

Strangers in strange lands: a hermeneutic inquiry into becoming a journalist

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**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
of Bournemouth University for the degree of
Doctor of Education**

July 2018

Bournemouth University

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Abstract

This research explores how students become the journalists of the future and the implications for journalism education. Drawing principally upon the work of Hans-Georg Gadamer, a practical application of philosophical hermeneutics is advocated to holistically venture beyond the theory-practice dualism that typically hallmarks journalism education today; the importance of a reflexive sense of journalistic being is instead presented as integral to the aspiring journalist's reimagining of an evolving media world. New conceptual ideas are introduced in this inquiry. Firstly, a hermeneutically-inspired *Journalistic Becoming* is defined and investigated through the case studies of ten former journalism students; indeed, exploration of *Journalistic Becoming*'s underlying and shaping conditions is commenced and the experiences that engender them considered. Secondly, this thesis offers a hermeneutic approach to the understanding and interpretation of *Journalistic Becoming* through the historically mediated pursuit of researcher-researched shared meaning. A Reflective Hermeneutic Model was designed for this purpose. It sought to examine my relationship with journalistic tradition in relation to that of the former journalism students who now work in journalism. Indeed, I aspired to utilise my own journalistic past through deepening my *Journalistically Effected Consciousness* and *Imaginative Journalistic Openness* which are also defined. Finally, a culminating vision of a new *Journalistic Becoming* pedagogy is presented and advocated to assist strangers to academia (former journalists) in their guidance of students – the strangers to journalism.

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Acknowledgements

There are several people that I wish to acknowledge for their support and encouragement during my doctoral journey. First and foremost, I thank my research participants for affording me the privilege of interpreting their worlds.

Secondly, I am deeply indebted to my supervisors, Dr. Mark Readman, Dr. Ashley Woodfall and Dr. Karen Fowler-Watt. They displayed admirable patience and good humour while generously imparting knowledge and advice. They helped a newspaper hack become a novice researcher and better educator.

Thirdly, I am grateful to my colleagues in the School of Journalism, English and Communication at Bournemouth University. I thank them for tolerating my impromptu drop-ins, my academic indulgencies and accompanying anxieties. They greatly expanded my thinking while providing inspiration and a sympathetic ear. In addition, I warmly thank Professor Julian McDougall and his team at the Centre for Excellence in Media Practice at Bournemouth University; they enthusiastically nurtured this Ed. D project throughout its four-year duration.

Fourthly, my thanks extend to the library staff at Bournemouth University. They embarked upon countless rummages for books and papers; their assistance was invaluable.

Finally, this project would not have materialised without my wife, Jill, and our sons, James and David. They hold my life together and make anything possible.

Introduction and research questions

“Wither we must travel – Immediate self-observation is not enough, by a long way, to enable us to learn to know ourselves. We need history, for the past continues to flow through us in a hundred channels. We ourselves are, after all, nothing but our own sensation at every moment of this continued flow” (Nietzsche 2013, p. 223).

This research originated from a desire to offer fresh thinking on journalism education at a time when its future is uncertain and when imagination has been called upon to ensure journalism’s survival (Mensing and Franklin 2011; Zelizer 2017). Starting initially from a personal ‘hunch’ that vocational skills-based training is an inadequate yet privileged pedagogic response, I felt compelled to look beyond the seemingly unhelpful debate that has stubbornly punctuated the works on journalism education since the beginning of the 20th century: the “unwinnable” strategy of advocating either a theoretical or practice-based approach (Deuze 2006, p. 22). I sought literary inspiration to commence exploration in a new educational direction. I was duly guided to consider that a more holistic journalistic preparedness might be required to enter a changing media world where seismic activity has ensured the forces of the old have encountered those of the new (Ponsford 2017a; Bell 2016). Indeed, it’s not only the job of the journalist that has changed: the nature of what it means to be a journalist is also rapidly changing (Greenwood 2018).

Consequently, the movement and momentum inherent in change itself emerged as a potential approach to imaginative and creative pedagogic exploration. Amid the pace, fluidity and complexity of technological and societal change, this thesis considers the ways in which being a journalist today similarly and necessarily entails a processual and evolutionary dynamic. This notion of moving, transitional and personal trajectories of self-change found expression in the concept of ‘becoming’. Indeed, this

thesis essentially explores how ‘becoming a journalist’ occurs in a transforming yet socialising journalistic world. The aspiring journalist is, in fact, envisaged as a stranger commencing a becoming journey in a strange and becoming journalistic land of tradition and change. I thus wanted my travels to illuminate how journalists might become as the journalistic world becomes; to glimpse how, according to Heraclitus, the pre-Socratic philosopher of becoming, “all things are in motion and nothing at rest” (Plato 2001, p. 19) and to sense the self-knowledge churned by history’s rivers of change that stream through us (Nietzsche 2013).

Journalism education is tasked with assisting the becoming of journalism’s new arrivals in the land of journalism. Yet academia’s landscape is itself in a state of flux as it attempts to juggle the changing skill requirements of industry with the demands of academic rigour (Hirst 2010). Former journalists are meanwhile entrusted to help teach and equip the next generation. Indeed, I arrived at Bournemouth University in 2013 following a career as a daily newspaper journalist. I joined fellow ‘hackademics’ – former journalists entering the academy – as strangers in the strange land of academia (Zelizer 2004; Engel 2003). Moreover, we arrived with journalistic baggage, with experiences of a different time and perhaps outdated views forged by journalism’s traditions. I considered that we, too, might require a journey of self-discovery to determine what becoming a journalist means to us and how our becoming impacts upon the becoming of others.

This thesis explores how the relationship between myself, a former journalist-turned-teacher, and former students-turned-journalists might yield clues to a new pedagogic direction in the teaching of journalism students. Journalistic tradition was cast as the mediator. Through bringing together our respective, habitus-shaping relationships with tradition (Bourdieu 1977; Gadamer 2004), a journey to re-

evaluating journalism education was commenced through seeking co-constructed insights into what becoming a journalist means today.

I begin with a review of literature (Chapter 1) which offers contextual deliberation upon the two changing landscapes of strangeness – industry and academia. The media industry continues to reconfigure, morph and become at a rapid rate (Conboy 2011; Bell 2016; Ponsford 2017a). The literature review surveys the contours of this conflicted world, one featuring commercial turmoil amid opportunity, fear of demise amid transitional hope, and celebration of civic liberation amid concern for democracy. The shock waves from this evolving world have duly reached the shores of academia which has been subject to industry's influence since training migrated to universities and colleges in the 1980s and 1990s. Industry suspicion of journalism education may have diminished but the literature suggests it still simmers beneath the surface. Today, industry continues to demand skills but there is disagreement over what core skills are required; meanwhile universities, seemingly locked in a socialising marriage of convenience with industry, remain engaged in a game of technological catch-up. Against this backdrop, debate over journalism education's future has ensued with calls to look beyond skills, beyond the preparation of industry-ready students and beyond the demands of accrediting bodies; more reflective approaches engendering societal perspective, intellectual confidence and community orientation have instead been urged (de Burgh 2003; Mensing 2010; Stewart 2017).

This thesis next sought literary guidance to commence understanding of the two strangers arriving in these lands of change. Consideration was first given to the challenges facing the hackademic arriving in the strange, unfamiliar world of academia. Indeed, the hackademic may feel an outsider while also being suspected of reinforcing the past and encouraging its imitation (Falk and Rajasekar 2017; Evans 2014). Turning next to their students – the strangers to the land of journalism – the

literature guided the research towards the territories of the holistic and ontological where I begin an initial pedagogic foray into the ‘being’ and ‘becoming’ of a journalist as an alternative to the ‘having’ of journalism knowledge (Jarvis 2012; Barnett 2009). Indeed, I sought understanding of what it means to ‘be’ a journalist today to help inform a becoming pedagogy. The literature offered preliminary insights regarding the influences that could shape and determine a journalist’s sense of becoming – what this thesis duly terms ‘conditions’. A quest thus began to discover these conditions as I pursued a different approach to the skills-theory dichotomy that typifies journalism education today (Harcup 2011a); it was a course that concurred with and addressed the concern that “prospective journalists need a lot more than training” (Phillips 2005, p. 243). The review of literature concludes aspiring journalists might rather need to reflect upon what they consider journalism to be in a changing journalistic world and what becoming a journalist means and entails for them. They might, in short, benefit from awareness of the conditions shaping their own sense of becoming a journalist.

Moving on to methodology (Chapter 2), I first sought to concretise this particular mode of becoming, one termed *Journalistic Becoming*. A philosophical journey that led to the philosophical hermeneutics of Hans-Georg Gadamer (see, for example, 2004 and 1976) was charted which duly afforded *Journalistic Becoming*’s explication as “the dynamic, transitional and linguistic process of journalistic self-interpretation afforded by and through engagement with journalistic possibilities and traditions”. It was envisaged that *Journalistic Becoming* was shaped by aforementioned conditions – the conditions in which self-understanding and its interpretation take place. The next task was to identify those conditions underlying and shaping a journalist’s *Journalistic Becoming* and the experiences that might engender them.

The journalist-turned-teacher was then brought into play to assist in the development of a new methodology that drew upon Gadamerian philosophical

hermeneutics. In so doing, I was able to explore how confronting the prejudiced preunderstandings of my own journalistic past might be a prerequisite to more adequately understanding my research participants' perceptions of becoming journalists. A four-movement Reflective Hermeneutic Model was designed and operationalised to bring together the becoming journeys of former Bournemouth University journalism students and myself. The model aimed to stir 'strangeness' within me, to develop my *Journalistically Effected Consciousness* through an adopted spirit of *Imaginative Journalistic Openness* to the questions and provocations of others; I sought a hermeneutic sensitivity to puzzlement, strangeness, intrigue and peculiar personal reverberations afforded by my research participants. Indeed, I aimed to interpret my participants' becoming experiences through my own self-discovery of hidden prejudices handed down by tradition. This thesis, then, explores the potential of Gadamerian philosophical hermeneutics to disclose and utilise the respective yet interrelational *Journalistic Becomings* of individuals negotiating strange lands; in so doing, sign posting to a new becoming pedagogy might afford more adequate preparation for both parties to enter their respective lands of strangeness – education and journalism.

The thesis then turns to discoveries. The stories of ten former Bournemouth University students who completed the same undergraduate journalism course are firstly disclosed in Chapter 3. I interpreted their individual stories through completion of the first three movements of the Model. Indeed, the hermeneutic interpretation of a student's journalistic evolution followed my ever-deepening personal reflection upon the encounter afforded by progression through these three movements which represented different ways of thinking. They were cumulative thought movements, aimed at deepening my understanding. The approach invited the former students to alert me to my historic journalistic prejudices that otherwise threatened to corrupt and

distort my interpretations of their *Journalistic Becoming*. These biases and prejudices required discovery and transparent foregrounding; in Gadamerian terms, I was then able to accommodate and incorporate my participants' situated, temporal standpoints and perspectives within my own. This "fusing of horizons" essentially attempted to unite us in a celebration of human interaction and shared understanding (Gadamer 2004, p. 306). Increasingly enriched horizontal projections of meaning were achieved through successively widening the hermeneutic circle of understanding; the circle's expansion depicted enhanced discovery of the participants through deepened discovery of myself. A culminating projection of each participants' *Journalistic Becoming* horizon was recorded in the Model's third movement; this horizon was shaped by identified conditions which were engendered by highlighted experiences.

Movement 4 of the Model witnessed transition from the individual to the collective; eight common *Journalistic Becoming* conditions were consequently drawn for further deliberation in Chapter 4. Again, it was only through continued reflection and reciprocal revelation that the privilege of researcher interpretation was possible. Extensive participant quotes are offered in this chapter to support the collective conditions of *Journalistic Becoming* identified.

The following discussion in Chapter 5 reflects upon the research questions that guided this thesis. They are:

- How can we understand *Journalistic Becoming* and what are its conditions?
- What types of educational experience have relative pedagogic potential to influence *Journalistic Becoming*?
- To what extent can philosophical hermeneutics provide insights into journalism education?

In this chapter, the processual nature of journalistic self-interpretation – *Journalistic Becoming* – is underscored and its definition and common conditions restated. The pervasiveness of socialising tradition (Gadamer 2004) and its shaping of habitus in the journalistic field (Bourdieu 1998a; 2005) is also revisited. The thesis goes on to promote *Journalistic Becoming* as a conceptual tool with which to illuminate the resulting processual negotiations, making of choices and pursuance of possibilities undertaken by aspiring journalists. Moving on to the experiences giving rise to *Journalistic Becoming* conditions, the research also highlights the propensity of extra-curriculum journalistic activity – undertaken during childhood as well as at university – to nurture these conditions and the importance of micro as well as macro experiential events. Bournemouth University emerges as a repository for becoming experiences.

Discussion then turns to the potential application of a philosophical hermeneutics approach to journalism education. Philosophical hermeneutics is firstly recommended as a practitioner attitude, a mindset granting interpretation of others through deepened understanding of one's own self-interpretation. Secondly, the case for a '*Journalistic Becoming* pedagogy' is presented. Projections of the conditions underlying and shaping *Journalistic Becoming* in others can give practitioners an insight into what becoming a journalist means today; such pedagogic understanding suggests an ontological superseding of polarising, practice-theory approaches may be required. Armed with such insights, empowered practitioners may rather afford primacy to the encouragement of students to seek an enriched sense of self-understanding – to consider the conditions of their own becoming. Such student awareness may help aspiring journalists to innovatively reimagine journalism's future. Indeed, while a *Journalistic Becoming* pedagogy entails enhancing students' awareness of their historical situatedness, understanding one's place in the journalistic world is not deemed to be at the expense of changing it. Students are instead encouraged to

confront and redefine journalistic tradition and utilise the freedom it offers (Gadamer 2004) through deployment of a critically reflective tool-kit and outlook (Deuze 2017). Practitioners thus become tasked with nurturing a becoming environment, one that engenders opportunities to explore self-understanding, self-interpretation and a sense of the journalist one wishes to become.

This thesis, which aspires to challenge the generally unchallenged contours of journalism's practical accomplishment (Zelizer 2017), underscores its essential contribution to journalism education in Chapter 6. It's duly hoped my conception of *Journalistic Becoming*, the reflective Model approach to its understanding and the resulting advocacy of a *Journalistic Becoming* pedagogy will help ease the passage of strangers to strange lands of unfamiliarity.

1. A review of the literature

Introduction

The literature was tasked with signposting fruitful directions to understanding what becoming a journalist entails today. It duly granted important detours that ensured my quest meandered into unforeseen yet enriching areas of inquiry. Indeed, my initial foray – into the world of journalism itself – seemed logical enough; gaining a sense of industry’s challenges and its demands upon aspiring journalists was deemed contextually imperative. Yet it soon transpired that the land of journalism education also required visiting. An academy deliberating upon its own becoming response to changing industry demands conceivably influenced student conceptions of being a journalist too. Next, strangers to these changing worlds were metaphorically approached. Firstly, academia’s newly settled inhabitants from industry demanded scrutiny, strangers like myself entrusted with ‘preparing’ the journalists of the future. Finally, sailing in the opposite direction were former students, strangers bound for journalism where they sought footholds in a land of flux. Literary consultation afforded insights into these strangers and their respective yet inter-connected journeys to strange lands. In turn, the methodological direction of this thesis was presented and a pathway that led to exploration of ‘becoming’ a journalist in the next chapter.

Exploring a strange land: journalism

The battle for journalism

The strangers to journalism’s shores enter a battlefield. It’s a place where “tectonic plates” have shifted to reveal “a radically altered landscape” (Conboy 2011, p. 165), a place where anything in print is threatened (Carey 2016) and where the forces of

social media have, according to Emily Bell, “swallowed journalism” (2016). Few could have predicted the last 30 years of technological innovation and disruption (Williams et al. 2017). Amid the chaos, the casualties have mounted. UK local newspaper jobs and revenues have halved since 2005 (Cox 2016) and 228 titles closed (Kakar 2018). While 418 jobs were lost between November 2015 and March 2017 (Ramsay et al. 2017), 18 local titles closed during the summer of 2017 alone (Ponsford 2017a); a further 22 vanished by the end of the year (Kakar 2018). Today, only 17% of London’s local newspapers remain based in the community they serve (Morton 2017). Culture Secretary Matt Hancock informed MPs in March 2018 that newspaper circulation had fallen by around 30% since the Leveson Inquiry; he added newspapers had gained only £3 in digital revenue for every £100 they had lost in advertising revenue in 2015 (Mayhew 2018a). In April 2018, Hancock said a government review would “explore what intervention might be required” to safeguard “our free and independent press” before warning: “This is about acting in time before irreversible damage is done to our news industry” (Mayhew 2018b).

A war of words and information control meanwhile continues to rage. While proponents of a brave new world of Internet communication herald a “democratisation” of news with more viewpoints and less dependency on large corporations (Donsbach 2014, p. 663), *Guardian* editor Katharine Viner has claimed personalised search functions have lessened exposure to alternative worldviews; rumours and lies are often more widely read than facts because they are “wilder than reality and more exciting to share” (2016). She observed a “consumerist shift” in journalism’s values; instead of strengthening social bonds and creating an informed public, news had created “gangs” who spread falsehoods, reinforced each other’s beliefs and drove each other into deeper shared opinions rather than establishing facts. The open web had created conflict:

“Now, we are caught in a series of confusing battles between opposing forces: between truth and falsehood, fact and rumour, kindness and cruelty; between the few and the many, the connected and the alienated; between the open platform of the web as its architects envisioned it and the gated enclosures of Facebook and other social networks; between an informed public and a misguided mob. What is common to these struggles – and what makes their resolution an urgent matter – is that they all involve the diminishing status of truth” (Viner 2016).

Nonetheless, more than half the UK population is projected to be using Facebook in 2018 (Baker 2016). It has become the dominant way to find news on the Internet (Viner 2016). Furthermore, Facebook and Google are expected to take 71% of all the money spent on digital advertising in the UK by 2020, prompting media trade magazine *Press Gazette* to launch a “Duopoly campaign” which aims to stop the two companies from “destroying any more of the UK journalism industry” (Ponsford 2017b). While Viner concurred that the journalism business model was “currently collapsing”, she claimed publishers funded by algorithmic adverts were now “locked in a race to the bottom in pursuit of any audience they can find” (2017). Though Google advocated collaboration and disputed competing for news publishers’ advertising (Chinnappa 2017), the *Guardian* warned investment in high quality journalism was being undermined (Mayhew 2017a). Meanwhile, it was claimed disasters like the Grenfell Tower fire could be prevented if cash-strapped local newspapers still had reporters investigating councils (Feller 2017).

Yet the aspiring journalist, standing in a new media world where the Internet is news provider and social media is news distributor, is able to hear conciliatory voices. For example, the editor of the *Independent*, the first national paper to embrace a digital-only future in 2016 (Turvill 2016a), has argued the future is bright for online publishing despite *Press Gazette*’s view (Ponsford 2016b; 2017c). The dawning of new opportunities for quality journalism have also been heralded by Robert Picard, a senior research fellow at the Reuters Institute, University of Oxford. He advised those “now dancing in circles, beating their chests, and chanting that the end of journalism is

nigh” to dispense with their “idealized and illusory vision of journalism in days past” (Picard 2014, p. 500).

Still, mutterings from the old brigade have refused to dissipate. Former newspaper editor Mike Gilson made a valiant last stand amid the ruins where he delivered a rallying call for a print counter-attack. With the majority of the UK unserved by a daily local newspaper and fragile hyper local news outlets unable to compensate (Ramsay et al. 2017), Gilson claimed a “re-invented” printed product required trained journalists with the time and passion to address the “democratic deficit” (2016, p. 205; Gilson 2017). Yet just three months later, Gilson fled a written press industry deemed the least trusted in Europe (Ponsford 2017d; Tobitt 2018). In becoming a communications manager for two district councils on his former patch (Ponsford 2017e), Gilson joined the “phalanx of communication officers” he once accused of making decision makers’ lives easier (Gilson 2017). Viner, meanwhile, noted how many free local newspapers were funded by the “very councils they should be holding to account”, leaving the public to sift the real from the fake (2017). A “crisis for public life” had been created, with the press risking becoming “wholly part of the establishment that the public no longer trusts” (Viner 2017).

In addition, an industry burdened by post-Leveson “tortured introspection” (Jukes 2016a, p. 5) has become smothered in a “big wet blanket”, according to former Sky News presenter Jeremy Thompson (Ponsford 2017f); a far more regulated broadcast industry had become “squeamish” and gripped by “timidity and caution”, ensuring material that he would have put on air 20 years ago now “hit the cutting room floor” (Ponsford 2017f). A terrorism-gripped world meanwhile requires challenging journalistic judgement. Following the Manchester Arena attack in May 2017, the city’s daily newspaper editor revealed he would never use a picture of the bomber on the front page; he added he referred to him as a ‘murderer’, not a ‘suicide bomber’

and the deceased were not his ‘victims’ but those he murdered (Mayhew 2017b).

Journalism’s newcomers thus survey a rocky terrain where seismic socio-technical activity has spawned new journalistic concerns and sensitivities as well as opportunities; journalism’s own becoming (Deuze and Witschge 2018) appears to require personal sifting and resolution within the becoming journalist.

The aspiring journalist: entering a click-based world of user-generators

The world of journalism can also be an “eye opener” for young journalists with an eye on a Pulitzer Prize; they may instead find themselves intensively farmed like “the journalistic equivalent of battery hens” and reduced to “laying story eggs in the hope they hatch into clicks” (Conlan 2017, p. 8). Newcomers enter a dumbing down debate focused upon the future of “real journalism online when hits (and cat videos) are the Holy Grail” (Turvill 2016b). Indeed, Viner warned that news organisations moving from public-interest journalism towards “junk-food news” in the pursuit of page view clicks, advertising or investment risked undermining the very reason they existed: “To find things out and tell readers the truth – to report, report, report” (Viner 2016). Yet the “binge-publishing” continues: some journalists “who learned in training that ‘news is something that someone, somewhere doesn’t want published’ churn out 10 commodified stories a day without making a phone call” (Viner 2017). Journalism may need the unexpected, the unpredictable and the oddness of real life but the truth is “a huge increase in ‘here’s one I made earlier’ journalism, the journalism of people sitting in front of screens in airless offices on the outskirts of towns, under the lash to be ‘productive’” (Marr 2005, p. 383). Meanwhile, this culture of ‘churnalism’ has helped ensure the output of ever-influential PR companies is regularly copied without journalistic checking, verification or analysis (Chambers and Baines 2015).

Those consigned to their desks to regurgitate and recycle may feel they are no longer doing journalism “properly” (Witschge and Nygren 2009, p. 54). Consequently, newcomers might observe a resulting fissure that has appeared between the old and the new, one described by a reporter thus:

“Online editors are often very young, with a couple of years of experience on a website before being promoted to a senior news editing role. They have little traditional journalistic training or reporting experience so their instincts – to echo a ‘story’ being tweeted elsewhere, true or not, to get numbers – can be at odds with the grizzled print newsdesk veterans, who still prefer getting a reporter out in the field” (Conlan 2017, p. 8).

Meanwhile, digital content and digital distribution models have also been “killing” the magazine industry “one click at a time”, according to Joely Carey; amid “endless hand-wringing”, the industry has been “ripped to shreds and left to slowly, but oh-so-surely, bleed to death in an all too crowded papery gutter” (2016, pp. 276-77). While most UK magazines audited lost sales year on year during the first half of 2017, the online migration of the UK’s tenth biggest selling magazine, *Glamour*, was declared a “huge blow to the power of print magazine publishing” (Ponsford 2017g; 2017h).

Newcomers to the broadcast world also confront uncertainty. Former BBC Director of News and Current Affairs James Harding has predicted the newspaper experience would “in some form or other, come to TV news over the coming decade” (2015).

While fewer Britons are consuming BBC news outputs (Ponsford 2017h), the National Union of Journalists claimed the organisation was closing local news district offices (Ponsford 2017i). Meanwhile, local ITV news has “retreated from more localised reporting” by instead offering coverage of vast regions (Ponsford 2017j). While concerns have been raised that changing working conditions have led to “compromised professionalism” in British television and “dumbed down products” (Ursell 2003, p. 43), the public nonetheless continues to demand authoritative and impartial “depth of coverage” in an era of fake news where mobile phones break headlines (Ryley 2017, p. 40).

The demanding public may ultimately reconfigure television themselves. The launch of Facebook Watch in 2017, a video service to incentivise “the creation of a new industry in original programming”, aims to drive the promotion and distribution of content as part of a “reinvention of TV”; while Facebook has made products of us all, it will also make us programmers (Rajan 2017). According to Daniel Danker, Facebook’s Director of Product, Watch is a platform for “all creators and publishers to find an audience”, one to inspire them to “seed the ecosystem” (Danker 2017). Becoming a successful television journalist today would appear to require an ever-demanding alertness to these social cycles of creation and valorisation, and of commodity production and consumption in order to keep one’s “unique aesthetic” in fashion (Ursell 2000, p. 818).

Indeed, the citizen is already a documentary-making bystander even if the jury is “still out” and deliberating upon whether user-generated content and social media has made news reporting more complete (Postigo 2016, p. 370). The encounter between an established professional culture and technological shifts – where traditional, professional practices and longstanding norms confront and incorporate external mediums – appears to have increasingly transformed news audiences into part consumer, part source and part fact checker (Postigo 2016). Moreover, the instant feedback journalists receive informs their news selection decisions (Harcup and O’Neill 2017); even if the main role performed by the online audience is sharing and dissemination rather than production, news organisations “tied to the goal of big traffic” must ask a key, pre-emptive question: “What works best on Facebook?” (Bell 2015).

Whether in print or in broadcast, becoming a journalist today takes place within the increasingly complex web of changing socio-technical and cultural entanglements depicted thus far. Aspiring journalists appear to require more than an awareness and

understanding of citizen generators in a click-obsessed “age of fake news and celebrity PR bumpf” (Temple 2017, p. 90). It’s also an age featuring demands for the reassertion of objectivity as “an aspirational quality standard”, “a universally understood guarantor of the pursuit of honesty and sincerity in journalistic work” (McNair 2017, p. 1328); it’s an age where a culture of news visibility exhibits performance, ritual and “a tonal shift towards more emotion” (Jukes 2016a, p. 11); it’s a Twitter age where independent thinking has become harder for journalists instantly aware of what peers have concluded about a topic (Montgomerie 2017); it’s a TV age of “commodified personalities” (Ursell 2000, p. 818) where a “creepy cult of beauty” in broadcast presenting allegedly consigns the “less obviously sexually attractive” to the “career doldrums” (Ponsford 2017k); and it’s an age where the “craft skill” of telling stories confronts the demands of a 24/7 news cycle emphasising story processing rather than storytelling (Fowler-Watt 2016a, p. 6). In short, new journalists appear required to make personal resolutions concerning what constitutes journalism and what being a journalist means to them today.

The aspiring journalist: who is a journalist?

Industry professionals reflect upon the changing media landscape in an annual *Press Gazette* publication entitled *How to be a Journalist*; as the title suggests, it is intended to guide industry newcomers in this strange, contorting land. A flavour of recent contributions helps to further set the scene. For example, Kim Fletcher, chairman of the National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ) informed future journalists in the 2015/16 edition: “Now anyone with a mobile phone can find out what is going on – and anyone with a social media account can be a journalist” (Fletcher 2016, p. 5). Nonetheless, the NCTJ chairman maintained the traditional media offered truth amid the “stuff flying around Twitter and Facebook” (Fletcher 2016, p. 5). The stories that

“stood up” led back to a newspaper or broadcaster “rather than a citizen journalist”; the BBC also offered an “editorial process” while local papers gave articles “more credibility than a Twitter account” (Fletcher 2016, p. 5). He insisted both new and old media required new talent that believed in the value of journalism (“let’s not forget that this is a trade that helps keep democracy on the straight and narrow”) and was able to produce it in the new world; that entailed knowing “how to publish for different media, take video, research data, penetrate social media” and combine it with the “curiosity, challenge and mischief that journalists have always shown” (Fletcher 2016, p. 5). In the same publication and in a similar vein, former *Guardian* editor Alan Rusbridger offered further advice. While the old skills were necessary, he highlighted the citizens, the “billions of people online and publishing content”; it was the ability to “get to the ones who know the stuff we need” which was a “new and vital skill” (Rusbridger 2016, p. 7).

Yet a media coup d’état was already well established. Ten years earlier Jay Rosen had colourfully depicted a “power shift” towards “the people formerly known as the audience”:

“You don’t own the eyeballs. You don’t own the press, which is now divided into pro and amateur zones. You don’t control production on the new platform, which isn’t one-way. There’s a new balance of power between you and us. The people formerly known as the audience are simply the public made realer, less fictional, more able, less predictable. You should welcome that, media people. But whether you do or not we want you to know we’re here” (Rosen 2006).

While it is debated whether corporations have already tamed the threat of the citizen and ensured main stream news remains dominated by elite sources (Wall 2017; Wahl-Jorgensen et al. 2016), there has nonetheless been a revolution. Companies have sought to reduce costs through user-generated content, associating themselves with open, democratic participation while harvesting free content in “commercially exploitative approaches” evidencing little common purpose, mutual benefit or

reciprocal exchange (Harte et al. 2017, p. 162). Readers were even invited to publish their own stories on one professional news website of a company hit by editorial cuts, redundancies and industrial action (Mayhew 2016).

However, the bid to offer “personalized news” on news websites has raised concerns about the impact on professional identity, the value journalists add and the erosion of their core function of news judgement (Thurman 2011, p. 409). Meanwhile, as editors share gate-keeping with readers “in ways unimagined in the past” (Thurman 2011, p. 413), the global reliance on live-streaming of the Paris and Brussels terrorism attacks of 2015 and 2016 revealed “how tenuous current journalistic claims to being an eye-witness have become” (Zelizer 2017, p. 6). In addition, as professional journalists continue to maintain that only they can effectively convey information and challenge power, many other sources now provide “far more attention and expert understanding to events”, ensuring they are increasingly relied upon by traditional news organisations (Picard 2015, p. 5).

A rethinking of journalism and the journalist’s professional identity thus appears required (Jackson and Moloney 2016; Deuze 2011; Harcup 2015; Spilsbury 2014). Working online can often make journalists “question their identity as reporters” while the founders of the UK’s new hyperlocal websites may not consider themselves journalists at all (Chadha 2016). Meanwhile, reorganisation and new investment in digital production has been reflected in transference of regional newspaper design to ‘subbing hubs’ which might also jeopardise journalistic identity amid resulting redundancies and union backlash (Mayhew 2017c). Those journalists reliant on traditional role concepts may additionally portray the speed of online journalism as endangering their status which they relate to the value dimension of quality; yet while they construct a threat scenario in which online journalism threatens quality journalism, ‘converged’ newsroom colleagues of a more service

and solution-orientated persuasion may create new “role scripts” and value definitions reliant on emerging online principles (Grubenmann and Meckel 2017, p. 732).¹

Amid these tensions, a picture persists of a working life where some journalists do little more than rejig the work of others as part of a deskbound, copy and paste “ripping culture” entailing dependency upon other websites for stories; it’s “not what they are taught at journalism school” and newcomers are instead moving into PR and marketing roles (Ponsford 2017). Wolfgang Donsbach concluded: “The very definition of ‘journalism’ and what being a journalist means is no longer as clearly defined as in the past when journalists were reporters and editors working for newspapers, the broadcast media or wire services. What we are observing is a declining appreciation for a specific product” (2010, p. 43).

While professionals have responded by defining the authority which demarcates them from the amateur or citizen journalist in terms of expertise or institutional collectivity (Luce et al. 2017), confusion even persists over professional identity itself. Many journalists reject the notion of ‘profession’ altogether. Andrew Marr, for example, describes journalism as the “most powerful and enjoyable of the anti-professions” outside organised crime (2005, p. 3). He prefers to call it a trade as debate continues over journalism’s coherence, autonomy and potential “de-professionalisation” in the digital age (Örnebring 2010, p. 569; Frost 2017; Witschge and Nygren 2009). Meanwhile, the predictable, manageable and routinised has evolved into the solo and mobile in an “evolving form of solitary – not organisational – journalistic practice” (Zelizer 2017, p. 250).

¹ This thesis defines convergence as the journalistic need “to think, report and write across print, broadcast and online media platforms” (Castaneda et al. 2005, p. 57). Convergence in journalism, or ‘multiplatform journalism’, has been driven by consumer demand for news and information whenever they want it and a media desire to reach the largest audiences possible (Auger et al. 2017).

Being a journalist today is thus shrouded in definitional confusion. It seems to have something to do with the past and the present, with old and new skills, and with being “multi-talented story-tellers” capable of bringing one’s words to life “in a way that is far beyond words” (Carey 2016, p. 282). Meanwhile, as journalism fragments into different approaches and standards, proliferation in the digital public sphere continues to question the role of professional codes and the value of a neutral voice, journalistic objectivity and impartiality (Sambrook 2012). The journalistic newcomer may well wonder whether the noble pursuit of impartiality and engagement are enough to combat social media offering satisfying affirmation rather than information, and where a “guerrilla war” against perceived mainstream media bias is being fought “day after day, hour after hour” (Robinson 2017). Those afflicted with a “virulent strain of anti-journalism journalism” (“especially the younger generation”) accept news is ideologically determined and prefer to trade in views “without apparently realising that news-as-comment is one step away from fake news” (Greenslade 2017).

Amid the resulting “communication chaos” unleashed by real-time news provided by diverse journalistic voices (McNair 2005, p. 40; Ames 2016), the question ‘Who is a journalist?’ has certainly been given a “new complexity” (Shirky 2008, p. 73). With power accrued to the formed audience (Shirky 2008), aspiring journalists must answer this question for themselves while aware people now create as much as they consume in a world in which mainstream media is allegedly “hated” (Greenslade 2017). While challenged to become and stay part of people’s “routinised round of clicks”, newcomers appear required to tell people what they need to know while allowing the audience to news gather and tell stories themselves (Deuze 2017, p. 310). Yet if social media puts everyone in the driving seat, do journalism’s new arrivals provide a diplomatic taxi service for people’s news or attempt to steer the suspicious citizen towards a more guided tour of the world?

Aspiring journalists must certainly keep their eye on the road and look ahead.

University student Dan Wilkinson gave this perspective in the *British Journalism*

Review before “setting out to make a living from journalism”:

“Professional journalism has entered a new age of collective confusion, the crystal ball that once held the answers to a successful career being smashed in front of a generation used to the old certainties of print. The Web 3.0 age has spawned readers with two-second attention spans who demand large bullet points in articles written by people so desperate to carve out a career that they are too scared of asking to get paid ... What if humans aren’t even required to write the news any more? *Wired* magazine recently wrote on the sophisticated computers that use algorithms to construct the body of an article ... Some may call this the death of traditional journalism, and what of it” (Wilkinson 2014, pp. 35-36).

Three years after Wilkinson’s futuristic speculation, Google awarded a grant to the Press Association to develop a reporting project which will see 30,000 stories a month written by robots for local media; a team of five journalists will use open government and local authority databases and story templates to automatically produce stories about health, crime, employment and other subjects (Ponsford 2017m). Automated journalism may comprise a major share of future news writing according to one study which found computer-written news tended to be rated higher than the human equivalent “in terms of credibility” (Graefe et al. 2018, p. 604). Another study found readers couldn’t discern automated journalistic content from human content (Clerwall 2014). It’s also predicted journalists will use personalised AI researchers who they become “emotionally attached to – just as we have become attached to our phones” (Greenwood 2017/18, p. 10).

Becoming a journalist today seemingly requires attentiveness to these industry trajectories as well as personal deliberation upon what journalists currently are, what they can be and what they should be.

The aspiring journalist: it's all about me

Returning to the present, the aspiring journalist is also required to emerge from the shadows and embrace a world where the individual became *Time's* 'Person of the Year' in 2006, 'Selfie' was 'Word of the Year' seven years later and media "stimulate us to look more or less exclusively at ourselves" (Deuze 2017, p. 313).

Dan Wilkinson offered this advice for budding journalists:

"Every writer must now become an eager self-promoter, offering rent-a-quote tweets with little to no perspective. I can see I must become my own personal spokesperson, make my own luck in using every opportunity to better myself and take more chances" (Wilkinson 2014, p. 38).

Indeed, journalists are today required to promote, deliver and market their work when at one time "the newspaper delivery truck took care of dissemination"; while normalizing social media, journalists must also rework some of their norms and routines around it in a process of "journalistic negotiation" (Tandoc and Vos 2016, p. 962). A balance may thus be sought between, on the one hand, editorial autonomy and "other norms that have institutionalized journalism" and, on the other, the increasing audience influence (Tandoc and Vos 2016, p. 962).

As social media influences how journalists disseminate their work and interact with audiences, it has shaped journalistic self-presentation strategies and skills; freelance journalists may, for example, be less likely to engage in more personal self-presentation since they "lack the social capital and consistent audience to do so" (Carpenter et al. 2017, p. 1259). Yet a dilemma may be encountered. The promotion of one's journalistic but sanitized and organisational online branding may suppress conveyance of a more transparent and relatable personal identity through social media; however, "if journalists choose to present too much of a personal identity, they risk punishment by their employers. If they present only a professional identity, they risk offending their audiences" (Holton and Molyneux 2017, p. 208). While publishing "frivolous" clickbait may also pose credibility issues and undermine the "serious

business” of journalism (Bossio and Sacco 2017, p. 535), the pressure to develop an expert presence and represent a news organization at all times “leaves little room for aspects of personal identity such as family, faith, or friendship to be shared online” (Holton and Molyneux 2017, p. 206). The self-presentation entailed in becoming a journalist may, in short, impact on other presentations and on other becomings.

Yet the focus on ‘me’ continues to reflect a significant power shift in the media ecosystem. The changing relationship between journalists working for traditional news organisations and the audience has also been accompanied by a change in journalists’ relationships with “the people formerly known as the employers” (Deuze 2009, p. 316). The growth of informal, casualised and freelance work has led to workers competing for jobs rather than employers competing for their services (Deuze 2009). The door has opened for entrepreneurial journalists to reclaim power from employers “and with it, autonomy and cultural independence” (Baines and Kennedy 2010, p. 100). Being a journalist today may entail seizing the opportunity to be an independent, self-employed and empowered businessperson rather than become an insecure, dependent freelancer or vulnerable employee. Journalists might perceive journalism’s professional principles of independence and public service to be at odds with business values; yet while the “narrative of ‘me the journalist’ is not the same narrative as ‘me the businessman or woman’”, many working journalists may treat professional and business values as negotiable while only a few would-be journalists might see public service as a major motivation (Baines and Kennedy 2010, pp. 104-5).

Summary reflections

Those aspiring to become journalists are required to negotiate the conflicted journalistic landscape toured thus far and personally address the challenges it poses. Indeed, amid the shiny technology of a new age, strangers to the battlefield join

citizen journalists in something of an old media apocalypse where traditional façades have partially crumbled, even collapsed. The literature paints a picture of a journalistic landscape featuring economic turmoil yet new opportunity, civic liberation yet democratic despair and new journalistic possibilities amid acute uncertainties and challenges. Becoming a journalist today appears to entail reflection upon the past, present and future. Indeed, if students are aware that they are reliving history, they may, according to Mezirow, embrace a process of perspective transformation in the way they see themselves and their relationships; such a perspective is important to identify relevant problems, to form attitudes, to make value judgements, for setting priorities and for feeling initiative can change one's situation (1978). So while professional identity encompasses how individuals "look at themselves" in relation to traditions (Nygren and Stigbrand 2014, p. 843), this may require fresh interrogation as might matters concerning societal and cultural power dynamics afforded by technology. Deliberation might need to be directed to what being a journalist means, to notions of truth, values and self-branding, and to conceptions of the future digital society.

If journalism is indeed experiencing a transition rather than a demise (Picard 2014), Brian McNair reminds us that journalism remains "ultimately the product of human beings" (2005, p. 27). Future journalists will be required to assess what journalism personally means to them. Is it a set of craft skills practised in accordance with tradition? A profession with democratic responsibilities and core ethical values? Is it an art form? (McNair 2005). Or is it something else? If definitions of journalists and journalism become based upon practices, not employment (Picard 2014), and entry is conditioned more on commercial terms than ideological and professional ones (Wiik 2016), newcomers need to determine what journalism they want to do and why. They may, indeed, need to recognise that pursuance of a media career entails a need to

“redefine what journalism is and can be” (Wiik 2016, p. 281). The “starting point” for recovering and rebuilding trust in journalism could be its definition so that the audience can recognise and value what it is (Greenwood 2017/18, p. 9).

The stakes are high. If the journalists of the future are required to engage with citizens as equals while holding power to account, they will be entrusted to help create the kind of world we want to live in (Viner 2016). The new journalists will inhabit a world where critical decisions are made by technology companies about “access to platforms, the shape of journalism or speech, the inclusion or banning of certain content, the acceptance or rejection of various publishers”; what happens to current news publishers has become eclipsed by questions of the kind of news and information society we want to create (Bell 2016) and more nuanced considerations of the “moral charter” connecting news with its multiple publics (Zelizer 2017, p. 7). New journalists also enter a world where public selectivity based on subjective interests and beliefs has made it easier to escape news while enjoying the illusion of news consumption; it’s a world where a younger generation may have lost interest in public sphere topics “that go beyond peculiar interests of the individual and its immediate reference group” (Donsbach 2014, p. 663). We live “in an uneven age”, one featuring in places “sagging enthusiasm for democracy, polarisation of opinion, disengagement from society and a crisis of citizenship” (Harding 2015).

These matters appear to reinforce the need for new journalists to reflect deeply upon journalistic responsibilities, personal values, beliefs, self-conceptions and aspirations in relation to a societal shift towards networked individualism, entrepreneurialism, self-expression and globally-linked yet personalised civic engagement (Deuze 2017). In addition, new journalists appear required to consider how to improvise the “disconnect” between their vision of journalistic activity and the shrinking institutional landscape for its practice (Zelizer 2017, p. 4). Amid

insecurity, precariousness and vulnerability, aspiring journalists may thus require a commitment “well beyond what any profession could ask for” as well as adaptability in practices and working routines; their drive must exceed “institutional protections and privileges of the profession” as they attempt to “both make a difference and to make ends meet in an exceedingly competitive market” (Deuze and Witschge 2018, p. 176). Becoming a journalist may entail determination to invent one’s own job (Gillmor 2016) in the quest to help reshape journalism.

Perhaps, however, newcomers should first reflect upon “why they are digging”, why it is important to “look a £200k chief executive in the eye and demand answers to their questions” (Gilson 2017). While Gilson lamented meeting too many students “who are not really sure why they are there”, his comments served to underline perhaps the fundamental question to be asked by any aspiring journalist: if “anyone can now be a reporter, commentator, publisher” (Baker 2016, p. 10), what do I want to journalistically become and why? While journalism graduates will help define journalism’s future, it may thus be posited that an awareness of one’s own becoming is a necessary prerequisite to helping forge the becoming of journalism and, indeed, society. This notion is now further explored in the context of journalism education where the shockwaves from a transfiguring industry have been strongly felt.

Exploring a strange land: journalism education

An uneasy alliance: academia and industry

Until the 1980s, local and regional newspaper companies in the UK had been happy to pay an external provider, the NCTJ (a charity founded in 1951), a per capita levy to train staff to become journalists. That changed when a climate of cost cutting descended and the provincial newspaper National Agreement between Newspaper

Society members and the National Union of Journalists ended in 1987; the proprietors were no longer obliged to train (Frost 2012). Some big employers started their own training schemes while the development of the National Vocational Qualification and the entry of universities further mixed the training melting pot.

In 1970, Cardiff became the first British university since 1939 to offer journalism qualifications (postgraduate diplomas in print and broadcasting) yet the emphasis was on an academic introduction to journalism studies rather than job preparation (Herbert 2000). More universities offered postgraduate courses in the 1980s before the first undergraduate programmes were launched in 1991 (Frost 2017; Cole 1998). With university courses offering NCTJ content, more newspaper groups ended their training schemes as the market place filled with well-qualified graduates; only a few newspaper-run training schemes remain (Frost 2012). Academia and industry thus formed an alliance.

The catalyst for growth was the competitive expansion of higher education facilitated by educational reforms from 1988 to 1992. These allowed polytechnics like Bournemouth to convert into universities as British higher education became increasingly exposed to the “rhetoric of the market” and “open to intervention by business and to the forces of supply and demand” (French and Richards 1994, p. 82; Frost 2012). Three universities launched undergraduate journalism programmes in 1991 and their popularity (nearly 2,000 applied for the 40 places at the University of Central Lancashire) encouraged more universities to follow suit (Frost 2012).

By early 2006, 38 British universities were offering journalism as a single subject undergraduate degree (Hanna and Sanders 2007); more than fifty institutions offered undergraduate journalism by the time of the Leveson Inquiry (Frost 2012). While 415 first year journalism undergraduates were enrolled at British universities in 1994/5, that number had risen to over 2,000 in 2004/05 (Hanna and Sanders 2007). In 2014/15,

a total of 12,000 students were studying on a journalism course at one of 72 Higher Education Institutions in the UK; this statistic included students on each year at a university and revealed the majority (83%) were studying at an undergraduate level (Spilsbury 2016a). Those planning to study journalism in 2018/19 could choose from 615 undergraduate courses including Football Journalism, Digital Journalism, Fashion Journalism and Multimedia Journalism – the undergraduate course offered at Bournemouth University (UCAS 2017).² Such choice could be seen to reflect the enhanced agility required of journalism education. It has needed to broaden to remain relevant while encouraging students to see themselves as self-contained brands and creators; indeed, “highly disruptive Internet initiatives” have shaken the previously “well-defined, highly competitive ladder of success” (Foote 2017, p. 443).

When training left industry for academia, it remained closely chaperoned by accreditation, the “kite mark” recognition that an educational institution or course met specific standards set by accrediting bodies (Society of Editors 2017).³ Accreditation appeared to facilitate a marriage of convenience between industry and academia: it attracted students while stipulating and ensuring required industry training. Yet tensions arose between the odd couple. In 1998, Peter Cole lamented the prejudice and lack of contact that existed between them (Cole 1998). Three years later Michael Hann, writing in the *Guardian*, went straight for the academic jugular when he claimed universities were running courses that did not provide students with skills to obtain jobs; worse, universities driven “to get bums on seats and fees in accounts” failed to identify those “who are simply not good enough to work in journalism and warn them of their shortcomings” (Hann 2001). While the debate concerning an “industry-academic dichotomy” (Reese and Cohen 2000, p. 217;

² Henceforth, the university’s BA Multimedia Journalism degree will also be referred to as the ‘BAMMJ’ course by which it is known. Bournemouth University also appears with the commonly used acronym, BU.

³ There are three main accreditation bodies for journalism courses – the NCTJ, the Broadcast Journalism Training Council (BJTC) and the Periodicals Training Council (PTC).

Nolan 2008) may indeed be “tired” (Reese 1999, p. 90), the aspiring journalist nonetheless remains exposed to any consequent tensions shaping their education and industry preparedness. It is to these matters that we now turn.

A partner under pressure: industry and the requirement of skills

As Angela Phillips noted in 2005, “the most common complaint” among journalists (including those actually teaching journalism) was that too much theory was taught; the contradiction between the teaching of the practice and theory of journalism was like “teaching philosophy to someone who only needs to fix the toilet” (Phillips 2005, p. 228). While the accreditation process “calmed fears” that theory teaching was excessive (Frost 2017, p. 207), university courses omitting shorthand were nonetheless accused of offering “Del Boy degrees” (Reynolds 2016). The *Sun*’s editor, Tony Gallagher, also proclaimed in 2016 that “you become a journalist by practising it, not by learning it in a classroom” (Ponsford 2016a). Gallagher was following in the footsteps of a predecessor, Kelvin MacKenzie, who four years earlier had famously recommended shutting down all journalism colleges (MacKenzie 2011). According to MacKenzie, journalism was “a job, a knack, a talent” that did not require a diploma; there was, in fact, nothing that could be learned in three years studying media at university “that you can’t learn in just one month on a local paper” (MacKenzie 2011). It’s argued that British anti-intellectualism, together with a fear of state licensing of journalists, has “strongly inhibited universities’ attempts to develop journalism education” (Frost 2017, p. 202). Today, most working journalists may have a degree but many did not study journalism at undergraduate level (Spilsbury 2013; 2016a).

While the value of a journalism degree continues to be debated (Greenslade 2016; Munford 2015; Frith and Meech 2007), industry’s requirements remain primarily

focused upon skill importation from academia. The accreditation bodies are market overseers in this respect; the NCTJ accreditors are special envoys, alliance mediators stressing the desirability of students to acquire the Level 3 Diploma in Journalism. Indeed, the latter is the “industry recognised, entry-level qualification” which can lead to eligibility for the National Qualification in Journalism, “the NCTJ’s professional, senior journalism qualification” (Spilsbury 2015, p. 6). Diploma holders also appear to find jobs: Mark Spilsbury’s NCTJ-commissioned survey of 205 students who completed the Diploma course showed 82% were employed in some form of work – and over three-quarters were in full-time or part-time journalism-related posts. The same survey claimed 77% of those in journalism-related jobs felt the Diploma was required by their employers (Spilsbury 2015). The report added: “The core skill areas of reporting, law, shorthand and public affairs are all rated highly in having been helpful in preparing respondents for employment. Even amongst those who were not working in a journalistic capacity, high proportions found the journalistic core skills to be still valuable in preparing them for work.” (Spilsbury 2015, p. 5).

The *Press Gazette*’s Editor-in-Chief underscored the importance of skill acquisition in an article entitled: *You wouldn’t expect to lay a brick wall without training*. Dominic Ponsford advised those with “serious” professional ambitions to greatly improve their chances of success “with the right vocational training” (Ponsford 2015a, p. 5). Indeed, students equipped with industry qualifications “have proof of skills, skills they can take to old, new and as yet unimagined media, skills that employers will pay for” (NCTJ 2014-15, p. 4).

Yet the industry contortions highlighted earlier ensure the skill imports it requires remain unclear and changeable; indeed, agreement over core skills is ever more difficult (NCTJ 2015). While online competencies can generate extensive individual

autonomy for those who have them (Wiik 2016), the value of entrepreneurial approaches, public relations skills and audience communication skills have also been highlighted (Baines and Kennedy 2010; Spilsbury 2014; Gillmor 2016; Gilson 2017; Barnes and de Villiers Scheepers 2018). Meanwhile Neil White, a former UK regional newspaper editor and former Chairman of the NCTJ Journalism Qualifications Board, anecdotally highlighted the experience of one of his employees. He recalled the skills of a social media specialist who provided “quality ideas” to engage more than 60,000 readers. However:

“She has a problem, for the skills that she has developed are not the skills of the journalist, as they have traditionally been understood. She would not, for instance, get too far with the qualification currently being offered by the UK training body, the National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ) which allows young journalists to demonstrate to editors that they have the skills necessary to operate in their news organisations” (White 2016, p. 33).

White claimed “there are scores, if not hundreds, of people in her position” across the UK and called for “new agendas of training” (2016, p. 33). The previous year the NCTJ had commissioned a review of its Diploma. The review pondered whether there was a case to reduce the number of core skills in light of the increased dispersion of journalism across different sectors; “significant proportions” in sectors outside of newspapers and magazines regarded shorthand – a Diploma staple – as unimportant while there was “clearly a view that social media should be the focus of more attention” (NCTJ 2015). From September 2016, a new online ‘Essential Journalism’ exam containing more digital journalism became part of the Diploma’s suite of requirements; shorthand remained mandatory for progression to the National Qualification in Journalism even though this “article of faith” has since been questioned as an essential skill and a “marker of the real journalist” (Baines 2017, p. 11; NCTJ 2016).

Journalistic tradition emerges from the literature as the custodian of traditional skills and therein lies a fundamental challenge facing journalism education today. The old and new slip and slide seeking new and relevant tractions. The ‘new’ encompasses knowledge of “the geography of social media” (Baker 2016, p. 11) and the “startup culture” (Gillmor 2016, p. 816); of how “entrepreneurial self-employed agents” can compete with as well as serve other media outlets while working in “wider communication sectors” (Baines and Kennedy 2010, pp. 97-8). While jobs may require “hybrid coder-communicators” (Royal 2017, p. 387), the new also entails an ability to tell visual stories (Jackson 2016) and preparedness to ethically deal with statistics and data analysis (Feigenbaum et al. 2016; Picard 2015). Indeed, a “selective socialisation” is advocated regarding evolving data journalism, which, it is claimed, is more “fluid and open” to innovative approaches (Hewett 2016, p. 132). Yet while future journalists require new skills associated with the digital world, some traditional ones will gain “a new impetus or direction”; furthermore, a “natural scepticism” for social media ensures it can “in no way replace or sideline any of the immutable virtues and values of good newsroom practice” (Baker 2016, p. 11).

Finally, it is important to note that industry does not exclusively endorse an industry-facing curriculum (Reardon 2016). Some employers might prioritise personal qualities and “not care a fig” about training (de Burgh 2003, p. 109); half of those responding to a small-scale research project claimed they would employ someone with no training at all (Canter 2015). Employers may instead seek individuality, originality and analytical ability rather than vocationally-trained graduates (Thornham and O’ Sullivan 2004). Indeed, it makes commercial sense to find people who can help distinguish a media organisation from others rather than repeat what it and their rivals currently do; the BBC’s focus is not on specific skills but the creative process and innovation (Baines 2012). David Higgerson, Reach’s

digital editorial strategy director, told journalism educators in 2018 that while new journalists should be “data savvy” and “audience builders”, they should also “think like a local” and bring something to “add value to a newsroom”.⁴ Higginson later said that while NCTJ qualifications were important, this added value was “stardust”.⁵

A partner under pressure: academia and curriculum challenges

Journalism education confronted a conundrum: with “two masters” demanding service (Foote 2017, p. 431), it feared being left stuck in an “academic no-man’s land”, accepted by neither industry nor by more traditional study disciplines (Reese and Cohen 2000, p. 213). While universities criticised the journalistic field’s academic legitimacy and industry questioned its ‘real world’ relevance, courses were forced to “do battle simultaneously on two challenging fronts” (Foote 2017, p. 431). As Reese succinctly put it, educators were required “to think through what they are about” (1999, p. 90).

A steered negotiation was required between the “‘rock’ of academic respectability and the ‘hard place’ of hoping industry will accept our graduates as professionally competent” (Hirst 2010, p. 84). It was a quest to find the slipstream that supplied industry with the ever-changing export cargoes of skills it demanded while offering the theoretical, disciplinary rigour and intellectual pursuit entailed in a “well-rounded, liberal arts education” (Frost 2017, p. 213).

By 1977, the fundamental block to the emergence of first degrees in journalism in Britain had probably been the cautious, conservative attitude most universities had towards vocational training in academic institutions; one training centre attached to a polytechnic was required to “disassociate itself from the institution” on the grounds its training standards were insufficiently academic (Boyd-Barrett 1970, p. 193;

⁴ Association for Journalism Education (AJE) conference at Canterbury Christ Church University, 27 June 2018.

⁵ Personal conversation with the author after his keynote AJE conference speech, 27 June 2018.

Hanna and Sanders 2007). More recently, concern arose that the push for vocationalism would rebuild barriers between courses focused upon intellectual inquiry and those centered on vocational education (Phillips 2005). In the world of journalism education, perhaps the key question was posed by Mark Hanna and Karen Sanders:

“How much curricular emphasis and space in journalism education programs should be allocated to tuition in such skills and in other ‘practice’ techniques, compared to space given to the imparting of wider, academic knowledge and skills in intellectual analysis to help students become journalists as ‘reflective practitioners’ but also to enable students to enter a range of careers, not just in journalism?” (2011, p. 177).

To further magnify the challenge confronting journalism education, universities remained engaged in a constant game of catch-up despite their zeal to be current with issuance of “impassioned rallying cries” of convergence, multimedia, cross-media and trans-media (Foote 2017, p. 444). Experiential multiplatform courses might help students develop a deeper self-understanding of themselves as storytellers but concepts of skills traditionally associated with journalism were changing and expanding (Auger et al. 2017). Even as convergence was gaining currency in the media world, the advent of smart phones ensured entry to the media world moved from branded websites and apps to social media consumption; the “innovation lag” between the journalism classroom and the media world was “getting bigger” and needed to be addressed (Falk and Rajasekar 2017, p. 63).

Meanwhile, as concern over the democratic deficit unfolded (see page 12), a further challenge confronting journalism education was brought into sharp focus. Angela Phillips (2005) identified this dilemma at the heart of journalism education: “Are we educating young people to hold power to account or are we merely training them to fill jobs in the communication industries?” (p. 227). The task appeared to be increasingly challenging too. Nick Nuttall, noting a course leader’s despair at trainees’ aspirations to become gossip columnists, asked if a new generation of John Pilgers was “waiting

in the wings”; investigative journalism relied upon those “on university courses, training schemes or through pure serendipity” who were willing to take up the challenge and “tell it like it is” (2006, p. 218).

A further deficit poses additional challenges for journalism education. Minority ethnic groups face “barriers to participation in the mainstream media” and are often “excluded from the critical conversations that society has with itself” (Baines and Chambers 2012, p. 11). Concerns over diversity have existed for fifteen years and these remain; journalists are more likely to be older, white, from higher social classes and more highly qualified (Spilsbury 2017).

Journalism education’s challenges, entwined with those of a challenged industry, prompted a global debate concerning what journalism education should become. Hugo de Burgh insisted skills were not enough, maintaining journalism can be taught as, and should be regarded as, “a serious academic discipline and not simply a vocational training” (2003, p. 95). He argued the purpose of a degree was not to make people “adequate employees” but “thoughtful citizens and potential contributors to the intellectual and cultural life of the society” (2003, p. 98). De Burgh, while contesting skills were “the stuff of journalism formation” (2003, p. 98), believed journalists required an education that afforded them societal perspective and the intellectual confidence that came from knowledge; he advocated “a reflective education”, one “in harmony with, rather than contrasted with, preparation for work” (2003, p. 110). Three years earlier concerns had been expressed that the “pragmatic pact” between job-minded student consumers and universities – one entailing a high degree of training – “may not be in the long-term best interests of young people who will ultimately be involved in many careers” (Reese and Cohen 2000, p. 215).

Visions for journalism education’s future have duly proliferated. They include: a call for complex problem analysis and national policy discussion (Hanna and Sanders

2011); speciality journalism courses to shape “self-sufficient journalists” (Picard 2015, p. 8); a curriculum focus on storytelling (Falk and Rajasekar 2017); a teaching drive to redefine journalism’s social role by creating a new ‘knowledge profession’ (Donsbach 2010; 2014); modern apprenticeships to create an alternative stream of non-graduates to address diversity concerns (Spilsbury 2017); a community focus to combat “the transmission-driven, industry-conceived model of journalism” (Mensing 2010, p. 512; Baines 2012; Deuze 2006; Deuze 2017); and, continuing the community theme, employing networked approaches that use social media to facilitate interactions and encourage journalistic collaborations by crossing traditional newsroom boundaries (Baines and Wall 2016). While “academic fiefdoms and ways of doing things” must be challenged, it is no longer a question of thinking outside the box because the box no longer exists: “What is required is deciding what will replace the box or how to get along without one” (Picard 2015, p. 10).

Today journalism education confronts its challenges in a climate of relative calm. It is far more “solidified into university hierarchies” than it was three decades ago; a “credibility high” has been claimed and “full acceptance” predicted (Foote 2017, p. 432/445). Industry suspicion, meanwhile, is not at the level it once was and the academy “continues to be career orientated” as its public pronouncements appear to testify (Frost 2017, p. 211). Indeed, with accreditation providing a welcome marketing tool (Frost 2017; Canter 2015), the bid to attract students may require the prioritisation of a training message, one encouraging students to believe skills are enough (Reardon 2016). Consequently, universities may be restrained in mentioning academic and reflective course content – even if the educator’s discourse is one of striving to encourage critical thought. Sally Reardon’s study of television journalism found course descriptors rarely used words such as ‘intellectual’. She noted:

“It is almost as if the courses are embarrassed to admit to this activity, glossing over this aspect in one sentence or a couple of words. More often

this opening line is the only occasion when this aspect of the course is mentioned, with the discourse quickly shifting to an emphasis on practical skills, the work placements, the professional experience and details of up-to-date technical facilities. Descriptions of skills training is very specific and detailed compared to the rather vague statements about becoming a ‘reflective practitioner’, if referred to at all” (Reardon 2016, p. 945).

The impact of the training message upon students now requires further deliberation.

A socialising partnership?

In relation to becoming a journalist, a fundamental concern of this thesis is to examine the potential role of journalism education in reinforcing journalism’s socialising practices and traditions. Course accreditation serves to preserve the training tradition, particularly if it is pushed by employers with the enthusiastic support of a government keen to see universities more closely tied to industry (Phillips 2005). The NCTJ Diploma in Journalism is billed as “the qualification editors look for when recruiting a trainee journalist” (NCTJ 2017a). Yet training bodies can offer a “monolithic, centralised training structure incapable of responding to industry change”; indeed, while “often the preserve of those coming towards the end of their careers”, they may “look backwards to what used to be done” (Phillips 2005, p. 239). Dominated by legacy and traditional media, accrediting bodies may thus offer outdated and prescriptive content (Stewart 2017).

Recently proposed changes to accreditation indicated a willingness to adapt. The NCTJ, which accredits 80 courses at 42 centres including Bournemouth University and 18 other universities, has announced less frequent accreditation inspections for “high performing” institutions; industry teams “made up of senior journalists” will instead carry out regular visits to talk about industry changes and assist with “quality journalism education and training” (NCTJ 2017b). Students, it seems, will continue to receive vocation and training messages from education, employers and journalists; such messages may constitute constructions conveying journalism as either “a

natural activity born of natural talent or learnt from those with experience and natural talent” (Reardon 2016, p. 946).

Indeed, there are concerns about industry’s messages and needs. When the NCTJ’s accreditation changes were discussed in 2017, Lee Hall, Head of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies at Sunderland University, questioned closer industry links. He said: “I’m concerned about industry’s need to provide clickbait and the need to fill the endless void online. We must also create an atmosphere where we encourage students to be critical thinkers. They have to do the quick work but also the other stuff as well – the investigative, the imaginative, the innovative work.”⁶

Robert Picard’s 2015 call to journalism education to change or “wither and die” also captured concern about training:

“Higher education isn’t about ensuring employment. It is about shaping and sharpening students’ abilities to think and about giving them skills they can use in a variety of activities in future years. It is about helping them understand the past, how people and societies work, what forces affect the human condition, how to deal with the inevitable changes they will encounter in their lives, and how to find their own paths to success” (2015, pp. 6-7).

Picard lamented how “minimal effort” was expended on teaching students to think and critically analyse social developments; those unable to think effectively would be “even more worthless in the future than they are now” (2015, p. 7). Angela Phillips also advised that education should extend beyond ensuring students are merely industry-ready and equipped with “a few tricks of the trade”; they should instead challenge paradigms, think about where power lies and commence “questioning the rules” (2005, p. 230). She states:

“An editor may well train new recruits to recognize ‘a good news story’. A university should point out that news values are not handed down by God, they are created by the cultures we live in and shaped both by those who work in newsrooms and those who employ them. The mythical ‘nose for news’ is in fact a finely tuned understanding of the culture and the particular power nexus in the subject, or geographical area in which we

⁶ Personal conversation with the author during NCTJ Higher Education Forum held at The Brunswick Group, 16 Lincoln’s Fields, London, on 30 June 2017.

work” (Phillips 2005, p. 231).

Journalism educators appear caught within a tension-filled trap: university bosses remain on one side “demanding a curriculum full of rigorous theory, analysis and critical thinking” while accrediting bodies are on the other with their focus “solely on replicating the practices and processes taking part in newsrooms” (Stewart 2017, p. 43). Developing curricula that go beyond traditional news industry-journalism education links has been declared a “universal goal for journalism programs worldwide” (Rupar 2016, p. 295; Berger and Foote 2017). Yet, with students appearing to verify the employment value of NCTJ qualifications (Spilsbury 2015), to “stray too far” from the industry model epitomized by the NCTJ could be seen as an “abrogation of professional duty” (Bromley 2009, p. 62).

Summary reflections

Journalism, as both a vocational and intellectual enterprise that is subject to influences from academia and industry, has in turn pulled journalism education in different directions. Under pressure to abandon its academic ethos and “embrace its industry patrons” (Reese 1999, p. 70), journalism education confronts the incorporation of “both ‘idealist’ and ‘realist’ aspirations and both ‘practical’ and ‘intellectual’ dimensions” (Tumber and Prentoulis 2005, p. 69). For the aspiring journalist, these tensions have become typically manifest in exposure to curriculums featuring skills and theory. While most universities claim their degrees integrate theory and practice, claims of complementation are “misguided” because often they do not (Kocic 2017, p. 70). Meanwhile, industry may fail to understand its own changing contexts and practices (Bromley 2009); employers may fail to comprehend what they want journalists to be, and, consequently, what they want universities to provide. Amid these confusions, industry nonetheless awaits graduates with “stardust” (see page 33).

The literature so far suggests a marriage of convenience is reflected in academia's somewhat fudged if pragmatic response. However, as noted earlier, a becoming industry would seemingly require recruits aware of their own journalistic situatedness within a world of socio-technical change, challenged norms and personal branding; recruits with a sense of what being a journalist means to them today and what they want journalism to be tomorrow. This, in turn, has implications for what journalism education may need to become. If currently conceived as an "agent of socialisation" (Luce et al. 2017, p. 278), journalism education may instead be required to help students unpack such influences and rework reiterative, ideologically-reinforcing acts in order to gain orientation (Bogearns 2011). With socialisation threatening to impair vision, academia may need to seek a more critical and holistic approach to becoming a journalist in a changing journalistic world.

Educators, in short, may be required to move beyond the simple reproduction of "a skilled yet not particularly reflective or questioning workforce" (Harcup 2011a, p. 31); they may also need to see beyond the requirements of the NCTJ. Teachers might rather need to help students decide if they want to become journalists (Nygren and Stigbrand 2014) and encourage them to conceive of what is involved. For example, should a journalist be a neutral observer, "an outsider to the inner-workings of community life", or a participant who works with elements of the community while mindful of their agendas? (Deuze 2017, p. 321). Inevitably, the development and discovery of critical reflection, reflexivity, a critical voice and a sense of what being a journalist is would need to be encouraged and embraced (Kronstad 2016; de Burgh 2003; Fowler-Watt 2014). If journalism could be seen as a "state of mind rather than a closed shop", perhaps the storytellers of the future could better converse within an open web and "shape a new journalism for a new age" (Viner 2013).

The pedagogic fostering of journalistic self-awareness may thus help negotiate the

‘specialist’ and siloed foci upon skills and theory while equipping students with the means to forge journalism’s future. Indeed, the academy’s exported, aspiring journalists will need to make better sense of stories emerging from the journalistic ether; they may need to grasp how they have arisen, how they were told and how they were retold (Ames 2016). Making sense of the stories of others may demand an interactional, referential knowledge encompassing reflection upon how one’s own story has arisen and where one wants to take it.

Such an approach would appear to offer a more interwoven, enriched and complementary relationship between theory and practice. The binary alternatives – the “fictitious trenches” that Mark Deuze once described (2006, p. 21) – would be negotiated to reach an ontological clearing where thinking *and* doing, reflection *and* action, theory *and* practice were merely parts of one’s whole journalistic sense of ‘being’ and ‘becoming’ a journalist.

Essentially, then, the literature led this thesis towards an examination of what journalism education might need to become amid industry’s becoming. The value of an enhanced understanding of students’ being and becoming and those encounters that work to encourage such understanding rose to the fore (Barnett 2009; Jarvis 2012). I wished to explore ‘becoming’ a journalist rather than ‘having’ journalism knowledge (Jarvis 2012). Indeed, could journalism education incorporate an approach to personal and social development which might “engage the whole person: what they know, how they act, and what they are”? (Dall’Alba and Barnacle 2007, p. 689). Could journalism education facilitate a transforming of one’s being into “a new self”? (Barnett 2009, p. 435; Illeris 2014)

Yet it’s not simply students who might benefit from making sense of themselves in their becoming journeys. The literature suggests teachers may also require an enhanced self-understanding and awareness of their relationship with students, the

world of academia and, not least, the world of journalism from where they have travelled. Like the caring nurse keen to enter the “sphere of the interhuman” with a patient, the self-aware teacher might then be similarly able to offer a “true presence”, one featuring the ability to be “authentic and attentive to moment-to-moment changes in meaning for the person” (Parse 1990, p. 139).

Understanding students and being truly present for them may thus first require teachers to understand themselves. Indeed, while a new journalism “powered by feeling” was once called for (Hentoff 1974, p. 52), a new journalism education might today be envisaged in which teachers strive to understand respective journalistic feelings and standpoints. We now turn to those feelings and perspectives possessed by academia’s new recruits.

Strangers in the strange land of journalism education: former journalists

Enter the hackademics

Increasing numbers of former journalists have arrived at the shores of journalism education in recent years, many disembarking in later life (Harcup 2011b; Greenberg 2007). Their passport is even stamped upon arrival with a special name, one that in effect signifies a new way of life: ‘Hackademic’. It’s a name whose provenance cannot be ascertained (Harcup 2011b) but it may have been first used by Matthew Engel who, in 2003, described “the growing number of hackademics (no offence) who flit between newsroom and lecture hall” (2003, p. 61). On the one hand, the name might reflect the transformative, aspirational nature of the journey across the strait separating the academy from industry. On the other, the somewhat clumsy melding of the self-deprecating ‘hack’ with a scholarly ‘academic’ perhaps better reflects the unsure footing of a stranger setting forth in a strange world. A certain insecurity, even

inferiority might be suggested; it's a term evoking the contrast between a 1700 definition of a hack as "a poor writer, a mere scribbler" and an Oxford or Cambridge 'don' (Hunter 2012, p. iii); according to John Carey, "the most obnoxious thing" about dons was their "upperishness" (Carey 1975, p. 12).

Newcomers to the academy arrived weary of industry pressures that had undercut professional standards; tired of market limitations, "the routine exodus" into book writing and teaching offered opportunities to raise their game (Greenberg 2007, p. 293). In academia, they entered an in-between world, a hybrid of journalism and education where they joined fellow hackademics populating a 'hackademy' (Harcup 2011b).

The challenges of acclimatisation drew attention to a clash of cultures. The former journalists had to "rapidly learn how to survive in Higher Education" (Frost 2012, p. 109) and be aware that they might talk about journalism in different ways to academics. While hackademics employed tacit knowledge embodied in custom, habits and metaphors, this was not necessarily respected by academics even if these ways were true to experience; scholars, argued Barbie Zelizer, existed in their "own interpretive communities that have produced distinctive definitional sets by which journalism can be identified" (2004, p. 32). Meanwhile, hackademics became "increasingly tugged between their professional orientation to the media crafts and their academic identities" (Reese and Cohen 2000, p. 215). Awareness of a "difficult double standard" could result: "That they should teach what is right, but also teach what is actually done. Honesty to the student requires that they be made aware that while there is a right way to do things, they might well be asked to do something different in the newsroom" (Frost 2012, p. 112). The newcomers could even end up "fighting on two fronts", according to Susan Greenberg; indeed, they renewed

contact with industry to make the case for more contextual study and at the same time argued with theory-based colleagues for more practical content (2007, p. 292).

Some hackademics concluded theory demoralised students, while others found distaste in “the apparently hostile tone adopted in much current theoretical writing about practice” (Greenberg 2007, p. 294). Indeed, the placing of their world under the scholarship microscope caused unease. Hackademics might feel they had entered a “parallel universe” where nothing reflected the journalistic world they had left (Zelizer 2004, p. 2); over the years “an intense animus” developed on both sides (Greenberg 2007, p. 292). As high work and administrative loads presented obstacles to hackademics becoming researchers themselves, these ranks of the “research battle weary” (Bromley 2014, p. 4) also feared “scornful disdain” (Frost 2017, p. 209). In addition, they might harbour perceptions of snobbish and elitist attitudes among academic colleagues, fuelled by what was seen as impenetrable jargon or “gobbledabollocks” (Harcup 2011b, p. 44). Tony Harcup suggested a beginner’s guide to “university-speak and to academic research methods” would be useful to the “strangers in a strange land” (2012, p. 89). In the meantime, they “routinely” viewed themselves as “outsiders”, as “motley crews”, “as victims of the academization process that they have striven to resist” (Bromley 2014, p. 5/9). While scholars negotiated the demands of research, hackademics viewed accreditation as a way to improve their status within the academy and reinforce the skills they felt were underrated by academic colleagues (Phillips 2005).

Handling hackademic baggage

Hackademics were required immigrants from foreign lands. Indeed, following on from the earlier discussion, they helped prepare the academy’s chief export to industry – the future journalists it needed. A balance of industry-education trade could thus be sought

with the help of the newcomers who had inhabited the lands of both business partners. The possessions hackademics brought – their expertise, knowledge and skills – were therefore most welcome. Yet the literature draws attention to other contents they carried ashore which shaped this thesis in important ways.

It should be made clear that hackademics and academics have long sought to challenge and critique previous practice in order to encourage and produce “a more engaged and thoughtful potential journalist” (Reardon 2016, p. 940). Yet, for all the hackademics’ enthusiasm, their appointment could meet with bewilderment. Robert Picard offered this assessment:

“Why would anyone think that hiring someone from a decaying news organization, steeped in old ways of doing things, is an effective way to create the journalists and news organizations for the future? Few former journalists who have spent the past twenty or thirty years working for a large firm have the outlook, attitudes, and skills needed now. Although many are able to convey effectively the basic skills used in gathering and producing news, most are not able to provide the skills necessary for new forms of information gathering and dissemination, data handling, data visualization, and journalistic entrepreneurship” (2015, p. 8).

Moreover, the practitioner strangers might still believe that “the status quo in the industry is the ideal one” and, hence, newcomers need only internalise what senior staff already did (Deuze 2006, p. 21); indeed, Wolfgang Donsbach observed all journalists acquired subjective tradition (pursuing individual goals), public service tradition (supplying valid information) and commercial tradition (economic interest of owner) from available role models which “left their mark in the self-identification and role perception of journalists” (2010, pp. 40-41). Meanwhile, however, “university administrators and faculty” could be found pointing towards “the academic way”, which lead them to question the “intellectual validity of adding vocational training to an otherwise largely ‘theoretical’ program of study” (Deuze 2006, p. 21).

Hackademics were accused of having an “agenda”, one “oriented towards correct action, guided by feedback and characterized by an unquestioning approach to set

rules” (Chapman and Papatheodorou 2004). Though the widespread implementation of this agenda was disputed (Greenberg 2007), Mark Deuze nonetheless issued a global “call to arms” in 2006, which was “not in the least motivated by the fact that journalism education as a socialising agent is becoming increasingly powerful in today's media” (p. 31). An accusatory finger appeared to point to the “aging hackademics” preoccupied with following traditions learned and understood by themselves; they were suspected of using the language of the past, reinforcing the invisible barriers between media disciplines and “forgetting that above all journalism relies on creativity and imagination as much as it does on technical knowledge and craft” (Falk and Rajasekar 2017, p. 60; Evans 2014). Moreover, Roy Hanney warned that what was transferred to education might constitute a recontextualised, imagined activity which was thought to be authentic and mirror original practice but in fact did not; nonetheless, practitioners’ expectations might remain unrealistic leaving students to unconsciously muddle through with no reflection and faked performance (Hanney 2016).

Media professionals might also recommend educational improvements involving the hiring of more professionals, further ensuring students were socialised into the expectations, norms and traditions expected of them upon arrival in industry (Mensing 2010; 2011). In calling for a culture of inquiry in journalism schools to counter socialisation, Donica Mensing had pre-empted Picard’s comments above by earlier warning:

“Rather than reinforcing the patterns of the past, journalism educators could work more deliberately to challenge students to understand how to improve their own work in this new environment, rather than imitate what has gone before. ‘Best practices’ of the previous generation may not be effective guides to the future” (2010, p. 515).

Data journalism was used as an example. It was journalism but “not as many journalism educators have known it” (Hewett 2016, p. 133). Indeed, while

practitioners often came from the land of print, their students inhabited a free, accessible online world in which more than half had never read a local paper (Mair 2016). Jonathan Baker remarked in 2016 that many journalists “and perhaps some of the people who train their successors”, were still only beginning to “love digital” (2016, p. 9). Baker wondered whether new journalism “was a young man’s game”, one that “remains opaque to an older generation whose career-long certainties – with their jobs – are disappearing fast” (p. 9). He urged those responsible for training to adapt as well, to provide digital skills which may be “alien to some of those doing the teaching, yet familiar and natural to those being taught” (2016, p. 11).

However, a US study suggested young journalists already held the cards. Interns had become “less the taught and more the teacher”; while they possessed “an assumed generational advantage” with technological knowledge and social network familiarity, professionals “cast interns as sources from whom they themselves could learn” (Thornton 2011, p. 134). Angela Phillips believed accreditation bodies could help in this respect. Practitioners coming to the end of their careers might be acquainted with industry norms but lack the feel for where it is was going; while industry bodies could organise innovative symposiums for educators, she asked if they were interested in helping media educators – “or only in controlling them?” (2005, p. 241).

Summary reflections

An inquiry into how students become journalists would thus appear to require explication of practitioners’ pasts, how they conceived of becoming journalists, and how they impact upon their aspiring students. If, as the literature suggests, becoming a journalist today requires awareness of one’s own place within a journalistic world of socio-technical and cultural change, the socialised and pervading norms

emanating from within academia cannot be simply ignored. Reflective practitioners instead become tasked with investigating and understanding the socialising tendencies permeating their own practice. Amid academia's perceived strangeness, the new practitioner must seek such direction from within: a practitioner's own sense of being and becoming a journalist emerges as a necessary prerequisite to any institutional ambition to move beyond the restrictive compartmentalisations of skills and theory. Indeed, it's otherwise difficult to envisage how a holistic and ontological pedagogy focused upon being and becoming a journalist would be possible.

Strangers in the strange land of journalism: students

Becoming a journalist: preliminary thoughts

The literature has thus far suggested that becoming a journalist today requires understanding and awareness of one's perceived journalistic situatedness amid a changing socio-technical landscape exposed to the socialising winds of industry and education. I next commenced literary exploration of what a resulting personal sense of 'being' and 'becoming' a journalist might entail for students.

While 'identity' has become a battleground for debate concerning the personal projects of individuals and the society that disciplines and regulates them (Wetherell 2010; Elliott 2001; Erikson 1968; Marcia 1966; Schwartz 2001; Bourdieu 1984; Bourdieu 1990), Richard Jenkins (2014) sought to steer the agency-structure debate, the individual and the collective, "out of its present doldrums" (p. 171). He considers identity not as a 'thing' to be 'had', not as something that simply 'is', but rather as a process of identification. Identity was afforded movement. One's identities – "who we are is always multi-dimensional" – are never settled (Jenkins 2014, p. 18). A journalist's 'professional identity', which has been approached both as a set of values

and as elements of practice, can, for example, exhibit temporal and spatial flexibility and negotiation (Sherwood and O'Donnell 2018; Grubenmann and Meckel 2017).

For Jenkins, “identity can only be understood as a process of ‘being’ or ‘becoming’” (2014 p. 18). While becoming has been considered “a transient, ephemeral and emergent reality” rather than a static state of being (Chia 1995, p. 580), identity may codify, order and “hem in”, potentially ensuring the “possibility of creative flight and expansive new perspective evaporates” (Wetherell 2010, p. 23). Identity might thus serve to close down becoming’s emphasis on temporal direction, implicit directedness, transformation over time and a movement from “one state of being to another”, one implying progression toward (Barnacle 2005, p. 179). The process of becoming would thus appear to offer insights into more active, fluid and transformative considerations of the individualisation-socialisation dynamic.

The process of ‘becoming’ was granted additional conceptualisation by Ronald Barnett’s notion of “epistemic becoming” (2009, p. 435). He envisaged a student’s knowing endeavours bringing forth a process of becoming, reflecting the “extraordinary and intimate relationship between knowing and becoming” (2009, p. 435). Peter Jarvis also notes how “in learning we experience the process of becoming” (2009, p. 29). Moreover, “we become changed persons” through learning: “Emotions are transformed, my beliefs are affected and so are many attitudes, values and so on” (Jarvis 2009, p. 29; Illeris 2014). Indeed, while emotion can be viewed as “culturally delineated types of feeling or affects” (Thoits 1989, p. 318), it is a key determinant of learning, allowing tensions and contradictions between personal, internal frameworks and external context to manifest themselves (Boud and Miller 1996). Becoming, it thus appears, concerns a fluid, emotional process of self-change emanating from the pursuit of knowledge.

These studies, in linking educational experience, learning and emotion to ‘changed persons’, helped deepen deliberation upon the learning-socialisation relationship and its potential influence on becoming. Indeed, the skills-theory schism polarising journalism education is offered a distinctly ontological and holistic dimension. If students are required to make sense of what being a journalist is, educators should be aware of becoming’s relationship with learning and, therefore, the socialised traditions of journalism that they may knowingly or unwittingly impart.

Exploring becoming: an initial discussion of its potential ‘conditions’

Becoming a journalist would appear to entail judgement. It could be seen to involve the “qualitative distinctions” we make – the thinking, feeling and judging that suggests a particular sense or action or “mode of life” is fuller, purer, deeper and more admirable; these ends have a “special status” commanding our awe, respect or admiration (Taylor 1989, pp. 19-20). According to Taylor, we determine what is good and valuable, what is endorsed or opposed and what ought to be done from within a “framework” where a stand can be taken (1989, p. 19). Yet the literature suggests fulfilment of a desired becoming is conditional; it might entail personal framework negotiation or assimilation of conditions deemed pertinent to that becoming process.

Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of habitus offers a touchstone to these potential accommodations by affording greater clarity to what has thus far been termed ‘socialisation’. While habitus is produced by socialisation (Meyen and Riesmeyer 2012), it is also described as “a socialised subjectivity” (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p. 126), a “system of dispositions” and “the result of an organising action” which designates “a way of being, a habitual state” and “in particular a predisposition, tendency, propensity or inclination” (Bourdieu 1977, p. 214). It’s the

“structuring structure” of habitus that is “necessarily internalised and converted into a disposition that generates meaningful practices and meaning-giving perceptions” (Bourdieu 1984, p. 170). The student’s background thus enters the becoming picture. While habitus hypothesises that a long-term process of socialisation results in predispositions, assumptions, judgements and behaviours which occur most importantly in the family, it also takes place “via primary, secondary and professional education” (Benson and Neveu 2005, p. 3).

Becoming a journalist would appear to be conditional upon accommodation of a journalistic habitus within one’s framework. Indeed, “all journalists come with a particular mode of behaviour, values and practices” through which they represent themselves; the content of journalism degrees also suggest “personal characteristics” are important to their professional work (Bossio and Sacco 2017, p. 530; De Burgh 2003). While the habitus of a journalist is shaped by their life course, it is influenced “even more by the position in the journalistic field” (Meyen and Riesmeyer 2012, p. 387). While this field will be further considered in the next chapter, habitus may at this stage be envisaged as shaped by a key socialising field influence: the aforementioned journalistic tradition preserving skills and practices contained in the journalistic field. Habitus, exposed to and shaped by a journalistic field, may be conceived to internalise the influence of tradition – “what is handed down from the past” (Weinsheimer and Marshall 2004, p. xvi).

In turn, journalistic tradition may be seen to cradle journalistic ideology – “a system of beliefs characteristic of a particular group”, its “collection of values, strategies and formal codes characterizing professional journalism and shared most widely by its members” (Deuze 2011, p. 19). Journalistic tradition, tightly embracing journalistic ideology, therefore assists the shaping of habitus: “The way a journalist perceives the world and judges other people, his taste and values, ways of thinking

and acting, his appearance and how he moves his body” (Meyen and Riesmeyer 2012, p. 388). Journalistic habitus and its conversion into dispositions would thus appear to be a condition that facilitates and shapes how students perceive the becoming of their journalistic selves within personal frameworks.

The work of Ronald Barnett develops ‘dispositions’ and ‘qualities’ in epistemological directions. Indeed, they may be called for and engendered during the process of “coming to know” – a process offering “person-forming properties” in a world so complex it is “already replete with manifest interpretations” (2009, p. 435/9). For Barnett, dispositions “provide being” while qualities are described as “the manifestations of dispositions in the world” (2009, p. 433).

Barnett’s ideas were among those drawn upon by Richard Evans to develop a journalistic model of the requirements of a “good journalist” (2014, p. 67). In turn, the Evans’ taxonomy of dispositions and qualities includes some of the “essential qualities” to be found in the *NCTJ Guide for Trainee Journalists*; this guide devotes a chapter to “what you need to be, to learn, to do and have to be the ideal reporter” (Smith 2007a, p. 3).⁷ Evans went on to conclude that universities could ‘make’ journalists; the dispositions and qualities required of good journalists could be developed with the help of professionally qualified tutors and practical, simulated experiences (2014). He claimed being a journalism student would involve being and

⁷ In more detail, Barnett’s overlapping dispositions (a will to learn, a will to engage, a preparedness to listen and explore and a determination to keep going forward) are manifest in qualities including courage, resilience, carefulness, integrity, self-discipline, restraint, respect for others, openness, generosity and authenticity (2009).

Evans’ (2014) journalistic model of the ‘good journalist’ followed reference to NCTJ requirements concerning skills, qualities and knowledge, the personal qualities cited in literature and a pilot study. His resulting dispositions include a willingness to learn and engage, resilience, preparedness to listen, determination to go forward, ethical dispositions and self-efficacy; the latter is understood in this thesis to be belief in one’s capability to “produce given levels of attainment” (Bandura 1997, p. 382).

Evans also distinguished between dispositions and predispositions; the latter may be immutable and include open-mindedness, conscientiousness, intra and extraversion and neuroticism. Evans saw these as underpinning “the internally focussed dispositions such as self-efficacy and determination” (p. 72).

In turn, Evans’ dispositions underpinned externally focussed qualities including curiosity, enterprise, confidence, ethics, tenacity and capacity for innovation. Dispositions and qualities can be developed “through the learning process”, according to Evans (2014, p. 83).

The *NCTJ Guide for Trainee Journalists* meanwhile describes ‘qualities’ that are innate (such as curiosity, courage, and belief), those to be worked on (news consciousness) and those to be acquired such as world and industry knowledge (Smith 2007a, pp. 3-9).

becoming a journalist – “a further developing identity which infuses and is infused by other identities but will be peculiar to their function as a journalist” (Evans 2014, p. 72).

The literary terminology of ‘making’ and developing ‘good journalists’ returns the discussion to habitus and the agency-structure debate; such language may imply a quest for educational and industry socialisation. Indeed, in the preface to the 20th anniversary edition of *Universal Journalist*, described on the cover as the “world’s leading textbook on journalism” and voted the sixth best journalism book in a 2012 *Press Gazette* poll (Turner 2012), author David Randall warmly embraces the journalistic guidance afforded by tradition:

“This book contains all the best advice I learnt or collected in three decades as a journalist. Some of it came direct and uninvited from wise old heads, some from observing classy reporters at work, some from picking their brains, some from books, some from websites and a lot from making mistakes and learning the hard way what was the best, most inventive way to do the job” (2016, p. viii).

For Randall, a graduate’s first job should involve researching, writing stories and a supervisory editor to “point out your failings, teach you things”; yet newcomers heading for major newspaper websites would not be writing very often and unlikely to find “an experienced old hand to tell you how your stories could be improved” (Randall 2016, pp. 17-18). A job failing to involve “daily reporting under expert supervision” is likely to be a “career cul-de-sac”, advises Randall (2016, p. 18). He draws attention to journalistic roles as another potential condition of journalistic self-perception; indeed, writing, interviewing, researching and working independently were considered most important by journalists in a European study that included the UK (Örnebring and Mellado 2018).

Following Evans (2014), Randall also sought to discover what ‘makes’ a good reporter. The ability to write well is “not even the half of it”: “What is needed to succeed as a reporter are the right attitudes and character.” (2016, p. 4). He went on:

“The most important equipment reporters have is that which is carried around between their ears. Some of these attitudes are instinctive, others are learnt quickly, but most are built up through years of experience – by researching and writing, re-researching and writing hundreds and hundreds of stories” (2016, p. 4). Randall’s “classy reporters” possessed determination, cheek, curiosity, enthusiasm and a sense of injustice (2016, p. 13). In the last pages of his extensive tome, Randall effectively summarised the required conditions for “becoming an outstanding journalist”: “Commitment to your own development”, the application of intelligence (the “brainpower” that accompanies technical skills), meticulousness, a “consuming appetite for books”, an obsessive nature and “a good knowledge of journalism’s past” (2016, pp. 277-81). Returning to the theme of journalistic tradition, there appears to be Bourdieusian overtones in the last Randall condition: Bourdieu noted how to have a “feel for the game” was to practically master the future of the game and to “have a sense of the history of the game” (1998b, p. 80).

While scholars have looked at cultural contributions to journalistic socialisation outside of education and prior to industry arrival (Mellado et al., 2013), teaching and newsroom socialisation has been documented across the world as the following examples demonstrate. One, a Danish study, concluded students experience a “double professional socialisation” – one within university and the place where they do work placements (Gravengaard and Rimestad 2016, p. 289); through acquisition of practice-related skills and their underlying values, they learn to “become a competent member ... that is assimilating a professional identity of being a journalist” (p. 289). While a study in Sweden, Poland and Russia concluded education failed to produce journalists “with a more critical attitude than usual within the profession” (Nygren 2016, p. 88), an Australian study concurred that students developed the identity of a journalist via a process of newsroom socialisation

(Shardlow 2009). Four stages were identified through which developing identity was influenced by the accumulation of Bourdieusian “hacker capital”, defined as journalistic status; university acted as a “crucible” that cast professional identity and moulded students towards an alignment with both the career of journalism and the key ideology of journalism (2009, p. 152). Colleen Cotter, offering an American perspective, agreed that professional socialisation began in the classroom and continued with reinforcement in the newsroom. She elaborated upon this process:

“People in the news business learn to report, edit, produce, and think about the news in ways that become habitual and a reflexive part of their everyday actions ... Over time, the ‘ways of speaking’ and writing in the journalistic context become internalized, functioning to formulate a professional identity as much as a news product” (2010, p. 49).

In this respect, a community of practice can potentially be viewed as both a context of becoming a journalist as well as a further condition of it (Wenger 2000). Here, while learning becomes a form of membership involving developing identity (Lave and Wenger 1991), a sense of becoming may conceivably be derived through “impression management”, a show or role conveyed irrespective of personal belief in staged routines (Goffman 1959, p. 116). Indeed, a professional persona might be a way of professional acting which does not fit within one’s personal lifeworld (Rees 2007).

Nonetheless, it’s within the newsroom community that newcomers gain knowledge and a repertoire of habits while internalising values and norms through interaction with “more competent members” (Gravengaard and Rimestad 2016, p. 293). In such communities, language is part of a shared repertoire or resource (Wenger 2000). Indeed, if the self is a “dialogic, a relation” (Holquist 2002, p. 18) and exists within spun “webs of interlocation” (Taylor 1989, p. 36), expertise becomes accomplished and enacted through linguistic, interactional mastery (such as the use of jargon and acronyms) (Carr 2010). While becoming a journalist may thus

be seen to conditionally entail appropriate linguistic interaction, a “communicatively competent member of the news community” arises through acquisition of practice-related skills (learning what makes news and how to report on it) and subsuming the values underlying them – “assimilating a professional identity of reporter” (Cotter 2010, pp. 62-63).

The source of these routinized and potentially socialising conditions of becoming remain difficult to trace due to their informal, diffuse nature. While guidance from or collaboration with more capable peers may enable maturation of the “buds or flowers” of development (Vygotsky 1978, p. 86), the sharing of journalistic stories can “provide a route to good practice” for others if self-indulgence and the retelling of ‘war stories’ is replaced with interrogation and critical reflection (Fowler-Watt 2014, p. 82). Still, intuitive experts may find it difficult to pass on expert knowledge based on a repertoire of experience (Gravengaard and Rimestad 2016). It is instead passed on in tacit, subtle ways and through “persuasive processes” in which organisational objectives became part of one’s self-perception (Donsbach 2004, p. 144; Polanyi 1958). Consequently, the experienced journalist just knows what a good story is; it’s “seemingly a self-evident and self-explaining sense of newsworthiness, the journalistic gut feeling” (Schultz 2007, p. 190). The becoming journalist may thus encounter a mystical process of journalistic osmosis; the journalistic asset of critical reflection, for example, may be acquired tacitly over time “through an intimate relation to specific experiences” (Kronstad 2016, p. 133).

This thesis wishes to explore the experiences that may influence a process of becoming. Certain experiences might give rise to the conditions in which becoming occurs and shed more light on the part played by the classroom and newsroom. Practitioner understanding of becoming’s shaping conditions might, in turn, help facilitate a holistic approach to journalism education entailing the coaxing of

students to better understand the personal distinctions, accommodations, negotiations and assimilations undertaken to secure their sense of becoming a journalist. These insights may help them write journalism's next chapter.

Summary reflections

This literature segment has served to guide preliminary deliberation upon the research questions through commencing investigation into what may shape a student's sense of 'becoming' a journalist. These influences are envisaged as potential 'conditions' shaping a becoming process exposed to socialisation. Indeed, at one level, a condition of skill acquisition may appear ostensibly simple but may be seen to entwine with the role of news values in determining what is written, who is spoken to and how resulting journalism is presented (Cotter 2010). For Tony Harcup, journalism recruits pick up this sense of newsworthiness and "develop their 'nose' for a story" by consuming news and by "picking up prevailing news values from more experienced colleagues" (2015, p. 46). Amid "social control" in the newsroom and the redefining of values to those of the newsroom group (Breed 1955, p. 326), some may even see journalism as a kind of "priesthood": entry involves surrender to the higher calling of serving others and joining the newsroom's "nest of believers" (Rosen 2004). However, as Wolfgang Donsbach suggests, news decisions may also appear to involve balancing the need for social validation of perceptions with the need to preserve and stabilise one's existing predispositions and individual cognitions; indeed, the influence of journalists' predispositions on news values is "well proven" and journalists should be aware of these influences (Donsbach 2004, p. 150).

This thesis aims to examine the journalistic habitus – the "mind of a journalist" (Willis 2010) – and glimpse the personal accommodations and assimilations

undertaken amid the forces of socialising tradition. It also seeks insights into the potential trade-off between liberation and domestication when education is cast as “turning out product which industry consumes” (Usher 2009, p. 174).

A bridge to methodology

If practitioners could better understand the conditional complexities of becoming a journalist, their students might, in turn, be encouraged to understand the conditions shaping their own journalistic evolution. Such self-awareness could help students comprehend the personal challenges entailed and assist navigation of a strange journalistic world where everyone is a journalist and old edifices stand defiantly amid the looming shadows of new skylines. When entering a land prone to socio-technical and cultural jolts, an understanding of one’s journalistic being and becoming in relation to fellow “social actors, technological actants and audiences” may secure a firmer footing (Westlund and Lewis 2017, p. 409). Put simply, newcomers may need to make sense of themselves in the context of their relationship with the journalistic world. Critical reflection and deliberation upon these interplays and socialising tradition might then empower students to innovatively redefine what journalism is and can be. Indeed, journalists may ultimately only be able to responsibly tell meaningful stories if they seek to understand themselves (Fowler-Watt 2016a). Then, as Theodore Glasser points out, they may begin to dig beneath the defensive newsroom clichés and platitudes to expose “the contradictions, tensions and paradoxes that time rationalizes away”; aspiring journalists may reveal how journalism’s self-evident claims “may endure in history and not in nature” (2006, p. 149). Journalistic common sense, expressed “in a culture’s stores of

proverbs and other opportunities for conventional wisdom”, may be questioned (Glasser and Ettema 1989, p. 21).

Thinking, in short, emerges as the “handicraft par excellence” (Heidegger 1968, p. 23). Indeed, the future appears to require “a certain quality of thinking about journalism, a state of preparedness” (Glasser 2006, p. 149). While industry’s newcomers may confront suspicion that the old mainstream order is a purveyor of fake news, journalism’s “mission to inform” is, according to Greenslade, in “real peril” if people believe only what they want to believe (2017). Meanwhile, the power of cognitive bias drives social media content and amplifies report distortion and fabrication (Neumark Jones 2017/18). Aspiring journalists are, therefore, required to think about what they believe, what they believe journalism should be and what their journalistic place should be within it.

Journalism educators keen to offer a relevant educational response must, the literature suggests, reconsider old pedagogic strategies. While the teaching of skills to find and tell stories remains critically important, educators need to “give equal parity to criticality; to encouraging a praxis which provides honest and ethical brokerage of information and analysis; which helps us all to make more sense of the increasingly complex and diverse society in which we live” (Baines and Kelsey 2013, p. 31). Ultimately, educators appear required to help students “free themselves from established powers” so they can define journalism (Cowan 2017/18, p. 16).

An ontological practitioner approach emerges as worthy of investigation, one capable of superseding narrow ‘practical’ and ‘intellectual’ discourses by offering the old dichotomy conciliatory enrichment. A whole person understanding of the conditions shaping the being and becoming of a journalist may be required. Such understanding may help nurture student awareness of their becoming within a

becoming journalistic world. Moreover, this approach may assist students to journalistically become what they want to become within this land of flux.

Yet the literature suggests such practitioner understanding first requires deep immersion into one's socialised past and comprehension of one's own becoming. It is a prerequisite to any pedagogic understanding of student becoming and encouragement of them to pursue their own journeys of becoming discovery. The socialising tendencies of the educator require examination if a "true presence" (Parse 1990, p. 139) with students is desired. This preparatory and practical concern directed the inquiry in a philosophical direction that is now explored in the methodology chapter.

2. Methodology

Introduction

When strangers arrive in a strange land they disembark with invisible baggage amid their possessions. These personal items are the latent, undiscovered preunderstandings that accompany undisclosed biases (Gadamer 2004; 1967). Arriving in academia from industry, I thus possessed “particular intuitive and subjective ways of thinking and practice” that were largely unknown to me (Evans 2014, p. 67).

My methodology was tasked with challenging my socialised condition forged in the past of journalistic tradition. Indeed, a pathway was sought through the thick, impenetrable fog of prejudice that threatened to cloud my understanding of becoming in others. Philosophical hermeneutics (Gadamer 2004; 1976) was explored for this purpose. I sought to examine its potential to illuminate the “historicity of our being” (Gadamer 2004, p. 259) and its capacity to activate my prejudices and enable them to be the accessing tools of meaningful understandings. In so doing, fresh, interpretive insights might be afforded into what being a journalist means today; in turn, such insights might suggest new exploratory directions for journalism education.¹

What follows is a depiction of my hermeneutic journey and, as a consequence, a philosophical definition of the ‘becoming’ discussed thus far. Indeed, the notion of *Journalistic Becoming* will be introduced. The journey features departure from

¹ This thesis will shortly discuss ‘prejudice’ and the ‘tradition’ that shapes it in more detail. Guided by Gadamer, ‘prejudice’ encapsulates the preunderstandings, fore-meanings and prejudgements that provide one with a standpoint; it is afforded by “ongoing history and tradition which already bequeaths to us assumptions and expectations about what we are trying to understand” (Warnke 2002, p. 95). Indeed, “text is always approached from somewhere” and Gadamer calls that ‘somewhere’ tradition; the arising anticipations are designated ‘prejudices’ (Smith 1997, p. 26). Gadamer’s ‘prejudices’ are thus the “inherited notions derived from one’s culture” (Crotty 1998, p. 102); we are “part of thick traditions and conditioned by the inevitable parochial character of our historical situation” (Warnke 2002, p. 95).

Edmund Husserl's bracketed phenomenology to the haven of Hans-Georg Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics; from description of objects of experience to understanding as a condition of being; from conceptual extension of understanding as interpretation to self-understanding as self-interpretation; and then a final step from 'becoming' conceived as the endlessness of self-interpretation to a definition of processual *Journalistic Becoming*.

After introducing the researcher and participants, the chapter then goes on to present a three stage preparatory approach to the study of *Journalistic Becoming* through development of Gadamerian concepts. With confrontation between the familiar and the unfamiliar at the heart of this thesis, Gadamer's interpretive requirements of a 'historically effected consciousness' and his conception of 'fused horizons' (Gadamer 2004) are refashioned. It's duly proposed that my *Journalistically Effected Consciousness* – an awareness of my own historical conditioning and relationship with journalistic tradition – required study to facilitate shared meaning and fusion of my own understandings, interpretations and perspectives with those of another. The hermeneutic circle is also introduced. I explain how the broadening of the circle of understanding reflected my ever-enhanced projections, accommodations and interpretations of a research participant's *Journalistic Becoming* horizon – a horizon depicting their journalistic self-interpretation and shaped by becoming 'conditions'. I wished to glimpse these self-interpretations and conditions in order to consider their pedagogic value in helping students better comprehend their becoming journalistic selves. A four-movement Reflective Hermeneutic Model was designed to obtain these insights through stirring and utilising my prejudices to obtain understanding. The chapter concludes with the Model primed for hermeneutic deployment in research interviews with ten former Bournemouth University journalism students.

World views: the laying of ontological and epistemological pathways

Establishing bearings

The respective world views of the researcher and the researched lie at the heart of this thesis. While the former students had their own worldly perspectives, the interpretive approach of this thesis required that I similarly disclose how I saw the world: how the lands depicted in Chapter 1 were perceived both ontologically and epistemologically. Only then could a stranger from journalism map an appropriate conceptual path on *terra firma*, one that could more confidently lead to an exploration of ‘becoming’ in the research participants – and myself.

I firstly outline my constructionist ontological position. While culture “persists and antedates the participation of particular people in it”, people were conceived to potentially create, review, negotiate and remake culture continuously (Becker 1982, p. 101; Strauss et al. 1973). We may be “thrown” into a pre-existent world of people, culture and objects ready to use (Heidegger 1962, p. 174; Smith et al. 2009), yet journalism culture was not dismissed as an inert objective reality that simply possesses and imposes constraint. If, for example, language is our “historical fate” (Linge 1976, p. lv) – “the reservoir of tradition and the medium in and through which we exist and perceive our world” (Gadamer 1967, p. 29) – I consider our linguistic and relational constructs of journalistic tradition might always be in the process of being formed.

Within this world, the ‘self’ is entertained as an ongoing, relational and interactional social construction and accomplishment (Gergen 2011; Mead 1934; Taylor 1985). Heidegger held we must abandon the idea of an abstract, autonomous and finishable self that contains a hidden essence; we are rather entirely contingent socio-historical constructions (Garrison 1998) and the self does not exist

independently of worldly immersion and experiential flow (Escudero 2014). His was an existential response to Edmund Husserl's transcendentalism (Garrison 1998). Husserl, in his exploration of consciousness, had discovered a "transcendental ego" (1973, p. 26; Hanna et al. 2017) that constituted the meaning of all objects including self-identity (Garrison 1998); this "pure ego" had no "explicable content" and was "indescribable in and for itself" (Husserl 1982, p. 191). Heidegger, however, stressed we are constructed by historical cultural practices that are never fully explicit.

Our constructed sense of self has been seen as a "tragic mistake" that has led to alienating perceptions of separateness to others and suffering (Stew 2016, p. 2). In this view, illusionary constructions of self and identity constitute a delusional and fictitious narrative scripted by the mind; awareness in which thoughts and feelings arise and pass away is what we really are (Stew 2016). Nonetheless, "we have to create ourselves as a work of art" according to Foucault since the self is "not given to us" (1983, p. 237). Yet while Foucault considered "it's all against all" and "we all fight each other" (1980, p. 208), Garrison countered notions of an autonomous, detached and "selfish-creation" by insisting "you can create yourself only if you create others, and you can create others only if you create yourself" (1998, p. 122).

This thesis sought to explore the constructions of self that we make. As will be seen, my endeavours led to a hermeneutic proposition that human beings possess a kind of evolving self-comprehension entailing open-ended construction. Indeed, while Jenkins (2014) saw the self as an individual's reflexive sense of a particular identity constituted *vis à vis* others in terms of identification, this thesis will offer another view of a fluid self-construct – one derived from ongoing self-interpretation. I will shortly explain this process as one of 'becoming'. If identity "is our understanding of who we are and who other people are" (Jenkins 2014, p. 19), our constructs that constitute

‘becoming’ may help further illuminate identity’s evolutionary nature. Indeed, within the relational, socially constructed world depicted here, I wanted to investigate how journalists (and journalism) might undergo reconstruction, refashioning and reinterpretation through historically and culturally situated social practices.

So while Heidegger’s inescapable, temporal structure of “being in the world” was envisaged, so too was his conceived enactment of possibilities within it and the projection of future being (1962, p. 78; Taylor 1989). Indeed, while Heidegger’s Dasein – human being – “always has understood itself and always will understand itself in terms of possibilities” (1962, p. 185), the non-conformist “authentic self” (1962, p. 167) was “true to one’s own self, to be one’s own person, to do one’s own thing” (Inwood, 1997, p. 26). Authentic Dasein chose to choose itself and its own way in the world, pushing forward into its possibilities which it alone had the potential to enact. We have hopes and dreams and cocreate possibilities with others (Parse 1998).

Nonetheless, I accepted circumstances place restrictions. Heidegger’s Dasein is encumbered with “facticity” (1962, p. 236) – contingent features of itself and its situation that are not of its doing; Dasein is always already in a situation that determines the possibilities available to it. (Inwood 1997). So while open to possibilities, Dasein had none uniquely its own (Garrison 1998). It was inclined to “fall back upon its world”, “interpret itself in terms of that world” and fall prey “to the tradition of which it has more or less explicitly taken hold”; this tradition kept Dasein from “providing its own guidance, whether in inquiring or in choosing” (Heidegger 1962, p. 42). Freedom, then, was derived from the relationship between Dasein’s choices and the constraints that shape Dasein’s possibilities (Magrini 2006). An inquiry into becoming a journalist thus appeared to entail investigation of the parameters of journalistic potential, journalistic self-construction and journalistic

possibility. It would nonetheless be an inquiry into the self-constructions afforded by seeking – even if the seeker self was no more than a creation of thought and the product of conditioning and education (Stew 2016).

This clearing can now be widened to accommodate the epistemological persuasion of this thesis. This research was distanced from logical empiricism and conceptions of knowledge as the ‘correct’ representation of an independent reality; the rational reconstruction of scientific knowledge instead deferred to social, cultural and historical dimensions of understanding (Schwandt 2003). Practical, negotiated meaning making that reveals a shared and constructed nature of social reality defies the reducing of the world to an “oppressive uniformity through the imposition of scientific categories” (Scott and Usher 2011, p. 29); in so doing, the rarity of total agreement was accepted, as was the influence of power dynamics upon these socially constructed realities (Pring 2010; Cohen et al. 2007). The interpretive tradition of *Verstehen* (Weber 1947) – one advocating ‘understanding’ rather than ‘explanation’ (*Erklaren*) – thus offered an appropriate epistemological direction for this research by looking for “culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world” (Crotty 1998, p. 67).

Yet further philosophical and methodological obstacles required negotiation before exploration of becoming a journalist could commence. These deliberations paved a path to philosophical hermeneutics; that journey is now charted en route to a definition of *Journalistic Becoming*.

Determining an interpretivist direction

While interpretivism is differently represented and has historically appeared in many guises (Schwandt 2003; Crotty 1998), dealing with the influence of the inherited past

becomes central to such approaches. Indeed, the interpretivist tradition can be aligned both “for culture and against culture” (Crotty 1998, p. 72). Firmly positioned in the ‘for’ camp is symbolic interactionism and its warm embrace of worldly exploration and relational, community belonging; while conceiving of cultural understanding as a meaningful life guide matrix, it advocates the putting of oneself in the place of others, to see the situation as the actor saw it and to adopt and see their standpoint (Crotty 1998; Mead 1934). Conversely, phenomenology, the philosophical approach to the study of experience, adopted a suspicion of what it saw as “tyrannous” cultural forces deemed to impose understanding (Crotty 1998, p. 86); culture “shuts us off from an abundant font of untapped significance” and is at once liberating and limiting, setting us free while setting boundaries (Crotty 1998, p. 71/81).

Phenomenology required the inquirer to place usual understandings and habits of thought in abeyance to access such knowledge; one may then see anew, to “learn the unmotivated upsurge of the world” by breaking with our “familiar acceptance” of it (Merleau-Ponty 1962, p. xv). It was the objects of experience that were sought “rather than being content with a description of the experiencing subject” (Crotty 1998, p. 83). Since language and culture was necessarily drawn upon to describe what came into view, a reinterpretation – new meaning or renewed meaning – became the endgame (Crotty 1998).

For Edmund Husserl – “the acknowledged founder of phenomenology” (Crotty 1998, p. 73) – the task at hand entailed understanding one’s own experiences through the adoption of a reflexive ‘phenomenological’ rather than everyday ‘natural’ attitude; it required looking at all objects from the perspective of consciousness – how they are experienced regardless of whether they actually are the way they are being experienced (Giorgi 2009). A phenomenological method could then access “the things

themselves” (Husserl 2001, p. 88) – the experiential content of consciousness – and identify the core structures, features and qualities of experience. This involved ‘bracketing’ out the taken-for-granted world – “the world as it simply exists” – to enable concentration on one’s perception of that world, “the world as given in consciousness (perceived, remembered, judged, thought, valued etc)” (Husserl 1927, p. 80). Bracketing was not doubting the existence of things or denial; it was rather disconnection and suspension (Koch 1995). Using a series of different lenses – “the method of phenomenological reduction” (Husserl 1927, p. 80) – one might then be tempted away from distracting and misdirecting assumptions and preconceptions and back towards the essence of an experience of a phenomenon (Smith et al. 2009).

Husserl’s phenomenological method offered a new science of being and disclosure; it was a realm of being boasting absolute certainty and unassailable truths with which to form a basis for the reform of understanding (Ashworth 1999). With conscious awareness the starting point for gleaning knowledge of reality, one could describe particular realities by coming face to face with the structures or essences that made objects or experiences identifiable and unique from others; it was a mechanistic view of the person where meanings could be reconstituted by allowing data to speak for itself (Lavery 2003). This, to recap, was a search for objects of experience rather than being content with a description of the experiencing subject; it was a first-person exercise in critique that called into question what one takes for granted (Crotty 1988).

For Merleau-Ponty, Husserl promised a blossoming phenomenological paradise. While the breaking of inherited preunderstandings “awakens a wild-flowering world and mind”, a “renewal of the world” was accompanied by the “mind’s renewal, a rediscovery of that brute mind which, untamed by any culture, is asked to create culture anew” (1964, p. 181). His existential interpretation of Husserlian bracketing

referred not to a turning away from the world but to a resolve to set aside presuppositions in order to reveal “engaged, lived experience” (Ashworth 1999, p. 708). In their Husserlian mediation, Peter Berger and Roger Luckmann hailed a “purely descriptive method” as “best suited” to clarify the foundations of knowledge; description of the common sense interpretations of everyday reality could ensue “within phenomenological brackets” (1966, p. 34). Today, phenomenology is “generally seen as a study of people’s subjective and everyday experiences”; moreover, in the attempt to understand and describe these experiences, “there is much talk of putting oneself in the place of the other” – a notion central to symbolic interactionism as noted earlier (Crotty 1988, pp. 83-4).

My research resisted methodological inclinations to bracket and objectify; to reproduce or relive an author’s intuition; to recreate another’s intent; or, as Schleiermacher famously advocated, to “understand the writer better than he understands himself” (1998, p. 228). So while Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) may be “avowedly interpretative” (Smith et al. 2009, p. 200), I was aware of its indebtedness to Schleiermacher: there was an assumption of a reasonably direct link between what a research participant said and what he or she actually meant, felt or intended (Tomkins and Eatough 2018). Moreover, I pondered whether an interpreter could feel their way into a participant’s experience and explore at something approaching first hand the connections between words and intent (Tomkins and Eatough 2018). In addition, I approached with caution IPA’s adoption of bracketing, even if in “a more enlivened form” (Smith et al. 2009, p. 25). I had no wish to leave my historical and biographical constructs at the door of the lifeworld – to put the “world in brackets” (Husserl 1927, p. 80) – and no desire to obtain descriptions of phenomena structures. While Giorgi advocated transition from the natural “attitude

of everyday life, the attitude one displays in the everyday world” to the bracketed requirements of a phenomenological attitude (2009, p. 87), the feasibility of effectively doing so – even “for a period of time” (Fry et al. 2017, p. 8) – gave way to quite different thoughts. Though such a phenomenological task may not be impossible (Giorgi 2009), I was instead drawn to the attitudinally unknown that might defiantly challenge isolation despite meditative reflection. Furthermore, I increasingly questioned the actual desirability of attempting to suspend these prejudicial judgements and preconceptions. A fork in the road thus appeared and a path to a different philosophical heritage was taken.

The route to philosophical hermeneutics

Rather than attempt a recovery of the past or recreate a participant’s experiences, Gadamer (2004) advocated a mediation or dialogue between our sense of ourselves and our sense of a text’s author and their worldview. I was consequently drawn to both acknowledging and connecting difference in researcher-researched perspectives. So rather than put aside a past that threatened to tempt “comfortable interpretations” (Giorgi 2009, p. 92), I pursued an attitudinal impulse to provocatively identify such cosy, prejudicial constructions and use them to explore their potential to access shared meaning. Accepting I would be inherently implicated in meaning-making, I wanted to constantly question the prejudicial agendas that lurked within and trace their source; I wanted to drag up the past rather than bury it during ongoing experience.

Following Gadamer (2004), I wished to explore the notion that understanding and knowledge creation required the testing and distinguishing of productive prejudices to help me reach out to my participants. Therefore, the “extinction of one’s self” (Gadamer 2004, p. 271) and temporary disengagement of prejudice was not the goal.

For Gadamer, indeed, it was “neither possible, necessary or desirable that we put ourselves within brackets” (1979, p. 152). Encounters could instead be preceded by the foregrounding and appropriation of the researcher’s preunderstandings, “imperceptible habits of thought” and historical and traditional prejudices (Gadamer 2004, p. 269; Heidegger 1962; Lowes and Prowse 2001). For Gadamer, what tradition said was not “something alien” but something that entered all understanding (2004, p. 283). Far from being a “lifeless mass” (Gallagher 1992, p. 86), tradition is “always part of us” and we live in the lifeworld as “historical creatures” (Gadamer 2004, p. 283/239); while we live through tradition, stepping outside of it would be like “trying to step outside of our own skins” (Gallagher 1992, pp. 86-87). The prejudices implanted by tradition were duly rehabilitated by Gadamer and no longer necessarily seen as “unjustified and erroneous” (1966, p. 9); they were deemed constitutive of what we are and required discovery even if such a project defied completion (Bernstein 1983).

This research, then, moved from an attempt to step into someone else’s skin to acknowledgement that it was impossible to shed my own. Consequently, I was drawn to hermeneutics, “the theory or art of explication, of interpretation” (Gadamer 1981, p. 88); I sought to offer interpretation of my participants’ becomings rather than attempt to descriptively recreate these experiences through bracketed access to their essences. Indeed, I followed Heidegger’s lead that “the meaning of phenomenological description as a method lies in interpretation” (1962, p. 61). While comparison between Giorgi’s Husserlian and descriptive approach and IPA’s interpretive, hermeneutic orientation is best seen as a difference in emphasis (Tomkins and Eatough 2013b), this thesis in turn represents an enhanced accentuation of the hermeneutic focus. In moving from the epistemological to the ontological, it exposes and centres

the researcher as an explorer seeking interpretation through reflection, reflexivity and interpersonal dynamics; indeed, hermeneutics has a reflexive dimension at its heart (Fawkes 2012) and sensitivity to my contextual presence was explicitly sustained and utilized throughout the participant encounters rather than bracketed at any point.² Uncertain terrain thus lay ahead; great care would be particularly required in my approach to “the swamp of interminable self-analysis and self-disclosure” (Finlay 2002, p. 212; MacMillan 1996).

Gadamer was my chosen guide. I duly took his counsel to depart from the interpretive but objectivist hermeneutics of his ‘scientific’ forbears who attempted to disentangle themselves from history via methodological alienation. Indeed, Gadamer’s casting of understanding as an ontological condition where the knower’s own present situation was already involved in the understanding process (Linge 1976) had pertinent, personal resonance. I wanted to explore how my hidden and potentially burdensome baggage could, in fact, be unpacked to enable understanding of the becoming of others.

The methodological crossroads of Gadamerian philosophical hermeneutics had now been reached. The task ahead was to coax its ontological focus to reveal a new pathway forward – one leading to a definition of *Journalistic Becoming* and a means of utilising myself and my prejudices to understand it. My quest, I hoped, would result in a pedagogic understanding of *Journalistic Becoming* that might assist the encouragement of students to contemplate what shapes and constitutes their becoming endeavours; they might then better envisage their shaping of industry’s becoming.

² Reflexivity is viewed in this thesis as a deep level of reflection (Moon 2004). For Gadamer (1967), a particular kind of reflection was required for hermeneutics and this will be discussed shortly.

Charting a philosophical hermeneutics course to *Journalistic Becoming*

Philosophical hermeneutics: from understanding to interpretation

While Gadamer saw language as “the universal medium in which understanding occurs” (2004, p. 390), philosophical hermeneutics deemed understanding was itself a “very condition of being human” (Schwandt 2003, p. 301). Indeed, if the human condition is fundamentally one of ontological insecurity, the drive to understand is a basic feature of being alive if we are born with no certainties other than death (Matheson 2009). Rather than viewed as the objective Husserlian operation of consciousness, understanding was thus “itself a mode of the event of being” (Gadamer 1962, pp. 49-50). While Heidegger saw understanding as not a way we know the world but the way we are (Lavery 2003), Merleau-Ponty emphasized our embodied, perceived and perspectival relationship in which worldly knowledge “is gained from my own particular point of view” (1962, p. ix).

Gadamer offered two important elaborations for the purposes of this research. Firstly, in the “last analysis”, he concluded “all understanding is self-understanding” (1962, p. 55). Indeed, understanding can only take place within the interpreter’s own hermeneutic horizon of significance (Tomkins and Eatough 2018). Yet this was not self-understanding “finally and definitively achieved” (Gadamer 1962, p. 57). While self-understanding only realises itself in the understanding of subject matter, the self “happens” (Gadamer 1962, p. 55) when it plays ongoing linguistic games with others; it’s dialogue that creates “the free buoyancy of an elevation above oneself” (1962, p. 55), an elevation experienced as “an enrichment of our self” (1962, p. 57). Gadamer depicts a constant language game of giving and taking during which conversationally-afforded self-understanding occurs through self-other relations.

Secondly, Gadamer forged understanding with interpretation. While Heidegger claimed the process of interpretation was an essential characteristic of Dasein (Linge 1976), Gadamer deemed “all understanding is interpretation” (2004, p. 390). Following his aforementioned guidance that all understanding is self-understanding (1962), a corollary can now be offered: one’s self-understanding is an interpretation, a self-interpretation realised in the understanding of subject matter. Understanding identity as self-interpretation is a basic hermeneutic tradition (Brinkmann 2008). It’s one famously encapsulated by Charles Taylor’s insistence that we are “self-interpreting animals”: “Interpretation of ourselves and our experience is constitutive of what we are” (1985, p. 45/7).³

Clearly, Gadamer’s notion of self-understanding is dynamic. Self-understanding does not appear to transparently and integrally present itself to us. We are rather forever seeking and moving into the unknown to find it and the constructed interpretations of self that accompany it. While immersed and engaged in worldly affairs, we are in a “hermeneutical situation” (Heidegger 1962, p. 275) in which we are compelled to ask questions of ourselves, our situation, “and about who we should be and become in it” (Henriksson and Friesen 2012, p. 2). For Gadamer, we are always understanding and interpreting in light of our anticipatory prejudices and prejudgements which are in turn changing in the course of history (Bernstein 1983). If self-understanding is always “on the way” and its completion is impossible (Gadamer

³ Taylor presents a paradox: How can the self be a self-interpretation unless there is a self prior to interpretation? Baynes (2010) argues that Taylor’s thesis remains radical since ‘self-interpreting animals’ focuses upon the narratives of self we construct without denying there are other ‘selves’ “in the sense of basic psychological capacities that are developmentally prior to and required for the existence of this self” (p. 450). My thesis concurs that the self is, at least in part, constituted through its self-interpretations; our constructed narratives are envisaged arising from Gadamer’s linguistic games and Taylor’s aforementioned “webs of interlocation” (1989, p. 36). Our efforts to understand ourselves “intersect and respond to the interpretations of others, both consciously and unconsciously” (Baynes 2010, p. 452).

1981, p. 103), so too is self-interpretation and language that continually brings us the unspoken possibilities suggested by engagement with tradition (Linge 1976).

All this potentially puts the journalistic being ‘on the way’ through the medium of language where “I and world meet” (Gadamer 2004, p. 469). For Gadamer, it’s discovery of a common language that puts respective participants on the way to change: “The individual perspectives with which they entered upon the discussion have been transformed, and so they are transformed themselves” (1981, p. 110). It was thus conceived that constructions of journalistic self-interpretation necessarily accompany journalistic self-understanding on a restlessly linguistic onwards voyage towards possibilities of journalistic being. Yet we must return to the issue of journalistic agency and socialising tradition commenced in the literature review. What is the nature of being ‘on the way’, of moving towards ‘becoming’ a journalist when tradition conditions interpretations? (Gallagher 1992).

Tradition and freedom in the journalistic field

Gadamer insisted that the self-knowledge discussed thus far required acknowledgement that we are “conditioned by historical circumstances”; then one can come to terms with “historically effected consciousness”, dominant prejudices and “see what manifests itself by their light” (2004, p. 336/354). A fundamental acceptance was demanded:

“History does not belong to us; we belong to it. Long before we understand ourselves through the process of self-examination, we understand ourselves in a self-evident way in the family, society, and state in which we live That is why the prejudices of the individual, far more than his judgments, constitute the historical reality of his being” (2004, p. 278).

Yet what is handed down from the past – tradition – is not taken on automatically; for Gadamer, tradition “confronts us as a task, as an effort of understanding” requiring self-questioning (Weinsheimer and Marshall 2004, p. xvi). In turn, successful understanding offered reward: it meant a “growth in inner awareness”, a new experience that entered the “texture of our own mental experience” (Gadamer 1981, p. 109).

Tradition was conceived in the previous chapter as a shaper and contributory producer of habitus. According to Gadamer, the process of tradition is a living force that is not something external, bygone and dealt with objectively; it rather shapes what we are and operates within us, permeating our experience in a process that governs our interpretations (Gallagher 1992; 1996; Gadamer 2004). Carrying journalistic ideology with it, handed-down journalistic tradition is conceived in this thesis to shape one’s habitus of socialised subjectivity within a “journalistic field” (Bourdieu 1998a, p. 39). Indeed, the field is a “site of actions and reactions performed by social agents endowed with permanent dispositions, partly acquired in their experience of these social fields” (Bourdieu 2005, p. 30). Any explanation of attitudes, behaviours and discourses thus benefit from deliberation upon one’s structural, relational positioning in a field as well as the habitual and historic trajectories by which individuals arrived at that position (Benson and Neveu 2005). While journalists bring “all the (relative) power at their disposal” to a field (Bourdieu 1998a, p. 40), they also “share a system of presuppositions” – the “doxa” – which is inherent in membership of that field (Bourdieu 2005, p. 37). Such tacit presuppositions may be envisaged to include accepted traditional practices and ideology.

Yet a literary or artistic field is also a “field of forces” and a “field of struggles” where competition ensues to valorise the forms of capital one possesses (Bourdieu

1983, p. 312; Benson and Neveu 2005). While economic capital includes circulation and advertising revenue, cultural capital embraces educational credentials, technical expertise, knowledge and artistic and verbal abilities (Bourdieu 2005). Though new agents may transform or conserve the field, Bourdieu suggests inherent dynamism and conflict tends to reproduce field structure unless neighbouring fields (such as media regulation or economic crisis) serve to “distort the whole space” (Bourdieu 2005, p. 43; Benson and Neveu 2005).

Freedom does not emerge as “a property that falls from the sky”, according to Bourdieu; while it depends on positioning in “social games”, journalists are destined to be “caught up in structural processes which exert constraints on them such that their choices are totally preconstained” (2005, pp. 44-45). Habitus can thus be seen as shaped by positioning in a field that obeys “its own laws, its own nomos”, its own traditions and ideology (Bourdieu 2005, p. 33). However, practice theorists entertain possibilities of change. The gap between the rules of every social practice and its performance is filled by the interpretations, contemplations, reflections and consequent actions of individuals choosing a course of action (Ryfe 2018).

Similarly, Gadamer’s world of tradition appears to be in interpretive motion. On the one hand, journalistic actors can be envisaged participating in journalistic tradition rather than attempting to escape from it; indeed, our relationship with tradition operates not only behind our backs but also “out ahead” through the language that carries it (Gallagher 1992, p. 104). Yet if tradition always permits an “element of freedom”, I wished to explore how it was “affirmed, embraced, cultivated” (Gadamer

2004, p. 282) and the implications for one's journalistic self-interpretation. This self-interpretation now requires further deliberation.⁴

Navigation to processual *Journalistic Becoming* and the nature of engendering experiences

Notions that human beings are either determined exclusively and mechanistically by external influences or are free unconstrained agents were resisted in this thesis. As noted in the previous chapter (see pages 48-9), I was instead drawn towards a more fluid and processual approach to negotiate a way around the self-centred and social-centred polarities of mutual exclusiveness concerning matters of 'identity'. A student's journalistic 'being' and ongoing 'becoming' was envisaged, a process shaped by 'conditions' necessarily exposed to socialising tradition. I now develop this thinking by solidifying what I mean by 'becoming' through relating it to self-interpretation.

The dynamic nature of self-interpretation discussed earlier in this chapter can, like becoming, be envisaged as a process. If lives are continuously made and remade in the present in a bid to achieve narrative coherence (Scott and Usher 2011), resulting self-interpretive constructions are part of that process; since narratives are embedded in history, our self-interpretations are always undergoing transformation. From a Gadamerian perspective, it has also been noted that perpetual self-interpretative

⁴ The freedom within tradition and the role of language can be usefully approached by considering Gallagher's (1992) contrast between Gadamer's 'moderate' hermeneutics and the 'critical' or 'depth' hermeneutics' of Habermas (1977; 1987; 1988). In brief, Habermas insists language is limited by extralinguistic experience. The "linguistic infrastructure of a society" is also constituted by economic, political and technical relations which "behind the back of language ... also affect the very grammatical rules according to which we interpret the world" (Habermas 1977, p. 361). Moreover, critical reflection depth hermeneutics "uncovers and attempts to neutralize built-in distortions operative in understanding in order to promote emancipation through self-reflection" (Gallagher 1992, p. 18). Structures of power can be broken up, thus exposing Gadamer to the charge of failing to recognise the power of reflection. Yet Gadamer objected to conceptions of critical reflection "that claims to dissolve or neutralize the process and force of tradition" (Gallagher 1992, p. 18); critical reflection could only be accomplished in ongoing communication and continuing exchange of views and statements. For Gadamer, societal reality brought itself to representation in a consciousness that was linguistically articulated (Gallagher 1992).

constructions are a consequence of our prejudgements and prejudices that are handed down from the traditions that shape us and which always remain open to future testing (Bernstein 1983). One self-interpretation is thus always becoming another; it is a process of becoming. Indeed, this thesis can now posit that the evolving constructions of self-interpretation that occur in ongoing self-understanding constitute the innately human, societal, linguistic and perpetual process of becoming. Becoming is viewed in this thesis as one's ongoing construction project of self-interpretation. It helps us understand a basic feature of human existence: our lives move and we are always changing. (Taylor 1989). In order to make sense of who we are, we conceive of how we have become and where we are going (Taylor 1989).

A Gadamerian-inspired definition of *Journalistic Becoming* can now be presented. *Journalistic Becoming* emerges as the dynamic, transitional and linguistic process of journalistic self-interpretation afforded by and through engagement with journalistic possibilities and traditions. In Chapter 1, the literature was consulted to commence a preliminary exploration of the conditions potentially shaping becoming, now philosophically and journalistically grounded as a transient, constructed process of journalistic self-interpretation. Refinement can now be offered here, too. The essential ontological task of philosophical hermeneutics is “to throw light on the fundamental conditions that underlie the phenomenon of understanding” (Linge 1976, p. xi). If understanding and the truth attached to it has the “character of an event” (Gadamer 2004, p. xvii), I sought illumination of the shaping conditions underlying a particular event of understanding: the ongoing self-understanding and self-interpretation that constitutes and constructs one's sense of being and becoming.

Furthermore, this research sought to identify those experiences that could give rise to the conditions in which self-interpretation takes place. ‘Experience’ was viewed

through a hierarchical lens. The participant stories that duly unfold were used to extrapolate experiences interpreted as affording conscious awareness of seemingly important life turns. They were events that transcended the taken-for-granted, where a difference could be interpreted between “‘experience’ (the everyday flow of unselfconsciousness in which we are – usually unproblematically – immersed), ‘an experience’ (the beginnings of a more conscious awareness, perhaps categorisation, of what is happening to us), and ‘an Experience’ (when the consciousness includes the sense that something has particular significance in our lives)” (Tomkins and Eatough 2013a, p. 262). I also contemplated if *Journalistic Becoming* could help illuminate experiential learning theory’s application to journalism (Brandon 2002; Evans 2016; Greenberg 2007). Against the setting of David Kolb’s learning cycle of experiencing, reflecting, thinking and acting (1984), Kate Kartveit argues such experiential learning allows for journalism students to personally determine experience and develop “from the inside” rather than transferring capability in from the outside as conventional teaching does (2009 p. 38). Could the conditions of *Journalistic Becoming* and their engendering experiences shed light on what occurs ‘inside’?

From the clearing now reached, I viewed Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics as conciliatory and supportive of my research ambitions. It provided the framework within which understanding, interpretation, prejudice and the underlying conditions shaping the self-interpretive process of being and becoming could be accommodated. It also supported inquiry into becoming agency within the “great horizon of the past, out of which our culture and present live”; a past that “influences us in everything we want, hope for, or fear in the future” (Gadamer 1966, p. 8).

Philosophical hermeneutics additionally determined the nature of the knowledge I sought. In a Gadamerian sense, my prejudices or prejudgements were the

preconditions of knowledge of others (Garrison 1996). Their provocation and harnessing would ensure my understanding was not “a mere reproduction of knowledge ... not a mere act of repeating the same thing” (Gadamer 1962, p. 45). Failure to address personal preunderstandings would simply heighten the risk of confirming my own truths rather than secure revelation of phenomenon (Geanellos 1998). In so doing, the participant view might be unable to “assert itself against the power of those tendencies of meaning that dominate the interpreter” (Gadamer 2004, p. 501; Lowes and Prowse 2001). The successful activation of my prejudices was thus an essential task and requirement of this thesis.

Resulting hermeneutic knowledge formation would be “iterative and spiral” rather than “linear and cumulative as portrayed in positivist epistemology”; knowledge would be inevitably perspectival, partial and unpredictable since “no interpretation can be uniquely correct” and explanation has an indeterminacy that resists closure (Scott and Usher 2011, pp. 30-31). Gadamer, though inexplicably referring to “all correct interpretation” at one point (2004, p. 269), returned to his narrative of the incomplete when he confirmed understanding is not understanding better: “It is enough to say that we understand in a different way, if we understand at all” (2004, p. 296). Meanwhile, ongoing testing of prejudice would result in ongoing interpretations; a text thus remains open to “ever new comprehensions” (Linge 1976, p. xxv).

Finally, ‘truth’, one of the most elusive concepts of Gadamer’s work (Bernstein 1983), requires further consideration. For Gadamer, methodological truth was dependent on a deeper, richer and more fundamental hermeneutic truth (Barthold 2017). The truth event took time, required language and was the result of mediation and conversation (Dostal 2002). While truth was revealed in experience – “an encounter with something that asserts itself as truth” (Gadamer 2004, p. 483) – it was

through understanding tradition that insights could be sought and “truths known” (Gadamer 2004, p. xx). In rejecting subjectivism, truth rather required losing oneself in something greater than oneself and returning to a self that was changed (Barthold 2017).

Though Gadamer has been criticised for failing to validate the reasons and arguments supporting such claims (Bernstein 1983), I pursued the broad idea that meanings and ‘truths’ could be found through understanding tradition, mediation and knowing and recognising “something and oneself” (Gadamer 2004, p. 113). While Gadamer’s truth was pursued in art (2004), I wanted to be drawn into and played by dynamic, conversational encounters with my participants to derive a better envisioning of them through new understanding of myself. ‘Truths’ would, I acknowledged, be contingent, contestable and multiple rather than abstract, determinate or definitive. For the reader, it was hoped that truth to the matter would infuse understandings emanating from a Reflective Hermeneutic Model designed to transparently and relationally explore the *Journalistic Becoming* of my participants and I through our respective relationships with journalistic tradition; this model will be discussed shortly. A communicative truth was therefore sought for the statements and utterances conveying my encounters with participants and their expressed experiences; I hoped that truths would transpire and be disclosed in the actual interpretive practices about to be explained (Schwandt 2003).

I will shortly lay out the steps to how *Journalistic Becoming* was studied in practice in order to directly address the research questions; the aim was to deploy my prejudicially-ingrained past to access understanding of the underlying conditions shaping self-interpretation and becoming constructions in others. The Reflective Hermeneutic Model drew upon key Gadamerian tenets to explore the “miracle of

understanding” derived not from “a mysterious communion of souls, but sharing in a common meaning” (Gadamer 2004, p. 292). First, however, the strangers in strange lands require introduction.

The voyagers to strange lands: introducing the researcher and participants

My story

I disembarked in academia in 2013 following a 29-year career as a regional daily newspaper journalist that encompassed increasingly challenging managerial roles. At the time of departure, my head spun with mixed emotions. I would certainly not miss the frayed nerves. In a shrinking newsroom where the mania for web hits ensured anything and everything fed the Internet’s voracious appetite, the migration of revenue from print to online became a painfully-awaited prerequisite to maintaining editorial quality. Yet there was huge excitement too. There were new ways, new ideas and new journalistic possibilities in a new media world. I was witnessing a newsroom revolution, fearful for the old order yet guiltily seduced by what had come into view.

My peculiar sense of dislocation was understandable. I was the by-product of a different historical age. I had entered journalism in 1984 after a long period of unemployment armed with a degree in economic and social history. There was no prior grand plan. Anxious to find work, I fell into journalism; there had been no “irresistible, scratchy need” and “no urgent desperation” that apparently preoccupies those wanting to be journalists (Marr 2005, pp. 3-4). In an era preceding undergraduate journalism degrees, ‘multimedia’ and citizen journalists, I duly underwent post-graduate NCTJ training while employed by a weekly newspaper. I remember taking my ‘proficiency test’ using a battered typewriter to capture the

seemingly endless mayhem plaguing the NCTJ's fictitious town of 'Oxdown'; I remember the sceptical mutterings of my News Editor when computers arrived in the newsroom during the mid-1980s; and I remember when there were multiple daily editions, district offices and time to conduct investigations. When nostalgia becomes this intoxicating, the perceived warmth of the past tends to chill the tempting yet uncertain allure of the future. It was time for a change; I decided to become a teacher. This, then, was some of the baggage I deposited on the shores of academia following my appointment as Lecturer in News Journalism at Bournemouth University.

Employed to teach practical skills on the undergraduate BAMMJ course, I was soon struck by the significant number of students who questioned their suitability or preparedness for journalism. They posed a fundamentally simple yet intriguing question: what is being a journalist? I increasingly suspected a pedagogic focus upon skill acquisition would not provide either them or me with an adequate answer. Educators had to delve deeper. I resolved to understand how new journalists – former BAMMJ students – journalistically perceived themselves in order to help those who aspired to follow. I wanted the new generation of journalists to show me today's world as they saw it; I wanted their perspectives to help inform my practice. We could, I hoped, share and draw upon our respective journalistic histories; the old and the new might even help illuminate a future direction for journalism education. The seed of this thesis was thus sown.

Bournemouth University and its journalism students

I will now say more about my relationship with the ten former BAMMJ students who became my research participants. My responsibilities at Bournemouth University include the teaching of a practical 'News and Online' unit to the first and second year

BAMMJ students; in this capacity, I taught five of the research participants. I also remain staff ‘overseer’ of the public-facing *Rock* student newspaper; I worked closely with four of the research participants on this extra-curricular publication which is available in shops and bars as well as on campus and online. I also supervise final year ‘Multimedia Projects’ (MMP’s)⁵ and dissertations; I supervised one research participant for her MMP and another participant for her dissertation. I also marked the final year ‘Personal Perspectives’ work experience portfolio of another participant.

All third year BAMMJ students are required to contribute to converged ‘news days’ (it’s a credited module) and encouraged to voluntarily participate in ‘live events’ and hands-on practical opportunities to derive their well-documented benefits (Steel et al. 2007; Frith and Meech 2007; Heathman and Mathews 2014; Charles and Luce 2016; Evans 2016; Evans 2017; Merryman 2017/18). The BAMMJ students engaged in large numbers for the US 2012 and 2016 elections, and the 2015 UK General Election. Live events are publicly broadcast online and on FM radio from the university; news day material can also be publically accessed online. Through all these inter-connected experiences, I knew eight of the ten participants and they knew me. The remaining two, John Stone and Kate Browne, graduated before I arrived in 2013. I had once briefly met Kate but did not know her; John was a stranger.

The ten journalists completed Bournemouth University’s undergraduate BAMMJ degree and graduated between 2013 and 2015. Though a representative sample was not sought, five participants were women, reflecting UK research suggesting the gender balance in journalism is relatively equal (Spilsbury 2013) and 57% of journalism undergraduate students are female (Spilsbury 2016a). Around 94% of UK

⁵ The MMP is an original piece of journalistic work evidencing a student’s use of multimedia skills in storytelling. Students choose a specialism (newspapers, online, magazines, radio, television or documentary) and produce a multimedia package equivalent to 10,000 words.

journalists are white while 82% of journalism students come from white ethnic groups (Spilsbury 2017); if the *Journalists at Work* ethnicity groupings (Spilsbury 2013) are applied to this thesis, nine participants would be classified as white (with two, Sarah Tyler and James Newton, of Turkish and Armenian descent respectively) while one, Jess Roberts, is from a Chinese family. Today, the ten former BAMMJ students are among the estimated 64,000 people in the UK who work as journalists (Ponsford 2015b). At the time of their interviews, they could all be described as early career journalists, having typically been employed between one and three years.⁶ I hoped they would all help inform a new pedagogic approach to my current students.

Bournemouth Polytechnic became Bournemouth University in 1992 and in October that year welcomed the first BAMMJ cohort. In the academic year 2017/2018, 236 undergraduate students were studying Multimedia Journalism across the three years of the BAMMJ course which is accredited by the NCTJ, the BJTC and PTC; there were 11 postgraduates studying for a Master's degree in journalism⁷. Today, the BAMMJ undergraduate course continues to blend theory with practice with units including 'Media, Journalism and Society', 'Global Current Affairs' and 'Journalism Ethics and News Theory' rubbing shoulders with shorthand, news reporting, online, broadcast and feature writing components; the course culminates in the third year requirement to produce the Multimedia Project and dissertation, each respectively reflecting the practical and theoretical composition of the course. All BAMMJ students are also required to complete six weeks of work experience before they graduate, reflecting research that continues to show the importance of such placements to a career in

⁶ Please see Appendix B (page 346) for an 'at a glance' table summarising my relationship with the students, their interview details and university and employment history. Their names have been anonymised.

⁷ Figures provided by Student Support Office, Faculty of Media and Communication, Bournemouth University.

journalism (Scott 2017; Barrett 2014). BU tells prospective students that work experience offers opportunities to make “professional contacts” and gain “insights into how the sector operates” (BU 2018).

Delivery of the NCTJ’s Diploma components is integrated within the BAMMJ course. Prospective students are informed the degree “has been developed in conjunction with the industry to ensure you acquire the entire practical and theoretical skillset needed to work in the fast-paced world of journalism, be it in print, radio, TV or online”; attainment of the NCTJ Diploma at the university can “radically enhance your credibility and employability as a practicing journalist” (BU 2018).

The former students who participated in this research will soon speak powerfully and evocatively. They gave generously during our conversations which were often humorous and light-hearted yet, on other occasions, poignant and deeply personal. With the privilege of interpretation comes responsibility and so it is to matters concerning research transparency and planning that I now turn.

Hermeneutic preparation, stage 1: the emergence of horizons

Introducing the concept of horizon

As stated, I planned to enable my prejudices to facilitate hermeneutic interpretation of others. Essentially, I was required to understand my own constructions of becoming a journalist in order to glimpse how a participant envisaged their own *Journalistic Becoming*; I needed to discover the prejudiced conditions shaping my own self-interpretation. Indeed, my interpretation of others could not be arbitrary; my interpretive frames were located “within the background of all our beliefs and practices” (Scott and Usher 2011, p. 30). But how could I do it, mindful that

introspective, personal revelation should not be an end in itself but used as “a springboard for interpretation and more general insight” (Finlay 2002, p. 215)?

Firstly, the hermeneutic interpreter seeking understanding must necessarily confront that which appears “strange and far off” (Crotty 1998, p. 90). Yet this “alienation from meaning” may be accompanied by a peculiar affinity; the hermeneutical has to do with “bridging the gap”, the encompassing of what we wish to understand and that which we already understand (Linge 1976, p. xii). In practical terms, the researcher’s understanding of a strange text entails acknowledgement that one’s given present situation is shaped by the past, and prejudice and tradition defines the ground occupied when one attempts to understand. While non-productive prejudices keep us locked in single-mindedness, it’s productive prejudices which help us to expand our horizons and facilitate understanding rather than block it (Tomkins and Eatough 2018).

Indeed, the task is to mediate one’s historical alienation through achieving what Gadamer famously called the “fusion of horizons” (1967, p. 39). My horizon, in the context of this thesis, was conceived to be my historic and prejudiced conception of my journalistic self-interpretation; it stood in relation to a participant’s conception of their historic and prejudiced journalistic self-interpretation. While my epistemic horizon framed my situation and provided boundaries, it also made knowledge of others possible (Barthold 2017). Indeed, as David Scott and Robin Usher note:

“The fusion comes from an understanding that is grounded in both standpoints, neither of which can be bracketed out. One could say that a fusion of horizons occurs when authors and readers, both of whom are historically situated, create shared meanings” (2011, p. 33).

The resulting fusion of understanding is, therefore, enlargement of one’s own horizon through historic interaction. In common parlance, one’s self and one’s horizon is broadened; I wanted to ‘broaden’ my understanding of what constituted journalistic

self-interpretation beyond conceptions of my own journalistic self-interpretation – beyond my present horizon. Such fusions would emerge through my efforts to understand (Barthold 2017). Gadamer offers this summary:

“The concept of ‘horizon’ suggests itself because it expresses the superior breadth of vision that the person who is trying to understand must have. To acquire a horizon means that one learns to look beyond what is close at hand – not in order to look away from it but to see it better, within a larger whole and in truer proportion” (2004, p. 304).

More will be said about fusion as the Reflective Hermeneutic Model’s assembly develops. Yet further deliberation is now required concerning how one’s efforts to understand might be intensified and how emerging new fusions could be studied.

Introducing *Journalistically Effected Consciousness*

Firstly, a mode of thought had to be confirmed, necessitating consideration of reflection and Gadamer’s aforementioned notion of ‘historically effected consciousness’ (see page 75). For Gadamer, subjective reflection upon self-knowledge was not enough; in fact, Gadamerian prejudices “function as a limit to the power of self-consciousness” (Linge 1976, p. xvii). Indeed, it was prejudgements rather than judgements that “constitute our being” (Gadamer 2004, p. 278). While self-awareness was “only a flickering in the closed circuits of historical life”, it also made history “private” (Gadamer 2004, p. 278). I was required to reach deeper, historical depths.

Consequently, contemplation upon hermeneutics’ “own kind of reflection” was demanded (Gadamer 1967, p. 38). Gadamer’s insistence that understanding is “an event of tradition” required mediation between divergent researcher-researched preunderstandings, perspectives, positionings and views derived from journalistically different historical pasts and conditionings (Gadamer 2004, p. 291). Such hermeneutical reflection upon my preunderstandings would, Gadamer assured, bring

forth “something that otherwise happens behind my back” (1967, p. 38). For Gadamer, this entailed a consciousness that adopted “a reflective posture toward both itself and the tradition in which it is situated”: “It understands itself in terms of its own history. Historical consciousness is a mode of self-knowledge” (Gadamer 2004, p. 228).

This demanded a certain readiness, preparedness and acknowledgement – an “openness to tradition characteristic of historically effected consciousness” (Gadamer 2004, p. 355), which is refashioned in this thesis as *Journalistically Effected Consciousness*. The term refers to awareness of my own historical conditioning and relationship with journalistic tradition; my journalistic consciousness was brought into being – ‘effected’ – by journalism’s history. Such historic consciousness would be “an element in the act of understanding itself”, ensuring it was a “historically effected event” (Gadamer 2004, p. 301/299). A “historical spirit” was required: it consisted “not in the restoration of the past but in thoughtful mediation with contemporary life” (Gadamer 2004, p. 161). I had to get in touch with my past to broaden my horizon.

The provocation of prejudice

The desired historic mediation and exploration of *Journalistically Effected Consciousness* confronted a key challenge highlighted by Gadamer: “The prejudices and fore-meanings that occupy the interpreter’s consciousness are not at his free disposal. He cannot separate in advance the productive prejudices that enable understanding from the prejudices that hinder it and lead to misunderstanding” (2004, p. 295). Garrison (1996, p. 434) further illuminates:

“Indeed, while unconsciously under the influence of a prejudice, it is impossible for us fully to recognize them, and if we cannot identify the prejudices that constitute our personal identities, then in some sense we cannot even know ourselves, much less understand somebody different.”

Heidegger advised that one should allow encounters to provoke awareness of one’s

“fore-structure” (1962, p. 191), the “shadowy preunderstanding of Being that we all possess” (Crotty 1998, p. 97). I was required to work out “these fore-structures in terms of the things themselves” (Heidegger 1962, p. 195), rather than allow them to be presented to me “by fancies and popular conceptions” (Gadamer 2004, p. 269).

Jonathan Smith explains this succinctly:

“In other words, while fore-structure may ontologically precede encounter with ‘the things’, understanding may work the other way, from ‘the thing’ to the fore-structure. When encountering a text I do not necessarily know which part of my fore-structure is relevant. Having engaged with the text, I may be in a better position to know what my fore-structure is” (Smith 2007b, p. 6).

The researcher must thus be prepared to be “pulled up short by the text”, enabling it to “break the spell of our own fore-meanings” (Gadamer 2004, p. 270). Inconspicuous prejudice must be “stirred up” by encountering what is “handed down” (Gadamer 1988, p. 77); strange words and expressions could then be followed by a “stand”, a readjustment and regained orientation (Gadamer 1966, p. 15). The aim was to gain a new understanding “through eyes conditioned by prejudice” (1967, p. 38), to unearth clues to the origin and legitimacy of my biases.

To summarise so far: if I sought to understand *Journalistic Becoming* and self-interpretation constructions and processes in others, I was obligated to challenge my own journalistic self-interpretation, one featuring known and unknown prejudices that were potentially self-congratulatory or self-depreciative. I thus had to investigate my present *Journalistic Becoming* horizon and examine how my historic prejudices affected my ability or inability to imagine another’s *Journalistic Becoming* horizon. My *Journalistically Effected Consciousness* would require investigation to throw into relief my prejudices; respective perspectival standpoints might then be glimpsed within the socialised, journalistic tradition that united my participants and I. Such historic mediation might facilitate new, shared – or fused – horizons of understanding.

Sensing strangeness and familiarity: imagination and openness

At this juncture, Gadamer's notion of "temporal distance" should be addressed (2004, p. 291). While the range of texts forming hermeneutic subject matter has considerably expanded beyond those of the Bible to the humanities, "human science" researchers – the "new kids on the block" – have nonetheless confronted temporal challenges (Smith 2007b, p. 4). Unlike texts constructed self-consciously for a public purpose (and at historical distance from the interpreter), personal experience interviews obtained in real time – such as the interview texts in this thesis – would not exist without the interpreter's request. Moreover, the absence of historical distance between the researcher and the interview transcriptions appears problematic; Gadamer considered contemporary texts to be lacking the historic, temporal distance required to bring the interpreter's prejudices to the fore. Discussing art in *Truth and Method*, Gadamer claimed "contemporary creations" denied time the opportunity to fade relations with the present; revelation of the creation's real nature and its authoritative understanding was therefore denied (2004, p. 297).

Yet later in *Truth and Method*, Gadamer used a footnote to inform the reader he had "softened the original text": "It is distance, not only temporal distance, that makes the hermeneutic problem solvable" (2004, p. 376). While Gallagher notes all interpretation occurs at distance ensuring all interpretation is productive (1992), generalized distance could encompass "the even more general idea of the tensions of strangeness and familiarity" (Garrison 1996, p. 438). I thus envisaged ongoing understandings and fusions occurring when individual subjectivities and respective prejudices of the past and present were put to the test in dialogic relations.

While awaiting awareness of relative asymmetries, I prepared to make an "unavoidable detour" and return to my journalistic past if what was said in the

journalistic tradition no longer provided immediate insight (Gadamer 1962, p. 46).

With the support of the familiar, such a “venture into the alien” could commence the “lifting up of something out of the alien” (Gadamer 1966, p. 15). Indeed, the “true locus of hermeneutics” is the “in between” where familiarity meets strangeness (Gadamer 2004, p. 295); it’s where the respective cultural, historic and socially constructed standpoints of researcher and researched are encountered.

However, fusion into a “common view of the subject matter” (Linge 1976, p. xix) was deemed dependent upon deploying the right attitude: new understandings and horizons would remain elusive unless my *Journalistically Effected Consciousness* was explored. Indeed, the linguistic, hermeneutic tensions of sameness and difference capable of coaxing *Journalistic Becoming* understandings would otherwise remain unprovoked and dormant.

How could my *Journalistically Effected Consciousness* be utilised? Heidegger and Gadamer did not develop research methods and there are no exemplars in the literature (Fleming et al. 2003; Turner 2003; Henriksson and Friesen 2012). Indeed, Gadamer saw the hermeneutic phenomenon as “basically not a problem of method at all” (2004, p. xx); indeed, understanding was deemed to precede methodical knowing, have its own “independent validity within science” and was resistant to “any attempt to reinterpret it in terms of scientific method” (Gadamer 2004, p. xx). In the spirit of philosophical hermeneutics, I had no wish to offend Gadamerian sensitivities by attempting to “develop a procedure of understanding” or “elaborate a system of rules” which Gadamer insisted could never be totally objective or value-free from the user (2004, p. 295; p. xxv). Yet in the interests of research usefulness and its communicated, practical application, I wished to show how I attempted to detect and “clarify the conditions in which understanding takes place” (Gadamer 2004, p. 295).

I hence wanted to share my experimentation with the unlocking key – exploration of my *Journalistically Effected Consciousness*.

A series of cumulative thought movements within the Reflective Hermeneutic Model were designed for this purpose. Tasked with triggering the interview texts to question the researcher and suggest indicative directions (Linge 1976), these different ways of thinking represented my transparent if messy bid to ontologically and epistemologically glimpse how becoming conditions might manifest themselves and what resulting interpretive expressions might look like. Yet they represented the ‘laying bare’ of a personal approach rather than a formal ‘method’ or a prescriptive ‘how to’ guide. The Model aspired to offer reflective documentation of how my hermeneutic sensitivity was experienced, provoked and deepened; the intention was not to offer a hermeneutic ‘method’ or structural analytic technique (Butler 1998). My reflective thought movements may suggest tentative, interpretive pathways but I did not intend to offer fixed, directional signage. In detailing my exploratory, interpretative and practical approach, I essentially wished to convey the nature of the hermeneutic spirit and prompt discussion concerning its potential nurturing. The movements thus indicate the deeply personal ways in which I sensed I needed to be ‘there’ for the becoming phenomenon in order to evoke its aliveness.

The task ahead entailed the spirit of imagination which Gadamer saw as differentiating genuine understanding from “methodological sterility” (Linge 1976, p. xxii). According to Gadamer, imagination was capable of exposing productive questions about the subject matter; and in seeing what is questionable lay the “real power of hermeneutic consciousness” (Gadamer 1966, p. 12). The essential precondition of such imagination was openness to be questioned and provoked by the texts in the first place (Linge 1976).

In fact, “anyone who listens is fundamentally open” (Gadamer 2004, p. 355). Openness to the voice of the other is therefore an essential requirement of the fruitful exploration of one’s *Journalistically Effected Consciousness*. Indeed, “hermeneutic experience is the encounter with the voice of the other”; yet the openness to experience and willingness to listen means “not to consume and assimilate the other but to suffer what is beyond oneself” (Risser 1997, p. 94). This clearly demands more than simply ‘giving voice’; it rather entails the open reception to another’s voice in order “to let him really say something to us” (Gadamer 2004, p. 355).

In the context of this thesis, the consequent lowering of personal safeguards through imagination and listening is termed *Imaginative Journalistic Openness*. It aimed to establish a “genuine human bond” through personally accepting that “some things are against me even though no one else forces me to do so” (Gadamer 2004, p. 355); through openness to the possibility that my participant was right, I might discover my personal “unforeseen constellations” (Gadamer 1966, p. 13).

In summary, the emergence of fused horizons of shared meaning required utilisation of my *Journalistically Effected Consciousness*, one explored and accessed through adoption of an *Imaginative Journalistic Openness*. Their dual deployment aimed to engender the “genuine reality” of the hermeneutic process, one that encompassed the self-understanding of the interpreter as well as what was interpreted (Gadamer 1962, p. 58) Both concepts, in turn, directed implementation of the thought movements contained in the Reflective Hermeneutic Model which will be further developed shortly. The Model, in short, guided my preparation to hear the voices of others and, crucially, allow them and resulting interview texts to tell me something through my deepening sensitivity to verbal and textual alterity. Indeed, listening would only be valuable in helping me to hear what was said; I still needed to make sense of

what was received (Nixon 2017). I will now say a little more about my participants and my deliberations upon interviewing, listening and responding to what was heard.

Hermeneutic preparation, stage 2: case study, interviewing the participants and ethical considerations

The participant case studies

Case study was deemed an appropriate accompaniment to philosophical hermeneutics. Initially, at least, each case study would be a concentrated investigation into a single case.⁸ The primary case selection criteria adopted for the ten former Bournemouth University students was an “opportunity to learn” (Stake 2005, p. 451). As noted earlier (see page 86), I interviewed early career journalists. Indeed, I wanted former students with relatively fresh memories of the university-workplace transition; I felt their reflections would have contemporary resonance and applicability. They were found after accessing the BAMMJ course records. My case selection followed an intuitive leaning to those who had lived experience of the study’s focus, were willing to talk about that experience and were diverse enough to offer stories of richness and variety (Stake 2005; Laverly 2003). The five men and five women who contributed represented reporting, production and broadcast disciplines within diverse multimedia outlets; four had also worked in a freelance capacity and two of those continue to do so. Aged between 22 and 25, they were intelligent, self-reflective and focused professionals. Each participant was emailed by myself and invited to offer thoughts and feelings about becoming a journalist in relation to experiences encountered before,

⁸ Case study is viewed here as not a methodological choice “but a choice of what is to be studied”; while the case will, in this thesis, be studied hermeneutically, “case study is defined by interest in an individual case, not by the methods of inquiry used” (Stake 2005, p. 443).

during and after their three-year BAMMJ undergraduate course. The single interviews that followed were conducted in 2016 and 2017 and lasted between one hour 4 minutes (Anna Coleman) and one hour 55 minutes (Rob Burrows); all yielded rich and textured data. Interview length, on average, was one hour and 25 minutes.

These cases for study (Stake 2005) were individually and separately analysed and interpreted before the next encounter occurred in order to bring order to amassing thoughts (Turner 2003). Typically, two weeks was set aside for each case interview, analysis and interpretation. I also endeavoured to assist case maturation by spacing out the interviews as much as logistically possible to minimise the inevitable leakage of my thoughts from one interpretation to the next. On average, 46 days elapsed between case interviews; the shortest period of time (between meeting Jess Roberts and Rob Burrows) was 12 days while 81 days separated the encounters with James Newton and Sian Jarvis. My commitment to the particular entailed the treatment of each case “on its own terms” and a desire to “do justice to its own individuality” (Smith et al. 2009, p. 100).

Nonetheless, I felt that I occupied a “zone of combined purpose” (Stake 2005, p. 445); indeed, while I held an “intrinsic” interest in the particularity of each participant, I also wanted them to support and assist “instrumental” study into the construct of becoming a journalist and advance understanding of it (Stake 2005, pp. 444-5). I was open to both their lived stories and the broader issues they individually raised; I reflected and built upon both interests simultaneously. Upon completion of the individual case studies, the analytical process moved cautiously to a joint study of them; instrumental study was extended to all the cases in a collective case study (Stake 2005). I then sought “fine-grained accounts of patterns of meaning for participants reflecting upon a shared experience” (Smith et al. 2009, p. 38; Bryman 2012)

The interviews: considerations and experimentations

Interview remains generally considered the “most fruitful way” of eliciting rich data concerning participants’ lived and embodied experience (Tomkins and Eatough 2013a, p. 269). While providing a “construction site for knowledge” (Kvale 1996, p. 14), interview also offered the crucial and very specific hermeneutic opportunity to develop a conversational relation with each participant. A spirit of openness – what has been termed *Imaginative Journalistic Openness* – could then be employed during the interviews to coax transformative dialogic understanding, a communion “in which we do not remain what we were” (Gadamer 2004, p. 371).

Two question and answer approaches were explored during a Pilot Study in 2016. An unstructured interview approach was employed with Sarah Tyler while a semi-structured approach was adopted with Anna Coleman; both had graduated in 2014. Sarah had been working as a local newspaper reporter for fifteen months while Anna had worked as a production assistant at a daily regional newspaper for 18 months. Both were sent Participant Information Sheets which detailed the research; all future research participants were sent the same document (see Appendix A, page 343).

Philosophical hermeneutics deems questions are of more importance than the answers. The questions we ask respond to challenges that reveal the questioner’s implicit presuppositions and prejudicial back-story in the process. We cannot begin to look for answers until the motivating meaning of the question is understood (Gadamer 1981). I therefore wanted my participants to stir questions within me, even if full illumination of my motives was impossible (Gadamer 1981). So while Gadamer explained the logic of question and answer using text as his model (Gallagher 1992), I also wanted the conversational interview to ask questions of myself and my circumstance, to stimulate “a dialogue of interpretation” (Gallagher 1992, p. 158).

I duly concluded the Pilot Study's unstructured interview approach used with Sarah was more provocatively questioning of my feelings than the relatively directed, semi-structured interview conducted with Anna. The unstructured approach used one "grand tour question" – *Can you tell me the story of your journalistic journey so far?* – which, I felt, allowed Sarah's priorities to assume primacy (Wengraf 2001, p. 197). In a bid to limit my prejudicial steerage, I sought to spontaneously "go with the flow as much as possible" (Osborne 1994, p. 183), reduce the prompting of contrived simulations and encourage the interview process to stay close to the lived experience (Lavery 2003). The experiences introduced by Sarah were therefore used to set the interview agenda and help leave the door open to the unknown, unpredictable and questionable; I might then better glimpse the "conscious and unconscious interests" at play determining me (Gadamer 1981, p. 106). Indeed, an "unexpected turn" arose with Sarah's very first response which prioritised a post-university experience rather than a university one I realise I had prejudicially expected (Smith et al. 2009, p. 58). I thus commenced the questioning of my responses and explored their origin; in so doing, I began considering "the weight of the other's opinion", endeavouring to bring out "its real strength" by being conducted by the subject matter (Gadamer 2004, p. 361).

In contrast, Anna's more directed semi-structured Pilot Study interview compartmentalised my thoughts; they felt oddly encased within a restrictively ordered cognitive structure. Moreover, I worried it was the same for Anna; I feared her thoughts were being too conveniently straitjacketed and I was depriving her of priority-setting. I may have been listening but I feared I was hearing a muffled voice. I also sensed my openness to provocation was, at times, compromised as I became mentally preoccupied with receiving material in the 'right' order and regulating

conversation's organic inclination. As a consequence, my desire for *Imaginative Journalistic Openness* felt threatened by "forced choices" (Wengraf 2001, p. 199).⁹

The Pilot Study also facilitated further refinement of the unstructured interview question – one that was subsequently asked to all following participants. My unease with the opening question (*Can you tell me the story of your journalistic journey so far?*) required hermeneutic unpacking to establish it was founded upon a prejudice. The question reflected a hidden but guiding presupposition that becoming a journalist had a neat start and finish. My question seemed to suggest a journalistic 'destination' and an unspecified yet implied route to journalistic 'arrival'. I felt I was encouraging a narrative that imposed or assumed a "ready-made intelligible order", one which perhaps subconsciously reflected my own perceived becoming (Usher 1998, p. 23); I feared missing discontinuous biographies of the "unself" (Quinn 2010, pp. 18-19; Usher 1998), less coherent narratives and "nomadic becomings" (Tamboukou 2008, p. 361). The following eight research participants were simply asked to tell me their journalistic story while remaining mindful that this might also imply a 'book-ended' life. I was at least aware that a hermeneutic attunement had been activated, one receptive to further sensitisation. The two Pilot Study cases – Sarah and Anna – were duly included in the thesis analysis.¹⁰

Ethical concerns

Ethical considerations centred firstly on the identification of the participants. I chose to anonymise their accounts. I envisaged (rightly) that our discussions would

⁹ Four priority question areas were identified and investigated in depth in Anna's semi-structured interview: Can you tell me what led up to you joining the course? How do you reflect upon your journalism course? How do you view yourself as a journalist today? Can you tell me about the experiences that may have contributed to your view of yourself as a journalist?

¹⁰ The Unstructured Interview Guide Sheet used during the interviews is contained in Appendix C, see page 349.

encompass views on Bournemouth University, places of employment and their respective staffs; I did not want to inhibit the openness of either party through preoccupation with being compromised. Pseudonyms were thus provided for participants and the names of university staff and employers changed or removed.

While minimal intrusion was envisaged and the participants were deemed non-vulnerable, it soon became apparent that such judgement is subjective; the laudable principle of *primum non nocere* (do no harm) is indeed difficult to assess in practice (Bryman 2012). While all participants appeared relaxed and effusive throughout our encounters, I suspected some dug deep into their emotional reserves. The recollection of specific journalistic tasks sometimes drew uncomfortable memories to the surface as will be duly recounted.

Yet while I could often detect raw feelings, the atmosphere did not feel intrusive on any occasion; I was mindful throughout that the successful resolution of key ethical dilemmas ultimately lies in the establishment of good relations and rapport which I felt was achieved in all cases (Cohen et al. 2007). The life span of the research also resulted in a heightened sensitivity to the potential impact of certain questions, the unpredictability of responses and the importance of allowing more time for post-interview reassurance.

As previously noted, I knew the participants and they knew me, except for the two who graduated the year I commenced work at Bournemouth University in 2013. It is hard to assess if preconceptions based on shared history and a past relationship featuring “asymmetries of power” hindered or encouraged openness and transparency (Cohen et al. 2007, p. 362; Mercer 2007). I did not detect any rapport differences between the ‘known’ and ‘unknown’ participants; all were cordial, helpful, frank and open. I felt an atmosphere of safety and trust prevailed; the laughter that often

accompanied anecdotal recital evidenced the creation of a relaxed dialogic space. In addition, I felt a strong duty of care and respect and perhaps that was detected.

Nonetheless, I was challenged to consider whether speech could ever straightforwardly provide a “clear window into the inner life of the self” (Grant et al. 2013, p. 7) where I could inspect its construction. Similarly, it proved difficult to sense if participant stories were selected to fit a perceived agenda of the researcher. While mindful that people organise their pasts in terms of the present and their interpretations have a pretext that supersedes prior pretexts (Scott and Usher 2011), they may also learn to tell stories which match a group’s understanding of what such narratives should look and sound like (Denzin 1989a). There are parallels here with observing the constructed self as a performed character, “a collaborative manufacture” and a “dramatic effect” arising from a scene (Goffman 1959, p. 245). Whether in stories or on stage, a disguised self can transpose adroitly amid smoke and mirrors.

A key research concern was preventing the potentially overbearing intrusiveness of the interpreter: I was in service to the research, not myself, even if to understand a text was to “come to understand oneself in a kind of dialogue” (Gadamer 1962, p. 52). While mindful throughout of Wanda Pillow’s call (2003) for a more uncomfortable, vigilant, interrogative and less indulgent reflexivity, the “critical danger” of excessive “navel gazing” loomed ominously (Finlay 2012, p. 26). Ironically, such introspection risked mirroring contemporary journalism’s autobiographical, self-revelatory “Me, Me, Me” tendencies (Coward 2010, p. 234); I was duly warned of the perils of “becoming more fascinated by yourself than the participant” (Smith et al. 2009, p. 90). While philosophical hermeneutics thrusts the researcher on stage, the resistance of self-indulgence demands that any unfolding action is discretely interpreted from the wings. While accepting the significance of my subjectivities, I thus endeavoured to

allow the actors' voices to be respectfully heard loud and clear; their disclosed stories had to be spared overwriting, dilution or both. The pursuit of such hermeneutic deftness and delicacy proved to be my greatest operational challenge; it was one the Model was designed to meet. It's also worth noting that each unstructured interview demanded intense cognitive dexterity on the part of the questioner; following a subject-led agenda while attempting 'real time' hermeneutic attunement and courteous, conversational engagement proved most challenging. Despite many journalistic years of interview experience, I was surprised at how emotionally demanding these sessions were. Yet my ability to attune deepened over time, a point that will be returned to.

The hermeneutic researcher may additionally share some of the same concerns of the auto-ethnographer embarked upon the linking of the personal to the cultural. Making the personal public may ensure vulnerability accompanies exposure. The analogy of being branded with an irremovable "inked tattoo" may be taking it too far (Tolich 2010, p. 1605), but there is indeed "a high level of risk taking in relation to personal disclosure and reader reception" (Grant et al. 2013 p. 11). I remain comfortable with the more personal disclosures that follow. Moreover, this research simply demanded them. Indeed, this thesis represents a bid to explicitly detail my management of interpretation which necessarily required justification and conveyance of my deeply personal involvement. Yet while anxious to transparently disclose my role in the inquiry process, I also endeavour to offer reassurance in the interpretive process through showcasing the participants' experiences in their own words; the extensive use of direct quotations that follow will, I hope, help readers make their judgements (Fleming et al. 2003).

These contemplations helped direct design of the cumulative movements of the Reflective Hermeneutic Model which now awaits closer inspection. The Model's various linking components reflect the research decisions taken so far, the philosophy from which its blueprint originated and the desire to harmoniously integrate interpretation, negotiation and ethical and reflexive behaviour.

Hermeneutic preparation, stage 3: fused horizons and priming of the four-movement Reflective Hermeneutic Model

The hermeneutic circle

As previously noted, hermeneutic understanding of a participant's journalistic self-interpretation essentially demanded the challenging discovery of my own journalistic self-interpretation and the prejudices shaping my present horizon. Provocation and awareness of these prejudices was conceived to require the stirring of my *Journalistically Effected Consciousness* through adoption of an *Imaginative Journalistic Openness*. Then active, ongoing understanding – fusions of horizons – could proceed concerning the underlying conditions shaping a participant's self-interpretation, their *Journalistic Becoming*. The Reflective Hermeneutic Model containing its series of thought movements was designed for the task; it now requires final preparation by securing a crucial last component that brings together the Gadamerian concepts discussed thus far.

The 'hermeneutic circle', "perhaps the most resonant idea in hermeneutic theory" (Smith 2007b, p. 5), offered the following design insight: "To understand the part, you have to look at the whole; to understand the whole you have to look to the part" (Smith 2007b, p. 5). There is no single circle definition in the hermeneutic corpus yet it usually signals a move from linear to more iterative and integrative thinking

(Tomkins and Eatough 2018). I envisaged going round the circle to meet and commence understanding of a participant before returning back ‘home’ where virtual revisiting, circling and interpretive dialogue could continue. The Reflective Hermeneutic Model adopted a synchronised approach to these journeys around the circle. The Model would, at one level, direct thoughts to the inter-dependency of the parts and wholes of a participant’s interview and text, such as my interpreted meanings of words in the context of whole sentences, the relationship between extracts and the complete text and episodes within whole lives. It was hoped this approach would help commence a lifting up of the part conditions constituting the whole conditional shaping of a participant’s self-interpretation. Yet, on a second level, such discovery would only be possible if the Model incorporated another thought movement. Indeed, I was simultaneously required to reflect upon myself during these circumnavigations. My past would then be the whole and my encounter the part. In this way, the circular tours aimed to continually explore the prejudiced conditions shaping my own self-interpretation; these would be thrown into relief by a *Journalistically Effected Consciousness* provoked by deliberation upon a participant’s self-interpretive views and standpoints. I envisaged my prejudices being revealed and my expectations corrected and transposed, thus facilitating deeper understanding of a participant’s self-interpretive conditions. The more I travelled around the circle, the more I could understand myself. Deliberation upon these self-excavations could, in short, offer the prospect of ongoing prejudicial confrontations, revisions and consolidation of an interview text into a unified meaning under another expectation. Indeed, the circle could then widen:

“The task is to expand in concentric circles the unity of the understood meaning. Harmonizing all the particulars within the whole is at each stage the criterion of correct understanding. Its absence means the failure to understand” (Gadamer 1988, p. 68).

We must briefly return to tradition at this point. For Gadamer, keen to emphasise an ontological rather than methodological circle, it was the “commonality that binds us to the tradition” that governed textual understanding (2004, p. 293); he insisted meaningfulness of texts was determined by tradition as a whole, just as tradition as a whole is a unity comprising the meaning of texts within it (Crotty 1998). We produce, evolve and determine that tradition ourselves (Gadamer 2004). Gadamer’s circle was neither subjective or objective, leaving understanding to derive from the moving interplays between tradition and interpreter. The firm securement of the hermeneutic circle in the Model essentially sought to explore this ‘commonality’ between myself and my participants in relation to the journalistic tradition we shared. Guided by Gadamer, I entertained the notion that journalistic tradition was within both myself and my participants, yet we might enjoy different vantage points and resulting self-interpretations. I had to explore the tradition that united us in order to make sense of our respective horizons. Thus deployment of *Imaginative Journalistic Openness* and *Journalistically Effected Consciousness* was crucial.¹¹ Indeed, their activation offered ever-deepening understanding of the becoming meanings expressed by my participants and continued concentric expansion of the hermeneutic circle. As the circle broadened, I envisaged ‘projecting’ increasingly enriched meanings from within it (Gadamer 2004).

Gadamer informs us that we are “always projecting” when attempting to understand texts (2004, p. 269). Whole meanings are projected as soon as initial textual meanings emerge; and these initial meanings emerge only because the reader

¹¹ As noted (see page 95), *Imaginative Journalistic Openness* refers to the lowering of personal safeguards through imagination and listening while *Journalistically Effected Consciousness* refers to awareness of my own historical conditioning and relationship with journalistic tradition (see page 90).

has particular and prejudiced expectations regarding a certain meaning (Gadamer 2004). Researchers seeking understanding are helpfully advised to enter the hermeneutic circle “the right way” ensuring these preunderstandings can be worked out in terms of the phenomenon encountered (Heidegger 1962, p. 195). In so doing, every revision of the researcher’s “fore-projection” is “capable of projecting before itself a new projection of meaning” (Gadamer 2004, p. 269).

Projecting a *Journalistic Becoming* horizon

Borrowing from Gadamer (2004), I conceptualised that every projection of a participant’s *Journalistic Becoming* ‘horizon’ represented my shared understanding of the conditions influencing their journalistic self-interpretation. This, following Gadamer, would occur when my projection of a participant’s horizon of *Journalistic Becoming* was “simultaneously superseded” or “overtaken” by my own horizon of *Journalistic Becoming*; a “fusing” of *Journalistic Becoming* horizons was then envisaged occurring – a linguistically-afforded sharing of researcher-researched understanding (2004, pp. 305-6). I thus conceived of accommodating the self-interpretive standpoint of a participant after becoming aware of my own journalistic self-interpretation and its prejudiced, historical situatedness, courtesy of enhanced *Journalistically Effected Consciousness*. With resulting understanding grounded in both viewpoints, an interpretation and projection of the part conditions shaping a participant’s *Journalistic Becoming* could then be offered, together with the experiences that engendered them.

The twin hermeneutic facilitators of *Imaginative Journalistic Openness* and *Journalistically Effected Consciousness* were conceived as the key ‘energisers’ of the hermeneutic circle. Yet the Model had to incorporate opportunities to enable me to

deepen my understanding and utilisation of them. The Model's cumulative thought movements were thus integral to its design; they offered different ways of thinking – movements of thought in a particular direction. I envisaged each approach successively serving to intensify my *Journalistically Effected Consciousness* which, in turn, was key to producing ever-widening circular expansions, ever-enhanced projections of shared understanding and broadened horizons. These thought movements will be explained after a summary of my conceptual thinking so far.

The four Model thought movements explained

Definitional summary and approach overview

Drawing together and interrelating the terms and ideas introduced above, the Model's practical task entailed the following conceptual considerations:

- I wished to enter and circumnavigate the hermeneutic circle where interpretation of each participant's *Journalistic Becoming* required understanding of the part conditions of the conditional whole that shaped their evolving journalistic self-interpretation.
- This endeavour demanded alertness and receptiveness to verbal and textual provocation of my prejudices by each participant. This required imagination and openness – an *Imaginative Journalistic Openness*.
- Adoption of *Imaginative Journalistic Openness* was envisaged deepening my hermeneutic awareness and acknowledgement of the journalistic past that shaped me, affording enriched understanding of each participant. This sensitivity to

tradition's influence was envisaged deepening awareness of a consciousness brought into being by history – my *Journalistically Effected Consciousness*.

- Exploration of my *Journalistically Effected Consciousness* through a series of reflective and successive thought movements was imagined steadily widening the hermeneutic circle as I circumnavigated it; this broadening of the circle reflected the resulting expansiveness and unity of shared meaning.
- These shared meanings emanating from the circle constituted ongoing fusions of horizons whereby my present horizon of understanding (my prejudiced self-interpretation) also 'broadened' to accommodate the horizon of the other (their prejudiced self-interpretation). As I continually sought to understand, there was an ongoing coming together of our respective vantage points concerning journalistic self-interpretation (Koch 1996).
- This coming together fused into shared meaning that became manifest in my projection of a participant's *Journalistic Becoming* horizons. These ongoing and projected fusions consisted of the part conditions in which a participant's *Journalistic Becoming* took place; bringing the parts together, a complete *Journalistic Becoming* horizon thus represented my fused projection of the whole conditional influence underlying and shaping an individual's self-interpretation.

The Model's first three thought movements aimed to successively deepen my understanding of each individual participant through the extended hermeneutic and reflective dwelling thus afforded. Indeed, I envisaged the thought movements

increasingly enriching my revisions and projections of new meanings and fusions. I left the hermeneutic circle in Movement 3 following a final projection of an individual participant's *Journalistic Becoming* horizon which I attempted to capture in a literary account. The move to extract collective conditions from the ten individual analyses then entailed circle re-entry for a further movement, Movement 4.

We start, however, with attention to the individual participants and thought Movements 1-3. To assist the reader with the discussion that follows, an introductory diagrammatic overview is offered on the next page. It commences with Movement 1 at the bottom when thought was directed towards a participant's verbal conveyance of their becoming; I thought deeply about what I heard. Thought then moved to the participant's interview transcription (Movement 2) in a bid to deepen the thinking commenced in Movement 1. Movement 3 continued the cumulative approach by thinking about the interview text in a different way as shown. During this progressive movement of thought, the hermeneutic circle steadily broadened, representing the deepening of shared meaning and projected fusions emanating from it. While Movement 3 culminates in a 'final' fused horizon' of *Journalistic Becoming*, horizons are never closed since the historical movement of life is never absolutely bound to one viewpoint (Gadamer 2004); we move into horizons and "they change for a person who is moving" (Gadamer 2004, 303). My conveyance of circle 'departure' and fusion 'completion' must thus be viewed in terms of methodological practicality.

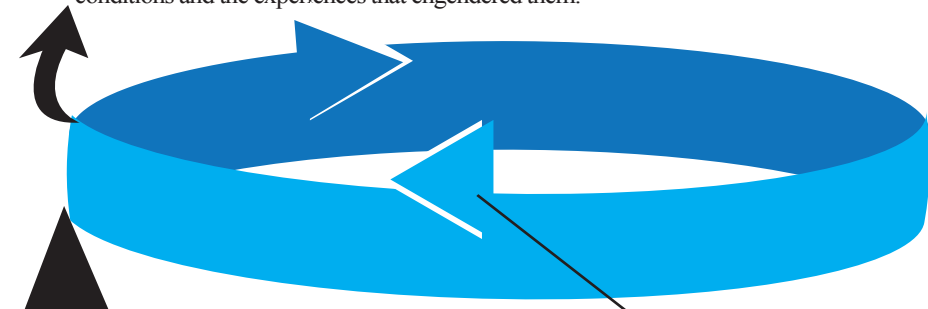
The reader is additionally alerted to Appendix D (see page 353) which uses selected portions of one participant's interview text to show how the first three reflective thought movements were operationalised in practice.

MOVEMENTS 1-3 SUMMARY: THE PROJECTION OF EACH PARTICIPANT'S *JOURNALISTIC BECOMING* HORIZON

Final fused horizon containing *Journalistic Becoming* conditions

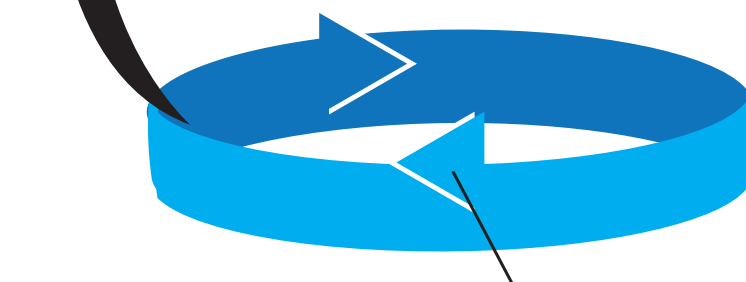
Movement 3: a return to the text and fusion

- Primacy afforded to relationship between text and myself to further hermeneutically intensify awareness of personal preunderstandings and my prejudiced self-interpretation.
- My biography became the whole and the participant encounter the part in a bid to further deepen awareness of my *Journalistically Effected Consciousness*.
- The *Journalistic Becoming* conditions thus far explored were now extracted and themed to further heighten hermeneutic interplay and sensitivity.
- With hermeneutic attunement at critical mass, a personal reflection was written.
- This reflection provided hermeneutic foundation for a final, fused projection of the participant's journalistic self-interpretation. This *Journalistic Becoming* horizon was 'captured' in a written account (a 'fused interpretation') that contains and details a participant's *Journalistic Becoming* conditions and the experiences that engendered them.



Movement 2: the transcribed interview

- Primacy afforded to relationship between textual wholes and parts while remaining open and guided by my own textual provocations. Fusions continue which result in loose definition of *Journalistic Becoming* conditions.



Researcher-researched creation of shared meaning leading to concentric expansion of hermeneutic circle of understanding.

Movement 1: listening to the voice of others

- Referred to as the 'three listenings', these linguistic receptions included the interview itself, relistening to the recording at home and a final hearing during verbatim transcription.
- Compilation of a 'summarised debriefing reflection' to take into Movement 2.
- Debriefing contained reflection upon initial prejudicial provocations and, as a result of consequent interplay with them, initial thoughts on a participant's *Journalistic Becoming* conditions. Shared meanings and fused horizon projections thus commence.

These movements were constructed following reference to: Gadamer (2004); Heidegger (1962); Smith et al. (2009); Fleming et al. (2003); Butler (1998); Wengraf (2001); Turner (2003) and Crotty (1998).

Movement 1 in more detail

The listening to the voice of others (Three listenings and transcription)

While Gadamer has been accused of textualism that condemned the interpretational process to “an internal operation of reading”, he insisted that speech be given priority over text (Gallagher 1992, p. 330). Accordingly, *Imaginative Journalistic Openness* – an openness to being questioned by voice as well as text – was first applied to the conversation as a prerequisite to a deepened awareness of my *Journalistically Effected Consciousness*. My thoughts were thus initially directed to the receipt of verbal utterances and their commencement of prejudicial awareness within me.

I did not take many notes as we talked. My thoughts were instead focused upon listening intently in order to receive conversational surprise, shock, disbelief or simply a feeling that something significant was peculiarly present. I did not, therefore, attempt to “park or bracket” my “pre-existing concerns, hunches and theoretical hobby horses” before I left for my encounter on the other side of the hermeneutic circle (Smith et al. 2009, p. 64). So while concurring that questioning should be “generated by attentive listening” to the participant (Smith et al. 2009, p. 64), I equally accepted my prejudices were framing the questions arising within me. I wanted to reach them. Where possible, jarring instances and troubling, internal questions were processed as the conversation ensued and resulting follow-up questions fed back into the discussion. Enhanced awareness of *Journalistically Effected Consciousness* through *Imaginative Journalistic Openness* certainly invoked and required a sense of one’s guard being lowered, of looking in at oneself; I was in effect interviewing two people at once – myself, and the participant. I was learning about another’s self-interpretation through learning about my own prejudiced interpretations and our relationship with the tradition we shared.

Once home, the digital interview recording was listened to for the first time; notes were now made as the conversational oddities were encountered once again and new ones emerged. The ‘rehearing’ always took place within one day of the encounter in order to keep the dialogue alive. This dialogic replay was rather more than an “instant debriefing”, more than a one-off opportunity to “spark theoretical memos” and curiously more than the provocation of a “flood of memories and thoughts” (Wengraf 2001, p. 209). It felt like my participant and I had simply resumed where we left off. We had taken a short break after which I duly revisited myself and resumed my reflective exfoliation. I did not attempt to “reduce the level of noise” and bracket off my most striking recollections for later contemplation (Smith et al. 2009, p. 82). I instead kept the floodgates open and welcomed the growing awareness of self-exposure, even vulnerability; it was both exciting yet frankly unnerving. Indeed, hermeneutic listening dangerously risks the prejudices and prejudgements “that constitute our very identity”; it’s like getting hit on the head by an encounter we could have avoided (Garrison 1996, p. 439). Yet those seeking Gadamerian understanding have little choice. Discovery of others through discovery of one’s own self-constructions demands openness, emotional engagement and the welcoming of alternative viewpoints. I would suggest more than a little courage is also required.

I consequently felt ‘different’ following the face-to-face interview. It was not simply a matter of returning home – thus completing a journey around the hermeneutic circle – to listen to the recording from the prior conceptions and perspectives I had started from. I indeed felt “irretrievably changed” by the encounter with my participant (Smith 2007b, p. 6). Something ‘new’ had happened in my relationship with the conversation that mirrored something ‘new’ that had happened in my own relationship with journalistic tradition. My participant had acquainted me with my past. Therefore,

the resumed conversation – the first recording run through – was heard with new ears since horizontal perspectives and expectations had been revised from the first dialogic encounter. I had, in short, become increasingly conscious of my historical position within journalistic tradition in relation to my participant; I was consequently granted new fusions of understanding and new projections of my participant's *Journalistic Becoming* horizon. Yet I wanted to go deeper.

I next commenced a verbatim textual transcription of the recording. This entailed a third 'rehearing' of the conversation; the conduit of language was again invited to grant a further sense of relational immersion. The consequent concentric expansion of the hermeneutic circle of understanding further enriched my projected horizons of fusion and shared meaning. In practice, this relistening and transcription process entailed additional journeys around a "virtual mini-circle" at home where I mentally took on again a conversation with my participant (Smith 2007b, p. 6); I reheard their story, asked questions of it and myself and tried to make sense of it all. It's important to again reiterate that sensitivity to my *Journalistically Effected Consciousness* through *Imaginative Journalistic Openness* had not simply been reserved for the "cognitive space at home base" (Smith 2007b, p. 6); my known prejudices had not been left there but taken with me for guidance throughout my encounter. Furthermore, I wanted to unearth unknown bias lurking within. The parts and whole of the participant's account were thus considered while continually 'playing off' the questions that were raised against the historical prejudices which infused my own horizon. Indeed, I was continually open to "being played by the movement of tradition itself" (Linge 1976, p. xxiv). While we both stood at different historic vantage points, it felt like my openness to difference was drawing me towards my participant; I was moving into new spaces of understanding featuring ever-changing horizontal hues.

There were countless reflective pauses during each transcription. Indeed, each would typically take four or five days to complete. The text was allowed to pull me closer to my participant through my deepened awareness that a good interpretation would deal with questions the text itself raised; confronting the otherness of the text and hearing its challenging viewpoints threw my prejudices into sharp relief and ensured they came to critical self-consciousness (Linge 1976).

The transformative “surrender” of these prejudices through *Imaginative Journalistic Openness* and *Journalistically Effected Consciousness* promised to further expand the hermeneutic circle of journalistic understanding (Gadamer 1967, p. 39). To help prepare for the next Model thought movement, the ‘three listenings’ were concluded with compilation of a ‘summarised debriefing reflection’. It contained deliberation upon my provoked historical consciousness so far. Following this initial interplay with my past, provisional yet potential conditions of the participant’s self-interpretation were explored. These sketched notes thus represented another projection of my participant’s *Journalistic Becoming* horizon.

Movement 2 in more detail

The transcribed interview

I now wished to broaden my Movement 1 horizons of understanding. To help encourage the hermeneutic circle’s further expansion and projective potential, Movement 2 continued the individual case analysis by directing thinking to the transcribed text. This Movement sought to build upon Movement 1. I now wanted to think in more detail about the relationship between the textual parts and the wholes. I thus considered the links between words and extracts and the complete text in which they were embedded; between a potential *Journalistic Becoming* condition and the

whole condition of self-interpretation it might shape; and between single experiences or episodes and the whole, journalistically experienced life.

I sought meanings in Heideggerian ‘appearing’ – the meanings emerging at surface level – and the meanings located at deeper, latent and related depths (1962). The use of metaphor for self-definition could, for example, indicate the sources of journalistic self-understandings and participant presuppositions. Expressions of old metaphorical tropes could serve to link self-understanding with the maintenance and preservation of journalistic tradition; one example is the self-deprecating and self-mythologizing lineage of ‘hack’ which connects the eighteenth century with today’s ‘hackademic’. I also sought additional clichéd portrayals of the ‘underdog’ with a ‘nose for news’ employed in a ‘battle’ on the ‘frontline’ with a ‘skeleton staff’ to save a ‘dying’ industry; these might similarly suggest “negative parameters as a form of mock-heroic self-identification” with identity conceived in terms of being an outsider and isolated from the audience (Conboy and Tang 2016, p. 890).

Yet, once again, this part-whole evaluation process continued to be filtered through my journalistic prejudices which were used to enrich understanding of them. I thus remained sensitive to questioning my inclined choices and connections; I continued to look within the feelings prompted by strange and jarring statements and those more readily accepted. Indeed, while an “incessant dialogue” with the text ensued (Turner 2003, p. 10), the questions it raised had to be utilised and viewed as “the laying open and holding open of possibilities” (Linge 1976, p. xxi). Questions could not be conveniently (and safely) shelved and a blind eye turned. Instead, discovered prejudice continued to be “brought into play by being put at risk”; it was the only way “to experience the other's claim to truth and make it possible for him to have full play himself” (Gadamer 2004, p. 298).

This explicitly hermeneutic preoccupation can be further underscored in relation to Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. Smith et al. (2009) suggest “three discrete processes with different focuses” for IPA (p. 83): descriptive comments (upon, for example, key participant words, phrases, explanation, sound-bites and figures of speech); linguistic comments (upon language use such as pronouns, pauses, laughter, repetition, metaphor and fluency); and conceptual comments (concerning the participants’ more overarching understanding of the matters they discuss). While these categorisations were helpful, I felt “moving the analysis beyond the superficial and purely descriptive” (Smith et al. 2009, p. 90) required participant expressions to encounter my *Imaginative Journalistic Openness*; the participants’ voices were thus invited to access, awaken and challenge my *Journalistically Effected Consciousness* in order to afford ongoing interpretation of textual parts and wholes. New *Journalistic Becoming* horizons were duly projected. These reflected an enrichment of understanding and meaning concerning a participant’s *Journalistic Becoming* and its potential conditions which were now loosely identified.

Movement 3 in more detail

A return to the text and fusion

Movement 2 tentatively explored the part-whole hermeneutic circle with an emphasis on the relationships between different aspects of the text. While sensitivity to the textual background – the circular relationship between the text and the interpreter – necessarily permeated this movement (and Movement 1), it was Movement 3 that now facilitated deeper thinking about it. Indeed, I now thought about the ‘whole’ as the researcher’s “ongoing biography” and the participant encounter as the ‘part’ (Smith et al. 2009, p. 35). The crucial importance of the relationship between the interpreter and

the object of interpretation may be “less comprehensively discussed in the classic texts” but it is fundamental to hermeneutic analysis (Smith 2007b, p. 5; 2009). Indeed, Heidegger reminds us that “interpretation is never a presuppositionless apprehending of something presented to us” (1962, pp. 191-2). With this in mind, Movement 3 sought to broaden the hermeneutic circle of understanding and enhance projections of a participant’s *Journalistic Becoming* horizon by focusing upon my preconceptions that necessarily preceded explicit understanding. Three ‘mini-movements’ of thought within the third movement aimed to prompt further reflective manoeuvring between preunderstanding and understanding and between assumption and actual encounter. Indeed, preconceptions required coaxing to the surface for further interrogation and revision as more information about the object of inquiry was gathered (Tomkins and Eatough 2018).

Firstly, I extracted and themed the embryonic fragment conditions and engendering experiences deliberated upon in Movements 1 and 2. It was envisaged that a formal condition selection process might itself crucially serve to further challenge – and be challenged by – my prejudices. It was a thinking space to take stock and cross-examine internally stirred feelings. Formal identification and selection of the underlying conditions shaping a participant’s journalistic self-interpretation afforded new dialogue between us. The result was a newly informed projection of the conditional parts comprising my participant’s *Journalistic Becoming* horizon. Yet I wished to broaden the hermeneutic circle further to increasingly enrich the projections released from it. I immediately embarked upon a further turn of thought.

I enacted a second mini-movement in which I sought to recount my journey into my *Journalistically Effected Consciousness*. I composed a written reflection of my encounter in a bid to deepen hermeneutic understanding through further self-

immersion. As Van Manen notes: “To write is to measure the depth of things, as well to come to a sense of one’s own depth” (1990, pp. 126-7). While such introspective reflections may distance us from the world, they may also serve to create the reflective space to achieve a closer, deeper return to that world (Van Manen 1990). This was my thinking space to further reflect upon my respective position in journalistic tradition, to take stock through pen and paper before rejoining that tradition with enriched understanding. These personal awakenings and discoveries, which are revealed in the next chapter, attempt to offer explicit insights into my approach to the management of interpretation. I hope each reflection provides a flavour of the sensitive negotiation and co-creation undertaken between researcher and researched. I trust too that these musings offer a flavour of the exchanges, happenings, resonances and dissonances occurring at the open, linguistic and relational interface between human beings infused with journalistic tradition and respective life experiences and understandings.

The personal reflection enabled me to further process the feelings, inclinations, self-interpretations, preunderstandings and past knowledge that had surfaced in my *Journalistically Effected Consciousness*. Of course, many prejudices were destined to remain manipulative but hidden and they remained absent from my reflection. They avoided detection yet must necessarily have played their part in horizon projections and fusions. Indeed, conversation ebbed and flowed, carrying shared yet unquestioned confirmations and agreements within its mystical connections between us. The unquestioned and the unfelt duly evaded capture and drifted ahead to begin fused horizon formations undisturbed. Other utterances passed by with barely a whispered challenge to my prejudices; they afforded a “fleeting” awareness of my fore-understandings (Smith 2007b, p. 7). However, other conversational contents felt implausible, peculiar, even other worldly. These provocations duly entered my

concluding, personal reflection to help further expose my *Journalistic Becoming* horizon; it revealed prejudiced parts shaping my journalistic self-interpretation at that time.

A third and final mini-movement followed. The personal reflection and the horizon it contained was utilised to project a final fusion of shared understanding. Indeed, through the veil of my prejudices, I felt I could now see a little clearer; I could appreciate and accommodate other standpoints more generously and I could project fused understanding more fully. Indeed, by now I sensed hermeneutic sensitivity had reached a critical mass of sorts. My participant's voice was "evocatively intimate" (Turner 2003, p. 20) and I now wished to formally articulate and capture the experience. I endeavoured to record a processual snapshot, a moment-in-time interpretation of a participant's *Journalistic Becoming* horizon. I recorded this event through a second literary contribution – a written 'fused interpretation' of the conditions in which the participant's self-interpretation takes place.

This literary process followed straight after composition of the personal reflection which bore it. It was a prompt, raw and instinctive contribution, reflecting an innate desire to harness the hermeneutic sensitivity realised at that point. In so doing, I recorded the moment when the hermeneutic circle of understanding had concentrically broadened to its furthest extent in the time available. The projected and written fusion was, then, a one-take hermeneutic outpouring that attempted to afford metamorphosis from the researcher's personalised, "confessional tale" (my personal reflection) to a new, co-constructed Gadamerian interpretation (Bryman 2012, p. 462). While it sought to crystallise the conversation with my prejudicial influences, my bid to 'capture the moment' was, I accept, merely the latest temporal superseding and accommodation of the participant's situated horizon by my own situated horizon.

Indeed, my conversation with the participant had been “resumed anew” by each succeeding horizon that took it up (Linge 1976, p. xxxi). Yet I now left the hermeneutic circle, comforted by the hermeneutic principle that no account ‘ending’ can be genuinely exhaustive, just as no starting point can be presuppositionless (Gallagher 1996).

I was not tempted to physically return to the participants to extend the interpretive process (Smith 2007b) or ‘member check’ as some hermeneutic studies have done or suggest (for example, Turner 2003, Fleming et al. 2003 and Van Manen 1990). I resisted the gaining of some sort of interpretive approval. I felt the integrity of the interpretation could then be lost in pursuit of a sanctioned, modified understanding that, in any case, “remains transient as such conversations could continue indefinitely” (Fleming et al. 2003, p. 118). While such “respondent validation” (Cohen et al. 2007, p. 149) could be seen as a “throwback to empirical, realist ideals” (Finlay 2012, p. 32), Justine Mercer also cautions that perspectives of participants “may be ambivalent at any given moment, may change over time, and may contradict one another to such an extent that consensus is impossible” (2007, p. 12).

My participants, meanwhile, might have simply forgotten experiences – recollections that may have changed my interpretive fusion. I will never know these memories. Yet I accept I cannot fully empty the contents of another human being any more than I can exhaust inquiry into what I am. The embodied nature of our relationships with the world ensured the former students’ experiences belonged to them (Smith et al. 2009); their personal, embodied and lived through events were merely “displayed” for me and, in turn, always seen from my own embodied perspective (Merleau-Ponty 1962, p. 415). While due attention had to be paid to the respective felt-sense experiences of my participants and I (Boden and Eatough 2014),

there was always going to be a limit to my interpretation of their embodied, lived engagements.

A point must thus be inevitably reached when the researcher simply accepts responsibility for the final interpretation (Fleming et al. 2003) even if, as noted earlier, horizons are never fully closed (see page 110). I left the circle satisfied that my own changing horizon, though ultimately decisive, had not been viewed as an enforced standpoint; I viewed it “more as an opinion and a possibility that one brings into play and puts at risk, and that helps one truly to make one’s own what the text says” (Gadamer 2004, p. 390).

The three Model thought movements detailed here were applied to each of the ten participants in turn. The resulting individual ‘fused interpretations’ that concluded each analysis were obtained over 14 months – from January 2016 to March 2017.

Movement 4 in more detail

Analysis of the collective Journalistic Becoming horizon

Movement 4, the thought transition to the collective case phase, entailed further deliberation upon each of the participants while at the same time thinking about them as part of a ‘whole’ group. I had ‘changed’ considerably during the 419 days that separated the first meeting with Sarah Tyler (on 8 January 2016) and the last encounter with Mark Smith (on 3 March 2017); my hermeneutic sensitivity had steadily deepened my hermeneutic capacity to ‘see’. I had also become infused with new readings, new ideas and new visions. Change was inevitable. In fact, I was aware that the first encounter with Sarah had ‘reset’ my preunderstandings prior to meeting the second participant, Anna Coleman. The ghosts of Sarah and Anna were then joined by the shadows of others as the research continued. Nine participants effectively

accompanied me on my visit to Mark in March 2017; interestingly, the length of the individual fusion accounts steadily increased during the project, a trend I only noticed when I revisited them after all individual analyses had been completed. My interpretation of my participants appears to have deepened as I learnt more about how I interpreted myself.

This realisation did not encourage me to retrospectively revise or enhance the ten originally written ‘fused interpretations’; they remained intact. Indeed, these were temporal becoming snapshots taken in real time and of real life. I had no desire to reinterpret dialogue, amend texts or neatly airbrush history. I did not view earlier fusions as suddenly sterile or extinct but rather as rich, fertile ground for ongoing cultivation. Indeed, I trusted their spontaneous ‘in the moment’ authenticity would provide foundational rigour to more general and collective *Journalistic Becoming* deliberations.

The passage of time had nonetheless worked on the project I carried in my subconscious, “crystallizing on the walls of the soul” (Tarkovsky 1994, p. 111). Hermeneutic immersion enhanced cognitive clarity; more of the hidden was revealed as my capacity to access my *Journalistically Effected Consciousness* deepened. Some analyses remained contentedly rested; yet often the old work came to life again in new ways. It was these contemplations that were utilised to extract the collective conditions underlying and shaping the *Journalistic Becoming* of the ten participants. I then withdrew from the hermeneutic circle.

A bridge to Discoveries

This chapter traced my journey from disembarkation in academia to discovery, conceptualisation and study of the self-interpretive process of *Journalistic Becoming*. It was a journey guided by philosophical hermeneutics which enlightened the means by which I could provoke and enable awareness of my historic prejudices and biases to facilitate an understanding of *Journalistic Becoming* in myself and others; as highlighted in the previous chapter, such understanding of practitioners and students might offer fresh pedagogic impetus to journalism education as it negotiates its own becoming and the demands of a becoming industry.

A Reflective Hermeneutic Model was designed for the investigative task. It features and refashions key Gadamerian (2004) concepts. Indeed, its cumulative thought movements aimed to expand the hermeneutic circle of understanding by provoking and intensifying awareness of my *Journalistically Effected Consciousness* through encouraging *Imaginative Journalistic Openness*. The aim was to see anew and obtain an enhanced appreciation, indeed accommodation, of the self-interpretive perceptions of others. Shared meanings concerning the conditional nature of becoming a journalist could then emanate from the capacious circle and be projected in ongoing fused horizons of understanding.

Movements 1-3 of the Reflective Hermeneutic Model aimed to illuminate the underlying conditions shaping individual journalistic horizons of self-interpretation and the experiences that engendered them. These movements offered different ways and emphases of thinking – indeed, they were envisaged as thought movements –

which successively served to deepen my understanding of each participant's respective becoming. The diagram below offers an 'at a glance' reminder.¹²

Movement 1	Movement 2	Movement 3
Thinking about what the participant said: the 'three listenings' and the composition of a 'summarised debriefing reflection' to take into next thought movement. Projections of fused understanding commence.	Thinking about the relationship between the interview text's parts and its wholes while remaining alert to prejudicial provocations. Enhanced projections emanate from circle expansion and becoming conditions are loosely identified.	Thinking about the relationship between myself and the text via three mini-movements that direct thought to: (a) condition selection (b) writing a personal reflection (c) writing a 'fused interpretation' of a participant's <i>Journalistic Becoming</i> horizon.

These movements thus culminate in Movement 3 with a written 'fused interpretation' of a participant's *Journalistic Becoming* and the conditions that shape it. In the next chapter, the two concluding mini-movements of Movement 3 are presented for each participant: my personal reflection (b in table above) and the written fused interpretation (c in table above).

The discoveries arising from the fourth thought movement will be considered in Chapter 4: the collective conditions shaping the *Journalistic Becoming* horizon.

¹² The reader is also reminded that Appendix D (see page 353) contains an example of how these three thought movements were applied in practice with reference to samples of a participant's interview text.

3. The third movement discoveries

Introduction

This chapter presents summaries of the ten individual Movement 3 fusions of shared meaning. They represent my projection of the conditions underlying and shaping each participant's journalistic self-interpretation – their *Journalistic Becoming* horizon.

These edited summaries are preceded by the personal reflections upon my *Journalistically Effected Consciousness* that produced them. The reader is reminded that these are contemporaneous, spontaneously-written and unrevised 'in the moment' captures of thoughts, reflections and recollections; they are offered with all the messiness that such well-meaning attempts at transparency and authenticity entails.

The ten participants' 'fused interpretation' summaries and reflection upon my *Journalistically Effected Consciousness* that afforded them¹

1. Sarah Tyler's story

Personal reflection

Sarah's interview was conducted at Bournemouth University on a day when she had been invited to return and talk to students. I had not taught Sarah but I marked her third year Professional Perspectives Portfolio in which she reflected upon work experience. Sarah, a trainee local newspaper reporter, was very friendly when we met

¹ The Movement 3 summaries are now presented in the order in which the interviews occurred. See Appendix B, page 346, which also provides a handy summary of the participants' employment history. Please note the Movement 3 fusions and prior personal reflections were edited to afford a more succinct and manageable presentation of data. The edited 'fused interpretations' also help avoid duplication of participant quotes that were instead allowed to extensively enrich the collective fourth Movement analysis that follows in Chapter 4. Similarly, the summarised 'fused interpretations' may reference some anecdotes and stories that are more fully described by the participants in their own words during the Movement 4 analysis in the next chapter.

and the conversation that ensued in a colleague's office flowed easily. This was my first interview, one in which I would commence my receptiveness to 'jarring' comments, alternative views and the 'strange'.

The novice hermeneuticist was put to the test almost immediately. Firstly, I was struck by Sarah's conveyed deliberation upon her journalistic 'capability' from a young age. In contrast, I had been unsure about future career options upon graduation and there was no conscious, extended, prior concern about journalism, my aptitude for it, my 'potential' or 'capability'. I simply equated the offer of journalistic employment as trusted, external acknowledgement that I was capable of becoming a journalist. Sarah thus informed me that dwelling upon journalistic capability may, in fact, commence early (for example, at school) and undergo many revisions prior to graduation – and beyond. In short, Sarah made me aware that journalism students may undertake a continuous monitoring of suitability, efficacy and competence in an ongoing process of self-evaluation and self-interpretation.

In addition, Sarah returned me to a longstanding preunderstanding that had commenced revision upon my arrival at BU. I once equated 'becoming a journalist' with acquisition of the NCTJ professional senior qualification, the NQJ (called the Proficiency Certificate in my day). As a young trainee, I shared Sarah's view that this was the best way to feel like a journalist, together with growing experience. Indeed, as she spoke, I distantly recalled my own odd sense of frustrated impatience – a peculiar limbo – prior to passing the required examinations. I, like Sarah, had awaited my becoming arrival, my self-interpretive renewal. Yet now, having employed and taught aspiring journalists, I was not so sure about the skill training focus the exams exemplified. Becoming a journalist also entailed other mysterious things. Strangely, however, the primacy Sarah afforded to the NCTJ examinations still retained a certain

comforting appeal. An attuned, hermeneutic ear would be required to greet the whispered, socialising reassurances of the past that I would encounter. For Sarah, though, the awaited blessing by the NCTJ would shape her *Journalistic Becoming*.

More generally, Sarah illuminated our two respective positions within journalistic tradition. Indeed, I felt disappointment when she announced plans to go into “communications” or “PR” which she felt would improve her journalism; I appeared to have a deep-seated and historic prejudice, viewing PR as the way out for journalists who could not cope. I had long viewed PR as an ‘easier’ option and, moreover, the antithesis of journalism’s mandate of truth. It was the poorhouse, one inhabited by burnt-out hacks seeking respite at the end of their careers. PR was certainly not a thought to cross the mind of a young journalist – particularly one who appeared to have ‘coped’ with the intense world of newspapers. Did I feel this demonstrated a flaw, a journalistic weakness in her? It felt a shameful thought to possess yet I was pleased to confront my prejudicial pomposity for the first time. It had lay latent for decades, buried and festering deep within.

I equally homed in on Sarah’s comments concerning the ‘refining’ of her interview techniques; I felt pleased that she mentioned them since I viewed these skills as integral to journalism. But why was I so reassured by her comment? I reflected that my fixation on the importance of interviewing might represent a further attempt to ‘hold on’ to a bygone era within tradition – an era of traditional skills that I feared was threatened by a new age, a new phase of tradition featuring multi and social media. Sarah was holding up a mirror to me and I saw reflections of a ‘golden era’, images of what was done in ‘my day’. Her conveyance of determination, confidence and being “tough skinned” was similarly music to my socialised ears. She reaffirmed

journalism's timeless, historic qualities. There was no jarring of sensibilities here; we had entered calmer waters.

In fact, there were extended periods when hardly a hermeneutic ripple was caused. For example, Sarah's advocacy of BAMMJ course theory reminded me of how much I had changed. Prior to becoming a 'hackademic', I was sceptical about media theory and its place in journalism education. Journalism was taught on the job by seasoned pros; it was a trade and an apprenticeship was required. Now I viewed theory as central to the development of a critical, investigative and questioning mind – essential qualities for any journalist.

There were other hermeneutic 'moments' which required unpacking. For instance, I immediately concurred with Sarah's inference of performance – the need to "seem" expert. My own frantic attempts to appear convincingly knowledgeable were vividly recalled; journalists have to be many experts, many times of the day and that required many performative acts with varying degrees of success. Sarah urged me to consider the importance of convincing performativity to one's self-interpretation; she also reminding me of the intense emotional demands that accompany becoming.

Like Sarah, I was the first member of my family to go to university and the first to enter journalism. However, I did not feel the resulting "pressure" that she indicated. I was reminded not to take for granted that students seamlessly make these transitions. Unlike Sarah, I did not encounter a revelatory, life-changing "bursting of a bubble" experience after leaving home either; her Salzburg Academy university placement and post-university internship changed her life.² I thus became attuned to recognise that for

² A small group of BU students annually attend the Salzburg Academy on Media and Global Change. It is "a unique three-week action research and critical making program that brings young media makers together from around the world to critique and create civic media for social change". The academy focuses on responding to the "wicked problems of the world, and values human connections and co-creation of media initiatives to solve them" (Salzburg Academy on Media and Global Change 2017; Fowler-Watt 2016b; Goodman 2017).

some a real sense of epiphany may occur— what Denzin describes as “interactional moments and experiences” (1989a, p. 70). A perceived, liberating escape from insularity or the mundane may follow and the jettisoning of the old self for a new, freer self-interpretation.

Sarah also forced me to open my eyes to the hierarchical complexities of *Journalistic Becoming*. Firstly, I had historically felt a reporter *was* a journalist whereas Sarah distinguished between them; the latter had a higher status value. Moreover, post-interview reflection upon this conversational segment made me realise I had never consciously considered the meaning or tradition of either label. Secondly, I also became aware that I often described myself in the same self-deprecating terms as she did (Sarah: “I’m just a reporter”; Me: “I’m just a hack”). Sarah had once more facilitated an important self-reflection: buried somewhere within, had I also accepted some sort of journalistic ‘pecking order’, the source of which was difficult to locate? Had I, like Sarah, privately viewed myself as “only the local newspaper reporter” in the company of the “top dog” national journalists? I had not consciously thought about being a journalist in terms of hierarchies and the self-interpretations attached to them. My journalistic outlook had also been primarily domestic in outlook in contrast to Sarah’s global engagement and worldly ambitions. Sarah, in short, had asked fundamental questions of my journalistic self which enabled me to see anew the journalistic world of others.

Fused interpretation: Sarah’s Journalistic Becoming horizon

Sarah’s text offers multi-dimensional insights into her perception of *Journalistic Becoming*, its conditional parts and the experiences that might have engendered them.

Starting with experiences, the impact of her university education appears encapsulated in three repeated words which aid understanding of her becoming. They are “capability”, “subtly” and “seeds.” She appears to suggest university is a purveyor of future journalistic growth, whereby seeds of self-efficacy – belief in one’s capabilities – are planted. She also suggests conditions of becoming may be so “subtly instilled” that the recipient requires temporal distance and future experience to acquire awareness of their existence or relevance. *Journalistic Becoming* may thus assume a latent character, patiently awaiting ongoing activations and appearances.

For Sarah, her epiphanic Salzburg Academy experience (a placement and internship undertaken during and after university) was, “without a shadow of a doubt”, the most significant part experience in her whole journalistic journey to date. The Academy summer school offered a perspective on global career possibilities while post-university internship “took it to another level”. Internship gave her insights into journalistic roles and teamwork, afforded communication practise, and helped her assess her strengths. Salzburg was cleansing; it “refreshed” her enthusiasm for journalism. It changed her life.

Also highlighted is her third year university MMP (it granted reassurance, a sense of capability and awareness of personal qualities), the dissertation (experience of researching, writing and the “practicalities” of how newspapers work) and work experience (it aided future job direction via “a matter of elimination”). However, she also discussed the importance of her childhood CBBC contributions and school experiences in offering insights into journalistic aptitude and suitability.

Sarah’s narrative extends to her present employment with the revelation that becoming a journalist remains an aspiration seemingly dependent on broader, multi-media experiences (including communications and PR) and acquisition of professional

NCTJ qualifications. There has been no turning point to date: her journalistic self-interpretation is ongoing, directional and processual in nature: “I think I will get there eventually, I just need to build up the experience.”

During this narrative, Sarah suggests a range of becoming conditions that these experiences helped engender; they may be seen to shape her current horizon of self-interpretation, her *Journalistic Becoming*. For example, verification through praise is when “you feel most a journalist” while belief in capability and a sense of journalistic direction can also be highlighted; the latter was assisted by a theoretical course component that globally broadened Sarah’s horizon at university. She also highlights performative confidence and required determination and toughness while acknowledging the significant influence of others – both at university and during her internship. A sense of journalistic status may also be seen as an emergent condition; ‘reporter’ is identified with the local newspaper industry while ‘journalist’ is linked with the experienced, the qualified and the nationally-focused. The contextual shaping of habitus is meanwhile alluded to. While Sarah “didn’t really have any hobbies” and “wasn’t generally any good at anything” prior to making journalistic contributions to CBBC, her life was also lived “in a bubble” prior to going to the Salzburg Academy. In addition, she did not wish to appear “a bit posh” by calling herself a journalist even though her mum exhibits pride in describing her as such.

Strong, emotional provocation engendered by experience also emerges as a potential becoming condition. Indeed, Sarah’s narrative conveys epiphanic awakening (“the Academy did change my life”) while words like “struggle”, “love”, “shock”, “daunting”, “nervous” and “stress” also pervade her text in the context of experiences encountered; the resultant confidence and sense of capability gained in confronting her challenges also shines through.

Finally, Sarah indicated that newly glimpsed horizons of becoming may require attention to keep them in view; after returning to university after her Salzburg placement, she realised she would have to “knuckle down” and “adopt” what she had learned. Today Sarah continues to await the becoming she desires; Sarah wants her current horizon of journalistic self-interpretation to be eclipsed by one that meaningfully signifies her personal, journalistic arrival.

2. Anna Coleman’s story

Personal reflection

Anna worked as a designer at one of the newspaper offices where I was once employed. It was a strange experience returning to the old building for our interview; its layout had been reconfigured but something of the old atmosphere lingered within its tiled, art deco walls. I met Anna in a conference room which, I noticed, contained an antique desk piled high with clutter. I was immediately transported back to 1986 when a brusque, pipe-puffing editor sat across the desk’s stained leather inlay and grilled me about my suitability for a reporting post. I could almost smell the plumes of smoke that engulfed us.

I was offered the job and, after several years, gained promotion to News Editor. I was entrusted to manage a large team of news reporters and liaise with production staff like Anna. As Anna and I took our seats, I wondered what impact, if any, my memories of the old place would have upon the interview. In what ways had awakened nostalgia stirred personal preunderstandings? Should I have conducted the interview here? Anna’s boss was also a good friend; he had been my deputy at the paper. I was unaware if Anna knew about our shared journalistic connections. These thoughts crossed my mind as we settled into our chairs. The conversation that followed was

relaxed and unhurried; Anna was enthusiastic and we chatted freely. We were not strangers. I had supervised her third year Multimedia Project.

There was much to reflect upon both during and following our conversation. Firstly, I recognised many of the becoming challenges and negotiations she highlighted: the making of telephone calls and public encounters, issues with perfectionism, excessive worrying and fear of failure. Indeed, Anna's stressful recollection of her first epiphanic phone call to a member of the public instantly reminded me of my first journalistic assignment. I stood at a gateway and wondered what I was going to say to a bereaved father who lived in the house before me. The resulting conversation represented a personal breakthrough; only now, almost 30 years on and while writing this reflection, do I realise how important that micro-experience was. On that day many years ago, I had broken through a ceiling, a mental ceiling; I had crossed the "boundary" that Anna described. I, like Anna, suddenly understood people would talk and share – and people would talk and share with me. I felt I belonged to the job. Anna's vignette appeared to indicate the same; her micro-experience afforded a sense of 'on-track' *Journalistic Becoming*, a sense of justifiable self-interpretation, of coherence and of stability. Something had been smoothed out; life could progress. Anna's experience had highlighted an apparent discrepancy between her attributes and those desired (Higgins 1987) as well as a potential disjuncture – a gap between one's "individual biography" and "what we are actually confronted with" (Jarvis 2010, p. 83). Yet her head could now be "held high", as Anna put it. Anna also appeared to draw attention to a continuum in tradition; despite our different historical standpoints, the journalistic art of conversation and persuasion transcends the ages. Nonetheless, Anna reminded me of the insidious power of one's

dispositions and qualities and the resulting self-resolutions and adjustments that shape who we are.

My prejudice, meanwhile, warmly embraced Anna's enthusiasm for the newspaper industry and traditional skills like interviewing; equally, her suspicion of theory comfortingly reminded me of my reformed mindset. Yet I had to address the source of my unease concerning the journalistic distinction she drew between "frontline" writing personnel and lesser-ranked "backseat" production staff. She counted herself in the latter category. At first I found myself disagreeing; some of the best journalists I worked with had moved into design. Yet further contemplation found me agreeing. I too put writing and fieldwork above all else; I always had. My admiration for design colleagues may, upon reflection, have been founded on the fact that they had once been writers in the field and had 'graduated' to senior design roles. Anna thus stimulated more thoughts concerning journalistic hierarchies and their capacity to shape one's journalistic self-interpretations.

Uppermost in my thoughts was Anna's oddly hesitant, laboured and unsure deliberation that she was a journalist. As she edged towards an eventual self-confirmation, I glimpsed becoming's fragility and delicacy. Anna's admittance that she no longer wishes to engage with the public made me instinctively question her eventual claim to be a journalist. I now felt I understood why she wrestled with her journalistic self-conception (she initially refuted she was a journalist). I wondered if she felt deep inside that journalism was, indeed, an outside job, one involving external communication, the gathering of news and writing it. Yet I again became aware that my view was shaped by my view of journalism's tradition. I seriously questioned for the first time whether a journalist could indeed be deskbound and reluctant to engage with readers. I had been confined to a deskbound news editor role in later years. Was

that why I had, at times, felt oddly unsettled in my role? Was I no longer a journalist? Anna appeared to have struck a very raw nerve. I had unconsciously retained a socialised perspective of *Journalistic Becoming*. Through openness to Anna's comments, I revisited my deskbound journalistic unhappiness once again; I realised I equated the field with being a journalist – even if others might not.

No wonder I avidly accepted the initial “black and white” journalistic primacy Anna afforded to writing and interviewing; it's exactly what I equated with journalism. No wonder I questioned whether Anna could be a journalist. No wonder I latched on to Anna's description of journalistic friends as “proper journalists” because they were reporters or presenters. My prejudice – and my former professional frustration at being deskbound – confronted Anna's self-interpretive perspective head on. I realised *Journalistic Becoming* was far from black and white. It was infused with role and geographical complexity. This was only the second interview but one thing was already abundantly clear. The holding up of a hermeneutic mirror not only glimpsed another's perspective; it also caught sight of disconcerting self reflections.

Fused interpretation: Anna's Journalistic Becoming horizon

While Anna feels she has become a journalist, she also affords further insight into the ongoing process of journalistic self-interpretation – *Journalistic Becoming*. Indeed, she maintains she is always becoming a different journalist. Anna, like Sarah, depicts an evolutionary becoming, one where the journalistic self is always adapting, improving, changing and gaining new confirmations of journalistic interpretation.

Anna, however, did deliberate for some time before reaching the conclusion she is a journalist. Her definitional dilemma appeared to focus upon the fact that she is office-bound and involved in design rather than writing and fieldwork; if her friends

are the face of journalism, she is a faceless and unseen journalist. Consequently, she believes these friends do not see her as a journalist. She presents a role and geographical status hierarchy based on the confirmation of others; “the proper journalist” occupies the top while she, “the lesser journalist”, sits at the bottom. Where you are on the ladder appears to condition the sort of journalistic self-interpretation one makes.

Meanwhile, perhaps the key condition part that shapes Anna’s *Journalistic Becoming* is attained and accumulated ‘confidence’. The word permeates her testimony to the extent that we joked about its prevalence towards the end of the interview. Confidence may be considered to have a positive effect on self-efficacy; indeed, she incorporates both at one stage when discussing work experience: “The biggest pro was confidence and the belief that I can do this.” The shaping condition of journalistic insight – gleaned particularly through an afforded insiderness – was also accelerated during work experience when career directions could be assessed for a good self-interpretive fit within her personal framework. Indeed, while Anna observed “cattiness” at a magazine, she found a local paper to be her “natural environment”; Anna also discovered journalists are “quite respected” by the public rather than hated.

Throughout this journalistic journey, Anna has endured considerable emotional turbulence. She talks about being “scared” of one university exercise, “always afraid” of the public not talking to her, the “horrible” work experience where she was treated like a “slave” and the “fear of failure” that is mentioned on more than one occasion. Her emotional confrontations are further conveyed by mention of being thrown or pushed in the “deep end” on other occasions; the ‘deep end’ appears to be the place where emotional resolutions shape her self-understanding. When these events are successfully confronted, there is an epiphanic sense of attained confidence, a

becoming deliverance. Anna's habitus, meanwhile, threads through the account. She did not aspire to become a journalist from a young age, mentions she was the first member of her family to go to university, and her desire never to let down her supportive parents.

The experience that best served to activate becoming's shaping conditions was work experience gained through the BAMMJ course. Indeed, being asked to make a telephone call and overcoming her trepidation emerges as a disjuncture-turned-epiphany, a 'micro-incident' within the work experience. The confidence gained taught Anna something about herself; it shaped her journalistic self-perception. Anna's undertaking of her final year MMP is highlighted as an additional experience during which she felt like a journalist at university. This project granted an exploratory "free reign" and journalistic independence to self-discover; it had a coherent wholeness and relevance which, in turn, ensured its significance as a key experiential part component in Anna's whole journalistic venture. She dismisses the usefulness of more theoretical course elements in comparison to practical application of what has been learnt: Being in an experience "is a lot more helpful" than being told about it. Learning derived from the NCTJ production course element is also specifically mentioned as a "small thing" that "probably played quite a big part" in her sensed becoming as a journalist.

Anna also draws attention to a "safety net" she employed at university. She successfully sought known contacts to interview rather than venture into the public domain. She indicates the possibility of going through university in a sort of becoming denial. Anna additionally implies the university journalistic experience had a faux or pseudo quality because students are always seen as students rather than journalists and are thus "tarnished". This led to lying and pretence to gain public access. Similarly, stories compiled in the workplace were "more worthy"; stories written for the course

didn't "have the same significance" as getting your name in print. Her journalistic self-interpretation appears to have been shaped by awareness of and engagement with journalistic authenticity and exploration of relevance.

It was employment which secured Anna's sense of journalistic self. At work her self-interpretation appears linked to further conditions: belonging and confirmation of others ("I know I'm appreciated and feel part of the team"), and insiderness – she was shown the "tricks of the trade" and short cuts. Finally, Anna appears to make a distinction between her journalistic self and whole self. While skills and confidence were conditions of her *Journalistic Becoming*, she nonetheless notes she "was always going to be me". The notion emerges of different self 'parts', different horizons of interpretation within the whole person.

3. John Stone's story

Personal reflection

I met John, a feature writer, in the lobby of the news agency where he works. He was very friendly, welcoming, and relaxed; I had not met him before and was immediately struck by his enthused, buoyant and highly personable demeanour. John suggested we remain in the quiet lobby area and we sat on a red leather sofa. He then carefully helped me adjust my dictaphone to prevent it slipping off the small table between us; this further helped break the ice.

I experienced the biggest hermeneutic wake-up call to date during this interview. Indeed, I firmly believe my stirred *Journalistically Effected Consciousness* only just caught the importance John attached to the combative qualities and "courage" needed to be a journalist. I was close to missing these utterances which initially confronted the defensive brick wall of my preunderstandings. I felt John was offering a clichéd

portrait of the strong, forceful and predatory journalist well-practised in the art of persuasion; the journalist who, in John's words, knows "what you need to have people say". I instinctively suspected he was telling a story which he felt matched 'our' group's understanding of what a journalistic narrative should look and sound like (Denzin 1989a). I felt he was acting the part: reciting a fabled, romanticised chapter from journalism's past. I wanted to hear a more nuanced and somehow less predictable account containing less journalistic bravado and more journalistic sensitivity. I didn't initially 'buy' his 'foot-in-the-door' image. But why?

In questioning my response to his comments, I assumed John was acting simply because I often felt I did. Yet while my journalistic alignment had, at times, been difficult to square with my 'naturally' introverted disposition, this transition had apparently been relatively smooth for John. He may once have been timid, reserved and "overly polite" but not now it seemed. John believed in his combative persona; it could be said that he revelled in his new self and was certainly convincing in his portrayal of it. I was wrong to question his authenticity and felt most uncomfortable that I had. Indeed, I was grateful to John for alerting me to the dispositional negotiation that accompanies a student's becoming. While personal framework alignment might be challenging – as in my case – it could equally be less so. I was also reminded that such adjustments are dependent upon what one perceives journalistic demeanour and conduct to be and the relational possibilities that aspiring journalists conceive to be available with journalism's tradition.

I consequently found John's discussion of personal, journalistic "shaping" and "embodiment" intriguing after initially being blinkered to its significance. The "chipping away" of John – which I envisaged to be his personal framework alignment – appeared to have been sufficiently agreeable to grant the profound and sincerely-

held belief that “maybe even 90%” of him is now a journalist. I, however, had never ‘felt’ such shaping or embodiment. I think I have unconsciously resisted certain alignments and endeavoured to preserve more of the non-journalistic ‘me’; I have, on reflection, always been uncomfortable with some aspects of journalistic work, notably aspects of what John calls the “chase”. My personal framework adjustments were thus more boxed, segregated and put away to enable the ‘real’ me to re-emerge beyond my work. So while I must recognise his portrayed transition from journalistic “acting” to apparent “embodiment”, I now wonder whether my feet have always remained firmly planted on the performative stage. Perhaps my journalistic life was always defiantly fragmentary, containing narratives that never quite came to fruition (Scott and Usher 2011). In short, John made me better aware of the internal power struggles that can shape *Journalistic Becoming*. Self constructions wrestle with each other.

John also demanded that I linger over the strangeness provoked by his usage of two oft-stated words: his “passion” for journalism and his preparedness to “invest” in it. I realised I had never considered journalism in these terms before. It was quite a revelation. These reflections enabled me to consider the possibility that feelings towards journalism occupied a continuum and “passion” may be an important condition of *Journalistic Becoming* reflected in investment in journalistic endeavours.

Fused interpretation: John’s Journalistic Becoming horizon

John presents a processual journey of becoming refinement that has led to journalistic arrival; he conceives of himself as a journalist.

Indeed, while John suggests the refinement of skills is a key condition of his becoming, his text reveals a broader process of self-refinement from which his self-interpretation emerges. This refinement has a sculptural quality; indeed, it has

necessitated the need to “chip away” at himself as a person as part of his journalistic “shaping”. In this context, key words emerge from his text as shaping, refining tools. They help reveal the conditions of his becoming, the conditions that are moulding his current *Journalistic Becoming*. Indeed, his sculptural refinements have led to a journalistic self-interpretation that appears linked to “courage”, “belief”, “confidence”, “passion” and a predatory (“stalkerish”) and combative determination to “fight” and “chase” for news. He wants to “be the best” and “beat everyone else to it”.

These conditional parts shaping and underlying his *Journalistic Becoming* are joined by others including a willingness to “invest” in journalism, a love of storytelling and the role of journalistic others; indeed, BU university lecturer Colin is specifically named in this respect. The resulting refinement process has witnessed an apparent self-metamorphosis from journalistic actor to journalistic embodiment; journalism has made him who he is and “fully” changed his life and perception of himself.

Some of the ‘part’ experiences that engendered his journalistic shaping precede the BAMMJ course. His experience at a press office aged 15 or 16 was his first journalistic exposure and afforded becoming conditions of career direction and selection. A film review undertaken at school afforded further verification and direction while a journalistic college exercise gave John “power”, the chance to “change things” and awareness that “tough questions” had to be asked.

The BAMMJ course, when taken as a whole, was “empowering” and confidence affording; he “wouldn’t be a journalist without BAMMJ” which taught skills, offered perspectives on media platforms and prepared students to “an industry standard”. A number of course parts are highlighted which required confrontation with disjuncture and discrepancy, and witnessed efficacy through achievement: a first year interview

requiring the “targeting” of an elderly person, a feature profile of a street entertainer and coverage of the 2012 US election which shaped him. The latter also offered a sense of future journalistic direction. Meanwhile, converged news days offered authenticity as did work experience which introduced new skills, afforded belonging and played a vital role in obtaining a job. The work experience part of the BAMMJ whole experience is conveyed as a showcase of his becoming: work experience would later “set me apart”. Student media were also “formulative”: the Bournemouth *Rock* newspaper required personal investment in return for “invaluable” experience and authenticity while the university’s *Pebble* magazine offered discrepancy and efficacy through providing a “blank canvas” and management responsibilities.³

These experiences, taken collectively, were an experiential taster. Taking BAMMJ as a whole, John says “we were journalists at points”. Yet it was employment at the news agency for a “good year” that finally secured a sense of becoming a journalist. So while John felt like a journalist for “short moments” at university, his embodiment in journalism occurred in employment. He says he may now be a journalist first and a person second and traces his epiphanic journalistic arrival to “the biggest story I’d worked on” while working at the agency; it concerned a woman escaping from Isis.

Throughout these experiences, his powers of communication emerge as a key conditional shaper of his journalistic self-interpretation. While he highlights the skill required to “talk a person round” in his current job, he employs the same phrase to describe his persuasive skill in getting on to the BAMMJ course after initially being rejected. He uses it again when discussing a first year feature exercise. Indeed, John makes the case for the conditional importance of performance and communication in

³ Student media collectively refers to extra-curricular BU publications and broadcasts produced by students. These include the *Rock* newspaper, the now defunct *Pebble* magazine and *Nerve* radio. Staff involvement in these outputs varies. The *Rock* is produced independently of Bournemouth University though, as noted earlier, I am currently staff overseer.

relation to becoming a journalist. While John says he was a born communicator who has enjoyed storytelling since childhood, the experiences he mentions may be seen to have facilitated the ‘shaping’ and ‘chipping away’ required to ensure his *Journalistic Becoming*. Consequently, a natural dispositional timidity and politeness underwent personal framework readjustment to facilitate John’s embodiment of journalism.

In the specific context of the university course, John suggests its empowering impact nurtures the “courage” required to “act like the journalist or be the journalist” courtesy of certain experiences: they include converged news days, community exercises, election coverage, work experience and student media. These experiences helped engender the conditions that shaped his journalistic self-interpretation; it’s an interpretation essentially presented in terms of a sculptured, chipped away self, one where self-refinement led to journalistic embodiment in work.

4. Kate Browne’s story

Personal reflection

I met Kate, a broadcast reporter, at 6pm at the offices of the radio station where she works. I was mindful that she might be tired after finishing a shift but she appeared relaxed, friendly and unrushed. I had briefly met Kate once before – when she revisited the university to talk to students. She graduated the year I started work at Bournemouth University so I had not taught her.

The first thing that struck me about Kate was her particularly confident, professional demeanour. I wasn’t sure at the time why this struck me as important or, indeed, surprising. Application of the Model thought movements helped me to hermeneutically peel away the layers of preunderstanding that may have prevented me from noticing a very important part of Kate’s journalistic being. Her voice. It was her

voice. It was the tone, clarity and assurance of Kate's voice that prompted, that niggled away. But why? I now believe she made me aware of my own journalistic voice, the insecurities I had about it (particularly on radio) and how I had tried to manipulate my South London accent for certain occasions. Kate's later elaboration upon her 'real' rather than 'radio' voice helped further open the door to 'voice' and communicative resolutions in relation to *Journalistic Becoming* through demanding hermeneutic interrogation of my responses of her. The use of her voice was duly selected as a condition that informed my projection of her journalistic self-interpretation.

Kate's strong sense of motivation to be a journalist was also powerful for the very reason that it contrasted with my own somewhat uncertain and belated interest; while she had pursued as much work experience as possible, I had simply entered a newspaper office desperate for any work and asked for a job. I had no experience and there had been no 'game plan'; I wasn't even sure I wanted to 'be' a journalist. Kate, meanwhile, instigated a plan, a becoming plan featuring journalistic drive and focus. Our contrasting experiences, and my frank analyses of them, helped me understand and glimpse the importance of work experience investment to her. While both part of the same journalistic tradition, different histories had afforded us different opportunities, expectations, perspectives, and experiences within it. Kate was a graduate of the journalism degree and work placement era; I was a product of the old 'hot metal' tradition which I entered following a short, unpaid 'trial' to assess my suitability. A mediation between the alien and the familiar was thus required even though I was aware that complete transparency would prove elusive. I needed to disable my preunderstandings and invite dialogue to make its claims upon me.

Comprehension of the value of work experience to Kate also required confrontation and interplay with historically-ingrained memories of students in my own newsrooms

when I held editor roles. These students were too often seen as an inconvenience unless they showed some immediate spark and pragmatic ‘usefulness’ to the staff. There was not time to nurture and teach and, it must be said, regrettably little inclination to do so. Perhaps newsrooms had changed and were now more grateful for help. Or perhaps it was just my newsrooms. In any case, my guilt-laden historical experience consciously infiltrated the work experience dialogue initiated by Kate. As she spoke, a silent film of my past was flickering behind her head.

Competitiveness, meanwhile, linked us across the ages. I instinctively attuned to her portrayal of nervously lining up against peers and wanting to do well. In my case, it was an obsessive race between trainees to attain the NCTJ qualification first. This memory surfaced as we spoke and it was promptly accompanied by a clearly significant realisation. Kate had failed to mention the NCTJ once. She, like Sarah, hermeneutically threw my traditional training prejudices into sharp focus. Yet, unlike Sarah, she effectively urged me to continue looking beyond NCTJ skills training – beyond the shadows of my journalistic past – if I wished to share understanding of *Journalistic Becoming*.

Fused interpretation: Kate’s Journalistic Becoming horizon

Kate’s becoming story features strong motivational, directional and self-belief conditions yet also reveals an exploratory journey involving the appropriate journalistic accommodation of her voice in storytelling. While print was deemed too “separate from the story” and TV an area for those who “want to be famous”, radio enabled her voice to be “physically in the story”. Her *Journalistic Becoming* was associated with being journalistically heard: “I’ve always wanted to be the person that people would listen to.”

Yet two becoming crossroads appear to have required negotiation. She entered the BAMMJ course inclined to be a journalist but she didn't want to "close the door on the idea of being a radio presenter". She felt she had "to pick a side" and her becoming was eventually directed towards speech radio "where you have a lot of overlap with journalism". But what voice to use? After performative experimentation, she now tries to sound "like a normal person" at work though she may speak "more formally". Her *Journalistic Becoming* has entailed the becoming of her voice in an appropriate medium.

What experiences conditionally shaped her journalistic self-interpretation? Three experiential parts are primarily identified. Firstly, school and college gave her scope for journalistic exploration while enhancing confidence in her use of voice; also at that time, work experience "literally gave me the idea of a newsroom". Secondly, involvement in *Nerve* radio at university (*she rose to Station Manager*) was "really important" and "like a club". While it afforded the opportunity to develop her presenting rather than news skills, her involvement gained her "recognition within the student radio world" and commendation on her interview skills. Thirdly, work experience on the BAMMJ course emerges as critically influential. This challenged her personal framework (such as ethical contemplation upon agency work) and helped confirm career direction and orientation. It also facilitated a transitional "turning point" from work 'experience' to work 'access' through newly-formed agreements with employers entailing regular work and training. This access made it "easier to see your progression"; she was able to chart her becoming. Work experience also prompted a stark realisation afforded by insiderness: "I don't think it's until you go into a real life newsroom that you actually realise how little you do know". The "rules" were different, deadlines tighter and she had to be a better writer; there was

“just a higher standard”. Kate depicts a becoming awakening. An awareness of disjuncture, discrepancy and efficacy was entailed; a dispositional sense of one’s ethics and required skills was similarly activated. In this context, the course provided a three-year “safety net” to catch Kate’s falls while allowing experiences to engender the conditions shaping her journalistic self-interpretation.

In addition, a collection of BAMMJ micro-experiences are highlighted including a first year project to find an original news story, and, once again, the first year exercise involving the interview of an elderly person. Yet it was covering the 2012 US election at university that crucially gave directional signage across Kate’s becoming crossroads towards speech radio. Meanwhile, vocational course elements assume primacy since theoretical components, though interesting, “do not make you a better journalist”. Her becoming benefitted from sensed authenticity: the MMP was “much more realistic” than the dissertation. During these experiences, the influence of significant others again emerges as a condition shaping becoming; lecturer Colin was once more depicted as a becoming facilitator. Kate also received verification through praise on work experience. She adds: “It’s almost the people you meet through the course that’s really important.”

The BAMMJ course, overall, offered accommodation of the self-understanding process: Kate said she entered knowing little but left journalistically knowledgeable. Much becoming had been done. She wouldn’t be “where I am now’ without the course but “the course alone is not enough”. She distinguishes between the course and the work experience which forms a component: “They run alongside each other in terms of making me the journalist that I am today”; work experience was the most important experience but not by a “country mile”.

Kate concludes she has become a journalist, a self-interpretation realised since employment in her current job. Her current conception of *Journalistic Becoming* appears “all encompassing”; there isn’t a distinguishable “that’s work me”. It was an expected, awaited and embraced becoming too. Indeed, journalism hasn’t changed her “in a way she wasn’t expecting it to”.

University experiences – particularly work experience opportunities – emerge at the vanguard of becoming facilitation; university also provided a temporal safe haven for becoming while she charted her becoming course. Kate suggests her future *Journalistic Becoming* will entail evidencing or “proving” her skills and attributes.

5. James Newton’s story

Personal reflection

James, a trainee multimedia journalist, was the first participant to be interviewed who I had taught. I taught him during his second year at BU – the unit called News and Online (see page 84) which helped prepare him for the NCTJ reporting and production examinations. I also worked with James on the student newspaper, the *Rock*. We did not get off to the best of starts. I had just arrived at the university and was immediately tasked with overseeing the paper which, as noted earlier, was independently produced by the students. I had formed the impression after talking to staff that the *Rock*, under lecturer Colin’s tenure, had become somewhat problematic; there had been concerns over the negative university stories it contained and accuracy. One staff member described it as “out of control”. When I suggested to the *Rock* team that pagination should be reduced and a more community rather than university focus adopted, James publically accused me of already being in the “university’s pocket”. Yet we went on to forge a very good professional relationship; we worked closely together on the *Rock*

and during the university's UK 2015 General Election coverage when he assumed the role of Editor-in-Chief. He was, in my opinion, one of the most capable students we had in the cohort; he possessed the attributes I deemed necessary be a good journalist in the field. He had that certain determination, that 'attitude', that desire to ask questions. I'd seen these qualities in industry colleagues and liked to think I possessed them as well. These were the socialised prejudices and skewed preunderstandings that accompanied me when I met James in the foyer of the London press agency where he works. He greeted me warmly and we walked a short distance to a quiet café where the interview took place.

As his journalistic story duly unfolded, I became increasingly aware that he was slowly drawing together key threads that made up the fabric of my norms and expectations. His was a story of being "toughened up" to speak to people and thriving in the field; it was as though I was saying the words. I thus projected our fused, shared understanding with 'ease' and 'naturalness'. I distinctly recall my concern at the time while attempting to hermeneutically slow down the receipt of material for closer interrogation. It was all too familiar.

Yet, in a further twist to the mind game, James then pre-empted divergence when he said: "This may not be what you want to hear". In fact, I welcomed what followed. He said he had learnt "on his feet" through interaction with other journalists rather than through training and NCTJ qualifications. I imagine he anticipated discomfort on my part because I had attempted such 'training' with him and his cohort during the second year. Like Kate, he appeared to invite me to look beyond formulaic skill acquisition. I was not 'hurt' by his training rejection or his claim that university was inauthentic. I rather recall a feeling of surging relief that my norms were again being assaulted. Moreover, he further encouraged me to explore the hunch that prompted this

thesis: becoming a journalist is multilayered and multifaceted. According to James, writing skills had to be accompanied by social skills to become a journalist. He went on to articulate solutions: we have to get students out of seminars so that they can interact with the wider journalistic world. We also have to find ways of engaging students with student newspapers and election coverage. It was fascinating to experience how a former student could, through his own becoming awakening, awaken and advise a becoming teacher. It was an exciting moment. Perhaps somewhere amid these frank, collaborative decipherings of each other lay a different sort of journalism education pedagogy.

At times, James was almost too good at tapping into me. He effortlessly established further common ground when he discussed the extreme emotion entailed in real-life field exposure. I was also struck by his conveyance of work experience; while formative, James agreed it can vary in quality. He recalled sitting and not speaking to anyone on one placement – immediately reinforcing my own observations in industry that were first recalled with Kate. His discussion of the value of non-journalism experiences (his pre-journalism charity work) also chimed; my own non-journalism experiences similarly toughened me up for journalism and made me realise I ‘got on’ with people. I, like James, had also ‘copied’ professionals – particularly their verbal door step techniques – and enjoyed affirmation from publication. I also learnt through fear as he did. Like James, I further remember discussing my journalistic exploits with flatmates; this ‘home becoming’ offered a sort of domestic affirmation of my journalistic self-interpretation and it may have been the same for James.

Concern derived from this comforting sense of harmony. Were my horizon projections of James’ *Journalistic Becoming* too self-reflective, too conveniently and eagerly conceived? James reminded me, more than anything, to be careful. To not so

readily derive reassurance from words of familiarity and compatibility. I remained duly vigilant as he spoke. I was also careful not to apply a sort of compensatory over-attendance to his words. This was the most tiring interview to date.

I was, however, ‘thrown’ when he said he planned different, non-journalistic becomings. That thought had rarely crossed my mind. It was a crucial discomfort to experience. My entrenched, perhaps generational preunderstandings had not included the simple possibility that people may want to be lots of things. His admiration of journalistic “heroes” jarred too; I had not particularly admired anyone, let alone relish the opportunity to sit next to them as he had. I also continue to be interested by lecturer Colin who James credits for injecting realism and urgency at BU. What did he offer these students who consistently mention him? What am I offering? Had I smothered the students when overseeing the *Rock*? I suddenly felt like a becoming denier. James instigated thoughts about the role of creative freedom in providing a further shaping condition of *Journalistic Becoming*.

Fused interpretation: James’s Journalistic Becoming horizon

James offers an account of his *Journalistic Becoming* which reveals its continued inherent fluidity and, moreover, directions towards new non-journalistic becomings. While the BAMMJ course provided “moments” when James felt like a journalist, he says he did not become a journalist until three or four months into his first and current job at the agency. Indeed, even at work he initially felt he was still “pretending”; he concedes he may still be acting but just more convincingly.

Shaping James’s journalistic self-interpretation are certain conditions that appear to contribute significantly to his *Journalistic Becoming*. Firstly, the achievement of publication was important to his journalistic verification; it was a statement or

announcement evidencing his becoming. One example he gives was “doing actual journalism” at a London university when he contributed Olympic Games copy in 2012. Secondly, there was an awareness that his “mentality” had changed which provided further self-confirmation. He saw a “bigger picture”; his becoming vision improved, his horizon broadened and James began acting differently in the field.

He identifies required skills (technical and interpersonal) as a third becoming condition. Here James affords primacy to writing and social adaptability; the latter encompasses learning “on your feet” with other journalists, the importance of which is placed over training and NCTJ acquisition. In this respect, he believes the BAMMJ course is not essential to becoming a journalist; indeed, James didn’t feel like a journalist on the course which he felt was inauthentic. Consequently, though he concedes the course facilitated industry entry, he did not feel confident upon entering the agency and felt no more ready having gone to Bournemouth; James adds he currently works with history graduates who are “better journalists than me”. While today he describes his ability level as “competent”, universities could enhance the social skill condition he highlights with students being “really pushed” into more practical work. Meanwhile, home emerges as a place for his becoming reflections and realisations; James says he never went home from university feeling like a journalist but, in contrast, he discussed his agency interview with Jeremy Corbyn with flatmates, telling them “yeah, I interviewed him today”. Home may be where his journalistic self-interpretation can be additionally evidenced and verified.

The experiential becoming “moments” at BU included “some” converged news days and the “last few hours” producing the student newspaper. Together with the Bournemouth *Rock*, coverage of the 2015 UK election and work experience are primarily highlighted as key experiences, the latter feeding into university work and

projects. Work experience, though varying in organisational quality, also appears to have helped inspire his becoming through putting him into contact with “heroes”. It also afforded the condition of journalistic exploration while allowing him to flex his becoming muscles; indeed, he became “armed” with an exclusive story which he took to his local paper for publication. The becoming condition of self-belief was also aided on his first work experience by watching and borrowing techniques. Indeed, adoption of an effective communicative approach resulted from “something very small” – the micro-experience of observing and copying a reporter’s telephone manner.

These and other university activities engendered further conditions of becoming: emotional epiphanies were provided by work experience (one is described as “terrifying”) while overseeing the 2015 election as editor granted him an “overwhelming experience”; the third year Multimedia Project offered freedom to self-explore (“it broadened part of myself”); a theoretical unit afforded a “global view”; and BU staff (particularly Colin) provided journalistic excitement and enthusiasm, contacts and support. All these experiences appear to have contributed to his constructions of journalistic self-interpretation.

However, non-university experiences figure prominently in James’ becoming too. His involvement in charity sales work afforded development of social skills, including rapport building, and awareness of dispositions; he realised people “just kinda like me”. This work toughened him up by introducing rejection. It was, he reflects, “one of the most influential parts in helping me to speak to people”; indeed, it provided a point of experiential reference when it came to agency ‘doorstepping’. He was able to

determine and orientate his approach to people, one that was not too friendly and not too distant.⁴

Other key non-university becoming experiences occurred in journalistic employment. Discussing his aforementioned changed mindset, he anecdotally contrasts one story, when he was “thinking like a journalist” with another when “he didn’t know what to do”. He also conveys the personal shaping afforded by knowledge and mastery which helped him feel “more as a journalist than at any other time” while covering a humanitarian conference in Armenia for the agency. Meanwhile, the conditions of confidence and peer observation thread through his entire becoming story. Finally, it was in the childhood home where he became a “consumer of stories”; a dispositional “nosiness” and desire to explore and discover news duly became manifest at university and today James and his mum share a bonding interest in the news agenda.

Today, journalism has changed his life and it’s “starting to take over a little bit”; he portrays an invasive becoming overtaking its host with cynicism, aided by the influence of his colleagues. His becoming is meanwhile fluid. He aspires to be faster, to write better, to know “what the line is instantly”. James desires to be like ‘them’, those who write “beautiful colour”, write with “scary” speed and “walk around the courtroom like they own it”. James also wants to acquire his “own voice” in terms of pursuing the stories of his choice; he now presents his ideas to the newsdesk after initially lacking the confidence to do so.

However, James does not feel journalism will command his lifelong becoming; other becomings are envisaged. Indeed, peers are on the “path to finding something they really enjoy”; he says people have a greater tendency to do that “in my

⁴ ‘Doorstepping’ or ‘door knocking’ are terms used by journalists to describe their unannounced arrival at people’s doors. While its effectiveness has been debated, harassment continues “but nowhere near as much as it once did” (Harcup 2015, p. 137).

generation”. James sees others, such as aid workers, and thinks “wow, they’re actually doing some real good”. His future self-interpretations may thus require conditional shaping by enjoyment and virtuousness to be found in other fields.

6. Sian Jarvis’ story

Personal reflection

I met Sian, a freelance field production assistant, at the international financial media company where she works in London. Sian was friendly and relaxed during the interview which was conducted inside a glass booth on the frenetic first floor. She was, however, noticeably more hesitant and unsure than previous participants which, at times, threatened to extend into awkward moments. Sian often prefaced an answer with “I don’t know” which, I concluded, reflected how challenging the articulation of becoming can be. At least we knew each other which, I felt, eased the situation. I had taught Sian the ‘News and Online’ unit on the BU Multimedia course for one semester in 2014.

The interview again brought into focus the changing face of the journalism industry, our respective positions within it and the curious continuities that tie the past to the present. Firstly, I was “pulled up short” (Gadamer 2004, p. 270) by Sian’s rejection of the local newspaper industry. She would, in fact, fail to fulfil her potential by entering it. She instead appeared to equate journalistic success with “working for a big company”. I understood the sadness I felt. I had spent a large part of my working life in local and regional newspapers and lamented the slow, agonising decline of the great titles – the hugely respected names of my day, many of which were now struggling. Holding on to them was holding on to my journalistic past, my part of journalism’s tradition; their demise was the slow extinction of my journalistic being.

Sian jolted me out of my sorry sentimentalism. She demanded I snap out of it and ‘see’ the hierarchical conditioning of her becoming in her journalistic world.

Sian also reminding me of my deep-seated bias towards the traditional skills of journalism in a multimedia, multiskilled age. Indeed, I found myself inwardly concurring with Sian’s apparent association of reporting, writing and news gathering with her perception of journalism and journalists. When Sian relegated copy editing in her hierarchical journalistic pecking order, I thought of the designer, Anna, and her own demotion of her role below those who worked in the field. Yet Sian had her own concerns; Sian also wondered if she was a journalist since she wasn’t reporting. Role and geographical positioning was emerging as a key shaper of *Journalistic Becoming*.

Meanwhile, the “things themselves” (Heidegger 1962, p. 195) continued to provoke my fore-conceptions. Sian’s compilation of a “portfolio website” prompted further jarring of the senses courtesy of the strange and unfamiliar. Indeed, the journalism of “read all about it” has become the journalism of “read all about me” (Wilkinson 2014). New journalistic dawns demand new horizons are understood. Their appearance must ask questions, stimulate prejudice and nag at the past.

Amid change, I also felt Sian’s timeless pain: the nerves, the anxiety, the self-doubts and the need for journalistic praise and pretence. Continuities accompany the transformations occurring within ceaselessly moving tradition.

Fused interpretation: Sian’s Journalistic Becoming horizon

While this projection of Sian’s *Journalistic Becoming* horizon is significantly shaped by her conception of journalistic hierarchies, internal confusion regarding her journalistic self-interpretation evidently continues. Indeed, though Sian maintains she “felt like a journalist” before entering the third year of Bournemouth University, a

convincing sense of becoming a journalist nonetheless appears to remain a matter of personal discovery and confirmation.

Sian's key shaping condition – her perceived placement within a journalistic hierarchy – seems to be one defined by journalistic tasks and place of employment. Taking tasks first, journalism concerns news gathering in the field rather than the deskbound requirement of ensuring resulting journalism can “look pretty”. Sian found herself in the latter position while employed as a copy editor – her first journalistic job after leaving university, which she disputed constituted journalism. She suggests her becoming effectively stalled at this point.

Her second hierarchical perspective centres on place of employment. While she enjoyed work experience on the Bournemouth *Daily Echo*, she “didn't want to work for a local newspaper”. Sian appears to introduce a status becoming. Indeed, a condition of her becoming involves successful involvement and association with a big reputation ‘name’; her frequent use of the word “cool” perhaps reflects her desire to embrace a cool becoming, an image-based ‘brand becoming’. This may have a hierarchical, geographical dimension too. London is mentioned twice; she wanted to study and work in the capital. When offered post-university radio work in Swindon, she turned it down. When BU lecturer Colin helped facilitate her second job at Gatwick Airport, “it was the next best thing, it was close enough”.

Yet it's the nature of the journalistic tasks she performs – the nature of her journalistic behaviour in practice – that appears dominant in her perceived becoming. Even when employed at the international financial media company, Sian did not initially feel a journalist. She was mainly involved in logistical work: “I wasn't involved in the production side of it”. Now, however, she works as a producer in the field which “essentially is a journalist”.

Nonetheless, a degree of ongoing tension is then evidenced, suggesting journalistic confirmation remains elusive. Sian doesn't consider herself to completely be a journalist because she is not reporting; she is rather in a journalistic role. Sian says she will feel more fully journalistic with acquired knowledge which will enable her to "expand my roles" and be "more involved in stories". She later adds she isn't the finished journalistic article because "I'm not really involved in any writing"; she wanted to be a reporter while at university but also mentions writer's block while going through phases of wanting to write. Nonetheless, despite implying reporting and writing are conditional components of her journalist self-interpretation, she elsewhere describes herself as currently a "24/7 journalist". She portrays a conflicted becoming.

Anxiety, disjuncture, efficacy and discrepancy have meanwhile collectively swirled within her personal framework and required resolution. She appears to have been shaped by emotional upheavals through their epiphanic impact. Indeed, Sian describes the personal turmoil entailed in conducting vox pops as part of her BTEC in print-based journalism; she "hated it". She also cringes when thinking about a first year university feature writing exercise that made her question her journalistic suitability; Sian wondered if she could "just be good at news or do you have to be good at both?" Meanwhile, she was a "nervous wreck" at a *Times* placement where she "just sat there"; again she questioned whether she was "cut out" to be a journalist. A local paper was welcoming but in effect offering coerced becoming through "forcing me to go out and do it". Becoming a journalist has made demands on her personal frame.

The role played by significant others constitutes a further becoming condition. Sian mentions her BTEC teacher, Bournemouth lecturer Colin and Karen at *Sky News* who looked after her during placement. Colin and Karen offered reassurance that she could become a journalist. Both 'wanted' her becoming and offered long-term mentoring;

they assisted her post-university career progression by offering directional exploration and even employment opportunities. It was also through Colin that Sian developed an interest in news through the *Rock* and class exercises. Meanwhile, the encouragement of Sian's mother prevented becoming closure because she talked her daughter through difficult times; the pride of family members continues to help Sian "feel like I am a success". Finally, becoming endorsement is offered by work colleagues who provide praise. Sian wasn't sure how she was performing and how her capability was perceived; the offer of a full-time job was thus "awesome". Her journalistic self-interpretation has seemingly been enhanced through the faith, hopes, wishes, confirmation and belonging engendered by others.

Sian's becoming journey also involved conditional investment in a becoming passport. Official stamped evidence of her journalistic progress and development afforded opportunities that could further shape her journalistic self-interpretation. Her CV benefitted from involvement with the *Rock* student newspaper, work experience at the *Times* and *Guardian*, her "portfolio website" and shorthand which further distinguished her from others. This showcased becoming was, in effect, an external expression and validation of her self-interpretation. It remains accompanied by the condition of performative becoming – the need to "give off a persona of confidence".

Going to Bournemouth University was her best becoming decision; it gave her confidence, a "good grounding into real life in the newsroom and in the journalistic world" and helped her "find" her journalistic qualities. Sian says the Bournemouth experience felt "very real" most of the time; Colin's "crazy life-like assignments" are highlighted and Sian feels "you learn a lot doing it that way".

Yet in emphasising the limitations to course authenticity, Sian also underscores its conditional importance to *Journalistic Becoming*. Hence, getting her first story

published in the *Rock* was a great birthday present “even though” it was the student newspaper; being published in *The Times* and the local paper during work experience was also “awesome” and “cool” but she still felt like a student while working there; news days would “make you feel like a journalist” and give insights into how newsrooms work but there was scope to enlist family members to provide interviews; and journalistic inauthenticity was highlighted when potential interviewees declined to talk to students. While the MMP project was also “awesome”, Sian considered dropping out over her dissertation; theory units “don’t really come into it” as far as her current work is concerned. While authentic experience thus appears linked to the engendering of her *Journalistic Becoming*, her stated ‘becoming’ at the end of the second year was also associated with a conditional sense of increased knowledge and workplace readiness.

Reflecting upon what makes a good journalist, Sian offers the following which may be seen to reflect additional conditions important to her own journalistic self-interpretation: dedication, “coming up with ideas” and an “eye for a story”. Confidence, meanwhile, “comes with practice”; she is naturally “the complete opposite” and still gets “really nervous”. Journalists also have to be “quite technological” and possess a desire to be a journalist. Indeed, while becoming a journalist can be taught and news sense can come with practice, “for some it quickly becomes apparent that that’s not what they want to be”. Professional NCTJ skills like media law are additionally “very important” and she wants her journalistic voice to be heard “eventually”.

Sian has now been working as a field producer for over a year. Yet her journey simply began with a “brainwave” she had one day: Sian wanted to be “out in the field, not stuck in the office all the time”. Though she was “always interested” in reading

magazines, it didn't occur to her that journalism "was actually a job that someone did". Now Sian is employed in journalism, her candid comments reveal field entry does not in itself bestow a sense of being a journalist. It's rather a complex process of ongoing self-interpretation, one she is still negotiating and constructing.

7. Jess Roberts' story

Personal reflection

I met Jess, a technology magazine Features Editor, in a Bournemouth hotel where the interview was conducted in a quiet section of the lounge. Her welcome was warm, reflecting, I assumed, the relationship forged during my third year supervision of her dissertation in 2014. Within moments, I was reminded of her unhurried calm and thoughtful demeanour.

My quest to deepen projection of the conditions shaping her *Journalistic Becoming* horizon entailed several provocative encounters with her words. Jess, in fact, like James, anticipated my first hermeneutic adjustment. When Jess mentioned that she had effectively adopted a pick and mix approach to the NCTJ examinations, I instinctively found myself questioning her claims to be a journalist; the past was on my shoulder, reminding me Jess didn't possess the 'required' professional qualification. When Sian asked "Is that a controversial comment?" she appeared to assume my disappointment. Yet I was grateful to her. Jess reminded me – very forcefully – of the depth of my entrenched position, one situated within the same tradition but instead infused with the relevancies of its time. In an uncertain, evolving journalist world, she questioned the 'value' of the NCTJ examinations. The NCTJ itself acknowledges its predicament and has moved to adapt, to be wanted, to 'become' something else. Jess (and James) effectively informed me I shared the same uncertainty and the same fear of irrelevance

derived from the present's seeming indifference to the past. Yet they were showing me new becoming possibilities. It was the power of tradition that sunk in as Jess spoke; while I felt traditional skills were not enough to become a journalist, this hunch nonetheless felt like an unwelcome intruder. My past tried to bolt the door, offering instead the familiarity of the NCJT and its skill suite to warm my journalistic being.

In a similar way, I was struck by Jess's claim that awareness of advertising requirements was part of being a journalist. I instantly recalled the many battles I had had with advertising departments, insisting upon editorial integrity and independence while seemingly immune to profit implications. Here was Jess seemingly advocating a new conciliation. Again, different times and roles demanded different approaches, attitudes and becoming conditions. My task was not to dismiss them but to seek their accommodation in my projections of shared understanding.

Perhaps the most sobering hermeneutic challenge was contemplating Jess's experience of the *Rock*. Jess painted a picture of independence from lecturer supervision – one that delivered becoming benefits. Jess, I assumed, was unaware that I had exerted more supervisory control since taking over academic responsibility for the running of this newspaper and its website. I had sought to instigate a new era, one rebuilt on safer foundations; one safer for the university – and safer for me. Students were given less slack. As Jess spoke of the creative, collaborative environment that shaped her, I visualised participant James sitting beside her at that very moment, nodding sagely and informing her I was now in the university's pocket (see page 149).

Creativity and collaboration certainly hallmark the *Rock* today. However, had I pruned back freedom too severely? Had I stunted the green shoots of becoming's potential? Jess, in effect, demanded that I view the *Rock* as a powerful becoming tool;

the exploratory, journalistic freedom it offered was intrinsically linked to one's self-discovery, to one's self-interpretation as a journalist.

Jess's conveyance of journalistic hierarchies meanwhile fanned the flames of the production versus reporting debate. It was writing and finding a story that made Jess feel like a journalist rather than a previous "subbing role" at her company that entailed taking the stories of others and improving them. She didn't consider herself a journalist then. I felt increasingly guilty when this topic was raised; my concurrence somehow felt like a disloyal betrayal of my former design colleagues.

Jess also jangled my dispositional shackles. She suggested potential ethical anxiety might arise if she undertakes future investigatory work resulting in "upset" to people. I was immediately hit by this comment. The debilitating frisson of inner conflict momentarily returned as I recalled the demands to expose while occasionally doubting the public interest validity in doing so. I sometimes felt I lost part of myself when I was required to play God with people's lives. Jess reminded me that becoming a journalist can involve a challenging assault on one's personal framework.

Fused interpretation: Jess's Journalistic Becoming horizon

Jess's becoming journey was shaped by self-interpretive conditions which secured her eventual sense of journalist 'arrival' four months ago. Two key and entwined conditional influences were creation and independence. While creation involved collaboration, passion, pride and the opportunity to originate from "scratch", independence was the necessary becoming context. Her becoming arose from non-supervisory spaces in which a collaborative journalistic creativity could nurture and shape one's journalistic self-interpretation.

Still, her personal framework has been challenged. Jess suggests a “switch” is clicked to transit from the introverted “home Jess” to her extroverted journalistic persona. She depicts the flow of an ongoing internal dialogue whereby home Jess gives advisory encouragement to another self part – Jess the journalist. Jess maintains it is additionally challenging to be a journalist when you are like her, an introvert. Certain words and phrases help further illuminate the nature of the dispositional challenges involved and how resolutions are made. While “weird” appears to depict her becoming encounters with strangeness, personal readjustment is eased through welcome “affirmation”, journalistic “passion”, required “discipline” and becoming “ambition”. What she wants to journalistically become in the future is meanwhile discussed within the context of other becoming challenges: Jess’s apparent directional confusion is linked to job insecurity and, in effect, the industry’s own directional confusion. “I don’t really know what’s going on”, she says, suggesting her own self-interpretive ambitions are tied to awareness of the industry’s becoming.

Indeed, concerns over commercial futures have followed her becoming journey. While at BU, there was “the worry of job availability” and today commercial awareness pervades Jess’s interpretation of journalism and what it means to be a journalist. She says being a journalist is “much more than being able to write now”; it is also conditional upon the ability to communicate and build relationships, including internal engagements with other departments and their financial requirements.

While choosing not to acquire the complete suite of NCTJ exam requirements, the traditional skill and role of writing in journalism nonetheless remains a key part of her whole becoming perception. Writing is a primary condition of being a journalist. When employed in a production role in her current job, she thought it was a “massive shame” because she could have been an “asset”; Jess only felt she had become a

journalist four months ago when she became Features Editor – a role that involved “actually writing things”, investigating, finding stories and interviewing. These are required activities of her becoming. Hence, a highlighted epiphanic experience, one that made Jess feel like a “true journalist”, involved breaking an exclusive technology story. This story appears to represent her becoming breakthrough. Jess consequently has “a lot of regard for reporters on newspapers and for people who do long form features for magazines and for newspapers”; they top her *Journalistic Becoming* hierarchy. One’s place within a hierarchy again emerges as a required conditional resolution shaping one’s journalistic self-interpretation.

In this respect, her production work for the *Rock* student newspaper was “not so much journalism”. Nonetheless, the *Rock* experience as a whole is highlighted as a “standout” part experience, one that eased Jess into her current job through offering the aforementioned freedom to collaboratively create. The second pivotal part experience mentioned – involvement in a school youth magazine – is similarly praised for its collaborative, creative and independent features. It was an “affirming” experience, one that evidenced journalistic potential and helped her gain access to Bournemouth University. The youth magazine thus kick-started her becoming journey. Both the *Rock* and the youth magazine were embraced as part of an ‘extra-curriculum becoming’; they were vital parts of the experiential whole. While extra-curriculum activities may be seen to provide passports stamps documenting becoming potential, they were also journalistic investments from which Jess derived self-interpretive rewards. Indeed, her *Journalistic Becoming* is closely entwined with conceptions of creating journalism in a collaborative environment.

Within the BU environment, practical class exercises meanwhile encouraged Jess to talk to lots of different people which “built the world up” for her; the global current

affairs unit similarly gave her “a bigger world”. She felt the practical-theory blend was “very useful” and there would have been a “loss on both sides” if only one had been offered. University ‘news days’, Jess notes, could have offered the authenticity, peer working and communication benefits of the *Rock* if they had been more frequent while online teaching requires updating. Finally, university work experience provided feedback, affirmation and an opportunity to filter journalistic self possibilities.

Taken together, Jess suggests university experiences engendered further conditions shaping journalistic self-interpretation: an awareness of organisational ability, of “being quite intelligent about things” and of inquisitiveness. Jess believes they can be taught at university and feels she attained “quite a lot” of these at Bournemouth. Yet engendering this intelligence and inquisitiveness in students may involve “poking them a bit” and getting them to look deeper. Meanwhile, significant others at BU are mentioned. Lecturer Colin is again name-checked (his “very different” and “physical” teaching style), together with lecturer Ann (who helped Jess find a journalistic voice); peers were also watched and provided opportunities “to learn from each other”.

Jess said she initially felt like a journalist at Bournemouth University “all the time” but later clarified “not 24/7”. Overall, the Bournemouth experience helped Jess develop her skills, prepared her for the world and give her a journalistic voice, even if she would claim to be “a freelance” during the course since people were reluctant to talk to students. She does not think she would be in her current job without the university experience; it put pieces in place for her *Journalistic Becoming*.

Jess felt she ‘became’ a journalist when in work – but only after securing the writing-orientated Features Editor job. While Jess is unsure about future becoming directions, she continues to journalistically learn and improve. Her *Journalistic Becoming* is unfolding.

8. Rob Burrows' story

Personal reflection

I met Rob, a motorsport magazine journalist, in the relaxed surroundings of a quiet London pub. We sat alone in a back room. Rob was friendly and relaxed; I was immediately struck by his thoughtfulness, eloquence and openness. Frequent pauses and silences felt 'filled' with thought and expectation rather than awkwardness and intrusiveness. I had taught Rob the News and Online unit during his second year and also worked with him on the *Rock* newspaper; rapport had been given a head start.

This was the longest interview conducted to date and one that proved particularly emotionally demanding. I think this stemmed from a discomfiting sense of convergence. Indeed, I strongly recognised Rob's recurring themes of shyness and fragile confidence which he said he tackled by deploying "the natural ways that I have". Rob seemed to sketch my own dispositional outlines very accurately and I was immediately alerted to how this might frame my horizontal projections of his becoming. Again, I consciously sensed a 'holding back' was required, the prevention of cosy slippage into a convenient inter-personal world of trait similarity we seemingly shared. I worried that my 'seeing' would become dimmed, that I would miss verbal and textual jolts to the system. Potential stirring up might be fogbound from the start. Equally, this perceived similarity represented a fusion of understanding; we appeared to share certain self-perceptions and personal preunderstandings while historically separated on journalism's time continuum.

While Rob's revelation of childhood competitiveness evidenced these personal parallels, so did his insight into what churned beneath: the demands of performance and presentation amid the unnerving unpredictability of intrusive shyness. As he put it, "there's a façade to myself in public, away from home". My self-reflection derived

from Rob was often sharp and painful. However, the tension between Rob's dispositional shyness and his journalistic self-interpretation also felt peculiarly intensified through the resurfacing of my own memories. Rob depicted a sort of shared becoming angst; our fused understanding again reminded me of the personal frame negotiation required to accommodate conditions pertinent to a particular becoming.

Yet hermeneutic acclimatisation also provoked strangeness amid familiarity. For example, I was required to address my surprise at his childhood journalistic ambitions and young, creative enterprises (both in contrast to my own) and give these investments due deliberation. Similarly, while a journalistic self-interpretation conditional upon writing and news chasing was harmoniously received, Rob's admittance that the NCTJ professional qualification was not taken "particularly seriously" also caused predictable disequilibrium.

Conversely, revisiting my own deskbound frustrations helped account for the sense of sympathy I felt towards Rob who today wrestles with choosing either an editorial (deskbound) direction or a journalistic one beyond the office walls. I shared his dilemma for years after heading indoors and making the "rite of passage" Rob depicted. Building upon the contributions of earlier participants, Rob also helped crystallise the importance of status as well as role and geographical hierarchical resolutions to one's *Journalistic Becoming*. Indeed, he proudly announced he works for the best publication in his field. Following Jess, he also acknowledged editorial consideration of wider advertising implications, further exposing my romanticised, time-warp memory of an era where editorial independence was king.

Rob was the first interviewee to include me among his influential others; again it was an emotionally demanding moment. I did not doubt his sincerity but recall a hyper-sensitised hermeneutic response: I felt I immediately imposed a distanced, out-

of-body withdrawal so we could discuss ‘Andy’ as if he was another person. Only then could I become hermeneutically attuned to what Andy and his colleagues had offered; I wanted to be open to further prejudicial challenges and confrontations rather than wallow in the seductiveness of acclaim. Rob nonetheless went on to offer reassurance when he ‘joined’ my ongoing *Rock* ‘independence debate’; a sports editor during my involvement with the newspaper, Rob highlighted its authenticity.

Rob ultimately offered an extra-curricular becoming, one supported and encouraged by the BAMMJ course. Collectively, these experiences engendered conditions of Rob’s journalistic self-interpretation which I projected after a particularly immersive researcher-researched trade-off.

Fused interpretation: Rob’s Journalistic Becoming horizon

Central to the projection of Rob’s *Journalistic Becoming* horizon was careful consideration of his ongoing confrontation and accommodation of inherent shyness and self-doubt within his personal framework. These dispositional traits compete with a desire to journalistically impress, demonstrate capability and achieve status. Similarly, while creativity, competitiveness and pride also emerge as significant self-interpretive shapers, confrontation with his fundamental shyness never seems to be far away. He paints a picture of personal alignments being shunted into place; indeed, talking to people and initial contact building remains a “big hurdle”. Yet rather than perceiving two parts to his constructed self – an introvert Rob and a performative, journalistic Rob – he instead attempts to ensure natural politeness and good manners “comes across” when his “public façade” is presented.

While his self-interpretative journey commenced with childhood journalistic explorations and investments (including a YouTube channel), uncertainty followed;

indeed, choosing to study journalism over geography at university entailed “turning it over in my head” for a month. The dual interests of journalism and motor sport duly coalesced. Yet Rob says he only ‘became’ a motor racing journalist three months ago when the title of Junior Journalist was bestowed by the motorsport magazine where he currently works. The title crowned and verified his journalistic self-interpretation. His *Journalistic Becoming* was also conditionally dependent upon a “writing capacity and a news chasing capacity”, rather than his previous freelance production role. Rob’s sensed arrival required a further hierarchical condition too: he is now working for the “best motorsport publication in the country”. Rob’s becoming is, to borrow and incorporate his phrase, an “esteemed brand” becoming. Indeed, when first offered his job, an epiphanic condition of his becoming is conveyed. It was “a very special moment”; it was his becoming and belonging moment. Indeed, it was Rob’s “dream job” with a publication he wanted to work for since the age of ten. His self-interpretation is thus shot through with conditional pride and related prestigiousness.

Yet still his shyness continues to intrude as his journalistic being confronts further, ongoing becoming. Being a writer and being a “newshound” requires ‘sniffing’ out stories and contact building; a resulting emotional and processual struggle is portrayed as Rob endeavours to become the “finished article”. In fact, his personal framework may deny further accommodation. Indeed, Rob claims he is “not fussed” if he does not become “that person”. Rob suggests that this may prove an alignment too far; he is prepared to “forego” being a field journalist and instead enter the deskbound “editorial side” where he feels “incredibly comfortable”. Yet Rob confronts a self-interpretation dilemma. While such journalistic withdrawal may be embraced, a consequent lost sense of *Journalistic Becoming* “constantly crosses my mind”. Rob hence hopes to retain a journalistic (writing) part to any new editorial whole. Writing, again, emerges

as a role condition of *Journalistic Becoming*. In the future, other becomings are meanwhile entertained by Rob. He may “consider teaching or lecturing in a few years’ time”.

Rob’s constructed path to journalistic self-interpretation can thus be seen to feature several key ‘parts’ or conditions. The aforementioned personal framework alignments entail ongoing accommodation of Rob’s dispositional shyness; in this respect, courage is required to confront discrepancy and resist “shying away” from confidence issues. A journalistic journey that additionally and conditionally equates writing and the field with being a journalist has also provided epiphanic moments; resulting feelings of pride, nervousness, comfort, discomfort and exaltation have also shaped his journalistic self-interpretations. The development of insightfulness (the “inside track”), the ability to originate material, skill acquisition and knowledge immersion (including commercial awareness) are also conditionally evidenced.

Meanwhile, Rob’s becoming was shaped by the passion, enthusiasm and care he detected in others. While parents supported and pushed, open and approachable BU lecturers including Colin, Kimberley and myself guided, enthused and encouraged. Lecturer Colin was, it transpires, instrumental in “swaying” Rob’s decision to pursue a journalism career. Yet becoming imposters are also identified – course peers who “just weren’t going to cut it” and whose desire and commitment is questioned.

Like Sian and Jess, a further condition of Rob’s journalistic self-interpretation was compilation of a becoming passport; it similarly evidenced journalistic investment while granting access to additional experiences capable of engendering becoming. Indeed, Rob’s passport boasted extra-curriculum stamps which were highly regarded by his current employers. These evidenced investments also afforded journalistic independence, exploratory freedom and experience of journalistic collaboration which

again emerge as allied conditions shaping self-interpretation. Moreover, the investments themselves appear to have afforded Rob the sense that he deserved his becoming, his interpretation as a journalist; indeed, he said: “I have earned the right to call myself a journalist”.

The key engendering, becoming experiences that Rob highlights are mainly extra-curricular. The university’s *Rock* newspaper offered practical skills, independence, pride, learning from experts, a creative non-classroom environment and authenticity even if Rob did not actually feel like a journalist at this time; indeed, in line with his hierarchical conception highlighted earlier, he was more of a delegating editor than a writer. Yet at this time Rob also reported from car racing paddocks for an online website. This investment offered a way of confronting disjunctures and discrepancies; in fact, it provided an opportunity to build a “strategy” to venture outside his “comfort zone”. Taken together, Rob believes the extra-curricular *Rock* and online website “went a long way” to securing his current job through the self-development they afforded. Earlier extra-curricular experiences are also highlighted which engendered the conditions shaping his journalistic self-interpretation. While childhood self-publications granted “a creative outlet”, Rob’s YouTube channel and blogs may be seen to evidence further journalistic exploration, investment and self-discovery.

In addition, school work experience at the *Guardian* was formative. The week gave him a sense of journalistic self-belief for the first time, commercial insight, a sense of belonging and pride, and a “sense of worth”; while the placement afforded journalistic recognition and verification with his first byline, it also made him aware of required skills (a “grasp of English” and the need to be a “good communicator”) while, crucially, offering further insight into “what I needed to be”.

Finally, the BU course is overall portrayed as a becoming conduit: it gave Rob the opportunity to do extra-curricular activities, provided skills for testing and helped retain his interest in journalism. While theoretical course elements granted background understanding of presented news, he doesn't think failure to acquire the NCTJ qualification held him back. The course, in short, guided him "down the road" to becoming a journalist and the appropriate self-interpretation that required.

9. Simon Baxter's story

Personal reflection

I met Simon, who I had taught on the second year News and Online unit, at a Southampton coffee bar. He was cheerful, friendly and relaxed and there was, I felt, a palpable sense of ease between us. I had spent many long hours working with him on the *Rock* newspaper. He had been Editor-in-Chief and I enjoyed working with him on deadline; he was a good 'operator' with a well-tuned news sense. Simon had since worked at a local newspaper and was now employed as a reporter for a news agency run by two journalists in my professional circle. Personal familiarity thus blended with professional commonality when Simon sketched his career during the opening interview exchanges. He appeared to be a modern-day version of myself, continuing the tradition of my world. Indeed, Simon said many of the 'right' things – he looked for the "strange" and "unusual" while he "hunted" for stories. He transported me back to the newsroom in a haze of nostalgia. The appeal of the cosy and familiar was again in danger of masking the troubling and unfamiliar, of reducing nuance to cliché.

However, it soon transpired Simon's story was very different to mine and I was aware of an abrupt cognitive shuffle. It became clear it wasn't just time and

space between us; it was our respective journalistic mindsets. It was his strong directional and premeditated approach to becoming a journalist that first proved disharmonious. Unlike me, he always knew he wanted to write. Unlike me, he had a passion to be a journalist. Unlike me, he had invested in this dream from a very young age. It was all in contrast to my casual, unfocused drift into journalism. Simon painted a picture of a planned, strategic becoming, one that started with writing a column in a community magazine from the age of 14.

His early journalistic forays were astonishing. I had never heard of a 15 or 16 year-old reporting hard news before. Yet that's what he did. Simon casually recounted how he conducted community magazine interviews for a story concerning the controversial HPV cervical cancer vaccine. From there, the steps to becoming a journalist were identified and negotiated. The necessary A-Levels were taken, the triple accredited BAMMJ course chosen, extra-curricular activities seized and a showcase platform built from where he could announce his work and himself. Indeed, he emphasised the building and projection of the journalistic self as a strong feature of today's journalism; the humble byline – the vanity prize of my era – has become supplemented by social media profile building and getting your name 'out there'. There was a lot to accommodate here. Not least, Simon revealed the relative shallowness of my own investment in becoming a journalist; mine had not been driven by longer-term investments, by prior commitment or a plan. My investment had simply extended to acquiring the NCTJ Certificate (now Diploma) which, I believed, would herald my becoming 'arrival'; I soon realised there was much more to one's becoming than that.

I felt moved when Simon detailed his second year university investment; the sheer volume was enormous. Simon surprised me further by announcing he is still developing the film blog he commenced in 2012 at university. Indeed, the 'news

journalist becoming' he says he achieved at Bournemouth University is not enough. Simon wants to construct another journalistic self-interpretation. Thus he is presently holding down two journalism jobs – full-time agency work and the blog – in order to pursue a dream becoming: a processual metamorphosis into a film journalist. In so doing, Simon appears immersed in journalism, perhaps even consumed by journalism; he says his fun has become his work, his work has become his fun. Simon adds he cannot be separated from his work. Again, I found this difficult to comprehend. I was journalistically immersed during office hours but my head then broke free of the surface. In short, hermeneutic reflection enabled me to further contemplate the self-interpretive rewards derived from investment, becoming's processual and ongoing nature, and depictions of one's journalistic self within one's whole self-interpretation.

Further prejudicial provocation was stirred when Simon maintained journalists can be office-bound as well as field-bound. My intuitive recoil betrayed the earlier, deep-rooted preunderstanding that had been teased to the cognitive surface by Simon's fellow participants. I was now tasked with hermeneutically unpacking a view that was anathema to me: one could become a journalist at a desk.

Other comments chimed comfortably. I agreed that journalistic ability is not necessarily related to the status some might hierarchically afford to places of work; I have always felt, like Simon, that there are simply good and bad journalists. I also shared the anguish he conveyed when undertaking 'death knocks'⁵ and, on another occasion, upon receipt of a complaint. The personal conflict he described, once filtered through my own experiences of similar situations, enabled me to hermeneutically comprehend how the heady mix of self-exposure, power exertion and responsibility

⁵ The 'death knock' entails "calling on a bereaved family to ask for information, quotes and a picture" (Harcup 2015, p. 136). While 'doorstepping' and the death knock "bring out different emotions in journalists and interviewees alike" (Harcup 2015, p. 135), it's claimed some bereaved people "desperately want their story – and the story of those they have lost – to be told" (Darbyshire 2018, p. 7).

can provoke moments of considerable tension within one's framework. I felt his anxiety through reliving my own; once again, a silent film was running behind a participant's head, one featuring challenging episodes in my own journalistic life.

Our two worlds, our respective experiences of journalistic tradition, illuminated each other on a further occasion. After praising my contribution to the *Rock* newspaper, he described me as a "guiding light" when discussing important others. I felt oddly detached, just as I had when Rob mentioned me by name. In being reminded of my own largely solitary becoming adventure, Simon ensured I was nonetheless mindful of the importance of journalists to the *Journalistic Becoming* of others.

Fused interpretation: Simon's Journalistic Becoming horizon

Simon became a journalist "almost immediately" upon starting the BAMMJ course, his journalistic self-interpretation resulting from execution of a strategic plan. While he had chosen the BU course due to its triple accreditation, it also paved the way for a formal, traditional and well-trod path to the NCTJ Diploma which he obtained. Yet his becoming strategy had begun long before with determined journalistic investment which assumes conditional primacy in his *Journalistic Becoming*. Indeed, Simon's decision to 'become' a journalist was made at school at the age of 14 when he voiced his youthful opinions through a community magazine while also writing blogs. He has been a committed investor and dividend beneficiary ever since.

Bournemouth University became key to expanding his investment portfolio. Indeed, the university provided the freedom, support and encouragement to experimentally invest in both the BU and external extra-curricular opportunities that form the experiential backdrop of his becoming. In turn, the university thus enabled investment derivatives to continue shaping Simon's self-interpretation; indeed,

investment offered name building, platform showcasing, freedom to discover and express voice and the acquisition of potential passport stamps to future becoming possibilities. So while the NCTJ Diploma investment offered a “string to my bow”, personal investments like his film blog were made. Simon also contributed to the *Bleacher Report* and earned freelance money from *WhatCulture* during the course. Simon’s investment has also entailed journalistic consumption. Simon “consumes” journalism while journalism has seemingly consumed him; indeed, “even the stuff I do for fun is journalism”. His proud parents fed his literary desires; they fuelled his consumption through support and book investments.

Simon’s commitment to journalism and his journalistic self remains active and dynamic. Indeed, he currently undertakes two jobs. The first is his current employment at the news agency he joined in August 2016 following “a very standard local newspaper job”. This is his “day job” that enables Simon and his partner to live. However, his film blog continues to make him “attractive” to the film journalism world, despite the long hours its maintenance entails. His dream becoming as a film journalist remains very much alive, if unfulfilled and latent. In short, though extra-curricular experiences have facilitated a ‘journalistic becoming’, he believes a multitude of different journalistic becomings remain possible; his future film journalism becoming is thus “bubbling underneath” his present news journalism becoming. Another becoming is conveyed as silently and restlessly churning deep within him, awaiting self-interpretive fulfilment. A dream is shaping him.

Writing, meanwhile, is also a crucial condition of his *Journalistic Becoming*. A “base of writing” was required and, in his BU second year, Simon was “writing almost 100% of the time”. While he perceived becoming a journalist also entailed being “driven” to ask questions, Simon’s newshound evolution additionally required the

hunting and gathering of the “strange” and “unusual”. Simon is a ‘hunter gatherer’ of news and one capable of disseminating it due to a rooted, base knowledge; his self-interpretation appears forged in journalism’s primal ancestry.

An awareness of personal exposure, of responsibility and of his journalistic power and influence has also shaped his self-interpretation, leading to a challenged personal framework in the face of journalistic socialisation. He gives an example of a death knock, a required task which left him “quite conflicted”. Yet socialisation appeared to speak when he insisted journalists should be granted the ability to publish material that might be challenged.

Meanwhile, becoming is equated with competence rather than place of work; journalists can also be deskbound rather than bound for the field. Becoming a journalist, he suggests, may proceed with self-interpretive deliberations and resolutions less shaped by geography and status.

The conditional importance of a sensed authenticity to his journalistic shaping is also evident, not least when he conducted film festival interviews for *Empire* magazine during independently-arranged work experience at university. He was afforded authentic insights and even the commuter experience to London was “very professional and very journalistic”. The *Rock*, meanwhile, and its “facsimile of a newsroom”, gave him a sense of journalistic responsibility when he became Editor; though there was a safety net “to a degree”, the stress was authentic. Coverage of elections similarly offered genuine newsroom experience, “something that is major and rolling and breaking” and difficult to replicate.

Simon conveyed the emotional roller-coaster ride that shaped his becoming: the humbling “thrill” and excitement of getting his name in print at the community magazine, aged 14; how he “agonised” over whether to take part in university

coverage of the UK election in the third year due to study commitments; the “nerve-racking” *Empire* experience; the emotional challenges presented by criticism; and the anxiety and fear entailed in dealing with complaints in his current job. Epiphanies explode too. He recalls his “first actual sort of writing” at the community magazine; his most confident day as a journalist when *Empire* invited him to cover the London Film Festival; the surprising *Rock* realisation that he could be a leader; and a formative ‘arrival’ story – an agency exclusive that a new blockbuster film was being made.

The role of others also manifests itself in various guises. While Simon was culturally immersed in online blogs from a young age, his journalistic evolution continued to be shared, experienced and ultimately shaped by significant others – university staff, peers and professionals – who offered feedback, direction, recognition, verification, support and a sense of belonging. The latter, for example, was provided by *Empire*, when Simon shared film screenings with professionals he admired. While sitting with professionals made Simon feel “part of it”, his selection and invitation to attend represented professional endorsement. He was one of the “chosen” ones. Former Bournemouth University students now in industry have also played a part in his becoming; one, now working for the *Guardian*, has read Simon’s film blog which was a “massive affirmation”. Council endorsement of the *Rock* – they were the “decision makers in the town” – was also highlighted. Simon also mentions collaborative peer working on the *Rock* and major events such as the 2012 US election. Finally, Simon’s confidence was retained after his current employers showed “faith in me” and “faith in the story” following an inquest complaint. Others, then, influenced his journalistic self-interpretation through endorsement, bonding, nurturing and a sensed belonging to a community of practice (Wenger 2000).

Bournemouth University was an essential accommodator of his becoming; it “opened doors” and supported an extra-curricular engendering of his journalistic self. Indeed, while Simon believes a journalism degree is needed “if you are going to be a journalist”, he suggests universities should make students aware of extra-curricular activities. The course, in short, accommodated his becoming experimentation and taught him how to become a journalist while theoretical elements helped him reach an acceptable journalistic standard. Yet it was essentially by “doing it” that he ‘became’, courtesy of his BU and external extra-curricular activities. Indeed, when confronting disjuncture, he notes: “It’s not until you hit up on those problems that you learn how to solve them. And that’s what makes you an actual journalist rather than just someone who knows how to be a journalist”. He reinforced the point with a driving analogy: it’s only after passing the test that one learns to drive through confronting motoring’s realities.

It was at Bournemouth University that Simon realised he wasn’t writing for himself anymore: “And I think if you are writing for everyone, I think you have to feel like you are a journalist to a degree”. Nonetheless, his own *Journalistic Becoming* will always be “ongoing”; it is linked to learning and betterment, and evolution from news reporter to the dream construction of a film journalist self-interpretation.

10. Mark Smith’s story

Personal reflection

I met Mark, a freelance sports journalist, in the foyer of a national television company’s regional office. It was 5pm and he had completed a shift in the newsroom; his freelance work is, however, primarily undertaken for a national newspaper. Mark greeted me warmly (both his hands clasped mine) and he suggested we retire to the

quiet basement restaurant. We discussed a recent story he wrote concerning a local footballer's bereavement as we descended the stairs. Mark was clearly buoyant about the feedback he had received and I congratulated him on his sensitive treatment of the subject.

I had taught Mark 'News and Online' in his second year at Bournemouth University; I also worked with him on the *Rock*. We always got on very well and had enjoyed many sport-orientated conversations in the past. He had always struck me as a very driven individual; I probably recognised myself in him. Mark was also one of a small group of students who had 'fingers in pies' and external journalistic commitments while studying at university; as we took our seats, I remembered that Mark had reported on football matches. He continues to do so today.

Within minutes of the interview commencing, I recalled feeling very much on Mark's 'wavelength'. I warmed to his philosophy of being "out there", "doing" journalism and meeting people "face-to-face" in contrast to the more passive, reactive, web-based and deskbound varieties of journalism. As Mark spoke, his words revived memories of my old newsrooms where staff cost cutting and web technology had resulted in a more sedentary and office-based operation. By interrogating my strong sense of accord with his views, I was once again alerted to my association of being in the field with interpretations of journalism and journalists.

Mark's passionate support of fieldwork appeared to confront contemporary web-based socialisation processes; he was advocating not only the preservation of older journalistic traditions but their extension. I found myself admiring his apparent rebelliousness, his all-action "out there" crusade for face-to-face human interaction. He called for the freedom of constrained journalistic beings while questioning the journalistically passive and lamenting the massed ranks of public relations personnel

restricting operations outside. Our horizons already felt close. Indeed, a keen receptiveness to his words seemed to effortlessly facilitate projection of the relational, geographical and role dimensions shaping his *Journalistic Becoming*.

Other utterances jarred and required more work. Once again, I didn't recognise the journalistic investment he evidenced. Mark's engaging vignettes – reporting on a McDonalds refurbishment as a teenager and lugging camera gear to a distant football press conference in the first year at university – entertained rather than resonated. It was through interrogation of my apparent alienation that I was able to acknowledge and contemplate his dispositional willingness and determination to engage, explore and invest – his journalistic 'drive'. I might otherwise have failed to glimpse this type of dedicated journalistic individual – what he described as “the right person” who is prepared to invest long-term to get into journalism. I gleaned an understanding of this important facet of his journalistic self-interpretation by questioning why his amusing vignettes felt strangely divorced from my own experience.

The interview was additionally memorable for a moment of poignancy which, I hoped, resulted from the atmosphere of trust I strove to engender. Mark said he wanted to be “very transparent” and duly shared deeply personal misgivings about his becoming. In what felt like a confessional, Mark said he had struggled to come to terms with his success; the short time span that secured his interpretive sense of journalistic arrival had conspired to diminish his confidence and ensure the spectre of expectation and future becoming weighed heavily.

In fact, the interview appeared to be cathartic for Mark. He said he was “quite pleased” he had had the “chat” because he remembered things he thought he had forgotten. Mark specifically said of his becoming disbelief: “I'm glad that came up”. His openness – and the interrogation I was required to apply to it – facilitated

projection of an important potential feature of his *Journalistic Becoming*. He helped illuminate the processual nature of becoming through his temporal depiction of a premature self-interpretation. I had not entertained the possibility of *Journalistic Becoming*'s untimely and discordant construction within personal frameworks.

Mark's interview and analysis not only offered different perspectives on becoming. I was aware while talking to him that his whole journalistic story was fundamentally a hermeneutic one. It was deeply relational – involving fellow journalists as well as the public – and concerned with human beings seeking possibilities within the world in which they were situated. In the journalistic world, Mark had initially watched from the shadows to glimpse becoming directions illuminated by the “light” emitted from significant others; yet his consequent seeking of becoming and journalistic arrival appears to have cast its own shadow of disorientation.

Fused interpretation: Mark's Journalistic Becoming horizon

Mark's story is hallmarked by a determined, focussed and committed desire to become a journalist. His dispositional, journalistic drive is today harnessed and deployed in several directions: a desire to be physically “out there” at the scene; to be practically “doing it”; to be always mentally “on”; a desire to “show one's face” and contact build; and a determination to be active rather than passive.

As a consequence, he depicts a personal conflict with journalistic leanings towards office-based, online provision. Indeed, he is engaged in a challenging “battle” against online which blocks his desired frontline engagement and field-based self-interpretation. While he views a “typical journalist” as “somebody asking the questions, somebody getting the answers out in the field”, he laments those journalists who are resigned to being deskbound.

He has also noticed a “shift” in decision-making based on ‘efficiency’ and the ‘worth’ of stories calculated in clicks. Yet in a “click happy” era, Mark believes only a “minute” pool of journalists are actually doing the big stories. Meanwhile, embargoes and PR constrain conversational “one-to-ones” and “little huddles”. Mark’s *Journalistic Becoming* seemingly involves the seeking of external relational possibilities in the face of what he portrays as creeping, office-bound and technologically-afforded journalistic passivity; his is a proactive and intimate vision of journalism and *Journalistic Becoming*.

It thus follows that the premier prerequisite of his journalistic self-interpretation is human contact. It’s “number one”, the main conditional part of his whole *Journalistic Becoming*. While the “human skills” are the crucial requirement, he also lists the need for clarity, accuracy and detail – “can you pick up on something other people won’t?” He additionally highlights the importance of honesty, transparency and keeping things “close to your chest” while ensuring one is not isolated from other journalists. Nonetheless, Mark “keeps banging on about” the “very human thing” that, for him, constitutes journalism and journalists.

To summarise thus far: Mark’s desire to “get out there and do stuff” rather than be office-bound reflects an entwined geographical and relational emphasis to his journalistic self-interpretation; indeed, Mark would say ‘no’ to a staff job at the paper he works for unless he was contact building in the field, “unless it was on that basis”. It’s a hierarchical priority that reflects where he perceives his journalistic being and becoming belongs. Indeed, it’s where journalism is and what it is. His heroes are in the field; they are not passively office-bound.

The geographical and relational conditions of Mark’s becoming are accompanied by the condition of investment. His desire to become a journalist started when he was

a teenager; indeed, he swapped playing football for writing about it and wrote football reports for his local paper. Mark also contributed to a football programme and wrote a monthly column for a community magazine. He edited the school newsletter too. These articles were contained in a portfolio – another example of an evidencing passport of capability that could open doors to becoming possibilities; indeed, he took it to a Bournemouth University open day. He didn't feel like a journalist at this stage, however; he felt like a writer because it "was more fun, it was very hobby-like whereas now it feels like a job". At the end of his first year at university, Mark began freelancing for a news agency and was employed three days a week. He treated his final year "as if I was already working". His journalistic investments not only afforded transition to the workplace; a change in his journalistic self-interpretation was also a derivative. Mark "certainly" felt like a journalist in the final year at BU and said he feels no different today.

Yet there's also a sense of becoming disorientation, a struggle with accepting his self-interpretation. It's happened too quickly and his rapid rise and achievements have knocked his confidence. Mark agreed 'disbelief' was a good word to describe his feelings; his becoming appears perceived to be too good to be true. While his parents suggest he undertook the freelance work at the agency too early, Mark says it's difficult to deal with people saying how well he's doing. Colleagues at the newspaper have expressed surprise at his age, too; one said it was "unbelievable" when Mark revealed he was 21. He spends a lot of time by himself (driving his car and at home) and has reflected upon his rapid becoming. His request for a progress chat with his current editor, to "check in", may reflect his fragile confidence which has required rebuilding. Mark appears to convey a dreamlike becoming. A becoming story that he twice describes as a "fairy tale" is equally a "surreal one". Mark's *Journalistic*

Becoming appears to have overwhelmed the capacity of his personal framework to accept, accommodate and readjust; his self-interpretation may have loose connections. Meanwhile, he awaits time to catch up and intervene to facilitate the “small talk” he sees older, experienced journalists employ with contacts. When Mark says one cannot “make yourself older”, he effectively suggests his future becoming cannot be hurried.

Several Bournemouth University experiences can be extracted as formative in engendering his becoming conditions. The first year generally was important in getting “a 20 second soundbite” that remained “forever”. The year helped him “zoom in”, to get “the facts”, to obtain “the crux of stuff”; this was “hammered in” or you were made aware of it and it became “hammered in after”. Mark then mentions the first year elderly person assignment other participants introduced. He remembers the class reacting “Oh Christ! What’s this all this about?” Students – including himself – were nervous yet the experience taught him about detail, the “human, communication stuff” and it gave him “some basic foundations”. Lecturer Colin also managed to get five sports industry figures to speak to the first year students. This micro experience was, he claims, the “most important hour and a half in a way of the whole thing.” It was a relaxed opportunity to ask questions, make contacts and organise future job shadowing. Four of the five guests have since been useful to him; he notes how communications with journalists are as important as public liaisons, thus offering a further dimension to his relationally infused self-interpretation.

Work experience was also “really big” and he highlights the helpful, if critical, feedback received while working for two football papers. In addition, his agency work led on from a Bournemouth University placement at the same workplace; he suggests a little bit of “tweaking” is required to enable students to more flexibly engage with

industry “because ultimately that’s what counts”. He appreciates it’s a difficult balance to achieve because students are also required to study on the course.

Finally, the student newspaper was “probably the most important” influence once the first year had given a “mini-platform”. It was “massive” in that it afforded responsibility; Mark was a *Rock* writer before becoming Sports Editor in his second year. Discussing the *Rock*, Mark’s active, “out there” and dynamic perception of the journalistic ideal was again evidenced. He mentions the disciplinary benefits, the human contact and the fact “you are doing it almost in a professional sense”; students are attending events “on behalf of the Bournemouth *Rock*”, experiencing authenticity and producing some work of “really good” quality. Mark felt understanding of the importance of the student newspaper was “a little bit lost” at university. He would ensure all the students were “on board” in some capacity; there would be no choice. Mark reveals he today enjoys professional relationships and contacts that were originally made on the *Rock*. He concludes that while course theory components and NCTJ elements are useful, “what is really important” is the “kind of the stuff we’ve already said – the work experience, the student paper”. When discussing the overall university experience, Mark returns to his theme of journalistic drive: university can only help those who are interested and motivated.

Mark also mentions key experiences after university. For example, after investing in a week’s work experience at a national newspaper during his third year, he was then asked to cover a Premier League football match for them the day after his graduation; the commission followed composition of a player profile feature while on work experience. While being asked to cover the match provided his epiphanic “breakthrough” and represented endorsement, peers continue to shape his self-interpretation. Invitations to work shifts are thus the “biggest ongoing compliment”.

Mark expressed his pride at being the last person to get a freelance job on his newspaper's sports desk in difficult and changing economic circumstances.

Hermeneutic extension: from the individual to the collective

The hermeneutic thinking required to complete each participant's Movement 3 analysis served to heighten sensitivity to my *Journalistically Effected Consciousness*; hence, I was also increasingly aware of my *Imaginative Journalistic Openness* to the questions posed by my participants within the journalistic tradition we shared. During the 60 weeks that elapsed between the first and last interview, the lifting of ingrained biases and stubborn prejudices can perhaps be best described as a practice of 'letting go and letting in'. As old self-interpretations and understandings were discovered, interrogated and replaced with new ones, the instinctive compulsion to expectantly and wishfully hear what I wanted to hear began to ease. The mind's noisy rush was quietened and slowed and the strange invited to claim the hush. A hermeneutic attitude was the host. It confronted the ordinary and everyday attitude in a bid to allow my dispositional insecurities and socialised, traditional constructs to access an understanding of my participants and pursue shared meanings; my projections of the conditions underlying and shaping their respective *Journalistic Becomings* were thus facilitated.

By the end of the ten interviews, I realised there had been much I simply had not thought about in the ways depicted by my participants. I was, for example, struck by my 'discovery' of the becoming importance of extensive journalistic investment; the centrality of views concerning roles, fieldwork and status; the processual, evolutionary and epiphanic nature of self-interpretation; and the nexus of relationships shaping the

becoming process that contrasted with the largely insular experience that I could recall. While the participants' dispositional angst often resonated, confrontation with the alien was never far away. They also illuminated the extent to which I had once yoked the NCTJ qualifications to my own perception of *Journalistic Becoming*. The participants now confirmed my suspicion that while skills were part of self-interpretation, *Journalistic Becoming* was a more complex matrix of shaping conditions.

A further thought movement – Movement 4 – was now made to enable transition from individual to collective case study. By now I could 'see' many of my participants discussing investment, fieldwork, writing and other common issues as though they were conversationally engrossed in my mind; they were gathered in huddles at this stage, with much wandering between groupings of common interest. I now wished to release these shared dialogues. I compiled loose lists of possible conditional and experiential connections while interview transcripts were carefully revisited and studied for confirmatory evidence. In so doing, more linked discussions were detected. This data dwelling continued for two weeks with tables drawn and redrawn to gently allow a collective picture to emerge. A tentative projection of a collective *Journalistic Becoming* horizon could then be attempted. The interlinked, shaping parts of this horizon of journalistic self-interpretation are now presented in the participants' own words.

4. The fourth movement discoveries

Introduction

Eight conditions were found to underlie and shape a collective *Journalistic Becoming* horizon when the hermeneutic circle was re-entered to undertake Movement 4. Yet these conditions are by no means either comprehensive or fixed; indeed, they cannot be. While these condition projections followed the circle's further intensification of my hermeneutic attunement, they can only suggest common shapers of a universal *Journalistic Becoming* horizon pertinent and peculiar to the ten participants during a particular timeslot. Indeed, these collective conditions hermeneutically and cumulatively arose from a 60-week immersion in my participants' journalistic lives. The resulting temporal, co-constructed snapshot of journalistic self-interpretation that follows has since faded; it was of its time. The same is true of the individual Movement 3 fusions of shared meaning from which the collective Movement 4 fusions were derived; they were similarly projections 'of the moment'. Respective standpoints and horizons of interpretation move with us as we continue our journeys of open communion and self-construction. In addition, the collective conditions that follow are not isolated; they are implicated in one another. Thus the resulting horizontal spectrum contains the merged hues of different conditional emphases which are now identified to assist examination of their practical significance.¹

¹ The participant quotations that follow are presented as they were spoken; they have received only light editing to remove repetition and ease readability while retaining their essential authenticity. These transcript conventions are adhered to when italicized, extended quotes are used:

... Short pause.

(...) Words omitted to shorten quotes and to sometimes chronologically link quotes concerning same subject.

[text] Contextual, explanatory information provided by myself.

The conditions collectively underlying and shaping the participants'

Journalistic Becoming horizon

Condition 1. Becoming investment dividends

All the participants involved in this research had 'invested' in journalism to varying degrees; indeed, at one level, all had invested in a journalism undergraduate degree. Investment is considered here to be the allocation of personal resources with the expectation that self-benefit will be derived. From a Bourdieusian perspective, the participants engaged in "investment in the game" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p. 98). In fact, all seven *Journalistic Becoming* conditions that follow may be seen to be resultant 'dividends' of such activity, the fruits of emotional and cognitive investment in "the stakes involved in any particular field, or simply, the belief that the game is worth playing" (Benson and Neveu 2005, p. 3). Here we commence a closer look at journalistic field investment and the accrued dividends that helped shape journalistic understandings and self-interpretations.

The dividend of exploratory freedom

Nine of the ten participants were involved in some sort of pre-university journalistic investment; Anna was the exception. These investments included being a "consumer of stories" at home (James), undertaking a preparatory journalism course (Sian), childhood compilation of online blog content and contribution to news outlets. For example, Simon wrote a "silly kind of 'day in the life' column" for a community magazine at the age of 14; it was "sort of experimental and 'this is what I can do'". He aimed to "shatter perceptions" of teenagers which, he now

reflects, were “perhaps lofty ambitions for a community magazine!” Meanwhile, Sarah was 11 when she submitted reports to the online CBBC channel. These investments could afford a dividend of freedom to creatively explore and experiment, to glimpse the field and one’s suitability for entrance:

“I lived in a fairly standard, I guess you would say middle class, community. We had a sort of cul-de-sac near us and there were a few people of my age who I went to school with. We used to play football against each other, run against each other, race our bikes against each other and, every time I did that, I’d end up going home [and] writing all the results up, putting it in a table or writing reports on it. And I thought ‘I quite enjoy this’. And I think from the age of 8 when I was putting together mock newspapers in my English class at primary school, I sort of thought ‘Yes, I’d quite like to do this for a living’ (...) I’d show my mum and dad [his racing reports] (...) and [they] ended up getting taken in to my favourite racing driver and shown to him because he made an appearance at my dad’s shop (...) I always enjoyed getting my Match [football] magazine every week (...) You could probably say that this was my way of trying to replicate what that was (...) it was a creative outlet” (Rob).

[Discussing involvement in a sixth form youth charity magazine] “I learnt that I could create something. I know that sounds weird ... [but] in school you don’t really create anything. I know in art you do, but you don’t create a project from scratch, finish it and then present to people like ‘Here’s what I’ve done’. It showed that I could do that and I guess I’ve just enjoyed doing that ever since. And it’s why I do what I do now, like making something from scratch every month. Umm, yeah I think it’s just the accomplishment of it and the pride (...) I chose journalism [at university] in the end because of the work with the youth charity (...) I had that kinda affirmation that I could do that I guess” (Jess).

“I knew I was good at doing interviews (...) I used to pick up dictaphones and mess around and interview people when I was younger and that was just something I picked up (...) I would do a lot of public speaking [in school] and so I knew that I had a clear voice, easily understood. I could articulate myself well and people would tell me so. I think I knew from quite a fairly young age that I could do that. I think even people making off-hand comments like ‘you sound like a news reader’ – even like as simple as that – makes you think about it a bit more” (Kate).

With creative freedom came awareness of audience at a young age. For Sarah, contributing to CBBC, it was important that her work “meant something to someone” and “somebody was listening to what I was doing”; meanwhile,

Simon said of his childhood involvement in his community magazine: “[It was] a chance to write about what I’m interested in and showcase that interest to readers (...) I think the fact I had this freedom to not only write about whatever I wanted, but to have an audience for it, I think that was a big thing for me.” At Bournemouth University, the *Rock* student newspaper offered him a new and liberated investment space:

“We were all experimenting, exploring to a degree. Even though we were public facing, there was never a sense that we were going to be judged I guess on what we were doing. It’s a sound box almost to be journalists and to produce a publication” (Simon).

The theme of innovative, independent exploration and co-creation was taken up by Jess; she reinforces research suggesting the new generation of journalists desire as much autonomy from outside pressures as professionals (Drok 2013; Deuze 2009):

“This product [The Rock] was created from scratch by a bunch of people who were passionate about journalism, about the newspaper and [we were] all working together with the same goal (...) It’s weird to say because even though we weren’t marked, we would put more heart into it. It’s such a weird thing to explain (...) Maybe because we were trying to be like independent from the uni, we were putting more heart into something that was separate outside of our coursework to show that we could do it without lecturer input; without lecturers saying you should be doing it this way or that way. So we were trying harder in that regard, maybe.”

Freedom was again evoked by John when he described being presented with a “blank canvass” when he became Features Editor of a BAMMJ magazine, *Pebble*. Originating “organic stories” proved to be a “formulative” experience since that is now what he does “on a daily basis”. Kate, meanwhile, identified the freedom of pre-BAMMJ college radio which enabled her “to go out and do stuff for yourself rather than doing it for a course”. She added: “If you want something to happen, you have to go out and do it yourself which, I suppose, looking at it now, is the way you would go and get a story; you don’t wait for something to fall in your lap.”

Within the BU curriculum, James also welcomed the freedom to invest in “broader”, “bigger” and “cultural” stories during his third year Multimedia Project (which concerned the Armenian genocide). He said freedom was “really important” adding: “To have complete freedom in something is really exciting (...) it broadened part of my self. I learnt about my own heritage during that which probably helped me more.” Similarly, Anna “didn’t really feel like a journalist as such until MMP”, when she was “doing this whole project” that went online and “you’ve got something to show for it”. Sarah’s final year dissertation on filicide also made her feel “more free” to explore areas not on the news agenda. In essence, these investments afforded dividends of freedom to explore their journalistic selves.

The dividend of brand building

Testimonies also illustrate the importance of investing in the evidencing of journalistic investment and progress; this was achieved through the brand building composition of a “portfolio website” (Sian) or equivalent. When Sarah reflected upon her internship portfolio, she “sat there and thought: ‘Wow I’ve done a lot’”; she felt “I have the capability of being a journalist”. These returns could thus constitute a reassuring, reinforcing record of the ongoing process of journalistic self-interpretation while effectively providing the passport stamps required for journalistic access to further becoming possibilities. Indeed, such self-brand evidencing was needed to “set me apart”, according to agency reporter John. He claimed those with CV’s lacking experience were discarded at his place of work “pretty much because they have not invested in it, in journalism”. In this respect, ‘experience’ can appear framed as a track record of what has been done, reducing the person to a traded commodity; it could represent, according to Tomkins and

Eatough, “potential disruption to selfhood” (2013a, p. 264). Nonetheless, such brand building constructed from experience again often commenced in childhood and could provide a passport to university:

“I did a column in Gordano Living which is a local magazine. It’s a bit off topic but I feel it’s important. I would have been 15 or 16 at this point. I had this column (...) a youth page (...) It’s my mum to thank really; my parents are really supportive which I think is really important (...) My mum said: ‘Why don’t you get in touch with Tracy [the Editor] and Tracy said to me: ‘Can you go to the McDonald’s refurbishment?’ (...) [The] Portishead mayor was there [and] a couple of local figureheads to unveil this refurb. And I went on a walking tour around Portishead McDonalds. Round the back I saw the urinals and how they were environmentally friendly ... honestly! I was noting some of these things down (...) [I] did a few interviews and did a report on it. Yes, I was 15 or 16 at the time and it was brilliant. It had my name [on the resulting article] and it was in the portfolio I took to the Bournemouth University open day with the [football] match reports which I did around the same time for the local paper” (Mark).

“It [Jess’s journalistic story] actually all began in sixth form when I was looking for universities and which course to apply [to]. I was very well aware that you needed a lot more extra-curriculum stuff while doing A-Levels to help you with your application process for uni. I don’t know why but I was very interested in magazines as a whole and I always had been as a child. I used to read so, so many different magazines so I ended up working for the local youth charity in sixth form. We created this magazine and it had a lot of good comments from the council and from the local people where I’m from. And I think that helped me get into Bournemouth Uni because it showed that I had done all these things outside of doing the typical A-levels” (Jess).

Investment in evidencing brand capability is discussed by agency reporter Simon in terms of building a “platform” and dressing “a shop window”; he wanted to write “for a variety of different audiences” and “get my name out there as much as possible”:

“From the first stage [at] Bournemouth [University] it was [a question off] ‘What other things are you doing, what other things have you got going on?’ So I thought I’ll start up another film blog. I’d already written a couple of pieces about film for the Rock at that time, so I thought: ‘I’ll repurpose those, I’ll start a blog and I’ll have somewhere to put my reviews when I go to see films’. So in the early days that’s what it was. It was reviews. And then as I spent more time at university, as I gained more skills, [I was] more comfortable with interviewing, more comfortable with writing more news-based stuff, more

comfortable with longer features. I kinda expanded the [film blog] to include more of that (...) I included more interviews. Since finishing university, [I] do a podcast now with two other Bournemouth graduates so there is a lot of extra stuff to it which I think comes from the journalism skills I gained (...) I think name building for one thing. I know that my ultimate goal is to be in film journalism in some way and so, from my point of view, in order to get that, I have to be writing about films. And so in the absence of any sort of platform for me to do that, I created my own platform. So it's not hugely [emphasises word] important to me whether anyone reads it I guess. It's just so that I can point to that [and say] 'Look at this base [emphasises word] of four years now of writing about film (...) I've reviewed almost every major release film in the UK for the last four years (...) it's almost like a shop window. This is my writing about films so if you hire me to be a film journalist, you are getting this essentially (...) I think if I can say to Empire magazine, or Total Film magazine, or anyone who is going to employ me to do film, 'I have reviewed every major release film in the UK for the last four years, five years, six years', that's immediately going to make me more attractive" (Simon).

It can be envisaged that one potential investment dividend to be derived here is the reinforcing of Simon's self-interpretation through successful brand marketing in the field; further *Journalistic Becoming* possibilities might then also arise.

The dividend of authenticity

The pursuit of extra-curricular investment at Bournemouth University could yield another particularly rich dividend: the authentic sense that one was, perhaps even fleetingly, a journalist. The *Rock* student newspaper was frequently mentioned in this regard:

"When I was leading the thing [as Editor-in-Chief], I certainly didn't ever feel like I had a major safety net. I felt like the buck did stop with me. So I felt that that was authentic (...) that that sort of stress is authentic. I mean, in a newsroom you are always a bit stressed (...) working to deadlines is always a bit stressful. It's very rare that you are ever 100% comfortable (...) I think number one is the Rock [in enabling him to become a journalist], just because of the fact it's a newsroom (...) I think those days when you are in the [Rock] newsroom and you're writing copy, you're editing copy, you're designing copy, that's as close as you get to being a working news journalist. So I think that for me was the most valuable [experience]. I think anyone who works on the Rock at any level can call themselves a journalist because of the way that all works" (Simon).

Rob also attested to the *Rock*'s authenticity while returning to the theme of freedom. He noted:

"Nothing about it felt like it was really just a pastime. You [would] try to hand out the Rock at lunchtime and people quite often would just walk by which [was] absolutely fine. You could look at it and say: 'Well, people don't really care about it so how real is what you are actually doing?' But it just felt, I dunno ... I've still got my stack of Rocks at home that I contributed to and I was always proud of what work got turned out from there (...) you are almost serving the community by putting news out there and you have the responsibility of telling these people news. [It] definitely made it an authentic experience (...) it was run by students [and] not by the university. That made quite a big difference to how I looked at the Rock at the time (...) When we worked with yourself and others on it, it always felt like it was a shared experience whereas when we were in, say, [BU] production classes, it was often: 'This is what you need to look out for', and that was very much a teaching process as it was meant to be."

Jess also conveys a collectively authentic, peer becoming:

"I think we all learned from each other. It was kinda watching people in the newsroom approach interviewees on the phone and discussing stories with each other over the Mac (...) I think I still got it [peer learning] from the actual uni course when we did news days and such but I think I got it even more so working on the Rock because it was for 12 hours at a time minimum in that newsroom; on a news day you are only typically there for 4-8 hours (...) In the Rock it felt way more authentic [than the course](...) it was [available] in Asda and stuff whereas no one would see our coursework (...) It was for me definitely a highlight of the course which is weird to say because it wasn't part of the course ... I think [it was] one of the top reasons that I've been able to transition to this role [her current Features Editor job]. Because without it, I don't think that any of my production skills – like working to deadline, organisation, management, communication – would be as good as they are now. I think work experience did [offer authenticity] but maybe not as much as the Rock (...) it [work experience] more affirmed that I was doing the right thing on the Rock."

Beyond the extra-curricular, university experiences afforded "little glimpses", a "little taster" and "short moments" of being a journalist (John) but it was not "24/7" (Jess). News days were highlighted as a case in point. For John, who had once planned to train as an actor, students were "very much acting like journalists" at BU apart from "certain times" like converged news days when "we were journalists".

Yet Sian remarked: “In the back of your mind you always knew: ‘Oh, this is fine, because it’s just for a news day.’” Jess believed more news days “would add to the authenticity” of the BAMMJ course but James suggested such facilitation also required greater staff direction to avoid students “just plodding through”. He summed up the opportunities for journalistic authenticity at university thus:

“[I] probably [felt like a journalist] when we were working on the Bournemouth Rock, probably when we were working on the election coverage [and] maybe on some news days when it was going very well and people were actually working in a team and we were actually getting good stories and not just copying from the [local paper]. So, yeah, probably for moments but I wouldn’t go home and be like: ‘I’m a proper journalist now.’”

John also reinforced the relative realism of extra-curricular activities once more when discussing the university’s coverage of the 2012 US election:

“It felt quite real ... I remember we actually beat Fox News to breaking the fact that Obama had become President. I was able to be the person to say that on our station (...) which felt amazing. It was incredible ... it was being real journalists at that point” (John).

The following comments illustrate how the investment dividend of authenticity could be both elusive and purposefully avoided at university. Work experience did typically offer this dividend but, again, not always:

“It was really cool [to get a byline on work experience at her local newspaper] (...) [but] I still felt like a student when I was there (...) [On BAMMJ] radio news days, you could be like: ‘Oh it’s ok, just get your mum to pretend to be a teacher if you want to get a quote’. But most of the time we always tried to get a real voice which was harder than it seemed because you are just students and you’d have to call up and say: ‘I’m a student at Bournemouth University’. Then they’d say: ‘Oh no, sorry, we can’t give quotes’, so that kinda took away the authenticity of being a journalist because you then feel like a student” (Sian).

“[With university interview assignments] I kind of thought: ‘Ok, who do I know?’ rather than ‘What do I want to do?’ How can I achieve this quite easily without going too far out of my depth? So, for example, in the first year we had to interview someone (...) in the public eye, of celebrity status. And my old IT teacher was Captain of the England Rugby team so I thought: ‘Ok, I know her.’ It had that safety net of ‘I know her.’ So it was then [work experience] that I was actually pushed

into the deep end and [I] thought: 'Go for it.' I got my confidence to start branching out a bit more, and going a bit more into the unknown (...) As a student, going out and being a journalist, you never were really. You were always seen as a student. People would ask: 'Are you a student?' Especially on radio news days. We'd ring up and they just wouldn't speak to us because we were students so you never really got the same experience as you would if you were ringing up as a reporter from so and so. You were always given a bit more of a cold shoulder. We had to ring up and lie or pretend that we were someone else because they would just shut you down for being a student (...) [but on work experience] it was the fact you had to go out and get a story and it was sort of gonna be used. It was sort of more worthy. You needed to get a story [on the course] because you were going to get a mark (...) but it doesn't have the same significance as actually getting a story put in print (...) [On] work experience you feel like a journalist because you are. You are part of the team and you are out and about (...) you are a journalist while at uni but you are a student and I think you are tarnished with the fact" (Anna).

"It was the feel of being in a newsroom environment shadowing and watching what people did (...) contributing where we could (...) Of all my work placements, The Sunday Times was the best one. I had to do some undercover vox pops in a university; I think it was [name of university] favouring international students because their fees were triple the amount a British student had to pay. That was amazing (...) I was actually doing it for a real publication. That was [employing] a really good skill in having to do it surreptitiously as well – without security or without guards finding out what I was doing" (John).

The dividend of career insight

The sense of being a journalist, often derived from investment in work experience or in extra-curricular activity, could also be accompanied by the dividend of career signposting; jobs could be tested for self-interpretive fit:

"[During] my first work experience, I had a bad experience (...) I went to [name] magazine ... I was just their slave really. I was just given transcriptions and on my actual feedback form I was told that I should make more tea. That's how I could improve (...) it was just catty there; it was an office full of women and I would hear something from [one] person and then the other person would say something in my ear totally contradicting that person and I [thought]: 'Oh my God, do I really want to be in this kind of industry?' Then, going into the [name], into a local newspaper, was totally different. I thought: 'Ahh' [she sighs]. I kind of relaxed and thought: 'Yes, I can do it and this is a natural

environment I actually want to work in rather than a catty sort of industry’” (Anna).

“Music journalism was my biggest drive coming to uni, just because I used to love NME and Q. But having gone there [to NME on work experience], it completely turned it on its head and I decided from then on I didn’t really want to do it any more. It was very disappointing. But it wasn’t too bad because I knew from all the skills I gained at uni I could do other things. And, from all the other places I’d done work experience, I could do different things. So that’s why it was so helpful (...) you can test out all the other sub-sections of journalism” (Jess).

“I wanted to be a Radio 1 presenter. I wanted to do music radio so at that point it didn’t seem like journalism and music radio would overlap that much. I didn’t know at the time that a speech radio presenter would be something that I would be interested in. We had a US election special in our final year and I was part of the overnight presenting team (...) I think that probably was my first idea of ‘Ok, this is speech radio’ and actually this is probably something I could do and be interested in – and that was journalism. Until then on the course we had never done speech radio, it was always bulletins” (Kate).

It should be noted at this point that one participant appeared to express regret that more investment had not been made. Anna, the Production Assistant at a regional newspaper, had not aspired to be a journalist and did not evidence a specific childhood exploration of journalism; indeed “she always wanted to do art at uni” but “hated” her school art teacher and instead gave journalism a “go”. Anna, though investing in the *Rock*, wished she had not been “so reserved” at BU, had “taken chances” with writing and invested in more work experience. She concluded: “You could read a book on how to dance but until you go out and try and dance you are not going to be any good at it.” Anna’s investment regrets contrast starkly with Sarah, who warned those with their “head in the sand” stand to miss investment opportunities. She invested in a high yield university summer school at the Salzburg Academy and a post-university internship at the same institution. These experiences afforded journalistic inspiration, a sense of being “internationally-based”, a refreshed, invigorated enthusiasm for journalism and awareness of global,

journalistic possibilities beyond the confines of her “bubble”. Sarah was also able to assess her journalistic strengths and weaknesses before returning home with an enhanced sense of potential; indeed, as noted earlier (see page 129), she felt the investment was life changing.

In summary, journalistic investment – in effect the extent of personal resource allocation in journalistic self-construction – may be seen to contribute towards the self-interpretive process of *Journalistic Becoming* through the provision of diverse, shaping and rewarding journalistic dividends. These include exploratory freedom, brand building, sensed authenticity and career insight; brand investment could prepare passports to help gain access to new self-interpretive possibilities.

These investments are culturally demarked with brand building accordingly evidencing online engagements. Sian, indeed, stressed the importance of being “quite technological” in “this kinda age”; she duly set up her “portfolio website” demonstrating “this is all my work” to employers. Simon was also “part of online communities” and “always around blogs”; he wrote freelance articles for the online *Bleacher Report* and *WhatCulture* during his second year at university to get his name extensively known. Rob, meanwhile, had started a YouTube channel at the age of 14 featuring “terrible picture mashups of Formula 1 races”. The evidencing of participant online platforms may be seen as technologically-afforded expressions of journalistic freedom. They can equally be seen as merely the latest manifestation of “socialised subjectivity” (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p. 126), part of an online, participatory conditioning Rob describes as “social decorum for people at my age”.

The forces of older traditions meanwhile appear to intermingle amid discussions of independence, brand building, experimentation and freedom to explore. Indeed,

while participants expressed different degrees of investment in the NCTJ Diploma, Sian claimed the qualification helped “stand you apart” while it was “another string” to Simon’s bow; acquisition of the senior NCTJ qualification would enable Sarah to “potentially call herself a journalist”. Old norms may thus offer continued influence and reassurance in times of flux. Indeed, as noted above, early journalistic investment by Kate resulted in being comfortingly told she sounded “like a newsreader”; later investment in extra-curriculum work at radio stations also enabled her to be trained and work “in their style”. Meanwhile, choosing to attend Bournemouth University can itself be seen as an investment in socialised reputation. The university, “with its triple accreditation” ensured it was “Bournemouth or bust” for Simon while the decision was a “no brainer” for Sian “purely for the NCTJ, BJTC or whatever”.

A participant’s habitus, one encompassing handed-down journalistic tradition and ideology, appears to help shape the journalistic investments that are duly made. The resulting allocation of personal resources can effectively prepare the aspiring journalist for the journalistic world through the receipt of dividends that shape an appropriate journalistic self-interpretation. Investment in one’s passport of capability may meanwhile help determine how arrival is fashioned and received in the awaiting journalistic field.

Condition 2. Becoming hierarchies: place, role and status resolutions

The participants had either undergone or were undertaking a range of hierarchical resolutions in relation to their journalistic self-interpretation; in terms of their habitus, these deliberations could reflect competing and conflicting conceptions of the profession, functions within it and resulting placement within the journalistic

field (Bourdieu 1998a). Indeed, the participants are engaged in overlapping hierarchical resolutions concerning geographical positioning, roles undertaken and employment status within the journalistic field; these determinations can be seen as further beneficial dividends derived from “illusio” (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p. 98) – investment in the journalistic game.

Geographical resolution concerned spatial conceptions in relation to journalistic self-interpretation. For example Sian, the freelance field production assistant, defined journalism as “going out, getting news and putting it out there”. She added: “The people behind the scenes that make it look pretty, I don’t think are journalists in my view”. While her desired journalistic situatedness additionally entailed location in London, roaming the field beyond offices and classrooms also assumed prominence for the London press agency reporter, James. He encouraged exploration of the great journalistic outdoors:

“The only way you can teach it [journalism] at university is not in a lecture, not sitting in a seminar room (...) [what’s needed is] 50% less of the seminars and lectures and 100% more of producing a newspaper, going out interviewing people, knocking on doors, being pushed, being really pushed into it because you are going to be.”

Mark, the freelance sports journalist, added this field insight:

“I enjoy the out in the field stuff more (...) I think it’s what I’m good at, speaking to people. It’s impossible to get stories, source stories yourself – I shouldn’t say impossible but it’s difficult – if you are in an office. I’m quite a rare breed in the sense that I am going to the office and still doing all of that. But really I’m doing the other bits [in the field], whereas a lot of people are like ‘Well, I’m in the office’. Some people don’t have a choice, they’re not bothered or whatever but there’s not that many people who are doing a bit of it all. People who do it at the very top – the guys who have been around forever and paid on staff jobs – they are doing it [in the field]. I think when you see them it’s hard not to want to do that (...) I wouldn’t like to be in the office at all in an ideal world. That’s the biggest challenge in my opinion facing people coming out of uni, people like myself, people trying to get a foot in the industry. Because how can you kinda make a name for yourself [and] make a story if no one is going to pay you to go out there in the first place? It’s really difficult. I think it is a really big problem. Being totally honest, I’m here today at [name of TV company]. I’ve been

covering online [and] you are just reacting to stuff a lot of the time (...) Sometimes, I've probably upset people [and] said: 'Look, I want to do this, I'm only round the corner from the Reading [football club] training ground so let me do that'. [I] push the boundaries a little bit. But nine times out of ten you're reacting to stories, you're waiting for the official club account to Tweet out so-and-so has signed a new contract (...) [Then the response is] 'Ok, so we'll do it then'. That's very easy to do (...) I think within that deskbound [group] there are different segments and some of those would be [journalists] and some wouldn't. It sounds awful but I'm going to say it ... there are some people who are resigned to 'This is how it is now ... ok, this is what I do ... there's no room or possibility to do that or go out and do that, [it's] just how it is' (...) To me a typical journalist is somebody asking the questions, somebody getting the answers out in the field but I wouldn't discredit those that aren't. But I do think, not just at the [name of national newspaper he works for], not just here, that a lot of people are resigned to the idea that 'This is how it is, it's online, I'll just sit here and see what comes in, see what happens, stick on the TV, 'Oh I'll react to that'. There's a lot of that. Look now at sports journalism ... say there's a big story ... actually a really small pool [are] actually doing that story yet if you type into Google, say 'Team Sky', there's going to be loads of different voices, loads of different web sites. But still, realistically, I would say as many as ten people [are] really on top of that story, really dealing with it, really face-to-face, really involved, engaged, whatever. Everybody else is passive, reacting to it. Too many people are happy being passive. A small pool of people are doing the work for everybody else."

Yet agency reporter Simon gives a different view:

"I think once upon a time (...) a decade, two decades, three decades ago (...) the be all and end all of journalism was going out, getting news, reporting news in the traditional sense. I think that is an enormous part of journalism now [but] I'm not out of the office all of the time. A lot of the time I am at my desk. But I think it's equally valid [being deskbound], particularly with online journalism. I'm not sure you ever need to leave an office really to be an online reporter (...) I think if you're gathering information and disseminating it, to a degree you are a journalist ... While I was at the [local newspaper name] there was a story I covered. There was a casting call for a film that was shooting in [town name]. It was [an] untitled World War Two film [and] Bodega Bay Productions were looking for males aged 18-34 who were willing to dress in military clothes with shaved heads etc. They paid for an ad in our paper to advertise this casting call. And so my news editor went: 'That sounds interesting. Can you work out what that is?' So I went: 'It's very vague but we'll give it a go'. [I] rang up the casting call people, went: 'What can you tell us about this film?' They went: 'Nothing' [he laughs] which is perhaps understandable so I looked at the production company ... went 'Bodega Bay Productions' ... let's Google them ... see what they are all about'. They don't exist online."

Nothing about them. However, five, six, seven pages down a Google search Bodega Bay is a code name Christopher Nolan [film director] was using for Dunkirk, the massive film he was shooting. So [I] went back to the casting call company, went: 'Is it Dunkirk?' and they went: 'No'. And so in my head I'm going 'It's totally Dunkirk!', that's definitely what they are doing! We also managed to speak to a boat captain in [town] who went: 'Yeah, Warner Brothers have come to me, they've said can we use your boat for the World War Two film we're shooting?' So by the end of the day, we were confident enough to go: 'We believe this film to be Dunkirk'. And I didn't leave my desk. That was a front page exclusive and no one else had that."

The freelance field production assistant, Sian, and national motor racing journalist Rob help move the discussion from the geographical to the functional, from a locational hierarchy to a role hierarchy. Sian, for example, said: "Technically, because I'm not reporting, I wouldn't 100% class myself as a journalist." Rob, meanwhile, didn't consider himself a journalist on the *Rock* because he had a production role and was "just getting content that other people had written and putting it through". Today, he deliberates over his continued field roaming where he associates writing and news gathering roles with 'journalism' in contrast to deskbound 'editorial' that he links with management and curation roles:

"Being able to call yourself a journalist has always required a writing capacity and a news chasing capacity (...) if you were really a journalist, you'd be someone who is off at the [motor] races every week, gathering news on the phone if you need to or at the race track ... putting feature content together. [On the] editorial side, you have a degree of that but much more curation of other stuff that comes in or delegation of what needs to be done (...) In that editorial sphere I feel incredibly comfortable and I don't always feel comfortable in the journalistic role at the moment. But [in an editorial role] you still miss out on that opportunity to build contacts. I don't consider them [editorial] to be journalists as such but they do so much work otherwise, and they still do writing for anything that comes through [in a] press release ... they can end up writing."

News gathering and writing roles emerge as important shapers of journalistic self-interpretation. Indeed, the following extract suggests these roles have

defined who John is. He also echoes Simon in the latter's news gathering pursuit of the "strange" and "unusual" (see pages 178-9):

"I love the chase of getting a story, I love trying to put a very complicated story into words, I really love it. Like it's who I am. I owe a lot to journalism for who I am today, personality-wise for sure. So I want to continue being a journalist. I've always been fascinated with literary journalism, [for example] Truman Capote and even more recent writers like Jon Ronson [who] I think is incredible. I'd love to do similar things to what he does. I kinda aspire to be a lot like Jon Ronson [and] eventually write literary journalism. So I'm trying to follow his path in the sense that I'm trying to cover wide and weird and unusual stories."

Meanwhile, transferring from a magazine production role to a writing role signalled transition from a frustrated self-interpretation to a more rewarding *Journalistic Becoming* for Jess: it brought back the "inquisitive mind that I hadn't used in two years in the other role". She added: "You don't feel like it [a journalist] until you are actually writing things". Her magazine production role was thus a "stepping stone" to being a journalist which she also equates with "investigating or contacting interviewees" and "finding a story and relating that to a wider audience". Prior to becoming a magazine Feature Editor, "she wasn't being used in the best way" and was "purely looking at what other people have already written and making it better for them". It's a view shared by Sian. There seems little appreciation of the sub-editor's "brand ambassador role" – one that adds "journalistic value with every alteration" (Vandendaele 2018, p. 287) – in her account of previous employment at a subbing 'hub':

"So I got an email one day. It was from [the BU course leader] actually. A few of us got it. It said: 'Hey, there's these jobs going and there's these interviews' (...) But it was just, you know, subbing copy, correcting text and putting headlines on. It was really mundane and boring (...) I felt like I'd gone from learning a lot at university [to] this job where I was putting none of those skills to use. So I wouldn't say they were two very good months (...) I wouldn't have said 'I'm a journalist' at that point. No. I don't think it is journalism, just reading

other people's journalistic work and putting a headline on it. I don't think that's journalism at all" (Sian).

However, newspaper Production Assistant Anna, while reinforcing points made by Jess and Sian, goes on to make creative distinctions between hub work and her current office-based newspaper design role:

"I don't want to be a reporter. I don't want to report again [and] I don't want to work in TV. I don't really want to work in radio. I would quite happily be a sub-editor in another publication or carry on in production (...) I was originally a sub [editor] in [name of hub location]. Stories used to come in Prestige [an IT system] and we used to lay them out in Quark [a design programme] ... [A] double-page spread used to be white and we used to fill it with the words and lay it out. That changed and we had to adapt our skills and just be copy editors. We just got the words and a red line showed over matter. We had to cut [the words] and then write a headline ... and the designer bit was gone ... I was, like, 'Oh no, what am I going to do?' So I started looking for new jobs because I hated it. We were just robots. They still do it now but it was just not for me. There was no real flair to it. The only thing you could have some fun with was the headline. It was not good. And then I was approached by these guys luckily [name of newspaper] and they brought me back over here and I'm loving my job [she designs whole pages in this role] (...) I don't think they [her journalist friends] actually see me as a journalist. They're proper journalists in a way, proper with inverted commas, because they're reporters or they're presenters. They see me [as] more of a designer because I don't work with words, even though I do but I don't. I.e. If we were to put ourselves in ranking order of who is the most likely to be a journalist, I would be at the bottom. I don't work directly with words on the frontline of journalism. I think I am perceived more as a sort of backseat journalist. But I am a journalist. Yes. If there was a tick box of professions, Production Assistant isn't going to be on there. I would tick journalist. Or in media. [I associate journalism with] writing words or, yeah, having a camera, like the whole interviewing ... being the face of journalism, being out there and being recognisable as the face of journalism ... compared to me. I don't leave the office all day."

Hierarchical role perceptions may also merge into additionally required self-interpretive resolutions regarding status. Anna, for example, came to the realisation that the public quite respected journalists and wanted to talk to them and "you are not this hated sort of person that's trying to dish the dirt". Status deliberations may also extend to terminology, sectors of employment and training. Indeed, local

newspaper reporter Sarah made a prestige distinction between ‘reporter’ and ‘journalist’. At present people “see the notepad [and] they know you are a reporter whereas if you say you are a journalist they ask: ‘So are you [in] radio, are you [in] television, online, [working for a] magazine?’” She will consider herself a journalist once she has “left newspapers for good”. Yet Sarah also says she will feel more journalistic and capable when she is a NCTJ qualified senior and there is a cessation of “eyes peering” at a trainee. She further elaborates in the following extract while additionally reflecting upon her status in relation to high profile work and the company of more experienced national journalists:

“I think with newspapers [you] have to say you are a reporter. Because if I say ‘I’m a journalist’ [‘journalist’ said in affected style] people think I’m a bit up myself or I’m a bit posh (...) I feel like a reporter ... it denotes a bit more nitty gritty ... When I think of reporter I just think of the notepad and I think that’s what people recognise (...) Oh God! My mum is proud as can be. She never mentions the word ‘reporter’, she constantly says ‘journalist’. She’s like [in affected voice] ‘Oh, my daughter’s a journalist’ (...) My friends are quite funny with it. They are like ‘Oh, my friend is a journalist.’ [said again in affected voice]. I’m like ‘I’m not, I’m just a reporter’ [said in a lowered deferential voice] ... I don’t feel old enough or wise enough to say I’m a journalist. I don’t feel that I have enough experience to say I’m a journalist. I’ve only been in newspapers 15 months (...) Though there is not much distinction, I think a reporter is sort of a lesser version of a journalist if that makes sense? Because at the moment I am still a trainee, technically. And I think once I get my senior [qualification] with the NQJ’s [National Qualification in Journalism], once I’ve got that, [I] think I could potentially call myself a journalist (...) At the moment I just don’t think I have enough experience (...) When I interview high profile people I feel like a journalist because there are other [journalists there] ... there’s PA [Press Association], all these national agencies, there’s [the] BBC and everything...and I’m like ‘I am a journalist now’. When you interview the everyday person, I feel like you are a reporter but with the high profile politicians and all of that, I feel like a journalist (...) I consider myself a journalist sort of within myself but, within the industry, comparing yourself with other people who have been there a lot longer, I’d say no because they are the top dogs at the end of the day (...) Even when you sit and interview politicians with all the national staff [national media], there is a little part of you that’s like: ‘Well, I am only the local newspaper reporter, these are the top

*dog journalists'. But no one says you can't ever get there so you have just got to try and get there if you can."*²

Jess, while holding newspaper and magazine reporters in high regard ("that is the top level for me"), felt the regional press was "maybe lower down, the next level". She then framed this hierarchical status distinction in terms of geographical practicalities:

"I feel with local papers you're always going to have to look at local things. At a national level you can look at basically anything all across the world whereas [a local paper] can't, for example, look into Syria unless it was directly related to [the newspaper's locality]. So that's the only thing, that's why it would be a lower level."

Yet Sian, discussing her freelance field production work for an international financial media company, presents her status resolution in terms of prestigious group inclusion. Sian's *Journalistic Becoming* appears to entail a self-interpretation shaped by exclusive brand association and belonging, an identified membership founded upon the "positive distinctiveness associated with a particular social category" (Carpenter et al. 2017, p. 1252); she seems touched by a "prestige halo effect" through simply being affiliated with an elite media organisation (Tran and Ragas 2018, p. 272). Consequently, her self-interpretation may reflect what Marr calls "a certain lightness of being" (2005, p. 5) derived from the lifestyle and image she enjoys:

"My mum calls me Lois Lane from Superman. She doesn't call me Sian any more. She texts 'Hi Lois' [she laughs] and I'm like 'Oh my God!' And my grandma is always like 'Ooh ... you were at Downing Street' and it is quite funny really. But, yes, they love it, they think it's really cool (...) It feels good that I've made them proud I guess. And also I feel like I'm a success I think. Yes, I'd say I feel quite successful so far (...) For me personally – it's really lame – but I always had the vision that I wanted to work for a big company and if I was going to do that, then

² Sue Greenwood (2018, p. 159) also offers a distinction. The job of the reporter "is not the same as that of a journalist (...) not the same as the investigative, 'holding power to account' journalism that journalists themselves think of as journalism". Similarly, the role of journalist does not extend to "other job titles within the news matrix", such as editor, page designer, radio news reader, on-screen presenter and producer.

that immediately makes me a success. And then I came here. Initially, I probably didn't feel like a success because I wasn't in the role necessarily ... I didn't feel like a journalist in the beginning [as noted earlier, she was initially employed in a logistical role but is now 'going out and being a producer which essentially is a journalist']. So as I grew ... yes, I feel like this kinda place makes me feel quite successful. Just because of its reputation. I don't mean to sound like a snob but if I was at a local newspaper, for example, I wouldn't feel like I was doing the best that I could be.”³

Indeed, while the radio journalist Kate always “wanted to do something on a national level”, Rob, the national motorsport magazine reporter, had similarly hoped to work for “an esteemed brand”. For Rob, “getting the status of a job and a title” on the prestigious publication enabled him to feel like a journalist:

“It's [the publication's] strapline, or it has been its strapline, and it's clichéd as such, but it's pretty much the 'authority on all forms of motorsport'. It might be quite vain to look at it in that way but to be able to say I'm working for the best motorsport publication in the country, the most recognisable certainly, I think it shoots everything else out of the water.”

Nonetheless, Simon warned against framing local-national status definitions in terms of journalistic quality:

“I think a good local news journalist is exactly as good as a good national journalist. I mean, I'm essentially a national news journalist working for [a UK press agency]. I don't think I'm writing any better than I was at the [local newspaper name] really [word emphasised]. I mean, I'm improving incrementally as a reporter just through length of time ... but I don't think I'm a better reporter now I'm writing for nationals than I was when I was writing for locals. So I think a news journalist is really quite flat. Obviously there are good and bad news journalists on any publication. I look at some of the best local reporters ... a name that springs to mind is [name] (...) I think he's one of the best local reporters I've seen and I think he's considerably better than some of the national reporters I've worked with (...) So I don't think there is a hierarchy in that sense. I think it's just different corners of journalism. It's the same with Empire [the film magazine where he completed a

³ While local newspapers are often described as a “typical first step on the career ladder” (Conboy 2011, p. 179) or “an excellent training ground for young journalists” (Forsdick 2018), a “sniffy attitude” detected in London towards the local and regional press has been called “short-sighted” (Williams 2018); indeed, it's claimed regional titles can act as the national titles for their communities due to the “London media bubble” (Williams 2018).

placement] ... there are some bad news writers who work for Empire, there are some excellent news writers who work for Empire."

These interview selections give a flavour of the hierarchical resolutions entailed in journalistic self-interpretation. *Journalistic Becoming* appears shaped by interwoven deliberations upon geographical situatedness in the journalistic field, the journalistic roles undertaken in that field and status associations. The backdrop to these resolutions is the influence of journalistic tradition, the handed-down journalistic past conceived to contribute to the shaping of habitus in this thesis. From a Gadamerian perspective, the "element of freedom" in tradition (2004, p. 282) appears to have been exploited by Mark who, in his words, wishes to "push the boundaries" that are today demarking new interpretations of that tradition. He struck a somewhat rebellious tone in his criticism of deskbound colleagues who now accept "this is how it is". Yet he also reinforced tradition's earlier manifestations through admiration of "people at the top" of journalism "who have been around for ever" and "doing it" beyond the office walls. Though Simon's support of deskbound journalism seemingly endorsed tradition's new order, Rob was also unequivocal when asked if he might regret returning to the office from the field: Rob replied "it constantly crosses my mind" and he "felt unsure" if he would then feel like a journalist. When newcomers negotiate changes in practice, the threads of tradition appear to pattern continuity and cohesion through the ages. Indeed, the clarion call to "get out more" and engage with those hard to reach continues to be heard even if further extension of "fatuous vox poppery" is decried (Robinson 2017); for Marr, "the most important thing is to hire more reporters – front-line people who are inquisitive, energetic and honest" (2005, p. 384).

Meanwhile, the participants' utterances of the traditional metaphors of journalism appear to reinforce long-standing role perceptions. The interviewee

transcripts include reference to the “newshound” sniffing out news (Rob), and journalists “fighting” and “chasing” for stories (John) on the “frontline” (Anna); the corporeal metaphor – depicting journalism as having a body that can be damaged (Conboy and Tang 2016) – was also evidenced. While Jess expressed concern over journalism’s uncertain future, Sarah insisted magazines and newspapers were “dying off”: “Our circulation figures are down each week ... it is just inevitable ... so I don’t know whether I’d like to go into an industry that I know is going down the pan or to go into communications which I know is a very steady sort of industry”. Meanwhile, for those planning to stay, journalistic self-interpretation continues to be conditioned by the timeless importance of writing and news gathering roles.

Condition 3. Becoming communication: relational deliberation and linguistic realisations

All the participants evidenced deliberation upon public engagement and linguistic deployment; these considerations further shaped understanding of the journalistic self and the requirements of becoming. Participants were, in essence, required to invest in identifying communicative attributes and deficiencies in relation to their perception of field requirements. As Kate put it: “We obviously had some sessions on how you would approach people and ways of doing it but, with a lot of these sort of things, you’ve kinda got to throw yourself in it and learn on the job.” For Rob, a “strategy” to talk to people was required, one involving stepping out of his “comfort zone” and a desire not to appear like an “incompetent buffoon”. Personal framework accommodations and alignments duly helped shape the self-

interpretation required to be a functioning member in different journalistic fields; the cultural capital of verbal ability was thus sought (Benson and Neveu 2005). The following testimony extracts reveal a flavour of these self-adjustment responses which include the adoption of conversational approaches and performance. It will also be shown that an awareness of approaches and required alignments was, in some cases, provided by fellow journalists.

For James and Sarah, becoming a journalist entailed awareness and development of a communicative method:

“If you can ask people for money for a charity [a job he did prior to entering journalism], I think you can ask any kind of question (...) We’d knock on 120 doors a day, I’d speak to at least 70-80 people and you’d get rejected about 60-65 times a day as well. What person is not going to be toughened up by that? (...) It [the charity job] just really, really helped [in]quizzing people I think – being able to speak to someone you’ve never spoken to [before]. You have about two minutes before they slam the door in your face and you’ve got to try and get them onside. The whole point, the whole system, the whole way you do it was [by] building rapport ... you know, finding something that you two can connect with. That’s how you’re encouraged to do it. So you have to be quite friendly. If you got down if someone was rude to you, you would then reflect that on everybody else you spoke to (...) I learnt that I was quite good at it which surprised me (...) When I was fronting my first door knock after someone was stabbed in East London [for the press agency he now works for] I said: ‘Oh, I’ve done these door knocks hundreds of times asking for money. All I’m doing now is asking for their story, the story that they know.’ And it’s a lot easier because people like talking to journalists” (James).

“I used to get really, really nervous in interviewing someone ... but I’ve realised the best way to overcome [nerves] ... I take a very chatty approach ... If you make someone feel like you are their friend, the rest is easy. So I think that’s something that has changed in terms of my approach. When a lot of people join the paper, when [politicians] ring up, they are like ‘Councillor so and so, Mr so and so’. I’m like ‘Are we all right Jeff?’ I try to make it as personable as I can. That’s helped me. It puts people’s barriers down and they are a lot more open to you when you are like that. And I think that’s how I’ve changed (...) A lot of the time you are calling people on the telephone. It would be a lot different if you were sat face-to-face, I understand that. But I try to make the telephone conversation as if we were face-to-face ... I think that’s where my skills have developed and I think that’s probably my best asset now. I can talk people around to ideas. Say there’s a serious

story, and I know the paper will want a photo. Nine times out of ten people will say 'No' but you have got to keep on working at it. Slowly, I think I've learnt through my interview technique and the way I talk to people, [that] you have to drop subtle hints to make people open up to the idea of it all" (Sarah).

Sarah's communicative education was aided by her three-week Salzburg Academy placement during her BAMMJ third year (see page 129); she recalls a discussion that ensued among the students following a visit to a concentration camp:

"It made me step back and say: 'You need to let people speak naturally and don't force something out of them'. If you let them speak naturally you're more likely to get a ten times better answer out of them than if you were to ask them a thousand different questions about their experience. And that was just a poignant thing that stayed with me."

A college experience helped John's communicative discovery. He had "always liked talking to people ... getting to know people and finding things [out] about people". Yet a new examination of his communicative skillset was now required.

He was tasked with approaching a trader who had installed a sound device to deter youths from congregating outside his shop:

"Before [the BAMMJ course] I didn't believe I had the skills at all. I was quite confident but nowhere near confident enough or, you know, forceful enough in the sense of being able to talk a person round, or having the self-belief at that point. I didn't have that but I still enjoyed doing it [the college assignment] (...) I felt a sense of power being able to write about it [the trader story] and to try and change things. My article wouldn't go anywhere significant but at that point I'd managed to interview someone who had had one of those [sound devices] installed on the shop ... and I was quite intense in the interview which was something I didn't think I had within me to do. That [interview] gave me the belief that you do have to ask those tough kind of questions and that I had the passion to push for something like that (...) I hoped it would go well but I was quite nervous. I think I was shaking a little bit through a few questions just out of not knowing how he would react or whether he would tell me to get out. Your mind conjures all these wayward scenarios that very rarely manifest themselves really. But I envisaged the worst in my head. And I had to fight quite hard to get an interview with him ... But yes, I was able to do it."

Today his communicative adaptation appears complete:

“Now, compared to what I used to think, you kind of know what you need to have people say. At first I kind of thought it was just about interviewing the person and waiting for that gem of a line or that gem of information to come through. Now it’s different in the sense that when I speak to a person I know the kind of things that I need them to say ... I don’t put words in their mouth ... but I know what kind of targeted questions I need to ask to ensure that we can make it into a national news story as opposed to a local one. Now, when I’m meeting someone new, the way I talk to a person is very journalistic [laughs]. You tend to grill a person in some ways, you ask those tough questions because it’s fun, it’s really enjoyable! I kind of like making people feel a bit on edge or uncomfortable with certain questions because it’s more funny ... you get to know a person better.”

Nonetheless, personal framework negotiation and accommodation was required:

“I was born being able to talk to people, and I think that’s a very key bit, and being approachable. But I think you have to chip away at yourself as a person (...) Compared to now, I was a lot more timid. Giving someone a call at half six in the morning, I’d actually have to take a few breathers or give myself a bit of a mental psyching up [laughing] to give myself the ‘You can do this’ kind of thing. But over time you just realise that it’s something you’ve got to do, you’ve got to beat everyone else to it and you’ve got to be the best. I’m a lot more confident, a lot more strong ... I don’t know if strong is the right word really ... but ... yes, it’s definitely changed not even my perception of who I am, it’s changed who I am fully. [A] hell of a lot from someone who is, you know, overly polite and perhaps a bit reserved at times to someone [who is] very confident. I feel very out there ... like ... journalism’s shaped me as a person undoubtedly.”

The participants also steered the discussion in the direction of the performative.

Sarah, for example, recalled how interviewing visiting dignitaries during her Salzburg placement required her to have the “front” to “seem that you are also an expert in that field”. The following testimonies also give an insight into the use of performance to ease personal framework adjustments:

“You have to act to convince an interviewee to talk to you; I think you have to put on that guise and you have to have that belief and you embody the role of the journalist. I think the more you do it the more you actually become a journalist rather than just acting like one (...) I think when you first start out you know what a journalist should do, or at least you hope you do, and how one should act in the sense of the type of questions they should be asking and being out of your comfort

zone. But it's not natural to you. I think you put on this guise ... I suppose you want to be that journalist but you're not at that stage. It's only through the more experience you get and the longer you work in it that the more you actually start to become the journalist if that makes any sense?" (John).

"[My] journalistic side is probably more extroverted than [the] actual non-journalist me which is quite introverted (...) It's almost kinda like a switch I guess. When you start checking emails in the morning, you know that you're starting right for the day and then you have to be that kind of person (...) I'm just thinking back to a couple of weeks ago. We went to a visual effects conference in Bournemouth which is organised by Bournemouth Uni. [I was] kinda putting that journalist side out instead of the normal Jess because you have to start doing the mingling and the networking. There are so many things you are trying to get out of them (...) I don't think it's stressful. I think it [is] quite exhausting more than anything because you're pushing yourself to do these things you don't normally do (...) I think it helps if you are extroverted. I think of my uni friends who did BAMMJ who are quite extroverted and that's quite good but, for me, it's been a bit more hard work trying to get myself to that level (...) 'Home Jess' would be like 'Yeah, you can do this today' and then [I'd go] out talking to whoever" (Jess).

"People always say I come across as confident but actually inside ... I guess in the end I just kinda have to inhale and give off a persona of confidence otherwise you are not going to do well. Deep down, [I'm] probably not very confident but you just have to pretend if you want to do well (...) I get really nervous. But again, I can't let it show. [Her managers will say]: 'We'd like you to go and produce' and I'm like 'Uha, sure, yeah, no problem' and then I'm like 'Oh God!'" [she sighs] (Sian).

"Acting as a journalist, which I felt I was doing for the first few months [of his job] has just ended up becoming how I do it. Maybe it's still an act but it's easier to put it on [he laughs] (...) As much as people don't like journalists, they quite like talking and especially when you are interested in what they want to say. Most people do quite like that and I think you have got to tap in to that. That's something I learnt and I had that confidence where I felt that I know people don't mind me [he laughs]. There were some people who didn't like me ... but I know I can connect with most people" (James).

However, Anna came to a quite different communicative resolution:

"I haven't had to deal with many emotions [in her current production post] because I haven't dealt with members of the public in my job. I haven't had to do any interviews, I've just literally had copy in front of me and a computer. So in terms of personal emotions and witnessing things, and speaking to people, no. But I can imagine it being

[emotionally demanding] (...) I don't want to speak to members of the public because I'm scared!" [we both laugh loudly].

For others, the communicative influence of more competent fellow journalists is evidenced (Gravengaard and Rimestad 2016). With legitimacy in a community of practice entailing how to converse in the manner of full participants (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 2000), older hands offered a sort of communicative socialisation – as evidenced in the following three testimonies.

"I thought he [a local newspaper journalist] was very good at talking to people on the phone. He would say: 'Hi, it's Tom Brown here from the [name] down in [name]'. So I would say: 'Hi, it's James here from the Bournemouth Rock down at the university' or 'Hi, it's James here from the agency down in London.' I still kind of use his opening phrase. It seemed to work (...) He seemed like a good journalist (...) It feels like I have to do it now" (James).

Rob, meanwhile, reveals how work experience at the *Guardian* at the age of 16 gave him a socialised insight into what "he needed to be" while granting communicative reassurance:

"I think seeing most people in there reinforced that if you are approachable and open, you'll get the stories that you need. Seeing some of the people there who were a bit more ... what's a polite way of saying it? ... full-on, a bit more confident, bolshie ... that approach didn't always ... you know, their conversations always seemed quite abrupt. So I think it helped to shape not necessarily how I went about things at the time in terms of being an interviewer, but [it] gave me a good idea [of] what I needed to be when I needed to be, when I became more confident and improved, the style that I'd need to take to speak to people (...) I think that was a big boost from the week because, probably from the age of 11/12 until that point, I wasn't particularly introvert but I was by no means an extrovert. Yeah, that was quite a confidence boost in itself to see people who could get by without being in your face all the time."

Professionals have meanwhile provided radio journalist Kate with communicative guidance to help her voice be heard:

"I think initially you try and do your news reader voice but actually you're almost fighting against that and you just want a normal voice. But you want to know how to emphasise in the right place (...)

It's one of the things we're being trained [in] at work. You don't want to sound like you have a radio voice. Your voice should be your voice."

Finally, James and Mark give further insights into the communicative learning that can occur with colleagues in the field:

"It's not all this 'I've got my NCTJ's and everything'. They are not the most helpful things because you learn on your feet (...) I've learnt on my feet by working with other journalists, getting bits of information off people and then listening to what people don't say rather than what they do say. That's one of the things that's surprised me the most ... how much of a team effort it can be even though you're from four or five different rival places" (James).

"A lot of the stuff you subconsciously pick up because a lot of it is human stuff, communication. Even just the manner of how you put your dictaphone down in a room [for a press conference]. Maybe you might say hello to the [football] player or you might not. Why you wouldn't in some cases or why you would [might depend on] previous relationships or the personality of the character. It's not science [and] again I don't think you are necessarily aware of it when you are doing these things. But I think you have actually taken a lot on board over time and it all crafts into one style of how you do things, I suppose (...) Turning up on a Thursday morning [to attend a weekly football club press conference for the student newspaper], showing my face, just being there [was important]. To be honest, a lot of the time I was there I was asking questions but, even if you're not asking questions, just being there – taking it in, absorbing it – I think it is so important (...) They get used to you (...) Over time you develop those important relationships" (Mark).

These comments, taken collectively, help convey the importance of communicative and relational deliberation and resolution in relation to journalistic self-interpretation. In addition, communicative adaptation might also be reflected in the use of traditional metaphors (see page 212) and be further revealed in rhetorical representations of what participants do. Indeed, some appear to evidence a constructed discourse that enables them to look beyond obvious, procedural and 'given' news; when participants discuss seeking and finding the "wide and weird" (John), the "strange" and "unusual" (Simon) and the "off the wall" (Kate), they do not appear to be "written out of the decision-making process" and reduced to mere gatherers "of pre-existent stories" (Reardon 2017, p. 94). In all these linguistic and

communicative elaborations, extensions and adaptations, the interrelatedness of journalistic self-interpretation with new thinking and language is underscored.

Becoming a journalist clearly makes fundamental communicative demands. While Simon felt the ability “to get stuff out of people” was a perceived requirement of journalistic practice, Mark posed some of the introspective questions involved:

“I just think it is so important to have that human communication, talking to people. How do you talk to people, can you talk to people, can you get their phone number if you need it? (...) I think communication is essentially number one.”

The personal adjustments required may be ongoing too as Rob suggests:

“[Journalist colleagues have] all got very good telephone skills. I’m absolutely fine in person when I speak to people and introduce myself but cold calling [on the telephone] three months into the job is still quite tough for me. But they have got that very well sorted so they are very good communicators.”

Like the journalistic self-interpretations they help to shape, communicative resolutions appear to be processual:

“I think it takes a lot of refinement to refine your skills as a journalist, whether that be your interview techniques, the kind of questions that you ask, [the] way you approach a person, the way you talk to a person to convince them and talk them round to work with you ... all sorts. They are all part of the refining process” (John).

Ultimately, the quest for suitable self-constructions may prove impossible:

“[Journalism is] a very human thing (...) I just think a lot of people don’t necessarily have the personality. It sounds quite cutting – I don’t mean it like this – but what it takes as such” (Mark).

‘What it takes’ is further explored through deliberation upon the next collective condition of *Journalistic Becoming*.

Condition 4. Becoming dispositions and qualities

The participants suggest journalistic investment leads to contemplation upon the dispositions and qualities perceived to be journalistically important; deliberation upon their possession or absence might be seen to be part of what Sarah described as getting “one’s head in check”.

For Ronald Barnett, dispositions are one’s “tendencies” to engage with the world while “qualities characterise the actual form taken by the dispositions as they are carried into the world with all its challenges” (Barnett 2009, pp. 433-4).

Drawing on Barnett, Richard Evans conceptualised the dispositions and qualities of a “good journalist” which he felt could be developed in students (2014, p. 67; see page 52 of thesis). The Evans model – compiled with reference to “qualities, skills and knowledge required by the NCTJ”, “the personal qualities cited in literature” and a pilot study (2014, p. 83) – provides a useful initial framework within which to explore the journalistic habitus. The participant comments that follow appear to endorse many of the ‘good journalist’ dispositions and qualities. Yet while “a system of dispositions” is one’s habitus produced by socialisation (Bourdieu 1977, p. 214), the participants also give a flavour of the personal frame accommodations that may be required after investing in the journalistic field that shapes them.

Starting then with Evans’ dispositions, being “prepared to listen” (2014, p. 84) was touched upon in the preceding becoming condition concerning communication. A “will to learn and engage” (Evans 2014 p. 84) was also evidenced in the first condition – a willingness to invest in journalism. John gives this further insight into the dispositional dimension of engaged investment:

“If you fully invest in becoming a journalist you can’t help but see things on a daily basis. You might be watching the television and you’ll

think ‘That’s an amazing story’ or ‘That’s something I want to look into myself’. I often write a lot of things down even in day-to-day life, little notes about things that I want to look for, little things that I want to chase ... or different ideas. They come at you all the time and that’s the only way you kind of find stories (...) BAMMJ is a very full-on course. But that’s really good, it’s really important; it kind of drills in to you very early the kind of work ethic you have to have to be a journalist and the fact that if you don’t give it your all, then you’re not going to be a journalist. If you can’t give it [your] all on BAMMJ, then you’re not going to make it as a journalist. I think it’s a make or break kind of course in the sense that it helps you decide whether journalism is for you or not, or what kind of journalism is for you or not. It feels like a lot of pressure at the time, it really does. You feel like you’re being pushed to your furthest regions, even on the BAMMJ course, and then when you get into the real world, you know, it’s amplified even more so. So I think it gets you used to pushing your boundaries and being as committed as you need to be to become a journalist.”

Dispositional “resilience” (Evans 2014, p. 84) was also reflected in expressions of toughness: “You have to be tough skinned” (Sarah); “I think I am tougher with what I can handle emotionally because I’m a regional reporter” (Kate); and James’ earlier conveyance of being “toughened up” by a charity fund-raising job. Similarly, Sarah came to the realisation that “you need to be knocked down a bit” in order to “build yourself back up ... build your confidence”. She recalled how public refusal to cooperate with her third year Multimedia Project gave her “the determination you need in reporting” and the realisation she was more capable than she thought.

Indeed, participants revealed a dispositional “determination to go forward” (Evans 2014, p. 84), one often accompanied by an emotionally charged commitment to journalistic investment and its demands. While six participants used the word ‘passion’ in connection with their intimate relationship with journalism, Mark’s vignette helps capture a manifestation of dispositional determination in terms of commitment to physically ‘go forward’:

“I don’t want to blow my own trumpet but I remember in the first year at uni going to Southampton press conferences [at Southampton

Football Club]. [I was] cycling from my flat with a tripod [and] a camera to Bournemouth station. I was wobbling all over the place at 6am in the morning to get to Southampton's training ground. Then [I got] a taxi at the other end in Southampton Central to get to the training ground and then [did] it all again on the way back. You know, that takes ... it sounds quite arrogant ... but I'm kinda quite proud of that. You have to be the right person to do that. Some people just can't be bothered. I think in journalism now – when you said earlier about competitiveness – a lot of it is who wants it the most in terms of not necessarily getting a story but just being there in the first place. You always hear 'Oh it's so competitiveness'. I think to be honest if you really want to stand out, I don't think it's that difficult. I really don't. There are a few people of similar age to myself who have done brilliantly and we all have something in common really."

He also reveals the determined drive demanded by the *Rock*:

"It's actually just about doing it. It's about doing it. [said quite determinedly]. It's about taking responsibility, saying: 'Yeah, I'm going to do 500 words by Friday 3pm and I going to be there Saturday. I'm going to give up my Saturday to do it, I'm going to give up my Sunday, I might even give up my Monday because, you know, this is what I'm doing'. I think it is so important. If you say I want to be a journalist and you're not doing the student paper, I think it's a massive own goal."

Others touch upon the theme of determination. While Simon thought

"commitment", "being driven to ask questions" and encountering problems and solving them were journalistic prerequisites, Jess, who earlier described her "non-journalist" self as "quite introverted" (see page 217) was meanwhile surprised at the extent she had "pushed herself". While Sian said journalists had to be "100% dedicated" and "have to want to be a journalist", Sarah learnt "just don't give up" from her MMP experience. She concluded: "Oh God! You have got to be determined". Mark and James contrasted their commitment and determination to go journalistically forward with that of others:

"I think you always have to be 'on'. [In sport], you have to be so self-absorbed. You go on holiday but you are still on. You know, you are always on in that sense, so aware of what's going on, engaged in stuff (...) I get extremely frustrated ... I'm kind of my biggest critic ... if I see somebody who has done a piece [and] I think it's brilliant, sometimes I think: 'Why have I not thought of that?'" (...) [At BU] I was desperate

to do all those kind of [extra-curricular] things. (...) I was saying a minute ago about being passive. Yes, you can get away with that for a bit [but] you can't be Mr Passive in my opinion. Those fundamentals have to be there: the kind of genuine interest, genuine will, genuine motivation (...) I think the [BAMMJ] course has a difficulty because you are fighting a losing battle [with] a small minority of people (...) They don't have such a vested interest in it is perhaps the best way to put it. You're trying to convert the unconverted if that makes sense. If I close my eyes I can think of so many people, lovely people, who I know for a fact aren't in journalism now, maybe for a number of reasons. But at the time I would say university couldn't help them" (Mark).

"I was sent to BHS near where I live ... It was during the last-minute talks [to save jobs] and I was told to go and talk to staff (...) And then this woman [employee] reacted [to learning she had lost her job] and I took the quote from her which was quite good. She swore ... and as soon as that happened the staff were called and shutters went down and everyone was pushed out. And instantly I got my phone out and filmed that because I was thinking like a journalist (...) That went everywhere. Channel 4 News opened their bulletin with it which was amazing; ITV ran it, BBC bought it and it was rubbish phone footage. So that contrasted with last September [when] Lord Janner was all over the papers and I was sent outside his house. He was arriving back from court. He arrived back and all the photographers were taking loads of [photographs]. I'm the only reporter there and I didn't know what to do. I didn't film that, I didn't think: 'Get my phone out and film this.' (...) Contrasting [those] two things – a journey of six-seven months – something in my mentality changed and I thought: 'I'm a journalist, I need to get this.' (...) It [the BAMMJ course] needs to become more streamlined [with] people that actually want to become journalists, actually want to work as journalists – not want to become, actually want to work as journalists (...) So many people just didn't want to do it, they just wanted to do the basics and get out the other side" (James).

The participants' expressions of these dispositions in the world can also be seen to match some of Evans' 'quality' categorisations. While Evans describes "ethical behaviour as a quality underpinned by ethical dispositions" (2014 p. 83), interviewee reflection upon such behaviour was widely evidenced. Sarah confided that while her sister was sceptical of journalists, she knew Sarah did not "twist words". Jess, the technology magazine editor, revealed the following concern:

"I'm planning on doing some investigative features so I feel like that could cause a lot of anxiety. [I'll be trying to balance] a story that I should be getting out because it's worth it to the reader and it's

something that could genuinely change the industry [with] holding back on it because it's going to upset a lot of people."

Meanwhile, Kate found work experience at a news agency "eye opening":

"You have to be a very good journalist to be able to sell your stories but there were elements [of agency work] that I did not like ... I wasn't keen on the idea of having to sell your stories and also there's just odd ethical things ... because it's harder to get your work published, you're trying even harder again for your exclusives and so you're more likely to probably push barriers in terms of whether you're door knocking on a grieving person or taking photos of things that maybe others would consider too graphic ... you kinda have to push the boundaries a bit more."

Indeed, agency employee Simon concurred that one's personal framework can be tested by the 'death knock':

"[A] two year-old lad was killed in a quiet village, [name] in [name] (...) The day after that happened and the news broke I was in the village knocking on doors. Several of the national press were there. I felt quite conflicted about reporting on that because for me I don't know if it was necessarily appropriate to be knocking on doors in this sleepy village the day after a small child had died there. I recognised it was part of the job, part of our job to get that information ... [it was a] huge story of local interest, latterly a story of national interest ... I think there's always going to be a conflict in the job we do about how far we can go."

Finally, Mark offered this self-interpretation:

"I would say [I'm] a quite honest person generally, quite transparent. If you're told something off the record, even if it's not that exciting, by the Southampton [football] manager, you don't go and tell it to your mate in the pub that evening. So I think that's important."

Moving on to other Evans' qualities, John concluded tenacity (2014, p. 80) was required more than "I would ever have imagined". Qualities of "curiosity" and "capacity for innovation" (Evans 2014, p. 84) are also reflected in expressions of natural 'nosiness' (Sarah, James and Kate), a drive to find "something that isn't on the news agenda but should be" (Sarah), deployment of "the inquisitive mind" (Jess) and the aforementioned desire to unearth the "weird" (John), "strange" (Simon) and "off the wall" (Kate). While Kate said curiosity and interest in people

was a quality “you need to be born with” (“I don’t think you can fake that or learn that”), Jess said she “naturally” wanted to know more about foreign subjects.

Meanwhile, all the participants mentioned the Evans’ quality of confidence (2014). These examples give a flavour of its pursuit:

“I think in the back of my mind I’ve always known that I would be able to do stuff. It just needs a certain amount of effort and confidence in the skills that I have and how to improve them. But I think I’ve always known that I can get there, I’ve just got to work hard” (Kate).

“The feedback on the few things that I did write [on work experience at the Guardian, aged 16] was really positive and that – maybe even for the first time – sort of made me realise that actually [I] probably could do this. [I] could go into journalism as a profession, as a career choice. Certainly it gave me more confidence in my writing abilities, in my interpersonal abilities to speak to people because I was still shy and I still find it difficult to speak to people now. That I was able to just get on with these people who were journalists was quite helpful for me (...) Throughout most of this interview I have mentioned how I have struggled with confidence at times. [Writing for a racing car website while at university] was actually a way of not shying away from it. That was a way of going: ‘Well, there’s a paddock, there’s someone you’ve been watching week in, week out. Go and speak to him and find something out about him, and find some news out from what you speak to him about.’ That was still quite a challenge at first” (Rob).

“I’ve still got a bit of [a] confidence issue in terms of ... [the] picking up the phone kind of job ... I think it’s just I’m a bit scared of failure and I’m scared I’ll do it wrong or bad. And I think I’ve probably always had that trait no matter how many times I do something that I’m a bit reserved about, [until I] do it well and get told: ‘Well done, you’ve done a good job’” (Anna).

The participants also offer some elaboration of the dispositions and qualities contained within the Evans’ model. For example, Kate’s competitive desire to be “the first to tell people stuff” and John’s conveyance of a combative quality may be seen as particular manifestations of Evans’ dispositional ‘determination to go forward’ and ‘will to engage’. The Evans’ quality of tenacity also assumes more extreme representations of persistence with John. The latter’s reference to

‘chasing’, ‘harassment’ and ‘stalking’ rather reflects a “street fighter” trait “which should be highly valued by editors” (Hanna and Sanders 2011, p. 188):

“You really have to fight every day for a story, you really do ... I don’t think I would have envisaged [that] every morning I [would] look through every local paper in the country [and] be writing 10-15 letters to families from a court case and, you know, only one out of thirty might work. Probably less than that. I never envisaged you would need to keep fighting or the fact that as soon as you get in in the morning, irrespective of what time it is, even if it’s 7am, maybe even 6.30am, you will still give a person a call, even knowing that you are probably going to wake them up. I suppose before I was quite polite but I think you have to discard it as a journalist [he laughs]. You can still be courteous and nice (...) I think a lot of it is based on determination. Like, I really want to be the best. That’s the thing ... I’m always fighting ... I’m always chasing. To give an example ... with any story I’ll harass a person in every way I can find them, whether that’s Facebook, Twitter, I’ll leave answerphone messages, I’ll send them letters, I’ll email ... [an] almost stalkerish [laughs] level of commitment and determination to get a story. Yeah, that’s kind of one of the characteristics of who I am now. Like I’m just determined ... every point to do what I can” (John).

The participants offer further potential dimensions to the Evans’ model. While Sarah suggested growing self-efficacy had to be accompanied by enthusiasm (even when writing about the “dullest subjects”), Mark suggests the quality of shrewdness is also required in the company of fellow journalists (“keep your cards close to your chest” and “be a bit sensible, a bit savvy”). Jess also alludes to the importance of good judgement when warning against “just taking it [a story] on face value”. Courage, one of the qualities highlighted by Barnett (2009), was additionally evidenced during the overcoming of journalistic challenges. Rob’s determined confrontation with shyness is one example (see page 226) as is this:

“They [work experience employers] were proactive (...) [They asked]: ‘Why don’t you go down to the beach to get a quote for this story?’ [They were] actually forcing me to go out and do it (...) I was probably at the beach for an hour or two waiting [laughs]. Yes, I had to go out and get a quote from a local ice cream vendor and I was really nervous to do it. But then in the end you are like ‘I’m just going to do it.’ And then you just kinda get over it (...) The first time you’re asked to go out and do vox pops, you have zero confidence. You don’t know what to do, you’re scared to ask. Then you do it a few more times and suddenly that

confidence just starts coming to you and you're like: 'Ok, I just want to get this, I want to get this done now'. You're just not nervous to do it any more" (Sian).

The participants' comments, in summary, appear to endorse many of the valued dispositions and qualities contained in Evans' 'good journalist' model (2014) and, by extension, the classic texts that helped compile it. Indeed, one, the *NCTJ Guide for Trainee Journalists* (Smith 2007a), lists the "qualities you are born with" and most of them were mentioned by the participants in the extracts above; some, including John (see page 216) and Kate (see page 226), specifically mentioned qualities and attributes in terms of their innateness. Interviewee Sian also felt "an eye for a story" was important and it "either comes naturally to you or it doesn't"; news sense is listed in the NCTJ guide as a "quality you can work on" but something we are "all born with to some degree" (Smith 2007a, p. 6).⁴

A second tome informing the Evans model is Randall's *Universal Journalist*, the "world's leading textbook on journalism" (2016). Several categorisations Randall describes as "right attitudes and character" – essentially reporting functions – were also reflected in the interviewee texts.⁵ Yet some are only lightly touched upon; for example, John was the clearest advocate of Randall's "will to win" while only Simon mentioned accuracy – Randall's "passion for precision". Only two, Jess and James, briefly mentioned being 'neutral' and objective (Randall's "leaving

⁴ Smith's full list of "qualities you are born with" contains the following: curiosity, an interest in people, intelligence, health, courage, belief, out-going, enthusiastic, determined, accurate, sceptical, thick-skinned and being innovative (2007a, pp. 3-5). As noted earlier (see pages 37-8), students are exposed to the discourse of vocation in which journalism is something you are born with or learnt from those with natural talent; the participant comments above could be seen to reflect these received messages (Reardon 2016). This discourse has also been extended to empathy which may be "either there or not"; it may need to be performed if it doesn't arise naturally (Gluck 2016, p. 901/895), even though it requires time which may be denied in the "frenetic digital age" (Lustig 2017, p. 7; Jukes 2016b).

⁵ His key attitudes in *Universal Journalist* include: news sense; a passion for precision; a determination to find out ("There is no surer sign of a bad reporter than the one who keeps wimpishly going back to the newsdesk to say 'I can't find out'"); never making assumptions; never being afraid to look stupid; being suspicious of all sources; being resourceful; leaving prejudices at home; a sense of urgency; empathy with readers; and a "will to win" and "taking pleasure in beating the opposition" (2016, p. 10).

prejudices at home”). Furthermore, the participants did not widely evidence a shared “belief in what the job is about” – Randall’s public sphere functions encompassing resisting government controls, informing and empowering voters, scrutinising government and business and “holding up a mirror to society” (2016, p. 3). Social media research has suggested that journalists write about themselves rather than about their connection to journalism and its ideals or humanity; they may be “less affected by an occupational or a public service point of view” (Carpenter et al. 2017, p. 1260).

There is, indeed, restricted evidence in this thesis of the anger and desire to effect change which, it’s argued, should inspire people to be journalists (Thompson 2015). Simon and Kate did enter this territory, however. When discussing the “horrific” implications of Section 40⁶ Simon said: “The purpose of journalism is sometimes to report stuff that is contentious ... We need to have the ability to publish stuff that might be challenged”; he added the “core of a lot of journalism is making you care about something you didn’t previously”. Kate, while wishing to be the voice “people would listen to”, discussed trying to balance people’s emotions while trying to do her job which “ultimately is a public service”; while a friend questioned news agenda priorities, Kate confronted difficulty because she cannot speak “on behalf of the whole media”.

On one level, the relative scarcity of Randall’s public sphere ‘beliefs’ could be interpreted as indifference to the values underpinning journalistic ideology (Deuze 2011). Yet the participants’ significant articulation of the dispositions, qualities and

⁶ Section 40 of the Crime and Courts Act 2013 threatened to force those publishers failing to sign up to a Royal Charter-backed press regulation scheme to pay the costs of the people who try to sue them – whatever the outcome of the case. Supported by celebrities and victims of press abuse, Section 40 was fiercely opposed by the newspaper industry which claimed investigative reporting would be harmed (Jolley 2017). In March 2018, the government announced it would not commence Section 40 and seek repeal (Mayhew 2018a).

attitudes contained in the Evans model, Smith's NCTJ guide and Randall's *Universal Journalist* strongly evidence traditional references; the participants' views appear to largely endorse the "high level of agreement" concerning "essential qualities" reached by "those who know what they are talking about" (Smith 2007a, p. 3). These mysterious individuals are not identified but, in the preface to the NCTJ guide, NCTJ Chairman Kim Fletcher informs prospective journalists that the tome contains "great wisdom" from those "who have done it themselves" (Fletcher 2007, p vii). These individuals bring journalism's past into the present; they are the apparent preservers and carriers of journalistic tradition.

How such socialisation works remains among "the least visible variables examined by researchers" (Marchetti 2005, p. 74). Yet it appears reasonable to suggest that journalistic tradition contributes to the shaping of dispositions and qualities constituting habitus within a "journalistic field" (Bourdieu 1998a, p. 39) and, therefore, to one's journalistic self-interpretation. For Bourdieu, habitus (like the Gadamerian tradition that helps shape it) is a "product of history"; with habitus cast as "an open system of dispositions" subject to constant experiences that reinforce and modify, my participants may be "statistically bound to encounter circumstances that tend to agree with those that originally fashioned their habitus" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p. 133). Amid these forces, Sian felt the BU course helped "find" her journalistic qualities. John also alluded to the furnishing of required, empowering qualities for the journalistic journey ahead: "BAMMJ was great because it kind of gave us the confidence and courage to be a journalist."

Yet the participants also give important insights into the personal resolutions that required addressing; journalism may continue to ordain the desirability of

certain dispositions and qualities but they nonetheless demand assessment and judgement within the personal frameworks that construct self-interpretation.

Condition 5. Becoming skills and knowledge awareness

The participants' journalistic self-interpretations were shaped by skill and knowledge acquisition. This is unsurprising. Like journalistic vocation, the "lexicon of training and skills" has been seen as a discursive construction of what is needed to become a journalist (Reardon 2016, p. 942). As Evans notes: "Reporting skills are the defining function of journalism. They remain the one distinguishing feature of the occupation of journalism" (2014, pp. 70-71). Andrew Marr puts it this way:

"Like plumbing or selling fish, there are certain skills without which it's very hard to be a journalist – though it's a fair bet that there are more journalists who can't write shorthand or who don't understand libel law than there are fishmongers who cannot gut a mackerel" (2005, p. 4).

Industry-facing journalism education is primarily focussed on developing skills and knowledge required for practicing journalism (Mensing 2011). In this respect, the requirements of the NCTJ Diploma serve to underscore "the vital required skills of finding and telling stories accurately and to deadline"; its "under-pinning values" encompass digital and traditional skills which "should be fully integrated and embedded in training" that includes media law and ethics (NCTJ 2017a).

While the participants earlier revealed differing degrees of investment in the NCTJ qualifications (for example, Sarah's becoming entails acquisition, see page 203), all discussed skills that can be seen to fall within the NCTJ Diploma requirements. For example, while the aforementioned *NCTJ Guide for Trainee Journalists* (Smith 2007a) lists "writing skills" as a "quality you can acquire" (p. 9), its importance was noted earlier as a hierarchical constituent of journalistic role

perception (see page 206). Indeed, writing was discussed by all the participants, underscoring the significance of these skills in multimedia journalism (Auger et al. 2017). Rob, for example, simply said “high quality written journalism” was required for “proper, proper esteemed publications”. Simon suggests below that the teaching of writing within the NCTJ framework could, however, be constraining, while the London agency reporter James conveys his admiration for writing artistry:

“I don’t know if there is something more early on [that] the [BAMMJ] course can do to reflect the wide breadth of journalism. When you first start it is news journalism and I think the reason for that is a lot of what journalism is [is] rooted in news journalism. So if you know how to do an inverted pyramid news story, you can pretty much do any journalism, just [by] extrapolating from that.”⁷ So I think while those are the fundamentals, I think for some people coming into the course, and I certainly felt like this initially, it’s difficult to get beyond that. It feels like: ‘Well, this is going to be three years of learning how to be a local news reporter’” (Simon).

“If your writing is good enough and if you’re socially adaptable enough you can become a journalist (...) We’ve got one guy who writes way too much for a court story and then everyone moans about it (...) he writes 2,000 words or 1,000 words on a story which could do with 300. But it’s some of the most beautiful colour I’ve ever read. He’s definitely a feature writer. A good news journalist as well but [also a] brilliant colour [writer]. He was doing Wimbledon for us this year and some of the stuff he wrote was brilliant and he was doing the news side not the sport. But he was still using brilliant language” (James).

News sense also appears integral to one’s journalistic self-interpretation. Previously discussed in terms of a quality or attitude (see page 228), it also has the characteristics of tacit knowledge if seen as informed by previously published material, the commissioner’s agenda and audience empathy (Evans 2014). Two

⁷ Trainee journalists have commonly been taught to think of a news story structure as a triangle or inverted pyramid, with the most important information at the top (a “whizzy intro” as Sarah put it, but also described as the ‘angle’ or ‘top line’) and the least important material at the bottom. The story should also contain the ‘Five W’s’ – who, what, where, when and why as well as how; Harcup (2015) notes: “Combined with the Five W’s, the pyramid – or inverted pyramid – is a good way of starting to think about constructing relatively simple news stories” (p. 146).

participants give an insight into what this knowledge might be and how it is acquired:

“I did a piece for [the agency] a week or two ago about the new Star Wars film (...) [his Director] said: ‘You know about films, write this’ (...) It fell to me to develop it into a news story. So I spoke to a few people I’ve got contact with in the film industry [and] I filed the copy. [his Director] went: ‘Well, this reads like an essay about piracy, this doesn’t read like a news story.’ He said go back and rework it. So that’s what I did. I think especially with something you know a lot about, something like film, you have a tendency to write it how you feel it should be written rather than for the audience you’re writing the piece [for]. And so I think for [his Director] to do that really helped in how I wrote that. That’s something I’ll take forward now ... to know that this is the way you need to write stuff (...). I think it is always emotionally challenging to receive criticism. I think I know more about film than [his Director] does and I’m very aware that [he] knows far more about news reporting than I do. And I had to kinda swallow my film pride to go: ‘This is about news reporting, [he] is the expert in this. He’s been in it for decades, he’s right’ [laughs]” (Simon).

“Our news editors can see a story, they know the line, the top line straight away. I need to get better at that, quicker at doing that and better at reading between the lines. I’ve become better but [need to get] better at reading between the lines” (James).

While Sarah says she can now “find a nibbit” of news (“when we’ve got the editor on the ‘phone saying we need a story, you find a story”), John suggests news sense is a lengthy process of acquisition:

“It’s probably taken a good year within a news agency to feel like I’m a proper journalist now. I’m used to pulling out good, strong news lines from average stories for people or finding the kind of things you need to get a story to ‘make’. When I say ‘make’ [I mean] make an appearance in a paper as opposed to just being online.”

The participants also discussed further skills and knowledge acquisitions to be found in Smith’s NCTJ guide (2007a). For example, six participants mentioned the importance of shorthand. Even though it was “a trump card” for Mark, he added

“people slag it off all the time” while Sian said it was “a nice thing to have” rather than a necessity; law knowledge was also deemed largely beneficial.⁸

Meanwhile, the usefulness of the more theoretical components of the BAMMJ course was generally endorsed by participants. However, the importance and practical helpfulness of a vocational emphasis was also stressed by some; Kate, for example, maintained theory “can be interesting but I don’t think it makes you a better journalist”. While Anna didn’t see the “point” of the Global Current Affairs module (“it’s like a history lesson”) and Sian wasn’t helped “in the slightest” by Media, Journalism and Society, the theory components nonetheless appear to have helped other participants heed NCTJ advice: the accreditation body’s list of required knowledge encompasses being “well-informed” about society and current affairs and understanding the “role of the media, its powers and responsibilities, how it works, who does what and why, the problems it faces – and your role within it” (Smith 2007a, p. 7). Indeed, theory brought Simon “up to scratch” and granted James a “global view”. Similarly, the BAMMJ course “broadened our minds to what was going on in the world” according to John; while theory helped Jess understand “how it all came together”, it afforded Rob “an understanding of stories behind what’s actually being presented as a piece of current affairs news”.

It’s important to note that knowledge dividends could be derived from early age investments and be accrued processually. Simon’s childhood contribution to a community magazine afforded appreciation of deadline requirements (“this is your deadline, give me 500 words by this time”) while Sarah, contributing material to the CBBC children’s channel at the age of 11, also became aware of the “subjects

⁸ Participants like Mark appear to have greater enthusiasm for shorthand than many contributors to a 2017 poll of 133 journalists aged under 30 who had been nominated for Young Journalist Awards (Mayhew 2017d). The survey found 15% considered shorthand the most important skill, while 29% said it was the least important; when asked what were the “most useful practical skills to have” as a journalist, 60% said media law.

that are important to people”. At university, the process continued. Kate, Anna and Simon disclosed how work experience and extra-curricular student investments afforded knowledge of how newsrooms work – “the process of a newsroom” in Simon’s case while editing the *Rock*. His work experience at *Empire* also provided “a real insight into the way that kind of reporting works and how it differs to news reporting”. For John, meanwhile, the BAMMJ course made him aware of acceptable standards and the expectations of different media mediums, thus affording preparation “to an industry standard”. Once in the workplace, Jess also joined Rob in stressing the importance of commercial knowledge: “I now have to think about how this story will affect our sales. How will it affect our advertising team [which] then has to try and pitch for more ads for the mag?”

Many of the participants also discussed what Smith terms “technical skills” (2007a, p. 9). They conveyed the desirability of up-to-date skills, the importance of awareness of multimedia requirements and mentioned instances of beneficial exposure. While Jess suggested a revamp of Bournemouth University’s online teaching (“it felt a bit outdated”), her introduction to user-generated content at an agency on work experience enabled her to see “how journalism could go ... where we could start getting content from”. John adds:

“At the Sunday Times [on work experience] we were investigating tax evading celebrities and footballers. I was introduced to a few bits of software there that I’d never used before to check businesses that had [been] registered to various celebrities and footballers. That was amazing. Also I went there during the Lord McAlpine scandal when Lord McAlpine was accused of being a paedophile by various celebrities on Twitter He ended up going on to sue quite a few. Again, we were using this software that tracked down people’s deleted tweets and so it was actually about feeling a part of that journalistic output (...) I was really invested and I put in a lot of hours there because I was really interested. It felt like we were actually doing something very useful as well (...) I did feel I was one of the journalists with them.”

Participants also confirmed other skill recommendations to be found in the NCTJ guide (Smith 2007a): organisational skills (Jess and Rob), innovation (“I’ve always been interested in coming up with ideas” said Sian), researching and knowing “sources of information” (Smith 2007a, p. 7). Indeed, research entails “tracking people down” and a “hell of a lot of digging” for Mark, while Rob advocates being “immersed” in one’s topic. It’s all against the clock too. James, in highlighting what Randall calls a “sense of urgency” (2016, p. 9) said:

“I want to be better at video because there are some very good people at the agency that can do really good video ... and they also do really nice graphics as well so I want to learn how to do that. My writing needs to get better ... definitely needs to get better and tighter. Since I’ve been at the agency its scary how fast the other reporters are (...) That’s what I really struggled with at the agency at first. I still struggle with it now and I’ve made mistakes because I’m trying to be too fast. So the News Editor said to me: ‘Be slower but get it right’. I fear for my speed.”

Becoming a journalist today clearly entails more than a “facility with words”; it also requires sharp questioning, the handling of sources, Internet research, online understanding and production of “informative, fresh and reliable” journalism (Randall 2016, p. xiii). Yet these skills resist simplistic acquisition; they require ongoing nurturing, verification and application. Indeed, there may even be another skill required to implement the acquired skill:

“You can learn how to do it at uni and be told and taught but actually doing it is another skill in itself I feel. You learn the basics and then actually putting them in to practice you kind of refine them” (Anna).

We now continue presentation of the final *Journalistic Becoming* conditions while remaining mindful of a familiar resonance: the participants’ voices often echo the voices of the past as recorded for posterity in the educational texts recommended to students. The categorisations, recommendations and ‘how to’ advice contained in these volumes both promote and preserve journalistic skills, such as the timeless

pyramid writing style that has “traditionally” been taught to trainees (Harcup 2015, p. 146).

While the participants’ voices evidence the socialised soundtrack reverberating through journalistic tradition, their narratives suggest everything but nothing has changed; the past is fused with the present, cementing understanding that “new techniques” added to the “more traditional ones” make a “universally skilled journalist” (Randall 2016, p. ix). Indeed, today’s skill set is “comprised of two key elements” – “finding and writing a story together with intermediate digital literacy” (Canter 2015, p. 49). Similarly, while an updated set of news values may today be required (including, for example, “audio visuals” and “shareability”), “much remains the same” with ten of fifteen identified story requirements remaining unchanged from 2001 (Harcup and O’Neill 2017, pp. 1481-1482). In fact, student journalists and professional journalists may appear to view the “current crisis” in journalism not as a starting point for radical change but “rather an incentive to emphasise traditional core values” (Drok 2013, p. 156). Gadamer’s insightfulness is thus invoked: “Far more of the old is preserved in the supposed transformation of everything than anyone knows, and it combines with the new to create a new value” (2004, p. 283).

The reality of this process was depicted somewhat bluntly by participant Mark when he recalled how university “hammered in” the “crux of stuff”. In the workplace, Simon also recalled the knowledgeable firmness of a guiding hand: “The Director has gone: ‘Well, you need to completely rework this because of this reason, this reason and this reason’ and they don’t necessarily tell you what’s right. They go: ‘This is what’s wrong with it, fix it’”. While the ways of tradition may thus be seen to shape one’s habitus in a journalistic field of shared presuppositions,

the skills and knowledge of the past and the present entwine as important dividends derived from investment in the stakes of journalism. Indeed, they are cultural capitals, “trump cards” with relative value determined by specific journalistic fields (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p. 98; Bourdieu 2005).

Yet skills and knowledge are only part conditions influencing and underlying the whole self-interpretive process. Indeed, the previously selected conditions of *Journalistic Becoming* also reflect the ongoing self-deliberations, resolutions and affirmations undertaken by my participants. Moreover, these conditions shaping journalistic self-interpretation are interwoven and entangled. Indeed, an apparent tension between the skills, knowledge and relational themes is addressed here:

“On my third or fourth day [of his current job] I was sent to Crown Court on my own for a church worker who had been accused of raping young girls. He was leading a community group [and] grooming them. And that was petrifying (...) [I used to think] you need to be trained, get all the qualifications and then you’ll feel ready, you’ll feel like you are able to do it. But actually you don’t. I could have done another three year degree and another ten years of training but I think I would have been as nervous as I was on that fourth day in the court on my own. I thought you probably needed to be objective, very passionate, massively knowledgeable, know all the law to everything ... But actually a lot of journalists just work with each other, lend each other little bits of information and borrow little bits off each other” (James).

Condition 6. Becoming epiphanies

As has been shown, my participants offered many vignettes during our discussions. They featured epiphanies that punctuated their becoming stories and shaped journalistic self-interpretation; these were interactional moments and experiences which altered “fundamental meaning structures” and “leave marks on people’s lives” (Denzin 1989a, p. 70). In these becoming moments, personal character was “manifested and made apparent”, leaving the person “never again quite the same”

(Denzin 1989b, p. 15). Indeed, these epiphanies could be experienced as “social dramas” (Denzin 2014, p. 53) and were significant events falling into the earlier hierarchical categorisation of “an Experience” (Tomkins and Eatough 2013a, p. 262; see page 79); they typically involved experientially-provoked disjunctures and discrepancies (Jarvis 2010; Higgins 1987). They might also prompt “nuclear episodes” (McAdams 1996, p. 308), reflection upon variation (Moon 2004), “strangeness” (Barnett 2005, p. 795), performative comparison with others (Bandura 1997), “discomforting compromises” (Kronstad 2016, p. 134) and “emotional dissonance” (Gluck 2016, p. 895). Yet their confrontation could return investment dividends which were sometimes discussed in terms of journalistic ‘turning points’. In John’s case, one such episode was described as “career defining”. These moments shaping *Journalistic Becoming* are now presented. The extracts that follow were selected to illustrate a three-themed but interlinked epiphanic categorisation that emerged from the analysis: moments of breakthrough, moments of endorsement and moments of exclusive creation.

Moments of breakthrough

The first two extracts show how epiphanic moments could be created by both ‘micro’ and ‘macro’ experiences. Indeed, it was the making of a single telephone call that prompted a breakthrough realisation for Anna. Underlying tensions and problems in a situation were revealed in what might be termed an “illuminative epiphany” (Denzin 1989b, p. 17); she duly proved something to herself:

“Speaking to people was not something I was looking forward to (...) I was at the Courier [a weekly newspaper on work experience] and I was given this story and I just did not want to do it. I was like: ‘Oh my God, I’ve got to ring someone and I don’t want to do it. What am I going to do?’ And then I suddenly thought: ‘This day is going to drag so much if I just don’t pick up that phone and do it’ (...) I remember sitting at my

desk and being given the brief and a Post-it [note] with a number on and [being asked]: “Can you ring this person?” I did as much research as I could on the Internet and really made sure I was clued up in case they threw any questions at me ... and then the day just kept going on and on and I kept looking at it and not wanting to do it. I suddenly had this realisation: ‘What am I doing? Stop being so stupid, it’s only a phone call.’ I did it and like I said they were lovely and I got what I needed. I came off the ‘phone [thinking]: ‘Why have I been panicking?’ It was just some sort of line that I couldn’t get across until I was forced to. Since then phone calls have been easy to me (...) I don’t know what taboo I had before about phone calls [but] it just sort of completely rid that, rid my fears of another person at the end of the phone (...) There was some boundary stopping me from picking up that phone (...) Yes, I always say that bit of work experience prepared me for the future. I was thrown in the deep end and proved I could do it (...) All my friends now say I was very shy at the start of uni which may go hand-in-hand with why I wouldn’t pick up the phone. Maybe I have always been a bit reserved (...) I think I’ll always have that fear of failure just because I don’t want to let anyone down. But that’s in life, it’s not just in work or anything. I think that’s just a flaw of my character (...) I think I am a perfectionist and I’m a worrier. A real worrier (...) I think I am just so scared of failure and doing something wrong, disappointing people.”

Sarah, meanwhile, discussed “the power of Salzburg” in life-changing terms (see pages 129/131); in what can be seen as a “major event” epiphany that “touches every fabric of a person’s life” (Denzin 1989a, p. 71), Sarah ‘broke through’ the “bubble” containing her old life:

“You go into the lecture with one view but you will come out with about ten different. It makes you reflective on your own life (...) It opens your eyes to things that you would never have imagined (...) It [a concentration camp] wasn’t as big as Auschwitz or anything like that. But the thing that stayed with me was as you leave ... there’s a wall with all the different sorts of plaques and the names of people that were there. And obviously people from the different countries stood in front of the ones most relevant to them. It was only as I walked past that I saw the Turkish flag [her family are from Turkey] with the names underneath. I thought: ‘Oh my God, Turkish people were actually killed here’. It just evoked something in me [her voice wavers] ... it came out of nowhere. I didn’t expect it to and then I just walked away and thought: ‘Well ... this is a really important piece of history.’ And it was when we got back that we had our talkdown. You were able to express what you were feeling. I think we ended up talking for about three hours and it was just the loveliest thing (...) I didn’t want to speak too much. But being able to hear from other students, even the lecturers themselves, just hearing from Michael [a BU lecturer] brought tears to

your eyes (...) Yes, going there did change my life. Without going to Salzburg I would probably still live in the bubble I lived in before."

For sports freelancer Mark and London news agency reporter James, breakthrough moments were afforded by the passage of time. Their "cumulative" epiphanies resulted from a build-up of events (Denzin 1989b, p. 17); while every experience "lives on in further experiences" in an "experiential continuum" (Dewey 1938, pp. 27-28; Dewey 1984), epiphanic awareness of such linkages could take time to register:

"I don't know whether you saw that Harry Arter piece in the paper? [a feature about the AFC Bournemouth footballer he wrote for a national newspaper]. They used the same picture byline I had [used] in the Bournemouth Rock (...) I sat at home – it sounds really cringey – but that was a massive kind of ... proud moment. A little goosebumpy thing. I didn't actually have a Rock copy to hand but if I took the two [the Rock and national newspaper], you would have seen the same picture, one in a national newspaper. That is when you realise how important the student paper is (...) That was a massive part of my learning. A massive stage of my progress. And to see that same picture [that was used] with the student paper ... it was quite emotional. That's [one of] those brief moments when you reflect: 'Blimey! ... Ok, I see what I've done here.' Especially the nature of that piece. To go from, with all due respect, [writing] classic football stories to then something like that [the story concerned a miscarriage suffered by Arter's wife], that was quite a big moment. A sense of accomplishment in that I had overcome doubt. I was a little bit nervous (...) and then to have overcome it, done the piece and had so much positive reaction ... brilliant, yes" (Mark).

James, who earlier revealed how he became aware his "mentality changed" between two reporting jobs separated by six months (see page 224), offers another breakthrough moment afforded by temporal distance; it concerns the first court case he covered for the agency that employs him (see page 238):

"There was a guy from [a national newspaper] there who used to work at [my] agency (...) [He] helped me very kindly because he knew the agency system and [he] read my copy for me (...) [The story then] went straight to the News Editor so they obviously changed anything they needed to. It didn't go straight on the wire. And it went to the sub [editor] as well. So it went through three people. So I didn't feel like a journalist then probably. I felt like I was pretending still. [A] couple of weeks later I interviewed Corbyn. That was probably a big turning

point ... interviewing someone during a time when everyone was talking about him, during the initial Labour leadership contest. And then going home to my housemates who are quite politically involved and know what they are talking about, and [saying]: 'Yeah, I interviewed him today.'"

Moments of endorsement

Industry endorsement of one's *Journalistic Becoming* could also create a "transformational" experience, one interpreted by the person as a turning point (Denzin 1989b, p. 15). For example, "a big moment" for freelancer Mark was "being asked" to cover a football match by a national newspaper the day after he graduated; he had got "through the barrier", it was "a genuine breakthrough" and he thought: "Ah, so they think I can do it." When Kate received praise during work experience she knew "people weren't giving me compliments just to be nice". For Sarah, meanwhile, the receipt of praise simply constituted "the times that you feel most a journalist".

For Simon and Rob, these moments of endorsement were manifest in invitations to enter the journalistic field:

"I think that was one of the first times that I've ever applied for something [covering the London Film Festival for Empire magazine while a student] and [I] really, really, really [words emphasised] wanted it. And so when I got the call to say, you know, 'This is what you are doing', it felt like a huge vote of confidence in me. The leading industry publication [was saying]: 'We think you are good enough to work for us and cover this for us'. So (I) and two other people were chosen to do it out of – I think they told us at the time – several hundred applicants. So it was a huge vote of confidence in me and I think that day when I was given the news was kind of the most confident I've ever felt as a journalist because it was Empire magazine saying 'Yes, you are good enough to do this' (...) They were very keen to drum into us from the start [that] 'You've been chosen for this because we think you are good enough'. And so then they sort of sent us out. I'd sit in the screening rooms – it was a press screening rather than a public one. You'd sit there and go: 'Oh, well, that's Danny Leigh, he's the critic on BBC Film Premier 16, that's Tim Robey, he works for Variety' (...) It kind of made me feel like I was a part of it, being in amongst all of those

people who I knew and [I] appreciated their work (...) Almost as soon as you've finished the film, you're filing copy, it's going to Empire magazine, it's on their website by the end of the day. And I think that was a huge moment for me (...) I was writing a review or I was going on to the red carpet in the evening. I was in the press pen with all of the other reporters ... I was interviewing Brad Pitt or whoever it was at the time, asking them questions, getting the response. I was then sending that straight to – not to a lecturer, not to an in-between person – but to Empire magazine” (Simon).

“[I] got woken by a phone call [from a national motor racing magazine] and sort of told: ‘Yeah, we’d like to offer you a job’ and it was just ... it’s still quite hard to quantify what that means to have someone say: ‘Yes, we’d quite like you to come and work for us’. But [to] have that someone be a representative of the brand that you’ve wanted to work for [for] ten, fifteen years, it was just ... I had to really compose myself because I just wanted to shout about it absolutely everywhere at the time. [He told himself] ‘No, just wait, they’ll put out an official announcement that you’re joining. Then after that you can say yes, I’m really proud to be doing this ...’ (...) I don’t always feel proud of myself or particularly brilliant about what I’ve done. But at that moment I looked back at that first weekend that I’d done [covering racing] for the website [an online race website] while I was at university ... [I] looked at how few people I spoke to. And then [I] looked three years down the line [to when] the most reputable motorsport brand in the UK [offered me a job] (...) To be one year out of university, one year qualified, and for [name] to say ‘We’d like to employ you’, that was a very special moment for me” (Rob).

Professional endorsement was also reflected in the epiphanic securement of publication, as Rob notes after seeing his name on a *Guardian* preview of a football match. He wrote the piece while undertaking school work experience:

“It’s a real cliché that your first byline is the most special one, but that was just absolutely fantastic. Opening the Saturday sports section of the Guardian, seeing my name on a 50-word summary preview of Stoke versus Man City in the FA Cup doesn’t really mean a lot to anyone. But I thought: ‘Wow, that’s really cool to get that recognition’ (...) It didn’t give me a sense of entitlement to anything journalistic in the future but it gave me a sense of worth that a national publication feels that your writing is of a standard where it can be published.”

While Rob added there was “still something just so special” about seeing his name in print, James suggests being “published extensively” could also bring a sense of journalistic self-endorsement though public reaction:

“You start to think this is going out to people and they are reading it on the bus or train or on their phone ... and sharing it. I’ve seen [my] stories shared on Facebook and people moaning about them and [I’m thinking] that’s me!”

Kate, meanwhile, recalled the *Sun* website publishing her story about students who projected pornography on to the external walls of a BU hall of residence; the story was compiled during her first year at university. It was “exciting” and “rewarding” to “actually get published” and make “international news”. She recalls feeling “really overwhelmed that I could actually do something like that”. Epiphanic endorsement could also come from star approval:

“One high I remember was when we launched the first [youth charity] magazine [see page 193]. It was when the charity moved to this disused bus station [which] had [been] done up. We happened to also launch the magazine on the same day [that] the radio presenter Jo Wiley came to launch the bus station and then we showed her the magazine as well. She said it was a really great thing for [city name]. And that was a massive high (...) It seemed like it wasn’t just my parents saying: ‘Oh yes, that’s a really good job.’ It was someone from outside seeing it and being, like, ‘Yeah, actually that’s really good’. It’s affirming that you’ve done something good [and the praise] isn’t just down to your parents’ love for you. It’s actually something that’s important I think” (Jess).

Moments of exclusive creation

The following three vignettes evidence the epiphanic potential inherent in the experience of story creation:

“It was a really big story. It was the first [UK] woman to return from Isis. I remember going to [her] court case and it was swamped with journalists (...) I remember approaching the family during the judge’s break [when] he was deciding on the sentence that he’d hand down and the family were quite intimidating [he laughs] (...) But it was fine, you’ve got to get used to it. I handed a letter to the mother and tried to speak to her and empathise a bit more with her. Other journalists did the same thing later. But [there was] something about my letter. They called me and wanted to work with us [the agency he works for] to tell the story of the first woman to escape Isis’s clutches (...) That was like the biggest story I’d worked on (...) it was really stressful. It felt like a kind of career defining piece in some ways (...) It was just really exciting but I felt a huge burden of pressure to get it right. But it felt incredible (...), it was so exciting, but nerve-wracking. I had to

approach the family very cautiously, and not upset them (...) They wanted to hold it off for a book that they'd want to be paid [for] to be published. I'd keep pushing them for more information, to get pictures for us. Yeah, it felt amazing. I think [during] those three days I probably only slept maybe nine hours at the most. That was my tenth day in a row working because I'd worked the weekend before ... so I was exhausted. But it was incredible. It felt like a really big story. I think I'll always be a bit gutted it never went out but obviously I'll always know that I had that story first and in the end the Mail on Sunday managed to get the story. I think it's fair to say they will have paid them because the family wouldn't work without paying" (John).

"They [a visual effects company] create a lot of things across the visual effects industry (...) They provide a lot of technology. And one of the things that I had found in this really old, forgotten press release [from the company] was something about 'Material X. It sounds exactly what it is, it sounds quite mysterious. I just looked into it and contacted the people on the press release. They didn't answer for months and I thought: 'Ok, well I'm not getting anything, that's fine'. But then I found out that no one had been reporting about it. So I thought that was quite weird, emailed them again and they contacted me back (...) It turned into this story that no one else in the industry had reported at all – this new technology that basically [is] developing the looks of visual effects. This [was a] completely new thing that they had been working on. And I think that's what made me feel like a true journalist" (Jess).

"I went to Cannes and did the reporting there [for the business magazine she was providing freelance copy for]. It was really intense, it was really full on, getting so many interviews in one day. You are talking [to] about eight or nine, going back and having them written up for a magazine that's coming out the next day. It's a lot of work. Then you see the finished product the next morning and you are like: 'Wow, that's pretty awesome, we did that as journalists'. That was probably, when I look through my career so far, something like that [made me feel I'd become a journalist]" (Sian).

Participants, however, also discuss the more discreet and subtle shaping afforded by these 'moments'. While James felt his journalistic 'arrival' came "over time" and was not heralded by one story, Kate adds:

"It's a gradual transition. I don't think you can put it down to one specific [turning point]. I've got different points which are good markers like the first published piece of work [the aforementioned Sun article, see page 244] and then things like my MMP (...) I was recommended to contact 5Live to see if it [the MMP] was something they would be interested in (...) When you knew there was real world potential for your work, [they were] always good markers but I wouldn't say it's like turning points."

Finally, it is important to note that some of the more extreme expressions of epiphanic, emotional upheaval were made in connection with micro experiences, like the telephone vignette described by Anna (see pages 239-40). Indeed, these micro-experiences could create epiphanic moments through provocation of the communicative and relational deliberations encapsulated in Condition 3 above (see page 213). In this respect, the first year university assignment entailing the interviewing of elderly residents was specifically mentioned by six participants. Sarah said the task “sent everyone into shock” while Anna was “so scared”; Kate obtained only “half of the information” required while the task “really influenced” John. Sian described a similar exercise during her journalism BTEC course as “make or break” and “the worst thing”. She revealed “you are crapping yourself”, adding: “You stand there with your friends [saying]: ‘Oh God, no, *you* ask them!’” Meanwhile, John still has “flashbacks” concerning a first year feature assignment undertaken at university; it was nonetheless “a very big turning point” since it pointed him in future journalistic directions. Yet the exercise left Sian pondering: “Oh God, maybe I’m not made to be a journalist then.” University coverage of elections could also be “overwhelming” and “very stressful” (James), “intense” and “quite a ballsy thing to do” (John). Moving on to student media, editorship of the *Rock* also entailed “stress”, as Simon noted earlier (see page 197); and while John wanted to challenge himself by becoming the *Pebble*’s Feature’s Editor, he “absolutely dreaded it”. Individual work experience placements could be emotionally challenging, too; while John found one placement “really exciting”, it could equally be “nerve-wracking (Simon), “terrifying” (James) and result in questioning if one was “cut out for this” (Sian). Rob remembers:

“I was very nervous (...) You get taken in [and] you go to reception ... they were all really nice and friendly but I can remember being perched

on the chair [demonstrates] just with my bum on the seat and my hands over my knees, just trying to stop almost the shaking from happening. Looking back there was no real reason for that to have been the case but there was a sense of awe I guess because you have gone into one of the leading national newspapers in the world, let alone the country ... so I didn't really have an idea of what to expect."

In summary, the participants suggest emotionally-charged experiences helped shape journalistic self-interpretation through offering epiphanic moments of breakthrough, endorsement and creative awareness. These moments may be said to have left self-interpretive marks upon my participants, leaving them, indeed, "never again quite the same" (Denzin 1989a, p. 70).

Experientially-provoked breakthroughs in self-understanding could be major and life-changing or illuminative of underlying problems (Denzin 1989b); indeed, discrepancies and disjunctures could be suddenly and emotionally thrust to the forefront of personal frameworks where they required resolution and accommodation. In these transformative and charged instances of introspection, James maintained it could be "good to be terrified" after reflecting upon a work experience placement on a national newspaper. Similarly, amid the stress Simon felt editing the *Rock*, it wasn't a "negative stress" that "distracted from what we were doing"; he duly reached the breakthrough understanding that "I can be a leader". While the participants additionally evidence the importance of epiphanic moments of endorsement and journalistic creation, it was frequently micro-experiences that engendered this sixth becoming condition. The participants also suggest that epiphanies can be the result of cumulative, experiential build-up (Denzin 1989b). So while epiphanic moments help steer and shape the self-interpretive process, they may also provide punctuating benchmark realisations and awareness of one's ongoing *Journalistic Becoming* journey.

Condition 7. Becoming champions

The role of ‘others’ in shaping the self-interpretation of the becoming journalist has already been touched upon. Indeed, within the ‘becoming communication’ condition, it was noted how a journalistic novice, James, listened to and adopted the linguistic skills of an expert (see page 218). In addition, we have just seen how experts might provide epiphanic moments through requesting journalistic material, offering field entry invitations and providing bylines and praise. Yet investment in the journalistic game (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992) might also afford the dividend of more personal relationships with influential others who we may consider to be ‘becoming champions’. These champions are grouped in this section as supporters, educational guiders and workplace guiders.

Supporters

All the participants said their parents were supportive of their journalistic endeavours; yet different dimensions within the parentally-influenced habitus may be presented. Indeed, while no members of the participants’ families worked in journalism, parental immersion in the journalistic world varied. For example, while James and his mother “kinda connect” over news, John noted:

“They [parents] have always been very supportive ... but my mum doesn’t read the news, she doesn’t watch the news. She’s as far away from [being] news aware or news conscious as you can get. I wasn’t really brought up in a household where they read the news at all. Not even my dad really. He read little bits, he’d listen to a local radio station [that] discusses specific current affairs and [which] localises national stories. But I wasn’t from a family where journalism was expected or even reading the news or consuming any form of news was normal (...) I think they could tell I was passionate about it, the way I was talking about it (...) They didn’t try and dissuade me (...) At that point they were relieved that I had found something that at least I was passionate about and [I] wasn’t going to be working in one of the many

part-time jobs I had when I was younger. And [I] wouldn't need any further education. I think they were glad."

Amid support, evident family pride could meanwhile become manifest in popular journalistic framing. For example, when Sian is constantly called 'Lois Lane' by her mum (see page 210), her daughter seemingly becomes imbued with the same heroic qualities as the fictitious "intrepid reporter" who "became a legend" (Farghaly 2013, p. vii). While Sian displays playful exasperation with the association, she acknowledges family pride "feels good". Participants might be shaped by their families in other ways, too. Anna said she was "very lucky" that the family attitude was one of "try your best and whatever happens, happens" while Sarah similarly conferred: "So long as you have done your best, that's what my mum says". Equally, however, Anna felt like a "guinea pig" since she was the first family member to go to university while Sarah said there was "a lot of pressure" on her for the same reason.

Meanwhile, some parents were relatively proactive in their journalistic encouragement and steerage. They perceived exploration of certain journalistic pathways might be fruitful. For example, Mark's mother advised he get in touch with a local magazine (see page 196) while Simon's grandparents suggested he ring the community magazine from which he duly derived investment dividends (see page 192). The mother of motor racing journalist Rob also had a contact at the *Guardian* that helped secure a work placement; she continues to remain alert to possible news stories for her son when working in the shop where she is employed. Rob reflected that his mother pushed him "quite a lot to go for more work experience and get out there". He also remembers watching his dad driving at Brands Hatch on a test day and accompanying his father to the track to see a home town driver compete.

Support and encouragement was also accompanied by parental concern.

Jess's parents continue to worry about her daughter's salary:

"My parents think I should be in a different industry and earn more. (...) Every time I go back [home] or [am] on the phone [mum] always thinks: 'Are you sure it's a real career? Are you sure?' – purely on a money basis and not for any other reason. And I say 'Yes, it's fine mum' [but] she's like: 'You sure you don't want to look into working somewhere else?'"

Meanwhile Kate, who grew up listening to the radio "all of the time", said her parents were mindful of the work entailed to fulfill her broadcast ambitions:

"Nobody ever said that they didn't think I could do it but I think there was healthy scepticism that it wasn't the easiest thing. They [her family] haven't had careers in the media and most people [where she lives] tend to just stay near to where they were born and grew up. People wouldn't necessarily move out of the county for work. So I think they were encouraging, but it wasn't necessarily a sort of 'that's easy'. I think they knew I would have to work hard to be able to [achieve] my goal."

Overall, the participants' parents appear to have offered habitual anchorage and essential stability; they offered a platform of reassurance, support and encouragement upon which a self-interpretive bid to become a journalist could be constructed. In this respect, while Sian's family glamorise her job (see page 210), there's no doubting the importance of her mother's role:

"Any time I've got a problem I call my mum. I did it countless times throughout the three years [of the BAMMJ course]. So [during the] first year, when I had a knock to my confidence with features, [I said]: 'Mum, I'm dropping out, this isn't for me.' (...) And then she was like: 'No, you just need to ... you know ... you're fine.' And then [in the] third year: 'Mum, I can't do my dissertation, I'm dropping out, this isn't for me.' [She replied]: 'No, you are nearly there, you need to just do it.' She encourages me, [saying]: 'Just don't think about that, just go on' (...) Yes, I probably would have [stopped] to be honest [without her mother's encouragement]."

Peers could also be reciprocally and mutually supportive through sharing their experiential becomings. When Sarah interned at the Salzburg Academy, she was "able to see how I felt in other students, seeing the eyes sparkle and seeing the light

bulbs come on”. While student media like the *Rock* could offer a space for collaborative becoming (see pages 194/198), John added the BAMMJ group was “very close-knit” and will always have a “very fond place” in his heart:

“We were all really, really close because you have to be, because you work together on a day-to-day basis to put out good stories. You really have to lean and rely on other people through personal circumstances (...) [We were] working together on stories and pulling together and, I suppose, appreciating the importance of teamwork a hell of a lot more. So, yeah, BAMMJ was very, very important, [a] very good foundation to becoming a journalist ... probably more than a foundation ... it was really invaluable.”

Educational guiders

Champions also took the form of educational guiders. For example, a school teacher “laid the path” from A-levels to university for Sarah and a college lecturer introduced John to the “life of a journalist” which “made me want to go and do journalism”. While a BTEC teacher taught Sian the basics of freelance work and has remained in touch, several BU staff were mentioned as influential. They facilitated pivotal BU events or offered training and opportunities to help them transition into work; in Sarah’s case, lecturer Michael inspired her to go to the Salzburg summer school where she broadened her horizons (see page 129).

Yet one Bournemouth University lecturer, Colin, was mentioned by all the participants with the exception of Anna and Simon. Sarah described Colin as “exciting” and he taught her how to “learn on your feet”. According to John, Colin also taught students “the crux” of what a news story is; he was “a hell of a character, a brilliant lecturer and very visually engaging”. Colin’s enthusiasm for journalism was noticed by James and Rob at a BU open day, with the latter remarking: “Colin just sort of blew me away by how passionate he was about journalism (...) I was taken aback at the level of enthusiasm he had for the course

and for teaching journalism.” Colin’s open day presentation proved instrumental in tempting Rob to enter journalism. James concurred:

“I chose Bournemouth University mainly because I went on an open day and met the most enthusiastic person I’d ever met about journalism which was Colin. And he kind of convinced me that everything he thought I agreed with (...) [I] thoroughly enjoyed my news sessions with Colin. He didn’t work for everyone but completely justified my decision in going to Bournemouth.”

The following extracts also help illuminate the shaping, guiding influence of Colin:

“He had a very different approach to teaching, [compared] to the other lecturers. I think in his teaching of news, [he] kinda made it more interesting to a lot of us because we were all in [the] first year [and] just starting out. [We] had no idea how any of it worked. And his way of making us go outside all the time and doing this and doing that and talking to all kinds of people as part of the lecture, that helped a lot. It [resulted in] a lot of confidence building [for] a lot of us (...) [He made] it more physical so it wasn’t just sitting down and doing an assignment on a Mac kinda thing (...) It was an interesting teaching style” (Jess).

“[It was] him as a person. He seemed very keen and he wanted students to do well. That was very clear to me. And not just in first year. He stayed in touch with you throughout the course which is good I think. But also ... there were some of my classmates who didn’t find his approach right for them so they didn’t enjoy his classes whereas I did (...) Personally, I learnt a lot in those classes ... they were like real-life experiences I guess ... you kinda felt like you were in a newsroom: ‘Ok, this story has just come in, right, quick, fire a story out in ten or fifteen minutes.’ And that is what you can expect if you are working for a newspaper I guess” (Sian).

While Colin “hooked” Sian up with a travel writing job at his brother’s firm, he also secured work experience for James who said:

“I’d say it was probably about fifty-fifty with the people I know [regarding] how they felt about him. There was a core of people who liked him and there was a core of people who didn’t really understand his way of teaching. That probably reflects whether you are into news or whether you’re more into arts, music journalism, sports journalism maybe. There was a core of people maybe more into news who knew that [this approach] was what you needed to be like – you needed to be getting that latest line ... yes, he was very influential. I sought him out. Every time I had a bit of trouble at uni I’d give him a call or email and, as busy as he was, he’d spend ten minutes talking to you. And he’d get you excited. There was a time during second year when I wasn’t loving

it and he'd get you excited about it again and kinda give you a kick that you needed."

Colin also helped ensure one of Kate's university stories was published in the *Sun* (see page 244). She said:

"In the first year I thought he was brilliant in that he was so whacky but made you feel at ease [upon arrival at BU]. He made what could have been [a] quite boring task quite fun (...) He was very good at singing your praises as well. When you are over-worrying how badly you could be doing it was, yeah, ... it was a good start."

Workplace guiders

When students sampled the workplace, more guiders were operative, offering a sense of belonging, inspiration and support. Indeed, while John was "shaped" during school work experience by one of his "first interactions with a proper journalist", he also felt "like a junior member of the team" and "one of the journalists" during a university work placement. James, meanwhile, worked with his "heroes" during university work experience at Channel 4.

Workplace guiders might help steer careers too. Indeed, university career talks given by professionals enabled Sarah to plant herself in "their [journalistic] world and think: 'Well, I could do that if I do this'". A guider also opened a door for Sian:

"By saying that I'd worked on the Times and the Guardian, I think that did me huge favours in getting my next work experience (...) I went to Sky News (...) There was a lady called Karen who worked there. She was the Business News Editor and she kinda took me under her wing, kinda got me involved in stuff and showed me the ropes. They got me writing stories for the web, for online. Just various bits and bobs and kinda shadowing. She [Karen] moved here [Sian's current place of employment] (...) She messaged me one day and said 'We need some help, are you around, do you want to [work for the company]?'"

Workplace guiders continue to champion and motivate. James now works with "some of the best reporters in the country" at the London news agency and he finds them "inspiring"; today he learns from peers by "just watching and asking". Staff

also offer support to Simon and placed “faith” in him when he received a complaint; they also provide ongoing correctional becoming guidance in the form of story feedback (see page 233).

The following testimonies further evidence how workplace guiders continue to provide insights, inspiration and an enhanced sense of professional endorsement.

Mark starts with an epiphanic encounter with expert guiders at BU:

“Colin [lecturer] got five people from the sports industry to come and talk [to students] (...) I’m in close-ish contact with two of those now. One of them is David at the [name of national newspaper] (...) I think I must have emailed him, rang him up [after the talk]. [He said]: ‘Right, come and shadow me at a game’. We went to Swansea-Villa (...) I can remember it as if it was yesterday. [We went with] Bill who is now freelance, about 65 and [has] covered every World Cup, you name it. [He was] in the car [as well]. I sent an email of my match report to Bill after the match. He emailed back saying (...) ‘Oh no, do it like that, so it’s bang, bang, bang, like this’. I still see Bill at matches now and [he says] ‘Oh great to see you!’ You know, those people – David, Bill – have been so helpful. I’ve covered games with David [since] which, when you say about those proud feelings, that is the best (...) I remember David always said to me: ‘I don’t mind helping people who help themselves’ (...) I went to Exeter-Liverpool last season and David picked me up at Gordano Services which is about two miles from my home. And we covered that game together. It sounds like we’re about to be married. It was quite an emotional moment to be honest ... (...) Funnily enough – this is what I mean about relationships – I’ve had David come to me, [regarding] this sexual abuse stuff [in football], saying: ‘Can you help me with this? Have you got a contact for so-and-so?’ Do you know what I mean? That speaks volumes. That’s role reversal! You don’t ever think that’s going to happen.”

“I was sat [at her place of work] next to this 37 year-old guy, really grumpy, [who] didn’t really speak to anyone. But we ended up being the best of friends. It was such an unlikely friendship because there was me – the blond ARRRG! [waving hands to express her outgoing personality] – and him, so miserable. And he literally showed me everything he knew. Still to this day, every time I see him or speak to him, I’m like ‘Thank you so much’. I [had been] left to my own devices and without him I would have learnt, but he was just so nice and so welcoming. [He said]: ‘They’ll tell you to do this but this is the way you should really do it ... and [he’d] show me all these little short cuts and these tricks of the trade and, yeah, [he] really helped me. That was the first couple of weeks (...) He was probably the one person that showed me the most [about] my job I’m doing now” (Anna).

“[Praise is] really important. For me that seems to be the thing that keeps me going – that I’m told I’m doing a good job. That makes me feel even better and I want to work even harder. Yeah, often they say: ‘You’re doing a really good job by the way’. That’s important definitely (...) I wasn’t really sure how I was doing and whether they thought I was capable (...) I was like ‘This is awesome!’ [when offered a full-time contract] ... yes, I thought, ok, I can really grow and make this my career” (Sian).

This *Journalistic Becoming* condition further assists deliberation upon habitus.

From a Bourdieusian perspective (1977), educational and workplace guiders may be seen as highly skilled virtuosos capable of influencing the conditions of practice. Their enhanced social skills and accrued resources create a taken-for-granted background of social action for other actors who tend to reproduce the given social practice (Ryfe 2018; see thesis pages 233/237/254 for examples). These champions thus contribute to the external stimuli and conditioning experiences that are “perceived through categories already constructed by prior experiences” and which result in a “relative closure of the system of dispositions that constitute habitus” (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p. 133). So while supportive families might suggest journalistic directions (and offer popular journalistic framing, see page 249), journalism’s newcomers encounter the subtleties of the socialisation process in education and the workplace where more champions await.

Consequently, Sian notes how the support afforded by two guiders, lecturer Colin at BU and Karen at *Sky News* (see page 253) “kind of encourages you and makes you think: ‘Ok, they think I’m ok to be a journalist.’” While Anna has been shown the “tricks of the trade” at work, James has also become “more cynical”, leading him to reflect: “The news editors who have been doing it for 20 years and the other journalists [are] maybe rubbing off on me a little bit.” Kate, in fact, suggests lecturer guiders could guide more ambitiously in the field. She states:

“I’ve read and heard different things that people, other BAMMJ’s, have said and I agree (...) A lot of the lecturers, when they’re talking about your future careers, they don’t necessarily ... don’t exactly expect people to be the next big TV news readers, like the next, I don’t know, Trevor McDonald ... they almost have lower expectations but that might be because they’re trying to constantly think about how you’re going to get your first job.”

Champions have not only nurtured, guided and inspired the participants’

journalistic self-interpretations. They also appear to have championed *Journalistic Becoming* in ways that assist the past to enter the present for renewed inspection and deployment. Indeed, the educational champions lining the road leading to the journalistic field, and the workplace guiders waiting inside, appear to ensure aspiring journalists are part of a historical process that conditionally underlies and shapes their journalistic self-interpretation.

Condition 8. Becoming awareness and field orientation

The final *Journalistic Becoming* condition derives, in effect, from the resulting coalescence of the previous seven; investment in the journalistic game, commenced with the first condition and evidenced in the conditions that followed, could ultimately yield a sense of journalistic awareness – where one ‘was’ with one’s becoming and what needed to be ‘done’. This sense of one’s currently constructed journalistic self offered the possibility of its future shaping through indicating new directions of experiential and interpretive travel. Indeed, a basic condition of fathoming who we are entails understanding our future direction as well as comprehending where we are now and from whence we came (Taylor 1989).

One of the ten participants, Sarah, did not consider herself “old enough or wise enough” to call herself a journalist (see page 209). While describing herself as a

reporter, Sarah said being a journalist was “something I aspire to feel”. Another participant, Sian, conveyed a conflicted and confused awareness of her journalistic self: “Oh God, let me think about this ... I guess technically, because I’m not reporting, I wouldn’t 100% class myself as a journalist. I’m in a journalistic role but, yes, I don’t know, it’s weird. I don’t know.” Meanwhile Anna, who considered herself to be a journalist upon employment “because you are in the profession”, only viewed herself as such after “backtracking and talking myself through it”. Of the remaining seven participants, five also said they became journalists when in employment. Two, Simon and Mark, sensed their arrival at university, a possibility reflected in other research findings (Shardlow 2009).

Some participants seemed strongly aware of how *Journalistic Becoming* had shaped their lives. Simon reflected thus:

“I think my partner would like to think there is a different me to my work [me] ... [but] I work from 8.30 to 6pm at [name of agency], I come home and then I’m either going to see a film in order to review it for my website or I’m writing for my website. Or I’m recording a podcast for my website. So I think because journalism for me is always so intrinsically linked with what I did for fun anyway, I think journalism is me as a whole. Even the stuff I do for fun is journalism to a degree! I think I am difficult to separate from my work.”

Similarly, Kate said her journalism was “all encompassing” while John depicts awareness of a processual journalistic embodiment:

“It takes a long time to become a ... I don’t want to say good journalist, I feel a bit arrogant saying that ... but to become a journalist, I suppose. It takes a long time (...) I’d say ... I’d say maybe 80% of me is a journalist, maybe even 90% (...) I’m very, very different to the 16 year-old John or John who just came out of my A-Levels (...) I like how journalism shaped me and how it’s made me become who I am. I feel a lot more interesting as a journalist [and] as a person because of journalism (...) At times during BAMMJ we were ... you know, we were journalists at points. But ... they were kind of for short moments whereas when you become a journalist later you embody it (...) You live as a journalist rather than just doing it as a profession. It becomes who you are. You as a person ... maybe even a journalist first and a person second, I don’t know! [he laughs] (...) It becomes who you are.”

John importantly highlights becoming's temporal evolution. Indeed, *Journalistic Becoming* and its conditions should be viewed as fluid and changeable, ensuring resulting journalistic self-interpretation is processual, ongoing and, consequently, potentially hazy in its sensing. Hence, we must proceed with caution when discussing becoming a journalist in terms of 'attainment'. The conditions that shaped one self-interpretation may be eclipsed as new interpretations are desired and emerge; these require shaping by new conditions that must be accommodated within one's personal frame. For Anna, new conditions appear to be metaphorically 'pinned' to her as adornments that offer confirmation of her evolving journalistic self: "You are always adapting and improving and changing due to certain environments and the demands of the job (...) you're adding new skills – like badges."

The comments that follow further underline the changeable ebb and flow of *Journalistic Becoming*; journalistic self-interpretation requires ongoing maintenance, accommodation, refinement and reaffirmation reflecting its transitionary and processual nature. Its fragility may be particularly exposed with awareness of discrepancies, new desired becoming – or even disbelief:

"In a way you learn a lot quickly and then you're there, sort of in a big field. But I would say there's that next step or next steps that [are] still put [before] you as one of many. It's not necessarily a bad thing but I think it's very difficult to instantly establish yourself as a journalist (...) It has been surreal. I now live away from home and all that stuff kind of has an effect. But I tell you what, one thing that I have genuinely struggled with is coming to terms with [success](...) It sounds very arrogant or whatever but I feel like I've absorbed, witnessed a lot (...) So now I'm thinking, 'What's next?'" (Mark).

"And I think [becoming a journalist is] always going to be ongoing. I think [in] any job, but especially a job like journalism, you are always still learning. If you are not still learning something, there's not really much point in you doing it. If you're as good as you're ever going to be, what's the point? (...) I think there are still elements of me as a journalist that aren't as strong as I'd like them to be. I'm far more

confident in writing news but I still feel like my news copy isn't perfect. I'm aware that I'm not an investigative reporter, I don't know how good I would be if I was put in an investigative reporting role ... journalism is so wide ranging, there are so many elements of it. It's like what we were saying earlier, you can be really good at one aspect of journalism and be completely at sea with others. So I'm always learning and I think I'd always want to be learning. I don't think I want to be a perfect journalist! I want to be improving and I want to be better (...) I don't think I'll ever not be a journalist. I think there are lots of different kinds of journalist I can be. I mean, I'm a news reporter at the moment. I want to be a film journalist, film critic, whatever" (Simon).

"I'm not just oblivious to the fact that I need to improve. I am aware and I make sure that my superiors know that there are still areas that I have to improve on. I'm not – again clichéd – I'm not the finished article (...) I hope it is a continued progression: [That] I do get more confident, [better at] speaking to people on the phone, making sure that people know who you are. I think in motorsport, in particular, that's quite an important part of being a journalist. That's certainly a different type of journalist to who I am at the moment. I'm not that person who will go and hang out with people for half an hour and chat to them. I can speak to them to interview them and have five minutes here and there with them; but I'm not there yet. And I wouldn't mind doing that but, again, I wouldn't be that fussed if I'm not either" (Rob).

Meanwhile Kate, though unsurprised by her expected becoming ("I've always known that I can get there"), suggests future self-interpretive possibilities will require the evidencing of her journalistic potential:

"In an ideal world, national speech radio is the end goal (...) I'm three years out of university but there's so [many] more experienced people in the company than me and I'm still learning how to better my day-to-day work. But I don't think there's necessarily any specific training or skills that I need to get [to] my end goal. I think it's just over time meeting more people I guess, almost in a networking way, proving myself [to] future employers whether that's [with] awards or whatever just to prove my skills as a journalist before making the leap."

Awareness of one's journalistic self may also assist in the envisaging of future non-journalistic self-interpretations. Rob, though currently in his "dream job", may "consider teaching or lecturing in a few years' time". James doesn't want a career to "shape what I'm doing ... to shape where I am"; he may join Rob in the teaching ranks but also entertains becoming a fiction writer or café owner. James notes:

“I think people who are in my generation, and I think just a little bit older and a bit younger, will not be similar to people in your generation and my mum’s generation where they take a job for life. We are multiskilled – not that you guys aren’t – but we’re multiskilled, we’ll apply our skills to different things and we’ll get bored of things very easily and we’ll move around. I don’t think I’ll do journalism for ever and I don’t think a lot of my peers will stick to their same careers for ever (...) People are a lot more on the path to finding something they really enjoy and if they don’t enjoy it any more, they’ll think: ‘Well, I’ll do something more that I enjoy’. I think people have a lot more tendency to do that in my generation.”

Jess does not think she will always be a journalist either, adding: “I think I could become something else”. Jess is unsure of developments in the transitional journalism industry and is looking to see where else she can “change and evolve”. In the meantime, Jess’s ongoing self-interpretation requires the pursuit of betterment: “I’m still learning all the time, always improving, always seeing what I could do better (...) I think even when I’m 40-something and doing whatever, I think I’ll still learn how to write better, be a better journalist, communicate better and all those things”. Sarah, meanwhile, earlier revealed her plan to go into communications (see page 128); the “amount of stress” she currently endures working on a weekly newspaper had not been imagined.

The comments of those entertaining different becomings can be seen to reflect the contortions of a becoming industry. Indeed, ‘moving up the ladder’ has been replaced by “job-hopping and a portfolio work life” as news professionals increasingly have contracts rather than careers in journalism (Deuze and Witschge 2018, p. 170). In this respect, the four participants who have worked as freelancers reflect the 67% increase in the number of self-employed journalists between 2000 and 2015 (Spilsbury 2016b). Amid a culture of job insecurity and precarity, stress and burnout are increasing as many journalists consider leaving the profession altogether (Deuze and Witschge 2018); indeed, James cannot remain at his agency

for his working life because he would find it “exhausting”. He, like other participants, contemplates becoming someone else in fields beyond journalism.

Indeed, awareness of one’s *Journalistic Becoming* may consequently leave deep or shallow foot imprints upon the field; these may be seen to depict the sensed suitability or desirability of one’s field orientation. For some, *Journalistic Becoming* may herald a sense of sure-footed ‘arrival’ as a journalist; from this secure, contented and connected sense of ‘I am’, new potentialities of journalist self-interpretation may be explored. Such groundedness appears to have been experienced by John who said: “I can see myself working at press agencies my whole life.” For others, however, field orientation may help set coordinates for new, non-journalistic adventures and becomings. For all, therefore, awareness of one’s *Journalistic Becoming* and field positioning opens up the possibilities of ‘I can’.

This restless endeavour may ultimately reflect one’s unique and precious quest for well-being. This final condition may be envisaged as a journalistic ‘check’ upon well-being and the “feeling of rootedness and flow, peace and possibility” which is carried in its deepest possibility (Galvin and Todres 2013, p. 65). *Journalistic Becoming*, for all its evolutionary concern with expansive future possibilities and mobility, may ultimately require the stability and security of a counterbalancing sense of settling, acceptance and dwelling – a “homecoming” giving “peace to life as a positive potential” (Galvin and Todres 2013, p. 72; Todres and Galvin 2010).

Summary reflections

The evolutionary and processual nature of *Journalistic Becoming* is reflected in the fluid and changeable relationships the participants have with the conditions that

shape their journalistic self-interpretations. They portray the ongoing tensions, deliberations, refinements, resolutions, epiphanic moments and awarenesses that ensure becoming a journalist is not a static, finalised achievement. Journalistic self-interpretation is rather an active, flowing, and changeable synthesis of personal thoughts, constructs, meanings, distinctions, feelings, beliefs and shifting horizons resulting from worldly interrelationships. Indeed, the judgements and “qualitative distinctions” made within a personal framework (Taylor 1989, pp. 19-20) appear to require ongoing negotiation and assimilation of the conditions that shape a desired self-interpretation. These interplays may be seen to significantly play out amid the temporal, changing relevancies and prioritised meaning moments afforded by socialisation. Consequently, the stock of some conditional investments (for example, certain skills) may conceivably rise and fall while new, interrelated conditions might emerge and vie for attention and self-interpretive accommodation. For some participants, however, alternative qualitative distinctions are emerging; they may seek new self-interpretations in fields beyond journalism.

For the researcher, the metamorphic nature of becoming demands an acceptance already alluded to but worthy of repetition. Any attempt to articulate the ‘capture’ of *Journalistic Becoming* – whether individually or collectively – is destined to be dated by the evolving, reconfiguring and accommodative relationship participants have with the conditions that shape self-interpretation; literary expression of the ‘latest’ horizontal snapshot is already eclipsed by time. Moreover, once the hermeneutic circle was vacated, I was deprived from seeking further shared meanings of my participants’ becomings. I was unable to reach a deeper understanding of them in relation to myself. I was left behind the curve of the hermeneutic circle.

5. Return to the research questions

The discoveries revealed in Chapters 3 and 4 are now discussed in relation to the research questions which guided this thesis.

How can we understand *Journalistic Becoming* and what are its conditions?

Just as journalism can mean different things to different people (McNair 2005), the same may be said of ‘becoming’ a journalist. Drawing upon the work of Heidegger (1962) and Gadamer (2004), philosophical hermeneutics led to my definition of *Journalistic Becoming* as “the dynamic, transitional and linguistic process of journalistic self-interpretation afforded by and through engagement with journalistic possibilities and traditions” (see page 79). This definition, evoking the hermeneutic metaphors of movement, attempts to capture the perpetual and changeable rather than the linear or static. *Journalistic Becoming* is inherently restless and metamorphic.

Indeed, it is envisaged that this unsettled process necessarily derives from fluid relations with the ‘conditions’ that shape and underlie it; these conditions of the self-interpretive process of *Journalistic Becoming* are interrelated yet potentially temporal and in a state of flux. Yet, despite their evolutionary, changeable nature, fleeting captures of these part conditions help glimpse the shaping influences underlying one’s whole journalistic self-interpretation – one’s personalised, constructed and conditional *Journalistic Becoming* – at a point in time.

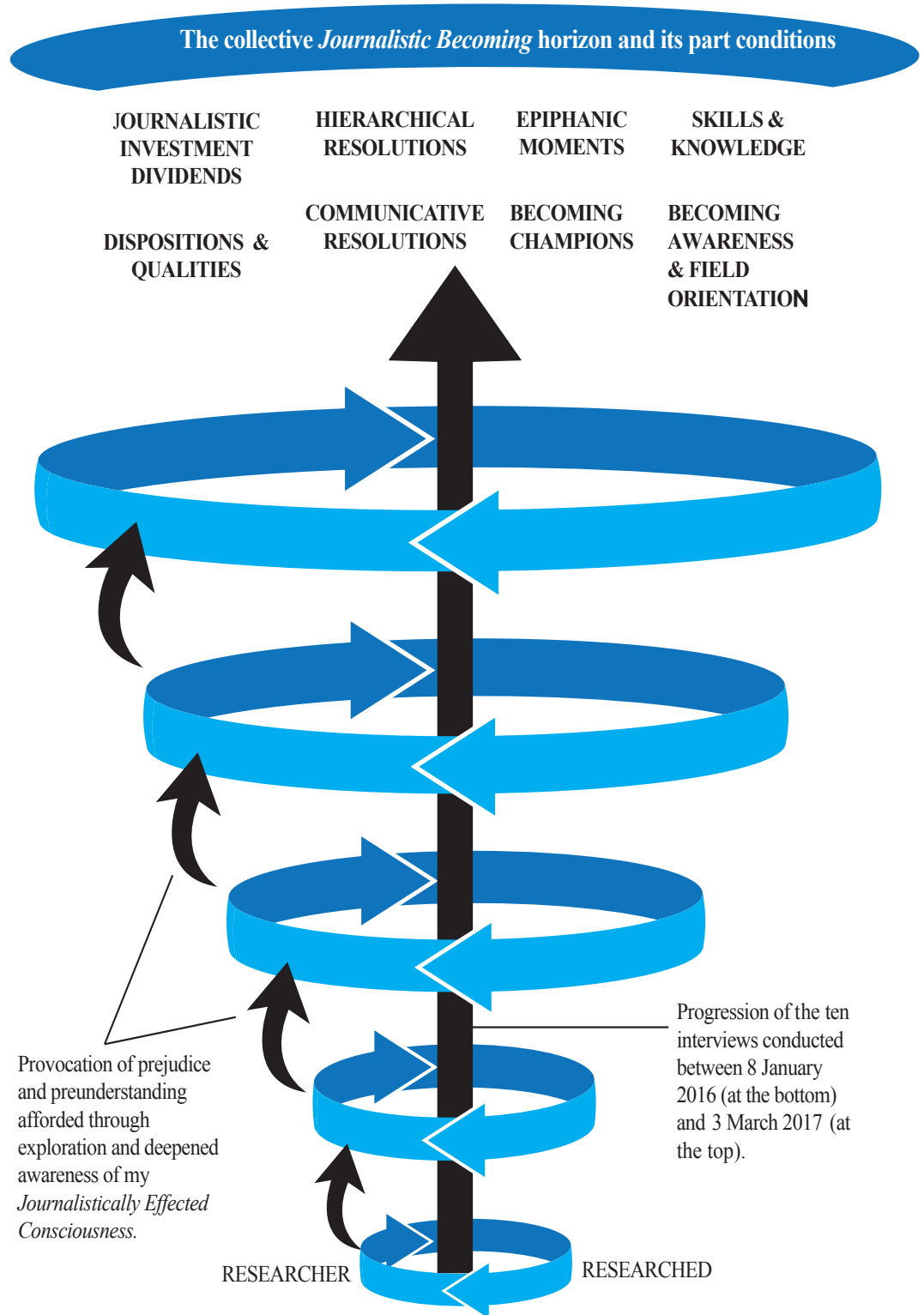
In acknowledgement of becoming’s individuality, I first presented every participant’s ‘*Journalistic Becoming* horizon’ – a horizon shaped by the condition agglomerations particular and peculiar to each of them (Chapter 3). These took the form of individually written ‘fused interpretations’; they represented my projection of co-constructed and shared meaning derived from a bid to understand through historic,

hermeneutic mediation with my own prejudiced horizon. Indeed, a Gadamer-inspired exploration of *Journalistically Effected Consciousness* and *Imaginative Journalistic Openness* was commenced for this purpose.

I then endeavoured to project the collective condition parts pertinent to the whole group under study (Chapter 4). Eight ‘snapshot’ conditions were duly identified which are diagrammatically summarised on the next page. The central black arrow represents the study’s temporal dimension. Over 420 days (from the first interview at the bottom of the arrow to the last at the arrow head), my awareness of being affected by journalistic tradition deepened my understanding and broadened the hermeneutic circle to facilitate projection of the conditions underlying and shaping a collective *Journalistic Becoming* horizon.

The acquisition of skill capitals emerged as a part condition of *Journalistic Becoming*. Journalistic self-interpretation was also shaped by the following conditions: receipt of journalistic investment dividends (such as sensed journalistic authenticity, passport and brand compilation and freedom to explore); deliberation upon dispositions and qualities; hierarchical, relational and communicative resolutions; epiphanic moments of breakthrough, endorsement and creation that could “leave marks on people’s lives” (Denzin 1989, p. 70); the guidance of champions in the family, education and workplace; and, finally, a culminating awareness of one’s becoming and field orientation. The latter was, in effect, a self-interpretive ‘taking stock’ that could facilitate deliberation upon the conditional requirements of future *Journalistic Becoming* or pursuit of other, non-journalistic possibilities.

FROM THE INDIVIDUAL TO THE COLLECTIVE: BROADENING THE HERMENEUTIC CIRCLE TO PROJECT HORIZON OF SHARED MEANING



THE HERMENEUTIC PROCESS

Journalistic Becoming must be understood within the context of journalistic tradition. Indeed, this thesis helps illuminate how handed-down tradition, carrying ideology with it, shapes the journalistic habitus of socialised subjectivity; newcomers are caught in journalism's history and their journalistic self-interpretations are influenced accordingly. Some participants, for example, talk the language of the past. When they see themselves as 'newshounds' with news sense fighting on the frontline, they help support the notion that norms and values indicative of professional practice are "constructed and performed to maintain a particular professional character" (Bossio and Sacco 2017, p. 530).

The process of acclimatisation appears to start early. The weight participants afford to evidencing journalistic investment could be seen to reflect the desire to meet perceived and prescribed field requirements. Indeed, the Society of Editors' states that a strong portfolio, work experience and proof of commitment to the industry are "as important as academic qualifications" (Society of Editors 2017). In addition, the answer to the question 'How do I become a journalist?' is "reasonably straightforward", according to *Press Gazette* Editor-in-Chief Dominic Ponsford. His advice includes composition of a clear CV and covering letter, completion of as much work experience as possible and obtaining an NCTJ-recognised qualification (2017n).

Consequently, journalistic norms appear to have been further inculcated at BU through the requirement of students to invest in the NCTJ syllabus and staff to meet the stipulations of accrediting bodies. Indeed, with journalistic skills required by industry (NCTJ 2014-15), it's claimed an academy "bedevilled by problems of accreditation" obligingly offers "a central body of factual knowledge" on which students can be examined (Frith and Meech 2007, p. 142). Even though NCTJ

Diploma acquisition varied in desirability among my participants, staff nonetheless prepared them for NCTJ exams and corresponding BU tests that mirrored them.

Participant testimonies, meanwhile, strongly reflect the importance and desirability of many of the essential skills and qualities of a journalist depicted in Jon Smith's *NCTJ Guide for Trainee Journalists* (2007a) and other classic texts; the NCTJ ethos seemingly pervaded the classroom ether and was duly inhaled.

While participants also appear to have absorbed newsroom culture without difficulty upon entering the workplace (Frith and Meech 2007), the past ensures tensions niggle within evolving tradition. Indeed, some participants suggest multimedia and online demands may require challenging accommodations within traditional practices. For example, their hierarchical distinctions affording primacy to fieldwork, writing and face-to-face communication attest to the power and endurance of old tradition in the face of desk-based web provision. While a "profession under pressure" may seek to reinforce boundaries, values and identities in a bid to maintain perceived distinctiveness (Witschge and Nygren 2009, p. 55), this thesis additionally supports recent research suggesting "field reporter" skills remain important to journalists (Örnebring and Mellado 2018, p. 454). The ways of the past thus permeate and infuse the *Journalistic Becoming* conditions underlying and shaping self-interpretations in the present.

However, the present equally stands up to the past, ensuring old and new media remain "mixed, mutually adaptive, with boundaries often blurred" (Zelizer 2017, p. 5). My participants, for example, have certainly embraced social media and brand presence. Simon Baxter, in particular, might consider himself a self-contained brand or creator rather than count himself as one of the "company men" (Foote 2017, p. 443; Wilkinson 2014); indeed, he wants to be a film journalist and remains active in

preparing an online “shop window” to display his brand potential (see page 196). In addition, the changing media ecosystem is reflected in participant engagement with freelance work; others, meanwhile, entertain becomings beyond as well as within the journalistic field.

It remains difficult to separate examples of apparent agency within the journalistic field from pragmatic, socialised compliance with its demands and appropriation of what is today available and at stake within its boundaries. *Journalistic Becoming* offers a helpful conceptual and analytical tool in this respect. By conceiving becoming as a fluid process of self-interpretation, the stale dichotomy of structure-agency can instead be envisaged as an ongoing personal negotiation of the conditions underlying constructions and understanding of the journalistic self. *Journalistic Becoming* provides a window through which the changing relationship between the influencing traditions of the past and one’s freedom within the present may be seen to shape conditions of self-interpretation; it offers a temporal view of processual, accommodative steorage and resolution rather than one of anchored poles. Becoming, indeed, involves agency as well as conditioning. It’s a perpetual interplay during which we are active and present in our own construction. Becoming, ultimately, may even reflect the essential humanity entailed in making cherished choices and pursuing possibilities; like participant Simon and his film journalist goals, we seem to be engaged in “moving beyond with intended hopes and dreams” (Parse 1998, p. 46).

The essential movement envisaged here chimes with a complementary focus upon journalism’s processual, networked evolution rather than its static being; it is “a profession in a permanent process of becoming” (Deuze and Witschge 2018, p. 177). Indeed, the temporal snapshots of *Journalistic Becoming* give tantalising insights into how journalism itself is transforming and the resulting provoked tensions that forge

changing self-understandings among journalists. *Journalistic Becoming* may also offer a way to transcend the ‘journalists are born not made’ debate (Reardon 2016; Smith 2007a); the pedagogic focus is rather diverted to considering student perceptions of their ongoing self-interpretation and the required personal negotiations they may foresee ahead.

What types of educational experience have relative pedagogic potential to influence *Journalistic Becoming*?

The experiences that helped engender the conditions shaping *Journalistic Becoming* weave through the participants’ testimonies. These formative events were typically first experienced in childhood. For example, the investment dividend of journalistic exploration could be accrued from childhood journalistic forays into community-based publications. School or college could also afford the epiphanic endorsement of a first byline during work experience (see page 243) or a shaping encounter with a journalistic guider as John revealed (see page 251). Meanwhile, pre-university jobs could provide a test bed for communication skills as evidenced by James during his employment as a charity sales person (see pages 214).

Upon arrival at Bournemouth University, students derived investment returns from extra-curriculum activities. Investment in student media, for example, was made by all the participants. However, the *Rock* student newspaper merits particular promotion as an experimental practitioner-student “laboratory of inquiry” (Mensing 2010, p. 512). In terms of the participants’ journalistic development, it was variously described as “probably the most important”, “number one”, “a highlight of the course”, a “positive experience” and “very formulative”. The *Rock* and *Nerve* radio provided enhanced returns in co-creativity, profile building, passport compilation (it

aided successful work placement applications) and authenticity. Jess, who earlier conveyed the *Rock*'s affordance of autonomy (see page 194), offered this summary:

"It was a bunch of us who were super-passionate about journalism, who were all there for the same reason (...) We all wanted to create something and be proud of what we wanted to do (...) People who I've seen working on the Rock now do amazing things all across the industry and I think [it has] helped everyone out massively."

Meanwhile, voluntary participation in live coverage of elections could offer insights into future journalistic directions and "newsroom experience right off the bat" (Simon), reinforcing findings endorsing the worth of such events and supporting calls for more practical and collaborative hands-on experiences (Steel et al. 2007; Charles and Luce 2016; Frith and Meech 2007; Merryman 2017/18). James insisted all students should get involved in these journalistic opportunities, maintaining "you shouldn't have to be asked".

Continuing the extra-curriculum theme, Jess concluded she would not have reached her "maximum potential" if she had "just done the course alone". Similarly, Simon, one of only two participants who 'became' a journalist at university, framed extra-curriculum activities in this way:

"Bournemouth allows you to do so much. What helped more than anything was [the attitude of]: 'We're going to teach you to be a journalist first and foremost, but you yourself can learn how you want to do it by experimenting as much as you want.' (...) I think you can teach people theoretically how to be a journalist. I don't think you become a journalist until you are doing it. I think if I'd been to Bournemouth and I'd just been to lectures and done the course, I don't know if I'd have felt like I was a journalist. I think I would have felt like I knew how [emphasises word] to be a journalist. I don't know if I would have felt like I was one until I got a job. Because of the extra-curriculars at Bournemouth and the extra-curriculars outside Bournemouth, I think I felt like I was a journalist because I was doing it, as well as being taught how to do it."

All participants were required by the BAMMJ course to invest in work experience.

This thesis concurs with earlier research (Scott 2017) that work experience remains,

to borrow participant Rob's words, "fundamentally important". Indeed, the participants give an insight into the "intense, complex and multidimensional learning experiences" involved (Barrett 2014, p. 73). Placements could, like university live events, offer projections of potential journalistic directions in the future; participants could also make insightful observations while gaining feedback and confidence. Indeed, while placements might afford confirmation of "how little you do know" (Kate) they could, as Anna put it earlier, instil "the belief that I can do this". It is, however, important to note that students could feel they were "pestering" (Sian) or "out of place" (James); yet while Anna felt like a "slave" on one placement (see page 200), she concluded work experience was, overall, still "number one, top of the list". For Kate, work experience was simply necessary to become an "experienced, well-trained journalist" and it opened doors to careers for her, Mark and Sian.

University news days, a hybrid of simulation and experiential learning, could also offer the benefit of sensed realism (Heathman and Mathews 2014; Evans 2016; Evans 2017). These occasions provided points and times when "we were journalists", according to John (see page 198), even if, as Anna revealed, engaging with the public was challenging and could involve the artificial exercising of pretence (see page 200).

Taken collectively, these experiences could provoke moments of disjuncture and discrepancy (Jarvis 2010; Higgins 1987) or of sensed achievement or self-efficacy through enacted mastery (Bandura 1997). At times, they were epiphanic events capable of creating "ruptures in the structure of daily life" (Denzin 2014, p. 53; Denzin 1989a; Denzin 1989b). Such experiences could give rise to the epiphanic moments of breakthrough, endorsement and creation discussed in the last chapter (see pages 238-9).

The experiences capable of engendering *Journalistic Becoming's* shaping conditions might also be 'micro' as well as 'macro' in scale, yet their impact was nonetheless profound. By means of comparison, Sarah's immersive, life-changing Salzburg experience (see pages 129/ 240) may appear to contrast with Anna's making of a single telephone call; yet, for Anna, making that call entailed the breaking of a "taboo" (see page 240). Influencing micro experiences also included first year assignments entailing community engagement and personalised moments with guiding champions. The latter encompassed valuable time spent with visiting professionals, as suggested in the literature (Fowler-Watt 2014). For Mark, the appearance of guest speakers at the university provided the "most important hour-and-a-half" of the entire course (see page 254). Listening to university guiders and invited guests also enabled Sarah to envisage new journalistic futures. Also on a micro level, the participants' engagement with their third year Multimedia Projects and dissertations could also provoke pride, determination, a sensed freedom to journalistically create and the broadening of minds.

Bournemouth University emerges as a repository of becoming experiences. Arising from these experiences – the extra-curricular as well as the curricular, the micro as well as the macro and the theoretical as well as the practical – were conditions in which journalistic self-interpretation could take place. The practical experiences were placed very much at the forefront in this respect ("You learn better on the job (...) actually doing it and putting what you have learnt into practice", says Anna). The university is portrayed as a custodian of becoming opportunity and exploration; it's where becoming facilitators (the staff) assist experiential engagement for those prepared to invest. As Simon put it, the course consequently shone a "spotlight" on "other things that were happening".

Anecdotal recollection of resulting experiences enliven many of the participants' accounts. These 'part' experiences contributed to a 'whole' university experience that was essentially preparatory and, with the permeating influence of accrediting bodies, significantly socialising. Jess duly gained "skills to enter any part of journalism" while being prepared "for the world"; John found the course "empowering" through the affordance of confidence and "courage to act like the journalist or be the journalist"; and Rob "wouldn't be as far down the road as I am now". These participants depict a journalistic staging post, one of many visited on the processual road to becoming a journalist. Within the university shelter, James experienced "moments" of journalistic authenticity while it provided a "very good foundation" for John. For Kate, BU was a place of "security" where she could safely reach a standard within a "timeframe"; then she could leave and "get a job fairly quickly".

Two participants – James and Kate – felt they could have become journalists without the university experience. James felt "as ready on my first day at the [news] agency as I would have if I hadn't done a degree – which was not ready at all." Yet he conceded the course nonetheless "shaped" him as a person. Kate also acknowledged the course was "a very, very important stepping stone". While Anna felt she could probably have done her current job without going to university, Sarah maintained those leaving the staging post had "the makings of what could be a brilliant journalist".

From childhood to university, condition-engendering educational experiences sustained the *Journalistic Becoming* process. Those experiences facilitated by the preparatory university in Bournemouth essentially nourished the process and eased it forward, with the extra-curricular and micro events significant. Yet, as experience flows into experience, they can be seen to be as fluidly changeable in relevance as the

conditions they engender. Furthermore, while experience can afford a sense of future direction towards “what I am not yet” (Taylor 1989, p. 48), awareness of the qualities in a situation might be delayed in their facilitation of a meaningful, connected and educational “experiential continuum” (Dewey 1938, p. 28; Dewey 1984). In this respect, the becoming significance and engendering potential of such experiences may acquire a sort of becoming dormancy:

“I think uni plants little seeds and it’s once you leave uni [that] it depends which ones sort of flower (...) Any opportunity you can take you should take (...) At the time it might not seem like it’s going to help you [but] it will help you ten times further down the line (...) I think with uni it will plant something in your head and you might not think about it but a couple of years later you might just think: ‘Oh well, that happened at uni, I can apply that here.’ (...) I think the problem with being a student is that you are not aware that they [seeds] are subtly being planted ... you just don’t realise what’s happening until actually you’ve left and it’s hit you like a ton of bricks” (Sarah).

While experiences give rise to the conditions in which one’s *Journalistic Becoming* takes place, future experiences can be envisaged as presenting new moments of self-interpretive meaning, contemplation and potential revision; indeed, these experiences may instigate new self-interpretations and awareness of the conditions pertinent to the shaping of them. These updated self-understandings may entail resolutions and accommodations within one’s personal framework.

As seen, educational experiences helped engender the conditions that shaped participants’ self-interpretations. I next consider how this potential inherent in educational experience might be realised through a hermeneutic approach to journalism teaching.

To what extent can philosophical hermeneutics provide insights into journalism education?

Philosophical hermeneutics and a new educator mindset

Philosophical hermeneutics, I suggest, offers more than a new approach to journalism education. I contend it offers the possibility of a new pedagogic mindset, one requiring a new hermeneutic spirit or attitude which I now explore.

This mindset is reflectively aware that students share with teachers the same frailties and fragilities of humanness; students have feelings and prejudices born of time and situatedness. This acknowledgement leads to consideration that teaching skills and practices may be insufficient to enact skilful practice. Instead, epistemology is cast in service to ontology. Indeed, students need to “transform as people” if they are to enact ways of being in the world that are appropriate to and responsive to changing practice contexts (Dall’Alba 2007, p. 689; Heidegger 1968). Teachers, in turn, must be prepared to transform their own self-understanding in order to better understand students and assist them in their transformative quest.

Philosophical hermeneutics offers appropriate guidance. It advises teachers to explore their present mindset and commence a reflective and reflexive bid to become attuned, receptive and questioning of the feelings, intrigue and puzzlement derived from and stirred by their students. It is our students who can tell us about ourselves. Teachers need, in short, to take heed of their bodies and use them as analytic tools, allowing felt senses to signal the important (Tomkins and Eatough 2013a).

Consequently, this thesis posits that the teacher’s resulting, hermeneutic self-interpretation is a fundamental requirement of the attempted interpretation of others and the historically-mediated pursuit of shared meaning. Indeed, a practitioner’s deepened, historic consciousness of personal, prejudicial socialisation may then

foster understanding of the sensed, equivalent forces within others and what the implications may be. Only then can the *Journalistic Becoming* horizons of students be understood and projected, shared meanings claimed and snapshot glimpses obtained of what the process of becoming a journalist looks and feels like today. Crucially, the teacher can then learn to let his or her students learn (Heidegger 1968): they may be coaxed to similarly self-reflect upon their own sensed becoming and the feelings to be accommodated. As Matheson notes (2009), Gadamer would want journalists to reflect upon their own prejudgements, to qualify what they know and make clear the situatedness and temporality of their knowledge. The task of the hermeneutic teacher thus becomes the primary task of philosophical hermeneutics: the moving of students towards a consciousness of their own effective-history.

Self-interpretation may not always exist in people's minds in clear-cut forms that can be easily expressed verbally (Brinkmann 2008). Yet students can be encouraged to understand their situation and standpoint within journalistic tradition and how their horizon may limit vision. If, for example, future journalists are more observationally open to the relevance of ideology and political economy, they might create "possibilities for more progressive ethical thinking in practical and professional contexts" (Baines and Kelsey 2013, p. 32). Such thinking may, in turn, become part of their journalistic self-conception, part of who they have journalistically become.

It starts with the teacher mindset. The thought movements of the Reflective Hermeneutic Model were designed to awaken my feelings and preunderstandings in the knowledge that many would remain undiscovered yet potentially disruptive. It's hoped fellow teachers will find similar usefulness in the Model's weaving of history-as-context into the interpretive act. In deliberating upon their own *Journalistically Effected Consciousness* and its deepened access through *Imaginative Journalistic*

Openness, teachers will be required to be readily receptive to the verbal and textual strangeness of others; what is stirred might reveal much to themselves.

As Gadamer notes, the forthcoming adventure may, like any adventure, be dangerous; yet “unique opportunities” await (1981, pp. 109-10). Indeed, from a personal perspective, this research was indispensably cleansing, even liberating. As Carina Henriksson attests (2012), I also recognised increasing comfort with my ‘place’ within pedagogical practice. The hermeneutic glimpsing of a more layered and unexpected ordinary world granted a genuine feeling of relief, rightness and a sense of wonder. My default position became an openness to provocation that enabled the questioning of the taken-for-granted and deep reflection upon participants’ feelings, experiences, uniqueness and ‘wholeness’.

Just as an explorer might investigate a floodplain’s capacity to slow a river’s rushed, sea-bound descent, hermeneutics may serve to soothe the frenetic churn of the teacher’s mind to an introspective meander. More and more cognitive sediment originating from distant pasts may be duly exposed for reflexive inspection; there, amid the alluvium of the mind, lie the prejudices that threaten to silt hermeneutic interpretation of students. In turn, the broadened teacher mind, one capable of seeing the once unseen and hearing the once unheard, can begin to glimpse the complexity of becoming a journalist. The teacher’s past is thus the insightful pedagogic tool at hand; while its neglect may obstruct student understanding, its application may grant entry to a hermeneutic world offering interpretation of each other and insights into how we came to be who we are and where we are.

Consequently, the educator’s mindset becomes characterised by a particular approach to tradition. While it’s accepted that journalistic tradition umbilically ties teachers with students through all that has been said about it, the hermeneutic

educator remains aware of its constraining potential. It's a mindset troubled, for example, by the historically restricted access granted to those of non-white and less advantageous socio-economic backgrounds (Spilsbury 2017; Baines and Chambers 2012). This mindset thus wrestles with tradition while acknowledging its interpretative potential; ultimately, it seeks ways to afford becoming opportunity.

The hermeneutically-attuned "ageing journalist" emerges as an asset to education rather than a socialising hindrance (Picard 2015, p. 8; see page 45). The future is forged in the context of history and hermeneutic hackademics help illuminate this relationship through developing their own *Journalistic Becoming* awareness and encouraging its reflexive exploration in questioning, self-aware students. Consequently, simply hiring "some digital entrepreneurs" while questioning the employment of experienced former professionals (Picard 2015, p. 9) is an inadequate response to journalism education's challenges. Both are needed. Any implicit jettisoning of journalistic history and its practitioner creators offers a future of inherent instability derived from casual rejection of the best of the past while failing to address its legacies of excess and marginalisation. Moreover, all teachers – whether old or young – have a prejudiced past. I would therefore suggest the prejudices borne of history should be viewed as a powerful educational resource rather than a source of futile denial. Indeed, the development of the hermeneutic mindset requires a deepening awareness of one's prejudice; it's the bridge to understanding students' journalistic self-interpretations – and the way forward to encouraging them to reflect upon their own historical conditioning. The final destination is empowering students to reimagine journalism.

Philosophical hermeneutics and journalism education: towards a Journalistic Becoming pedagogy

A hermeneutic pedagogy offers teachers interpretive opportunities to learn more about their students through leaning more about themselves. Practitioners with an understanding of the conditions underlying and shaping their students' *Journalistic Becoming* (courtesy of fused horizons) may then be able to offer a new hermeneutic teaching approach: the nurturing of students to contemplate how they interpret their journalistic selves. I call this a *Journalistic Becoming* pedagogy. It invites students to explore their *Journalistically Effected Consciousness* and enable the experience to engender a new condition in which journalistic self-interpretation can take place: an awareness of one's historical situatedness and the power of tradition. Their journalistic hopes and fears, as well as personal resolutions and accommodations, may then be critically and meaningfully addressed within the context of journalism's past in order to forge its future. It is, I believe, a timely pedagogic response to the challenges and opportunities posed by a becoming industry.

The becoming journalism industry awaits future definition. However, while journalism may be an "infinitely suggestible and flexible trade" (Marr 2005, p. 382), its future definers still require freedom to define (Cowan 2017/18) and opportunity to sprinkle the industry with "stardust" (see page 33). Yet educators, in their bid for accreditation and approval, may have too often "given over journalism to the publishers and taken their perspective, their definition of what journalism is" (Cowan 2017/18, p. 20). While the participants in this thesis significantly evidence the enduring power of legacy journalism, a *Journalistic Becoming* pedagogy would encourage students to critically reflect upon "memorial narratives" derived from viewpoints within journalism culture (Vine 2016, p. 19); it would aspire to help

ease the struggle they may face in negotiating and defending traditional ideals and occupational ideology while assisting in conceptualisation of alternative and legitimate forms of journalism (Williams et al. 2017).

In this respect, a hermeneutic *Journalistic Becoming* pedagogy offers development of a more “philosophical angle of mind”; it’s one encompassing “respectful scepticism towards tradition and belief” (Romano 2009; Cowan 2017/18). The “perennial questions” of ‘What is journalism?’ and ‘Who is a journalist?’ are thus not simply matters for scholarly and intellectual re-examination (Franklin 2014, p. 475). Students need to know that a choice can be made between their own interpretation of what journalism is and the predetermined conformity which is given to them (Cowan 2017/18). Those keen to reflectively, reflexively and proactively explore journalism in transition and “what journalism could be” (Zelizer 2017, p. 1) may then move from uncritical organic relationships “to a self-consciously contractual relationship with individuals, institutions and ideologies” (Mezirow 1978, p. 108).

In so doing, journalistic common sense and its “logic and power” can be evaluated (Glasser and Ettema 1989, p. 24); indeed, what rubs off on newcomers from experienced peers is a “style of thought” – one attuned to journalism’s traditions and practices and also one’s cultural heritage (Glasser and Ettema 1989, p. 24). A *Journalistic Becoming* pedagogy would aim to holistically and reflexively interrogate such common sense and its “historically defined standards of judgement” (Geertz 1983, p. 76). A *Journalistic Becoming* pedagogy would instead encourage and nurture a reflective thinking that scrutinises one’s being-in-the world in relation to journalism-in-the world.

Indeed, if practices are to define journalists rather than employment and if entry becomes conditioned on commercial rather than ideological terms (Picard 2014; Wiik 2016), the journalistic future awaits determination in accordance with what journalism means to aspiring journalists – and what they want to do and be within it. Participant Sian Jarvis poses a fundamental question in this respect: “Why do they [students] want to be a journalist? What is it? A lot of people say they want to be on TV. If that’s your answer, then you probably need to think a little bit harder about really why and how you are going to get to that place.”

Becoming a journalist thus entails understanding one’s journalistic self. What Lee Bollinger (2003) described as “a sense of an identity as a professional” may then carry with it a certain potential in the face of industry’s technological determinism. These reflexive, becoming journalists may be better placed to address industry’s exhaustion and prepare for its “height and rebirth” (Zelizer 2017, p. 7). Indeed, if self-potential is illuminated, it may inspire an impassioned drive to unlock potential in others as part and parcel of any genuine rebirth. We return to the issue of becoming opportunity which a *Journalistic Becoming* pedagogy looks to galvanise. It aspires to send students into the world who are more fully aware of the barriers preventing others from entering mainstream journalism (Spilsbury 2017; Baines and Chambers 2012); once ensconced in newsrooms, former students might then evidence their commitment to diversity and respond to calls for industry to be “more reflective of people we serve” (Snow 2017).

Indeed, a *Journalistic Becoming* pedagogy champions genuine community journalism. It strives to nurture students’ discovery of their relationship with the world through sensitising their awareness of connectedness to some people and distance from others; they may consequently be inspired to “reconnect journalism

with its democratic roots” (Mensing 2010, p. 512). While one explanation of the gap between reporters and the reported is fewer locally deployed staff, self-aware newcomers intent on building community must also feel empowered to confront commercially successful media models built upon specialisation rather than connection (Montgomerie 2017). A starting point would appear to be a new conceptualisation of journalism. These journalists might consider themselves to be part of a network rather than “an industrial process”; in becoming community participants and educators as well as broadcasters of news, these newcomers would recognise that “communities are diverse and have different needs of journalism” (Baines 2012, p. 41). They would also understand that journalists from diverse backgrounds can help eradicate misinterpretation and under-representation of minority ethnic groups (Baines and Chambers 2012).

A Journalistic Becoming pedagogy thus goes far beyond viewing socialisation as education; replication of professional experience and creation of career dress rehearsals may not be the best way to address changes “rocking the field” (Baines and Wall 2016, p. 153). Selecting appropriately orientated young people and suitably honing and maturing their qualities and attitudes (de Burgh 2003) rather gives way to encouraging self-aware students to guard their fresh perspectives and use them to challenge all of our assumptions (Jarvis 2015). The paradigm of journalism education thus shifts from one where students internalise occupational ideology to one where a critical eye is cast at “educating super citizens, the industry, and its social and technological context” (Deuze 2017, p. 321).

Meanwhile, journalists (including my participants) appear to continue defining their profession with reference to “fairly nebulous personal traits”; failure to explain why and how these traits enable journalism to make the world better-

informed and more progressive “limits and undermines” what journalists do (Greenwood 2018, p. 10). Sets of ideals shared by journalists will require rigorous interrogation and resolution as part of the journalistic self-interpretations made by journalism’s new definers.

This journalism education paradigm essentially invites students to discover a sense of their desired journalistic being through engagement with the journalistic world, its possibilities and its traditions. It’s a student-led educational paradigm, one that centres the understanding of the journalistic self as a prerequisite to the meaningful metamorphosis of journalistic tradition. The NCTJ has much to offer this reimagined teaching model; indeed, its continued course evolution aims to allow the next generation of journalists to choose the path it wishes to follow (NCTJ 2015-16). Yet a new ethos is also required. Indeed, students are unable to make informed directional decisions if they are referentially unaware of their journalistic being-in-the-world. The answer, I suggest, is the paradigm pathfinder of philosophical hermeneutics; it offers the teacher mindset required for a *Journalistic Becoming* pedagogy.

A *Journalistic Becoming* pedagogy is not naively blinkered to the gravitational pull that the world of journalism exerts on the world of academia. Yet rather than endorse an industry-centred model of education that produces socialised selves (Mensing 2010), it joins the global rallying cry to venture curricula beyond traditional news industry-journalism education links (Rupar 2016). A *Journalistic Becoming* pedagogy instead tasks an “independent-minded journalism education” (Berger and Foote 2017, p. 257) to nurture independent-minded students who can not only confidently do but “confidently claim to be” (Nolan 2008, p. 742). Calls for professional journalism to assume the role of a new knowledge profession

(Donsbach 2014) should thus be accompanied by insistence of a new self-knowledge concerning its participants.

It follows that a *Journalistic Becoming* pedagogy strongly rejects claims that its underpinning philosophical hermeneutics lacks an “explicit critical function” and is passively silent on issues concerning domination and power (Bernstein 1983, p. 43). We return once more to the earlier discussion concerning Gadamer’s ‘moderate’ hermeneutics and its contrast with a more ‘critical’ contemporary approach (Gallagher 1992; Habermas 1977; 1987; 1988; see page 78).

While a Gadamerian approach suggests emancipation, power and resistance are historically bound, the pedagogy envisaged in this thesis nonetheless resists mute, assimilative subservience to dogmatism and perpetuation of the “hierarchy of knowers and doers, theory and practice” (Scott and Usher 2011, p. 35). It rather encourages journalistic autonomy and independence through “reflexive discourse about the past” (Zelizer 2017, p. 249). Indeed, it aspires to point out “the perils of confusing tradition with justification” while reminding students “there often exists, for reasons that need to be explored, a gap between what journalism is and has been and what journalism ought to be” (Glasser 2006, p. 149). A *Journalistic Becoming* pedagogy thus encourages tradition’s exposure, confrontation, refashioning and reorganisation rather than join entrenched discourses concerning the “power of reflection” to “reject the claim of tradition” and break up “dogmatic forces” (Habermas 1977, p. 358). If, as Gadamer argues, moving outside tradition is untenable (Tomkins and Eatough 2018), it is certainly there to be actively challenged, its “positive possibilities” sought (Heidegger 1962, p. 44) and exploration commenced concerning the “adoption and transformation of what has been handed down to us” (Heidegger 1956, p. 71). If journalism needs fresh,

imaginative thinking to survive (Zelizer 2017), a *Journalistic Becoming* pedagogy would encourage students to replenish and reinvigorate tradition in the most emancipatory, ethnically diverse and innovative ways possible by directing them to their own relationship with that tradition. Indeed, Gadamer, while defending hermeneutical “bridge-building and recovery of the best of the past” (1967, p. 26), denied that a focus on tradition implied uncritical acceptance or endorsement of it (Bernstein 1983; Gadamer 1981; Barthold 2017); the task was to critically and creatively apply the tradition as one’s own ensuring it was more of a provocative force than a conserving one (Barthold 2017). Students with a critical awareness of influencing cultural and psychological assumptions may be able to shape the way they see themselves, their relationships and the “way we pattern our lives” (Mezirow 1978, p. 101). The questioning of values and assumptions may then free their dreams to extend beyond the past; when students transcend themselves towards their possibilities, they may also transcend tradition “toward its possibilities” (Gallagher 1992, p. 99).

In essence, a *Journalistic Becoming* pedagogy is one of generative potential and possibilities and one concerning what students want themselves and the world to be. While acknowledging understanding is our historical heritage, faith is nonetheless placed in human beings to relate, create, invent and question rather than comply and conform. The pedagogy envisaged here thus recoils from an education that is partial to vocation and skill discourses, one that casts journalism as a ‘natural’ talent taught by the naturally talented and experienced; it does not connect becoming a journalist with the trained reiteration of processes offered by ‘natural’ journalists (Reardon 2016). Students are rather encouraged to realise dreams through hermeneutic openness and development of their own versions of

journalism's traditions and future. Journalists have already become more engaged, prepared to take sides and offer more commentary; younger generations are also "more willing to challenge traditional practices" (Tumber and Prentoulis 2005, p. 71). It's even claimed they are "fixing local journalism" through the *Tab* student website (Rivlin 2016, p. 26). *Journalistic Becoming* may offer a timely educational opportunity with which to better understand these processes and guide teaching provision accordingly. The academy certainly needs to know its role if, indeed, "would-be journalists still want to change the world" (Greenslade 2015).

The kind of journalism envisaged here accords with Parse's view of nursing practice noted earlier, one requiring the "true presence" of its practitioners (1990, p. 139). There is thus no use for a "canned approach" where professional advice is offered and opinions stem from personal value systems; this surrenders to a "subject-to-subject interrelationship" (Parse 1990, p. 139). Parse casts the nurse as an attentive presence shedding light on individual and family moments of meaning and encouraging critical thought about whom one is becoming. The attentive, hermeneutic journalism teacher can also be conceived as a "nurturing gardener" rather than a "fix it mechanic" (Parse 1990, p. 139). Within this nurturing role, student disharmony may be sensitively prompted through challenging discussions which provide opportunities to deal with "moments of difficulty" – the tension and emotionality that occurs when biases and prejudices are confronted (Gayle et al. 2013). A *Journalistic Becoming* pedagogy would, accordingly, encourage students to engage with their emotions; for example, students may benefit from considering how the demands of traditionally detached and objective journalism may impact upon their need to be empathic human beings (Jukes 2016b). More broadly, it's a pedagogy that is aware of how self-interpretation today stresses self-realisation. A

discourse where “the kind of individual we learn to be is one who continually develops and realises her own true self” (Brinkmann 2008, p. 416) is potentially damaging. Individuals inhabiting a deregulated and consumer society may be overburdened with the demand to realise themselves in every social arena; constant introspection may lead to depression, emptiness and social and individual suffering (Brinkmann 2008).

It follows that nurturing, reflective scaffolding should carefully support and frame provision of the university’s repository experiences – including the formative extra-curricular and micro experiences that prompt self-questioning and introspection. A practical manifestation of Heideggarian ‘care’ may be evoked with imagery of the hermeneutically-sensitive teacher prepared to “leap ahead” (1962, p. 158); in so doing, the care integral to a *Journalistic Becoming* pedagogy entails showing the other person the way towards future possibilities while helping them become transparent to themselves and their concerns (Tomkins and Eatough 2013b). Students who better understand their becoming may not be ruled by it.

While extra-curricular activities like the *Rock* offer investment dividend possibilities of authenticity and exploratory freedom to students, their provision nonetheless presents challenges to caring practitioners; indeed, they are tasked to facilitate student self-discovery and autonomy while mindful of legal danger and self and institutional reputation. My dilemma working with *Rock* students was noted earlier (see page 149) and the same conflicts may arise by placing news day material in the public domain (Evans 2017). However, I would suggest safety nets may, in fact, be held less tight when a hermeneutic attitude replaces a risk-averse one. The hermeneutic practitioner is envisaged bringing a calming, holistic attentiveness and relational knowing to interventions. These teachers reduce

potentially suffocating anxiety and uncertainty through enhanced understanding of students and their situated actions; new, fused horizons of understanding ease tensions, granting students the freedom to find themselves and their relationship with journalism. A *Journalistic Becoming* pedagogy thus confidently encourages students to embrace extra-curricular activity and “doing it for real” (Steel et al. 2007, p. 330).

Indeed, it’s through the encouragement of reflection upon meaningful experiences that aspiring journalists may begin to make sense of the cultural and industry-centred processes they are subjected to (Mensing 2010); self-resolutions and accommodations can then afford and fashion personal steerage. The life-changing experience of participant Sarah Tyler at the Salzburg Media Academy is a case in point; this global media literacy event has been applauded for “challenging cultural biases” that colour “often nation-based perceptions and narratives about information, news, and the world at large” (Goodman 2017, p. 453). When “identity dissonance” challenges deeply held self-beliefs, new self-possibilities are “tested out for fit”; new “cognitive scripts” are written as self-knowledge becomes directly related to a willingness to engage in reflection and “potentially identity-threatening feedback about themselves” (Lund Dean and Jolly 2012, pp. 233-238).

In all these regards, my conception of *Journalistic Becoming* as a process of self-interpretation aspires to assist budding journalists (and their educators) to interrogate the socialised demands of the past, better respond to today’s challenges and confidently envisage new innovative futures. Students may, in fact, need to reflect upon how they think and where they stand at a profound level. Participant Mark Smith, for example, thanked me for the conversation we had. Mark said he had remembered things he thought he had forgotten and was glad the “mental

thing” came up – the troubling surreality he felt now that he is a journalist (see pages 183/258). Indeed, reflective practice “is a way of viewing and participating in the unfolding drama of the self in becoming”; participants can watch themselves being invented through deliberative practice while aware they are inventing themselves (Freshwater 2002, p. 8). Rather than journalism educators offering muted discourses concerning reflection and critique (Reardon 2016), committed encouragement of reflective activity may enable students to seriously consider the person they are and the person they are becoming (Rees 2007).

The *Journalistic Becoming* pedagogy envisaged here finds appropriate touchstones within experiential learning theory’s application to journalism (Brandon 2002; Evans 2016; Greenberg 2007; see page 80). When Kate Kartveit suggests experiential learning enables journalism students to determine experience and develop “from the inside” (2009, p. 38), this thesis offers a hermeneutic perspective concerning the self-conceptualizations that may take place. I suggest an ‘experiential becoming’ approach helps illuminate how experience develops the ‘inside’ in a particular way. Indeed, experience is envisaged giving rise to conditions that shape journalistic self-interpretation in a process involving thoughts, feelings, distinctions and accommodations within one’s personal framework.

I maintain it’s what goes on ‘inside’ that makes technical skills and knowledge acquisition contextually intelligible. Yet my *Journalistic Becoming* pedagogy does not ignore the need to remain current with industry practice (Wenger et al. 2018); nor does it denigrate pedagogic ‘training models’ attempting to “bridge the theory versus practice divide” (Tulloch and Manchon 2018, p. 38). A *Journalistic Becoming* pedagogy is rather focused upon enriching both theory and practice through new thinking. Indeed, this ontologically-anchored pedagogy reinforces the

interrelatedness of theory and practice through an approach to scholarship that encourages the possibilities of a “seamless way of being”; it’s one that warmly invites thinking, doing and feeling to come and stay together (Galvin and Todres 2013, p. 140). Tired dichotomies and industry-academia face-offs become subsumed by a pedagogic commitment to creatively and contemplatively explore the integrated nature of being in the journalistic world. Indeed, educators are tasked with inviting their students to join them in ethically and critically recognising, examining and understanding the ideological contours of this world (Baines and Kelsey 2013). I suggest it’s a pedagogic quest that can be encouraged and nurtured through hermeneutic understanding of our relationships with tradition, and the consequent interpretations of self and others that we make in the journalistic field. If we can understand how we have become together – as a “community of self-interpreters” (Brinkmann 2008, p. 411) – we might together understand and invigorate journalism’s becoming.

6. Contribution and concluding remarks

This thesis endeavoured to explore the transient, ephemeral and emergent process of becoming a journalist through the metaphorical conception of strangers making respective journeys to lands of transitional strangeness. Indeed, while the unpredictable, unfamiliar landscape of journalism awaits aspiring journalists, former journalists entrusted to teach them have left those shores for the shifting, unknown terrain of academia. I aspired to help calm the waters between the strange lands of industry and academia by viewing the unpredictable currents of change as an “omnipotent enabler of all things new” (Zelizer 2017, p. 1); I wanted to make the strange land of journalism less inhospitable to visiting strangers who plan to settle and become journalists within it. These strangers might then feel empowered to reimagine journalism’s future. Yet they required help. It transpired that teachers could assist them by adopting a particular mindset that entertained reimagining journalism education as well.

A new compass setting was consequently recommended for teachers disembarking in academia; I encouraged them to envisage a fresh pedagogic horizon. It was one entailing the charting of an ontological, holistic and hermeneutic passage to the enclaves of industry skills and academic theory and the brokering of a long-awaited truce founded upon conciliatory enrichment to both encampments; indeed, practice and theory were rather envisaged as shapers of one’s being and becoming in the journalistic world.

A pedagogic and philosophical exploration of being and becoming duly unfolded. It led to investigation of how the prejudices and preunderstandings of a former journalist-turned-teacher might historically mediate with those of industry newcomers

to inform what it means to become a journalist today. It was hoped the study of ten early career journalists (all recent BAMMJ graduates) might duly access a new understanding of my journalism students and enable me to help them better understand themselves. Consequently, this thesis suggests appropriate pedagogic direction lies in the mystique and strangeness that infuse our historic relationships with each other. Such an informed pedagogy, one aimed at mutual self-discovery through interrogation of the past's socialising forces, might help alleviate the strangeness encountered by practitioners and former students arriving in their respective but alien destinations of academia and journalism.

This thesis offers initial navigation towards such a pedagogy with three interlinked contributions to the future mapping of journalism education informed by Gadamer (2004; 1976). Firstly, a definition of *Journalistic Becoming* as a process of self-interpretation is offered; exploration also commenced of its underlying, shaping conditions and those experiences capable of giving rise to them. Secondly, a hermeneutic approach to understanding and interpreting *Journalistic Becoming* is presented that enables tradition to stir provocations of familiarity and strangeness in researchers by enhancing awareness of *Journalistically Effected Consciousness* through *Imaginative Journalistic Openness*. In accordance with Gadamer, this entails understanding that anticipation of intelligibility is derived from the way we are connected, indeed embedded, in shared journalistic tradition and a community of understanding. Crucially, it's openness that shakes anticipation, dashes expectations, breaks down sense and demands questioning of one's puzzlement and surprise; it's precisely the shock of not understanding and the unsettling intrusion of strangeness that constructively alerts us to the prejudices that enable interpretation and shared meaning. A four-movement Reflective Hermeneutic Model was designed to

practically activate and intensify these tensions; the hermeneutic circle operating at the Model's heart aimed to ensure adherence to the principles of philosophical hermeneutics during verbal and textual analysis. Thirdly, these contributions culminate in presentation of the case for a *Journalistic Becoming* pedagogy. This approach requires a hermeneutically-attuned teacher mindset which welcomes jolting disruptions from students in order to trigger hermeneutic reflection (Gadamer 2004). A student's *Journalistic Becoming* might then be interpreted through discovery and utilisation of one's own self-interpretation. The hermeneutic teacher-researcher thus seeks fusions of horizons – a common intersubjectivity and sociality of understanding in which the interpreter's own thoughts have also gone into the awakening of meaning (Gadamer 2004). Crucially, reawakened hermeneutic teachers may in turn introduce students to more reflexive thinking about their own relationship with journalism and what they want journalism to be; the persistent ideological mists shrouding journalism may then fade to permit new visions to materialise and new journalistic possibilities to arise. A strange land can become a land of opportunity. In short, a new *Journalistic Becoming* pedagogy aspires to encourage students to redefine journalistic tradition through developing their journalistic self-understanding and imagination.

The pedagogic centering of being and becoming helps remind us that knowledge and skills “will always be insufficient to describe the novel and unstable situations that present themselves” (Barnett 2009, p. 439). Indeed, we are today “structured by media”, we “live in media”, and we love and hate it which puts it on the “same level as emotion, the psyche, and the human body” (Deuze 2017, pp. 307-8). As opportunities are seized to publically communicate and connect multiple versions of a self-centred and expressed self, we are confronted with the “endless versions of ourselves” that we have created and co-created in media (Deuze 2012, p. xvi). The understanding of

journalism, journalism education and the society journalists investigate may need to begin with reflection upon this mediatization of the customised world it constitutes (Deuze 2017). In this respect, I would suggest deepened understanding of *Journalistic Becoming* can contribute to increased awareness of how invisible, pervasive and connected media shapes the being and acting of journalists in the media world. We need to better understand these media agents in order to better understand their portrayal of the media lives we all lead; indeed, as we become multiple selves in our “very own reality show” (Deuze 2012, p. 253), we should learn more about those observing, recording and representing our media immersion. Moreover, and as this thesis has advocated, the observers themselves would benefit from enhanced reflexive understanding of their media becoming in a secluded personalised lifeworld that also features connectedness to others and the past.

A new *Journalistic Becoming* pedagogy may thus assist scholarly exploration of our media life. On one level, communication with former students might produce insightful reports from the frontier of journalism’s changing landscape; their accounts of evolving *Journalistic Becoming* conditions and experiences may help teachers guide future journalists on their journeys across the turbulent divide separating academia from industry. On another, the critical reflections of this journalistic ‘new wave’ may help illuminate the profound mediatization of our world and our deeply personal entanglements with it (Deuze 2017). This thesis maintains practitioners can better decipher these incoming coded messages if they hermeneutically acknowledge their own becoming experiences and bring their prejudiced pasts to the fore as enablers of translation and understanding.

Indeed, I have begun sharing my hermeneutic journey and its pedagogic implications with colleagues at BU. A new research team – a *Journalism Education*

Research Group – has now been established which will consider how reflective practitioners can better understand students and how students can be encouraged to challenge journalism. This forum is helping direct my future research outputs which will aim to offer insight into the power of *Journalistically Effected Consciousness*; if students as well as practitioners can be encouraged to consider what has shaped them, they may then feel empowered to exploit the “element of freedom” within the traditions they carry (Gadamer 2004, p. 282). Practitioners can commence this process with the kind of thinking laid bare in the Reflective Hermeneutic Model; indeed, I will seek dissemination of the Model’s hermeneutically-infused thought movements in journals such as *Journalism Studies*, *Journalism Practice* and *Journalism Education*, and through conference presentations both nationally and internationally. I will also be applying my conceptual ideas to new case selections and data sets. I plan, for example, to hermeneutically study written work-experience reflections composed by a final year cohort; I hope to glean further insights into the shaping of *Journalistic Becoming*.

In parallel, the evolving ideas spawned by this study are beginning to inform pedagogic practice at BU where I was recently appointed BAMMJ Programme Leader. For example, staff delivering the ‘News and Online’ unit are now working to reflectively supplement the skills-based content required by the accrediting NCTJ. Indeed, lectures and seminars incorporate discussions and exercises designed to coax students to reflect deeply upon the sort of journalistic world they wish to inhabit and the demands that may be made upon them; staff and students collectively contemplate how they perceive journalism, where it may be heading and what scope exists to do things differently. In addition, the practitioner’s ‘academic advisor’ role offers further potential to develop a hermeneutically-attuned mindset. Informational guidance could be enhanced through the advisor’s own self discovery; practitioners’ awareness of

what they are bringing to the advisory setting may then secure more meaningful relationships while banishing connotations of prescriptive one-way dialogue.

Further work needs to be done to unlock the full potential of a *Journalistic Becoming* pedagogy. This thesis, I must acknowledge, is a modest and small-scale beginning; I turned a key and momentarily peeked into the hermeneutic world beyond. A temporal snapshot resulted that was captured in a highly personalised way.

As this work draws to a close, I would like to return to the matter of personal disclosure. I wish to emphasise that my reflexive motivation was interpretation of others rather than narcissistic in intent; I trust the “swamp” of self-indulgence (Finlay 2002) was negotiated and the speaking, experiencing subject was not lost without trace in the mire. I recommend that fellow educators confront the swamp’s “beast” and see what dwells in their “dark beyond” (MacMillan 1996, p. 29). Even so, their resulting interpretations of others will, like mine, be necessarily contingent, emergent, unpredictable and subject to alternative interpretations (Finlay 2012; Scott and Usher 2011). Indeed, interpretation is concerned with pointing in a direction rather than to a final endpoint – towards “an open realm that can be filled in a variety of ways” (Gadamer 1986, p. 68). Shades of interpretive light dapple our media world.

I must also share with colleagues the concern that my Model thought movements were too few or too shallow, ensuring that so much more lay insidiously latent yet mischievously manipulative and unknown within me. I wonder how the “things themselves” (Heidegger 1962, p. 195) may have provoked me differently if alternative questions had been asked; I wonder what my participants forgot and what they chose to keep private; and I wonder what I too eagerly and naively accepted.

However, I realise that the unknown depths of my *Journalistically Effected Consciousness* can never be reached; the unstirred and unprovoked continue to

constitute my opaque, unfathomed history. More interview time may not have provided the remedy. For all its gracious affordance of subject immersion, distance and perspective, time can never grant enough of itself while people are unable to comprehend or reveal all of themselves. Even if they could, I would not pretend to proffer a definitive interpretation of them.

Hermeneutic theory may, as Smith notes (2007b), ultimately fail to get near to explaining the wondrous and mysterious process of interpretation. There will always be a limitation to our understanding. A certain humility is therefore called for. I hope, at least, that something of the glorious messiness of humanness entailed in hermeneutic endeavour is communicated in this inquiry: something of the privilege, poignancy and strangeness arising from listening and reflection; the value of openness to others despite the comforting allure of self-defensiveness; the looming spectre of vulnerability amid the quest for understanding and transparency; the embrace and tolerance of ambiguity and disjuncture in meaning; the preparedness to reflexively partake in tradition yet challenge its already commenced conversations; and, perhaps above all, the sincere desire to relationally give in order to respectfully receive.

This research concludes that a *Journalistic Becoming* pedagogy, one infused with Gadamerian philosophical hermeneutics and entailing the sharing of becoming journeys, offers potential enrichment to journalism education. Much, however, will be demanded of its trailblazers. Those heading for journalism in pursuit of *Journalistic Becoming* and the academy-bound former journalists seeking student understanding must be prepared to visit a forbidding place. These strangers embarking for strange lands will be sharing their experience of the most demanding environment of all: themselves.

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Appendix A. The Participant Information Sheet

Introduction

My name is Andy Bissell and I am a Lecturer in News Journalism at Bournemouth University. I am inviting you to take part in a research project that aims to inform and improve future provision of journalism education.

Before you decide to contribute, it is important that you fully understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish.

Do ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information (see contact information below). Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

What is the research project?

This is a doctoral research project that addresses the following question: *To what extent can educational media experiences enhance students' awareness of journalistic becoming?*

What is the purpose of the project?

My doctoral research seeks to discover if some journalism education experiences are more effective than others in enabling students to feel that they are becoming journalists. The findings may help inform future curricula design and guide provision of journalism education.

This is a four-year project culminating in presentation of a doctoral thesis in 2018.

What stage are you at and why have I been chosen?

I have completed a 'pilot' study which was used to fine-tune future research. You are one of 10-12 former students who have now been asked to take part in the main research phase. I wish to interview former students who completed their Bournemouth University Multimedia Journalism (BAMMJ) degree at least one year ago and now work as journalists.

You have been chosen for this study because I think you can offer an interesting insight into the educational experiences offered by the BAMMJ course and the part they may have played in your professional self-development.

Anonymity is guaranteed for all participants. You will not be named or identified in any way.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part in the study. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. You can still withdraw up to the point of publication of the thesis in 2018. You do not have to give a reason.

What do I have to do?

You will be interviewed by myself on one occasion at a time/place convenient to you. The interview will last for approximately 1 hour.

There will be no financial cost incurred by you.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those people participating in the project, it is hoped that this work will help shape, guide and improve the future education of aspiring journalists attending Bournemouth University.

Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential? And what will happen to the results of the research project?

All the information that I collect about you during the course of the study will be kept strictly confidential. You will not be able to be identified in any reports or publications. The audio recording of your interview will be used only for analysis. No other use will be made of it without your written permission, and no one outside the project will be allowed access to the original recordings. The study results will be contained in a thesis that will be submitted to the Centre for Excellence in Media Practice at Bournemouth University. I will send you a copy of the study if you would like to read it.

What type of information will be sought from me and why is the collection of this information relevant for achieving the research project's objectives?

I would like to discuss your educational experiences with you and how they have impacted upon your perceptions of journalism and becoming a journalist. I would also like to discuss your pre-course feelings about becoming a journalist and how they may have evolved over time.

I will analyse the transcripts of the interviews for common themes and differences. I aspire to acquire understanding of how students perceive themselves as journalists and the media experiences that may influence these perceptions.

How can I contact you?

I can be contacted in the following ways:

Email: abissell@bournemouth.ac.uk

Telephone: 01202 965930 (BU)/07767 303282 (Mobile)

Post: Room 337, The Media School, Weymouth House, Bournemouth University, Talbot Campus, Poole, BH12 5BB.

Finally...

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this Participant Information Sheet. You will be given a copy of it if you take part together with a copy of the signed consent form.

Andy Bissell

Lecturer in News Journalism, Bournemouth University

B. Social Science (Economic and Social History)

Fellow, Higher Education Academy

National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ) Proficiency Certificate

Appendix B. The former BAMMJ students who were interviewed

(Names have been anonymised; see page 100)

<u>Participant</u>	<u>Interview details</u>	<u>Researcher-researched relationship</u>	<u>Employment history at time of interview</u>
<u>SARAH TYLER</u> Aged 24 Graduated: 2014	Interviewed: 8 January 2016 Duration: 1hr 33 mins	I knew Sarah. I did not teach her but marked her third year work experience 'Personal Perspectives' reflective portfolio.	Currently a trainee reporter on two weekly newspapers. Sarah had been employed as a journalist by these publications for 15 months at the time of the interview. One week after graduating, Sarah commenced a three-month internship at the Salzburg Global Seminar before joining the newspapers.
<u>ANNA COLEMAN</u> Aged 22 Graduated: 2014	Interviewed: 25 January 2016 Duration: 1h 4 mins	I knew Anna. I did not teach her but supervised her third year Multimedia Project.	Currently a Production Assistant on a regional newspaper. After graduating, Anna was employed as a copy editor at a regional newspaper 'subbing hub'; she designed pages for a number of the company's titles published across the south of England. Ten months later she joined the regional newspaper. Anna had been employed as a journalist for 18 months at the time of the interview.
<u>JOHN STONE</u> Aged 25 Graduated: 2013	Interviewed: 9 April 2016 Duration: 1hr 25 mins	I did not know John prior to the interview.	Currently employed as a feature writer for a news agency. He was formerly a video journalist for a television company in the Falkland Islands; this was a nine-month internship he embarked upon after leaving university. He then joined the news agency where he has been employed for 15 months. John was looking forward to moving to the United States the month after our interview; his agency had promoted him to news reporter in their New York office.
<u>KATE BROWNE</u>	Interviewed: 2 June 2016	I did not know Kate but had very briefly met her	A radio broadcast reporter who has been working for a broadcaster for two years; she

<p>Aged 23</p> <p>Graduated: 2013</p>	<p><u>Duration:</u></p> <p>1hr 6 mins</p>	<p>prior to our interview.</p>	<p>works for the company's stations across the UK as a reporter and bulletin reader. Kate embarked upon a freelance career after graduating, focusing on broadcast journalism. She was also voice coaching at Bournemouth University and undertaking social media work for a small travel business; in addition, Kate completed a day's media training at the Dorset School Games. She joined her present company in June 2014 and has been employed as a journalist for "pretty much three years".</p>
<p><u>JAMES NEWTON</u></p> <p>Aged 24</p> <p>Graduated: 2015</p>	<p><u>Interviewed:</u></p> <p>27 July 2016</p> <p><u>Duration:</u></p> <p>1hr 16 mins</p>	<p>I knew James. I taught him on the BAMMJ News and Online second year unit. I also worked closely with James on the <i>Rock</i> student newspaper and during BU's coverage of the UK 2015 General Election when he was Editor-in-Chief.</p>	<p>A trainee multimedia journalist working for a news agency in London; his responsibilities include video compilation and content creation for the newswire and social media. He had been employed as a journalist for just over one year at the time of the interview.</p>
<p><u>SIAN JARVIS</u></p> <p>Aged 23</p> <p>Graduated: 2015</p>	<p><u>Interviewed:</u></p> <p>17 October 2016</p> <p><u>Duration:</u></p> <p>1hr 8 mins</p>	<p>I knew Sian. I taught her on the BAMMJ News and Online second year unit.</p>	<p>Employed as a freelance Field Production Assistant on the TV desk of an international financial media company since December 2015. Sian said she was about to be offered a full-time field producer contract with the company. Previously, Sian worked as a copy editor at a regional newspaper 'subbing hub' for two months; she joined the hub from university. She then worked as an assistant editor at two airport business magazines for three months. Sian has been working as a journalist for 15 months.</p>

<u>JESS ROBERTS</u> Aged 23 Graduated: 2014	<u>Interviewed:</u> 11 November 2016 <u>Duration:</u> 1hr 12 mins	I knew Jess. I did not teach her but supervised her third year dissertation.	She began working as a Production Editor for two “tecky magazines” one month after leaving Bournemouth University. Eighteen months later, the owning company appointed her Features Editor of a third technology magazine within its stable of titles; it focuses on visual effects – “very industry focused and educational”. Jess had been working for two years as a journalist at the time of the interview.
<u>ROB BURROWS</u> Aged 22 Graduated: 2015	<u>Interviewed:</u> 24 November 2016 <u>Duration:</u> 1hr 55 mins	I knew Rob. I taught him on the BAMMJ News and Online second year unit; I also worked closely with him on the <i>Rock</i> student newspaper.	He began freelancing for two national motorsport magazines after graduating before being employed by the owning company as a Junior Journalist in August 2016. He is a correspondent covering the national motor racing scene. He said he had been “officially employed for three months” after providing freelance material for the same publication for nine months.
<u>SIMON BAXTER</u> Aged 22 Graduated: 2015	<u>Interviewed:</u> 3 January 2017 <u>Duration:</u> 1hr 40 mins	I knew Simon. I taught him on the BAMMJ News and Online second year unit. I also worked closely with him on the <i>Rock</i> student newspaper in his capacity as Editor-in-Chief.	Simon had been employed as a reporter for a news agency for five months at the time of the interview; he also publishes content on his film blog. Simon had formerly been a regional newspaper reporter for eight months.
<u>MARK SMITH</u> Aged 22 Graduated: 2015	<u>Interviewed:</u> 3 March 2017 <u>Duration:</u> 1hr 51 mins	I knew Mark. I taught him on the BAMMJ News and Online second year unit; we also worked together on the <i>Rock</i> student newspaper.	Freelance sports journalist who works predominantly for a national newspaper and national TV company. Mark has worked as a journalist “the whole time” since leaving university and was paid for freelance work during his studies from the summer of 2013.

Appendix C. Unstructured interview preparation and approach

My interview preparation entailed familiarisation with this document, the Unstructured Interview Guide Sheet, which was taken into each interview. It contains: (1) An introduction which was read to each participant and, (2), a flexible four-dimensional interview framework to stir my Journalistically Effected Consciousness.

Introduction

The first thing to say is thank you very much indeed for agreeing to see me today. It's (date). I'd just like to revisit a couple of points I made in the Participant Information Sheet that I gave you. I'll recap on some important items. I'm here because I'm conducting doctoral research; I am currently studying for a doctorate in education. My area of interest is the student experience and I want to explore with you the educational experiences you had on the BAMMJ course and which of those experiences may have been of greater relative value than others in terms of making you feel that you were becoming a journalist.

A couple of additional things I'd like to mention. Anonymity is guaranteed to all participants. You will all be given different names. All of the research including this digital recording will be retained by myself and only myself; only other people involved in the research project will have access to it.

It is also important to say that I will be adopting an unstructured interview approach which means essentially that I want you to set the agenda. It is very important that you talk about what is of importance to you and then we'll go from there and I'll pick up on the things that you tell me. The most important thing is for you to talk about what is of pertinence and interest to you. Does that sound ok?

(Response)

Have you any questions at this point?

(Response)

Can I ask you first of all to give me your full name, age and your graduation date please?

(Response)

Can you also tell me a little bit about your current employment, when you started here, how long you've been working here and a few details about what the role is?

(Response)

Looking at your journalistic employment as a whole, how long have you been employed as a journalist?

(Response)

Thank you very much indeed for that. The question I'd like to ask you is this:

Can you tell me your journalistic story?

As this story duly unfolded, I made very brief skeleton notes which provided a framework for revisiting in depth the topics raised by the participant. Meanwhile, I endeavoured to remain attentive to my research questions through hermeneutic attunement to their sensed becoming and the experiences that gave rise to them. I was therefore open to hearing the unusual and jarring as well as the familiar; I invited the participant's comments to enter and stir my Journalistically Effected Consciousness.

My questions that followed sought to elaborate upon this participant-led agenda. To assist this exploration, I loosely employed a four-dimensional approach to the prioritised topics they had raised. These different investigatory lenses now follow, together with a selection of commonly-used probes and prompts relevant to each. These dimensions served as "a rich ferment of ideas" (Turner 2003, p. 9) rather than a strict and structured interview guide; indeed, it is important to note that a rigid, regimented and ordered 'tick list' interview procedure was not applied. So while mindful of my four dimensions, the pursuit of conversational fluidity and participant-led direction remained of paramount importance. My follow-up probes and prompts were therefore taken from different dimensions at different times and when appropriate to the circumstances; they were determined by the course of the conversation which I wanted each participant to control (Koch 1996). Some interviews featured more of these prompts than others. I didn't strive to apply all the questions to

all the participants because I felt that risked disruption to the integrity and flow of their story presentations. So while I familiarised myself with the four dimensions prior to each interview, nothing was 'rehearsed' beforehand. Indeed, the dimensions' probes and prompts were essentially viewed as tools to further unlock my Journalistically Effected Consciousness when and if deemed necessary.

Four-dimensional interview framework

(Remember to encourage: 'That's interesting' / 'You are helping me to understand' / 'Thank you for sharing that/explaining that so well for me').

Dimension 1. A circular approach to *Journalistic Becoming* conditions

Common follow-up probes and prompts:

Can you say more about why you joined the course?

What do you think makes a good journalist? Has your view changed since leaving BU?

How do you view yourself as a journalist?

Do you consider yourself a journalist now?

When did you consider yourself a journalist? Did you consider yourself a journalist at that point?

Why did you feel like a journalist then?

Do you think you are a good journalist? Please explain.

Where do you want your journalistic journey to take you?

Do you perceive that there's a journalistic part to yourself? If so, how significant or insignificant is that part of you?

Has becoming a journalist changed your perception of yourself or not? What makes up the journalist in you? Has it changed your life or not? How?

What do your family/friends think/perceive about journalism/journalists/your career?

Is that how you feel too? How important are their views? Why?

Dimension 2. Establishment of significant experiences in relation to *Journalistic Becoming*

Common follow-up probes and prompts:

Was this experience journalistically significant/important to you? How/why?

Can you tell me what, if anything, this experience gave you/what you learnt about yourself?

What was it about the experience that gave you this [participant-raised benefit, discrepancy, feeling etc]?

Can you say more about that experience?

What do you mean by 'good', 'bad' etc?

Can you explain what you mean?

Can you describe what you did?

Tell me what happened...

Can you think a little more about [an experience]? Can you give more information/detail?
Can you reflect on how you tackled this experience? What memories have you? What did you think when...?
What did you do/what happened next? Did it help you in the future?
Can you give me an example/a story to illustrate what you have just said? Do you have any more examples of this?

Dimension 3. Going deeper. Encouraging expression of feelings concerning experiences in relation to *Journalistic Becoming*

Common follow-up probes and prompts:

How did the experience make you feel/react at the time?
How do you reflect back upon that experience today?
Have any of these particular moments or experiences from your course been drawn upon in your job? Why do you think this example/story comes to mind?
What effect did it have on you?
Did you find it easy/challenging? Why/how?
Were you happy with your performance?
When did you realise...?
Can you tell me what you are thinking?

Dimension 4. Summary approach to further deepen understanding. Confirming and clarifying, inviting elaboration and re-examination of key views/feelings/messages

Common follow-up probes and prompts:

Are you able to tell me the differences between experience A and B? Do you see any connections between X and Y?
Are you able to classify them in order of personal significance to your journalistic development?
Is it fair to say that experience A gave you this and that experience B gave you that?
Do you mean...? Are you saying...?
Did you prefer/benefit from A rather than B? Why?
You seem to be saying....
Correct me if I'm wrong but am I right to say...
Have I understood you correctly?
What was the relative value of the course in relation to you becoming a journalist?
What was its role?
Can you clarify? Did you feel like a journalist on the course? To what extent is the course authentic?
What experiences stand out as particularly important/formative? Why?
What is the value of the theoretical components of the course?
Is there a course element that did not feel particularly important at the time but does now?
To what extent did the course develop your journalistic voice?
Could BU improve the course or not? Explain please.
What are the most important journalistic skills, qualities and dispositions in your view? Can they be taught? Do you possess them?
Finally, are there any other points you would like to make about your experience of becoming a journalist?

Appendix D. The movements of the Reflective Hermeneutic Model in action (Movements 1-3)

This Appendix aims to give an illustrative snapshot of how the individual participant analyses proceeded in practice by using my approach to the data of Simon Baxter as an example. While his full data set amounts to 61,000 words, the excerpts that follow hope to offer insight into the cumulative phases of the Reflective Hermeneutic Model's first three thought movements as applied to each individual participant; they represent the ways in which my thoughts were 'moved' and focused in order to successively deepen them. They can be summarised thus:

Movement 1	Movement 2	Movement 3
Thinking about what the participant said: the 'three listenings' and the composition of a 'summarised debriefing reflection' to take into next thought movement. Projections of fused understanding commence.	Thinking about the relationship between the interview text's parts and its wholes while remaining alert to prejudicial provocations. Enhanced projections emanate from circle expansion and becoming conditions are loosely identified.	Thinking about the relationship between myself and the text via three mini-movements that direct thought to: (a) condition selection (b) writing a personal reflection (c) writing a 'fused interpretation' of a participant's <i>Journalistic Becoming</i> horizon.

Movement 1. The listening to the voice of others (Three listenings and transcription)

The thoughts I directed towards the conversation and listening concluded with compilation of a written 'summarised de-briefing reflection'. It was a 'one take' outpouring of my stirred thoughts provoked during the 'three listenings': the face-to-face conversation, hearing the recording for the first time and, finally, re-hearing the recording during my transcribing. The de-briefing offered more than a provisional

sifting of material; it commenced formal expression of my exploratory voyage into my *Journalistically Effected Consciousness*. The following de-briefing extract is included to show how one preunderstanding was initially provoked at this early stage in the analysis and, in so doing, a potential condition of Simon's *Journalistic Becoming* identified for future deliberation.

Simon offered a story of becoming that was achieved at university thanks to considerable investment in extra-curricular experiences and opportunities. These experiences began as a teenager when he blogged and became a comment writer for a community magazine – his “earliest journalism”. His extra-curricular quest continued at Bournemouth (...) Why am I so impressed by this – and so profoundly surprised? I am allowing myself to see a different world, an alien, extra-curricular one I never inhabited. I never committed to journalism in this way; I just stumbled in. Amid my indifference, I had not considered prior investment to be a contributor to anyone's sensed becoming. I felt almost guilty as Simon relayed all this. He helped me see it was these extra-curricular activities that ensured his becoming. The benefits he derived from them were conditions of his journalistic self-interpretation – if not mine. Without these experiences he would not have thought of himself as a journalist at Bournemouth (...) As he pointed out, while the course taught him *how* to be a journalist, it was the extra-curricular activities that enabled him to become one by *doing* journalism.

Movement 2. The transcribed interview

In a bid to build upon the initial Movement 1 exploration of *Journalistic Becoming* conditions, my attention now focused upon the transcribed interview. This movement reflected a particular emphasis in thought: it was a thought movement primarily concerned with isolating the relationship between textual parts and wholes. Yet, as with the interview, I remained steadfastly open to being questioned by language and invited the subject matter to question me further in the directions it indicated (Linge 1976). Indeed, I wanted to close in on the motivating meaning of the questions that arose within me, even if full illumination would prove impossible (Gadamer 1981). I had to become aware of my own bias, so that the text could “present itself in all its otherness” and “assert its own truth” against my fore-meanings (Gadamer 2004, p.

271). The task, essentially, was to broaden further my own present horizon beyond “the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point” (Gadamer 2004, p. 301).

Below is an edited extract of Simon’s Movement 2 ‘grid’ which was used. It contains contemporaneous ‘rough workings’ accompanying the chronological insertion of a text sample alongside. Here, the importance of one’s journalistic role (news gathering and writing in this case) emerges as a potential part condition of the whole conditional influence shaping Simon’s self-interpretation. Also, Movement 1’s preliminary deliberation upon extra-curricular becoming and investment acquires solidification through reflection upon evidencing quotes. These new, shared understandings led to fresh projections of the conditions underlying Simon’s *Journalistic Becoming* horizon.

<p><u>THE TEXT</u> The whole text and its parts.</p>	<p><u>MY REFLECTIONS</u> Emergence of participant’s <i>Journalistic Becoming</i> conditional parts.</p>
<p>L. 35: “<i>And what we sort of do is take a look at the stories that are in there, decide which ones will be of interest to the nationals, kinda based on how strange they are, how unusual they are...</i>”</p>	<p>Abidance to and execution of news values as a potential condition part of his <i>Journalistic Becoming</i>; the pursuit of strangeness and the unusual thus appear to form part of Simon’s horizon. A socialised, traditional becoming? Indeed, his comments reminded me of my news values when I was a News Editor; Simon united us in tradition.</p>
<p>L. 41: “<i>So it tends to be the first two or three hours of the day are our busiest because we are writing up the locals and then, [in the] afternoons, we spend a lot of that time hunting for stories and putting stuff together that way.</i>”</p>	<p>... and hunting ... the news hound analogy. The journalist as hunter gatherer. Further socialisation? Tradition as a part of his becoming whole? Again, a strong personal resonance.</p>

<p>L. 46: <i>“So quite often what we’ll do is look at a local story, say they’ve interviewed someone whose done something unusual, what we’ll do is we’ll go ‘well the national newspaper will want this detail, this detail and this detail’. So then it’s a case of going back to that person, trying to get contact details for them either from the local paper or from other sources, following up with them, getting the information we need to make the story more suitable for the nationals.”</i></p>	<p>The pursuit of the unusual again ... and conforming to newspaper demands/norms and a community of practice: “what we’ll do” and “what we need”. A sense of belonging, being part of the pack, the hunter-gatherer pack. Part of <i>my</i> pack.</p>
<p>L. 62 onwards: <i>“Ok, so I guess I always knew I wanted to write from pretty early on so going through school I always enjoyed writing. I took every opportunity I could to write. It wasn’t until later when I started picking GCSE’s, A-Levels etc that that kinda crystallised into journalism as a whole and reporting rather than any other type of writing. And then it was a case of deciding what the best route to that was. So that was when I decided to ... I took the necessary A-Levels, sort of English-based, writing-based, and then started seeking out university courses. And it was then that I sort of realised quite early on that the NCTJ qualifications were a huge part of it and that was what I was going to have to do. So that kinda narrowed my university courses down to the ones that incorporated that. So I was looking at places like [three universities named] and that was when I decided that Bournemouth with its triple accreditation would be the best course to go for. Pretty early on in the university selection process, I decided it was pretty much Bournemouth or bust. And</i></p>	<p>Journalistic desires/wishes ... A desire to write. How important is the writing part to his whole sense of being a journalist? A task/role dimension to one’s whole self-interpretation?</p> <p>The seeking of journalistic opportunities, the searching for a journalistic self-interpretation.</p> <p>More evidence of a commitment and desire to become.</p> <p>A ‘crystallisation’ – he hints at self-interpretive formation, one entailing direction and orientation.</p> <p>Establishing journalistic direction ... The ‘necessary A-Levels’ ... a planned becoming. His becoming is shaped by intent and drive.</p> <p>And NCTJ passport would be needed ... ‘what I was going to have to do’ ... which narrowed choices down ... Certainly a becoming strategy is unfolding ... a planned, directional becoming is again depicted ... ‘Bournemouth or bust’ ...</p> <p>Again, he conveys a traditional becoming ... NCTJ importance and journalistic status tied to accredited Bournemouth ... I note how I feel: I am seductively drawn to his</p>

<p><i>so I was working constantly towards that course whilst also trying ... I was blogging in my own time. Whilst applying for work experience at school, I got in touch with a local magazine that predominantly dealt in advertising and that was distributed around [home city]. But they also wanted to incorporate columns so I started writing a column for them in 2009 and I'm still doing it every two months now. So I've been doing that for seven, nearly eight years now...I would have been 14 I think I was when I started writing it. Yes, I'm still doing that to this day. So that was kinda the first actual sort of writing, reporting, journalism thing I did. And that was just a silly kind of 'day in the life' column really. I think the brief of it was essentially to provide the young person's experience, and as that's gone on and I've become an adult, it's transitioned into whatever I find interesting really ... So that was my earliest journalism really, I guess."</i></p>	<p>support for old values ... the values that shaped my journalistic conception of being a journalist. His comments are comforting; he is helpfully exposing my journalistic prejudices.</p> <p>How did these extra-curricular activities shape his self-interpretation? What part did derived benefits play in his whole becoming?</p> <p>Simon was blogging, involved in the local community magazine, aged 14. He was "working constantly towards" the course ... I am becoming increasingly aware of the importance of investment as a potential condition, an awareness prompted by hermeneutically-afforded strangeness. His words are alien. I did not invest. This deeper journalistic calling was lacking. Simon's calling threw into sharp relief my relationship with tradition; I felt more distanced and peripheral. We had different vantage points from which we viewed our respective journalistic self-interpretations.</p> <p>'Transitional journalism' is interesting; is it created by a transitional, becoming journalist?</p> <p>This entire passage evidences a strong journalistic commitment/investment steered by a premeditated, directional desire to become.</p>
<p>L. 84: <i>"From there I moved on to Bournemouth. And then I think when you start at university ... the thing that I was always keen on was making sure that I was doing as much as I could that was sort of ... as much as I could generally really...so as well as what was being taught on the course, whatever opportunity there was to write. I was still blogging, by that time I was running my film blog, [name], which again is something I'm still doing today ... so that's reviewing films, where possible getting interviews with people within the film industry..."</i></p>	<p>Further evidence of Simon's commitment to becoming a journalist at Bournemouth ... his strong investment in extra- curricular activities ... taking every opportunity to journalistically become.</p> <p>He so far depicts a sense of journalistic being conditioned by a commitment to journalism and investment in it. His self-interpretive bid appears premeditated, directional and opportunistic in character and one necessitating engendering extra-curricular experiences. All this is thrown into relief by the strangeness these utterances provoke within me.</p>


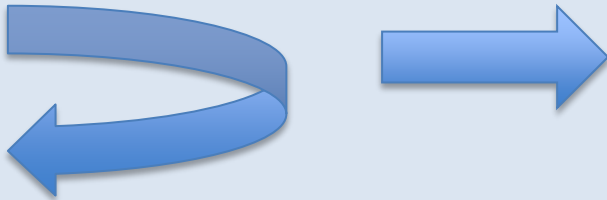

Movement 3. A return to the text and fusion

Simon's transcribed text was now approached again with a view to interpretively 'capture' and record his *Journalistic Becoming* horizon. In this movement, my thinking transferred to the relationship between my 'whole' biography and my encounter with him – the part. The aim was to give the text a final concentrated opportunity to provoke and deepen my prejudices. This was done by building upon Movements 1 and 2 and concretising Simon's conditions of *Journalistic Becoming* which had so far been only tentatively identified.

Extracts from the Movement 3 grid table used for Simon follow on pages 356-60. The reader is reminded of the three 'mini-movements' of thought that collectively comprised Movement 3: they are shown as (a), (b) and (c) respectively in the grid table headings. The first mini-movement (a) concerned the process of condition selection and quote evidencing in the first column which provided a further focused opportunity for self-questioning and immersion in the unfamiliar; a sample is included in this column. Upon completion of these evidenced condition extractions, a second mini-movement followed with the writing of a summarising 'personal reflection' in the second column (b); this collated the awakened thoughts upon my preunderstandings that had surfaced so far. This reflective 'confessional' was compiled straight after the first mini-movement (a) in the hope that the most vivid impressions would instinctively pour forth. My present horizon (my prejudiced and conditional journalistic self-interpretation) was thus revealed; it was thrown into relief by the deepening hermeneutic attunement and openness that accessed and utilised my *Journalistically Effected Consciousness*. After composing this account, I then felt equipped, indeed compelled, to immediately harness this generated reflective power and record my latest projection of shared meaning attained. This third mini-movement

of thought resulted in a spontaneous outpouring which I call a ‘fused interpretation’; it is shown in the final column (c). This projected fused horizon, emergent from the awakened *Journalistically Effected Consciousness* that made it possible, was written in ‘one take’ straight after the personal reflection in order to fully exploit the advanced hermeneutic maturation and extended hermeneutic circle attained by that stage. This was my final projection of Simon’s *Journalistic Becoming* horizon – one revealing the conditions underlying and shaping his journalistic self-interpretation – before I withdrew from the circle. Like those before it, this horizon had been created by both of us. As can be seen in the ‘fused interpretation’ segment included in the third column, “determined journalistic investment” – first identified in thought Movement 1 – now “assumes conditional primacy” following the historic mediation that proceeded this projection.

Note: Please see pages 126-189 for a summarised personal reflection (mini-movement b) and resulting ‘fused interpretation’ (mini-movement c) compiled for each of the ten participants during Movement 3.

Simon Baxter: the three ‘mini’ thought movements of Movement 3		
<p>(a) Selection of condition parts shaping Simon’s <i>Journalistic Becoming</i> horizon</p>  <p>(The ‘part: Simon’s text)</p>	<p>(b) Personal reflection upon my current <i>Journalistic Becoming</i> horizon</p>  <p>(The ‘whole’: my ongoing biography/prejudices)</p>	<p>(c) Fused interpretation:</p> <p><u>The final projection of Simon’s <i>Journalistic Becoming</i> horizon</u></p> 
<p><u>Journalistic investment</u> L. 96: “And whilst at Bournemouth, I immediately noticed all of these extra opportunities that were involved. So the Rock had started by then, there was obviously Nerve Media (...) [and] soon after we started, the university started gearing up for the 2012 American elections (...) So immediately when I got to Bournemouth, I was seeking out these extra opportunities to get involved in stuff.” L. 123: “By the time I was in my second year, I was also seeking out opportunities. So I was writing for various websites online (...) I was writing for Bleacher Report which is a</p>	<p>I met Simon, who I had taught on the second year News and Online unit, at a Southampton coffee bar; he was cheerful, friendly and relaxed throughout our meeting. I felt a palpable sense of ease between us. The projection of Simon’s <i>Journalistic Becoming</i> horizon involved confrontation with several personal preunderstandings; resolution consequently resulted in interpretative refractions to achieve fusion. One major preunderstanding lulled me into a false sense of security – one that made the interview and interpretation that followed particularly challenging. I assumed that Simon was a</p>	<p>Simon’s journalistic self-interpretation resulted from execution of a strategic plan. Indeed, he had chosen the Bournemouth University course due to its triple accreditation; it was, he says, “pretty much Bournemouth or bust” (L. 71). While Simon became a journalist “almost immediately” upon starting the BAMMJ course, it also paved the way for a formal, traditional and well-trod path leading to the NCTJ Diploma which he obtained. Yet his becoming strategy had begun long before with determined journalistic investment which assumes conditional primacy in his <i>Journalistic</i></p>

sports-based site – I was writing about wrestling for them predominantly – [and] WhatCulture which is a sort of culture, media-type site.” (Plus evidence from L. 62 onwards; see above in Movement 2 table)

Journalistic desire and dreams

L. 393: “I know that my ultimate goal is to be in film journalism in some way and so from my point of view, in order to get that, I have to be writing about films.”

L. 93: onwards, his dream of being a film journalist: “Yes, I was at university. I was doing a little of it [his film blog] before that on a different site but it wasn’t as serious and that kind of faded away. But my main site started in November of 2012 so it was just after I started at Bournemouth. So that’s always been kinda bubbling underneath what I have been doing.”

L. 199: “It was a reasonable job [his first job, working on a local newspaper]. I enjoyed doing it to a degree. I’ve always been aware that kind of reporting, specifically local news reporting, is not really what I want to do and is why the film stuff has always bubbled underneath. And I’ve always kept the film blog going even underneath the full time employment I’m doing.”

L. 155: “So obviously as someone who has been into films the whole time I have been writing, [and as a] subscriber to Empire

‘newspaper man’ like myself. Indeed, I had spent many long hours working with him on the *Rock* newspaper where his news capabilities were apparent. Simon was Editor-in-Chief and I enjoyed working with him on deadline; he was a good ‘operator’ with well-tuned news sense. Simon had since worked at a local newspaper too and was now employed by a news agency run by two journalists in my professional circle. Personal familiarity thus blended with professional commonality when Simon sketched his career during the opening interview exchanges; he appeared to be a modern-day version of myself, continuing the tradition of my world. Indeed, he said many of the ‘right’ things – he looked for the “strange” and “unusual”, he “hunted” for stories. He transported me back to the newsroom in a haze of nostalgia. He was one of ‘us’.

However, it soon transpired Simon’s story was very different to mine and I was aware of an abrupt cognitive shuffle in order to hermeneutically ‘see’ what he was telling me. The appeal of the cosy and familiar was again in danger of masking the troubling and unfamiliar, of reducing nuance to cliché. The more he spoke, it became clear it wasn’t just time and space between us; it was our respective journalistic mindsets.

It was his strong directional and premeditated approach to becoming a journalist that first proved disharmonious. I was

Becoming. Indeed, Simon’s decision to ‘become’ a journalist was made at school at the age of 14 when he voiced his youthful opinions through a community magazine; it was his “earliest journalism” (L. 80), “sort of experimental and ‘this is what I can do’” (L. 278). He also wrote blogs. Simon has been a committed investor and dividend beneficiary ever since.

Bournemouth University became key to expanding his investment portfolio. Indeed, the university provided the becoming support and encouragement to experimentally explore and invest in both the BU and external extra-curricular opportunities that form the experiential backdrop of his becoming. In turn, the university thus enabled investment derivatives to continue shaping Simon’s self-interpretation; indeed, investment offered name building, platform showcasing, freedom to discover and express voice and the acquisition of potential passport stamps to future becoming possibilities. So while the NCTJ Diploma investment offered a “string to my bow” (L. 361), personal investments like his (*name*) film blog were made in “the absence of any sort of platform for me to do that” (L. 395). He also contributed to the *Bleacher Report* and earned freelance money from *WhatCulture* during the course; indeed, Simon was “writing for a variety of different

magazine, that [Empire placement] was a huge opportunity for me and it gave me a real insight into kinda the way that kind of reporting works and how it differs to news reporting which was interesting. And I still put that down as one of the most rewarding things I've done as a journalist."

L. 1093: "... when I got that [Empire placement] I was bouncing off walls for about two weeks!"

L. 367: "... I began consuming a lot of film, going to the cinema a lot and watching a lot of films at home. And I thought 'well I like writing, I like films, I'll write about films'." [Discussing contributing to a community magazine].

L. 604: "I think that was one of the first times that I've ever applied for something and really, really, really [words emphasised] wanted it. And so when I got the call to say, you know, 'this is what you are doing', it felt like a huge vote of confidence in me." [Discussing Empire placement].

L. 715: "I think my day job, as much as I enjoy what I'm currently doing [working for an agency], I think my drive is always to be that film journalist at the end of it."

Name building

L. 139: "So my second year was incredibly busy! [laughs] (...) but I was glad to be doing it. And I think the experiences I was doing were

hermeneutically tasked to question why I felt so unsettled. Unlike me, he always knew he wanted to write. Unlike me, he had a passion to be a journalist. Unlike me, he had invested in this dream from a very young age. It was all in contrast to my casual, unfocused drift into journalism following a long period of unemployment. He was painting a picture of a planned, strategic becoming, one that started with writing a column in a community magazine from the age of 14.

His early journalistic forays were astonishing. I had never heard of a 15 or 16 year-old reporting hard news before. Yet that's what he did. Simon casually recounted how he conducted community magazine interviews for a story about the controversial HPV cervical cancer vaccine. From there, the steps to becoming a journalist were identified and negotiated. The necessary A-Levels were taken, the triple accredited BAMMJ course chosen, extra- curricular activities seized and a showcase platform built from where he could announce his work and himself. Indeed, he emphasised the building and projection of the journalistic self as a strong feature of today's journalism; the humble byline – the vanity prize of my era – has become supplemented by social media profile building and getting your name 'out there'. There was a lot for the interpreter to accommodate here. Not least, Simon revealed the relative shallowness of my own investment

audiences and getting my name out there as much as possible" (L. 141). Simon's investment has also entailed journalistic consumption. Simon "consumes" journalism (L. 294) while journalism has seemingly consumed him; indeed, "even the stuff I do for fun is journalism" (L. 708) and "journalism is me as a whole" (L. 706). His proud parents fed his literary desires; they fuelled his consumption through support and book investments.

Simon's commitment to journalism and his journalistic self remains active and dynamic. Indeed, he currently undertakes two jobs. The first is his current employment at a news agency he joined in August 2016 following "a very standard local newspaper job" (L. 199). This is his "day job" (L. 736) that enables Simon and his partner to live. However, his (*name*) film blog continues to make him "attractive" to the film journalism world; in fact, it's "not hugely important to me whether anyone reads it" (L. 396). His "shop window" must therefore continue to be adorned despite the long hours this entails (L. 403). His dream becoming as a film journalist remains very much alive, if unfulfilled and latent. In short, though extra-curricular experiences have facilitated a 'journalistic becoming', he believes a multitude of different journalistic becomings remain possible; his future film journalism

absolutely invaluable. It was writing for a variety of different audiences and getting my name out there as much as possible really – that was what it was about.”

L. 161: *“Obviously that [his Empire placement] required the [BAMMJ] course to be kind of accommodating because I was essentially AWOL for two weeks. And thankfully they were. That’s something that I always enjoyed about Bournemouth ... was that if you had an opportunity they were very accommodating of it, which I think is important because everyone on that course is pursuing other things and trying to get their name out there as much as possible. So I think it’s really important that anyone who is doing education in that sort of field allow people to explore their own opportunities as much as is possible.”*

L. 393: *“I know that my ultimate goal is to be in film journalism in some way and so from my point of view, in order to get that, I have to be writing about films. And so in the absence of any sort of platform for me to do that, I created my own platform. So it’s not hugely [emphasises word] important to me whether anyone reads it I guess, it’s just so that I can point to that as ‘look at this base [emphasises word] of four years now of writing about film I’ve got’. I’ve reviewed almost every major release film in the UK for the last four years (...) it’s almost like a shop window.”*

and commitment to becoming a journalist. Mine had not been driven by longer-term investments, by prior commitment or a plan. Importantly, he also reminded me that I had once believed that investment in the NCTJ examination (now Diploma) would herald my becoming ‘arrival’; I soon realised there was much more to one’s becoming than that.

I felt moved when Simon detailed his second year university investment; the sheer volume was enormous. Then he surprised me further by announcing he is still developing the film blog he commenced in 2012 at university. Indeed, the ‘news journalist becoming’ he says he achieved at Bournemouth is not enough. Simon wants to construct another journalistic self-interpretation. Indeed, Simon believes he can become many types of journalist. Thus he is presently holding down two journalism jobs – full-time agency work and the blog – in order to pursue his dream becoming: a processual metamorphosis into a film journalist. In so doing, Simon appears immersed in journalism, perhaps even consumed by journalism; he says fun has become his work, his work has become his fun. He says he cannot be separated from his work. Again I found this difficult to comprehend. I was journalistically immersed during office hours but my head broke free of the surface at other times. In short, hermeneutic reflection enabled me to further contemplate the self-interpretive rewards derived from journalistic

becoming is thus “bubbling underneath” (L. 95) his present news journalism becoming. Another becoming is conveyed as silently and restlessly churning deep within him, awaiting self-interpretive fulfilment. A dream is shaping him.

Writing, meanwhile, is also a crucial condition of his *Journalistic Becoming*. A “base of writing” was required and, in his BU second year, Simon was “writing almost 100% of the time” (L. 429). While he perceived becoming a journalist also entailed being “driven” to ask questions (L. 434), Simon’s newshound evolution additionally required the hunting and gathering of the “strange” and “unusual” (L. 36-7). Simon is a ‘hunter gatherer’ of news and one capable of disseminating it due to a rooted, base knowledge that includes the ‘inverted pyramid’ style of journalistic presentation. His self-interpretation appears forged in journalism’s primal ancestry.

He has also discovered a journalist does not have to be “a jack of all trades” (L. 458). Specialist becomings are possible; some may have been realised but others await – like his film journalism dream becoming. He notes: “I think there are lots of different kinds of journalist I can be. I mean I’m a news reporter at the moment. I want to be a film journalist, film critic, whatever. I don’t think I’ll ever not be a journalist” (L. 854).

Journalistic skills and dispositions

L. 423: “What did you imagine were the qualities, attributes or attitudes or behaviours that were required to be a good journalist?”

“Yes, I think I was acutely aware that the predominant thing that people would be looking for from a journalist is that they had a base of writing, so that they were able to write, they had a base of writing. There was always ... I think it was important that you had to be doing things accurately, I guess was a main thing for me ... but the predominant thing when I arrived at university that I was aware of in order to become a journalist was you need to be writing all [emphasises word] the time. So that’s why, especially in my second year – we discussed it – how busy I was. I was writing almost 100% of the time.”

And what personal qualities were required?

“Yeah, so being able to meet deadlines, being able to get stuff out of people, being driven enough to keep asking the questions, being driven enough to keep doing stuff.

Commitment, predominantly, I think is the main sort of quality I thought.”

L. 457: “I think I thought at the time you had to be more of a jack of all trades, able to do everything whereas, I mean, you can be a top news reporter by just being really, really good at reporting.”

Continues ...

investment, the ongoing becoming process and depictions of one’s journalistic self within one’s whole self-interpretation.

Further prejudicial provocation occurred when Simon maintained journalists can be office-bound as well as field-bound; being out and about occurred “once upon a time” when it was “the be all and end all of journalism”. My intuitive recoil betrayed the earlier, deep-rooted preunderstanding that had been teased to the cognitive surface by Simon’s fellow participants. I was now tasked with hermeneutically unpacking a view that was anathema to me: one could become a journalist at a desk.

Other comments chimed comfortably. I privately endorsed his advocacy of embracing extra-curricular activities at university. I also agreed that journalistic ability is not necessarily related to the status some might hierarchically afford to places of work; I have always felt, like Simon, that there are simply good and bad journalists. I also shared the anguish he conveyed upon receiving a complaint and while undertaking ‘death knocks’. The personal conflict he described, once filtered through my own experiences of similar situations, helped me hermeneutically comprehend how the heady becoming mix of self-exposure, power exertion and responsibility can provoke moments of considerable tension within one’s framework.

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An awareness of personal exposure, of responsibility, of power and journalistic influence has also shaped his journalistic self-interpretation, leading to a challenged personal framework in the face of journalistic socialisation. He gives an example of ‘door knocking’ following the death of a child, a required task that left him “quite conflicted” (L. 1146). Yet socialisation appeared to speak when he insisted journalists should be granted the ability to publish material that might be challenged.

Meanwhile, becoming is equated with competence rather than place of work; there are just “different corners of journalism” (L. 989) containing good and bad journalists. Journalists can also be desk bound rather than field bound as they were “once upon a time” (L. 820). Becoming a journalist, he suggests, may proceed with self-interpretive deliberations and resolutions less shaped by geography and status.

The conditional importance of a sensed authenticity to his journalistic shaping is also evident, not least when he conducted film festival interviews for *Empire* magazine while on independently-arranged work experience during university. He was sending Film Festival red carpet interviews “not to a lecturer, not to an inbetween person – but to *Empire* magazine” (L. 633).

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