

Why do I dance?....Why do I breathe?: Life histories of advertising creatives

Charlotte Gilmore

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Declaration

This declaration is to confirm that this thesis has been composed by the Charlotte Louise Gilmore, and is her own work.

Further, this thesis has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification, except as specified.

Signed**Date** 23/01/07.

Abstract

The study identifies two gaps in related fields of literature: in the creativity literature, the lived experiences of advertising creatives, their field and culture have been unexplored, and in the advertising literature, the relationship between the creatives' life histories and their creativity has not been explored. Therefore this study has explored the life histories of advertising creatives and the nature of advertising creativity. Life history interviews were conducted with thirty four advertising creatives, including art directors, copywriters, creative directors and creative chairmen in London, Edinburgh and Glasgow agencies. This study provides a better understanding of advertising creatives, their creativity and their experiences of their organisational culture and context than currently exists.

"How can we know the dancer from the dance?" These lines from Yeats illuminate the central relationship found in this study: that between advertising creatives and their creativity. Just as Yeats recognised that it is impossible to separate the dancer from the dance, this study concludes that creativity is the central source of meaning *throughout* the creatives' lives. The creatives experience *"flow"* as an intrinsic part of their *"dance"* (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996).

Central to their creative success in advertising is their *pas de deux*: the *"dance"* for two. Dancers, like spouses in good marriages, grow together, complement and support one another. Sometimes like 'Rudi and Margot', the chemistry and diversity between the partners creates something unique. The creative director is also important to the choreography of their work; thus creatives strategically create their careers. To the creatives the most important members of their audience are their peers. Critical creative success influences their professional identities, career trajectories and life course. A 'contemporary' hotshop or a 'classical' service company determines the type of culture and structure the creatives 'live' within and the dance they perform. Just as contemporary companies lead the development of new ways of dancing, creative hotshops in advertising are redefining how marketing communications is practiced, particularly in terms of how creatives relate to clients and expanding media options.

Acknowledgements

“...Thus words being symbols of ideas, we collect ideas by collecting words. The fellow who said he tried reading the dictionary but couldn’t get the hang of the story simply missed the point: namely, that it is a collection of short stories.” (Webb Young, 1965/2003:47)

This study has been developed through many words being written, read and spoken.

I am particularly grateful to my superb supervisor, Dr Stephanie O’Donohoe, for her words, both spoken and written. I know that my study and I would not have made it to this point had it not been for her guidance, patience and kindness. I am also very grateful to my second supervisor, Dr Inger Seiferheld, for her words of encouragement.

I would like to thank all the creatives for giving me their time – and the words to create this study. I was lucky enough to meet some legendary creatives, others not (yet) so legendary, and a few who thought they were legendary.

Finally, I am thankful to those whose words have helped keep me sane. I particularly appreciate those of my mum, dad and Rory (who, in the final weeks, became adept at the art of the unspoken word).

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"Understand that passion is the starting point of all great creative ideas. If you are looking to make your mark by creating something new, make sure that you are in a field that totally fascinates and captivates you"

(Schmetterer, 2003: 4)



(Benady, 2004: 23)

The Creatives: Vaz and Baz (not included in the sample)

Chapter One: Introduction

In keeping with the nature of this study I will give a very brief life history to explain its origins.

I love advertising. I love the creativity in advertising. These factors combined formed the initial impetus for this study. Apart from the Smash Martians and "*a finger of fudge...is just enough to give your kids a treat*", I wasn't really interested in advertising when I was younger. I wasn't really a creative child either, although, my mum has always told me that I was "*different*". I don't really know what this means, and perhaps that is for the best.

At school I enjoyed English because I always had interesting teachers and I liked reading books. I also loved History, weirdly enough because it gave me the opportunity to study people's lives. For my Sixth Year Studies dissertation I psychoanalysed Hitler (my dark phase). Given this and my rather odd taste in music and clothes (leg warmers never did anyone any favours) perhaps I could have been a copywriter. Instead, I continued with history at university. I would have studied history to honours but my Dad told me the only job I would get was as a teacher. So I have a degree in economics.

After I finished university I split my time between cleaning offices and shelf stacking in supermarkets. However my brother was having a rather good time working in marketing. He recommended marketing to me as a 'proper' job on the basis that there were lots of freebies/jollies. I promptly sent my CV off to all the companies in the Yellow Pages under Marketing and Advertising. I had quite a bit of interest from direct marketing agencies and one response from an advertising agency. I opted for the latter, I don't know why but in retrospect I feel that I chose wisely. I was hired at my interview as a 'trainee' Account Executive (dog's body). I got this job because I came cheap. I knew nothing about advertising. On my first day I thought the creative director was the handy man. He had holes in his jumper, crazy hair and spoke with a Yorkshire accent (this was Edinburgh).

I was a 'suit' for nearly four years. I would have loved to have been a creative. They had a creative life: they wore what they wanted, nobody minded if they were late to work, they had *very* long 'lunches' and they had the interesting job. I therefore decided to leave my job. I went to Strathclyde University to do a Msc. in Marketing, with the idea of becoming a planner. In my

experience, this was one step closer to the creative department and many steps away from daily contact with clients.

Evidently, I continued being a student. In the end I decided that for me, being a student was a little like living a creative life: I could wear what I wanted, I could have crazy hair, 'lunch' could last until 9pm (on a good day) and I could study something I loved. This is something I have found to be a pre requisite to surviving a PhD.

This study was originally going to build on my Msc Dissertation and explore the planner/creative relationship. However early on in my PhD reading I discovered the brilliant work of Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. His study of creatives' life histories has helped to shape this study.

The distinguishing characteristic of Csikszentmihalyi's (1996) approach is his focus on context which goes beyond a simple focus on creative thinking in individuals. Csikszentmihalyi describes creative thinking in its social, cultural or evolutionary context. Csikszentmihalyi (1999: 314-315) argues for a systems model of creativity that includes a culture (or domain), society (field) and the individual. Based on my experience and knowledge of the advertising industry, I felt that this model could be applied to the study of advertising creatives and the creative process:

"...for creativity to occur, a set of rules must be transmitted from the domain to the individual, the individual must then produce a novel variation in the context of the domain" and "the variation then must be selected by the field for inclusion in the domain."

In a similar vein, the work of John-Steiner (1987, 2000) has also been influential to my thinking. John-Steiner is influenced by the work of Vygotsky (for example, 1931) who believed that thought develops first through interdependence with others and is later internalised. John-Steiner considers that the beginnings of creative endeavours are linked to "*languages of thought*", for example artists are *primarily* visual thinkers and writers are *primarily* verbal thinkers. These begin with the young creative's first efforts at reflection that develop during childhood (John-Steiner, 1987: xi). She believes that the choice of such a language or inner symbol system is not always a conscious one; it is embodied in the *history* of the individual.

Vygotsky's cultural-historical ideas share some important features with Csikszentmihalyi's (1988b) systems model. They both recognise the critical role of social processes in creativity, that thinking is not confined to the individual mind, and that construction of knowledge is embedded in the cultural and social milieu in which it arises. Vygotsky's ideas also resemble those of Mead (1934). John-Steiner (2000: 3) believes that the relevance of these scholars has grown because modern practice in work settings and creative contexts supports their emphasis on the social sources of development:

"We have come to a new understanding of the mind. Generative ideas emerge from joint thinking, from significant conversations, and from sustained, shared struggles to achieve new insights by partners in thought."

However creative collaboration and advertising remain neglected areas of research within the creative research literature.

When I reflected on the contextual creativity literature and then explored the advertising research literature, the understanding of creatives and their creativity seemed to be limited. The literature widely acknowledges the importance of the creative as being central to the agency product (for example Reid, King & DeLorme, 1998; Zinkhan, 1993). However, with a few notable exceptions (in particular Kover 1995), the explanation of creativity is mainly trait-based. This explanation of creativity contributes to defining the personality and identifying 'who has creativity' it does not answer questions about the nature of their creative thinking and how it develops. In this manner, creativity research such as that conducted by Csikszentmihalyi and John-Steiner could enhance our understanding of advertising creatives in their particular social and cultural context.

In this sense, studies of the social processes of creativity (for example Hirschman, 1989; Kover et al., 1995; Hackley, 2003c) are valuable because they illuminate advertising culture: the relationships, the stereotypes, the 'tensions', the work processes. However, what is often implicit or even explicit is the 'separate' creative culture "*nested inside*" the larger advertising culture, with its values, peers, norms and so forth (Csikszentmihalyi, 1994: 156). Thus it is argued here

that the literature would benefit from a deeper ‘cultural-historical’ understanding of creatives’, their creativity and culture.

Thus this study aims to explore the life histories of advertising creatives and the nature of advertising creativity. The objectives are to explore creatives’ personal life histories, professional trajectories, working practices, interactions and their perceptions of creativity.

The literature review explores these knowledge gaps in more detail. Chapter Two, *Understanding Creativity*, provides a generic understanding of creative people. Initially the chapter defines creativity and provides an understanding of creativity and creative people. The review also discusses the influences on a creative life which has been found to contribute to their creativity.

The second chapter of the literature review, *Understanding the Advertising Creative*, begins by exploring the nature of the advertising creative process, in particular the management of creatives and collaborative creativity. The second section discusses the nature of the advertising industry, and looks in depth at agency culture, creative culture and the new creative challenges.

Chapter 4 provides a rationale for the life history approach and the grounded theory methods employed in this study. Thus this study will be located in an interpretive paradigm. There is also a detailed description and justification of the research sample, recruitment methods employed. The chapter concludes by providing a detailed explanation of the approach taken to the gathering, analysis and interpretation of the data.

The first findings chapter, *“Beginnings of a Creative Life”*, explores the creatives’ family backgrounds, their experiences of education and of ‘starting out’ in advertising. The second findings chapter entitled *“Agency Life,”* discusses the creation of an agency culture and the creative director-creative relationship. This chapter also outlines the evolving nature of the creative process and the current changes within the industry.

The conclusions chapter outlines the key findings which have emerged from this exploratory study and the gaps of academic and practitioner knowledge that they fill. This chapter also

discusses the implications for practice in advertising agencies and amongst client and identifies key areas for further research which build on the findings of this research.

Chapter 2: Understanding Creativity

2.1 Introduction

In order to place this study within the wider context of creativity research this chapter will review studies of creative lives within other creative domains. Specifically this chapter will explore how,

“...creativity is as much a decision about and an attitude to life as it is a matter of ability”
(Sternberg, 2003: 98).

Initially this chapter will define creativity. There will then be a discussion on how creativity has been studied historically with particular reference to the ‘new’ contextual approach to the study of creative lives and the influential work of Csikszentmihalyi and his systems model. In particular, the influences on and motivations of creative individuals during the initial part of their lives will be explored. This chapter will also examine the effect of the social environment on creativity before concluding with a discussion of how creative people *create* their careers.

2.2 A definition of creativity

The relationship between creativity and problem solving is perceived as a close one in the minds of many creativity researchers. Policastro & Gardener (1999: 220) argue that, *“...all creative work might be thought of as some kind of problem solving.”* Similarly, Guilford (1964) has argued that the terms refer to essentially the same phenomenon. Some researchers believe that creativity is a special form of problem solving. For example Newell, Shaw & Simon (1962: 66) describe creative activity as,

“...a special class of problem solving activity characterised by novelty, unconventionality, persistence and difficulty in problem formulation”.

Mumford et al.(1994) also refer to creative thought as a form of problem solving, whereas Feldheusen & Treffinger (1986: 2) combine creativity and problem solving into *“a single complex concept”* arguing that,

“...creative abilities such as fluency, flexibility, and originality...are in reality indispensable components of realistic and complex problem solving behaviour”.

Kay (1994: 117) defines creative thought as:

“...a process whereby the individual finds, defines, or discovers an idea or problem not predetermined by the situation or task”.

Many researchers have emphasised the importance of problem finding and problem definition or formulation, as distinct from problem-solving, as an important aspect of creativity (Campbell, 1960; Csikszentmihayli & Getzels, 1975, 1976; Macworth, 1965; Okuda et al. 1991; Runco, 1994; Runco & Nemiro, 1994; Starko, 1989). For example, there is evidence that the quality of artwork is predictable to an extent from the exploratory behaviour artists engage prior to creating their work (Csikszentmihayli & Getzels, 1970, 1971; Kay, 1991). There is evidence too that students who have been taught to explore different ways to define problems may engage in more creative problem solving over the longer term (Baer, 1988). Depending on how problem solving is defined, if it is recognised as instances which require true original thinking then by definition all problem solving is creative (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996):

“...the creative process starts with a sense that there is a puzzle somewhere or a task to be accomplished...without a stimulus of this sort, the creative process is unlikely to start” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 97).

Here then creativity is considered a product of thinking. Creativity is seen as the ability to generate lots of ideas; new and original creative solutions which are ‘fit for purpose’ (Gallagher, 1975). Cropley (1992) suggests that to be creative means to be daring and innovative in one’s thinking. Koestler (1964) defines creativity in terms of the capacity to make connections to bring together previously unconnected frames of reference. Such insights tend to come to ‘prepared minds’, that is, to those who have thought long and hard about a given set of problematic issues (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). When thinking intentionally, thoughts are forced to follow a linear, logical and predictable direction, but when attention is focused for example on the view during a walk, part of the brain is left free to pursue associations that normally are not made, and because these thoughts are not the centre of attention they are left to develop on their own:

“...it [the story of Archimedes] reminds us of the relationship of problem to observation. There was once a view that the purest form of observation was conducted with an absolutely empty head...but most of us will be like Archimedes: we need some external stimulus...everything Archimedes observed must have been considered at some level of consciousness for potential relevance” (Bullmore, 2003: 217).

Insight - the experience of suddenly realising the solution to a problem or of grasping a familiar situation in a new and more productive way - is often associated with creativity (Nickerson, 1999). Insight is a form of discovery and its distinguishing characteristic is the suddenness of its occurrence. At a given point in time, creative individuals ‘see’ the solution to a problem or they do not. For a creative, a problem is enjoyable when it has clear goals. However, in creation the goal of the activity is not always defined or easily found. In fact the more creative the problem the less clear it is what needs to be done. These are the challenges that for the creative are the most difficult or enjoyable working on because of their elusiveness. In such cases the creative person is guided by their intuition or internal locus of evaluation (Getzels and Jackson, 1962); their ‘muse’ (Csikszentmihalyi, 1994, 1996; Sternberg & Lubart, 1999). Creatives listen to themselves and are more influenced by their own inner standards than by those of the profession to which they belong (Amabile, 1983, 1996; Gardener, 1993). Csikszentmihalyi (1996) found that most of the creative people in his study recalled with great intensity and precision a particular moment when a solution to a major problem crystallised in their minds. After such an insight creatives need to check that their connections genuinely make sense:

“Most lovely insights never go any farther because under the cold light of reason fatal flaws appear. But if it works the slow and often routine work of elaboration begins” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 104).

During “*elaboration*” creatives must keep an open mind because new ideas, new problems and new insights may arise. Free from rational direction ideas can combine and pursue each other in every which way and because of this freedom original connections that would first be rejected by the rational mind have a chance to become established. This pursuit takes place within the context of creatives’ goals and feelings in order for the work to proceed as they intended. Creatives also need to be mindful that they need to keep in touch with domain knowledge to be assured their work has relevance. A ‘domain’ as it is referred to here (and will be discussed in greater depth later in this chapter) is:

“Any symbolic system that has a set of rules for representing thought and action...for example mathematics, music, ... synchronised swimming...have conventions that specify mental or physical performances...the function of the domain is to preserve desirable performances selected by the field and transmit them to a new generation of people in a form that will be easy to learn” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1994: 153).

In addition it is important that creatives listen to peers and mentors, their “*field*”. Whether the breakthrough occurs in art, poetry or business, a new way of doing things is discovered because they are always open to new learning and have the drive to carry through the new idea that emerges from the learning. Through experience, creatives internalise the knowledge of the domain and the concerns of the field, and this becomes part of the way their minds are organised (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988; 1990, 1996; Gardener, 1997, 1988). To elaborate, the ‘field’ (which will be discussed in greater depth later in this chapter) is defined as:

“...part of the social system and has the power to determine the structure of the domain. Its major function is to preserve the domain as it is, and its secondary function is to help it evolve by a judicious selection of new content” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1994: 151-152).

The concerns of the field and domain knowledge shape and control how creatives evaluate and select their ideas (Feldman et al., 1994). These are common threads that have been found to run across the boundaries of the many creative domains and individual creative idiosyncrasies (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996, 1999; Feldman et al., 1994). These might well constitute the core characteristics of what it takes to approach a problem in a way likely to lead to an outcome the field will perceive as creative (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996, 1988; John-Steiner, 2000; Amabile, 1983, 1996).

Many creative writers have proposed conceptual models of problem solving, and sometimes these have even been explicitly referred to as *creative* problem solving. These models characterise creative problem solving as a phased or step-wise process (for example, Noller, 1977; Parnes & Meadow, 1963; Polya, 1957; Rossman, 1931; Torrance, 1988; Wallas, 1926). Generally these models recognise from four to six phases in the process, and they follow a similar pattern of: problem definition, seeking possible solutions, evaluation of alternative solutions, selection of a solution and a reflection on the problem solving process.

This classical analytic framework does offer a relatively valid and simple way to organise the complexities involved. However it may give a distorted picture of the creative process if it is taken too literally. This is because the creative process is constantly interrupted by periods of incubation and punctuated by small epiphanies (Denzin, 1989; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). For example, fresh insights may emerge as the creative is putting the finishing touches to the initial insight. In essence the creative process is less linear than recursive (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Amabile, 1983, 1990, 1996; Sternberg & Lubart, 1999; Bullmore, 2003; Fletcher, 1999). The stages are not exclusive but typically overlap and recur several times before the process is completed. The number of iterations it goes through and how many insights are needed is dependent on the breadth and depth of the issues dealt with by the creative.

This section will now look at the main sources of these creative problems.

2.3 Creative problems

According to Csikszentmihalyi (1996) there are three main sources of creative problems. These are: personal experiences, requirements of the domain and social pressures. While these three sources of inspiration are usually synergistic and intertwined, it is easier to consider them separately. Artists for example find inspiration in 'real life'. Artists are also influenced by their domain and the field. It has been said that every painting is a response to all previous paintings and every poem reflects the history of poetry. Yet paintings and poems are also often clearly inspired by the artist's experiences.

When searching for ideas and problems creatives are influenced by the historical knowledge of their domain. Every domain has its own internal logic, its pattern of development. Just as creatives must take the concerns of their discipline seriously, creatives must also be willing to take a stand against perceived wisdom if the conditions warrant it otherwise no advance would ever be possible. Creative thoughts evolve from the tension between trust in the domain knowledge and being willing to reject it. For example Csikszentmihalyi (1996) found that even though creatives may not think of themselves as interdisciplinary often their best work bridges realms of ideas. Here it is important to be mindful that most creative breakthroughs are based on linking information that usually is not thought of as related. Therefore a breadth of interest even

when not directly integrated in their work is creatively valuable (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988b, 1994, 1996; John-Steiner, 1987).

Further, an individual cannot be creative without learning what others know (for example, Csikszentmihalyi, 1994, 1996; John-Steiner, 1987, 2000; Feldman et al., 1994; Policastro & Gardener, 1999). In creation the general outline is the same whether the breakthrough occurs in art or physics or business. A new way of doing things is discovered because a person is open to new ways of learning and has the drive to carry through the new idea that emerges from that learning. The field and the organisation in which the creative works and the events of the wider society in which the creative lives provide powerful influences that can redirect their career and channel their thinking in new directions. Looking at creativity from this perspective, personal experience and domain knowledge may pale in comparison with the contribution of the social context to determine which problems a creative tackles, for example what an artist paints is a response not only to the art but also to what other artists are painting right now. Therefore whether the creative follows 'the crowd' or takes a different path, it is impossible for them to ignore what takes place in the field i.e. their peers. The field has been found to be particularly important for individuals, for example advertising creatives, who work in an organisational context (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996) because the work is usually dictated by the requirements of the organisation which is guided by the symbolic domain. However what creatives accomplish within their organisational structure is *their* creative accomplishment and is recognised as such by their field. Consequently their creative output may influence their career trajectory.

Thus the underlying view here is of creativity as a context based activity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Lubart, 1999; John-Steiner, 1987, 2000). Contextual approaches to creativity focus on creativity in its social, cultural or evolutionary context (Mayer, 1999). The distinguishing characteristic of the contextual approach is a focus on context, which goes beyond a simple focus on creative thinking in individuals. The contextual approach and specifically the systems view of creativity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996) will now be discussed in greater depth.

2.4 The systems view of creativity

Historically, the study of creativity has been almost exclusively confined to psychologists studying individual traits (Feldman et al, 1994). Even though some psychologists have taken

seriously the importance of culture, social context and other systemic variables (for example, Feldman, 1980; Gruber & Davies, 1988; Harrington, 1990; Martindale, 1989), it can be said that these variables have been seen as facilitating conditions, not as in any way constitutive of the creative process itself. Individually orientated approaches to creativity often neglect the interrelationships that can develop between the individual and the environment, and that can result in the individual's modification of external conditions to increase creativity (Mayer, 1999). Classic studies in the fields of history and anthropology (for example Kroeber, 1944; Toynbee, 1936-1954) support the idea that environments can be manipulated to stimulate cultures, which subsequently yield a large number of both abstract and concrete innovations. Thus in response to the shortcomings of individual views of creativity, researchers began examining creativity from a contextual perspective.

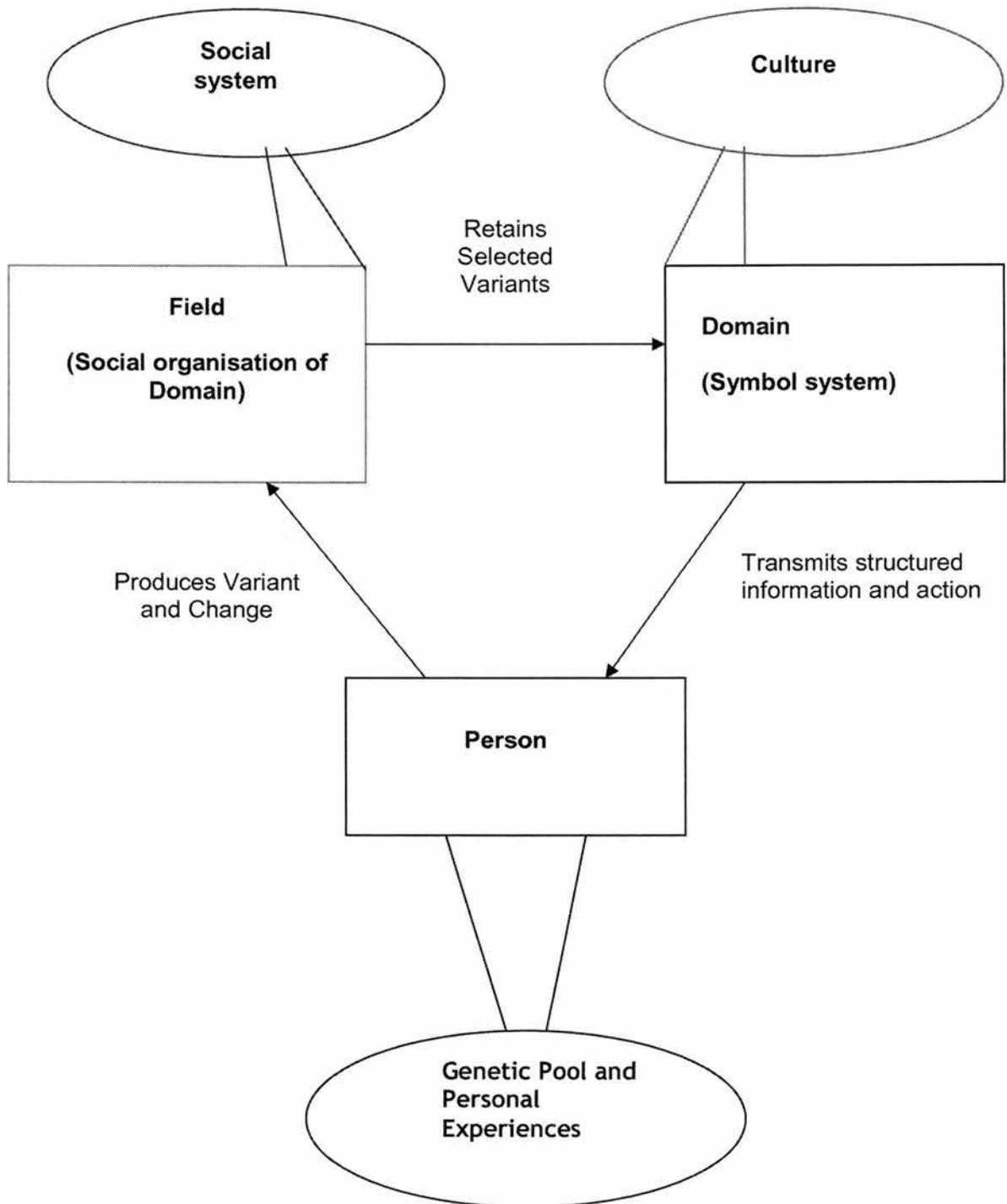
Underlying the systems view of creativity is a belief that creativity cannot be understood by looking only at the people who appear to make it happen. Rather, creativity can only be observed in the interrelations of a system made up three elements: a domain (as defined above), a symbolic system which contains rules; the field, (as defined above), refers to experts who recognise and validate the innovation; and a creative person brings novelty into the symbolic domain (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996, 1994; Feldman et al., 1994). This approach has been called holistic, in contrast to "*more atomistic views of creativity*" (Gardner 1988: 299). Within the system based view, creativity can still best be seen as an "*individualised phenomenon*" (Lubart & Sternberg, 1988: 63; Feldman et al., 1994); however, the creative process is perceived to be taking place within the context of a particular environment rather than a "*vacuum*" (Rhodes, 1961; Lubart, 1999: 339).

In the view of systems theorists, creative individuals are influenced and stimulated by elements such as the attitudes and norms of their family; the environment in which they grew up; peers; and their education; the culture and the dynamics of the society in which they live. Creative products are made possible by these closely intertwined systems of social networks and fields of study of enterprise. Gruber (1988: 33) in particular calls this approach "*pluralistic*" and "*experientially sensitive*" in light of its attention to multiple influences on creativity the contributions of past work in a discipline, and of its focus on the unique experiences of each creative individual within the context of his or her emotional world. Many systems theorists believe that creativity occurs only when there is the appropriate mix of problem solving, social

and individual elements (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, 1994, 1996; Feldman et al., 1994; Lubart, 1999; John-Steiner, 1987, 2000).

For creatives, it is through making explicit not only what is new inside their mind, but also the implicit background of their ideas, knowledge, and beliefs that novelty and insight arises. To have an affect the idea must create new meaning by using symbols that are understandable and accepted by their field and then the cultural domain to which it belongs. Creativity researchers have found that the attraction of this challenge is what makes some people immerse themselves throughout all of their lives (for example, Crutchfield, 1962; Policastro & Gardener, 1999; Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, 1996, 1999; Amabile, 1983, 1996; Feldman et al., 1994). This is a dynamic and evolving process because the next generation will encounter that novelty as part of the domain they are exposed to, and if they are creative they in turn will change it further and so on. A diagram of the systems view of creativity can be seen overleaf.

Figure 1: The locus of creativity



Csikszentmihalyi, M., (1988b: 329) Society, culture and the person: a system's view of creativity. In R.J. Sternberg (ed.). The nature of creativity (pp. 325-339). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Thus, in order to understand creativity it is important to place creative people within the context of their lives. This review will begin by discussing parental and cultural background influences.

2.5 Class, culture and identity

Most creative achievements are part of a long-term commitment to a domain of interest that starts somewhere in childhood, then proceeds through school, and continues in art college or university and so on (Sawyer et al, 2003; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). John-Steiner (1987: xi) writes that the beginnings of creative endeavours are linked to one of many “*languages of thought*”. The choice of such a language or inner symbol system is not always a conscious one. It is embodied in the *history* of the individual beginning with their efforts at reflection that first develop during childhood. The transformation of what is touched, heard or seen is dependent upon the individual skill of the creative’s mind in representing experience as images, as inner speech, as movement ideas. Through these various languages of thought, the meanings of these experiences are stored and organised. Preference to learn by touch, by vision or by language is developed by children through play and as young adults in the course of sustained inquiries. From these emerge a reliance on a particular way of learning and the establishment of an internal *hierarchical* system of symbolic processes.

In this sense it is fitting to explore the type of cultures, environments and the sort of events that shaped the early lives of those persons who later accomplished something creative (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). Therefore, when considering the background of creative individuals one of the first things to consider is whether an individual was born into a social environment that has enough surplus energy and resources, or ‘cultural capital’ (Bourdieu, 1984) to encourage the development of curiosity and interest for its own sake (Mayer, 1999). Such a curiosity is integral to creativity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996, 1999). So, while the creative individual must have an innate ability, the opportunities and content of children’s learning are historically and culturally patterned (John-Steiner, 1987; 2000; Moran & John-Steiner, 2003; Sawyer, 2003; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996, 2003; Feldman et. al, 1994). Thus as an individual grows up, cycles of activity and the internalised knowledge based upon them, are formed by the particular setting in which they are raised. Children pick up behaviours, tastes, expectations, values and norms which are characteristic of their parents, peers or others within their community (Giddens, 1989).

Socialisation is the process whereby the infant gradually becomes a self aware, knowledgeable person, skilled in the ways of the culture into which they are born (Giddens, 1989). The family is the main socialising agency of the child during infancy but at later stages of an individual's life many other socialisation agencies come into play for example school, college, university, peer groups, mass media and work (Giddens, 1989). Thus cultural capital comes to involve the learning opportunities that include schooling, TV, internet, radio, newspapers, cinema, musical instruments, museums, art galleries, advertising, work and so forth. All of these contribute to the content and the form of knowledge in the developing creative. A child is likely to be discouraged from expressing curiosity and interest, for example, if the material conditions such as books or music or films are lacking or if there is not a tradition of respect for learning and culture in the child's environment (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999; Policastro & Gardener, 1999).

Such conditions and traditions are reflective of an individual's social class background. Social class is one axis around which identities and cultures are formed (Lawler, 2005). The distinctive feature of social class stratification is that it ranks individuals in the general social hierarchy, which is organised around the occupations people have (Parsons, 1948). Absolute equality of opportunity in the occupational system is impossible (Marshall, 1963) and it is therefore relevant to talk of diversity in social classes. In contemporary British society social class is not only etched into the culture, it is still deeply etched into individuals' psyches, despite claims of classlessness (Reay, 2005):

“Insofar as actors recognise the arbitrariness and injustice of natal class, and the ways in which it influences individuals' lives – and it is hard for them not to – it can prompt guilt, shame, resentment and defensiveness, and the balance of these feelings and the ways of handling them are likely to vary according to class position” (Sayer, 2005: 201-202)

Indeed, politically and theoretically, class has become a contentious issue (Lawler, 2005). Changes in industrial and political organisation, for example property ownership, and the increasing emphasis on plasticity and self-fashioning means that class, is seen as representative of old, ascriptive ties (Lawler, 2005). Politicians from both the 'left' and the 'right' have talked about the end of class and yet class is implied in policies e.g. those encouraging young people from 'deprived areas' into Higher Education. These political claims to classlessness, which intensified in the 1980s and 1990s, were never about the 'abolition' of classes, because class is

built into the idea of classlessness and claims of a classless society are the opposite of what is (apparently) claimed (Adonis & Pollard, 1997). As Hout et al. (1996: 56) note:

“Class was always only one source of political identity and action alongside race, religion, nationality, gender and others. To say class matters less now than it used to requires that one exaggerate its importance in the past and understate its importance at present.”

Inherent in the functional requirements of the class system, is that children must share the status of their parents (Parson, 1948) and in so far as this is differentiated, the more favoured groups will have differential access to opportunity e.g. culturally, materially and educationally as well as different pressures e.g. parental and peer to which they are subject (Parsons, 1948). There are inherent tendencies for those structurally placed at different points in a differentiated social structure to develop different ‘cultures’ (Parsons, 1948). Within the different cultures there will be a differentiation of attitude systems, of ideologies, discourse, norms, expectations etc. Schachtel (in Getzel & Jackson, 1962: 74) states that the developing child is expected to conform to the “*givens*”, the “*codes*” and “*predetermined categories*” of his or her culture:

“in everybody’s life one can observe the effect of the pressure of society, as represented by parents, teachers, peers, toward the formulation of a more or less definitive, closed view of life and the world, a certain kind of code of behaviour as well as often very definite views about things and people and what they are there for. These views may be implicit or explicit” (Schachtel quoted in Getzels & Jackson, 1962: 74).

Class then is not simply a matter of economic inequality; it also circulates through symbolic and cultural forms. Through these means people become judged as morally worthwhile or as having the ‘right’ kind of knowledge or ‘taste’:

“Taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier. Social subjects, classified by their classifications, distinguish themselves by the distinctions they make, between the beautiful and the ugly, the distinguished and the vulgar, in which their position in the objective classifications is expressed or betrayed” (Bourdieu, 1986:6).

Bourdieu, probably more than any other sociologist, has argued for an attention to the cultural, symbolic and identity-forming aspects of social class (Lawler, 2005). It is important to consider that identity is not just felt or experienced but conferred, something imposed on individuals

irrespective of how they feel about themselves. This raises the question of whose opinion matters. Gagnier (2000: 39) writes:

“Subjectivity in its deeper forms may also conflict with objectivity, where objectivity means the convergence of the opinions of others. I may feel like a king but I won’t be treated like one in the bank. I may feel like a woman but if I walk like a man, talk like a man and look like a man, I will for all practical purposes be a man” (2000: 39).

With the exception of the nouveau riche, those at the bottom of the economic system are generally also deemed to be at the bottom of the cultural system. Working class people are not primarily marked as lacking through their poverty, but through their assumed lack of knowledge or taste. Lawler (2005: 800) uses this excerpt from a newspaper article as an example of where taste is used to both signify and to erase class:

“(class) labels are irrelevant, confusing and foster stereotypes, when there are few less things important now than class”

Lawler (2005: 800) states that the journalist believed his thoughts were “*untainted by class consciousness*”, when he writes:

“[W]e should be allowed our own thoughts on taste which is not to be confused with class. So I’ll continue to look down on Mondeos, and best-of classical collections. On air-fresheners, Poundstretchers and Harrods and royalty. On people who talk with their mouths full, and gold taps, and people who are rude to waiters, and on sneery waiters; on cheap garden gnomes and on expensive chandeliers” (Ferguson, 2002).

However, Lawler (2005: 801) believes that Ferguson uses taste in his article to both “*invoke and occlude*” class. In this schema, such class marking becomes respectable because (middle class) taste is constituted as a personal characteristic which is ‘desirable’ and ‘attainable’ at the same time as it is a ‘scarce’ resource (Lawler, 2005). Like Bourdieu (1986, 1998), Gagnier (2000: 39-40, emphasis in the original) comments that ‘pleasure is not transitive across class’ and continues:

“Taste – or class as culture - may disincline middle-class people to share anything but political solidarity and economic resources with the working class. Put differently, a good leftist will willingly share the pains of working people, willingly redistribute the wealth, but will she [sic] share in their pleasures?”

Csikszentmihalyi (1996), reflecting on the 99 creatives lives he studied from early childhood, suggested that creatives can break out of these routine constraints of genetic and social conditioning. He found that creatives came from a diverse range of social class backgrounds, and tended to succeed in their creative ambitions often despite an identity conferred by peers, teachers and others along the way:

“What allows certain individuals to make memorable contributions to culture is a personal resolution to shape their lives to suit their own goals instead of letting external forces rule their destiny” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 151)

The creative’s cultural background is important because it shapes their thinking and thinking defines the creative (John-Steiner, 1987). However culture can only evolve if there are a few individuals who do not play by the ‘usual’ rules. Creative people have been found to be inherently marginal within their culture while growing up (Gardener & Wolf, 1988, 1994; Policastro & Gardener, 1999; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996, 1999; Feldman et al., 1994). This sometimes reflects parental behaviour but more often is as a result of their immersion in their creative form. This inherent marginality will now be explored in depth.

2.6 Inherent marginality

Parental characteristics and behaviour have been closely related to children’s creativity (Amabile, 1983, 1996; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; John-Steiner, 1987). There is ample evidence, for example, that children tend to be more creative when their parents feel personally secure and relatively unconcerned about conforming to society’s behavioural inhibitions or rules on status and roles (Miller & Gerard, 1979; Amabile, 1996). In a study of high school boys (Domino, 1969) mothers of those in the highly creative group were less inhibited, less concerned about making a good impression and in general relatively unresponsive to social demands. In Csikszentmihalyi’s (1996) study around a third of the random sample of creative individuals he studied came from quite poor, working class origins. However their parents did not identify with their lower class position and had high aspirations for their children’s academic achievement. He considered that a strong positive parental influence is especially necessary for children who have to struggle hard against poor or socially marginal backgrounds. Csikszentmihalyi (1996: 173) also found that it helped to be born into a family where intellectual activity is practiced or in a family that values education as an avenue of mobility. This was because the majority of creatives

within his study had fathers who held intellectual occupations such as professor or conductor, with another quarter being lawyers or businessmen. (In Csikszentmihalyi's study, mothers were not mentioned as contributing within the latter context.)

Considerable evidence suggests that families most likely to foster creativity in children are characterised by low levels of authoritarianism (for example, Bayard de Volo & Fiebert, 1977) and disciplinary restrictiveness (for example Getzels & Jackson, 1961; Parish & Eads, 1977). Mackinnon (1962) found that the parents of creative people displayed a respect for their children and a confidence in their child's ability to do the right thing. He also found that often there was little affection or warmth expressed between fathers and their creative children and this was sometimes also true in relationships with their mothers. In another study, low maternal warmth was associated with higher creativity, and being a 'Daddy's girl' appeared to lead to particularly low levels of creativity in women (Halpin & Halpin, 1973).

While these behaviours contribute to self-perceptions of personal freedom which are necessary for creative thought and expression, creatives have been found to be less independent from their families than perhaps the norm because they felt marginalised from their peers (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Amabile, 1983, 1996). This is an important factor in creatives' development because it means they spend relatively more time in the protected, playful stages of life in which experimentation and learning are easier to achieve (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). Csikszentmihalyi (1996) found that this often resulted in creatives being loners among their peers, because popularity or even strong ties to friends tended to make a young person conform to the peer culture (Amabile, 1983, 1996; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). This increased pressure to conform might be expected to reduce children's willingness to take risks in exploring new paths to solutions (Amabile, 1996). If the peer culture is intellectual or artistic for example, then conformity may support the development of talent. But in most cases it is not, and so 'loneliness' helps protect the interests of the adolescent from being diluted by the typical concerns of that stage of life (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). Crutchfield (1962: 121) postulated a basic antipathy between conformity and creative thinking, asserting:

"...conformity pressures tend to elicit kinds of motivation in the individual that are incompatible with the creative process."

Therefore, marginality or the feeling of being on the outside, of being different from their peers, of observing with detachment, is a common theme amongst creatives (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Gardener, 1993b; Gardener & Wolf, 1988, 1994; Policastro & Gardener, 1999):

“...creators, more so than other mortals, search for asynchronies, thrive on them, receive flow from them. This is exemplified by the findings on that type of asynchrony termed marginality: when marginality is not given to creators, or when it appears to be disappearing the creators – unlike many others – actually attempt to re-establish the asynchrony” (Gardener, 1994: 79).

However, Policastro and Gardener (1999) state that it is difficult to conclude that creative individuals are more marginal than the rest of us because there are no consensual measures of amount or type of deviance. Rather, creatives stand out not on account of their ‘asynchrony’ or ‘lack of fit’ from society per se but rather in light of the way they deal with their marginality (Gardner & Policastro, 1999; Gardener & Wolf, 1988, 1994). Rather than becoming despondent, creative individuals are characterised by their disposition to convert differences into advantages, primarily driven by their intrinsic motivation (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Policastro & Gardener, 1999; Gardener & Wolf, 1988, 1994). Gardener and Wolf (1988, 1994) have referred to the capacity of certain individuals to exploit their differences from the norm as ‘fruitful asynchrony’, illustrated here as Csikszentmihalyi quotes one of creatives within his study (1996: 177):

“I had the advantage of my marginality – marginal to the upper class, marginal to my school friends and so on, but also marginal because of my views, and at times insulated.”

Independence, or an absence of conformity in thinking or dependence on social approval is particularly relevant to intrinsic motivation (Crutchfield, 1955, 1959, 1962). Extending Crutchfield’s work on conformity, Csikszentmihalyi (1990) suggested that high levels of intrinsic motivation, accompanied by relatively low levels of extrinsic motivation, may help creative individuals to be more independent of their domain because they are less susceptible to pressures to conform. Like Crutchfield (1955, 1962), Henle (1962: 46) argued that creativity was accompanied by “*detached devotion*” in which the creative’s intense passion, commitment and interest in the activity were combined with a critical detachment. Henle proposed conditions that would lead to this “*detached devotion*”:

“The condition of intense interest together with detachment can be achieved in other words, if the ego lends itself to the work rather than dominating the task. The forces

responsible for carrying on the work derive to a large extent from the perceived demands of the task itself rather than from the personal needs of the individual."

This intense curiosity and focused interest characteristic of the creative may seem odd to their peers. However constant curiosity - a constantly renewed interest in whatever happens around them - is perhaps a creative's most salient characteristic (John-Steiner, 1987). This enthusiasm for experience is often seen as part of the 'childishness' attributed to creative individuals (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Gardener, 1993). Without interest, a person would be unlikely to become immersed deeply enough in a domain to be able to change it,

"...one thing about creative work it is never done. In different words, every person we interviewed said that they had worked every minute of their career, and that they had never worked a day in their lives. They experienced even the most focused immersion in extremely difficult tasks as a lark, an exhilarating and playful adventure" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 106).

Thus, creative people are different in many ways but in one respect they are the same: they are intrinsically motivated (for example, Gardener, 1993b; Amabile, 1996; Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, 1994, 1996; John-Steiner, 1987, 2000). This chapter will now explore creatives' love for creation and their experiences of "flow" which creatives derive from successful creative production (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988b, 1990; 1996; Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2003).

2.7 Creative motivation and "flow"

Early theorists contended that a crucial part of creativity was a deep love for and enjoyment for the tasks undertaken (Bruner, 1962; Henle, 1962; Torrance, 1962). According to Torrance (1962: 120):

"The exercise of their creative powers is itself a reward, and to them the most important reward."

Research has found that creative people are energised by challenging tasks and this is a sign of high intrinsic motivation (for example Amabile, 1983, 1994; Gardener, 1993; Perkins, 1988; Csikszentmihalyi, 1988, 1990, 1996). Albert (1990) noted that the more eminent creators choose and become more passionately involved in challenging, risky problems that provide a powerful sense of pleasure from the opportunity to use their talents. Perkins (1988) has also described how

creative people are excited by complex problems and driven by opportunities to solve challenging, boundary-pushing problems. The consequences of seeking challenges that match their skills have been described extensively by Csikszentmihalyi in his work on 'flow' experiences (1990, 1988b, 1996). Flow was described as a process of:

“forgetting self, time and surroundings – the sense of flowing along this extended present and the powerful sense of doing exactly the right thing the only way it could be done” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 22).

This optimal experience is what Csikszentmihalyi calls flow because creatives within his study described the feeling when things were going well as an automatic, effortless, yet highly focused state of consciousness. Accordingly, in flow creatives feel that their abilities are well matched to the opportunities for creation. However the pursuit of a challenging problem is rarely easy. Although creatives have many tools and symbols at their disposal when they are being creative, they are operating at the 'edge' of their domain; in the boundary between the field's meaning and the individual's sense (John-Steiner, 1995; Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, 1996, 1999; Feldman et al., 1994). Here there are no socially agreed terms or definitions for what they are working on. There are no reliable reference points, no 'cultural web of meaning' to support them at the time the creators engages in a particular new process, for others to know the work is creative (John-Steiner & Moran, 1999). Gardener (1993: 34) describes this experience,

“These are the times that try the mettle of the creator. No longer do conventional symbol systems suffice; the creator must begin, at first largely in isolation to work out new more adequate form of symbolic expression”

In particular, for the creative starting-out, trying to 'break into' the field, the difficulties often seem almost overwhelming (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). However Csikszentmihalyi (1996, 1999) believes that it is impossible to accomplish something that is truly new and worthwhile without struggling with it. In order to cope with such problems, the creative person has to have a great many personality traits that are conducive to discovery and hard work, including the ability to internalise the rules of the domain and the judgement of the field (Feldman et al., 1994). Csikszentmihalyi (1996) considers that the creative personality is best described as complex. In particular, an intense concentration on the present is required by the close match between challenges and skills. Another skill that Csikszentmihalyi (1996) found creatives develop was a personal approach or an 'internal model' to problem solving, which allowed them to put the

problem into a 'manageable form'. However, the strategies that creative people develop are not always successful. For creatives, when the challenges seem too great to cope with, they experience frustration rather joy. However, this frustration is often only a temporary stage which is experienced at the beginning of a new creative task (John-Steiner, 1987; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996, 1999). When the challenges are just right the creative process begins to flow and all other concerns are temporarily shelved in the deep involvement in the activity. Within the process of flow for the creative there is no worry of failure because they are too involved with the task to be worried about failure.

Through these periods of flow but also through periods when work is frustrating or difficult, Csikszentmihalyi found that creatives' relationship with their domain continued to hold meaning (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2003). Vital engagement describes this absorbing and meaningful relationship a creative has with his or her domain (John Steiner, 1985; Roe, 1952; Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2003). The most basic aspect of vital engagement that fosters continued involvement with their domain into later life is the fact that the creative endeavour has become, over time, a central source of flow and meaning in the creative's life (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2003).

"When the distractions are out of the way and other conditions for flow are in place, the creative process acquires all the dimensions of flow...the powerful sense of doing exactly the right thing the only way it could done. It may not happen often, but when it does the beauty of it justifies all the hard work" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 121).

Creativity researchers have observed that creatives place the intrinsic rewards of creative working ahead of any extrinsic rewards they may receive from it. John-Steiner (1987: 221) considers the difference between 'non-creative' and creative lives,

"The difference lies in the intensity and continuity of the individual's mental life...when we close the door behind our paid work we also tend to close our mind to it. Indeed, ordinary, repetitive work needs to be extrinsically rewarded because it lacks the intrinsic rewards of sustained continuous mental labour...The strength of such sustained concern is not a deadly, wilful thing. It is linked to childhood play and wonder and to the pleasures of one's craft"

Csikszentmihalyi's (1996) study included creatives from a wide range of domains, for example writers, scientists and business people. The flow experience was described in almost identical

terms regardless of the activity that produced it. The descriptions of the flow did not vary much by culture, gender or age. However Csikszentmihalyi, like many other creativity researchers (for example Amabile, 1983, 1996; Crutchfield, 1962; Getzels & Jackson, 1962), found that the creatives' intrinsic motivation only flourished in particular environments.

“Creatives may seem to disregard their environment...but in reality...the right milieu is important in more ways than one. It can affect the production of novelty as well as its acceptance...” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 127).

The relationship between creatives' social environment and their intrinsic motivation will now be explored, particularly in terms of the impact of the educational environment on their creativity.

2.8 Intrinsic motivation and the social environment

It is often taken for granted that teachers and schools, and other sources of preparation for later creative work are critical to its success but, the opposite is closer to the truth (Feldman & Goldsmith, 1991; Gardner & Wolf, 1988; Wallace & Gruber, 1989). Research has found that if anything school threatened to extinguish the interest and curiosity that the child had discovered outside of school (Amabile, 1983, 1996; Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, 1996; Getzels & Jackson, 1962). Whatever creatives' talents and thinking skills, their social environment - the conditions under which they work - can significantly increase or decrease the level of creativity produced. The primary mechanism of this influence is the creative's motivational state, and in turn intrinsic motivation can be significantly affected by the social environment.

Out of all the social and environmental factors that might influence creativity, most can be found in some form in the classroom (Amabile 1983, 1996). Creatives' original ways of thinking and expression make them somewhat suspect (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Amabile 1983, 1996) not only among their peers at school but also among their teachers. Getzel and Jackson (1962) found that creative children were often viewed as bothersome by their teachers. These researchers suggested that creative children, because of their playfulness, humour and independence, may be difficult for teachers to control and as a result these children may frequently fall into the teacher's disfavour.

Extrinsic motivation is defined as the motivation to engage in an activity primarily in order to meet some goal external to the work itself, such as conforming to a teacher's expectations or achieving good exam results (Crutchfield, 1962). Studies have confirmed the detrimental effect of expected performance evaluation (an extrinsic constraint) and have also provided evidence that the receipt of positive evaluation prior to performance (an extrinsic motivator) produces negative effects on creativity (Amabile, Gelfand & Brackfield, 1990). Similarly creatives are less creative simply when being watched by others (Amabile, Gelfand & Brackfield 1990). Complementary results emerge in Barron's work on creative personalities. He reports that creative people distance themselves psychologically from others in order to minimise the negative effects of interpersonal intrusions. Research has also shown that when the way a person does a task is constrained or controlled resulting in reduced autonomy, creativity is also reduced (Amabile & Gitomer 1984; Koestner et al., 1984).

Furthermore the concept of extrinsic motivation has been refined to include two facets: control and information (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Under many conditions extrinsic motivation will be perceived as externally controlling, but there are times when it might actually be perceived as providing useful and desired information. Building upon this distinction, Amabile (1993) identified what she termed as synergistic and non synergistic extrinsic motivators. The synergistic motivators are compatible with intrinsic motivators; for example constructive feedback on an assignment from a respected teacher. The non synergistic motivators are incompatible with intrinsic motivation; for example exams tend to make creatives feel controlled rather than motivated (Amabile, 1996). Thus, although intrinsic motivation may be inversely related to some types of extrinsic motivation (non-synergistic), it may combine additively with other, synergistic, extrinsic motivators:

"Intrinsic motivation is conducive to creativity; controlling extrinsic motivation is detrimental to creativity; but informational or enabling extrinsic motivation can be conducive, particularly if initial levels of intrinsic motivation are high" (Amabile, 1996)

There is almost no research on the effects of teacher characteristics on creativity of their pupils (Amabile, 1996). Although not directly examining creativity one study points to teacher attitudes that are maybe conducive to creativity (Deci, Nezleck, & Sheinman, 1981). In that study, teachers' beliefs in the importance of student autonomy correlated significantly and positively with their student's preference for challenge and curiosity. This study also showed that when the

teacher was seen by their pupils as more intrinsically orientated towards their work, the pupils perceive themselves as more competent and more intrinsically motivated. Therefore the child's intrinsic motivation (and hence creativity) might be enhanced by teacher attitudes toward allowing more autonomy and self-direction in their work. Children who received greater warmth from their teachers also displayed higher levels of intrinsic motivation and creativity (Ryan & Grolnick, 1986).

Similarly for creatives in Csikszentmihalyi's study where teachers were considered influential, it was because they recognised and believed in the students' ability. These teachers also demonstrated to the student that they cared by giving them extra work to do in the subject where they showed ability. Here creatives were given greater challenges than the rest of the class received. However, overall performance at school was considered a poor indicator of future creativity particularly in the creative arts and humanities (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Gardner, 1993; Simonton, 1988). Intrinsically motivated young artists are notoriously uninterested in academic subjects and their exam results are usually reflective of this (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996).

In contrast to the school environment, college or university typically provides a social environment more conducive to fostering creativity (Amabile, 1996). This was where creatives could first assert their independence (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). Creatives met soul mates and lecturers who were able to appreciate their uniqueness. For many creatives, the college or university years are the period where they find 'their voice', when their vocation becomes clear (Amabile, 1983, 1996; John-Steiner, 1987). College teachers and university lecturers are important to the career of creatives because they could both foster creative talents and 'ignite' a creative's dormant interest in a subject (Amabile, 1983, 1996; John-Steiner, 1987). Often in contrast to the school teacher, college lecturers and tutors could provide the right intellectual challenge that led to a lifelong vocation (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; John-Steiner, 1987).

Mentorship is an aspect that often plays a crucial role in the development of great creativity. The apprenticeship tradition in the visual arts has also been an enduring one, and is almost always critical to the development of an artist's skill and career (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988b, 1990; Getzels & Csikszentmihalyi, 1976). As previously mentioned, creatives who are starting-out often find it very difficult to 'break into' their creative field (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). Therefore, if specific preparation within the domain or discipline is distinguished from schooling, then a

generalisation can be made that proper preparation is crucial (Simonton, 1988). What form this preparation must take varies from field to field and person to person, indeed the challenge of providing just the right sort of preparation is one of the greatest ones facing those who hold this responsibility. This is because in order to be creative within a specific domain, the creative needs to internalise the knowledge of the domain: 'new' is meaningful only in reference to the 'old' (Sternberg & Lubart, 1999; Csikszentmihalyi, 1988b, 1996). This chapter will now discuss why creativity is only possible within a domain when the creative individual has internalised the system of that domain.

2.9 Internalising the system

Creatives do not have careers in the 'ordinary' sense of the term (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). The creative must have an innate ability to introduce novelty into the domain. However entering a creative career also requires a great deal of determination and luck. The majority of creative people interviewed by Csikszentmihalyi (1996) modestly cited luck as the reason they had been successful. He also found that it took enormous energy, commitment, focus and perseverance to produce great creative work. Those who work in the creative field tend to be more intrinsically motivated toward their work than the general population (for example Amabile et al. 1994; John-Steiner, 1987; Policastro & Gardener, 1999). Csikszentmihalyi found that creatives were not primarily motivated by money and fame; but some had, by the nature of their discoveries, become comfortably well off. Research has found that what creatives feel fortunate about is that they get paid for something they have such fun doing (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; John-Steiner, 1987; 2000; Policastro & Gardener, 1999; Fletcher, 1999). What makes the creative job intrinsically rewarding is the everyday practice, not the rare success.

A good creative person needs to be well trained; as stated above, a person has to internalise the entire system that makes creativity possible. Refining this competence can come only through experience; it is a learning process. Hayes (1989), following Chase and Simon (1973), also proposed that preparation in the sense of immersion in the discipline was required for creative achievement or creatives needed to internalise the system. The person must learn the rules and content of the domain, as well as the criteria of selection and the preferences of the field. It is practically impossible to make a creative contribution without internalising the fundamental knowledge of the domain (Gardener, 1993b). For example artists agreed that a painter cannot

make a creative contribution without looking repeatedly at previous art and without knowing what other artists and critics consider good and bad art (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). Those individuals who sustain a creative career succeed in internalising the field's criteria of judgement to the extent that they can give immediate feedback to themselves, without having to wait to hear from experts in the field. The difference between successful creatives and their less successful peers is their ability to separate their own bad ideas from good ones because they have a good internalised picture of what the domain is like and what constitutes 'good' and 'bad' ideas according to their field.

Hayes (1989) carried out a study of the role of what he called preparation in creative production. The basic question he investigated was the time needed to reach master level performance. Gardener (1993b) stated that it took ten years for the eminent creators in his study to master their respective domains, giving rise to the '10 year rule'. Hayes examined career development in several fields requiring creative thinking, such as poetry and painting. The results, which were consistent across fields, showed that even the most noteworthy and 'talented' individuals required many years of preparation before they began to produce the work on which their reputations were built, although that length of time was variable.

While specialising in a particular domain can wait until late adolescence, an intense involvement in some related domain may be necessary if a person is to become creative (Gardener, 1993b). Acquiring the foundation of drawing for an artist or science for a scientist is the starting point for any further innovation. However, no matter how gifted a person is, he or she has no chance to achieve unless the right conditions are provided by the field. Favourable convergences in time and place need to open up a brief window of opportunity for the individual to be recognised by an older member of the field in which they aspire to work (Csikszentmihalyi, 1994, 1996; Feldman et al., 1999). If this does not happen it is likely that their motivation will erode with time and the young creative will not get the training and the opportunities necessary to make a contribution (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). The practitioner's main role is to validate the identity of the younger person and to encourage him or her to continue working in the domain. The guidance of an older practitioner is important also because there are hundreds of ideas, procedures, contacts that the creative will not read in books or hear in class and that are essential to learn if they hope to attract the attention of the field. Some of this information is substantive, some is more political but all of it maybe necessary if their ideas are to be noticed as creative.

Often training, expectation, resources and recognition are to no avail, if the young person has no hope of using his or her skills in a productive career. Many creative people give up because it is so difficult to break into the creative fields and make a living (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). In this following example there is a description of the realities of the starting-out experiences which most creative people have to endure in the advertising domain. This description is from an article in the advertising industry's trade magazine, *Campaign's* special supplement, called *Campaign for beginners*:

"Sleeping on mates' floors, living off baked beans and working your arse off for pocket money is a hurdle at which some fall...If you're still convinced advertising is for you after months, or even years, of this then you've probably got what it takes to get on. Certainly there remains a school of thought among senior creatives that surviving a placement is a real test of commitment and passion for the business... it's a rites of passage that many in advertising have endured...the pay is low and the expectations of creative directors and clients for mind-blowing work are high. But spending time at agencies, gaining an real insight into clients' demands and how to turn ideas into ads, is a valuable learning curve" (Billings, 2004: 16).

Environments that support intrinsic motivation, through rewarding behaviour, during the initial learning of domain relevant skills are important. Such environments need to focus on increasing the creator's competence, emphasising the joy of discovery and allowing considerable autonomy in the learning process (Amabile, 1989). Above all learning from established names in their field is an important part of getting a good grounding from which to create a career (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). Therefore creatives need to be in a position where they can easily access the field. For example Policastro & Gardener (1999) found that moving during or after adolescence to a major cultural centre was a feature of many creatives' biographies:

"The right milieu is important in more ways than one... It can affect the production of novelty as well as its acceptance; therefore it is not surprising that creative individuals tend to gravitate toward centres of vital activity where their work has more chance of succeeding." (Policastro & Gardener, 1999: 215)

This chapter will now conclude this generic discussion of creativity and creative individuals before moving on to place this review of creativity literature, as far as possible given the limitation of the current research literature, within the advertising domain.

2.10 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a generic understanding of creativity and the main influences contributing to a creative life. By exploring these two different strands of the literature, it has been possible to identify important areas for exploration within creativity and the lives of creative individuals from other domains.

Of particular note was the understanding of creativity within the context of the systems model of creativity. That is, creativity cannot be understood and therefore should not be explored, without due consideration to the domain, field and individual. The systems framework seems highly relevant work to this contextual study of the advertising creative, their creative culture and the nature of their creativity.

The system approach goes beyond the individualistic approach to creativity. As this chapter has demonstrated, a creative's intrinsic motivation, personality and values are all important areas of exploration, but a study based on these alone would leave much of the variance in the advertising creative's life, achievement and culture unexplained.

In order to set the theoretical and practical issues in context, the next chapter will review the creativity workplace and collaboration literature from an advertising perspective. The chapter will then explore the advertising creativity literature.

Chapter Three: Understanding the advertising creative

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will draw on different types of literature to provide an understanding of the mindset of advertising creatives, the British industry culture, and current trends within the industry which are impacting on creative working practices.

The first section will explore the relationship between agency culture, management style and intrinsic motivation. Given the lack of exploration within the advertising research literature of these areas, the discussion will draw on generic literature illustrated by excerpts mainly from the trade press.

An understanding of the advertising creative culture will be provided in the second section. This incorporates the social dynamics of the wider advertising domain. Current developments within the advertising domain and social processes are thus contextualised and explored.

3.2 The management of creatives

Creatives manage to give their surroundings a personal pattern that reflects the rhythm of their thoughts and habits of action (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; John-Steiner, 1987; 2000; Amabile, 1983, 1996). Most creatives find out early what their best rhythms are for sleeping, eating and working and abide by them. In this example, again from the *Campaign for beginners* supplement, one half of an advertising creative team explains the routines that he and his partner have which give them comfort as they work through their day:

“We generally get in between 8.30am and 9.30am...If we’re thinking of concepts, we’ll spend all our time together but when we’re busy producing work we’ll have a few hours doing our own thing...We have toast at 11am and cake at 4pm...we usually have lunch here but having said that we get good lunches out too...we do that once a month” (Billings, 2004: 32).

Personalising patterns of action helps to free the mind for the expectations that make demands on attention and allows intense concentration on matters that counts, in this case their work

(Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; John-Steiner, 1987; 2000; Amabile, 1983, 1996). Therefore there must be a cultural fit between the creative and their work place. The culture of the organisation is reflective of its founders and the people who work within it. This point is illustrated by Brook (2006), who observes the similarities between the creative directors and the agency, namely Weiden + Kennedy. The agency's culture is then likened by one of the creative directors to the founder's personality:

*“the duo (joint creative directors) had a lot in common with the agency, which Davidson describes as follows: “meet [founder] Dan Weiden and you kind of get why it's a f*cked-up, back-to-front, independent, chaotic, talented, mixed-up but lovely place” (Brook, 2006: 27).*

Surroundings can influence creativity in different ways, in part depending on the stage of a creative career. Creatives need to live and work in an environment which reflects their needs and tastes. As previously discussed the social environment can significantly affect intrinsic motivation. Creatives can only be encouraged to think creatively if they are not afraid of criticism and punishment (Amabile, 1983). Experimental (for example Koestner, Ryan, Bernieri & Holt, 1984) and non-experimental (for example, Ryan & Grolnick, 1986) evidence suggests that control and constraint placed on task engagement has consistently negative effects on creativity.

It is important to reiterate a point made earlier relating to education and creative motivation, but in a work-based context here. According to Amabile (1983, 1996) there are at least two means by which extrinsic motivators rather than detracting from creativity can add to it. Any extrinsic factors that support their sense of competence without undermining creatives' sense of self determination should positively contribute to intrinsic motivation. However competence can only be meaningfully confirmed by people the creative respects:

“Few creators accept that organisational hierarchies are an unavoidable fact of life. If a manager is to lead them he (sic) must get their respect, and to get their respect he must earn it. It will not be bestowed upon him merely because of his status in the hierarchy” (Fletcher, 1999:71)

Frequently then, the issue in the workplace becomes one of maintaining intrinsic motivation. Motivation is a forward looking process (Fletcher, 1999). The degree to which creatives are

motivated to carry out a task depends upon their perception that carrying out the task will help them achieve the results they desire. Among creatives the single most important motivating factor is their perceived opportunity to fulfil themselves (for example, Amabile, 1996; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Fletcher, 1999). A creative team's work is often more creative when they perceive that the work is positively challenging (Amabile & S.Gryskiewicz, 1987; Amabile & N. Gryskiewicz, 1989). If the creative director enables them to create work of which they are proud and which others admire, creatives will be motivated to work for him or her (Fletcher, 1999). To illustrate this point John Salmon, copywriter at the legendary London advertising agency Collett Dickenson Pearce (CDP) reflects on the impact of his creative director:

"Working for Colin, writers and art directors discovered that they were more talented than they ever thought they could be. The buzz produced by this realisation resulted in an atmosphere where everything was possible...Colin worked alongside the creative people, demonstrating how to improve layouts, grumbling about anything he saw that was dull or predictable and pushing everyone to excel. He didn't provide solutions. He made us think harder than we'd ever done before" (Salmon, 2004: 16).

Creativity consists of anticipation and commitment (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996, 1994; Policastro & Gardener, 1999; Nickerson, 1999). Anticipation involves having a vision of something that will become important in the future before anyone else has it; commitment is the belief that keeps on working to realise the vision despite doubt or discouragement. For example Olsen (2003: 114) describes her time working as a freelance artist in New York agency:

"Typical of an owner/creative director, he oversaw and approved everything we wrote and designed, which put those of us with strong opinions often at odds with his decisions. A brilliant though difficult man to work for, his ability to take our suggestions often stimulated insightful collaboration that mitigated the consternation shared by most of his staff... it was his energy and vision that drove the agency to win many awards...most of us who stayed on through the years respected his intellect and truly benefited from learning from a master despite his conflicted personality".

Bowven and Fry (1988) suggest that in managing novelty effectively it is not enough simply to avoid the practices and procedures that inhibit it; there is a need to actively attend to the management of ideas. The leader's vision is a key factor when managing creative individuals (Locke & Kirkpatrick, 1995):

“...a leader shapes and shares a vision which gives point to the work of others” (Handy, in Fletcher, 1999: 71).

Vision is a transcendent goal that represents shared values, has moral overtones and provides meaning; it reflects what the organisation could and should be (Fletcher, 1999). Cook (1998) proposes that leaders must effectively communicate a vision conducive to creativity through any available formal and informal channel of communication and constantly encourage employees to think and act beyond current wisdom. This vision must be communicated clearly from the highest to the lowest levels of management (Delbecq & Mills, 1985; Kimberly and Evanisko, 1981; Brand, 1998). For example, in a *Campaign* article referring to J Walter Thompson’s new corporate identity *“designed to inspire staff and clients”*, Seymour (in Gardener, 2005: 22) writes:

“Handsome is as handsome does. If you want people to see you as creative uber-agency striding across continents, spewing genius, act like one. You’ll be judged on how you behave. And how you behave puts meat on your corporate image... First, be what you want to be. Otherwise a frothy new logo is just your Dad at the disco”.

Most advertising agencies are concerned with the cosmetic appearance of their reception and their important conference rooms, but otherwise work in fairly conventional offices, like the majority of other creative businesses. As previously noted most good creators have powerful concentration and can immerse themselves in the job almost oblivious to their surroundings (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). All creators want the relevant facilities to be perfect – but comfort and appearance, though not insignificant are rarely crucial. Thus to encourage creativity, the role of the creative director is not simply to keep their creators cheerful but as Bland (in Fletcher, 1999: 68) states:

“...to create an environment in which creative people can enjoy themselves without running riot”.

This is because:

“...most good creative work is done in an atmosphere of enjoyment and excitement” (Bullmore, 2003: 211).

Often the creative director's responsibilities are not solely or even principally about the creatives, because they will also be involved in the management of the agency, developing client relationships, new business development, strategic planning on accounts and so forth (Marshall, 2002). But having found the right creatives for the job, the creative director and the agency culture must be conducive to enhancing their creativity, because:

"...the differences between agencies lies in the advertising they create...the creative function is therefore the most important one performed by agencies and the one where the most rigorous standards need to be maintained" (Campaign editorial, 1993 in Nixon, 2003: 39).

Therefore becoming a creative director within an agency is:

"...about the chance to...build a culture. Considering the evolving nature of the agency, people come and go in the best agencies all the time. What stays is the culture. Defining that is the duty of the person driving the creative product working in partnership with the agency management" (Marshall, 2002: 16).

The creation of advertising then may be seen as a social process. The central relationships within this process are between the art director and the copywriter, and then their relationship with their creative director. Beyond these, the other actors in the creative development process have historically existed in a 'creative tension' (Feldwick, 2000; Pollitt, 1979) precipitated by ingrained cultural stereotypes.

In order to understand the effect of these other 'extrinsic' actors on the creative's motivation there is a need to understand the intimacy of creative collaboration. Given the lack of research literature in this area, the dynamics of the advertising creative team are explored in the next section by drawing on broader creativity and then marriage literature.

3.3 Collaborative creativity

As discussed in the previous chapter, from the beginning of a creative's life, the enduring belief that creativity is developed alone without influence of teachers, parents, college or university mentors or peers is largely a myth (John-Steiner, 2000; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Feldman et al., 1994). A life devoted to creative work is insecure (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). Creative work often

requires a trust in oneself that is virtually impossible to sustain alone: support is critical (John-Steiner, 2000). Most creatives have to mobilise personal, emotional, and financial resources in order to fulfil their objectives (John-Steiner, 2000). Central to meeting such a challenge is belief in themselves and their talent. Such belief is seldom built without the support of mentors, professional partners, family and friends. A creative's development illustrates the notion that the self develops in the context of important relationships (Jordan et al., 1991; John-Steiner, 1987, 2000).

All seven of Gardener's (1993a; 1993b; 1997) subjects seemed to benefit from forming a set of personal and professional relationships which could help them in their work and careers. However, in his biographical studies Gardener found that creative people often had difficulty in forming close friendships or deep emotional relationships. Friends, lovers, wives, and husbands etc. were important, but more for what they contributed to the creator's purposes than for their intrinsic value. All individuals worked hard at getting their work known and recognised, and they formed and maintained relationships as part of that process. Since they felt marginal in certain respects, it was part of their struggle to make a name for themselves at the centre of their field. Each of the creators seemed to benefit from an intense, supportive relationship during the period which a major breakthrough in the work was underway after which the relationship became less intense or disappeared altogether:

"...support is needed at this time more so than at any other time in life since infancy. The kind of communication that takes place is unique and uniquely important, bearing closer resemblance to the introduction of a new language in early life, than to the routine conversations between individuals who already share the same language" (Gardener, 1993a: 147).

Gardener's depiction of these supportive connections included affective and cognitive dimensions (Gardener, 1993a, 1993b). The supportive partner provides legitimisation of the new language that is part of the creative breakthrough. Belief in a partner's capabilities is crucial in collaborative work because of the marginality, estrangement and self doubt which frequently plague creative people (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). Effective creative outcomes require the rigorous, sustained labour of nurturing, shaping, and developing of ideas. The motivation for such discipline is strengthened through mutual support. Commitment to shared objectives or a shared "*passionate interest*" (John-Steiner, 2000: 22) is crucial to joint endeavours.

Among the creative collaborations explored by John-Steiner (2000), partnerships were defined as successful where creatives jointly generate a wealth of new ideas. John Steiner quotes the choreographer Suki John who worked in collaboration with the playwright Bill Conte. In their collaboration they were both open to experimentation, prepared to face failure, and willing to take criticism and suggestions from each other and from the other actors and dancers with whom they worked. They trusted their personal fluency and knew that they could increase it through their interaction:

“...ideas create ideas, it’s like ping-ponging” (John cited in John-Steiner, 2000: 80).

To improve the chemistry of the advertising creative process, or in other words to create “*ping-ponging*”, Bernbach introduced the creative team structure into United States’ creative departments in the 1960s (Young, 2000; Tylee, 2005). Prior to this ‘invention’ copywriters and art directors had worked separately. This successful team structure was adopted by British agencies in the 1970s and is now integral to advertising creative culture (Salmon & Osborne, 2000). Hirschman (1989: 46) found that the creative process between the art director and the copywriter was described as one of “*intense collaboration*”. In the British trade press marital themes are evident within successful advertising creative partnerships. The emphasis of the meaning of marriage within the advertising literature reflects the enduring and supportive nature of successful creative partnerships and the intimacy generated through spending long periods of time together (Nixon, 2003).

“They always describe it (the partnership between art director and copywriter) as a marriage because there is no better description...because you work night and day in advertising. You just never stop. And it is a marriage. ‘Cause you’ve got to trust each other, with each other’s ideas...the idea is the child of the marriage” (Taylor, quoted in Nixon, 2003: 116).

From the collective efforts of marriage researchers, marriage is seen as a dynamic process of constructing a shared reality (Marano, 1992): a developmental process (Marano, 1992; Wackman et al, 1986/87) which evolves towards intimacy and mutuality (Marano, 1992). Viewing marriage as a process that unfolds in stages affords couples a realistic perspective:

“No marriage can be constantly happy over the years...each partner’s personal development and the normal events of life necessitate continual adaptation both individually and as a couple” (Kaslow, quoted in Marano, 1992: 49).

Each of these stages poses specific challenges to individual and couple development. The most important indicators of individual stages are emotional themes and interaction patterns. As a relationship grows and endures the two people must focus on deeper, more psychological attributes to keep them together (Berscheid et al., 1973). This may be a difficult evolution as the pair progresses slowly from the excitement of the honeymoon period toward compassionate love, in which each person becomes primarily concerned with the welfare of each other (Marano, 2004). If the relationship survives, this is necessary for developing a sense of belonging and trust in each other’s commitment to an evolving relationship.

Once a relationship shows mutuality, intimacy begins to develop. That is when people share information with one another not only about superficial facts, but also about beliefs, preferences, goals, philosophies and so on. Mutual relationships begin with a small amount of intimacy and then may progress to a deeper and deeper level of intimacy. Eventually each person begins to care about and identify with the other person and accepts at least some responsibility for what happens to that person. One of the major factors in the development of intimate relationships is self-disclosure, the revelation of a person’s private world, background, fears, hopes, beliefs, weaknesses etc. There are two independent dimensions to self-disclosure: breadth and depth (Altman & Taylor, 1973). Breadth refers to the number of topics touched by self-disclosure. Depth refers to the intimacy level, that is, how much private information a person reveals about a given topic. In the early stages of most relationships one person offers self-disclosure at a relatively low level on each dimension. If the other person accepts initial self disclosures and reciprocates future disclosures, both parties gradually become broader and deeper over time. Ideally when each person’s self-disclosure is received by the other with acceptance, understanding, and caring they begin to develop trust in one another. This trust in turn makes the relationship more intimate, leads to further cycles of self disclosure, greater trust and deepening intimacy. The most important determinants of the development of intimacy are how each person responds to the other’s self disclosures and whether they also self disclose (Chaiken & Derlega, 1974). Similarly, John-Steiner (2000: 35) in her study of creative collaborators found that the partners emphasised the *“crucial role of dialogue”* (internal and external) during creative idea generation:

“...like many other collaborators they emphasised the crucial role of dialogue: “We are always talking, at the physical level, at the emotional level, and at the spiritual level”. When they described their joint explorations, their words had a strong physical resonance; they bounced “ideas off each other”, and it was “a physical and emotional push and pull” (John-Steiner, 2000: 35).

Storr writes (1985: 56), “...for creative work, access to the inner realm of the psyche is essential”. The respective creative partners must have access to that “psyche” for creativity to occur.

“Human beings in exercising their verbal power, become both objects and subjects of their discourse, and they are participants in their own inner dialogue; they are creators and critics, observers and the observed.” (John-Steiner, 1987: 31)

The process of generating a creative dialogue requires a collaborative disagreement or divergence in perceptions (Amabile (1996). Bernbach’s insight was that copywriters and art directors approach advertisements in different ways and see different things in them. Young (2000) considered that Bernbach’s model was successful because by working with an art director, the copywriter to get past the limitations of the internal dialogue as described by Kover (1995). Therefore what is involved in this internal and external dialogue is the interpretive understanding between themselves, and of their creative output by others. In this way, advertising creatives engage in an intensely personal and idiosyncratic process when producing creative communication (Kover, 1995). The advertising that results reflects the creative team, their lives, needs and perceptions. Thus advertising creative collaboration is shared creation and discovery of:

“Two...individuals with complementary skills interacting to create a shared understanding that none had previously possessed or could have known.” (John-Steiner, 2000: 7)

Just as in marriage trust is central to creative collaboration, but it can not be taken for granted, it needs to be nourished. It may require honest confrontations of problems between partners and a willingness to adjust a relationship that has lost its original intensity. Related to trust, partnerships can support risk taking in creative endeavours. Risk taking is a particularly urgent concern for young creatives who are faced with the challenge of gaining recognition while also testing their own sense of worth and promise (for example Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Gruber &

Wallace, 1999; Sternberg & Lubart, 1999). Thus partnerships can build on their solidarity as well as their differences (John-Steiner, 2000; Bennis & Beiderman 1997).

“There is something almost bewitching about a happy, successful and longstanding creative team. The way they don’t just finish each other’s sentences but also their thoughts. The way they know each other’s peccadilloes and unusual dietary habits. The way they suck their Pentel tops in comfortable silence” (Trickett, 1999: 26).

Similar to the beginning of a romantic relationship there is a common journey of mutual discovery and perhaps enchantment with the partner. In creative collaboration this enchantment contributes to an eagerness to learn, to explore and to engage in new work (Marano, 2004). However, as their relationship becomes less idealised, ambivalent feelings may emerge and in relationships where there is financial dependence resentment may not be safe to express. Bennis & Biederman (1997: 216) believe that there may be a time limit to particularly intense, transformative collaborations. That is “*great groups*” cannot last; “*if only because of their intensity they cannot be sustained indefinitely*”. Eventually these passionate collaborators start to attend to their own individual needs and even to compete with each other. Their emotional trajectory starts with fusion, out of which important works are produced, but it is followed by ambivalence which can result in painful separation. However, there are creative collaborators who manage to develop ways to protect their relationship. They are skilled in knowing how to modulate it and at times build some creative distance between each other while treasuring their primary connection. Their bond is more of a balanced and supportive partnership (Bennis & Beiderman, 1997).

Further, there is evidence within the trade press that the advertising creative process has “*evolved*” and is now a far more collaborative affair than in Bernbach’s day. The traditional boundaries dividing copywriting and art direction have blurred (Trickett, 1999: 26-27), as this creative director quoted in *Campaign* explains:

“Few in the industry would deny that creating an ad is a far more homogenous process nowadays...“Over the past 15 to 20 years, teams have evolved. Before, you had copywriters who wrote copy, and art directors who did the art,” Paul Briginshaw, a creative partner of Miles Calcraft Briginshaw Duffy, says. “Now the teams are ideas generators. I’ll always talk to Malcolm [his art director partner] about the art direction and he’ll talk to me about the copy”” (Campbell in Trickett, 1999).

Therefore within the industry the creative team is now believed to be more of an idea based partnership. To understand these changes, the working dynamics and mindset of the advertising creative partnership in more detail, this chapter will explore the advertising creative culture and industry changes within the next section.

3.4 The Creative Culture

A recent call for entries to a creative awards scheme explains the centrality of obsession to creativity:

“Does perfection exist? ...It can become an obsession. A fixation. You forget to have haircuts. Lightboxes wink and taunt you. You learn to grade your dreams. Your pockets packed full of smudged Polaroids. And you start to redesign animals...And only then might you win a D&AD Pencil. Maybe. If you don't, perhaps you haven't obsessed enough. Pushed it far enough. Cropped enough. Hurt enough or watched enough. Stared in the mirror enough. All alone enough. Late at night enough...” (D & AD, 2006: 1).

Like an artist or writer, the advertising creative must continually generate ideas that no creative has done before, so while these creative vocations are established the substance of what they do is unprecedented (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). Creative people are almost unique in the way that they are personally linked to their endeavours (Fletcher, 1999). Therefore because creatives want to be judged by their output, the quality of their output matters intensely to them. Bullmore writes (2003: 206):

“I think that all good creative people are professionally responsible: if only out of sheer self-interest, self-absorption, or self-esteem. Because, more than any other member of an agency, the creative person is what he does: and he knows it. He'll work all weekend or all night or both; not, if we're honest, because he's driven by an obsessive desire to put his client's sales up by two per cent. He's driven more, I think, by the sheer satisfaction of an absolutely beautiful egg (in the English sense of that phrase)”.

Creatives recognise that this is in large measure dependent upon the quality of their agency, which is determined by the quality of their agency's collective output. This is defined by the culture of the agency, which is defined and is a reflection of the creative director. Therefore it is not just creatives themselves who want to be associated publicly with their work when it is awarded but also the agencies that employ them. As well as the creative kudos, their employers are well aware that this puts pressure on all of their creative employees such is the competitive

nature of the creative industry. For example this creative who now works for another agency, writing in *Campaign for beginners*, describes his experience of working in a well established agency with a large creative department and the *internal* competition between teams to ‘get work out’:

“...sometimes you’re lucky and you get loads of work through. But we once went two years without getting an ad out when we were at TBWA” (Shepherd, May 2004).

Control within the advertising agency environment, means that people other than creatives criticise and attempt to mandate change to the work (Hirschman, 1989). At the same time, creatives have a powerful, internal need to own and keep work unchanged (Amabile, 1983, 1996; Hirschman, 1989). Bell (cited in Fletcher, 1999: 36) writes with regard to managing creatives’ inherent “*assertive independence*”:

“...the creative people who are the most difficult to get good work out are the ones who want to please you. That’s the wrong motivation. They should want to please themselves”.

The primary audience for creatives’ work is their peers (Kover, et al, 1997) and in reality respect from creative peers comes more from the various industry awards than the effectiveness of those advertisements (Alps, 2006). Hirschman (1989) reported that the creative team viewed their work as a communication vehicle for promoting their own talents and personal career objectives. This point was made explicitly, noting that a desirable commercial from their standpoint was one which communicated their unique creative talents and thereby permitted them to obtain ‘better jobs’ (Hirschman, 1989; Fletcher, 1999). As creatives are personally identified with their work, it is comparatively easy for prospective employers to keep track of a creative team whose work may have caught their eye (Fletcher, 1999; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). All creatives should always know exactly who in their field has done what, and when and working with whom; hence the importance of internalising the system. Such knowledge is their stock in trade; without it they could not do their jobs (Fletcher, 1999; Bullmore, 2005; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Gardener, 1993b).

Job selection for creatives and agency creative directors then is a two way process. This is because creatives must ensure that their talent is invested to maximum advantage (Fletcher, 1999). There are two factors that are particularly significant for creatives when considering the

next move in their career. Firstly creatives are always concerned about the reputation of any potential employer. Secondly they are concerned as to whether their potential employer will provide them personally with opportunities to produce outstanding work. The two are interlocked, and embedded in the creative personality and its intricacies (Fletcher, 1999; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Bullmore, 2003). For example as Willmott reports (2003: 15):

“Miles (co-founder of Miles Calcraft Briginshaw Duffy) believes that the independents have the ability to motivate the best talent, despite the global networks having theoretically bigger pockets.”

Miles also links the importance of creative culture to another ingredient, the pedigree of the founders. And so when starting an agency it is important for founders to be mindful of these issues if they want to attract the best talent and nurture a creative culture differentiated in terms of its quality. This point is illustrated by Calcraft (co-founder of another independent creative agency called Mother) who believes the secret of their success with their creative product is that:

“...we put a strong, robust, creative culture first. If you grow too quickly you risk diluting that culture”....

Without a good creative reputation an agency would not be able to recruit creatives at the top of their field. All creatives want to work in the respected agencies with the good creative reputations, particularly at the beginning of their career (Trott, 1990). This is because creatives' pasts create their futures. Even if it does so only temporarily it will provide them with an opportunity to produce work which may enhance their reputation for the future, and if it does so permanently the value of their talent will increase for good. Fletcher (1999: 64) here succinctly sums up this (almost) self-perpetuating cycle of the creative system:

“...the best companies get the best commissions, clients and projects which helps them to continue to recruit the best staff and so they continue to get the best commissions. The system would be eternally self-perpetuating but for the fact that even the brightest creative stars fade”.

The section will now explore what are historically perceived by creatives as extrinsic constraints to their creative expression and consequently their career, namely the other account team members and the client.

3.5 The historic 'tension'

"Do we really need the horses?" Words allegedly uttered by a senior account man, when the script for Guinness "surfer" began running into budgetary problems. The creative team replied: "Well, yes, we were really rather hoping to include the horses..." Or words to that effect. The account man then picked up his missing teeth and went back to the client. They found the money, shot the horses and ended up with the best commercial of all time...Oh, and a couple of D&AD golds. How often does this sort of conversation take place? The line between seminal magic and crap is terrifyingly thin. And it's the agencies with the biggest balls, or the strongest client relationships, that overcome time or money issues to end up with the former on their reels" (Collins, 2004: 33).

Many researchers (for example, Hackley, 2000, 2003; Hirschman, 1989; Kover, 1995; Moeran, 1996) argue that advertising is socially constructed. Cohen (1995) states that advertising agencies not only produce symbols; they are assemblages of shared symbols. He believes that the symbolism of ownership of work and control of output is extraordinarily complex. Historically, in advertising agencies the meaning of symbols produced differs because of the different needs and attitudes towards advertising that are held by different disciplines (Bullmore, 2003; de Waal Malefyt & Moeran, 2003; Hirschman, 1989). For example, creatives work according to intuitive, artistic ideas that may have little 'obvious' relationship to the expressed marketing aims. As previously discussed, for the creative team those symbolic productions are their own voice (Hirschman, 1989; West & Kover, 2003). Creatives feel a great amount of ownership of their work (Kover et al., 1995; Hirschman, 1989). Indeed, creatives' output is often described by them as their 'babies' with all the needs for association and closeness associated with that of parenthood (Hirschman, 1989; Kover et al., 1995). Removal of control over their output means that those extensions of self are nearly always taken away, by people (for example account executives) who creatives often feel do not understand the work and for whom they often feel contempt (Hirschman, 1989; Kover et al., 1995).

Indeed for account management, who act as the "voice of the client", creatives' productions need to be tailored to a client brief and eventually their target audience (Crosier et al., 2003: 8). The client and account person view the advertisement as a promotional tool whose primary purpose is to change attitudes or behaviours (Hirschman, 1989). Furthermore, because the advertisement is viewed as an institutional investment, emphasis is also placed by these two parties on getting the client's money's worth from the communication. Thus the value of the commercial is primarily evaluated in terms of its fulfilment of the client's communication

objectives. Therefore by serving the client the account people are also serving their personal career goals. This point is illustrated by Tylee, who, when posed with the question, '*What makes a good account manager?*' (2006c: 26) wrote,

"In the past the most junior [Account Executive] carried the bags, made coffee and ordered the cabs. The most senior picked up the tab after a four-hour lunch, arranged the box for the opening day at Ascot and built relationships so close that it was not unknown for a top account man to become godfather to the offspring of a company chairman."

Hirschman (1989) found that typically the client wants a more conservative commercial than the creative team, as they are answerable and may need to justify any decision to many layers of internal clients and superiors. This is often where conflicts (and confusion) arise as clients are looking to minimise risks due to their financial responsibilities, whereas creative people, as the account person and client sees it, are trying to maximise the creative impact of the advertising through 'newness' of thought (Sternberg & Lubart, 1999).

According to Sternberg and Lubart's (1991, 1992, 1995, 1999) investment theory of creativity, creative people generate ideas which are like undervalued stocks, because the creative person buys low by coming up with an idea that is likely to be rejected and derided. Initially, others often view these ideas as bizarre or useless, and the ideas are rejected because of the perceived risk i.e. they go against the grain and so make the majority of people feel uncomfortable. However, *occasionally* the creative convinces other people of the value of that idea, thereby increasing the perceived value of the investment. Thus the creative person sells high and moves on to the next unpopular idea. Although creatives tend to want others to appreciate their ideas, universal applause for a new idea usually means that the idea is not original. Advertising creatives assume that risk and creativity are positively correlated (Belch & Belch, 2001). In their investigation into whether higher risk taking is related to higher advertising creativity, El-Murad and West (2003: 668) found that those creatives, who had a "*higher personal risk propensity*", had recently won a greater number of creative awards. However, most creatives felt that their output was limited by their agency managers and clients, particularly on larger clients where the perceived risk was greater. Here inconsistency in judgements and a lack of clarity of purpose may affect the creative's intrinsic motivation and therefore output. However, Bullmore (2003) believes an important reason for good creative work failing is that creatives don't spend enough time helping others to understand what they propose and why they propose it. Therefore:

“Who wins the argument in judging creative work depends on skills of articulate persuasion and the plausibility of evidence presented. As in any organisation, winning arguments and gaining influence also depend on raw political power deriving from rank, reputation or sheer force of personality” (Hackley, 2003: 328).

Kelly et al. (2005: 515) in their ethnographic study conducted in an Irish advertising agency found that creatives metaphorically described the *“battling”* and *“fighting”* involved in trying to get their ideas accepted. They also found that the creative process was described by the creatives as *“a game”* played between themselves with other agency practitioners and clients. Similarly Kover and Goldberg (1995) found that copywriters employ self-conscious political strategies in an attempt to control their output. Furthermore, in a separate article in the same year, they suggested that the ‘power’ of creativity was the major factor in conflict and destabilisation within advertising agencies (Kover, Goldberg and James, 1995). Hackley (2000: 246) found that, despite using account planners (planners – ‘defined’ below) as a *“buffer between creatives and account management”*, few large agencies in the USA were in fact successful in managing the tension between the ‘artistic values’ of the former and the commercial instinct of the latter.

Senge, (1990) like Pollitt (1979), one of the founders of account planning (planning), thought a ‘creative tension’ was a pre-requisite for effective creative work:

“The planner forms part of a threesome with account manager and creative who together share responsibility for the creation of effective advertising in a ‘creative tension’ – significantly Stanley [Pollitt] did not expect them to try to please each other too hard, but to stand up for their different points of view” (Feldwick, 2000: 3).

From the outset, a major component of the planner’s role was to have a significant input into the development of creative strategy (Crosier, 2003). Steel (1998: 36) recounts a meeting with the planning director who succeeded Stanley Pollitt at BMP:

“‘So what exactly is account planning?’ I asked through the pall of Dunhill smoke. ‘Account planning is the discipline that brings the consumer into the process of developing advertising’, Cowpe replied. ‘To be truly effective, advertising must be both distinctive and relevant planning helps on both counts’.”

During creative development diversity of thought is important to the quality of the creative output, because while homogeneous teams may often reach solutions more quickly and with less friction along the way, they do little to enhance their individual or collective creative thinking because individuals come with a similar mind-set (Amabile, 1983, 1996). This dynamic within the account team (and creative team itself for that matter) helps creatives to examine and question their thinking (Amabile, 1983, 1996; Fletcher, 1999). According to Smith (1996 in Nixon, 2003: 54), the then chairman of Bartle Bogle Hegarty, for creativity to occur there is a need for what he calls “*controlled tension*” within the account team:

“It is important to strike a balance between a kind of openness, where everyone works in a tight group and the fact there is no doubt about it that creativity works best when there is a controlled tension... There has to be some kind of tension between the business needs that are being articulated by the account management and planning and the creative solution which is being offered by the creative department. If it is all too nice and straight line, you end up with Switzerland. You know, something wonderfully efficient and neutral and extremely dull”.

In order to be successful creatives need their work to be ‘bought’ and for that work to be judged favourably by their peers. “*Shrewd creatives*” know that they have more chance of this happening if they work with account handlers and planners who are “*good at their own job*” (Haines, 1997: 34). Haines believes it is a common misconception that creative people do not value the views of account handlers, rather he argues they value account handlers and / or planners who can provide them with creative brief which has an insightful strategic base from which to work. That is, contrary to popular belief, creative people do not want complete freedom to do whatever they want on a project (Bullmore, 2003; Haines, 1997). This is because working within the challenge of the brief ultimately creates the pleasure, or flow, that creatives feel when the ‘right’ solution suddenly appears to them. As Bullmore (2003: 219) writes:

“Creative people in advertising sometimes yearn for greater freedom: for release from what they see as the tyranny of the brief. But it is of course, precisely this tyranny that provides the stimulus for invention as painful as it may seem at the time”.

The function of the creative brief therefore is not just to ensure relevance: it is also to encourage original thinking (Haines, 1997; Bullmore, 2003). As has already been alluded to within the process of creation, a new idea is dependent at some stage on an intuitive leap which can be

rationalised and acknowledged as right only after the event (Bullmore, 2003; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). Agencies need to have formalised research processes because clients often seek a degree of control over the uncertainties of creative production. According to some practitioners and industry commentators (for example, Bullmore, 2003; Fletcher, 1999) creatives are notorious for disregarding research as a judge of creativity, because the public are typically perceived to be 'not qualified' to judge original thinking. According to Sternberg and Lubart's Investment theory of creativity (1999) most non-creatives will always divert to what is familiar to them. The issue is how to accommodate the tension between intuition, experience, imagination and calculation, the synthetic and the analytic (Merrihue, 2006). Underlying this is how each discipline perceives the consumer.

In his exploratory study Hackley (2003c: 321) looking at different disciplinary perspectives within the account team and how this affected attitudes to research, found that the account planner considered the consumer as a "*socially situated meaning-seeking entity*". Gilmore et al. (2001) found that the creatives saw the planner as a brand strategist and conduit to the consumer, and as the starting point for creativity in terms of generating creative insights primarily by interpreting qualitative research data. Creatives welcome research which *informs* their creativity (Hackley, 2003c), as opposed to that which controls, quantifies and post-rationalises their art. Hackley found (2003c: 322) that creatives:

"...hold an implicit model of the consumer as a busy, inattentive entity who could be distracted from daily routine and inspired by the advertisements that depict consumption in aesthetically pleasing ways"

Kelly et al. (2005) similar to Hackley (2003c) found that creatives would go out 'into the field' to observe and improve their understanding of the target audience. Similarly, these practices are recognised in the trade press as contributing to award winning campaigns. For example it was reported in *Campaign* that Lawes and Cartmel, the Lowes creative team, behind the recent award winning campaign for Tesco's, conducted their own research by visiting Tesco stores all over the country to observe consumers in the stores:

"In order to find the right feeling for the campaign, they spent many rainy Wednesdays ...visiting Tesco stores in places like Pontypridd, to see how Tesco affects people in their

everyday lives". This, they claim, gave them a real understanding of the company, which was evident in the work that they produced (Bussey, 2005: 23).

As previously discussed, exploration, immersion and curiosity are instinctive behaviours of creative people. Without these it would be difficult to recognise an interesting problem or solution. Openness to experience and a fluid attention that constantly processes events in the environment are a great advantage in recognising potential novelty (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). In contrast then to the account management who thought of the consumer "*in terms of an economically rational information processing entity*" (Hackley, 2003c: 320) advertising creatives have been described by Hirota (1995: 340) as "*commercial urban ethnographers*".

This chapter will now look at the industry stereotypes in greater detail, and how deeply ingrained they are within the industry culture. This will set in context the changes which are occurring to the traditional structure of the agency and client-agency relationships.

3.6 The Industry Stereotypes

Historically, then, creatives, planners and account people all exist in a tense and often personally unsatisfactory position in which identity consists of conflicting individual voices and group belonging (Cohen, 1995). However, membership of the culture is an important part of their identity (Hirschman, 1989). As an assembly of shared symbols (Cohen, 1995), advertising culture has been built around these departmental specialists, defined not only in terms of their role in the overall process, but also in terms of personality stereotypes and as players occupying a role in a status hierarchy (Duckworth, 2005). This includes media, traditionally not part of the creative development process but as will be described below, it is becoming increasingly involved:

"In personality terms, account people were stereotyped as shallow salesmen (suits without substance), planners were autistic boffins, incapable of creative thinking, creatives were unworldly geniuses incapable of business understanding and, for media, allow me to quote Greg Grimmer's dissection from Campaign a few weeks back, "beer-swilling, football-loving hooligans" (Duckworth, 2005: 33).

As cultural stereotypes they are learned early in the respective practitioners working lives (Duckworth, 2005). They are part of the advertising system's internalisation and socialisation processes into which Duckworth offers some rich insights:

"We learn them deep and hard. When we start our working lives we want to belong...we inevitably treat our bosses as authority figures, and we want not only to learn, but to fit in...with the company, with the industry. So we absorb not just the skills and knowledge that make us professional people, but also the unconscious attitudes, the jokes, the put-downs that identify us as members of one tribe or another. And we get the resentments or feelings of superiority that go with our place in the hierarchy" (Duckworth, 2005: 33).

These inevitably influence the differing judgments on the creative output and not least creatives' intrinsic motivation. Within advertising culture the implicit stereotypes and hierarchies are not exclusive within agencies, as inferred above when describing the media stereotype they cut across the whole communications industry. As Duckworth (2005: 32) explains:

"...Here's the hierarchy I learned on entering the advertising business in the late 70s: creative TV advertising people at the top, then DM (direct marketing), then sales promotion below that, then PR (public relations) and research bringing up the rear...No-one ever sat me down and showed me a diagram. It came from casual remarks, put-downs after meetings, jokes in the pub... "You know when the media department starts wearing a brand, that's the time to give it up"? Or how about DM is "the shit that folds"?"

As previously mentioned, generally creative people are thought to be rebellious and independent. Yet, it is impossible to be creative without having first internalised a domain of culture. And a person must believe in the importance of such a domain in order to learn its rules; hence he or she must to a certain extent be a traditionalist. So it is difficult to know how a person can be creative without being both traditional and conservative and at the same time rebellious and iconoclastic (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). Being only traditional leaves an area unchanged; constantly taking chances without regard to what has been valued in the past rarely leads to novelty that is accepted as an improvement (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). 'Above the line' advertising, for example television, has been habitually used as the primary means of building relationships between consumers and brands (Rainey, 2003). This was because of the traditional 'creative mindset' which believed that all media activity should stem from the 30 second television advertisement, essentially because television was the most high profile way of establishing themselves among their peers (for example, Rainey, 2003; Feldman, 2005; Earls, 2002; Jaffe, 2003).

Here then, the nature of the creative advertising culture and the creative mindset coming together with the traditional creative development process leads to a situation where creatives have historically perceived a need to fight against the system (Hirschman, 1989). Perhaps underpinning this need, as has been described above, is what Bullmore believes arises out of confusion through lack of explicit communication as a consequence of the traditional stereotypes referred to by Duckworth (2005: 33)

"... [Stereotypes] define for many who we are, what we believe we can be and how we allow ourselves to work. They're a kind of instinctive, internal emotional baggage that can limit the ability to see both yourself and other people fully".

Duckworth believes that the cultural stereotypes are holding back the evolution of the industry because they foster an *"us versus them"* attitude, leading to a type of cooperation which is perhaps best described by Sumner (1906, in Kover & Goldberg, 1995:55) as *"antagonistic cooperation"*. Sumner described *"antagonistic cooperation"* as a kind of *"symbiosis"* found in social situations in which the actors need each other to survive but where they mistrust each other (Kover & Goldberg, 1995). For example, a series of IPA debates on creative issues, where some of the industry's key figures gathered in 2003 to discuss whether creatives should be 'allowed' to meet clients was reported in *Campaign* (Barnes, 2003: 22). The article was tellingly called, *The Great Divide: Why are creatives still pigeonholed as crazy mavericks and not allowed to interact directly with clients*. The views expressed by senior leading figures interviewed for this article highlight the divides. For example:

"There are lots of account men out there and the idea of a smelly, long-haired creative meeting their beloved clients is an anathema. I think there's also a problem in that account people have to be 'nice'. This is a major reason why creatives aren't allowed to go and meet clients." (Wnek, creative)

"Then that means the clients need to be educated. If you want greatness, it comes from extraordinary places." (Stringham, client)

"We're all guilty of talking to clients as if they were straight and dull, but they are human beings too." (Campbell, creative)

"They treat us like Martians too. It's a real chicken-and-egg situation." (Wnek, creative)

Csikszentmihalyi (1996) argues that it is often this type of tension within the domain that makes great creative advances possible. This chapter will conclude by looking at the changes which are

occurring within the advertising domain. The impact that these changes have had on creatives' intrinsic motivation and subsequent creativity will then be explored.

3.7 Changing nature of the industry

When tension in the domain occurs, some creative individuals form entirely new organisations outside of the industry norm to further their own creative vision unfettered by pressures of conformity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). In advertising an example of this would be the independent agency called Mother. Mother is structurally distinguished as an agency by having no account management department. Creatives work closely with their clients, taking and responding to brief, presenting work and negotiating its development (Collister, 2005). Mother is not only one of the most lauded agencies among their peers in the UK, it is also one of the most profitable (Collister, 2006; Hicks, 2006):

"I think the interesting thing is the role of the account men and how that's changed. Agencies, such as Mother, that don't have any account people at all seem to work really well and they produce a lot of the best advertising in London" (Savage, 2003: 22).

Their success may reflect the effect of these processes and cultural changes on the intrinsic motivation of this creatively led company. Csikszentmihalyi (1996) found these business start-ups were typically financed independently so as to avoid the processes that come with large companies and tends to mitigate against creativity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). By creating new forms of association these individuals hope to see new problems emerge, leading to solutions that could not be attempted through old ways of thinking (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). Willmott reports (2003: 13) that within the advertising domain:

"...creatively led young agencies...are closer to their clients, and less encumbered by the institutionalised characteristics and internal politics of many of the global groups".

In recent years the success of creatively led independents, their clients and the infusion of some of their working practices into the mainstream, albeit in less extreme variant forms, reflects what Csikszentmihalyi believes is perhaps the most important implication of the systems model, that is the level of creativity in a given place at a given time does not depend only on the amount of individual creativity, it depends just as much on how well suited the respective domains and

fields are to the recognition and diffusion of novel ideas. Csikszentmihalyi (1996) believes that this can make a great deal of practical difference to efforts for enhancing creativity. He gives as an example the renaissance in artistic creativity that took place in Florence between 1400 and 1425, which has some parallels with the contemporary changes and the effect on creatives' intrinsic motivation in advertising culture. The explanation for the renaissance is that the field of art became particularly favourable to the creation of new works at just the same time as the rediscovery of the ancient domains of art. For example when the Florentine bankers, churchmen and other city notaries decided to make their city intimidatingly beautiful, they did not just throw money at artists and wait to see what happened, they became intensely involved in the process of encouraging, evaluating and selecting the works they wanted to see completed. It was because the leading citizens and the common people were so seriously concerned with the outcome of their work that artists pushed to perform beyond their previous limits which would not have been possible without the constant encouragement. In this way:

“Advertising agencies with the same skill set but broader mindset could go under a renaissance in the next 10 years” (Rainey, 2003).

Traditional agency structures are “*breaking down*” because clients are “*ever more demanding of their agencies*” (Barnes, 2003: 33). Clients want to get straight to the creative ideas and do not have the time or the patience to deal with the historically convoluted route to the creative (Bell & Hockney, 2004; Feldman, 2005; Barnes, 2003; Delaney, 2006). According to the Incorporated Society of British Advertisers (ISBA) there has been a “*sea-change in how clients relate to their agencies*” (Trickett, 1999: 26). Clients want greater awareness of the process and this has been a prime reason for clients moving their accounts over the past few years:

“Fewer clients are happy to brief an agency and then sit back without making any further input until the creative solutions arrive” (Campbell, in Trickett, 1999).

For example, Mother's *Observer* client attributes part of their mutually successful relationship to the fact that creatives at Mother are good to work *with* (Collister, 2005). This is because they make quick decisions, they do not dither which always leads to compromise, nor do they defer judgement to focus groups. While Mother research the product in some detail, they rarely test their advertising, preferring to trust their own understanding of the brand and rely on a mixture of gut-feel and experience when judging ideas (Collister, 2006). Rather than the historic

master/servant patronage relationship, between client and supplier, there is a mutual belief that if one prospers, both prosper (Collister, 2006). Mother's way of working suits clients who want to be closer to the creative process and creatives who find direct dialogue intrinsically beneficial to their creative processes:

"Abba to Zappa is a great example of how we do things. It's quite possible that if the idea had been presented by an intermediary then it would have gone nowhere...instead we were able to listen to the client's comments, which triggered off suggestions we were able to discuss and agree there and then" (Elliott, Creative Director at Mother, quoted in Collister, 2005).

Michell (1986/87) found that advertisers attach more significance to the general positioning adopted by agencies toward creativity than agencies fully comprehend. An agency's creative vision and values are not only important for the intrinsic motivation of the creative but for clarity in the mind of the client of what the agency stands for. For example, at the end of last year Innocent Drinks announced the appointment of Lowe London as its advertising agency ahead of a £7 million campaign partly due to the agency's pledge to implement environmental change:

"the decision to appoint Lowe London was a combination of creativity and values...It is important to us to work with people who share our values (Rawlins, quoted in Hancock, 2006).

Levitt (1983) stressed the growing importance of the service relationship over a transaction (West & Paliwoda, 1996). In a creative transaction, given the inherent risks of creativity, there is a strong need for direct interaction and information sharing at the client level to diminish risk, both real and perceived:

"Keeping creatives away from clients makes little sense...the structure that should be in place is the one that works best for the brand. And the idea of a Chinese whispers briefing process seems riddled with risk" (Bainbridge, 2001: 23).

Direct social exchange builds up trust by demonstrating a capacity to keep promises and shows commitment. For a client agency partnership, to be mutually successful, trust is essential. As Brook (2006: 9) observes in the Weiden + Kennedy and Honda relationship:

"...the partnership has produced some of the most memorable advertising of the decade ...sales of Honda cars rose by 47% between 2002 and 2005...They paint a picture of a

very accomodating client interested in advertising innovation ...Papworth and Davidson [joint creative directors] say the secret of the success seems to have involved a large amount of trust."

Bell (2004) believed that mutually satisfactory creative work is not simply the product of a great creative team or a great creative agency but a 'brave' client, who knows how to foster intrinsic motivation and therefore facilitate creative thinking:

"The client has to believe in the power of great creativity for the campaign to be effective. The starting point for both client and creative is to acknowledge that developing outstanding creativity in pursuit of business goals is a team effort, a two-way street" (Bell, 2004: 20).

Rather than working with a fear of failure and having to be right at every stage, Rainey believes:

"...enlightened trial and error beats the planning of flawless intellectuals every time - we fail faster to succeed sooner" (Rainey, 2003: 223).

To highlight the success of this type of approach and to return the *Observer's* 'Abba to Zappa' campaign, as the campaign developed so it changed the marketing team's thinking not just in terms of the magazine campaign but about how to advertise the other *Observer* supplements. Neither the client nor the agency had set out to create an integrated idea but here was an example of an idea stretched across all forms of media:

"We realised we'd got it wrong with our initial TV launch...the idea was brilliantly elastic. It worked on t-shirts and in print in ads the size of a postage stamp and on four-sheet or ninety six sheet posters. It would even work on TV" (Byrne, quoted in Collister, 2006: 3).

In terms of a mutually satisfactory relationship the Abba to Zappa campaign started as a small idea which grew large to encompass all types of media. The process was facilitated through a client-agency relationship built on openness and a willingness to explore new ideas. From the agency's perspective the client briefed the agency on a small project but recognised they had a big idea on their hands and changed their minds as a result. The client was also happy to work with some of the agency's younger people, demanding talent rather than status. From the client's perspective, having a history of buying award-winning work gave them permission to cajole their agency into doing the best for them (Collister, 2006). Through such transparency perhaps

traditional cultures will evolve; indeed as one Creative Director has noted, they have slowly evolved to an extent:

“Twenty years ago advertising creativity was seen as a strange black art... Now better creatives are more aware of the business reality of what clients are going through” (Dye, quoted in Trickett, 1999).

In collaborative endeavours creatives and clients learn from each other by teaching each other what they know and engaging in mutual appropriation. Creatives can benefit from continual exposure to the in-depth knowledge clients have of their brands and target audiences. For example, the established partnership between DDB and Volkswagen:

“We don’t do formal with them, getting the pastries in and all that...the clients wants exactly what we want, advertising that gets noticed and which budgets go further so under those circumstances it tends to be a much more collaborative process (Harrison, www.dandad.co.uk).

In the case of Volkswagen the client has an office in the agency and this innovative ‘embedded client’ approach has greatly enhanced the working relationship and its benefits. Given that communication breakdowns are common seeds of difficulty in client–agency relationships, the ability to ‘pop’ into client’s office is perceived as a way of avoiding this type of pitfall (Collister, 2006). The sense of partnership is further strengthened by the length of time the client has been in the job which has allowed strong personal relationships to develop with the with brand team. Here then, particularly with the history of DDB and Volkswagen advertising, there is a correlation between successful client-agency relationship and the nurturing of good creative advertising (Michell, 1986/87). The defining issues were clear briefing and openness to execution, client-agency personnel, client courage and vision on creativity (Collister, 2006).

This growing demand for connectedness and integration is driven in part by clients whose businesses have become increasingly ‘joined up’ over the past two decades. According to advertising practitioners there is less talk of above and below-the-line (Erich, 2005). Rather clients look for strategic partners to help them establish a clearly differentiated position and brand personality across all media channels. The divergent and (increasingly) digital media environment means that there are an increasing number of ways that clients can communicate with their consumers (Gilmore et al., 2001; Crosier et al., 2003). Franz (2002) argues that new

media does not usually replace old (Franz, 2000). Rather, what actually changes is the way in which they are used, the functions they fulfil for the media user and the individual budget being spent on them (Gilmore et al., 2001; Crosier et al., 2003). A recent report published by the IPA (Bellwether Report on UK marketing spend, 2005) which found the trend amongst clients was to place their media spend in more accountable channels (than media advertising) of communication such as the internet and direct marketing (www.ipa.co.uk). Franz (2000) suggests that the growing number of media limits the attention capacity of the media user, resulting in more selective media behaviour; and this has become evident,

“It appears that the communications industry may be in the throes of a paradigm shift...traditional communications thinking casts consumers as passive receivers...today’s consumer is behaving far less passively...target audiences aren’t a collection of isolated individuals but a community of interconnected people within which brand perceptions are shaped by multiple influences – of which brand communication is just one. In this view factors such as word of mouth, user imagery (for example cool urbanites being the first to wear iPods) and observed behaviours (like putting ice in your Magners cider) can be considered equally alongside advertising... (Collin, 2006: 4 -5)

Therefore being able to meet an increasing client focus on brand ideas that go beyond traditional advertising solutions the agency reduces the threat posed by the management and brand consultants (for example, Rainey, 2003; Duckworth, 2005; Billings, 2006; Delaney, 2006). In this way while not underestimating the importance of craft skills, much of the emphasis within the industry is now on creative training that embraces a greater understanding of media, of business issues and of consumer trends (Billings, 2004). Creative graduates with an appreciation of real business issues are those likely to be most sought after by the leading creative agencies (Billings, 2004). For creatives the central issue now revolves around the ‘big idea’ (Rainey, 2003):

“So a redefinition of creativity to include upstream creative thinking and the delivery of brand ideas is not to deny the importance of advertising and the craft skill of making great ads. It is simply to broaden the scope of the industry” (Rainey, 2003:223).

The ‘idea’ is defined as a single creative or intellectual property that clearly and consistently communicates something about the brand: *“in the total media age creative ideas are the vital glue that holds together and provides coherence and coordination” (Grimes, 2004: 53)*. A media neutral idea can be synergistically brought to life in all forms of media (for example, Earls,

2002; Cowley, 2002; Law, 1994; White, 1999; Schmetterer, 2003; Rainey, 2003; Jaffe, 2003; HHCL & Partners, 1994; Grimes, 2004; Kaye, 2002). Ideas are important in providing consumers with the competitive edge between brands and products. Creatives are expected to have broad perspective attached to their specific skills and an approach that is both flexible and wide-ranging, which in part explains the evolution of an 'ideas based' partnership

The core skills required for ideas are ones that many agencies already have such as strategic problem solving and creative thinking that includes but is not restricted to TV and press. Media is now part of the creative challenge. These changes are seen by some in the creative community to *contribute* to creativity. As the challenge broadens so does the creative skill-set and mindset, a point made by Weiden + Kennedy's co-creative director in an article titled '*We had to do something different*':

"in the new media age there is a role for the traditional TV advert but only if it's brilliant: with the media platforms changing and so much stuff coming at you from all angles we had to do something different and something true..." (Papworth, quoted in Brook, 2006: 9).

However while media and the structure of the industry may change, the fundamentals of the creative motivation do not. These changes in media are now reflected in the D&AD annual awards i.e. there are now categories in interactive, digital media, integrated advertising (www.dandad.co.uk), thus keeping the creative challenge fresh and exciting. This is important because the basic condition for creatives remaining in a domain is that they can continue to see challenging, meaningful and enjoyable possibilities for creation.

3.8 Conclusion

Just like creatives, “*scholars must say something new while connecting what they say to what’s already been said, and this must be done in such a way that people will understand the point*” (Becker, 1986: 141). The aim of this literature review has been to provide an understanding of where this new research fits into the existing data: to contextualise the study in the current body of research.

In this chapter key areas from the creativity and advertising literature, have been discussed. This chapter has provided an understanding of advertising creatives within the context of their culture and social processes and how these impact on their creativity. The impact of the industry stereotypes and the ‘historic tension’ on the creative processes were also explored, and how these are changing with the ‘new’ creative challenges.

Creativity is central to the advertising industry: this underpins relationships, conflicts, agency cultures and reputations. Further, within this broader advertising culture, advertising creatives have their own ‘creative culture’, with stereotypes, peers, norms, values, expectations and so forth. There is a need to deepen the understanding of advertising creativity by adopting a systematic perspective that includes the cultural and social context in which the creative person lives and operates.

More broadly, this literature review has identified two gaps in these related fields of literature: in the creativity literature, the lived experiences of advertising creatives, their field and culture have been unexplored, and in the advertising literature, researchers have not taken advantage of the creativity literature’s systematic / holistic / life history insights and theories. It is therefore argued that this study will fill a number of important gaps in the current academic and management knowledge. The life history approach taken within this study will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 Introduction

“Creativity is as much a cultural and social as it is a psychological event”
(Csikszentmihalyi, 1999: 313).

Creative people and their creativity need to be understood within the context of their culture (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). The life history technique explores the thoughts, experiences and behaviour of individuals: how they interpret, understand and define the world around them (Faraday & Plummer, 1979). Thus the relevance of the life history method to this study is explained succinctly by Plummer (2001: 404):

“...telling the story of a life...enables pathways into a culture”

Initially, the research aims and objectives of the study will be set out. The life history approach will then be defined and its appropriateness for this research fully explained. The type of life history selected for the purposes of this study will be discussed and the limitations of the method will also be addressed. The sample will then be explored and the recruitment strategies outlined. Finally, this chapter will describe how and why grounded theory strategies have been applied to the analysis of the life histories obtained and generated during the course of this study.

4.2. Research Aim

The aim of this study is to explore the life histories of advertising creatives and the nature of advertising creativity. This is because the lived experiences of advertising creatives have not been explored by the creativity or advertising literature. Therefore an understanding of these individuals, their domain and consequently the nature of their creativity is limited. Indeed, more specifically, theorising of creativity is also limited within the advertising research literature. A limitation within the advertising and creativity literature is that historically the main focus of creativity research has been on studying creativity as an individual trait or as an individual process. As Hackley notes (1998: 127) *“creativity is spoken of as an entity”*; in the main

researchers have ignored the interaction between the creative individual, the domain and the field within the creative process.

Relatively recently the influential life history work of researchers such as Csikszentmihalyi (for example, 1988b, 1996) and John-Steiner (1987, 2000) has shown how this contextual approach can enhance our understanding of creative people and their creativity. Therefore by employing the life history approach this study will build on studies such as Hirschman (1989), Hackley (for example, 1998, 2003c) and Kover (for example, 1995), which examine the social processes of advertising culture to explore the creatives' culture which is implicit and explicit within these broader processes. This study will also 'look behind the scenes' to provide an understanding of the creatives' lives and the influence of these on their creativity.

The objectives of the research will now be set out.

4.3 Research Objectives

The research objectives were to explore:

4.3.1 Creatives' personal life histories

Creatives' personal backgrounds influence their creativity. Within this context, the family backgrounds and educational environments of the creatives are especially pertinent areas for exploration. In particular the creativity literature has identified two themes which influence the life course of creative people: their intrinsic motivation and marginality. These are important areas of exploration for this research.

4.3.2 Creatives' professional trajectories

The advertising creative's career trajectory has not been fully explored by the research literature. This research will give a richer picture of the creatives' culture and career. For example, in the current literature (e.g. Hirschman, 1989) it is understood that creatives are driven by career advancement and peer recognition, but how does that career start and finish, and how is it

constructed? These are important organisational/management considerations, for example, understanding creatives' motivations at different stages of their careers.

4.3.3 Creatives' working practices and interactions

"It is becoming increasingly clear that great ideas emerge more from ideas exchanged between two people, than from solitary introspection" (Csikszentmihalyi, 2000:i). In the creativity literature the 'lone creator' is increasingly recognised as outdated. This research will contribute to the currently underdeveloped area of collaborative creativity research (John-Steiner, 2000).

The advertising research literature has not fully explored the impact of current structural and cultural changes on 'traditional' agency working practices. These are areas which are current, and therefore they are widely discussed and debated in the practitioner literature. This research will therefore update current knowledge of creatives' working practices and relationships.

4.3.4 Creatives' perceptions of creativity

Based on the literature there is a view that a creative's perception of creativity is work that wins awards. However as Rainey (2003: 217) has stated the *"definition of creativity is broadening"*. This study will therefore explore the creatives' perceptions of whether, how and why this is the case. These perceptions are pertinent to understanding what factors are currently affecting the creative culture and their predictions for future of advertising creativity.

The various approaches to studying creativity will be discussed in order to explain why the interpretive life history is the most appropriate method for meeting the research aim and objectives.

4.4 Approaches to the study of creative people

Historically the main methods for studying creativity have been psychometric (for example Guildford, 1950, 1967; Torrance, 1974) and experimental (Barron, 1968, 1969; Eysenck, 1993; Gough, 1979; Mackinnon, 1965; De Bono, 1973; Osborn, 1953). Manipulation and control are

the defining characteristics of experimental research (Runco & Sakamoto, 1999). As Hyman (1964: 70) described it, experimentation focuses on,

“...induced changes in performance... [creativity is] something which can change or be changed within an individual rather than [being] something that varies among individuals”.

This distinguishes experimental work from psychometric work; the latter focuses on the individual differences that exist without experimental manipulation. The starting point for all psychometric measures of creativity are Guilford's (1950, 1967) tests of creativity thinking, which were later refined by Torrance (1974).

“Practically all current work on creativity is based upon methodologies that are either psychometric in nature or were developed in response to perceived weaknesses of creativity measurement” (Plucker & Renzulli, 1999: 35).

The approaches above have been criticised primarily for being one dimensional. Csikszentmihalyi (1996:362) describes the *“highly individualised”* creative personality as *“relatively complex”*. This complexity is the result of the fruitful interaction between two opposing tendencies. Creatives create their own careers but at the same time they learn and respect the rules of the domain and are responsive to the opinions of the field – as long as those opinions do not conflict with personal experience. Therefore, in the *“...trade-off between the precision of quantitative methods and the complexity-capturing ability of qualitative ones”* (McCracken, 1988: 16), quantitative methods are increasingly seen as inadequate.

Wallach (1971), the most influential psychometric researcher of the 1960s, proposed a new direction for the field at the beginning of the 1970s (Feldman et al., 1994). He argued that efforts to isolate a trait of ‘creativity’ to complement the trait of ‘intelligence’ had gone as far as was useful. The work had shown that intelligence test scores were only modestly related to creative accomplishment and virtually unrelated in the above average range (Feldman et al., 1994). Recognising that IQ would tell little about creative potential and realising that so-called creativity tests did not predict real-world creative accomplishments, Wallach urged that detailed studies of creativity in various specific fields would yield better insights into the nature of the creative process.

The focus of creativity research, then, has changed in recent years from trait to process and from broad generalities to a domain-specific focus (Feldman et al., 1994). Rather than trying to predict which individuals were in general more likely to do creative work, researchers started asking questions about the nature of creative thinking in various domains and how it develops. Investigators became less concerned with differential prediction and their interests turned to more developmental issues, social context influences and domain questions. The emphasis on how new thoughts are constructed and under what conditions, within specific content areas and cultural contexts can thus be said to mark a major shift in the field of creativity research during the past decade (Feldman et al., 1994; Mayer, 1999).

In this vein, biographical methods have begun to feature prominently within the creativity literature (for example Gruber, 1981a). The biographical approaches to the study of creativity are based on analysing the case histories of eminent creative people such as Darwin (Gruber, 1981a) Freud, Gandhi and Virginia Woolf (Gardener, 1997). According to the biographical view, creativity is best understood by examining the events in the life of a creative person, including detailed examination of creative episodes or 'epiphanies' (Denzin, 1989). In short, biographical researchers examine those creative individuals whose status as creators is unquestionable (Mayer, 1999; Gardener, 1997; Gruber, 1989; Feldman et al., 1994).

Rather than using quantitative methods, biographical researchers rely on qualitative descriptions. This is the method's strength, the richness and depth of knowledge which may be gleaned by carefully documenting the case histories of creative people. These works add a great deal to the understanding of the processes through which specific individuals have achieved their greatest works (Feldman et al., 1994). The biographical approach provides a level of detail that cannot be matched by psychological and experimental approaches. However sceptics question whether a coherent theory of creativity can be built from the highly detailed case histories of a few elite individuals (Feldman et al., 1999).

The biographical approach has led to the realisation among some creativity researchers that creativity is not an individual phenomenon, but rather relies on the interaction and judgement of people, socially and historically (Moran & John-Steiner, 2003). The contextual approach broadens this biographical approach to describe creative individuals, eminent or otherwise, in their social, cultural and evolutionary context (Feldman et al., 1994; Csikszentmihalyi, 1988b,

1990, 1994, 1996). Mayer (1999: 422) notes that in comparison to the individualised approaches to studying creativity,

“A major strength of the contextual approaches is a broadening of the study of creativity. The narrow focus on cognition epitomised by the psychometric and experimental approaches should be widened to recognise the social, cultural and evolutionary context of creative cognition”

As discussed in the literature review, Csikszentmihalyi argues for a systems model of creativity that includes the domain, field and individual. It is within this context that the life history method is appropriately applied because it is

“...a deliberate attempt to define the growth of a person in a cultural milieu and to make theoretical sense of it” (Dollard, 1935: 3)

Thus the life history method is an interpretive research approach. The following section will discuss what an interpretive paradigm means and why it fits the frame of reference for this study. The life history approach and its appropriateness to this study will then be explored.

4.5 Interpretive paradigm

“The most powerful kinds of social understanding we have are qualitative because we are interpreting creatures” (Hackley, 2001: 191).

A paradigm is a set of assumptions, implicit and explicit, about the best way to approach the pursuit of scientific knowledge (Kuhn, 1970; Hackley, 2003b). Broadly speaking, there are two opposing schools of thought: anti-naturalist (interpretive) and naturalist (positivist).

For positivists, social science is an attempt to gain predictive and explanatory knowledge of the external world. To do this, they must construct theories, which consist of highly general universal statements expressing the regular relationships that are found to exist in that world (Fay, 1972; Rosenberg, 1988). Such statements must be objectively tested by means of experiment and observation, which, according to positivists, are the only source of sure and certain empirical knowledge. These general statements enable positivist researchers both to predict and explain the phenomena that they discover by means of systematic observation and experiment (Fay, 1972; Little, 1991). Here it is not the purpose of science to get ‘behind’ or

'beyond' the phenomena (Keats & Urry, 1975/82). For the positivist there are only regularities which can be systematically represented in the universal laws of scientific theory (Little, 1991).

"[The] basic language of the Cartesian approach is mathematics. It describes and explains from the outside. It defines relationships among data and from these deduces causes...but there is another approach to social science... [Giambattista] Vico wrote that only people understand people...if we insist on research as only number processing, we become clerks, ancillary to any decisions. If we develop empathy and intuitive understanding, then we become more. We help understanding of marketing; we help make decisions..." (Kover 1982/83: 22; emphasis in original)

In contrast, the anti-naturalist views of social enquiry require interpretive understanding as distinct from causal explanations. By investigating social life, the interpretive researcher explores the activities that are meaningful to the people that are engaged in them. Here humans are considered as self-aware beings, conferring sense and purpose on what they do. Therefore from an interpretive perspective, in order to describe social life accurately it is important to first of all grasp the meanings which people apply to their behaviour (Giddens, 1989).

"We shall never understand fully the human personality if we are to look at it statistically as a sum of phenomena of acts, and the like, without an integral biographical plan of personality, without a main line of development which transforms the history of man's life from a row of disconnected and separate episodes into a connected, integral, life long process" (Vygotsky, 1928/1993, cited in John-Steiner & Moran, 2003: 65).

Thus, as opposed to the Cartesian-inspired approaches of the positivist science, this study employs an interpretive approach. Contemporary researchers have identified and measured the cognitive and personality traits associated with creativity. There is now a need to study how such traits come to be, and how they develop in their social and cultural contexts. As such, this study will not be concerned with objective facts, measurement, or scientific verification, nor will it attempt to gain predictive or explanatory knowledge in the positivistic sense. The advertising creatives' world will not be analysed or written about from the "*outside*" (Kover, 1982/83: 22), and their creativity will not be studied as an "*entity*" (Hackley, 1998: 127). The knowledge needed to understand creative behaviour is embedded in the complex network of their social interaction. The life history approach taken to explore such embeddedness will be contextualised, explained and justified.

4.6 Background to the Life History Method

A life history can be defined as a

“...written account of a person’s life based on spoken conversations and interviews”
(Titon, 1980: 283).

The life history method came to prominence during the heyday of sociology at the University of Chicago in the 1920s and 1930s. Although by the 1940s there was a general drift by sociologists toward quantifiable statistical analysis, the Chicago sociologists came to believe that the life history method provided a unique picture of an individual’s behaviour, experience and thought that was unattainable by other methods (Becker, 1966). The strength of the life history method for this study lies in the fact that it enables insights into the historic social and cultural formations of a creative’s life and career, to a much greater extent than other qualitative work. Giddens (1989: 680) writes,

“Life histories are particularly valuable when research is concerned with connections between psychological processes and social processes.”

The life history technique documents the inner experiences of individuals; how they interpret, understand and define the world around them (Faraday & Plummer, 1979). The focus of life history is primarily concerned with the subjective meanings of individuals; the ‘taken for granted’ world of people, their assumptions and what it is they find problematic about life and their lives. This is relevant to this study because,

“Creativity requires a continuity of concern, an intense awareness of one’s inner life combined with sensitivity to the external world” (John-Steiner, 1987: 220).

Life histories provide access to essential data on the way social forces affect individuals and the way individuals affect social happenings (Thomas & Thomas, 1928; Thomas & Znaniecki, 1927). Denzin (1978,1989) emphasises the close relationship between life history and symbolic interactionism. Symbolic interactionism is a social constructionist approach to understanding social life that focuses on how reality is constructed by creative actors through their interactions with others. Social constructionism, broadly speaking, holds that,

"...Meaning is a social construction as opposed to a purely private cognitive construction" (Hackley, 1998: 125).

Social constructionism stems from a particular epistemological position, or a theory of knowledge (Benton & Craib, 2001). In terms of the study of creativity, this epistemological position

"...allows researchers to see words as constitutive of social events and does away with the need to sustain the fiction that creativity (or whatever) subsists in the universe as an entity. On this view, research into the organisational (or personal) need not engage with sterile definitional issues of what creativity "really" is and what a creative person is "really" doing. Creativity itself is seen as a social construction which cannot subsist apart from the ways people talk about it..." (Hackley, 1998: 127).

Mead (1934), Blumer (1969), and Becker (1970), all proponents of symbolic interactionism, believed that the social world may be approached as being constituted through joint actions and significant others (Denzin, 1978). People act toward things based on the intrinsic meaning those things have for them; and these meanings are derived from social interaction and are modified through interpretation (Blumer, 1969).

Mead (1934) believed that language allows individuals to become self-conscious beings, aware of their own individuality; the key to this view is the symbol. A symbol is something that stands for something else (Giddens, 1989; Denzin, 1978, 1989). According to symbolic interactionism a child learns to interact with others by assimilating a shared system of symbolic representation. For example the word 'kettle' is a symbol by means of which a child represents the object, kettle. Mead argued that if the child can think of a kettle even when it is not visible, that individual has learned to think of the object symbolically. Symbolic (internal) thought frees the child from being limited in their experience to what he or she can actually see, hear, or feel.

Mead believed that infants and young children first of all develop as 'social beings' by imitating the actions of those around them. Play is one way in which this takes place (Giddens, 1989; Denzin, 1978). A child's play evolves from simple imitation to more complicated games in which the young child will act out an adult role. Mead called this 'taking the role of the other' (Giddens, 1989). It is at this stage that the child develops a sense of self. The child achieves an understanding of him or herself, as separate agent – as a 'me' – by seeing him or herself through the eyes of others (Giddens, 1989; Denzin, 1978). According to Mead the child achieves self

awareness when he or she learns to distinguish between 'me' from 'I'. The 'I' is the 'unsocialised' infant with spontaneous wants and needs. The 'me', as Mead uses the term, is the social self (Giddens, 1989; Denzin, 1978). From a symbolic interactionist perspective, a further stage in the child's development is when he or she understands the rules of games and notions of fairness. The child at this stage learns to grasp what Mead termed the 'generalised other', which refers to the general values and moral rules of the culture in which he or she is developing (Giddens, 1989).

"Creativity...depends on development, and development depends on creativity" (Moran & John-Steiner, 2003: 63).

Mead influenced the work of Vygotsky (for example: 1960/1987; 1929/1994a; 1930/1997d; 1930/1998c; 1936/1999a) who suggested that creativity is not an individual phenomenon but rather relied on the interaction and judgement of people, *socially* and *historically*. A central argument of Vygotsky's theory is that all mental functions are first experienced socially. People come to know the world through transforming the information they receive from the speech and action of others; they construct knowledge based on these experiences. Similar to Mead, Vygotsky (1930/1998c) thought that children first learn to create, manipulate and give meaning to signs and symbols through play. Vygotsky's conception of play parallels Piaget (1962), Vygotsky (1930/1998c) asserted that imagination was internalised play developed in conjunction with others, however to Piaget (1962) play was externalised imagination that spontaneously arose when playing alone (Sawyer, 2003). According to Vygotsky (1930/1997d), during adolescence once play was internalised, it formed the basis of fantasy or imagination as inner speech developed. Inner speech was the condensation of meaning derived from social interaction (John-Steiner, 1987) and was related to the individual's own experience. In adolescence creative imagination resulted when imagination and thinking in concepts became conjoined, which, in adulthood could mature into artistic and scientific creativity (Moran & John-Steiner, 2003).

Thus Vygotsky conceived of developmental and creative processes as internalisation or appropriation of cultural tools and social interaction. Internalisation was not just copying but the reorganisation of incoming information and mental structures based on the individual's characteristics and existing knowledge (John-Steiner, 1987). This was a significant aspect of lifelong learning and development. The dynamic form that resulted from this process was the

individual personality; the embodied social mind. Vygotsky (1930/1997d) believed that a personality forms and transforms through the use of creative imagination and personal experience of developmental internalisation and creative externalisation. Creative externalisation was the construction and synthesis of emotion based meanings and cognitive symbols. Once expressed these meanings and symbols were embodied in the creative products that endured over time. The dynamic constructions that result from externalisation were materialised meanings, composed of shared ideas, beliefs, knowledge, emotions, and culture (Moran & John-Steiner, 2003).

By studying advertising creative collaboration, this study follows Vygotsky's call to research the creative process as it happens; the study of collaborative activity contributes to discovering covert processes, because they are expressed and verbalised. According to Engestrom (1987: 45),

“One of the most persistent methodological difficulties of studying thinking has to do with access to online data from thought processes. When thinking is defined as a private, individual phenomenon only indirect data is accessible. Thinking embedded in collaborative practice must to a significant degree take the form of talk, gesture, use of artefacts, or some other publicly accessible instrumentality; otherwise mutual formation of ideas would be rendered impossible. Collaborative thinking opens up access to direct data on thought processes”.

Creative advertising solutions emerge from collaborative thinking. This dynamic problem-solving has been found to be a process of internal and external dialogue between the creative partners (Kover, 1995; Bohm, 1996). As noted above inner speech is the condensation of meaning derived from social interaction (John-Steiner, 2000). It relates to the creative individual's own experience, to form a more intricately interconnected web of understanding of him or herself and his or her world. Therefore to understand the creative process and creativity better it is important to study their lives. John-Steiner (1987: 218) proposed that 'inner speech writing' were cryptic forms of creative thought that helped creatives plan, organise, and transform their ideas. The creatives' interaction involves the manipulation of symbols, words, meanings and languages. The meaning of objects lies in the actions those creatives take towards them. But what is involved in this dialogue is the interpretive understanding between themselves, and of their creative output by others. Creativity involves bringing something new to the realm of social meaning.

“The tendency of human beings to intentionally transform their physical and social worlds is unique and exclusively human process...this focus...puts our work [the systems theory of creativity] squarely in the tradition best exemplified by...Vygotsky.” (Feldman et al., 1994: 17).

Vygotsky has influenced Csikszentmihalyi's (for example 1988b, 1990, 1994, 1996) and John-Steiner (1987, 2000), not least because they all recognise the critical role of social processes in creativity. As Csikszentmihalyi (1996) and John-Steiner (1987, 2000) have both shown, creative life history 'tellers' compose their life histories through parents, teachers, creative peers, mentors, and friends etc. who may have influenced their life and work. Recognising that there are important aspects of the development of creativity that transcend an individual's talent in no way diminishes the importance of the individual. It simply shows that there are interpersonal, social, and educational relationships that are almost always critical to their story (for example Amabile, 1983, 1990, 1996; Kasof, 1995a, 1995b). Thus the value of the life history to this study of creatives is the joining and recording of these relationships and structures of experience (Denzin, 1989). In adopting such an approach, this study will produce a new understanding of the cultural and social (personal and professional) construction of the advertising creatives' lives and their creativity.

This chapter will now explain and justify the approach taken to the collection of the creatives' life histories.

4.7 Approach to the Life History interview

There are three main forms of the life history: the complete, the topical, and the edited (Allport, 1942). All these forms contain three central features: the life history is the person's own story of his or her life; the social and cultural situation to which the creative and others see the creative responding; and the sequence of past experiences and situations in the subject's life (Denzin, 1978). Each of the respective forms will be discussed in turn.

The central feature of the *complete* life history is a careful and studied representation of *one* person's entire life experiences. The complete life history attempts to cover the entire sweep of the person's life experiences. It will necessarily be long, many sided and complex. For example

in Shaw's (1966) life history of a juvenile delinquent; the reader finds the subject, Stanley, describing his early childhood experiences, educational history, early contacts with the underworld, his initial reactions to being defined as deviant, his association with other deviants and finally his later experiences in detention homes. Juxtaposed against this first person description were other secondary forms of life history data, such as data concerning Stanley's neighbourhood and information from 'officials' including prison officials involved in his life and his criminal record. The truthfulness of Stanley's statements is established by comparing them with interviews obtained from his stepmother, family letters and other documents that relate to Stanley's life (Denzin, 1978). This material when presented with Stanley's first person account and those of his significant others, enable the reader to acquire a picture of Stanley's life.

The *topical* life history shares all the features of the complete form except that only one dimension of the subject's life is presented. For example Conwell and Sutherland's (Conwell & Sutherland, 1937) topical life history of a professional thief was only concerned with the experiences of one thief as these related to the social organisation of professional crime. What the reader finds is simply one man's conception of his profession with interpretations and annotations offered by Conwell and Sutherland to clarify unusual terms and phrases (Denzin, 1978).

Finally the *edited* life history may be topical or complete (in the sense that it attempts to cover the *entire* life span). Its key and differentiating feature is the continual interspersing of comments, explanations and questions by someone other than the focal subject ('the editor') (Denzin, 1978). For purposes of theory construction and hypothesis testing, some degree of editing and interspersing of comments by the researcher must be present. Without such intrusions the life history must stand as its own sociological document.

The topical and complete life history approaches are at the two ends of a life history spectrum. In consideration of the two alternatives and the practicalities of this study e.g. time constraints, this research generated as complete life histories as was practically feasible. These life stories were also edited.

All of the life history interviews were based around a topic guide, which was developed by the researcher. The guide was designed to meet the aim and objectives of this study. Therefore the

topic guide themes were: their family; their childhood; early interests; their education; their 'discovery' of advertising as a vocation; their experiences of 'starting out'; their experiences of working in advertising; their thoughts on the future of advertising; their thoughts on their future; and their description of creativity. A copy of the life history topic guide is in Appendix A.

In keeping with the exploratory nature of the life history method the questions were not necessarily asked in the same order, or in exactly the same words. Instead, research themes were probed, with each interview tailored to the individual creative. This was important because the researcher wanted to capture the creatives' complexities and idiosyncrasies (John-Steiner, 1987; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996).

Thus the researcher's priority was to keep the interview as close to a natural conversation as possible. The use of the researcher as an "*instrument*" in the collection (and analysis) of data was facilitated by her first hand knowledge of the advertising culture and discourse (Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Reeves Sanday, 1979; McCracken, 1988). This knowledge and the researcher's previous experience as a market researcher were also useful.

The discussions were conducted in environments familiar to the creatives (Thompson, Locander & Pollio, 1989, 1990), for example, in the creatives' own offices; in an agency meeting room; in the open plan area within their agencies; in a favoured bar; and for one freelance art director, in his home. The researcher ensured that a relaxed *rapport* was established prior to the interview. Here again the researcher's advertising background was useful in terms of establishing at the outset that she was familiar with the advertising culture and discourse. However the researcher did not explicitly talk about her background until after the interviews.

The researcher ensured that she had a professional but relaxed demeanour. For example while she was casually dressed, she was 'prepared' in terms of recording equipment and topic guide materials. She also gave the participants a brief description of the nature of the research. The researcher also gave the participants reassurances of confidentiality. These reassurances have been honoured in the findings chapter of this study.

All of the interviews were digitally recorded and then transcribed verbatim. They generally lasted about two hours, although some of the conversations were shorter and some lasted quite a

bit longer. The shortest interview was an hour and a quarter, while the longest ran to slightly over three hours. The resultant transcripts provided rich as well as comprehensive data. The researcher also wrote down ideas and notes throughout the interview process because she was aware that such memo-making was potentially the crucial step between coding and analysis (Glaser, 1992).

The sample will now be detailed before looking at the different recruitment strategies which were used.

4.8 The sample

The sample was initially guided by a number of different selection criteria to capture a range of creative 'types' at different stages in their lives and professional trajectories. Each of these criteria will be explained in turn before looking at the judgement and theory guiding the sample construction:

4.8.1 Agency reputation

Within advertising's creative culture the creative's career trajectory is determined mainly by the reputation of the agencies that they work for (Fletcher, 1999).

Agency reputations fall broadly into two different categories. In the industry an agency is either known for being service led or creatively led (www.ipa.co.uk).

A service led agency means that the bulk of creative work will tend to be 'low risk' or answering briefs where there is little room for creative input e.g. larger financial or retail based clients. The agency culture will be centred on servicing the client rather than the creative product.

In contrast the focus of a creatively led agency is on producing a respected and quality creative product which ideally has the potential to win awards. The creatives in these agencies tend to have more room to experiment creatively and produce 'riskier' work than those answering the briefs in service led agencies. This is particularly true in creative 'hotshops' which are typically smaller, independent creative agencies.

To get a picture of the dynamics of creative culture, it was important that this study interviewed creatives from both types of agencies.

4.8.2 Agency location

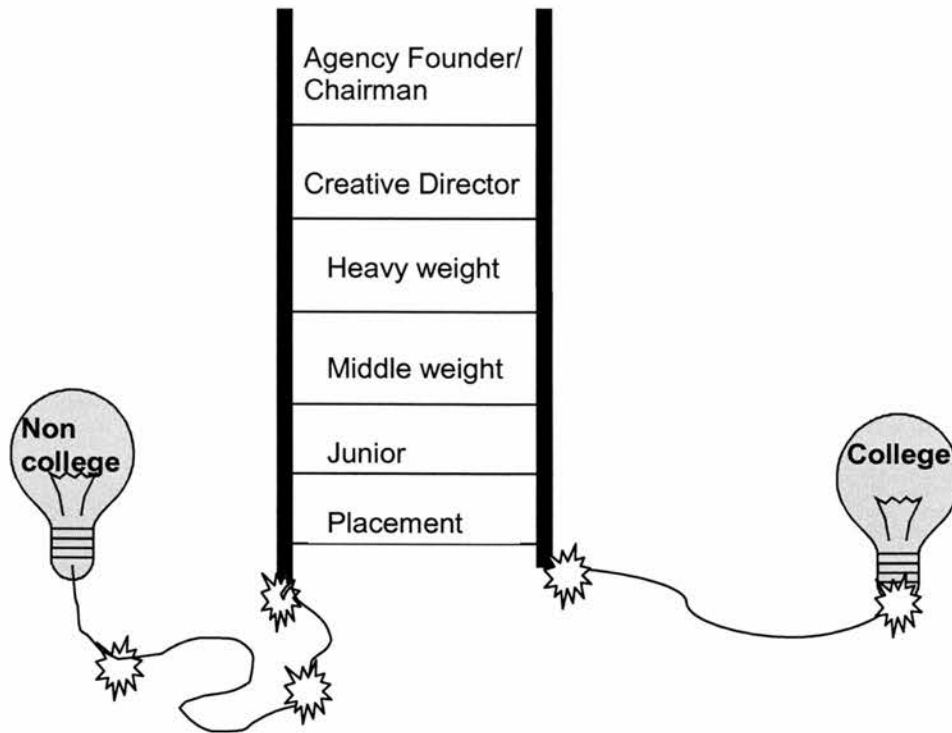
Both Csikszentmihalyi (1996) and Policastro & Gardener (1999) argue that creatives were attracted to cultural centres, in part because it is here that they can maximise their access to the field.

In the UK the main advertising 'centre' is London. London is also widely recognised as one of the main centres of advertising creativity in the world (www.ipa.co.uk).

Within the so-called regional agencies (those outside of London), the sample had some Edinburgh agencies and to get a broader Scottish perspective this study also included a Glasgow agency. In Scotland, Edinburgh tends to be the 'creative' centre whereas Glasgow agencies, with one exception, have a reputation for having a 'service' led client based.

4.8.3 Stage in professional trajectory

Figure 2: The Creative Career Ladder



There are six rungs on the ladder of an advertising creative's career trajectory. This study included creatives from all of these different 'steps'. It is important to note that in the context of the systems model this sample included 'gate keepers' in the field and those trying to break into the field (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). The route to a creative's first job often involves a series of placements with anxious gaps in between.

These career 'steps' are based on the participants' own classification of their career 'step' or with the creative management, their job title. The researcher then compared these classifications against the number of months / years they had been in (or been trying to get into) the industry.

A placement team: in general two weeks – three months

Junior team: typically up to 7 years (with a permanent job) in the industry

Middleweight: around 8 – 12 years in the industry

Heavyweight: typically 13+ years in the industry

Creative Director: generally 15+ years in the industry (usually a heavy weight creative who had decided to take / been offered a Creative Director role)

Agency founder/chairperson: typically 15+ (generally speaking these are creative directors who had decided to open their own agency / been promoted within a agency)

In nearly all instances (unless indicated otherwise on the sample table) when the creative was part of a team both partners were interviewed. In three instances, because of time constraints or because they suggested it, the teams were interviewed as a pair.

4.8.4 Gender

Advertising creatives are predominately male. Women currently make up 20% of teams in UK creative departments (Alps, 2006). This explains the gender imbalance in the sample. However this study did succeed in recruiting female creatives at different stages in their professional trajectories, including one all-female team and a female creative director.

The judgement guiding the sample was based on the researcher's personal knowledge and experience of the advertising industry gained through a number of years working in the industry. This knowledge was supported by reviews of creative work and creative agency league tables published in national and regional trade publications. In 2004 all the London agencies within the sample appeared in the top twenty of *Campaign's* agency league table, and all the Scottish agencies used in the sample appeared in the top ten of *The Drum's* agency league table.

4.9 Theoretical Sampling

The researcher used the grounded theory techniques of analytic induction (to be described in greater depth in a separate section below) and theoretical sampling to inform this study. Grounded theory compliments the life history approach employed in this study, as it is an interpretive mode of enquiry which has its roots in symbolic interactionism (Goulding, 1997). In

keeping with the epistemological underpinnings of this study, according to the grounded theory, knowledge is seen as actively and socially constructed. In essence the process requires that,

“Joint collection, coding and analysis of data is the underlying operation. The generation of theory, coupled with the notion of theory as process...should blur and intertwine continually from the beginning of the investigation to its end...” (Glaser and Strauss, 1967: 43)

Grounded theory’s methodological emphasis is an actor’s own emergent interpretations and meanings, with minimal researcher intervention. Through constant comparison, coding and analysis of interview and observational data, theory that is grounded in these data emerges. What is pertinent to this social study is that grounded theory seeks to approximate the *context* of that being studied, that is, for example: the creative team, their interactions and interrelationships; thus conveying a conceptual understanding of issues that make up their world (Van Maanen, 1979).

Grounded theory is a method where close inspection of the data extends theory through ‘theoretical sampling’. This means that rather than pre-determining the characteristics and size of the sample the developing theory guides the researcher. Thus the process of data collection is controlled by theoretical sampling according to the emerging theory.

“By letting it [theoretical sampling] guide the generation of theory the analyst goes to the limits of his data and data collection resources” (Glaser, 1992: 104).

The fieldwork took place between October 2004 – July 2005 which allowed the analytical process to inform and guide the research. The researcher coded the fragments of data through various developmental stages. The nature of grounded theory meant that coding started as soon as there was data to work with because the analysis of data guided the research in terms of theory and sampling: the data extends theory through theoretical sampling. The researcher elicited codes from raw data through constant comparative analysis as the data was generated. During the first phase of the fieldwork the creatives’ social class and educational backgrounds emerged as being influential within their lives. This is what prompted the researcher to look in more detail at the literature on these issues. Thus the social class and educational background of each creative became an issue for the sample selection and a range of backgrounds was sought. The codes were further developed theoretically until each category is saturated (Charmaz, 1983,

1995; Goulding, 1998, 1999, 2000; Glaser, 1978, 1992; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The criterion of theoretical sufficiency (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) was judged by the researcher to have been met after 34 completed interviews. In making this judgement the researcher was aware that:

“There can be no hard and fast rule in this respect – saturation may occur at any point in the study, and the only criterion the investigator can employ is the compatibility of each statement with all that preceded it” (Denzin, 1974: 235).

A full description of the sample is presented in Table 1 below (all names are pseudonyms).

Table 1: Sample

Interviews	Occupation	Age	Service/Creative	Education	Class roots
Lynne	Head of Art	40s	Service	Printing College	Upper
Fred	Deputy Creative Director: (Copywriter)	40s	Service	University (English) / Acting School (dropped out)	Upper
Wallace	International Creative Director: (Copywriter)	40s	Creative	Oxbridge (Geography)	Upper
Scott	Art Director	30s	Service	Oxbridge (Classics)	Upper
Russ	Vice Chairman & Worldwide Creative Director (Copywriter)	40s	Service	Oxbridge (Classics)	Upper
Malcolm	Chairman & Executive Creative Director (Copywriter)	50s	Creative	Oxbridge (English)	Upper
Jez	Agency Network Advisory Board Member (Copywriter)	70s	Service	Oxbridge (English)	Upper

Jake	Chairman and Worldwide Creative Director (Art Director)	60s	Creative	Art College – foundation course	Upper
Lionel	Creative Director	40s	Service	Art College – foundation course	Middle
Paul	Creative Director: (Copywriter)	40s	Creative	Art College – art foundation course/ College (Advertising)	Middle
Gerald	Executive Creative Director	40s	Creative	Art College – art foundation course / College (Advertising)	Middle
*Tim	Art Director	20s	Service	University (English) / Watford	Middle
Craig	Creative Director/ Art Director	40s	Creative	University (Bio-Science) / Watford	Middle
*Harold	Copywriter	20s	N/A Student	University (English) / Bucks	Middle
Michael	Copywriter	40s	Creative	Art College – art foundation course/ Polytechnic (Advertising)	Middle
Lewis	Art Director	20s	Creative	Art College – foundation course /Bucks	Middle
Jacob	Copywriter	30s	Creative	Art College – foundation course /Bucks	Middle
Stan	Art Director	30s	Creative	Art College – foundation course /Bucks	Middle
*Rabir	Art Director	30s	Creative	University (Art) / Watford	Middle
Dan	Creative Director (Copywriter)	40s	Creative	Art College / Watford	Middle
Crispin	Copywriter	30s	Service	University (Accountancy)	Middle
Laura	Art Director	20s	Creative	Art College - Advertising	Middle

Damon	Art Director	30s	N/A (Looking for placement)	University (Film Studies)	Middle
Indira	Copywriter	20s	N/A (Looking for placement)	University (English)	Middle
Magnus	Art Director	20s	Creative	Art College - Advertising	Middle
Wilf	Copywriter	20s	Creative	Art College – foundation course /Bucks	Working
Archie	Art Director	30s	Service	Local College (Advertising course)	Working
Derek	Art Director	40s	Creative	Art College – foundation course / Local College (Advertising)	Working
*Jonny	Copywriter	20s	Creative	Local College/ Watford	Working
Calum	Copywriter	30s	Service	University (History of Art)	Working
Andy	Art Director	60s	Creative	Printer Apprenticeship / Art College (part time)	Working
Donald	Creative Director (Copywriter)	40s	Creative	Art College – foundation course / Bucks	Working
James	Art Director	30s	Service	Local College (Advertising course)	Working
*Mairi	Art Director	20s	Service	University (Graphic Design) / Watford	Working
Colin	Art Director	30s	Creative	Local College (Graphic design)	Working

* Partner not interviewed

The strategies used by the researcher to recruit the sample will now be presented.

4.10 Recruitment Strategies

This study employed a number of recruitment strategies. There were three main stages of fieldwork which took place between October 2004 and July 2005.

Initially the researcher contacted some creatives by letter. The researcher got the creatives' names from *Campaign* and agency websites. The letter outlined the nature of the research (a copy of the letter is in Appendix B). In the letter creatives were asked to contact the researcher via email, if they were interested in taking part in the research.

Given the initial success of this approach, this strategy was employed again in the second stage of the fieldwork. In the second and third stage of recruitment the researcher also used her personal contacts within the industry. None of the creatives were personally known to the researcher. Rather, the researcher was given names and contact details by friends, former colleagues and a creative director who took part in the research. This method of recruitment was particularly successful because the researcher made it clear at the outset of her email communication that she was associated to a person known to them.

To recruit creatives *outside* the field i.e. those trying to get into the industry, the researcher contacted specialist industry organisations: the Design and Art Direction (D&AD) and Finktank art school.

Finktank art school is held once a month for creatives trying to break in to the advertising industry. The art school provides the creatives with the opportunity to work on briefs, to meet people in the same position and to learn from experienced creatives in the industry.

After being briefed on the research the administrator at the Finktank art school contacted students who she thought would be most suitable for the research (in terms of 'stage' in their development). Interested creatives then emailed the researcher directly.

D&AD is an educational charity that represents creative, design and advertising communities. The D&AD runs a series of workshops throughout the year for creatives trying to break in to the industry. The workshops offer creatives the opportunity to work on briefs and learn from experienced industry professionals.

Within the D&AD, the researcher's 'recruitment email' outlining the nature of the research was forwarded by the D&AD student workshop organiser to students on their database. Interested creatives then emailed the researcher directly.

In all cases a mutually convenient date and time was arranged for the researcher to come along to their respective agencies or home (freelance art director) or bar (team looking for placement) to conduct the interviews.

Here then, the chapter will turn to the debate surrounding how life histories should be analysed, before looking at the strategies employed in this research.

4.11 Analysis of Life Histories

“...A life history is written at every point in the collection process” (Denzin, 1978: 235).

While the researcher may gather a life history in a way that does not impose some favoured theoretical cast on it, the interpretation phase is not insulated against researcher bias (Frazier, 1976; Faraday & Plummer, 1979; Plummer, 2001). As Mannheim (1965: 158) notes:

“There is nothing in this method to stop the intrusion of an analyst’s own theory in interpreting the case”.

Indeed, the researcher becomes the sole interpreter of meaning once the data are generated. The concern about researcher bias in interpretations of life history materials comes about essentially because there are no ‘standardised’ ways of or conventions for analysing and reporting life history data. Despite attempts to institute standard guidelines for the life history method (Dollard, 1942; Allport, 1935; Young, 1952) it seems that historically the ‘preferred’ method of generating theory of sensitised concepts involves an *“ad hoc fumbling around”* (Faraday & Plummer, 1979) within the research area. Faraday & Plummer (1979: 24) state:

“Until standards...are developed, researchers will probably go on muddling through life history studies having only their best instincts and integrity to guide them...Indeed this is not to say that such research cannot be excellent. There is too much classic literature in this tradition to believe that. However, it is likely that modern day researchers will find that their interpretations will be unacceptable to a wide audience of sociologists because uniform standards are not apparent...”

However, there is a more ‘structured’ approach, to the *“fumbling”* which may be applied to the life history method (Faraday & Plummer, 1979). This is through the use of Grounded Theory

methods, i.e. analytic induction. As described above, the researcher slowly builds up a comparative analysis of different life histories on these theoretical themes. For some life history researchers (for example Faraday & Plummer, 1979) applying Grounded Theory methods to life history data does not permit extensive analysis within the substantive area. The grounded theory style of analysis is based on the premise that theory at various levels of generality is indispensable for deeper knowledge of social phenomenon (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978). However, sceptics believe that once an initial theoretical hunch has been evolved, all subsequent analysis is strictly restricted to the exploration of that limited theoretical theme. This study will demonstrate this is a very limited view of Grounded Theory. As Goulding notes,

“It may be argued that like many qualitative methodologies the role of grounded theory was and is the careful and systematic study of the relationship of the individual’s experience to society and to history” (Goulding, 1998: 54).

Thus Denzin (1976) *recommends* employing the grounded theory methods of analytic induction and theoretical sampling as interpretive tools for analysing life history data. In keeping with the aim and objectives of this research, grounded theorists strive to develop fresh theoretical interpretations of the data rather than explicitly aiming for any final or complete interpretation of them (Baker et al, 1992). That is, the qualitative nature of the paradigm focuses on the search for meaning and understanding to build innovative theory and not universal laws (O’Callaghan, 1996). This in itself is possibly the most important part of the process (Goulding, 2000). It is also one which must ultimately be referred back to in the method of analysis and interpretation. These are methods which this study employed in order to provide a framework for data analysis and interpretation.

Grounded theory research requires an understanding of related theory and empirical work in order to enhance theoretical sensitivity. Theoretical sensitivity refers to the researcher’s capacity to think about the data in theoretical terms. This requires the researcher to interact continually with the data collection and analysis and suspend judgement on possible outcomes. According to Glaser (1992: 4) the researcher should be asking two questions:

“...what is the chief concern or problem of the people in the substantive area, and what accounts for most of the variation in processing the problem? What category or what property of what category does this incident indicate? One asks these two questions while constantly comparing incident to incident and coding and analysis.”

There are two analytic procedures that are basic to the constant comparison method of coding (Glaser, 1992). The first pertains to the making constant comparisons of different incidents, perceptions, relationships, and issues. The aim is to identify inconsistencies, similarities, gaps in data and the emerging consensus on key concepts and relationships. This is how properties of categories are generated. A property refers to a type of concept that is a characteristic of a category. A category is a type of concept, and a concept is the underlying, meaning, uniformity and/or pattern within a set of descriptive incidents (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

The second procedure is a strategy of using concepts in a 'sensitising fashion'. This strategy allowed the researcher to work back and forth between theory and observations, altering when necessary both the theory and the definitions of central concepts. Further, Glaser (1978) discussed the role of theory and its importance in sensitising the researcher to the significance of emerging concepts and categories where knowledge and theory are used as if they were another informant. The researcher was mindful of this, because otherwise the pattern recognition would have been limited to the obvious and superficial (Glaser, 1978).

In this study open coding was the initial stage of constant comparative analysis (Glaser, 1992; Goulding, 1998). Open coding was the interpretative process by which the researcher broke the data down analytically. The purpose of this first stage of coding was to give the researcher new insights by interpreting phenomena reflected in the data. The researcher transcribed all of her interviews verbatim. Each of the verbatim transcripts was analysed line by line, the researcher closely examined phrases, words, sentences, paragraphs and then the entire transcript. Then the researcher wrote notes on key themes from each transcript. This analysis involved an iterative, part-to-whole reading strategy which helped the researcher develop an understanding of each interview transcript (Hirschman, 1992; Thompson, et al, 1989). In this process, earlier readings of the text informed later readings and reciprocally later readings allowed the researcher to recognise and explore patterns not noted in the initial analysis. The transcripts were then compared against each other as an ongoing part of the analysis. During the open coding the researcher compared events, actions, behaviours, relationships, interactions for similarities and differences. In this way conceptually similar events, actions, interactions, behaviours, relationships and so forth were grouped together to form categories and sub-categories. As

described above, once identified, categories and their properties became the basis for sampling on theoretical grounds.

Open coding stimulated generative and comparative questions which guided the researcher upon return to the field. Asking such questions enabled the researcher to be sensitive to new issues, and allowed her to explore their implications. The aim was to build a theoretical explanation by specifying phenomena in terms of the conditions that give rise to them, how they are expressed through action and interaction, the consequences that result from them, and variations of these qualifiers. Thus consistency was achieved because a concept had earned its way into this study through demonstrating its relationship to the phenomenon under investigation. Breaking up and considering the data in this way allowed the researcher to examine any preconceived notions and ideas against the data themselves. In this way, the researcher arranged the data and concepts into the appropriate classifications.

The process of selective coding followed the open coding. Selective coding started after the researcher had identified the core variable. The core variable *emerged* from the constant comparative coding and analysis of the data. The core category became obvious with the discovery of properties of a category and its relationship to other categories over and over again. Thus in keeping with grounded theory, the researcher's goal was the generation of theory around this core category. The researcher 'lifted' ideas from the data and explained them theoretically, in order to give meaning to the creatives' descriptions of their behaviours, thoughts and experiences (Glaser, 1992; Skodal-Wilson and Ambler-Hutchison, 1996; Charmaz, 1983; Goulding, 1998).

This chapter will now discuss how and why life histories need to be 'evaluated', and then the specific methods used to evaluate the life histories in this research will be outlined.

4.12 Evaluating the life history

Aligned with issues relating to interpretation, few life history researchers now believe a single truth about a life can be gleaned through a life history interview or indeed that a researcher can have any clear, superior access to knowledge about a life (Plummer, 2001). As a proponent of the life history method, Bruner writes (1993: 38-39):

“...there is no such thing as a ‘uniquely true, correct or even faithful autobiography; ...an autobiography is not and cannot be a way of simply signifying or referring to a ‘life as lived’. I take the view that there is no such thing as a ‘life as lived’ to be referred to. On this view, a life is created or construed by the act of autobiography. It is a way of construing experience: of re-construing and re-construing it until our breath and our pen fail us. Construal and re-construal are interpretive.”

To recognise that lives are construed means that there is a need to search out ways to evaluate just what it is that is being construed and how this may lead to different kinds of truths. Portelli (1998) for example recognises that life histories are not and cannot be objective: they are always ‘artificial, variable and partial’ but at the same time he believes that this does not weaken them. A researcher may even know that some of the respondent’s statements are factually wrong: and yet such ‘wrong’ statements may still be psychologically true: *“this truth may be equally as important as factually reliable accounts”* (Portelli, 1998: 46-47). Thus there is a need for various criteria appraising the different connections between life histories and ‘truth’. There are many ways in which life histories may be evaluated. One approach is to think of a continuum of objectivity and subjectivity. At one end there is the search for an objective life (as far as possible). Some users of the life-history method (for example Dollard, 1935; Becker, 1966; Denzin, 1970, 1978) argue that the accuracy of the life history may be improved by checking it against other sources. Classically the task here has been to take reality checks on the life history (Shaw, 1966): to look at its internal consistency, its correspondence with external events, the sincerity with which it has been told. This may be seen as seeking a historical truth: getting closer to the ‘reality’ of life.

Further along this continuum comes narrative truth. This is where this study is positioned. Here what matters is the way in which the story enabled the researcher to enter the subjective world of the creative ‘teller’, to see the world from their point of view, even if this world ‘does not match reality’ (Plummer, 2001).

“Researchers must seek to accept the world as it is produced by participants...the emphasis on meaning results in a focus on meanings as they are constructed by research participants...” (Hackley, 2003b: 99).

This point can be illustrated by David Blunkett, the then education secretary, when he was asked about what “*nine eights*” was, as noted by the Guardian’s television review of Channel 4’s “*Dispatches: the Blunkett Tapes*” (Wollaston, 2006: www.guardian.co.uk);

“We see a clip of him being interviewed by a reporter.

“Do you know your times table?” she asks.

“I do know my times table.” he replies, confidently. “I had to learn it rote fashion when I was a child. And it stayed with me ever since. So ‘seven sevens are 49’ comes quite naturally.”

“And nine eights?”

“Nine eights...[there’s a little pause]...nine eights...[big laugh]...nine eights...[another laugh]...72.”

Then we hear in his diary entry: “An ITN reporter asked me what nine times eight were. Fortunately I was able to give him an immediate answer.””

At the (subjective) extreme of this continuum comes narrative and fictional biography, when the story told by the individual is seen to be entirely made up. The individual’s ‘own story’ is then combined with these factual and pertinent materials from other sources to make a complete life history document. Closely connected to ‘truth’ is the issue of memory: all life history work is selective work (Terkel, 1970). Life history work involves re-collecting, remembering, rediscovering, along with the active process of memorising and constructing history (Frisch, 1998: 33).

At the beginning of the ‘writing up’ process the researcher wrote a ‘portrait’ of each creative from these notes, observations and the transcription analysis. This helped the researcher visualise and remember each participant, their work, partnership, relationships and type of agency and so on. In most instances when the creative was part of a team the researcher interviewed both partners. In addition the researcher was mindful that life history materials consist of ‘any documents’ that bear a relationship to a person (Denzin, 1989). Here the researcher’s memos and notes were particularly useful. Building a memo on raw data grounds ideas and should ultimately balance evidence with the theoretical argument (Glaser, 1992). These notes came from observations from chatting informally to the creatives. In the ‘agency world’ creative careers are built on networking, reputation and peer recognition. Therefore, the researcher gathered information by chatting informally with creatives about other creatives they admired or had worked for or with. Many of the creatives who were discussed happened to be taking part in

this research. It is important to note that all the creatives who took part in the research had their anonymity respected at all times.

The researcher also built up notes from studying examples of the creatives' work prior to the interview. In the case of students and those on placement the researcher looked at their portfolio within the interview, in one case a team emailed the researcher a PDF of their work. Some of the more prominent creators i.e. agency chairmen and creative directors had articles written by them and about them within practitioner press.

Most of these creatives had also created creative cultures and creative visions for their departments and agencies, which the researcher experienced and discussed as part of the interview. Therefore, the researcher's notes and observations of the agency atmosphere and environment were important. Similarly the 'type' of agency that a team had a job with was reflective of them. These additional resources and reference points were useful, as was the researcher's prior knowledge of the industry in rounding out her understanding of each creative and their life. The researcher has drawn on some of these notes implicitly and explicitly in the findings chapters.

These contextual and background observations were added at the analysis stage of the research. The researcher sorted her memos and notes comparatively on the basis of recurring concepts. These notes also helped the researcher develop a deeper understanding of each participant. However the main research tool for this study was the life history interview, as Denzin (1978: 235) notes:

"The best focus for the life history becomes...the "prolonged interview" "

In short, life histories can be evaluated in terms of their uses, functions and the role they play in personal and cultural life. Life histories may be seen as ways of 'reading cultures' (Dollard, 1935: 3): *"the life history is in and of the culture."* The same is true of advertising creatives. Thus this research benefited from the life history's ability to display how the culture talked about itself, and the subjective side of the creatives' social experiences. This study also benefited from the creatives' ability to *"hold onto the texture of their past"* (John-Steiner, 1987: 68). Therefore by *grounding* her interpretations in this 'textured' data, this researcher provides a *"textual*

representation” of these creatives’ personal and professional lives (Hackley, 2003: 110). Indeed, as will be seen in the findings chapter, the researcher has extensively drawn on the verbatim data to illustrate and support her interpretations and reasoning. In addition, the researcher has also drawn on her own work experience and knowledge of advertising culture when gathering and interpreting the data. These interpretations have then been placed within the broader context of the academic and practitioner literature. In this way, the researcher meets the aims and objectives of this study by providing a *contextualised* understanding of advertising creatives and their creative processes.

Please note that within the findings chapter, in most of the verbatim quotes the researcher has used ‘...’. This signifies that the researcher used her judgement to delete some of the text, where she considered it not to be relevant to the point being made.

4.13 Conclusion

This chapter has explained why the life history method was the most appropriate approach to this study. The chapter has outlined the main approaches which have been employed in the study of creativity. Historically these have been predominately positivistic, because they were designed to measure creativity as a trait of an individual, rather than a context based phenomenon as it is now widely regarded within the creative research community, and as it is here. The life history method fits into the contextual based approach to creativity, because it considers the individual in their social and cultural historical context.

The chapter has explored how the life history methods were used by the researcher within this study. These were complimented by the use of grounded theory methods during the analysis of the data and in the construction of the sample. This study also benefited from the researcher’s previous experience of working in the advertising industry and as a market researcher in terms of the quality of data gathered.

The findings of this study will now be explored.

Chapter 5: Beginnings of a Creative Life

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will explore the relationship between the advertising creatives' childhood and adolescent years and their creativity. Initially the influences of their parents and home environments will be discussed. The creatives' experiences of education will also be explored before explaining how and why they chose to create a career in advertising. The chapter concludes by discussing the creatives' experiences of 'starting out' in advertising.

5.2 Diverse family backgrounds

Delaney (2006) considered that it was only recently that advertising creatives have come from a diverse range of backgrounds, such as those found in this research. He and the Vice Chairman below considered it to be a healthy trait of the advertising industry,

“What I like about this business... is that you can come into this business and be successful regardless of your background...I mean Oxbridge people and there are people who left school at 16...it's...random...healthily random...” (Russ, Vice Chairman, service agency)

When the creatives discussed their families they tended to spontaneously classify their backgrounds. These personal classifications were consistent with 'traditional' market research methods of socio-demographic classification i.e. the main income earner in the household. This was typically the father, unless the creative grew up in a single parent family, when it was the mother.

Through pursuing their creativity and talents, the creatives who described themselves as “*working class*” or “*middle class*” had opened up a different kind of world for themselves from the culture in which they grew up. Overall for the creatives from “*working class*” backgrounds this was often *because of* their parents' support and for the “*middle classes*” this was usually *despite* their parents' opposition. A few had what one creative termed “*wealthy middle class*” backgrounds. As will become evident, this description is in keeping with their upbringing because it underplays the financial resources implicit and explicit in their families. These

creatives maybe classified as having an upper class background. These parents *nurtured* their child's creative and introspective spirits.

Within these different classes there was some also cultural and ethnic diversity. That is, one of the creatives was second generation Chinese and a couple of the creatives were second generation Indian. Another of the creatives was from Scandinavia and one was from Australia. These figures relate the low representation of ethnic minorities in advertising identified by the Independent Practitioners of Advertising (IPA). In the UK 7.9% of the population is of ethnic minority origin (www.ipa.co.uk/diversity). The IPA figures state that only 4% of IPA agency employees are of ethnic origin, and of this 4%, 70% are in support disciplines such as IT and finance. The IPA reports that it is "*actively addressing*" the issue of ethnic diversity within the creative department, as well as in planning and account management.

Thus cultural diversity among the creatives was considered to be relatively recent within the industry. The Creative Partner of the agency claims to have "*started*" the recruitment of foreign nationals and more females, actively did so in part to counter the "*boys' club*" culture of the creative departments, but also because he felt that diversity contributed to creativity:

"When I first came into the industry creative departments were just a boys' club and it was young men aged... in their early to mid twenties ...in their twenties and now it's easier for foreign nationals to get a job and that's one thing we started I mean one of our original partners was an American woman...I think that the English were quite arrogant...about their, their advertising and I think they had a feeling that...foreign nationals wouldn't get us and we changed all that...because you need diversity...and there weren't a lot of foreigners working...and now we've got a creative department full of them...I mean Ozzie and Kiwis...Americans, Swedes, Danes, French, Italian...Brazilian...Argentinean and all within our company ...we also have a lot of women working in the creative department..." (Donald, Creative Partner, creative hotshop)

The main themes which emerged from the creatives' accounts of their respective socio economic backgrounds will now be explored in turn. The parallels and differences which emerged among the different classes will be highlighted throughout the following sections.

5.2.1 “Working class”

The “*working class*” creatives grew up in a range of different environments for example on council estates, housing estates, in mining towns and small country villages. Their fathers worked in jobs such as painting and decorating, lorry driving and mining, while their mothers tended to be housewives or worked part time. Sometimes these creatives grew up in single parent families and so their mothers would be the main income earner and worked full time in jobs such as hairdressing, caring for the elderly or office and shop work. With the exception of four male creatives whose parents had divorced these “*working class*” parents had remained married throughout the creatives’ lives.

Within these households financial resources were described as “*tight*”. Importantly, however, the “*working class*” creative was born into an environment which had surplus energy to encourage the development of their curiosity and interest for its own sake. This was important to open and stimulate their minds to different ways of thinking, inspirations and experiences. Csikszentmihayli (1996) stated cultural capital included the educational aspirations of their parents, the non academic knowledge they absorbed in their home and the informal learning that they picked up in their community. Influential for these creatives was their exposure to their parents’ talents, television, advertising, cinema, comics, away days and holidays to different places. With the support and encouragement of their parents these activities helped to stimulate their imaginations, and to think beyond what was familiar:

“Well I loved drawing...I absolutely adored drawing, I loved watching television, I was obsessed with TV eh loved the pictures, thought the cinema was great...anything to do with the big screen and all that...I loved that ...most adverts kind of stuck in my head...I can remember watching quite a few ... I used to sing the jingles ... ‘made to make your mouth water’ all those little catch lines stick with you...I used to like collecting comics...”
(Derek, heavyweight art director, service agency)

Some of the creatives used the stimulus largely as a point of departure for self-expression, as for this young copywriter:

“I love TV...I was the biggest TV kid...in fact I grew up in front of the television which...that was one thing...I didn’t go out and play football with other kids or climb trees with other kids...I watched videos and taped MTV and put together collections of pop promos and stuff...” (Jonny, junior copywriter, creative hotshop)

Many of the younger copywriters were “*working class*” and as such were from less ‘bookish’ backgrounds than their older “*wealthy middle class*” counterparts. For the younger copywriters film and television opened up a visual world of imagination and ideas:

“I know what made me want to get into films and advertising, it was seeing Star Wars when I was about 5 or 6 and I’ve talked to a lot of guys my age and they say quite similar things...it was a definitive moment...you know. I saw that film and I knew what I wanted to do. It opened up a whole world of imagination, possibilities and ideas and the technical side of it, the imaginative side of it, the creative...” (Calum, middleweight copywriter, service agency)

Calum talked about the impact that Star Wars had on him in terms of opening up his mind and imagination. This was for him a “*crystallising experience*” (Gardener, in Feldman, 1999: 172) that set his course of development (Feldman, 1971; Walters & Gardner, 1986), a critical moment when the young creative mind was focused and organised toward a clear purpose. These thoughts were fostered and developed through play within his home,

“I’ve always kind of known what I wanted to do from a child. I either wanted to be in advertising or in films, even from when I was about five, you know and I used to have a...poor version of eh an old camera of my mums that didn’t work...an old brownie camera and I used to have a tripod and I used to walk around with the tripod setting things up, but there was never any film in it but I just used to imagine I was making stuff...” (Calum, middleweight copywriter, service agency)

The “*working class*” parents’ ‘open world’ and nurturing attitudes remained through to adolescence, when it came to encouraging them to use their creative talents and aspirations to do ‘better than they had done’ in life. However in Calum’s case his father initially felt that Calum’s advertising aspirations were unrealistic. Later Calum’s father would encourage him to pursue his dream. The fact that Calum was successful, as will be discussed later in more depth, was also illustrative of changes within the field of copywriting, and more broadly within advertising,

“They like culture ...again I think they came from a kind of class and a world where they...you didn’t aspire to that ...even before I ever wanted to get into advertising, I remember my dad saying to me...well it’s a closed world and you’ll never get into it and all this sort of stuff. I don’t think he was trying to be negative, it’s just that he’s come from a world where it was much more class driven and I think he thought that it just wouldn’t happen... I thought I am going to try and get into advertising even if it doesn’t work, it’s what I want to do, I have to at least try. And my dad actually said I should and to his

credit he actually said I should definitely try it..." (Calum, middleweight copywriter, service agency)

This supportive father–son relationship seemed unusual amongst the creatives, and particularly so for “*working class*” creatives. Similar to other studies (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; John-Steiner, 1987) this research found that many of the creatives, particularly those who were artistic, spoke of how they had either little or no relationship or a difficult relationship with their father. This may explain why many of the “*working class*” creative males had such close and positively encouraging relationships with their mothers (there was only one female “*working class*” creative in this study, whose parental relationships will be discussed shortly),

“I was never incredibly close to him [his father] ...he wasn't a man you got very close to...he had his own demons...I think men are like that...my mother was much more the driving force in the family and I think that ...you often...you see that so often actually...she was fantastic ...great sort of sense of humour and eh great sort of warmth...always attracted people ...you know people always wanted to be around her...Encouraged...never drove ...you know you hear about these parents driving these kids ... she encouraged sort of you know and always...keep and open mind...remain opened, never close things down...” (Jake, Creative Chairman, creative agency)

Similar to other studies of creative lives (for example Roe, 1952; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; John-Steiner, 1987), and without exception among the male creatives it was the mothers who tended to be very influential in encouraging their son's creative ambitions. This was often a case of emotional support and encouragement but where the mother had an artistic talent the creative's apprenticeship began at home. This art director had his talent nurtured by his mother who wanted to give him a choice in his future rather than follow the norm. His mother helped him to develop a self-belief and an internalised picture of what constituted a ‘good’ or a ‘bad’ idea without relying on the judgement of his art teacher as ‘expert’. This competence could only be developed through experience; it was a learning process (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Gardner, 1993b). There was also a sense that his mother was fulfilling her own ambitions and aspirations through her child. Here there was a sense of vindication for this art director and his mother's belief in him and his talent,

“One of the things I was good at was being artistic and me mother always regretted not doing something with her talent because she was good ...she was a very talented drawer...so she kind of said to us that I could make a living out of this...you know you don't have to go down the mine...so I went to college straight out of school, thanks to me

mam pushing us to do something...like I say it wasn't a very good school and possibly I wasn't a very good student because I was kind of preoccupied with survival but she taught me to draw and perspective and stuff like that and from that we put a book together and we went to the art college...the art teacher at my school when I told him I wanted to do this...said I wasn't good enough ...and at the end of the year when I graduated the college asked me to go back to the school to show my book because it was one of the best ones..."
(Derek, heavyweight creative, service agency)

This art director's experience resonates with Csikszentmihalyi's (1996) finding that a strong parental influence was especially necessary for children who have to struggle hard against poor or socially marginal backgrounds. Sometimes the only contribution of the parents to their child's intellectual development was to treat them like an adult. This creative was driven to find his identity without the benefit of much early stimulation either at home or at school. Indeed this copywriter exceeded his mother's aspirations for him by going on to "further education" per se,

"I had a really regular childhood...it was really regular...that's the one stand out thing about my childhood was that it was dull...you know it was just growing up on an estate...kicking footballs around in the street...you know it was just telly...I wanted to do better than my parents...I didn't want to live that dull life for the rest of my life...I didn't want to live on a dull estate and do nothing...My mother used to encourage me...they were really happy for me to go to art school...yep further education but I don't know how much that was about the art aspect or the further education aspect...I think it was the further education..." (Donald, Creative Partner, creative hotshop)

The exception to having at least one parent's encouragement was Mairi, a "working class" art director, whose father sought to close her aspirations down. She described her father as being a dominant and controlling influence over her family, particularly her mother, whom she described as being submissive. Her father had a traditional and fixed idea about what he wanted for his daughter. However it was the type of life that her father wanted her to have within her home environment that made her feel marginalised and motivated her to use her artistic talents as a way out. She reflected that it was this determination that helped her to survive and succeed as a female creative in such a male dominated culture despite her parents' opposition. She also felt vindicated for having higher expectations for herself than her father had done,

"I didn't fit in...my dad always wanted me to settle down and have babies...he didn't have any expectation for me and it didn't feel right that he didn't have any...you know want or desire...they'd obviously never been to university...I just knew this wasn't what I wanted...I didn't want to meet a boy in the village and live in a house in the village and get pregnant and you know...because there's so much more out there...my dad was quite

controlling... he's got to be number one in the family to be looked after... you know my mum's like if your dad's happy...oh we've got to do this cause of your dad and I'm kind of thinking well what about me so...I thought the best thing was to get away..." (Mairi, middleweight art director, service agency)

The creatives' parental aspirations were different across the social classes. In general there were parallels between the "working class" and "wealthy middle class" parents since most encouraged their children's creative ambitions and were open to different experiences. However these attitudes were in contrast to the more 'closed world' attitude of the "middle class" parents. There was evidence within this study that this environment added to the creative's determination to pursue a creative career. This chapter will now describe these creatives' experiences of their "middle class" homes.

5.2.2 "Middle class"

The "middle class" fathers had typically gone to college or university and done some form of professional training. Interestingly, a large number of the "middle class" fathers were architects or some form of 'technical drawer' e.g. town planner and engineers. This had influenced some of the creatives as children because they had loved to watch their fathers work and enjoyed experiencing their environment:

"My dad's an architect...when I was young my mum used to work on Saturdays...I used to love going to his office...seeing all these technical drawings of buildings and houses, I used to love it you know. My dad used to bring work home at night, and he'd have all the plans, and like tracing paper, set squares and compasses and I just watched...I just loved watching him..." (Paul, Joint Creative Director, creative agency)

Other fathers with 'less artistic' professions were employed in areas such as finance, healthcare and retailing. Some of their mothers were also professionally trained for example as a teacher, physiotherapist or dentist. Other mothers did part time office work and some were full-time housewives. Most of them had stopped working when they had children and then some had gone back to work when their children were older. Within these households the emphasis was on stability and security within the family unit. With one exception, all these creatives' parents had remained married throughout the creatives' lives.

Across all the classes some of the creatives' childhoods were happier than others. Within the "middle class" creatives the difference was more polarised than in the other classes. This is perhaps because they didn't have some of the freedoms experienced by the creatives in the more 'open world' of "working class" and "wealthy middle class" households. This also seemed to be dependent on the location of their home which tended to be in either rural or suburban location. For those in rural locations they were allowed the freedom to play and explore which meant that their childhoods were typically enjoyed:

"I had a really happy childhood in a little village...and em which involved going out for walks and riding motor bikes in the field and stuff and I was really into wildlife and stuff like that ...it was really sort of rural up there so that was cool ...quite naïve though...didn't really know what was what in terms of like music or fashion or anything like that..." (Tim, junior copywriter, service agency)

However the creative children growing up in a suburban environment did not have the same space and freedoms, and consequently often felt their lives were boring and "claustrophobic". These were feelings also experienced by some of the "working class" creatives, living on council estates.

"Suburbia...oh bloody boring, really boring...early closing on Wednesday and...nothing happening...very suburban, very quiet, very respectable...I hated it yeah...felt really claustrophobic there..." (Malcolm, Executive Creative Director, creative agency)

Indeed the "middle class" family home was generally described as being quite a strict environment. Their mothers in particular had been quite 'vigilant' about friends, school and what they watched on television. These creatives were encouraged to develop their creative abilities as leisure activities and 'respectable' past times. Indeed cultural pursuits were often instigated by their parents often as part of their children's development i.e. to become 'rounded' and cultural individuals, particularly when such activities were connected to the school,

"Our parents made us learn the piano, we all played for around ten years or so before we were allowed to give it up so yeah ...and we all went on orchestra course ... drama course anything the school sort of did we'd get involved em and we did get involved, school plays all that sort of thing..." (Lewis, junior copywriter, creative agency)

However they were discouraged against following the *perceived* financial insecurity and instability of a creative career. Such a career did not carry the same prestige as a ‘proper’ profession among their parent’s peer group,

R: “*I dropped biology after the first term because it got in the way of art, it was just too much so I decided well I’m into art, I enjoy it, it’s something I’d like to pursue much to my folks’ horror and disgust but then yeah...then I just ended up doing art, English lit and math AS level...*”

I: “At that point did you know what you wanted to do?”

R: “*Yeah, yeah I wanted to be an artist, I wanted my own studio and to paint my own pictures*”

I: “To which your parents were?”

R: “*Horrificed...they didn’t know where it would lead, you know...they’re from a world where...I suppose most parents are like that they want their kids to be secure and be in a career that they’ll make a good living out of and so they can say to their peers ‘oh my son’s doing this or he is this’ and they’ll be like ‘ah that is good’...I mean they couldn’t say ‘oh he’s an artist’ or ‘he does art’ because they’d be like ‘oh right’...they don’t know what art entails...they’d rather I was a doctor or a pharmacist...*” (Rabir, middleweight art director, creative agency)

From the descriptions of the “*middle class*” parents, they seemed to be more conventionally success-orientated concerned with financial security. The parental emphasis on security followed through to their educational aspirations and expectations for their children. In general, these parents and their peer group *expected* their children to go on to university and then to follow a ‘respectable’ profession such as law or medicine. However, like the creative adolescents studied by Getzels and Jackson (1962: 22) the “*middle class*” creatives in this study were, “*more able and willing to deal with career risks...to take greater liberties with accepted standards of adult success*”.

This difference in outlook often led to a relationship fraught with tension and discontentment. Consequently, the intense, talented “*middle class*” creative often had an ambivalent relationship with the adult world. This is in part the basis of the creative’s strength and range of experiences, but at the same time contributed to their disappointments and frustrations.

Indeed there was evidence within this study that the “*middle class*” environment often added to their frustration and thus determination to pursue a creative career. This “*middle class*” creative talked about his dilemma of ‘forcing’ himself to fulfil his parents’ wishes by going to business school rather than fulfilling his sense of purpose by following an “*esoteric*” route.

“I was actually veering towards something more esoteric... they (his parents) were a bit concerned...so I actually took the exams to go into business school ... I actually got accepted into two business schools...I went to one for a week and I quit I said I can't take this...this is ridiculous this is common sense I'm not going to spend 4 years of my life studying common sense...then I went to the other one...I actually went for a month and said 'no I can't do it'...because I think that's the thing even today...you know the split between...you know the suits and the creatives...it's very difficult for someone that thinks or has a different approach to things...I'm not a business person I am a creative person...I can't force myself to something that I'm not ...” (Lionel, Creative Director, service agency)

In discussing these different approaches to his life this creative director compared his situation to the ‘tension’ between the creatives and “suits” (account management): the convergent versus divergent thinker. Convergent thinking involved well-defined rational problems and learning facts i.e. “*studying common sense*”. In contrast creative thinkers, regardless of class, needed fluency and the flexibility to generate a great quantity of ideas and always felt the need to question existing logic (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Getzels & Jackson, 1962). Therefore they often never realised their creative potential through conventional schooling (Getzels & Jackson, 1962).

Relations with their parents often became quite difficult because of their creative ambitions (for example, Getzels & Csikszentmihalyi, 1976; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; John-Steiner, 1987). Thus the creatives frequently exhibited sensitivity to the contradictory pulls of necessity and choice (Mackinnon, 1967; John-Steiner, 1987). Creatives were not motivated by money and social status, rather they were intrinsically motivated. This was why a creative career was a necessity if they were to be happy in their lives. Their openness to their feelings and reactions distinguished them from others less able to confront their emotions, as MacKinnon (1967: 30) observes,

“Much of the experience which less courageous persons would repress or deny is accepted by creative persons.”

These values were in contrast to those of the “*wealthy middle class*” parents. These will be now explored.

5.2.3 “Wealthy middle class”

The “*wealthy middle class*” creatives came from old money backgrounds and had a tradition of private and then typically Oxbridge education. Some of their fathers were in professions such as law, land, property, medicine and academia. Others had diverted from the family tradition to follow pursuits such as greyhound training. These parents were described as being unorthodox or rather bohemian in their outlook, with tales of at least one eccentric relative within each family. The mothers were involved in a range of different professions. Some were full time mothers helping their fathers occasionally in the family business, while others were accomplished professionally or artistically. This copywriter’s account of his parents’ “*intellectual outlook on life*” was typical within these households:

“My mum is an artist, she trained as an illustrator and she was the art editor...and that’s how she met my Dad who’s a Professor now...it was a rarefied, sort of posh...background...a sort of wealthy middle class family with an intellectual outlook on life...” (Fred, Deputy Creative Director, service agency)

In general and unlike the “*working class*” and “*middle class*” creatives, these creatives were quite ‘comfortable’ within their family culture. Among these creatives there wasn’t the same sense of *struggle* to ‘get out’ rather they were given the freedom to express themselves,

“I’ve been lucky enough that I’ve grown up in, in a household where both sides of the family are well educated and expect to be educated...I mean I did 11 GCSEs and 4 A-Levels and then you know went to Oxbridge and did Classics...I had lots artists in both sides of the family...and I am conscious of the fact that some of my friends when I was growing up weren’t given the freedoms that I had...” (Scott, middleweight art director, service agency)

The “*wealthy middle class*” households tended to be situated in town houses and large country houses, and while they were given freedoms to express themselves they tended to be “*closeted*” within the family unit,

“I grew up in this very sort of closeted, perfect family that ate together, lived together, holidayed together and it was sort of part Enid Blyton part kind of post-war euphoria that we kind of lived in and it really was the sunlit uplands of innocence and all this kind of thing...” (Wallace, International Creative Director, creative agency)

Intellectually and culturally, these creatives' worlds were opened up by their parents and families. For example, there were many influential grandfathers, aunts and uncles. These families emphasised cultural stimulation through books and art and family discussions. These cultural resources and the home environment contributed to this art director's aspirations and appreciation of being open to different experiences in life.

"I just always loved the idea of painting...artists...I can't describe it ...you know I was just naturally drawn towards it...I liked looking at it and again I was lucky that my parents...were people who kind of appreciated better things and art is trying to get you to appreciate that...to see things in life...slightly more profound...the bigger idea..." (Jake, Creative Chairman, creative agency)

For the most part the creatives' careers could not have been predicted from knowledge of their initial interest alone, not least because most of them were not aware of the advertising creative vocation until much later in life. For example, as was illustrated among the young "working class" copywriters, not every creative writer was committed to writing at an early age, rather during their childhoods it was more a case of making the most of the resources available to them, being aware of their love for the uncommon and of an intense need and admiration for different forms of thinking. In this way even though these creatives did not know what specific form their curiosity would take, they were open to the world around them and particularly so within the "wealthy middle class" environment. For the art director above there was an emphasis on visual stimulation within his family environment. In contrast the copywriter below, his curiosity was encouraged by family discussions, debate and thus there was a natural nurturing of an introspective, verbal mindset within the family home,

"They were just that little bit more introspective ...you know there is a slightly different approach...if someone behaved strangely my family would spend hours debating why someone had said something, why someone had behaved you know the way they'd done, what had motivated someone to buy something and so you just ask more questions..." (Russ, Vice Chairman, service agency network)

These parents also placed importance on their children expressing themselves creatively through play. While film and graphic media lent themselves well to the fluidity of experience particularly for the younger "working class" creatives, for the copywriters brought up in this "wealthy middle class" environment their craft could be linked more to activities such as reading, writing and performing plays.

“When I was small...a lot of kind of play acting, writing plays...you know I kind of had 3 brothers to boss around we’d do...make sort of fantasy worlds and you know get dressed up ...and have kind of layouts and things...it was all kind of role playing and um that kind of thing...we lived in quite a big old house...and so it kind of rambled on and on and so you could set up ships and all sorts of things in different rooms... we had 5000 books in the house you know ...staggering collection of books and historical knowledge and so forth...” (Fred, Deputy Creative Director, service agency)

In this way the writers had started to organise their thinking through written language, which developed over time. Many writers had the need to make life more understandable and memorable by the use of words. The use of words were used to explore some of the more emotional and complex aspects of human nature. At school, for example many of the young writers enjoyed the ‘imaginative’ aspects of English: the integration of feeling, thought and text. At school it was by the means of ‘imaginative’ aspects of language e.g. writing stories and absorption in favourite poets or authors that some writers first found feelings and emotions to which they relate.

“I ran away from my first school...hated it...when I was about ten ...Oh I just hated it ...I mean looking back on it I think it was abusive do you know what I mean...it was a really nasty English prep school run by a kind of sadist ...you know just really unpleasant so yeah ran away and then went to another one which wasn’t a lot better really...another prep school ...then went to public school which I kind of pretty much hated until the last two years...it was only in the last two years...in A-level that I felt a bit more confident, a bit happier...English...what I liked about it was the only subject...where emotions...real life came in...to the classroom other than that it sort of didn’t come into it very much...so yeah, poets, writers talking about their feelings was to me yeah really inspiring...” (Malcolm, Executive Creative Director, creative agency)

Although they were typically very happy within their family unit, their childhood tended to centre on their school life; more so than the other classes. This was because of the importance placed on a tradition of private, boarding education within the family. The restrictive educational environment was usually in contrast to the freedom experienced in their home environment,

“I’ve sort of grown up in this tradition of semi professional class style thinking and educated privately... I went through and what that generation with that kind of background and income did... which was to be sent away to school at the age of 7 and you get tipped out into the world again when I was 23 I got shunted through a bit quicker than most em from 7 – 13 I was packed off to a prep school, an English prep school and there were 80 or 90 kids ...boys and seven refugees from life who were the teachers and we

were stuck in the middle of a small pine forest...and it was a very strange, sort of backwards looking, Victorian enterprise and with those kind of institutional systems when you get to the top having worked your way there. Five years is a very long time when you're 12 or 13...then I went off to a private school... you know the sixth generation to have rocked up there and all four of us kids both girls and boys went there...em I didn't hugely enjoy it if I'm honest..." (Wallace, International Creative Director, creative agency)

In contrast to this bleak picture among the “wealthy middle classes” there was one exception. This creative found that his school environment and teachers reflected the stimulating type of intellectual environment in which he speaks of “fairly well of...in retrospect”,

“Yeah...what was interesting was that I spent quite a lot of time with adults...I mean it was good... it was independent but it had a diversity of intake that made it pretty interesting...quite a few very eccentric teachers...there was a hang over of school masters who could either had been in the second world war before they starting teaching or done something else before they started teaching those people were just that little bit more interesting than those people who had been sort of life time teachers ...it also had a good intellectual and art...you know it had lots of different types of people...interesting school actually, genuinely quite an eccentric place which I speak fairly well of actually in retrospect...” (Russ, Vice Chairman, service agency)

For the parents, sending their children to private schools was more to do with family tradition and their desire for their child to have the opportunity to do well academically than through any desire for their child to conform and follow a particular ‘profession’ at the end of it. On the contrary, upon completing their education the creatives went ‘their own way’, and often this was in a direction that their parents were proud of (in *their own way*),

“They probably put academic pressure on us but they never put pressure on us to conform...on the contrary...my father...as I am...both Tory voters...but there's nothing bourgeois about him at all ...I mean he drove about in a battered Renault 4...you know...totally uninterested in cars...you know completely...to the credit of my father who grew up with a wealthy, right wing doctor father...and I would say of my parents unusually...no snobbery at all...and my father's job was doing up houses ...your engagement was with builders and so forth ...my father would have probably thought what I was doing as very frivolous... if you read Toby Young's book 'How to Lose Friends and Alienate People' he's not an advertising guy but he has a fascination with popular culture almost as a way of annoying his highbrow parents...” (Russ, Vice Chairman, service agency)

Paradoxically then their parents' outlook was often at odds with those of the educational environment that they sent their children to. Indeed, just as the creatives didn't find their 'fit' within the culture, neither did their parents:

"Kind of odd being a girl in a very posh convent and everybody's dad if they were ill used to come and pick them up in a stripy suit but my dad would turn up in a battered old Volvo wearing Wellington boots, a Barbour and a cap...he loved poetry and things ...we were just talking about how my dad was very bohemian for London..." (Lynne, Head of Art, service agency)

In general this mindset characterised the whole family, including their siblings. Their families' financial resources and parents' attitudes *enabled* them to pursue different ways of life beyond the immediate family environment, although not always creative,

"I'm the only one in the family that's gone into that sort of business [advertising], a brother who works in import/export...having lived abroad for the past 25 years in the Far East and the Near East and a sister who also lives abroad and who works in sort of design and arty type things..." (Wallace, International Creative Director, creative agency)

However in the other classes, the creatives' intrinsic motivation often meant they were "very different" to their siblings in terms of their outlook on life. Here, for example this "working class" copywriter describes his brother's lack of focus in life,

"I have one younger brother. He has just joined the police...he and I were always very different...I always wanted be in something creative....whereas my brother never really knew what to do, he drifted through many jobs as he was getting older... only now realise he wanted to become a policeman...I'm not really sure whether he really wanted to do it...he's never really be motivated by a kind of goal in any formal way..." (Calum, middleweight copywriter, service agency)

The "working class" creatives' siblings were often more "comfortable" within their home environment when growing up and so they were content to continue to live and work in their home town throughout their lives. However, among the "middle class" creatives sometimes there was a sibling or close relative with similar creative tendencies or aspirations,

"I always wanted to do my own thing you know whereas my sister is still at home, she'll always be at home...you know she still lives in the same kind of little town, you know where she sees my mum and dad every day whereas me and my brother were always kind of ...my brother's in a band and he's in London eh me and him we were kind of really

similar...you know just ...you know I suppose free spirits ...you know I just couldn't wait to get away from little kind of little seaside town...once you'd sampled life in the city, it was like god I'm not going back there you know ..." (Paul, Creative Director, creative agency)

The intense motivation to move beyond what was familiar, in all aspects of their life, was common to all of the creatives within this study. This motivation tended to marginalise them particularly among their peers at school. This chapter will now briefly discuss the creatives' marginality and why it served as an important part of being a creative. This chapter will then discuss the creatives' experiences of college and university.

5.3 Experiences of school

In general part of the despair and excitement that characterised their early years for all the creatives was their efforts to bridge the gap between their sense of purpose and its fulfilment. Roe (1954) found economic differences in the background of the sixty four male scientists whom she had studied, but a shared emphasis on learning for its own sake was also present among her subjects. Similarly here within the economically diverse backgrounds of the creatives during their childhood and adolescent years, what remained a constant was their sense of creative intensity: their need to see, explore, understand, experience and to go beyond what is already known for its own sake (John-Steiner, 1987). For creatives, childhood play evolved to become their creative imagination, which in adolescence became what Vygotsky termed as "*intellectualised*" (Moran & John-Steiner, 2003: 71). Csikszentmihalyi (1996) also found that in adolescence creatives would build on their childhood curiosity and introspection. Similarly here, once the creatives' interests became more focused upon a particular craft they started to learn how to combine skill and discipline with their earlier sense of excitement. Creatives devoted time to the development of their interests and talents, which usually meant they were alone drawing or watching films or reading books. This was an important part of their creative development, as Csikszentmihalyi (1996: 66) writes,

"...only those teens who can tolerate being alone are able to master the symbolic content of their domain"

Within the creativity literature marginality is a common theme and is linked to the depth of their intrinsic motivation and intensity. It should be noted that there is a difference between

marginality and marginalisation. Marginalisation is the social process of becoming or being made marginal, for example by one's peers. Whereas marginality is the personal feeling of being on the outside - for example of observing with detachment how the world around them interacted. Marginality was a common theme amongst the creatives in this study. While feelings of marginality maybe considered typical in adolescence generally, in the case of creative people there were concrete reasons for it,

R: *"I just enjoyed art at school and em as I got older I just enjoyed drawing stuff you know...if I was at home I'd draw my parents if they were sitting watching telly or go out and sit and draw landscapes and things, that's something I liked doing..."*

I: *"And were your mates into that at all?"*

R: *"No, no not really...I preferred it on my own anyway..."* (Rabir, middleweight art director, creative agency)

Getzels and Jackson (1962) view this behaviour as an expression of their struggle to reconcile their image of the world with the more conventional image of their peers. Original ways of thinking and expression also made the creatives somewhat suspect to teachers and peers. On the whole creatives felt different from their classmates. They did not feel the need to conform and this was most evident in their musical and clothing tastes, and among many male creatives their lack of interest in sport,

"The different cliques...the bullies, trendy gang or funny people, so it was always quite interesting to see how they interacted...that was quite good fun, I quite liked that about school...but my two friends...my gang we were...the nerdy gang...we were rubbish with girls and not interested in sport ...the common thread we had was that we liked music...wasn't in the charts generally...David Bowie or the Clash ...you know none of that was particularly trendy to like at school particularly when New Kids on the Block were the thing em so yeah... we all had that sort of common thread...that we all liked proper music I suppose as opposed to chart music..." (Lewis, junior copywriter, creative agency)

As a result of their 'solitary existence' Csikszentmihalyi (1996: 66) found that creative adolescents were on the whole less happy. In this study this was particularly true among copywriters than those who were artistically inclined. Young artists created an identity for themselves through their art and among female creatives, in particular, it was through their talent that they gained the respect of their peers.

"I kind of enjoyed school because after the first bout where I got bullied a lot and mum telling me to hit them...I kind of got left alone and I could kind of draw quite well and the

girls kind of respected that then I went through my very sort of arty phase...I could just go to the art room and do my thing... and so because of that I actually did enjoy school, in that way...school was great fun” (Lynne, Head of Art, service agency)

Indeed at school the art directors were at their happiest absorbed in their own world in the art room; certainly it was preferred to spending time with their peers.

Artistic creatives tended to fashion their own approaches to their work. They were largely self-taught in terms of the rudimentary nature of their discipline. Those who stayed on to do their A-level art concentrated on developing their skills and their thinking. During these years some of these creatives’ talents were noticed and encouraged by their teachers. These teachers were influential because they engaged with the creative and importantly they seemed to *care*. In terms of the artists’ ‘marginalised’ thinking often the art teacher was the first person they had met whom they could relate to; and it was they who opened up young creatives’ minds to different possibilities,

“Our art teacher was great ... because he opened you up to different ways of thinking really, he was quite, quite an open person really...and just had a different angle on things...” (Rabir, middleweight art director, creative agency)

More generally, because they were marginalised, the impact of an engaging and enthusiastic teacher on these creatives’ lives was particularly powerful. For example by engaging and relating to this creative, this teacher positively influenced his attitude towards school. In his account the creative also implies that his teacher, whom he still sees, had an effect on the way he has approached his life and work. For example here he talked about the “*power of engagement*” and how information needed to be presented in a way that “*captures people’s imagination*”,

“Loathed it [school]...until I was about 12 or 13 and I think because I viewed school as a place that you know drove information into you rather than engaged with you and at about 12, 13...I had three wonderful teachers...the first was a man...who taught history and he was our form master...and I still see him today which is wonderful...he was the first person who really made learning...you know he taught history...as though it was the most exciting story ever to be told...he just engaged with you...and you were wow...and you looked at him and he was a young man he was about 26...but you kind of knew...he knew the words to Elvis Presley’s “Blue Suede Shoes”...and he knew you could have that conversation with him...if you talked to him about rock and roll he would have a point of view about it...it was very...my first experience of the power of engagement that it isn’t just necessary to have information but what you have to have is an ability to excite

people...you know we say knowledge is power...it is, but only if it is expressed in a way that captures people's imagination...otherwise it's just big, dried stuff that just sits there and you don't use it...it's how you present it..." (Jake, Worldwide Creative Chairman, creative agency)

Getzels and Jackson (1962) found that, for a teacher, a pupil's desirability was not a function only of academic achievement but the nature of the pupil themselves i.e. their personal values, attitudes and their long-term aspirations. Conversely, this study found that with a few exceptions (to be discussed later) their teachers' attitudes reflected those of 'vigilant' "middle class" parents, as this "middle class" copywriter describes,

"I wasn't so popular towards the end with teachers or pupils ...I had the worst teachers in the world ...they always pretty much tell you what you can't do, no one ever tells you...you know what you can be whatever you like...but I just think the education system is pretty poor...nobody ever encouraged you to be who you wanted to be, I don't think...I mean in terms of the educational world they would I mean they assumed you either go to college or university...they never sort of say 'hey, you want to be a footballer?'" (Lewis, junior copywriter, creative agency)

Aligned with their attitudes the teachers' expectations differed according to the class of the creative. Overall "working class" creatives did not perform well in the school environment. Some of them were "in with the wrong crowd". Generally their teachers had little or no expectations for them. This meant that often creatives did not get as much attention as the pupils who showed more academic promise. Typically the "working class" creative would leave school at 15 or 16 to go to the local college or art school to experiment with different subjects. They felt happier in these less restrictive environments where they were encouraged and motivated by tutors they related to. This college environment was particularly important for nurturing the younger, 'new breed' of "working class" copywriters. Unlike their older "wealthy middle class" counterparts they did not have the same opportunities nor was there the same expectation of them going to university. Here this "working class" junior copywriter talked about how, unusually for him in an educational environment he felt "quite comfortable" doing his college advertising course,

"Um hated school, wasn't particularly very good at it um...didn't think it was a particularly good...and looking back now definitely don't think it was a good school, because I wasn't informed...I think it was one of those ones and I think it happens in every school where the good, bright kids are looked after and the not so bright, slightly naughty ones are just sort of left...so there was never any talk of university or college so I left at 16

with a few GCSEs and then went to the local tech and started doing different BTecs...in my second year doing my HND there was an advertising course...2 hours a week and for once I actually felt quite comfortable and I was actually getting quite good grades in it...you know I wasn't always the brightest student and I wasn't always like top of the class but for once I felt quite good and getting good grades and it, it was suggested to go to Watford..." (Jonny, junior copywriter, creative agency)

In general, with their 'vigilant' mothers, the "middle class" creatives were less likely than "working class" creatives to get into the 'wrong crowd' at school. Rather they were more likely to be considered 'nerdy' or 'loners' than 'troublemakers'. The teachers' expectations for these creatives were higher than for the "working class" creatives. These creatives tended to stay on at school longer than the "working class" creatives, and nearly all of them had taken A-Levels. For these creatives the final years at school were often the most difficult, particularly for the art directors. This was because they often had to go against or struggle with their parents' and teachers' expectations to pursue their art. Like their parents, their teachers' expected them to go onto university and then pursue a 'conventional' profession.

Copywriters had less of a struggle because they tended to fulfil the expectations placed upon them, that is, they made 'sensible' subject choices at A-Level and then pursued one of these subjects at university. These subjects tended to be 'arts' based for example English because they enjoyed the "imagination involved in it" as compared to the more logic based subjects of science and maths,

"English I was good at...which was the A ...and then biology I guess I was good at ...although I didn't particularly enjoy it...which I got a B for...got a C for general studies and a D for maths...which I absolutely hated...but I like the sort of work we were doing [in English] like writing essays...I liked doing poetry and stuff...and I like reading...and I like the sort of imagination involved in it I went to University...I did English Literature and philosophy...like it was a dual course...the English was really good and because like it was a new university you could choose which courses you could do...you didn't have to do any Shakespeare or anything like that and I did a lot of poetry ...sort of modernist writing which suited me..." (Tim, junior copywriter, service agency)

The "wealthy middle class" creatives also tended to be loners or misfits at school, and were often bullied. This situation was intensified for some because they were sent away to boarding school, and so their school years were a particularly unhappy time. In terms of higher education there were also similar expectations put upon the "wealthy middle class" creatives, and with the exception of two art directors who went to art college, all of these creatives went to university,

typically Oxbridge, as the 'obvious' next step in their education. However among these "wealthy middle class" parents, at least, divergence from this path was accepted. For example this International Creative Director was privileged and financially free enough to take a year off between school and university, and then again after university to travel.

"I kind of enjoyed it [school] a little bit towards the very end...and then I took off for a year, and did a gap year, trundled around south east Asia, when I was 17...then went off to be a student for 3 years had a fantastic time, utterly fantastic time...I went to Oxbridge...to do Geography, last resort of the incompetent...I went through a system that saw Oxbridge as the pinnacle of achievement...my best A-Level result was in geography and de facto if you're going to have a pop at the big one then you'd better have a go with your strongest suit...and it just sort of happened that I got on better with the geography teachers and it was a broad enough subject to find your way into it...I could be moderately serious about geography because there are a number of moderately interesting things within it em because there's a social science side...social anthropology...you know all kind of interesting stuff and there's lots of it...so em did that and went off and had another year off effectively, because em it seemed like quite a nice idea..." (Wallace, International Creative Director, creative agency)

Within the university and college environment the effect of an influential tutor on the life course of a creative was often more 'direct' than of a school teacher's. These environments provided the opportunity to learn from the work of people whose approach was of heightened interest and contributed to their capacity to make career choices. If teachers helped or hindered the development of creative individuals at school, their tutors and lecturers did so even more. Most of the art directors and younger copywriters were introduced to advertising by a tutor or lecturer at their art college or their local college. And sometimes their tutors or lecturers helped them to access to the field,

"I mean I had to do this young offenders thing for a while em but after that I did A' level art and then I done technical drawing ...A' level art was sort of pretty academic...making me draw flowers and it wasn't really developing me artistically in what I wanted to do...so I went to college and done like graphics and the tutors there were part time graphic designers as well as tutors so they knew the industry...so they were a lot more qualified... It's quite a weird job to get into really ...until say the BTec graphic design I hadn't actually heard about being an advertising creative...my tutors put me onto Bucks university... they had sort of spotted that coming up with the idea quickly was what I was good at... they were really cool and sound people and they just helped me out you know a lot ...just sort of pushed me along, I still keep in contact with one of them actually...it was about seven years ago since he taught me ...I sort of phone him up once every six months...I go out for a beer with him every now and again ..." (Wilf, junior art director, creative agency)

Further education allowed the creatives to immerse themselves in a discipline or subject which they enjoyed, and so the college or university environment yielded a useful counterpoint to the rote learning of school for the creative preparing for a creative life (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). These experiences will now be discussed in more detail.

5.4 Experiences of College and University

Nearly all of the art directors had done a foundation art course, either at their local college or art college or university. The foundation course typically lasted two years and allowed the creatives to experiment with a range of art forms. All of the creatives who had done a foundation course enjoyed these years of experimentation and in particular the freedom that it allowed,

“I thought that was so much fun. I knew I’d never get work doing silk screen printing or you know typography but I thought it was a huge amount of fun doing it anyway just kind of experimenting with all sorts of stuff ... for me it was more kind of I was like suddenly I was free...” (Magnus, placement – art director, creative agency)

After completing the foundation course most of the creatives then specialised in one or two disciplines. Often the creatives would be undecided as to whether to specialise in a “pure” art e.g. sculpture, illustration or a “commercial” art e.g. graphics, advertising. However most chose to do graphics or advertising or both because they enjoyed them. They also thought they could create a career and financially support themselves more easily than pursuing a less commercial art. This was important to those who did not want to return home. However there was evidence that this had been an easier decision for some than for others, given the creative “hierarchy”,

“I straddle a peer group which is photographers and fashion designers and dancers and in that peer group I am you know the poor relation creative...yeah there is a hierarchy em...I’m not that bothered by the fact that the you know contemporary dancers I know and the sort of gay mafia I know will put me you know further down the spectrum than say the tax lawyers...the irony is that a lot of these other creative types look down on an advertising creative because they perceive us having gone into it for the money and given that the money is not in the industry any more it is a bit galling...” (Scott, middleweight art director, service agency)

Some art directors, as below, chose to specialise in advertising because it allowed them to use the range of artistic skills and interests which they had developed at college.

“I did all my O’Levels and em I only took one A-Level ...in art ...I think it was the only thing I was any good at really...that I wanted to push and get an A-Level in it ...I went to art school ...I did a foundation course which was good because I could try out lots of different things and then I went to art college for three years and did graphics and advertising ...I couldn’t decide what to do whether to do painting and fine art or sculpture ...I was really undecided...and I just found out about the advertising at that course ...I didn’t know about beforehand, it kind of came up after first year of the graphics course I thought oh this is quite interesting...Because I thought it was a way of getting...of using all the other things that I was good at like photography and art...I felt that there was a medium here where I could use film and photography and typography and you could put it all together in adverts and you know I quite liked the idea... (Gerald, Executive Creative Director, service agency)

Many of the art directors considered that they weren’t particularly talented artistically, in the “pure” sense; rather it was their ability to think of ideas and being able to put them together visually which led them into art direction. For example this art director was encouraged by his art teacher to pursue graphic design rather than painting because he was better at coming up with ideas than painting. Here this creative, as did many others, identified his experience at art college as a turning point or “*crystallising experience*” in his life (Gardener, in Feldman, 1999: 172). In particular it was here that many of the creatives were exposed to the work of Bernbach for the first time,

“A fantastic teacher ...who was at art school...he was a fantastic lecturer in art and he kind of observed in me that I was not going to be the next Picasso...and he said to me just keep having ideas...he was the one who said why don’t you go and study graphic design...and I then went from art school to Printing College and ...where I studied graphic design and it was whilst I was there I then met another wonderful teacher and he was the man who showed me the work of an advertising man...this was 1960...3, 4...the work of this fantastic agency in America called Doyle, Dane Bernbach...all the work they were doing for Volkswagen...and Avis and he showed me this work ...and I was God this is fantastic ...it was like a light being turned on in a darkened room it was like...this is what I want to do ...this is what I’ve been looking for ...it’s very interesting that isn’t it...you can be surrounded by something and not notice it...I mean advertising was everywhere...” (Jake, Worldwide Creative Chairman, creative agency)

Similar to Csikszentmihalyi (1996: 183) this study found that the creatives’ days at art college, college or university were a “*high point – if not the high point – of life...*” This was because it gave them the freedom to immerse themselves in the subjects that they enjoyed. In addition these environments exposed them to a diverse range of people and different ways of thinking. For most of the creatives they no longer felt marginalised because they met peers, tutors and lecturers to whom they could relate.

For most of the creatives, and particularly the copywriters who tended not to have a range of artistic craft skills, it was the emphasis on *thinking* that set advertising apart from other vocational options at college or after university. Like Csikszentmihalyi (1996: 24) this study found that in general these creatives were motivated primarily by having a challenge which was “*fun*”.

The copywriters had different routes into advertising, depending on their class and age. As discussed above, the younger “*working class*” copywriter left school at the earliest juncture. These creatives went to college and ‘tried out’ different, typically arts or media-based subjects, such as advertising or film-making or history of art. Similar to the art directors, it was at college that these copywriters ‘discovered’ advertising as their potential vocation, and they went on to do a specialist advertising course for example at Watford or Buckinghamshire (referred to as “*Bucks*” within the industry) University.

A small number of “*middle class*” copywriters dropped out of school during their A-levels because they no longer enjoyed the subjects that they were doing. For the copywriter below the contrast between his school experiences and those of his sister at art school gave him the added motivation to fail his exams, as a route out of school. Some copywriters left school to study graphic design at art college and then specialised in advertising. Others would go to college to study advertising or communication at a local college, and then go on to do one of the specialist advertising courses:

“I was going to do something in science, biochemistry...my mum wanted me to be a doctor...but when it came to doing A-levels I got really bored of everything ...it all got a bit too difficult, so I dropped out of college, the sixth form college to go and join the art college that my sister was at...she was having much more fun than me, when I was at 6th form where it was very, very serious...it was more like being at school really than college so ... to get thrown off my A-level course I had to go about failing all my end of year exams to thrown off because she [his mum] wasn't going to let me leave ...I didn't revise, failed all my exams and they threw me out nicely... I went off to do graphic design at the art college after a year of doing A-levels in science...” (Jacob, middleweight copywriter, creative agency)

However in general most of the “*middle class*” and “*wealthy middle class*” copywriters gained A-level passes in subjects that they enjoyed. Typically these creatives left school and went onto

pursue their favourite subject (and usually best A-level pass) at university. These copywriters would then either go travelling, or go to London after they had finished their degrees.

“It was the late 80s which was quite a flash time and being honest you felt a bit of a dork leaving Oxbridge and going to London ...if you didn't go to something reasonably well paid but I didn't want to go into a bank, I didn't want to go into accountancy and I didn't want to go into law and I didn't want to do anything that involved any more bloody exams... I looked at teaching as a fall-back but I applied to about 10 ad agencies... I suppose pretty much within a few weeks of starting as an account person you see this creative part of the job and you think well surely that's the job for me...you think that's the more interesting part of the business ...but of course...unless you went to art school...one of three art schools there's no obvious route into creative from anywhere else...I have no idea why this is so ... I mean for a young person as well it is in many ways a little bit of a dream job isn't it ...I have to say because it's reasonably lucrative ...while having none of the rather naff selling out qualities of quite a lot of other jobs...” (Russ, Vice Chairman, service agency)

This chapter will now look in detail at how the creatives began to create their careers in advertising and explore the drive which helped them through what was often the difficult process of starting out.

5.5 Starting out in advertising

Most of the older creatives left university with no idea what career they were going to pursue. Prior to the launch of specialist advertising courses, art directors and copywriters were hired separately. Some copywriters went into account management as an alternative job to banking or accountancy. In general account management had been a common route into advertising for many older copywriters. After a year or so in account management they would switch to copywriting because it seemed more “enjoyable” or “fun” or for this “wealthy middle class” copywriter it was a “more acceptable” alternative.

“You can probably pick up a slightly sort of bookish tradition from my background also I think it might be a kind of Englishness or even a sort of pompous Englishness that writing is more acceptable than business, if I'm honest...” (Wallace, International Creative Director, creative agency)

Some of the older writers had considered teaching or acting or scriptwriting, but then friends or fate would lead them into advertising. Overall the older copywriters, as below, had an ad hoc route into copywriting.

“Tried teaching for a bit... I taught Shakespeare to students which I really enjoyed actually and then...I was trying to write comedy strips for the BBC ...trying lots of things really and then I had a girlfriend at the time who said oh you should try advertising because she was working as a secretary at an agency ...at the time um so I went and did their copy test which they had to get copywriters and...I loved the copy test and the copy test was sort of a test of lateral thinking...you know there wasn't right answers or wrong answers it was all lateral and interesting...I thought that was fantastic...so I sent off for all the copy tests from all the agencies that did them about 5 or 6 of them, did them and then I just kind of got into the idea of getting into advertising ...I thought it would be a fun way to spend a few years...” (Malcolm, Executive Creative Director, creative agency)

In contrast all of the younger writers had left university and been aware of copywriting as a profession through internet searches at university. All of them, apart from one, had done a specialist postgraduate advertising course. The one copywriter who had not done a specialist course had tried to get into copywriting by going into account management. However she had been unsuccessful and was now part of a team which had spent 18 months trying to get their first placement.

“You know this process has gone on for like 18 months and you kind of get to the point where unless somebody gives me an idea ...you know...what do we need to do to get a placement...what we need to do to get a job...you know it's hard...I've had the odd bar job and stuff but I haven't been in proper paid employment for like 18 months so...I feel the pressure weighing down you know day by day ...and if you'd talked to me this time last year ...I'd be like yeah no I love it ...and I do love it still. The resolve is still there but it's very tiring...but I'm quite glad we didn't go to college personally in that my degree really informed me the way that I work and my life experiences...we know I guess what a good advert is and what the kind of essentials ...but you know the contacts would have been really good from Watford you know that sort of element... you hear about the college kids coming out and having placements like nothing you know...” (Indira, copywriter – looking for first placement – non-college team)

Those who did not do a specialist advertising course were at an immediate disadvantage compared to the so-called “college kids”. As many creative researchers have found in other creative domains preparation in the sense of immersion in the discipline was required for creative achievement (Gardener, 1993a; Hayes, 1989; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; John-Steiner, 1987). At the beginning of the creatives' careers those who had gone to college to do a

specialised advertising course were considered by the field and themselves as coming out equipped with the 'basic requirements' to enter the industry. The colleges began to shape their thinking. In the first term the creatives were partnered with different people on the course to work on a range of briefs. In the second term the creatives had to choose one partner to work with for the whole term. Typically over the course of the term they would put together a portfolio of work. This process helped each of the creatives start to work out their ways of working, what they looked for in a partner and their own strengths and weaknesses. For a creative starting out finding the 'right' partner in terms of creative compatibility was a particularly important part of process. This was because, as will be discussed in the next chapter, the quality of the partnership defined the quality of work that they produced:

"I mean on the course during the first term we worked with everyone, they gave us very quick briefs to work on so you get to work with someone on each brief...so you got an idea of who you get on with and who you work well with and blah, blah...we were given an ultimatum at the end of term...the tutor hung a notice up ...in the morning and by the end of the day you need to have teamed up with someone...it was like a school disco ... me and Stu both decided we wanted to work with each other fortunately ...so we teamed up ...yeah it worked we stayed as a team... for me he's a very good thinker, he just has a broad mind, he thinks big...he's a very clear thinker...I think we, we respect each other's opinion, we're not very argumentative, I mean we'll discuss things but we don't really get in a huff ...we take on each other's view and form a balanced opinion about it and we compromise and it's tended to work out so...we help each other improve on the work we're doing ...yeah complement each other in that respect. We're a bit different as well in terms of the way we think and our tastes and things which is a good thing..." (Rabir, middleweight art director, creative agency)

Crucially, these courses also began the process of immersing the creatives in the industry culture e.g. through agency trips, short term placements, by introducing them to creative organisations like the D&AD (Design and Art Direction) and specialist recruitment agencies. Thus some of the creatives had their work exposed within the industry before they had even tried to obtain a placement within an agency. For example the D&AD puts on an annual New Blood exhibition showcasing the best college talent, and the specialist creative recruitment companies put on an end of year exhibition for the top books from the advertising colleges. The art director and his partner above had gone on to win team of the year at Watford and had featured in the trade magazine *Campaign's 'Ones to Watch'*:

"We were finished our course em there's this exhibition that a headhunter organises every year for sort of graduate teams and sort of the best books in their opinion from around the

country and they picked ours to exhibit in it ... a lot of em creative directors were there, people that would sort of make decisions that evening...the sort of opening night as it were...a lot of people saw our book it had a good response...oh we had a notebook in the back where people could write comments and stuff and eh one of the creative directors ...well he said to come in and have a chat so we did...eh he liked our work and he offered us a 3 month placement...” (Rabir, middleweight art director, creative agency)

From the creatives’ accounts the importance of the ‘formalised’ college approach has grown particularly over the last two or three decades. Many of the older creatives considered that this increased popularity stemmed, in part, from the 1980s and changing perception of advertising from “*Hidden Persuader*” to a glamorous, sexy creative profession. As explained by these joint deputy creative directors who were interviewed together,

F: *“I think when Saatchis helped win the Tories win that election I think ...for the first time an advertising agency was like a household name and I don’t think you can overestimate the effect that that had on people looking for careers I think...suddenly it was big and sexy and it was powerful...I think advertising prior to that had been kind of an adjunct of a few large companies marketing departments and that’s kind of where it stopped...that overt influence had a huge influence on the whole industry in this country I think...”*

L: *“...Yeah and there was a huge burst of you know it was a creative discipline, just as much you know as...you know it wasn’t just flogging products you know it was very sexy and trendy...” (Fred and Lynne, Joint Deputy Creative Directors, service agency)*

In general then the ease with which the creatives got their jobs two or three decades ago compared to those who had started out in the industry more recently was apparent:

“I got a job in advertising...it was relatively easy...because at that time...this was the late 60s... being a design student saying that I wanted to go into advertising was really...it was like oh my god...the Pope telling you that he wanted to be Jewish or something...it was a kind of...it really was frowned upon...you know it was viewed as a horrible commercial world... nobody was interested if you passed all these exams...they weren’t obsessed like now...it’s become a much more formalised...” (Jake, Worldwide Creative Chairman, creative agency)

Some industry commentators (Sutherland, 2005: 32) and some of the creative directors within this study felt that the college practices of producing creatives that arrive “*from art colleges...in a kind of freeze-dried, just-add-a-brief state*” was to the detriment of creativity within the industry. These creatives considered that advertising no longer attracted the same eclectic mix of creatives that it did two or three decades ago. Thus as an industry of cultural production some of

the senior creatives were concerned that advertising was in danger of losing its 'edge' because it was losing the 'more eclectic' intake to other creative industries,

"Three or four art colleges basically account for the intake...the conformity of the input increases the conformity of the output...why?...because everybody has been taught the same damn way...they all want to impress each other because they've got a peer group...and you do that by doing a cute kind of art "colleegy" sort of ad that is a bit like Bill Bernbach only with a penis joke ...and nobody is actually thinking about it..." (Russ, Vice Chairman, service agency network)

However while the colleges *began* the creatives' network and *began* to shape their thinking, the creatives who had been to college believed their 'real' learning began once they started to interact with experienced and established creatives within the field, because

"Learning on the job is what you do in advertising" (Bullmore, 2003: vii).

According to these creatives their 'proper' learning process began when they started to go round the agencies with their college portfolio. Throughout their careers, creatives were hired on the judgement of their portfolio or 'book' of work. For the creative director looking to hire a team, the creatives' portfolio was the most reliable way to judge a team's talent and their potential 'fit' with the agency. This 'judging process' formed a critique of the creatives' work (referred to in the industry as a 'book crit'). In order to gain entry into the advertising domain, the creative ideas within their book had to be couched in terms understandable to those in the field. Therefore a creative team who wanted to gain entry into the domain not only had to work within the creative system but also had to reproduce that system within their minds (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). In other words the creatives had to learn the 'rules' and the content of the domain: the criteria of selection and the preferences of the field. As explained here by this middleweight team,

J: *"There's only so much you can learn when you're at college ...the most stuff you learn is when you are actually on placement...you know when you're working in an agency...when you're going around with your book and you're having book crits ...mainly all the work from college got binned...because it was wrong...because it's a different world...the work you do to get through your course is completely different from the work you need in a portfolio for...to get a job..."*

S: *"Like at college they give you briefs that are very easy to work on, they give you products that have a very obvious benefit, so it's quite easy we used to call them our est*

briefs, because it would be the fastest something, or the longest or the biggest...so it's very easy to do ads on that one single thing...it's all about...narrowing it down to that one single thing but in the real world we work on cornflakes or soap powder and there isn't any est about that it's just how do you sell that ...when you start going to see teams and they say get rid of all that college stuff now do an ad for coco pops or something...that's when you kind of learn it properly..." (Jacob and Stan, middleweight creative team, creative agency)

Similar to Gardener (1993a, 1997) this research found that much of what determined the success of a creative starting out in the advertising industry was their attitude, their openness to learning and absorption of the creative culture. Successful creatives used their book crits to get advice for example on how their work could be improved, which pieces should be in their portfolio and who in the industry they should be seeing. As well as developing and improving their work, this was a process of getting themselves and their work 'out there', developing their confidence, maturing their own judgement and understanding their strengths and weaknesses. Within this research there was evidence, early on in the creatives' career, of how important it was that their work was evaluated by creatives they respected and whose work they admired. For a young team starting out, access to these senior creatives was limited. However gaining this access and learning from these creatives was an important motivating factor and occasionally they were successful:

"Well we didn't see him that much but I reckon we saw him on an average of about 2 minutes a day or something like that but...two minutes would be extremely valuable ...he'd slaughter our work and then he'd kind of justify why it was slaughtered ...where we had gone wrong in the process..." (Laura, art director, placement – creative agency)

For the creatives, learning the rules of the domain and refining their understanding of how to create good advertising was part of the intrinsic challenge which continued over the course of their career. However the creatives, particularly when they were starting out, were hired on the basis of their 'raw' ideas and thinking. Because of the subjective nature of creativity, there would always be those who liked or disliked a particular style or different pieces of work. Therefore they had to have strong self belief and motivation to succeed,

"And when we go in for book crits you obviously go in and they talk you through what they like and what they don't like and what they think might be able to make it better and where you might be going wrong ...obviously every single agency has ...every single person has a different view ...some people like and some people don't ...the recent stuff

that we've done they either hate it or love it ...it's really divided you're either that type of person or you're not...” (Laura, art director, placement – creative agency)

Indeed numerous studies, (for example Coopersmith, 1967/81; Garwood, 1964) have stated that creative people listen to themselves and are more influenced by their own inner standards than by those of the society or profession to which they belong. Creative Directors within this study hired teams whose ideas could ‘surprise’ and whose thinking had ‘variety’ and ‘freshness’. This Creative Director did not hire teams whose work replicated his own personal style, which many young teams did in an attempt to endear themselves to him,

“I don't hire people on the basis that you know their books are like how I would do it do you know what I mean because then they just replicate me ...I hire people on the basis that 'God I would never have thought of doing that'...so what I want is teams here that surprise me ...I don't want think 'right ok I could have done that', because then there's no point ...so that's why you want other teams, because you want more variety and freshness...” (Malcolm, Executive Creative Director, creative agency)

5.6 Creatives' motivation

During this ‘starting out’ phase in their career many creatives within this study said that they thought about giving up. This section considers why so many were driven to this point and how they overcame it.

Generally, if the Creative Director liked their work and their attitude and felt they would fit within the agency culture, a creative team starting out would be hired for a placement or put on the agency's placement waiting list. The placement system which originated in the eighties is now an integral part of agency culture. This system involves creative teams who were seeking permanent employment doing a 'placement' for usually between two weeks to three months, depending on how well they got on. Paid the minimum wage, a team moves from agency to agency and built up their portfolio and experience until eventually they might be offered a permanent job.

The placement system gave the new creatives work experience and let the agencies ‘try before they buy’. The current oversupply of creative students (approximately 10,000 students graduate from art colleges or courses each year, according to www.ipa.co.uk) meant those who had made

it to the 'other side', like the art director below, were grateful to be a part of the privileged few. However, he was also well aware of the fickle nature of the industry and that he was dispensable until he had proved his creative worth in terms of awards,

"It's quite nice to be in this industry because it's pretty cut throat so it kind of makes you feel privileged to work for them in a way... there's like a million other people wanting to do it... there's probably about 100 teams get kicked out every year ... jobs don't come around that often so you know they've pretty much got you over a barrel unless you're a big team...I mean it can literally switch like that, I mean it can literally be 'you should be grateful to work here, work hard if you don't there's the door' ...and you do one ad, like my friends did ...won loads of awards which are important in this industry...so they went from a junior team with not really much say, fighting their way in the industry trying to get good briefs to basically go where they want, get any brief they want..." (Wilf, junior art director, creative agency)

Therefore to persevere through often two years and more of placement life, the creatives' values and intensity which were evident throughout their childhoods, were at the heart of creating their career. Similar to Getzel and Jackson (1962) this study found that during their childhood the creatives used their talents to create a world to escape what they perceived as the 'conventional' or the mundane aspects of reality. As the creatives grew older this evolved into a "fear" of settling for what they perceived to be a 'mundane' life. This "fear" provided the motivation which drove many of the creatives, particularly during the difficult days trying to start their creative career:

"It was all or nothing...I couldn't walk away at that point because...fear of...while I was at college I worked at McDonalds with all my friends and in my year between (local college) and Watford I went back to McDonalds and I lived with my mum and I was manager and you could see, you could see a way of life and all my friends still work there and you know the people who I grew up with in college and stuff and my mates, it was great at the time but eh I didn't want it...I just didn't want it and it was that fear of having to go back to that life that I didn't want, I just couldn't give up...I mean like if someone forced me to give up, if I didn't have any more options left like I completely ran out of money...I didn't get any financial support from my mum you know they don't earn a lot of money...I just had to until I didn't have any choice in the matter or someone literally throw my suitcases on the street and told me to get out because I hadn't been paying my rent...that was the point I was going to get to..." (Jonny, junior copywriter, hotshop agency)

In this way had the creatives' been motivated by money or stability, they would have been unlikely to brave the insecurities involved in a creative life, settling instead for a more

'conventional' career. For example in advertising being made redundant early on in their career was, with hindsight, seen as a beneficial learning process for some of the creatives in this study. Indeed these insecurities for some young creatives helped to develop confidence early on in their careers. As this art director who had been made redundant three times in her eight year career explained,

"It was a bit of a shock but I think it was a really good thing to be made redundant early on because it made me bounce back again ...the fact that I could get a job again made me feel a lot better, you know made me feel confident..." (Mairi, middleweight art director, service agency)

Thus the placement system toughened the creatives up and exposed them to the realities of the job. Getting used to the insecurities was a learning process and often it was a case of knowing each particular agency's definition of the term 'placement'. For some it seemed that it was a case of the agency hiring in cheap labour perhaps under false pretence:

"I had a three month supposed work trial at [well-known agency]...that they said was a work trial and then they decided on the last week that actually it was never a work trial ...we never said that and just gave us a grand each and told us to go..." (Mairi, middleweight art director, service agency)

The strength of the creatives' motivation was especially clear when they described their daily lives when they were not in a placement. In terms of day to day survival it was practically very difficult and mentally draining, particularly when there was no emotional support or encouragement from their parents:

M: *"During this 18 months there was obviously times in between where we were out of work for long stretches and stuff...where we're basically sat at home watching daytime TV, trying to write some ads and like getting really depressed about it all..."*

I: *"Did you ever feel like giving up?"*

M: *"I did at that point yeah ...I was getting a really, really hard time from my parents like em ... and em you know ringing up and telling me that I had to come home ...so it's taken a lot for me to ...I had to learn to sort of cut off their opinions or what they think, you know. So..., but at the time I was thinking 'oh no' you know 'why can't they be proud of me?' ...I think that was the worst thing. If I'd have felt that had their support then it would have been a lot easier ...I mean a lot better but I think having no support from anybody and feeling like you're on your own and doing it is really tough ...you know it was basically just me and [her partner] sort of thing keeping each other going..."* (Mairi, middleweight art director, service agency)

Most of the young creatives became absorbed in a culture completely alien to their friends and family, and so the only people they could truly relate to were their partners. Thus the creative partnership was considered not only beneficial for creative production.

“I think that a good partnership is really important because I think advertising can be a really tough business to be in especially when starting out...really tough...it can really grind you down and I think you need, you need partnerships” (Malcolm, Executive Creative Director, creative agency)

Thus successful creative careers required a long-term commitment to the partnership and domain. This section will turn to discuss the creatives’ commitment to the domain.

5.7 Internalising the domain

A recent survey (IPA cited in Bannister, 2005: 33) found that Bartle Bogle Hegarty along with Weiden + Kennedy were the two creative agencies that creatives in London most aspired to work for. This was also found to be the case among most of the creatives within this research. In advertising learning from the best was important, particularly at the beginning of their career.

“...The great centres of learning and commerce have always acted as magnets for ambitious individuals who wanted to leave their mark on the culture” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 128).

London was recognised as such a “magnet” for advertising creatives. The creatives’ current location depended on the stage in their career and their lifestyle. Most of the creatives who worked outside London did so because they had negative perceptions or experiences of the London lifestyle. Overall the regional agencies were not perceived as having the same creative prestige or opportunities as those in London:

“I became creative director at [an agency in Manchester]...I was joint creative director for a couple of years and then did 4 or 5 as the creative director...sole creative director em and I adored the sense of being responsible for forming a department...loved it...and then I eh came here...six months ago now... I came here in October because...I’d got as far as I could go ...I was at the best agency outside of London and I’d been at the top of it creatively for 5 years...I had nowhere to go so I had to move to London...” (Dan, Joint Creative Director, creative agency)

Regardless of where they worked, all the creatives saw London as the centre of creative excellence within UK advertising. The creatives also felt that London agencies led the way in terms of the industry's creative trends and cultural and structural change. So for a creative the career opportunities were greater in London. Importantly for those starting out, London offered opportunities to maximise their access to the advertising field, both formally and informally,

“It’s a very involved profession...for a lot of people it kind of is their life ...the hardest thing I think is when you start off as a junior you em have to ...and what I did for years and years you just have to absorb yourself in it completely because it’s so hard to get a job...because you have to learn how to do advertising em...you know you can’t just do it...there ain’t loads of jobs out there so you’ve kind of got to go round and get experience and stuff...you’ve got to read up all the time...you’ve got to absorb everything...it’s a very time consuming thing...you’ve got to get out to the pubs and bars...you know if you want a job you’ve got to do everything...you know you need to sort of meet people and you know find out what’s going on at what places...all the agencies in town...” (Mairi, middleweight art director, service agency)

It should be noted that creatives who had started out in the regional agencies also had to engage in the process of becoming absorbed into the advertising culture. This meant that the creatives very often became obsessed by their metier (Gardener and Policastro, 1999). To be successful creatives needed to keep abreast of new developments and movements in the industry, what teams had done what work; what teams were moving where; which creative director was going to head up what agency; who’d won what award, at which agency and under which creative director? These movements affected agency reputations in the long term. This was something creatives needed to be mindful of particularly when they were looking for their first job. All the creatives wanted to work with the agencies possessing the best creative reputations because they wanted to work with and learn from creatives at the top of their field. For all creatives the most important qualities of prospective employers were their creative reputation and the opportunity to produce quality, high profile work,

“Creative reputation, work, where I think would be a good step next after all the other places I’ve worked at...Weidens...BBH I’d go to ...top one yeah ...I feel that they’ve got the big agency mentality, and I like their work and I admire their big production values and their thinking and stuff ...that would be the one place I’d like to go next...” (Mairi, middleweight art director, service agency)

The quality of their first ‘permanent’ agency influenced their career trajectory. The quality of a creative’s learning determined the quality of their work. Through the course of their career the

quality of their work determined where they would get their next job. The agency defined the type of work the creative produced. Therefore stereotypes of above and below-the-line needed to be learned before the creatives searched for their first placement; for the “college kids” this process began at college. The junior art director below talked of the majority of college leavers having to “settle” for a job in a below-the-line agency, and the industry’s implicit creative hierarchy among the above-the-line agencies in London. Learning and understanding these stereotypes and hierarchies was one of the first indications of a creative’s internalisation into advertising culture:

“The thing is I feel really, really sorry because there’s a lot of students ...and I think 95% of students leaving these courses will not get a job in a top agency and maybe about 70% will settle for a below the line agency and the rest will ditch advertising altogether and do something else but I think that 5% who are like really focused on getting a job...they’ll be the ones who’ll get the job...” (Colin, junior art director, creative agency)

In creating careers for themselves the creatives who persevered and succeeded needed to be creative not only in their ideas but also in shaping a future for themselves. To be successful the creatives’ career trajectories were strategically planned. Because the creatives were personally identified with their work it was comparatively easy for creative directors to identify and keep track of talented creatives. Creative directors were also greatly aided by the creatives’ predilection for peer recognition,

“It is a great place to be I mean it’s got a good reputation...I mean it will definitely help our careers along, if we ever want to leave here then it’s really good that we’ve been here I mean advertising is so small I mean no one will advertise advertising jobs it’s all word of mouth you know and if people know we’ve come from here then...and we’ve got some of our work then it’ll help our careers no end really...” (Wilf, junior art director, creative agency)

The awards based creative culture and the importance of an agency’s reputation will be explored along with many other aspects of agency life, in the next chapter.

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the creatives' childhood and adolescent years through to the beginnings of creating their creative careers and absorption into the advertising creative culture.

This research found that among advertising creatives there was a range of family backgrounds. These were classified by the creatives as "*working class*", "*middle class*" and "*wealthy middle class*".

This diversity was considered to be a relatively recent and positive change in the industry away from the "*boys' club*" culture which had dominated the industry for so long. This range of backgrounds was important to the industry and enhancing creativity because it brought new thinking and different perspectives. Similar to other studies, (for example John-Steiner, 1987 and Csikszentmihalyi, 1996) an individual's creativity was found to be the result of the interaction between their thoughts and their socio-cultural contexts. That is, the creatives' thinking and their creativity were influenced by their different environments. Each of these classes had different types of cultural resources available to them; different parents' expectations and attitudes; and different teachers' expectations and attitudes. However common to all was their intrinsic motivation. This motivation was evident from a young age. This motivation was important for overcoming each creatives' class specific struggles for example the "*middle class*" parents' closed world attitudes'; the "*working class*" norms; the "*wealth middle class*" educational traditions.

Their intensity, curiosity and focus often marginalised them from their peers, particularly at school. However as other studies (for example Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Gardener & Wolf, 1988, 1994) have found the creatives used their marginality to their creative advantage, for example as observers of life and the 'isolation' to develop their talents.

Typically the creatives only found like-minded peers, tutors and the 'freedom' to explore their creativity when they were at art college or college or university. These years were particularly influential for the creatives, in terms of nurturing their talents and developing their thinking. Indeed for the artistically inclined and younger copywriters it was during these years they would 'discover' advertising as a creative vocation. The art colleges and colleges in particular

facilitated the creatives' access to the advertising field. Mentors and tutors would often encourage the young creative to apply for one of the specialist advertising courses, which were now the 'standard' route into the industry.

Most of the older wealthy "*middle class*" creative directors (who were copywriters by trade) had gone to Oxbridge. Oxbridge, which was at one time the main source of advertising copywriters, was now mainly replaced by the specialist advertising courses. These courses were criticised by some creative directors in this study for producing 'formulaic' creatives. However the evidence here suggested that these colleges contributed to the industry's creative diversity by facilitating access to a field which might at one time have been closed to some creatives. For example there was a new generation of "*working class*" and "*middle class*" copywriters with a different set of more visually-based influences, observations, and ways of thinking than their mostly older "*wealthy middle class*" Oxbridge educated counterparts.

Creativity was a process and sensibility that unfolded over their lifetime. Many of the themes which characterised their childhood and adolescence continued throughout their adult life and influenced their creativity. Their intrinsic motivation and self belief was particularly important to surviving the first few years of starting out in the advertising industry.

Although creatives were usually hired on the basis of their "*fresh thinking*", this was when a creative's learning truly began. Advertising was found to be a very "*involving*" profession. The intensity with which they pursued their talents as children was now transposed to internalising the advertising system. Learning the rules of the advertising domain was an essential part of being successful in the advertising field.

The doors to agency life will be opened in the next chapter.

Chapter 6: Agency life

6.1 Introduction

A creative director's vision defined the agency culture. This culture defined the type of creatives and clients that the agency attracted. Creatives were attracted to agencies which had a reputation for award winning work. The agency's work was an outward symbol of that culture. The quality of that output was managed by the creative director in accordance with the agency vision. Fundamental to the quality of that output was the quality of the 'creative marriage', their relationship with their creative director and the systems in place within the creative development process. Each of these aspects of agency life will now be explored in turn. The changes which were occurring within agency life will be discussed throughout the chapter.

6.2 The creative marriage

"It is not just an intellectual endeavour; rather it is like an affair of the mind in which emotions can transform the participants and the work itself is interesting and supportive. Because the emotional intensity of collaboration is quite high, the process can be painful at times" (John-Steiner, 2000: 82).

For new ways of thinking and creativity to occur different perspectives were needed (Amabile, 1996); hence the importance of the diversity in the creatives' backgrounds. The creatives considered this to be an essential part of what made a successful creative partnership. Most of the partnerships included in this study had one working class creative partnered with a middle class creative. There was one working class creative partnered with a wealthy middle class creative and one team made up of only middle class creatives. In some cases there was also cultural and ethnic diversity. The creatives believed that *complementary* thinking was an essential for the ideas based partnership to be successful, so too was the partners' compatibility and trust. Such a partnership created a "*third person*" which enriched their perspectives and work,

"Someone who's quite different to you...someone you can be honest with...someone you can talk to ...I mean they always say about a team you know two of you create a third person that's better than both of you..." (Gerald, Executive Creative Director, service agency)

Creative partnerships supported a creative's willingness to take risks. Gruber (1989) believes that by spreading the risk between partners, each participant is encouraged to take more chances. Through successful collaboration, the creatives can move beyond the constraints of their personal creative habits:

"Because when you start working with somebody you're basically showing them your knickers ...because what you're doing is you're showing them your inner workings of your mind ... you've got to be very comfortable with someone to try something which may sound a bit stupid or might sound crap... it's the little like golden nuggets that you have to work out between you..." (Derek, heavyweight creative, service agency)

The intensity of the creative partnership necessitated a pattern of reciprocal self disclosure which had to be established early on in the relationship if it was to survive. This meant the shaping of a shared language, the pleasures and risks of honest dialogue, trust, and the search for common ground. In this way, as explored in the Literature Review, the advertising partnership is metaphorically described in the industry, trade press and research literature (for example Nixon, 2003) as a marriage:

"I liked him as a person he's really easy to talk to ...so it's just pure, pure, pure luck that I met a guy like him ...because I think it is like difficult for creatives to find their ideal partner you know [his joint creative directors] they've been together for like 8 years and you know they complement each other so, so much...because basically being in a creative team is like a marriage..." (Colin, junior art director, creative agency)

The creatives described this 'special' type of relationship as being difficult to find. When starting out, the younger creatives talked of meeting partners as an act of fate, through friends or at college. A more formalised 'match making' service had been set up by some of the advertising organisations and head hunters. These services, where creatives tended to initially 'meet' online, were perceived to facilitate the search process. Here the creatives would make decisions primarily based on the quality of creative thinking and style of their work:

"It's where if you're looking for a partner you put your details up...so I just emailed dozens and dozens of people on the website and met dozens and dozens of people and went through the process of...you bring your book and you sit there and exchange books and look through each others books...it's terribly like internet dating, it really is..." (Indira, copywriter, looking for first placement – non-college team)

Marital themes were explicit within the creatives' narratives. The marital discourse, 'we and not I' was consistently used by the creatives. This durable 'we'-ness, associated with a marital mindset of joint endeavour and ownership (Notarius & Markman, 1993) was part of the learning process for young creatives, who, up to starting a college course or in the early years before getting an agency job, had typically created alone. This was more difficult for some than others, depending on the partner, but it was an accepted part of the job:

"I think the key is that you work for him and he works for you and I think that mindset is the best mindset ...you're not working for yourself...because if you come up with an idea you'll take it as yours rather than saying "we" ... [Creative Director] taught me out of that when I said I instead of we...he said stop saying I and say we instead because it's all about teamwork..." (Colin, junior art director, creative agency)

However to a small number in the industry, "permanent" partnerships and their 'we-ness' gave a team a false sense of security because it allowed them to get too comfortable with a particular style of creativity rather than expanding themselves creatively with different partners:

"The cons of perfect permanent partnerships is that you get on so well you start producing the same style of work on almost everything that you work on ...whereas the delight of having to come to terms with a different art director or a different writer means that you continue to expand em...so I don't think there is a perfect permanent partnership ...it's more difficult... permanent partnerships allow people to have a false sense of courage because you can say we rather than I and that gives you more authority..." (Jez, Member of Advisory Board, worldwide agency network)

However the creatives in partnerships, did not talk about being in a permanent partnership, rather they let them run their natural course. Just as in marriage, one creative might outgrow their partner and seek out new relationships and new challenges. Just as marital relationships ended through a natural growing apart, so they were forced apart sometimes through circumstances beyond their control. Sometimes it would be evident to a creative director that there was mismatch of talent and the director's experience told him or her that one creative would work better with another partner. Often the creative director's decision was politically driven, that is an incoming director who could not afford to buy in a new team might want to stamp his or her authority or freshen up the department, having observed the teams at work. Sometimes the rationale for splitting a team was all of the above, as here:

“Well it was just deemed that his partner wasn’t very good and my partner wasn’t very good and there was a bit of politics in it as well and em yeah so unfortunately they got the boot...I was working with [new partner] ...and the first sort of project was really successful and did really well and then it just sort of became apparent that was the best thing to do was to stay...to stay with my new partner...” (Tim, junior copywriter, service agency)

All of the creatives had experienced working with more than one partner and many creatives had experienced both good and bad partnerships. For example this copywriter describes how he “ended up fanning about...for a couple of years...” because his Creative Director split him from his partner with whom he felt comfortable and put him with someone with a completely different work ethos:

“He’d [creative director] split us up and give us both new...Tim got a writer who he was mates with anyway, he got on really well with and they kept doing pretty good work...I ended kind of fanning about a bit for a couple of years without really having a partner that I enjoyed or could... get anything going with... it’s a bit difficult when you’re working with someone... it’s going from being comfortable in your own room to having a stranger in there...” (Crispin, middleweight copywriter, service agency)

The type of relationship they had with their partner affected the quality of their output. Therefore once the creatives had found a partner with whom they felt comfortable enjoyed working, they valued that relationship for as long as it remained productive. When the creatives described their successful relationship experiences, two specific types of creative partnerships emerged: work mates and soul mates. These typologies were clearly recognised by the more experienced creatives retrospectively and were often the defining difference between a “stellar” or “blistering” team (i.e. soul mates) and a team that “produced good work” and “got on really well” (i.e. work mates),

“Me and [his ex-partner] got on really well yeah...we were never a stellar team though...I don’t think we were a blistering team, you know...sometimes...you just get that...you know some teams can just work faster than others, you know some people just get it...they get to a solution faster than others ...some people just want it more than others you know...I think me and [his current partner] work really well together, the best I’ve ever known it...” (Donald, Joint Creative Partner, creative hotshop)

The definable difference in the types of relationships was explained by the Creative Director below. His soul mate partnership with Toby had gone beyond the implicit value provided by the working relationship with William, towards a psychological intimacy and mutuality. As Gerald

noted this was in part influenced by Toby's background and his degree which had influenced his thinking. The meaning of the relationship moved beyond the intrinsic value the relative partners contributed to the creative work. The commitment to the creative work remained but so too did the enduring personal relationship commitment. The relationship ended when Gerald sought a fresh creative challenge and moved into directing,

G: *"Toby was quite an amazing guy ...he's one of my closest friends still now um and I was there for three or four years with Toby and again did some really nice work...it was great..."*

I: "A different relationship to William would you say?"

G: *"With Toby it was much more...real...I suppose...we used to talk about a lot of stuff...I mean Toby had a degree in psychology so we used to have a lot of philosophical, psychological discussions...it was very...quite deep and profound...much more profound relationship..."* (Gerald, Executive Creative Director, service agency)

The functional workmate partnership was found to be the most common type of relationship. While the partners got on well the relationship was essentially built on the intrinsic value it provided for the two partners; they produced good creative work together and therefore they were motivated to remain committed to the partnership, as illustrated here:

"The first time I worked with [current partner] ...we never had a reason to split up em ...me and [current partner] we get on well, we're not best friends, you won't find us down the pub, or having dinner or anything but we do good work and we get on with it...and it works so...there was never a reason to go and work with somebody else because it always seemed to work..." (Jonny, junior copywriter, creative hotshop)

Evidence of this need for a commitment to the relationship was given in many of the creatives' accounts. The strength of commitment to the creatives' relationship was often evident day to day because the process of generating a creative dialogue often involved, indeed *necessitated* a creative tension (Pollit, 1969; Senge, 1990) or constructive arguing (Notarius and Markman, 1993); usually because of the diversity of perspectives (Amabile, 1996). However this creative conflict was often perceived as a positive release or clearing of the air which made for successful long term marital relations, as described below in the creatives' interaction during this paired interview:

L: *"I found him quite interesting in a way because he's so completely different to me and I think sometimes we clash because of that ...but it can be quite fun to be around him because he'll see something very different..."*

M: *"We do argue every day..."*

L: *"Healthy...it's over ideas..."*

M: *"Yeah...I never really argued with eh with the ex [creative partner] and it just kind of grew up, and up and up...like small annoyance...I just think it's like any relationship...if you don't clear the air it will just start festering and then it will all come out in a huge explosion...so at least we kind of clear the air..."* (Laura and Magnus, placement team, creative agency)

As with marital conflict (Notarius and Markman, 1993), creative conflict by itself was not perceived as destructive when it was counterbalanced with positive aspects, such as humour, positive problem solving, agreement, assent, empathy, and active non-defensive listening. These create a commitment and motivation to work at the relationship. For the creatives the most important aspects were a shared sense of humour and positive problem solving.

"You get on sometimes despite your faults do you know what I mean. Because one person is one way and because you complement each other...first of all it's shared sense of humour...you know...it's getting to solutions very quickly..." (Donald, Creative Partner, creative hotshop)

Just as Vygotsky (1984/1999b) thought that children first learn to create, manipulate and give meaning to signs and symbols through play, for the creatives play and having fun was a key part of the creative process. Play also allowed them to tease out relationships, to try on and practice different roles, and exercise their growing capabilities (Vygotsky, 1984/1999b). This 'non work like' sense of play also was a key factor in maintaining high levels of intrinsic motivation (Amabile, 1983, 1996).

"I'm blessed to enjoy what I do with one of my best mates, piss around all day and get paid good money for it, so I'm happy about that..." (Wilf, junior art director, creative agency)

Affirmation of the self and unconditional approval from their partner through non-verbal exchange was also found to be powerful. In 'real' marriages, Douvan (in Marano, 1992) found it brought about a transformation she termed as 'accommodation' where during the course of a relationship the respective partners found themselves moving towards their partner's innermost ideal mate. 'Accommodation' marital themes were evident within many of the successful

advertising creative partnerships within this study. However creatives needed to be careful their level of 'accommodation' wasn't to the detriment of their work, because there was a danger of complacency leading to stale work,

"You get to the point where I think you think along the same lines so he suggests something then I'll be thinking within the same territory and I'll understand it as well rather than losing what might be a great idea because I don't understand it...so we are similar and that's maybe a good thing or a bad thing I don't know maybe we are too alike now, maybe we do always go down the same route...but we seem to do alright out of it..."
(Michael, heavyweight copywriter, service industry)

Thus to keep their creativity fresh, both as individuals and within the context of the partnership, many creatives had 'outside' creative interests. The pursuit of creative 'sidelines' were also commonly perceived to fulfil a creative need, either as a creative release or challenge or in pursuing their 'true' creative aspirations beyond advertising. These sidelines often helped maintain high levels of intrinsic motivation for their 'day job', and were sometimes done alone:

"I've no doubt a lot of people in the industry have side projects, like I've got...like I'm starting up a magazine at the moment and do a lot of pencil illustrations and stuff and I know a lot of people who are very good at photography or very good at writing...like [creative colleague]...who helped us get a job here, he's a copywriter and he wrote a book...so obviously there is that mindset to be creative." (Dan, junior art director, creative agency)

Or with another partner:

"...there's a guy who works here...and together we actually write screenplays...eh...I don't write with [his creative partner] on screenplays...I don't know why, I think it's probably because he's not as interested in it as I am, em [screenplay writing partner] and I have always really been into films and writing..." (Calum, middle weight copywriter, service agency)

Thus in productive creative collaboration each creative's individual capacities were deepened at the same time that partners discovered the benefits of reciprocity. Similar to Gardener (1993a; 1997), this study found the intensity of the commitment to their work and their creative relationship was often to the detriment of the creatives' personal relationships. As many of the creatives said, being "*hired together and fired together*"; made the relationship unique.

“A lot of creative teams find that they are in longer term relationships with their work partners than with their life partners... my previous girlfriend had a real problem with how much more time I spent with Calum than her...” (Scott, middleweight art director, service agency)

The intensity and commitment to this unique creative relationship was in the pursuit of producing award winning work. Kover, James and Sonner (1997) defined the audience for creatives as other advertising people and creatives: the people to whom creatives look for validation of their work are other professionals. The reasons why and how this still appeared to be the case will now be explored.

6.3 Awards driven culture

For creatives, the importance of peer recognition was learned early on through the importance placed on awards within the *“highly competitive”, “awards driven”* advertising creative culture:

“It is so desperately competitive and the industry as a whole amongst creatives is highly competitive... it’s all driven by awards... it’s all driven by kudos... it’s all driven by perception and who’s good and who isn’t...it’s very small world...incestuous” (Calum, middleweight copywriter, service agency)

Csikszentmihalyi (1996) argued that creative work is situated and supported in a complex network of institutions that constituted the fields of creativity. This mindset was fostered by the nature of the advertising creative culture which directed the creatives’ motivation from the beginning of their careers. As the respected London Creative Director, Trott (1985: 9), explained in his book *‘How to get into Advertising’*,

“The only way to learn how to do good advertising is to continually expose yourself to it – read the (D&AD) Annuals and go to the awards...”

Within the advertising community the D&AD was famous for its influential Awards which were showcased in the D&AD Annual. These awards were considered to be the pinnacle of creative excellence among the creatives. The ‘Annual’ was described as the creatives’ ‘bible’ and it was the ambition of all creatives to have their work in it because the prestige it carried within the creative community,

“Virtually everybody kind of grows up poring over the Annuals... there are people in London who you know can tell you...you tell them an ad and they’ll tell you what page it was on and who the art director was, who the copywriter was, who the photographer was...you know who the client was...you know half a dozen facts about it and because you are kind of brought up with that kind of ethos of what is great advertising, you know when you come up with something you feel is as good as that...” (Fred, Deputy Creative Director, service agency)

Peer recognition was of particular concern among the ambitious junior and middleweight creatives looking to make their mark on the industry. In accordance with the systems approach to creativity, peer recognition confirmed the creatives’ competence and the value of their work among their peers. Creative excellence, according to the field, occurred for example when the idea was selected for a D&AD award. The field’s judgement would be internalised by the next generation of creatives as part of their domain and they in turn would change it further:

T: *“I think advertising is a sort of ...it’s quite insular and a lot of work that gets rewarded by awards and stuff like that goes over the public’s head ...so it’s like advertisers writing adverts for other advertisers to appreciate...which sounds terrible but I haven’t got that much of a problem with it you know and the best ads generally cut through to everyone ...if it’s a really good idea then anyone will understand it and enjoy it but a lot of it is what you can get away with and the sort of balance of advertising”*

I: *“So peer recognition is important to you?”*

T: *“Yeah definitely...it’s probably more important than doing an ad that sells more crisps or whatever...”* (Tim, junior copywriter, service agency)

Gaylord (1994, in Kover, Goldberg & James, 1995: 29) wrote that creative advertising that won awards often had little to do with advertising effectiveness. Often the distinction between creativity and effectiveness within agencies was cultural, reflecting different goals and needs of different departments (Ibarra, 1992). These cultural issues will be discussed in more detail later; however the essence of the issue was the contention over how to judge creative work. Creative awards, as stated above, were for the most part judged by the field i.e. other creatives, which was why in part peer recognition was so important to the creative. Thus the importance of awards and how these are judged has led to what some industry observers perceived as a ‘genuine confusion’ amongst creatives,

“The D&AD with the best possible motives ...has diverted peoples’ ambitions quite dangerously for 20 years or more because you know the pencil [D&AD award] became the way to fame and riches ...and nobody said “what are you being paid to do?” and I think creative people got genuinely confused ...it’s the confusion if you don’t know how

you're judged and if you're a young creative person and you've got your creative director telling you you've got to win awards, you've got your account person telling you on behalf of your client you've got to shift stuff and your clients know nothing about advertising...and then your client says he loves your advertising ...you're told he doesn't know anything about advertising ...so is he suddenly perceptive or is he suddenly wrong to like your advertising and then your creative director suddenly comes back from holiday and sees the work you've done that the client likes and says it's crap ...if that's on our reel it will do damage to this agency...I mean all of this is not exaggeration as I'm sure you've picked up I mean there isn't a common understanding of how you're judged which is very confusing for animals and people..." (Jez, Advisory Board Member, worldwide agency network)

This resonated with other studies' findings that the creative team viewed the advertisement primarily as a communication vehicle for promoting their own, aesthetic viewpoints and personal career objectives (for example Hirschman, 1989; Kover et al., 1997). Indeed this point was made explicitly by this copywriter:

"I mean like [his partner] and I did a campaign ...we was just happy it was our first TV campaign that we'd done together em and it got us a few awards...it got us a Cannes Lion and stuff like that so for us it was good, for our agency it was good ...our creative boss he was really happy, we got a bonus and, and it sort of made us feel like we were part of the agency and stuff like that...but it didn't actually sell anymore 'biscuits'...although it doesn't sound professional I don't really care if it's right for the target market... I thought it was the wrong tone of voice for mums completely ... it was quite sort of dry...it was aimed at mums...and mums didn't get it at all...but equally if I'd done one that did sell to mums then it wouldn't have got me any peer recognition whatsoever...and it's the peer recognition that'll get me another job ...literally it would be if I do a great ad that everyone sees and thinks is brilliant then I'll get headhunted to go somewhere else with loads of money..." (Wilf, junior art director, creative agency)

However when the creative above considered and discussed his priorities in more depth, he was primarily motivated to pursue challenging and interesting work as opposed to money. The creative's intrinsic motivation diminished the importance of remuneration as a motivating factor. Therefore the quality of his output mattered intensely to him, and he recognised that this was in large measure dependent upon the reputation of his employer,

"As much as I say money is important to me if I was offered double my money now to go to Euro I wouldn't go or McCanns I don't think I'd want to go there um just because I would be bored, bored shitless and that's the main thing and I know what it's like to be in a job you hate. So although all my rattling on about earning loads of money ...I think probably being where I'm happy I'd put first ...I think it goes hand in hand...if I'm

somewhere I'm happy I'd probably do my best work and then the money would follow I suppose thinking about it..." (Wilf, junior art director, creative agency)

Within the industry an agency's poor creative image often came with a reputation for being service orientated and having 'dull' accounts. Often this was self fulfilling. Such agencies were perceived to yield to the demands of the client, rather than robustly defend their creative integrity. The 'safer' types of clients tended to be retailing, banking or insurance accounts. Such clients had large communication budgets and these accounts were often the financial bedrock of creative agencies. For example a creative agency, such as the one below, had to have a couple of these accounts to grow and to work on more the creative accounts which made their reputation,

"I mean I have one or two clients I have to be honest who, who, whose main motivation for being here is not creativity...they'll get a reasonable process, nice people and they'll get the job done and they're buying into a network and so that Grade A category leading creativity is not their primary focus in life and you'd argue that they're counter culture to the organisation but nevertheless we need clients like that because we need a base level of cash to build on. So not every client wants the same thing and that again is part of the grown up world, recognising that there are horses for courses...doesn't mean you don't try and give it to them you know I can't stop myself but that's what I try and give them..." (Wallace, International Creative Director, creative agency)

However the decision for a less established and growing creative agency to pitch for this type of account had the potential to be detrimental to their reputation. It was in these instances that creative directors would risk losing their creatives' respect because it was perceived that the management were motivated more by the money than maintaining the creative integrity of the agency. Thus such wins were often the start of a downhill spiral for the agency, which led creatives to look elsewhere. This creative who worked in a 'growing' creative agency gave an insight into a creative's way of thinking when he talked about the prospect of winning the pitch for a large insurance company,

"But no one here wants it at all...because it's shit...it's not very creative...the whole green dollar thing... you know the big green dollar...it's shit and they still want to keep that in their advertising...but it's just worth so much money. That's why the partners want it because they've just got this new building and everything...now the bit of work I got through I quite liked...you know not great but I'm not ashamed of it...I mean they've got £XX million to spend on their advertising and if you put 3 or 4 months into an advert...project making it...filming it and making sure it goes on air you know on prime time slots if you're embarrassed about it, how are you going to tell anyone...you've wasted 3 months of your time on this ad and you're not going to put it on your reel anyway

so those 3 months you've wasted making an ad you can't put on your reel or in your portfolio to get a better job you could have been writing better ads..." (Wilf, junior art director, creative agency)

In advertising size was important for maintaining the creatives' levels of intrinsic motivation. For an agency remaining small typically meant they were very selective about the type of accounts that they would work for i.e. they would typically be quality, creative accounts. Therefore working in a small hotshop agency increased the chances of a creative team having a 'breakthrough' campaign, i.e. a high profile campaign (among peers and the public); thus moving them up the creative 'pecking order',

"Their wages went from 25 grand to 100 grand a year that team done [famous car advert], that team were at TBWA before that didn't really get any work out, went to Weidens and that was like their first big break and now they can go wherever they want, get any job they want..." (Wilf, junior art director, creative agency)

Being small also benefited the creatives because it decreased the amount of competition within the department for 'good briefs' i.e. those which gave them an opportunity to do 'nice work'. This was important, particularly for the junior and middleweight teams who were yet to have their 'breakthrough campaign'. When these creatives described the competition for these briefs they described the pecking order within creative departments, alluded to earlier.

"I get affected by it in the sense that you know there's a brief or something that I want to get on like the [famous beer] brief, and I think it would be a great brief to work...get a good bit of work out, and I'm not getting it because eh there's a senior team who've kind of said we're going for that and they've got to keep them happy so we don't get to touch it until three weeks later and they can't crack it because they've been to the pub so we get a day on it ...and they go here you go have a day on the [famous beer] brief, aren't we good to you. That sort of shit bothers me because it affects me um but...totally but equally though it's never changed it's always been that way...they've earned their stripes...they've been in the position I was and they've got through it..." (Wilf, junior art director, creative agency)

Thus a team's place within the department's pecking order needed to be earned by way of awards. This in turn put pressure on junior and middleweight teams to get good creative work out, and most of this pressure originated from within themselves. As the young copywriter below explained, in addition to his own internal pressures there was always the external pressure of potential redundancy. Indeed the flip side for working in a creative hotshop or smaller agency

meant that the impact of an account loss was greater on the agency i.e. increasing the chances of redundancy:

“It’s intense because you know the pressure to do well is immense ...like huge...like for me personally, huge. You know, I’ve been made redundant once before and everyone knows you get made redundant all the time and you’ve got to treat every piece of work like it’s your last piece of work because that’s what’s going to get you your new job um that’s kind of self pressure ... I kill myself...I go this has got to be brilliant and if it’s not...then I’m gutted...I don’t want to do bad work I only want to do good work and especially in somewhere like [creative hotshop]... everything that comes out of here is a good standard you don’t want to be the one doing the one that’s bad ...there’s so many things ...I mean you’ve opened up a real can of worms for me because working at [creative hotshop] is brilliant...we’re really good it’s just...I’d like to get to a stage where I actually know what I’m doing ...if I do get made redundant ...I know I can go here and I’ve done this work and that work and not to be egotistical about it but I want to be successful as well...that’s why I’m doing it...there’s no point in doing it otherwise...” (Jonny, junior copywriter, creative hotshop)

Although ideas stemmed from a creative team’s talent and creativity, it was the agency culture that mediated a team’s potential and channelled it into creative production. Central to this mediation process was the creative director. Each creative director did this differently and in so doing created the different agency cultures. Therefore fundamental to a team’s self-fulfilment, learning and motivation was their fit within the culture and the relationship that they had with their creative director.

6.4 Creating an agency culture

Creative directors were often hired or started their own independent agencies because their reputations and creative visions were assets to agencies. Their creative vision defined the agency’s culture. This vision was a transcendent goal that represented shared values and provided meaning, which was reflected in the agency’s creative work and client relationships,

“Well we wanted to run an agency in our own vision, structured the way we wanted it to be structured ...that vision was outstanding creativity linked to great strategic thinking unfettered by ownership from abroad or ownership that could dictate who we would or wouldn’t work with...” (Jake, Creative Director, creative agency)

This vision formed the basis of the agency's reputation, which was an outward signal to the industry of the type of agency it was and this inevitably influenced the type of creatives (and clients) it attracted,

"On one occasion a team didn't come here because we credit everything [to the agency]...well you know this is how we run our company we can't...two people or an individual coming in...we can't change company policy just because of them you know ...nobody's that good do you know what I mean and nobody should be bigger than the agency...but some people are quite egotistical you know...we've had people that won't work here because there aren't individual offices...that don't want to work in an open plan office...I've had creatives that won't come here because we don't have account people because it means that they're going to have to meet the client ...they don't want to meet the client they just want to stay in their office with the door closed...don't get that..."
(Donald, Creative Partner, creative hotshop)

The creative director's and/or agency founder's vision was therefore a key factor when managing creative individuals (Locke & Kirkpatrick, 1995). To have a mutually beneficial relationship the creatives and the agency needed to have cultural 'fit'. Integral to this 'fit' was the maintenance of the creative's intrinsic motivation because,

"...Creative people may flourish in one environment and then transfer them to another apparently similar environment and they fail" (Fletcher, 1999: 68).

For example, for some teams the intense, competitive and personal nature of creative production was not conducive to the current trend towards open plan working within the creative department:

*"It was one of the great misunderstandings when they moved to this building two years ago...it's actually open plan here, the creative department...which is a complete disaster...it works in some agencies, on the whole it doesn't though...of course everyone in the company wants the company to do well but actually in the creative department each team is **constantly** competing with another team because you want your script to be bought and then presented and then do well in research and then to get made. So you are constantly competing with the team next to you. And this is what they fail to understand, we are now working in open plan and you are in this terrible situation where you are trying desperately not to overhear what the team next door are thinking or saying about the same piece of work that you are working on... the only person you're prepared to share ideas with is the person you work with because they are used to hearing all your bad ideas as well as your good ideas and you don't want someone...to hear all your shit ideas (laughs) because most of the time all we have are bad ideas because good ideas are very difficult and they don't come along very often otherwise we'd all be constantly winning*

stuff and we'd all be very successful..." (Calum, middleweight copywriter, service agency)

The creative director needed to ensure all creatives understood and shared their creative vision, and for this to be managed throughout the *whole* agency. The agency culture needed to be clearly communicated through the agency's systems and environment. For example the agency environment was 'packaged' in a particular way as part of communicating this culture.

"Reception areas can say as much about an agency as its work ...it's in the agency reception that those (first) impressions are crystallised ...here again like the brands they work on...need to deliver a concise, clear message of what they stand for.....take a peek around the door of any big London ad establishment and you get an automatic snapshot of its personality, attitude, and perhaps most importantly, its creativity or lack of it...they all offer an invaluable insight into an agency" (Gardener, 2004: 32).

As illustrated in the field notes below, each of the agencies visited as part of this research had a very different 'feel'; a distinct culture. This 'packaging' was also aimed at creating an environment in which the agency's employees could enjoy their work. For example most of the agencies had cafes and bars, some had fresh fruit in reception and another had a drum kit and self portraits of the staff. Often the researcher got a 'groovy' visitor badge or a smoothie or coffee and on other occasions a free breakfast (the researcher tended to take what she could get). These notes give a flavour of three contrasting agency environments:

Table 2: Agency environments

Service agency	Creative Agency	Creative hot shop
<p>Reception</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate/stylish/slick • <i>Trying</i> to be trendy and relaxed • Plasma screen/Music • Different seating areas • Telephones/meeting areas • Open plan • Colourful / bright/ airy • Newspapers / magazines • Offered coffee on arrival 	<p>Reception</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awards / ‘trendy’ / busy • Newspaper / industry magazines • Big leather sofas • Open plan / wooden floors • Offered coffee on arrival 	<p>Reception</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funky / lots of random objects to look at • Informal / messy • Book of press clippings • Help self to water • Self portraits of staff • Drum kit • Open plan
<p>Body of agency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Across 4 floors • Spiral staircase from reception • Café / bar • Open plan (including creative department) • Constrained atmosphere • On each floor there were large, open plan offices (glass walls) • Meeting rooms on each floor (glass walls) 	<p>Body of agency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Across four floors: shown around whole agency • Top floor – meeting rooms • Large old fashioned board room with wood panelled walls – framed ‘big idea’ quotations from famous people e.g. Boris Johnston, John McCarthy <p>Creative department</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open plan creative department / spiral staircase through middle up to ‘games room’ / bar • One ‘quiet room’ off department • ‘Buzzy’ atmosphere 	<p>Body of agency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Across 2 floors: shown around both • Reception & Account management department open plan • Airy / white walls / wooden floors <p>Creative department</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intense atmosphere • Open plan • Comfy seating area at end – with big plants • Board room in corner of department: white boards/ lots of different objects • One side of department is a conservatory complete with shed (where creatives escape to work)

As noted in the Literature Review, to manage novelty effectively it was not enough simply to avoid the practices and procedures that inhibit it, there was a need for the creative director to actively attend to the management of ideas (Bowven and Fry, 1988). Fundamentally the creative directors considered that their primary responsibilities were to: 'guide' the work of the department, in the creative vision of the agency and marry this with the needs of the client; to influence agency culture; and to influence practices to foster creativity. In this way creative directors took on responsibilities beyond the ones that made them famous, and this was often with regret. Indeed most of the creative directors rarely produced work, which for some had made the move into creative directing a long and difficult transitional process.

"There's a fundamental problem...which took me a long time to resolve ... you spend ten years of your life as a creative...where every bloody day even if it's just a bundle of words you've got something to show for it ...you know...is it good or is it bad...you get feedback on everything ...everyday ... but I still think it's the job of creative directors to go out there and be client-facing and persuade clients to value creativity more. The only problem is that you slightly get the feeling from your colleagues that you've abandoned them....slight feeling of betrayal and slight feeling that you're a fraud because you're not producing work and I think creative people have to learn you see ...you know this whole thing about what is your book, lets see your portfolio ...what have you done last week ...and if you're not actually doing work yourself there's a slight feeling that you're, you're not really working ...which I mean ...nobody else in the agency seems to suffer from the same guilt, do they, interestingly..." (Russ, Vice Chairman, service agency)

Many of the skills that were required from a creative director were developed when they were creatives, for example developing client relationships, developing strategy and evaluating work. Successful creatives would progress through the ranks gaining experience and would be given more responsibility. For example, middle weight teams were often given responsibility for doing book crits. This experience would develop when they became heavyweight for example, they were responsible for the junior teams in the agency. Specific management skills such as guiding and managing their department were developed 'on the job'. Career trajectories varied a great deal but in general creative directors tended to have around fifteen to twenty years experience in the industry before "*taking silk*" as one Creative Director put it, in the form of a creative management role. Some would take a deputy creative director role to learn management skills under an experienced director looking for their 'successor'. When the time came, one of the consuming concerns was the issue of succession and finding the 'right' person to preserve the agency's culture and reputation:

“I chose [creative colleague] as my successor and I said look the whole thing about this agency world is about looking for successors ...making sure the culture carries on and I think you’re the best person to carry the culture on so I think you should be creative director...” (Andy, freelance art director)

Creative directors and agency chairmen who kept working seamlessly integrated their careers into vocations, particularly those who had created their own agency and/or culture. That is, they created, “*unique “life themes” that are enjoyable and meaningful at the same time*” (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2003:192). Creatives continued to be motivated by fresh challenges throughout their lives. The depths of their motivation accounted for the self-regenerative character of their careers; as did their reputations. Indeed, as noted at the beginning of this section, creative directors were hired or started agencies because of their reputations. In part this was because for a team the initial attraction of working at a particular agency was often because of the creative director, their work and reputation within the industry.

J: “When we work with [International Creative Director] it’s really easy isn’t it, he’s a very intelligent man, we admire him for the work that he’s done in his career and you know he speaks a lot of sense most of the time doesn’t he?...Well all of the time really...”

S: “Yeah, yeah it’s really good...I mean it’s really important to obviously respect your creative director...but I mean we’re very lucky because [International Creative Director] and [Creative Director] together, our other creative director have both done brilliant ads over the years...so I mean when they say something you listen, you never really question them...” (Jacob and Stan, middleweight creative team, creative agency)

In advertising talent tended to attract talent. Mutual respect was an important part of the creative director / creative team relationship, not least in terms of motivation because advertising has a culture of evaluation. Feedback and evaluation could only be meaningful if given to the creatives by those they respected. The creative director’s day to day evaluation was an important part of the creatives’ learning process. It helped the creatives to see their work from an informed perspective, probing its strengths and weaknesses. In this way the creatives became accustomed to the daily rejection of their work and high levels of creative wastage.

For the creative directors an important part of evaluation was to ensure the creatives’ ‘safety’ (Anderson et al., 1992). The creative directors needed to be comfortable with half-developed ideas and see the potential of a team’s rough thinking. In turn creatives needed to have the

confidence that their creative director understood and appreciated their ideas at an early stage of gestation:

“Don’t be afraid of getting it wrong ...like if you’ve got an idea and you just think there might be something in it...just present it and eh it doesn’t matter if you’re wrong you know ...just be right the next time and the time after that because I think if you don’t explore certain avenues because you’re embarrassed about what someone might think then you’ll miss out on the best ideas...” (Tim, junior copywriter, service agency)

Brand (1998) indicated that creatives needed to be in an environment where top management took a long-term view, because failure or being comfortable to come up with what one creative termed as “*shit ideas*” was a natural part of the creative process. Csikszentmihalyi (1996) suggested that in the creative problem solving process, the first solution considered was rarely as original as the second or the third because the first solution that comes to mind was usually the most obvious. This research found that working through these different stages of creative thoughts was an important part of the creative process,

“Who makes those shoes for instance, what are they called...Kangaroos ...ok problem is Kangaroos being launched into the UK nobody has ever heard of them before...so in comes the brief right and it says Kangaroo ...I, I need to think of an interesting idea and, so...em...literally have Kangaroos wearing shoes, I could have you bouncing up and down as an individual sort of very, very high although that seems kind of obvious but its first thought and you gotta get them out...that ebbs and flows em and then it’s a series of post rational steps to get back into what you’re suppose to be doing...does it fit the brief de de de dum and so you kind of keep taking steps back and all the time you’re throwing stuff away. You know 99.9% of what an advertising agency produces trickles out of the building and is not paid for and is completely wasted” (Wallace, International Creative Director, creative agency)

The creative directors saw their role a mixture of creative filter, quality controller, critic, creative motivator and mentor. They understood that the degree to which any creative was motivated to carry out a task was dependent upon their perception that carrying out the task would help them achieve the results *they* desired, for example, their first permanent job or an award. Therefore maintaining the reputation and the integrity of the agency was facilitated by “*enabling creative talent to fulfill itself...you’re there to help people be creative*” (Isaacs, quoted in Fletcher, 1999: 57),

“I feel happy I can speak to him ...if I have a problem you know I could go and tell him ...we’re his sort of babies almost, we’re doing all this work for him and that’s what builds his reputation so he’s got to be nice to us, look after us sort of thing you know ...we make him look good...” (Mairi, middleweight art director, service agency)

To maintain the creatives’ motivation the creative directors needed to challenge them and make them stretch themselves. In this way, maturing creatively on the job involved meeting a series of creative challenges. For example, at the beginning of their careers creatives would be given smaller briefs; these were often ones that none of the other teams would want to work on anyway, but it gave them an opportunity to develop their craft skills and a reputation. Often the smaller briefs gave them an opportunity to produce ‘edgier’ work, either because it was for a small client looking to make an impact or it was a small brief for a bigger client more focused on the bigger brand picture:

“Our creative directors... they gave us lots of opportunities and we eh took them...we used to get lots of little briefs and nobody wanted to do them...lots of little stuff...and we won loads of awards in the first couple of years and suddenly we started working on some of the bigger stuff like the tourist board...you go into an agency sometimes there’s small briefs...you know they’re the ones you can do really good stuff on because the client has always got their eye on the bigger picture...” (Paul, Joint Creative Director, creative agency)

A creative team’s work was often better when the work was positively challenging (Amabile & Gryskiewicz, 1989). As explored in the Literature Review, the consequences of creatives seeking challenges and opportunities that match their skill have been described by Csikszentmihalyi (for example 1990, 1996) in his work on ‘flow’ experiences. Similarly Albert (1990) noted that the more creatives choose and become passionately involved in challenging risky problems, the greater the sense of pleasure obtained from the opportunity to use their talents. These creatives were more likely to experience flow if their creative directors matched their projects to their skill levels (the creatives’ experiences of flow will be discussed in greater depth later). Building a relationship in this way was important because creatives view their output as an extension of themselves. That is, when the creative director criticised one of their ideas he was criticising them personally. Therefore in the minds of these creatives the authority of the creative director was ideally charismatic rather than bureaucratic. When this was not the case it led to pent up resentment and poor output because of the low levels of intrinsic motivation,

“I completely respect him [his new creative director] ...and I think he’s excellent news for this agency...and I didn’t really think that of the previous creative director, we didn’t really get on with him...he didn’t really get us because...we were always giving him work that he wasn’t really expecting...there were two campaigns on the table for this [famous vodka brand] campaign...and he favoured his boys that did this campaign and everyone else liked our route and our route won out in qual but [creative director] wouldn’t let their route die...we kind of never really forgave him for that and he knew that we hadn’t forgiven him for it and it kind of really caused a lot of friction...that’s when we literally sulked for 9 months...because we put our lives into it for a year and it didn’t happen...” (Calum, middleweight copywriter, service agency)

The copywriter above drew comparisons between the relationship he had with his previous director and his new creative director. Here he enthused about the impact of his new creative director on his agency, mindful of the overall effect that he could potentially have on his work and career,

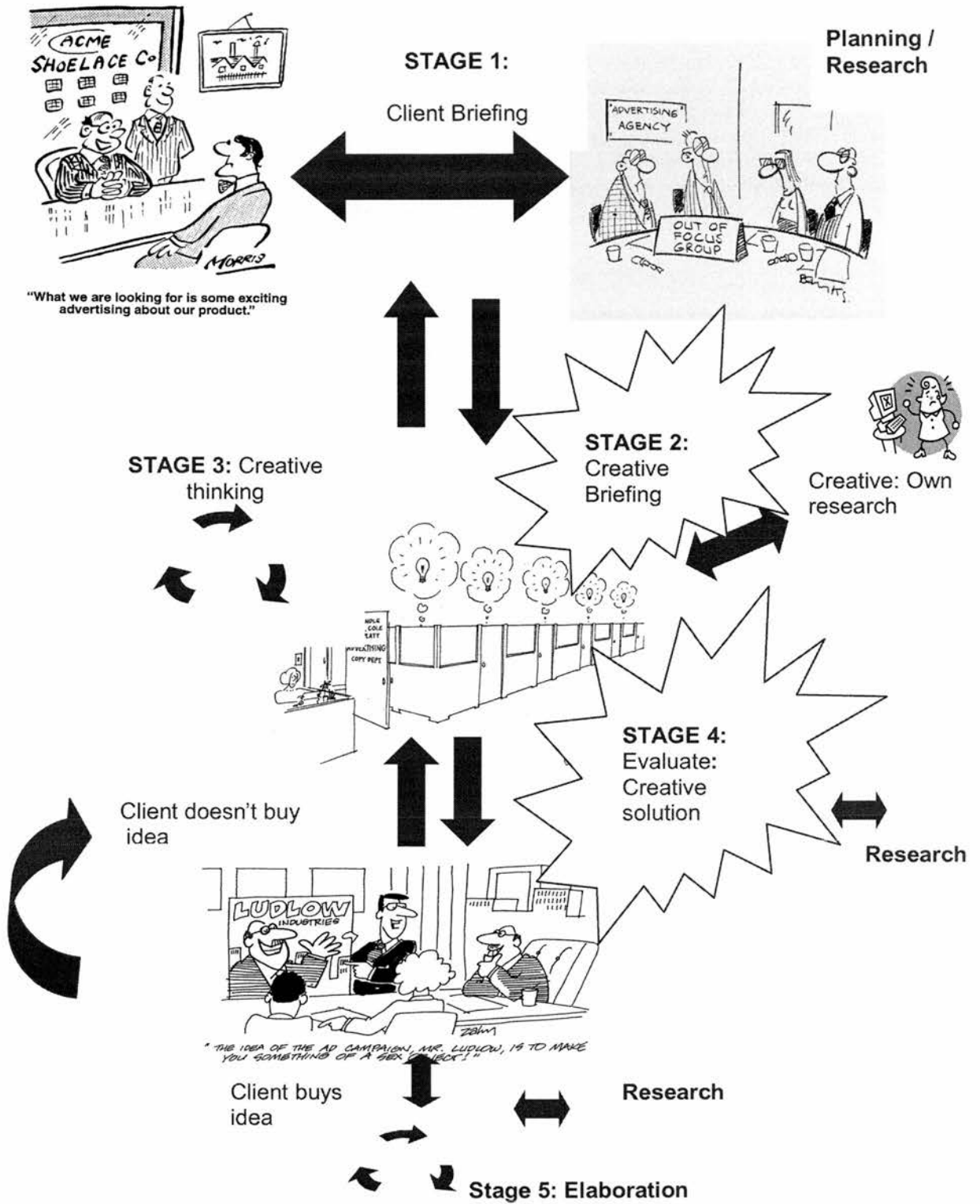
“[His new creative director] has managed to attract some very, very good teams here now...his new trawling and these teams simply wouldn’t have come here if he hadn’t been here, he’s got that credibility and kudos and I think we’ve got some very good teams...ex BBH team that did [famous jeans advert]...teams that wouldn’t have dreamed of coming here you know...I mean he’s attracted that sort of talent and um [famous ex art director turned film director] is a friend of his and so he’s been freelancing here ... I mean the personnel are in place and the work is starting to happen...So it’s a really good time to be here now... it’s great to be other good creative people because you want to be as good as they are or better, it goes back to the competitive thing...you know if you are working against some of the best creative teams in London because you’ll work harder and strive harder...” (Calum, middleweight copywriter, service agency)

This chapter will now move on to explore the central source of the creatives’ motivation, namely producing ‘the work’.

6.5 The creative process

Similar to Csikszentmihalyi (1996) this research found that the advertising creative process began with a problem. Here creative problem solving was an iterative process through different stages. These different stages are illustrated in the diagram overleaf.

Figure 3: The Creative Process



Source: Adapted from Butterfield, L. (1997) Developing Advertising Strategy, in How to Plan Advertising, Cooper, A. (ed), 2nd edition. pp32. London: Cassell. All cartoons sourced from www.cartoonstock.com

This diagram graphically illustrates the basic advertising creative development structure within the advertising literature (for example, Webb Young, 1969; Cooper (ed.), 1997). However, this diagram also incorporates findings from this research which develops this 'traditional' structure.

This section will now describe the different relationships and processes which occur within each of the stages.

6.5.1 Stage 1: Client Briefing

During the first 'client briefing' period the client sets out their problem to the agency. In general the client used to brief just the account management and perhaps the planner when they needed a new campaign. In recent years this stage had become more collaborative for the agencies and in particular for the creatives. For example, sometimes during this initial period everyone who was going to be involved in the campaign would go on an "*away day*" hosted by the client to discuss the problem and work out the brief's proposition. The nature and size of the client campaign occasionally meant that the briefing sometimes involved the clients' other external communications and media agencies,

"It's called a day 1...which is an away day or where all the agency and the client get together to try and work out what the product is and what the briefs going to be..."
(Calum, middleweight copywriter, service agency)

As referred to in the Literature Review, Haines (1997) wrote of a general misconception that creative people wanted complete freedom to do whatever they wanted on a piece of work. Rather the opposite is true: they want a clear direction. Csikszentmihalyi (1996:114) also found that an important part of flow experience was "*the clarity of goals*". Similarly the creatives participating in this research wanted a clear understanding of the clients' problem. Such clarity facilitated the creative process, which was why those who had direct contact with the client found it to be beneficial. However to begin the creative process the creatives needed a well written creative brief with an insightful proposition, "*a single thought*" which gave the creatives "*a way in*" (to solving the problem) and a clear direction. An insightful proposition meant the planner had looked at a familiar situation in a new and productive way which *enabled* the creative to suddenly realise the solution to the problem. The creative below explained why a well-written and informed brief was important to his work process,

“Because you do end up going round in circles, because if a brief is wrong you just end up working and working and trying to please everything on the brief and then... you just end up getting locked onto this sort of spiral of...not being able to break out and get a good ad out of it and the only reason is that you’re not working to a single thought...” (Jacob, middleweight copywriter, creative agency)

The next stage in the process then was writing the brief and the creative briefing.

6.5.2 Stage 2: Creative brief and briefing

All of the agencies in this study apart from one had a planning department. Pollitt was one of the founders of the planning function. He created the planner to be an ‘expert in research’ (Feldman, 2000). Pollitt and his contemporaries, such as King, fought to create a way of working where the primary purpose of research was consumer understanding, in the service of intelligent strategy and creative communication (Feldman, 2000).

Similar to other research (for example Grant et al., 2003) the level of planning input on an account was found to be dependent mainly on the nature of the client and the culture of the agency. In some agencies even where there were planners the account management wrote the creative briefs. However in general the planners would write the brief based on the client’s briefing. Often the planner used secondary and primary (depending on the budget) research which provided the creatives with a better understanding of the market audience. Qualitative research in particular was considered useful because if the planner was “good” they would be able to identify “nugget[s] of good insight” which could form the basis of the proposition,

“Planners are very important, I mean planners are if they can find that nugget of good insight...it’s all about digging deep... when we won [famous whisky brand]...now I know for a fact at [their former agency], we’d have just had a very lazy brief for that...if you go through all the magazines...whisky...it’s hand crafted blah, blah...we went to the distillery and this master distiller ...he said this is a soft whisky ...we were like soft nobody’s ever said soft ...you’ve got to be careful how you do soft in like it’s a poofy drink you know ...we did loads of research and you pull that face, a grimace... and with that you don’t... it’s actually a nice soft whisky...it was actually the master distiller who came up with soft and then it was the planner who took that ...and researched to find out how soft it could be portrayed ...you know is soft going to be wrong for whisky and people said like no not if it’s soft tasting ...you know that’s where the tasting came into it...so it’s the softer tasting malt do you know what I mean... you know so that was different, and the planner kind

of...that was an insight that the planner kind of found and researched..." (Paul, Joint Creative Director, creative agency)

At this stage research and the insights it could give were considered important because it *contributed* to the creative process. However as alluded to above very often these creatives felt that planners would do little or no research which meant they were given what the creative above called a "very lazy brief". This meant that there was no original thinking and no "sneaky way in" i.e. creative insight. Indeed some briefs would be copied or repeated from previous campaigns,

*"Good planners are great aren't they?...the annoying thing is that we still get briefs that have still got the same f*ckin' proposition time and time again...and it's like we've got 9 planners and we're still getting a brief...you know like The Daily Newspaper supplement ads...free tickets on the Trainstar...they don't plan that, they don't think of a sneaky way in or a clever way of selling Trainstar tickets 2 for 1...they'll just say get free Trainstar ticket in The Daily Newspaper...well that's not a creative proposition is it, that's just the facts, that's what you're getting ...you know that's not take someone you love away or whatever the creative proposition is you know..."* (Wilf, junior art director, creative agency)

All the creatives thought that good planners were like good creatives, or good account management in that they were "they're thin on the ground". Like good creatives, their skills were considered to be intuitive rather than learned: they had a creative mindset. From the creatives' perspective, as discussed, such a mindset meant that a planner was insightful. The creatives considered that a "good" account person or "suit" understood creativity. This meant that within the agency they were able to identify good work or ideas with potential, and when called upon, could write a good brief. Outside of the agency a good "suit" was able to explain, defend and sell the work to clients (this will be discussed in greater depth below).

"I think a good planner is very useful...we used to have them at [Agency A]...we used to have a couple of good ones at [Agency B]...one or two at [Agency C] ...but I think overall they're thin on the ground...like good creative people...like good account people...like good anything...some planners and suits I have worked with in the past are infinitely more creative than the people in the creative departments..." (Gerald, Executive Creative Director, service agency)

In the creative briefing the planner and account management would meet with the creative team to discuss the creative brief. The creative partners would ask any questions that they had in

concerning the brief. After being briefed by account management or the planner, the creatives would immerse themselves in the brief; stage three of the creative process. Sometimes it was only by examining the brief in depth and by working out different possible approaches between themselves that further questions arose,

“Basically the account people and the planners come up and they just talk through the brief and if there are any questions that sort of spring to mind just as they are talking through then you discuss it there and then but more often than not you just have to sit down with it really and just spend a day or two with it and see if there’s anything that’s you know really not going to work...it just takes time really ...And then the brief changes slightly and you have to go back and change it ...” (Jacob, middleweight copywriter, creative agency)

Often creatives did their own research. Sometimes this was to improve their understanding of the brand, the market and their audience. Often creatives used research to find inspiration. For example sometimes the research was desk based internet searches or reading clients’ ‘brand bible’,

“When we get a brief we’ll sit and especially at [hotshop agency] you have to do a lot of research as well...it’s like when you are writing an ad about [famous car brand] or a product you really have to get into the branding...you know, you know that can be like looking for a fact or looking or you know looking for a hook or you’re just trying to discover like a tone of voice ...we recently wrote a [famous car brand] ad...when they got on the podium for formula 1... I mean before you write an ad you’ve got to read the [brand] book which is that thick ...so that, that just took about two days of just like trying to find a way in or finding an interesting hook on it and we eventually found out that [it] is the only car that on the bearing on the inside they actually have all the names of all the people that have ever worked on that car and as soon as we found out we were like right ok we can write an ad now...” (Jonny, junior copywriter, creative hotshop)

Similar to other studies (for example Kelly et al., 2005; Hackley, 2000), the creatives here often would go out ‘into the field’ to observe and improve their understanding of the target audience,

“Any brief we ever do target audience is key...you look at who you’re talking to and you target your work to suit that audience...we’ve just done stuff for [designer brand] which sells shoes and clothes and they’re lads, they’re 18 year olds, they get pissed they do drinking games, sex...that’s all they do at weekends...lost weekends...so you have to immerse yourself...so [his partner] and I have been on websites galore to try to find out what lads are into...you go down Main Road on a Saturday night and see what they’re drinking and you think bloody hell...big jugs of stuff for £2 and they’re just knocking it back in ones...it’s drinking, it’s sex, it’s kebabs on the way home, it’s fighting you

know...so you go and find your target audience...” (Paul, Creative Director, creative agency)

Once these creatives had gathered all their information they entered the next stage in the process, what Webb Young (1965/2003: 29) called “*mental digestion*”.

6.5.3 Stage 3: Creative thinking

“*Mental digestion*” was a period of incubation for the team. This was when ideas churned around in the creatives’ heads. It was during this time unusual and unexpected connections were often made individually and then together; although there was no fixed pattern,

*“So we’ll sit there and usually we’ll sit there and we’ll write individually and then go after a couple of hours what do you think to this, what do you think to that and that’s just the way we are...some people will talk and talk and talk you know we don’t do that we ...you know I’ll go oh f*ckin’ hell I’ve got a brilliant idea what do you think and she’ll say oh that’s rubbish...and it’s oh right fair enough you know...but sometimes I think you have to work out the argument in your own head before you can talk to someone else about it ...because there’s no point in me turning round to Lucy and saying bananas and custard...she’ll go what are you talking about...I’d rather go it’s about x,y,z what do you reckon and she’ll go well x is right but y is not and z is...you know it’s different, it’s different every day...” (Jonny, Junior copywriter, creative hotshop)*

This illustrates Vygotsky’s point about studying collaborative creativity as a way of researching the creative process “*in the making*” (Moran & John-Steiner, 2003: 62), and the interplay between the internal and external modes of thought. This research found that the creatives’ inner speech helped them to create and work out ideas individually. These ideas would then be discussed with their partner and either dismissed or developed through further internal and external dialogue. This process would continue until they came up with the ‘right’ idea.

“I’ve got quite a good internal gauge on whether I like what I’ve done and...I know if I like what I’ve done, it’s probably going to be liked by other people, because I see enough work and I know that feeling when you see something fresh...I can’t even describe the feeling. My previous partner used to call it a frothy coffee moment...when we’d thought of something and he’d stand up and triumphantly come back with two frothy coffees...” (Dan, Joint Creative Director, creative agency)

The solution would often suddenly ‘announce itself’ without much warning. The creatives and creative directors talked about intuitively knowing when an idea was the ‘right’ solution. They

felt that their intuition had become more refined with experience i.e. their creative director thought it was the 'right' solution too. Hence the importance of learning on the job and internalising the rules of the domain,

"Well I guess a lot of that is experience I think for the first sort of five years you don't really know. Certainly in my case...it took me a long time to really get it ...then you may feel you have it right...and your creative director may tell you it's off brief or it's off strategy or something and I think that takes a bit of experience to kind of work it out...now I know if I get an idea I know if it's a good one or if it's not a good one or it works or it doesn't work ...I know if it's a really good idea but it doesn't fit what I'm looking for ...it's kind of an instinctive thing ...if you work on it then you find it...I don't think it's easy at all ...and I think coming up with ideas...coming up with original ideas is incredibly hard..." (Gerald, Executive Creative Director)

The creatives' feelings during this stage were similar to the creative flow described by Csikszentmihalyi (1996). As Csikszentmihalyi found, experiencing these feelings motivated the creatives through what was often described as a "difficult" and "painful" problem solving process. Therefore within a partnership while diversity of thought was important for creativity, as previously discussed, so too was the partners' compatibility and complementarity,

S: *"I can't predict how that happens ... suddenly something comes out of nowhere and you take this apparently as boring as f*ck proposition and you take it head on and suddenly you've got something really charming and very, very nice..."*

I: You get really excited about it?

S: *"Yeah, yeah that's, that's the juice, that's, that's the bit you look for...that sudden rush...we...our, me and Scott's rule to ourselves is that if it doesn't make the hair stand up on the back of our neck then we haven't got it yet and we just keep going and keep going and keep going ...we always know when we've got it because we can't stop talking about it and we'll start acting it out and suddenly we've got ten executions of the same campaign and it's wonderful...that's the bit that we're always hunting for and the problem is that as I said to you I can never predict where it's going to come...sometimes it's a logical progression to that point...sometimes though it's completely out of the blue... (clicks fingers) it's a light bulb and I just don't know where it's come from..."* (Calum, middleweight copywriter, service agency)

For creatives, these moments of flow were,

"Those are the moments you live for...those insights where you look at something in a completely different way...a new and fresh way...if I don't have a moment like that a month it hurts...it can be just a simple little insight..." (Russ, Vice Chairman, service industry)

Once the 'right' idea had 'appeared', it needed to be evaluated. This stage had been changing radically over recent years, and these changes will be explored.

6.5.4 Stage 4: Evaluate creative solutions

Similar to other creative thinking models the next stage in the process was the evaluation of the creatives' idea or ideas. As "*quality controller*" the creative director would typically be the first to evaluate the work. Usually there would be more than one team working on the brief and so creative directors would evaluate all the different ideas and select the route which they felt was 'right' or could be developed further. Sometimes, depending on the budget, the different routes would be put into research. At this and subsequent stages of research most of the creatives' attitudes resonated with Fletcher's (1999: 105) observations,

"Most creators' attitudes to market research are equivocal. On the one hand they value, indeed are often thrilled by the general public's opinions of their creativity. They enjoy the very notion of people looking at, concentrating upon and discussing their work. On the other hand, they firmly believe that the general public has neither the perspicacity nor the sensitivity to criticise their work meaningfully. They subconsciously feel the public should respond to their work emotionally, without being required to analyse or dissect it" (Fletcher, 1999).

The creatives resented their work being put out to research because they felt that 'the public' were not educated to make valued judgements about their work. Most of the creatives felt the same way about the majority of account managers and planners (clients) they had worked with. The inherent tensions and stereotypes between the disciplines have been well documented in the literature (for example Hirschman, 1989; Duckworth, 2005; Kover et al., 1995; Hackley, 2003c). Similarly this study found these stereotypes were learned as part of the advertising culture. Underpinning these attitudes was the creatives' ownership of their work and the removal of that ownership by people that they believed did not understand the emotional process of creation or creativity. Typically the *only* person the creatives' felt was qualified to judge their work was their creative director. This underlined the importance of creative directors being able to command the respect of their creative departments, and keeping them motivated,

C: "That's one of the problems here that a lot of the stuff is researched...it's very demotivating...our [breakfast cereal] ad should of happened and I think that would have been their campaign for the next five years and it would have rescued the whole

*thing...it's a dying brand...you know I don't care what research said I think it was a f*ckin' great idea...everyone I told without exception thought that was a great idea em it's incredibly demoralising and I think research is the enemy of creativity...I think it's more of an enemy than anything else at the moment... getting paid 50 quid to get some biscuits and coffee... and look at some ads and of course our natural inclination as Brits, it's probably easier to criticise something than it is to praise something. I also don't think people are equipped to kind of understand the executional differences of what they're seeing now and what it might look like em and I also think focus groups simply over analyse stuff, I just don't think people care that much about ads...it's an insult to our industry to kind of question it that much, otherwise if you can't have that little faith in the agency why have an agency ... that's the biggest challenge creatives are facing at the moment I think...but we kind of came through the dark cloud and came through the other side. Em I'd also say eh don't let the f*ckers get you down... ”*

I: “The f*ckers being...”

C: “The account managers and clients and focus groups...”

I: “Creative directors?”

C: “No...because that's their job and so you have to respect them” (Calum, middleweight copywriter, service agency)

If the creatives' idea survived through the research, it would usually be refined and developed, in accordance with the research findings. Once the ideas were at a point where the creative director (with the agreement of the planner and account director) was happy for the client to see them, they would be presented to the client.

As referred to in the client briefing, the creative development process was becoming more collaborative. In a few agencies the creatives collaborated with the client *throughout* the creative development process. The newer London creative hotshops led the way in this collaborative way of working and experimenting with agency structures. The degree to which the client was involved was dependent on the culture of the agency and the needs and wants of the client. For a mutually beneficial and long lasting relationship, the importance of client-agency cultural fit was emphasised,

“You need like minded people...mostly with clients...you need like minded clients, you know you can't have a client who you're going to...you're going to force into buying ideas that he or she doesn't want to buy you know ...they've got to share an opinion as to what good communication is and what it can achieve and how it works ...you know you need to share that with your clients because you know otherwise you're just you know shoehorning them into ideas that they're going to be uncomfortable with...If we sit down with the client we can change things, we can work with them in the meeting...and things can be approved in the meeting...it is very, very important that we get a chance to sit down with the client because we need to work for both of us...once we started working like that there was no way back...we don't have account people...they just get in the way...I

think a lot of the time...the creatives and the strategists [planners] and the clients will all be in the meeting at the same time so everyone will understand what the brief is...we've got everyone in the meeting so everyone's like up to speed on what like the problem is..."
(Donald, Creative Partner, creative hotshop)

In a hotshop agency such as the one above the client would tend to work closely with the creatives in the development of ideas. Once the creatives had developed some rough ideas, all those involved on the campaign would meet and 'present' these ideas to the client. These ideas would then be discussed and those that were felt to be heading in the right direction would be developed further by the creatives. This process would be repeated until both client and agency were satisfied with the outcome. These new ways of working and thinking had evolved from titan meetings which were introduced into the UK by HHCL in the 1990s (HHCL & Partners, 1996),

"A titian meeting is basically showing more than one idea...so it used to be agencies would go to clients and go here's your solution... to work closely with clients, there's more than one way to do it... these titian meeting which were invented by Jay Chiat where... half way through the process ...the client can come on in and the creatives roll their sleeves up and show the client the work...great agencies can do it because clients will go into that relationship with respect and trust...it's like when you said what makes a good relationship between a copywriter and an art director it's the same thing as what makes a good relationship between a client and an agency...it's mutual respect, it's trust, it's complementarity...it's recognising that you have different skills...you know clients bring all the expertise, all the knowledge from their side...but you know the agency brings their particular expertise... creativity is about collaboration" (Malcolm, Executive Creative Director, creative agency)

This relationship of mutual trust, understanding and education between the client and creative had led to some of the most effective and awarded creative work of recent years (www.dandad.org). Because of their proven success, in terms of awards and critically acclaimed work, these new processes and ideas were being adopted by the field albeit in variant forms. Even the service agencies, in an attempt to improve their creative output, were adopting different forms of 'hotshop style' creative work processes.

Most of the creatives spoke about meeting directly with clients to discuss the work but typically when the ideas were being presented. They also talked about how they were now selling their own work directly or were at least involved in client meetings. Most of the creatives considered that the practice of direct selling and discussing work directly facilitated the creative process,

because it clarified issues for both parties. This relationship was considered to be educational and beneficial for both client and creative.

“The future belongs to creatives who can win the trust of clients, a trust based on agencies enlarging their own definition of creativity and expanding the mission of the creative department” (Jaffe, 2003: 26).

The creatives felt that the creative-client relationship facilitated the creative process by cutting through some of the inherent problems associated with account management and the approval process. This “*Chinese whispers*” process as one creative termed it, where the account person acts as go-between, had often led to a breakdown in relationships, internally within the account team and externally between the client and agency,

I: “Do you prefer to sell direct?”

M: *“Yes...the more complex our work is...or our ideas are...different approaches...the more difficult the clients are like [multinational company]...they’re not used to quite obscure thinking...the account people sort of flounder a bit selling our work...they find it a lot easier and we find it a lot easier if we just sell direct...the best person to sell the idea sometimes is the person who’s created it...we’re always in meetings these days selling our work so you kind of have to...like the account people...are just doing the em...”*

I: “Meet and greet?”

M: *“Yeah and they’ll be setting up meetings, phone calls all the sort of house keeping and we’re having to do the main bit which was their role em so ...bit weird...it’s all evolving I think...”* (Mairi, middleweight copywriter, service agency)

It was because of “*uneducated*” clients that the creatives thought that account management were not the right people to sell their work. This was because the creatives considered that most account people were also creatively “*uneducated*” and client centric. The creatives believed that “*uneducated*” clients would naturally opt for safe option rather than take the creative risk, which was often needed for their brand (and for the creative’s career and the agency’s creative reputation). In this way this creative director, who was the one exception, considered that the client relationship should be managed by account management. This was because he believed that clients were not “*trained*” how to judge the work or deal with creative and in his experience this had de-motivated creatives:

“Clients aren’t trained you know how to judge creative work...we’ve sometimes found here with the clients who want to see the creative...so we send the creatives down and then the way that they judge the work in a meeting is terrible...you know it’s really

demotivating...you know they'll just say 'that's shit'...which I'd never say to a creative team ...I'd always be positive, I'd always find ways of developing it...you know exposing creatives to clients I think only works with clients who are very respectful of that process and are very respectful of creatives..." (Malcolm, Executive Creative Director, creative agency)

However within this study there was no firsthand evidence of this situation occurring, rather the evidence suggested the contrary. This was why most creatives thought that it was important to build a creative-client relationship. As one creative director said, direct contact "*demystified the creative process*" and motivated rather than controlled the creative, because they would often get work through that normally would not have been agreed.

Such a relationship also established a sense of client ownership and control, as opposed to them being presented 'at' with work which was unfamiliar, and which was consequently perceived as risqué. Being involved in the creative process also gave them a better understanding and appreciation of the work. In some client-agency relationships this had led to client driven culture change, as the well respected Creative Director Tim Delaney (2006: 32) observed in his recent *Campaign* essay: "The rise of the new creative",

"Nowadays clients simply refuse to pay for anyone who does not add value. Rather than accept the pyramid of account people and planners that customarily follows the winning of a piece of business, clients often hand pick the team that exactly matches their business...in old advertising, it was: "I don't like Jamie the account director." In New Advertising, it is: "I'm not paying for Jamie." In a recent meeting one prospective client exclaimed "I don't want anyone in the room who isn't creative." In other words, if you want that spotty silent thing at the end of the table in the room, fine. But don't expect me to pay for him...in the new environment, new models, and ways of working are on every client's agenda..." (Delaney, 2006: 32).

In most of the agencies, albeit to varying degrees, the collaborative approach was now about developing work *with* clients. The extent to which creative production was a collaborative affair was dependent on the culture of the agency. The advertising practitioners believed that it was unlikely the agency environment would stabilise around a 'standard' agency model, as historically had been the case.

One thing that remained the same was that once the client and agency agreed that an idea was worth developing, it was shaped and developed into what Webb Young (1965/2003:38) termed “*practical usefulness*”.

6.5.5 Stage 5: Elaboration

Similar to what Csikszentmihalyi (1996) found, this stage was often interrupted by periods of idea refinement; client conflict; account team conflict; incubation; further evaluation; (“*sometimes*”) starting all over again; budget changes; media changes. “*Sometimes*” the client even abandoned the whole campaign.

If the idea made it into production, many different variables could influence the end result. These will now be briefly discussed.

A trusting client-agency relationship, a good budget and an interesting brand with creative potential were considered conducive to good creative (potentially “*award-winning*” work). Importantly the trust meant that the idea would be close to the original idea presented because, “*they just let the agency get on with it.*”

“It makes a big difference if it’s the right kind of brand, and they’ve got the money and they...give you more freedom than a lot of clients then it’s a lot easier to do an award-winning ad but that only comes from years of relationships being built up between clients and agencies like here and [car brand]...they just let the agency get on with it... a lot of trust between client and agency that’s what really helps get really good ads out” (Stan, middleweight art director, creative agency)

Without this level of trust, the creatives felt that the client could adversely influence the end product. Particularly the larger clients, where there were a greater number of personalities and politics involved in the approval process. The marketing managers of the big multinational companies were often answerable to ‘layers’ of internal clients. These companies often had company systems to abide by at each stage of the process. This meant that the production period was often drawn out because of the amount of research, the subsequent creative changes and the client’s complex approval processes,

“A campaign for [hair product] ...kind of an emotional idea as well and we’re working at the moment of pushing that idea into the mainstream campaign ...what [partner] just doing at the moment, the scripts for that and we’ve been pursuing that all this year...we’re trying to push it all the way through ...we’ll shoot it in kind of October this year and it’ll come out next February but obviously we started in January this year so it takes a whole year to have to go through this process to get this work out which is em hard work but...[multinational company] ...they spend millions of pounds on research to find out that the bottle should actually be in the bottom right hand corner. They spend more money on research than they do on the actual ad...” (Mairi, middleweight art director, service agency)

The creative director had overall responsibility for the creative integrity of the agency. They too would influence the creatives’ end product. In the initial stages of idea development they used their experience and knowledge to guide and advise the creatives. In the latter stages they would advise on the art direction and production. And when the need arose, sometimes it could only be the creative directors (and their reputations for producing great work) who could “battle” with the client to maintain the integrity of the idea. Similar to Kelly et al (2005) the creatives in this study used “fighting” and “battling” metaphors to describe their struggle to maintain the integrity of the idea. Winning such a “battle” was particularly important when a new creative director was trying to communicate his or her creative vision to his or her clients and agency,

“Yeah this is the first time people have said it and meant it. People always say they want to be more creative but then as soon as the client says they don’t want something they bend over and it all collapses, whereas [new creative director] is actually quite happy to fall out with agency staff and clients if necessary... I mean he was brought into turn the agency around and I think he was given em superior powers and on occasion and frequently he’ll overrule the CEO...I think that is incredibly important because he has managed to hold off on many occasions to stop things happening which shouldn’t have...there is a [drinks advert] ...it’s a wonderful film...the client wanted...preferred another version of it...a different edit of it and [new creative director] simply wouldn’t let them do it and he kept saying no, no, no, no and he won the battle whereas before I think they would have caved in... it was a subtle thing but you know it’s the details that often make the difference between something great and good...[well respected and decorated art director] says that good is the enemy of great and I think he’s sort of got a point you know you have to fight for those seemingly pointless details...(Calum, middleweight copywriter, service agency)

Another constraint was the regulatory bodies, for example the British Advertising Clearance Centre (BACC) approved all television and cinema advertising scripts. In general, the creatives talked about how industry regulations were getting more and more restrictive particularly in relation to alcohol and junk food. The creatives felt that often the BACC needlessly rejected

good scripts. Therefore to get round these perceived restrictions, where possible, they were becoming more creative with their media selection,

“The regulatory environment is getting harder and harder...The BACC which...you know they have to clear everything...they, they haven't passed that [new crisp advert] script...they said it was mocking deformity, which it is but it's a joke... we're trying to do it anyway even though the BACC have blown it out... we'll do it as a viral internet ad...and shoot it very cheaply... because it's good creatively for the agency ...pieces of work like that that can enhance the agency's creative credentials...best viral ad is a category in some advertising award stuff... it's a good one to have. And I think if the agency believes in it and the creative director believes in it's creatively justified... and it could enhance the reputation then I think that's going to happen more and more...”
(Calum, middleweight copywriter, service agency)

Indeed the creatives talked about how advertising and their role was changing because of the new creative opportunities which technology and media provided. These changes in media and the cultural and structural changes required in the industry to accommodate these have been written about extensively by advertising practitioners (for example Jaffe, 2003; Rainey, 2003) and on a weekly basis in *Campaign*, but they have not been explored fully in the research literature. Recently, Delaney (2006: 31) suggested that many of these changes have led to the “*New Creative*”. Similar to what was found in this study, the “*New Creative*” was about a “*New*” mindset and perspective,

“There is a revolution going on in advertising as the boundaries between specialisms blur. Emerging from the chaos are the New Creatives - become one or become obsolete...the New Creative...open minded, articulate, inspired by every gizmo...and, importantly, someone who wants to share their enthusiasm for the brave new world with clients...”

The “*Old Creative*”, the “*New Creative*” and their new creative challenges will now be discussed.

6.6 The role of the “New Creative”

“A redefinition of creativity to include upstream creative thinking and the delivery of brand ideas is not to deny the importance of advertising and the craft skill of making great ads. It is simply to broaden the scope of the industry ... and advertising isn’t changing, it is being changed” (Rainey, 2000: 215).

In essence then the redefinition of creativity stemmed from new technology, fragmentation of media, how media was consumed and educated clients wanting more from their budgets. The client focus was on brand ideas which could be applied across different media: above and below-the-line. This is what some commentators have termed media neutral thinking; although most of the creatives in this study had not heard of the term. As referred to in the Literature Review, media neutrality essentially meant that within the agencies and among clients there was an emphasis on a brand’s ‘big idea’ which could be applied across many different types of media (for example Jaffe, 2003; Rainey, 2003; MacDonald, 2004).

Many industry commentators (for example Jaffe, 2003; Rainey, 2003; Delaney, 2006; Earls, 2002) believed that changes in the industry have been largely client driven. They considered that clients were ahead of agencies in their understanding and use of new communication tools, and in their curiosity about the new opportunities offered by digital technology. Clients had to be up to date with any new communication tool that moved them even slightly ahead of a competitor,

“A combination of digital technology, new fragmented media options, a lack of faith in the effectiveness of conventional marketing and the confusing array of new opportunities offered up to advertisers have somehow conspired to make the very term ad agency seem old fashioned” (Delaney, 2006: 31)

A recent *Campaign* editorial (2006b: 20) titled “Adland cannot afford to ignore emerging new media” underlined the importance of these changes to the advertising industry,

“While no-one really understands the full potential digital media has to change advertising, advertisers and agencies alike are at last beginning to realise that, like it or not, we are on the cusp of major change. This time, it's more than just hype.”

The industry, the creative mindset and thus the role of the creative was changing. In a study conducted just six years ago, Young (2000) found that art directors and writers brought different

competencies to the process of advertising creation. The ability to process or manipulate verbal information, as compared to visual information distinguished copywriters from art directors. They processed different kinds of information uniquely and therefore see the world differently. However because of the change within the industry this research found that the creatives roles and craft skills were no longer clear cut,

“Well I’m kind of a bit of both so I’m not ...I was an art director when I came out of college...I’ve worked with a few different people...and I prefer to work with someone who has got really good ideas first of all ...because I can write and I can art direct so I’d sooner have someone who I thought their thinking was spot on...” (Mairi, middleweight art director, service agency)

While the creatives still had the traditional titles, within most of the partnerships traditional divisions of labour were fluid and it was an idea-based collaboration. Therefore creative partnerships were evaluated on the quality of their thinking; and often thinking that went through the line at that:

“We have to start thinking about it as communications you know...like you need...I mean the more skills you have as an individual...you know it’s going to help in the future...I think like before...10 years ago if you were a great copywriter you were a great copywriter and that was it and I think now you’ve got to be a great copywriter, you’ve got to have a visual eye, you’ve got to have a little bit of planning...you’ve got to talk to clients ...you know talking to clients was essentially an account man’s job but now, now if you look at the model of Mother they don’t have account managers, creatives sell their own work so you know, you know that’s showing how things are changing...you know when I was in college it was always above-the-line and below-the-line, it was don’t go below-the-line it’s the scourge of advertising and I think now that’s where...you know loads of great creative work is coming from you know and, and like no one would ever have dreamed of doing that but like I’d have no qualms about trying to invent a video game for a product you know it would be fantastic...you know why does that cheapen your thought...you know and I think that’s changing now ...and I think you have to go with what’s creative and not...I think there isn’t a below-the-line and an above-the-line anymore...the line is slowly, slowly shrinking and I think that people who go right I’m only going to do TV ads are going to become dinosaurs (Jonny, junior copywriter, creative hotshop)

In the context of the traditional stereotypes learned at college working in a good above-the-line agency but with integrated thoughts was now considered creatively acceptable. This research found that most of the creatives were shifting away from the mindset with which they have been associated historically that is, all creative activity should be centred on a 30 second television

advertisement. Rather there were new 'creatively respectable' vehicles for achieving peer recognition, and importantly these were recognised in the award categories. Experimenting with different media to achieve stand-out was now part of the creative challenge,

"They've done for the Britart stuff...you know Britart.com was like a sticker on a pavement saying 1 of 50,000 concrete...you know the D&AD...yeah well...it's either 2001 or 2002 ...I think it's 2001 they got a black pencil for it which is like the highest..." (Wilf, junior art director, creative agency)

However television remained the "shiny bit of advertising", as one junior copywriter termed it but "now you have to have more strings to your bow". Television's 'shininess' was in part because like the industry's stereotypes,

"Old media is indeed old, and hence its roots run deep" (Sutherland, 2006: 16).

While television was considered "old media" many creatives predicted that future changes in the environment meant that it would pose a new creative challenge. These creatives felt that the changes would naturally filter out poor creative work,

"In the next five years consumers are going to skip ads and I think that's going to radically change advertising 'cause it means that bad ads won't survive ... if it's not entertaining people are just not going to be interested in it ...you do obviously websites...you do stunts, you do ambient, you do posters...you do all that kind of stuff but actually the televised...the film is still the best way to sell the brand because you can put such emotion into it so...that's not going to go away but it's going to happen in...you know it can be sent round as virals, it can be downloaded on phones ...it's going to be there on TV but it's only going to survive if it's entertaining ...I think that, that's the future ...is being able to say to clients ...look your advertising isn't going to survive in the future unless it's entertaining ...I think...this is going to be great news ...I think that is the opportunity...to produce advertising that is distinctive, that stands out and that is really, genuinely entertaining..." (Malcolm, Executive Creative Director, creative agency)

Some of the creative directors considered that this would also be the opportunity for agencies to reassert their "creative control", for example over brand consultancies and the client's other media agencies offering communication solutions. Most of the creatives felt that the changes within the industry, closer client-creative relationships and tighter client budgets enhanced creativity, because they were motivated by the challenge to be more inventive with their ideas and media to achieve stand out:

"I think also that conventional advertising because of all sorts of things will become less and less important and so you'll see advertising agencies moving much more into stuff about content on TV programmes um sponsorship stuff...interesting, different ways to get their messages...I hope it's liberating...I think if you think about the idea and that's what I mean about my job is to rent space in people's brains, the idea is the most interesting thing of all because it's a transportable piece of machinery that you can put into people's heads. How you get to people is secondary to that ...some people go straight into it's a TV commercial and I say no it isn't actually this idea is a taxi, you know this idea is a pigeon painted pink...it forces people to be more inventive..." (Wallace, International Creative Director, creative agency)

"*Their instinctive grasp of media*" was another reason why Delaney (2006: 31) thought that the "*New Creative*" was so important to their clients,

"Their instincts about communication come from being participants in it, rather than hapless victims. Video gaming probably started it; now any form of technological expression is grabbed, reshaped, and represented on behalf of a brand in the name of pop culture's penchant for reconstruction..."

Just as this research found, particularly among the new generation of copywriters and independent agency founders, Delaney (2006: 32) believed that advertising inventiveness was benefiting from the "*democratised*" idea generation. In other words he considered that advertising was no longer a "*closed shop*" to those from 'particular' backgrounds.

"First to go ...is Old Advertising's cult of the prima donna creative...anathema to the genuinely talented...Many of the creative voices stifled under Old Advertising regimes are now finding outlets...idea generation has now been democratised...The [Old Creative] is stuck in the glorious past: mildly Luddite in disposition, diffident, protective and suspicious; someone who views Kanye West as an assault on their refined sensibilities, which, of course, have become attuned to the finer things which advertising salaries can buy with ease: old sports cars (done up meticulously), antiques, Tuscan villas etc."

Indeed according to the creative pair below, who were interviewed together, changes in the industry meant that as creatives only those who were motivated by the new creative challenge would survive and the 'old school' mindset or as referred to by Jonny above, these "*dinosaurs*" would eventually die out:

J: *"Well you have to be more creative now to get your message across because so many people see so many messages everyday and you've just got to stand out more, haven't*

you? You know there is more interesting things for people to look at now and listen to so you've got to stand out more ...it's making it harder for us now, isn't it?"

S: "Yeah but it makes it more of a challenge though so it's kind of good in a way ...what they'll probably do is get rid of some of the people that just do it so that they can go away on foreign shoots and do a 60 second TV ad because there'll be less and less of that..."
(Jacob and Stan, middleweight team, creative agency)

With the exception of one “*working class*” creative director, the older creatives tended to be wealthy “*middle class*” creatives. They all had a “*New Creative*” mindset and were embracing the new creative opportunities. Indeed a few of them had been instrumental in introducing new ways of working within the agencies. These creatives had entered the industry in the 1970s and 1980s. This was when creatives were put together to work in teams and so their creativity benefited from the different perspectives of their partner and creative director, i.e. art directors had less “*genteel*” and ‘educated’ backgrounds than their copywriting partner. This wealthy “*middle class*” creative director, who pioneered collaborative working in UK agencies, described the impact on his creativity and perspective of his first “*working class*” creative director.

“[Creative director] was a great teacher ...and it was really inspiring for me because...[creative director] is sort of working class very, very working class...there was a school of advertising copywriters like Tony Abbott and Derek Brignell that wrote elegant body copy ...if they hadn't gone to Oxford wished they'd gone to Oxford d'you know what I mean? And if I'd gone and learnt from them I think I would have got stuck in one way of doing it whereas going and learning from...[creative director]...because he hated body copy...he said the best body copy is no body copy at all you know he was very visual...down to earth, logical, hard advertising but entertaining...I mean he hated the fact that I went to university...he only found that out after he'd given me the job he said he wouldn't have given me the job if he'd known I'd gone to university...I mean he's so kind of “working class” ...but he said I made up for it in the fact I was born in [city in the Far East]... (Malcolm, Executive Creative Director, creative agency)

For new ways of thinking to occur, different perspectives were needed (Amabile, 1986). Thus the new models of working will be changed further by the new generation of creative directors.

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter has explored agency cultures, structures, relationships and work processes.

The quality of the creatives' marriage was defined by the quality of their output. In turn their output defined their career trajectory. The culture of the agency is defined by the reputation and vision of the creative director or agency founder. The reputation and work of the creative director often determined the type of creatives (and clients) that an agency attracted. Thus creative directors took on responsibilities beyond the ones that made them famous. The creative directors saw their role as mixture of creative filter, quality controller, critic and creative motivator. Maintaining the creatives' motivation meant enabling them to fulfil themselves and mature creatively by setting them creative challenges. Mutual respect was a fundamental element of the creative/creative director relationship, because feedback and evaluation could only be meaningful if given to the creatives by those they respected.

The creative development process was evolving. The creative team was now more an ideas based than a craft-based partnership. The emphasis was on the quality of their collaborative thinking; brand ideas that could be applied across several different media. Media was now considered part of the creative challenge. This study found that the definition of creativity within advertising was broadening and thus so too was the creative mindset. Media neutrality and the opportunities provided by technology meant that clients were looking to reach their audience through big brand ideas that could be applied through-the-line, across many forms of different media. While creatives sought to use media creatively, including traditionally below-the-line mediums, the media stereotypes still remained when they considered which agencies they wanted to work for. Here, the (above-the-line) agency's reputation, their creative work and creative director were the key considerations.

A new generation was opening creative agencies with different ways of working. New and fresh perspectives on the traditional creative social processes meant that the creatives and clients were working much more closely in the creative development process. Creatives and clients now had direct contact and therefore in some agencies the account management had reduced responsibilities. These practices were considered to be mutually beneficial and educational for both the client and the agency. Indeed on many accounts this relationship had led to acclaimed

and award winning work. Thus while these innovative agencies would attract the brightest talent, their methods were being adopted in various forms by the field. These changes within the industry were predicted to continue.

Chapter 7: The Finale “*Why do I dance?.....Why do I breathe?*” (Anonymous)

7.1 The Programme

“Breathe: to draw air and expel it from the lungs; to be alive” (Oxford English Dictionary, 2005).

The opening scene will explain what this study found to be at the core of a creative life in advertising. The production will then dramatise the contributions that this study has made to the creativity and advertising literature, and its practical implications for the advertising industry. The curtain closes by discussing possible avenues for future research which have resulted from this performance.

7.2 The dancer and the dance

Some lines from W.B. Yeats illuminate the central relationship found in this study: that between advertising creatives and their creativity:

*“O body swayed to music. O brightening glance.
How can we know the dancer from the dance?”* (Among School Children, 1927)

In asking the question as to the use of a long life, Yeats looked to dancers who created their own choreography, within the constraints of the pace of musical accompaniment. To Yeats, life is a series of fluid and self invented steps, not governed by time but rather invented against time. In the act of creation, creators are drawn into the immortality of the creation. Equally the creation, although pure and perfect, must depend on the creator. The process is natural and entirely unforced: the two are one and interdependent.

There are powerful parallels between the world of dance and the central relationship found in this study. Just as dancing was *the* vital experience for the dancer, so creativity was *the* vital experience for the advertising creative. Creativity was the central source of meaning *throughout* these creatives’ lives: they lived it and breathed it. They became obsessed by it and absorbed in the culture of it. An intrinsic part of their “*dance*” was their experience of “*flow*” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). This *drove* them to create their creative lives:

“Those are the moments you live for...those insights where you look at something in a completely different way...” (Russ, Vice Chairman, service agency)

Thus, this study’s conclusions and implications will be brought together by adopting the dance metaphor.

7.3 Key Findings

Gardner’s (in Feldman, 1999: 172) notion of “*the crystallising experience*” was an exceptional creative experience or as it is called in the dance world, a ‘dance revelation’. This ‘revelation’, which often happened in childhood but sometimes ‘struck’ later, could produce a feeling of such force that it was never forgotten. It sometimes arose through an experience of cultural capital such as a film or of a ‘past master’. A common example from this study would be the work of Bernbach. A ‘revelation’ could also occur through a creative experience, for example while experimenting with different art forms at school or college. For the advertising creatives in this study, these ‘revelations’ often provided the initial impetus to pursue their creative vocation.

Throughout a creative life the love of creation has many facets, from the hardships of starting out to the excitement and unpredictability of creating the ‘dance’ on ‘stage’. If the pain of the rehearsal was a part of the every day life of creatives, there was also the *pleasure* of being able to move beyond the ordinary; at times reaching a state of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Moments of flow were when creatives felt completely in control, and they experienced great power and excitement as a consequence. This experience was the reward, and one important reason, for struggling with the pain and hardships involved in creation. A flow experience would most significantly happen during a key performance.

From a young age creatives identified themselves as ‘different’. They lived in the intensity and discipline that was required to develop their skills. This separated the creative adolescents from their non-creative peers. This may partly be explained by the creatives’ own experiences of getting into a role and forgetting the ‘ordinariness’ of the real world while they are creating. In their childhood, creatives would observe everyday ‘ordinary’ life around them and this would

continue throughout their lives. When they were older, creatives used their observations of everyday 'ordinary' life in their work to make their performance relevant to their audience.

There was a spectrum of social class in the creatives' world, with a shared intensity and drive, often despite or because of their background. This diversity was a relatively recent phenomenon which had been particularly influenced by contemporary 'hotshops'. This recent diversity was similar to the contemporary dance companies; contemporary choreographers like their creative director counterparts believe that a diverse company enhanced the dance,

"He [choreographer] put together a mixed company of many personalities in contrasting shapes, sizes and colours. It gives him a rich material to work with; to surprise with"
(Wulff, 1998: 29)

Thus there had been an expansion in the number of creatives during the last decades and also a rise in specialist schools to train them. The specialist schools had facilitated access to a previously "closed world", to those other than the 'classically trained' creatives. Most considered that their *real* learning began on the job: training, casting, stage fright, as well as negative (and positive) reviews. Although some of the 'old guard' believed that these schools produced creatives drilled in performing formulaic routines, these schools were significant in beginning the socialisation process of understudies and members of chorus lines.

Similar to the creative-creative director relationship, in the dance world, it was considered an important part of a dancer's reputation to have been trained by a distinguished choreographer. Choreography is the *art* of making dances. Prominent ex-dancers enjoy a lot of respect in the dance world and their experience is held in high regard. The relationship between the dancers and their choreographers was important to the quality of the performance. Mutual trust and respect were important to this communication. The choreographer may have a mental picture of what the ballet steps the partners should take and what the dance should look like; but dance was learnt through the dancers immersing themselves in the dance world.

Becoming 'professional' relied on a certain level of routine that had built up over the course of many years of learning, as well as becoming immersed in the creative world. One of the consequences of the long working hours in the 'theatre' is that they become a part of the industry network. Despite the fact that the creative world was structured by constant competition to take

top billing, there was camaraderie. Informal networking was an important part of the culture. The most significant kinds of news and rumours concern promotions, casting and new appointments.

Becoming immersed in this network was an important part of career creation. So too was the *pas de deux*; a dance for two. Like advertising creation, a dancing career was much enhanced by the quality of their partnership. Because of the intense schedule and the nature of the work, the partners spend almost all their time in the 'theatre'. Thus the partners develop a feeling of belonging together. This belonging was activated on stage, where the partners depended on each other and were united in a vulnerable exposure,

"You're completely naked out there. They see what you have inside" (Wulff, 1998: 9)

Partnerships took different forms. Some partnerships were considered to be 'special' by the partners themselves and by their peers because of the work that they created. Often, like Rudi and Margot, the partners came from very different backgrounds, and it was the chemistry between them that created the great performances. Some creatives who were partners on stage were not necessarily friends outside the theatre, but when they started creating together they released hidden qualities in each other, reaching new artistic heights. By 'dancing' with a partner, advertising creatives can jump higher and take leaps that they would never be able to do on their own. Probably the most risky of these is the 'leap of faith'. Similar to John-Steiner's (2000) findings among scientific and artistic collaborators, 'dancing' with a partner allowed them to extend themselves and show off their strengths. Partnering was a question of technique, complementarity *and* rapport.

"There is a special magic, a certain one and one miraculously adding to make three, a process that somehow makes the partnership somehow greater than the contribution of the pair as individuals" (Barnes, in Montague, 1981: 18)

To enhance their 'dance' further, many of the contemporary hotshop agencies now involved the client within the creative production. Rather than creating a production based on "*Chinese whispers*", with account people relaying instructions from front of house to backstage, the creatives felt that the direct contact with the client let them leap a little higher. These relationships had let creatives experiment with and broaden their repertoire. Just as new

developments in modern dance used different media on stage (Wulff, 1998); using media and technology to engage with their audience was now part of the creative challenge for advertising creatives. These contemporary collaborations and creative 'experimentations' had led to some award-winning productions (www.dandad.co.uk). This, in turn, has led to a crossover of work processes, in various forms, from the contemporary to the classical 'service' agencies.

Thus while old established media are still important, digital technology has renewed work practices backstage and widened the scope of performances. These technological opportunities, which often involve collaborative client working, are changing the meaning of the creatives' performance:

"Ideas and the people who provide them are the only things clients want, or will pay for. In the digital revolution, the New Creative is the one at the front of the crowd. Only it is not a flag he is waving – it is just his hand, with an electronic device planted in it".
(Delaney, 2006: 32)

What was happening on stage was anchored backstage socially. As in any theatrical performance, what can be seen of a performance 'out there' in the auditorium is only half of it. The performance was the combined product not only of creatives and their 'choreographers' who were rewarded in public, but also of those who work backstage, contributing to the creatives' careers and simultaneously their own. For example "good" planners were considered "vitally important" to giving the creative performers the insights from which to make their creative leap. These insights were often as a result of exploratory audience research, usually conducted by the planner. Similar to other studies (Kelley, 2005; Hackley, 2003c) some of the creatives would mingle in the auditorium themselves. Creatives considered that research at this stage *contributed* to their creative process. However research particularly during creative development or the 'interval' was negatively perceived. In general the creatives felt that 'non-creatives' weren't "qualified" to judge an 'unfinished idea' of an 'original' performance (Sternberg & Lubart, 1999) because they would divert to a 'completed classic'.

7.4 Contribution to the literature

This view from the creative's dressing room has made a contribution to the advertising literature. It builds on the understanding gained from earlier advertising studies focused on these broader

social processes involved in the production of ads (for example, Hirschman, 1989). However this study has explored the creative's dressing room domain which is "*nested inside*" the backstage domain (Csikszentmihalyi, 1994: 156). That is, the life histories have explored the creatives' motivations, behaviours, experiences and thoughts in their cultural contexts. Therefore the current understanding of advertising creatives has been enhanced. Due to the qualitative and exploratory nature of this study, the findings cannot be generalised to the advertising industry as a whole. However the deeper understanding which this domain-specific study provides has applicability within the research literature, particularly in relation to the social processes involved in advertising production.

For advertising practitioners, understanding that creativity was the vital experience for these creatives is important to the future of the industry because this relationship underpins the industry. Creativity makes the industry unique within an increasingly competitive communications environment (Beale, 2006b). Agencies are defined by their output, which relies in turn on their ability to attract and retain the best talent, and at the same time, "*gold collar workers view their talents as an asset, as their own best investments*" (Kelley, in Fletcher, 1999: 11). Therefore it is important that the agency management know how to keep their creatives motivated, through practices which enhance their creativity and allow them to express their creativity. For example this study gives an understanding of how and why these creatives perceived the 'new' creative-client relationship as a positive change. For agency management nurturing the creative-client relationship is important in terms of developing a mutual trust and transparency within the creative process, particularly at a time when digital media and media neutral solutions provide a 'broad stage' for creative experimentation.

Furthermore another area where management practices could improve the creatives' motivation was within the agency environment. Most creatives considered that the open plan office environment to be "*counter productive*" to the intensity of their creative collaborative working. This finding may also have relevance to the broader organisational community because creative and collaborative work practices now extend beyond the creative industries.

This study is also important to the creative research literature. Collaborative creativity is now recognised as an important area of research (John-Steiner, 2000; Feldman, 2000; Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). It is however an unexplored domain within creativity literature.

Therefore this study contributes to a currently limited body of knowledge, by providing an understanding of the creative collaborators and an industry built around creative collaborative working. It also contributes to this literature by taking a more contextualised approach to the study of creativity, and this in turn may lead to the exploration of other specific collaborative contexts (such as new product development, architecture, theatre, music) for creativity.

Overall, this contextual study has built on existing knowledge and contributed new knowledge to the advertising and creativity literature. The 'new' creative-client working practices illustrate how and why getting into the dressing room is important to the research literature. Rather than clients standing in the stalls of the theatre, being served by the usherettes and peering through binoculars at the performance, many are now becoming involved down in the 'inner circle' and some are even backstage in the dressing room. This brings them closer to the dancers and in some contemporary theatres they become involved in the performance. Being backstage in the dressing room allowed for a better understanding of the 'dancers' and their 'dance':

"I don't think clients understood as much about the creatives as they do now...I get more involved with clients now and more involved in their brand...media has obviously changed massively...the internet's huge... I think we'll go the way communication goes...I think we'll have to adapt in every single way or we'll die..." (Jonny, junior copywriter, creative hotshop)

7.5 Coming attractions: a programme of further research

A deeper understanding of 'creative-creativity' relationship and how it affected their working relationships would come from a longer stay in their dressing room; an ethnographic study. Here the researcher and the research act itself become part and parcel of the social world under investigation (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1989). Immersion in the "involving" creative culture and "hanging out" with the creatives, would allow the participant observer to refine and develop the observations and theories derived from these life histories. As such, the present study may have benefited from an ethnographic stage to compliment the life history interviews. This approach would have allowed the researcher to become absorbed in an agency's formal and informal culture. In addition this approach would have allowed the researcher to observe the creatives' 'symbolic' behaviours and interactions during the creative process.

In particular understanding how the 'new' client-creative relationship fits into the flow of the intimate *pas de deux*, between art director and copywriter, is important area of future research, because as noted above, this relationship will be central to future performances. Clearly, gaining prolonged access to the dressing room would pose a significant challenge, requiring researchers to acquire and deploy particular kinds of social capital. During the present study, for example, the researcher found that her knowledge of the culture was beneficial. The development of a network of contacts, with references to their work, sourced through personal contacts and practitioner literature was also useful. In advertising, building a network and becoming immersed in the culture are important to getting beyond knocking on the dressing room door.

Looking more broadly backstage, this study found that another evolving area was the impact of technology on the creative work and the role of the different disciplines. For academics and practitioners these are important moves away from the 'traditional' social processes and dynamics of creative production. As noted above for practitioners in particular these are issues which affect management practices such as training and recruitment for these evolving disciplines. In terms of predicting future trends in working practices and agency models, academics should explore the working practices of the contemporary creative hotshops which were the instigators of such change. There is also the possibility of researching creativity as experienced in other marketing communications agencies, for example, sales promotion, packaging, or direct marketing companies.

The 'digital revolution' was predicted to continue for the foreseeable future. This represents an important area of future research for advertising and creativity researchers. Therefore it is important that future research builds on the knowledge gleaned from this exploration into the dressing room. Importantly, for future advertising research, this study demonstrates the applicability of Csikszentmihalyi's (1996) system model of creativity. In this way this research meets the need identified by Mayer (1999) who believed that there was a need for cultural and evolutionary creativity research to be based on solid empirical evidence.

Indeed, as discussed above this research opens up many new areas of cultural and evolutionary research. To creativity researchers, advertising involves a new kind of dancer performing a different kind of dance. This study contributes a new understanding of a different kind of *pas de*

deux, to John-Steiner's study (2000) who explored the lives of 'famous' dancers collaborating on an 'ad-hoc' basis. Here the partnership was an integral part of the creative culture. This exploration has showed how each creative could enhance their partner's 'dance', through a trajectory of partnerships: those starting-out to seasoned professionals. This study gave an understanding of how their flow experiences affected them throughout the course of their lives: why the 'dancer' cannot be separated from the 'dance'.

Dancing Tutor: *"Billy, what does it feel like when you're dancing?"*

Billy Elliot: *"Don't know. Sorta feels good. Sorta stiff and that, but once I get going...then I like, forget everything. And ...sorta disappear. Sorta disappear. Like, I feel a change in my whole body. And I've got this fire in my body. I'm just there. Flyin' like a bird. Like electricity. Yeah, like electricity..."*

(www.billyelliot.com)

Appendix A

Life History Topic Areas

Prior to interview

- Brief description of the nature of the research
- Explain nature of interview
- Assurances of confidentiality
- Introduce tape recorder

Brief Intro of Current position

- Including occupation title, years in current agency.

Part A: Family

- Describe your family background (mother / father occupation / where brought up / move around etc.)
- How (if at all) do you think family background was influential in helping you become the person you are? How would you describe your personality?
- Describe your home environment / How did you spend most of your free-time as a child? What kinds of activities did you like to do? With peers? Parents? Siblings? None?
- Could you describe any important friendships / 'significant others' that you had while you were growing up? Influential in helping you become the person you are?
- How would describe your current main priorities in life? Married / Kids – Influential on career / personality

Part B: Education

- Could you describe your educational background (enjoy / dislike school? favourite teachers etc.)
- Enjoy (or better at) any particular subjects /activities more than others?
- What did you want to be when you grew up?
- Describe what you did after leaving school (any fixed ideas of what you wanted to do / any influential people or moments at this time etc.)
- Describe the steps that led to you to a career in advertising

Part C: Career to date and Life Priorities

- Describe any moments in your childhood when you felt you had creative persuasion / influenced your choice of career?

- Aware of advertising when younger? Influential? Any campaign which is memorable / influential to you?
- Of the things you have done in your working life, of what are you most proud? To what do you attribute to your success in this endeavour (personal qualities etc.)?
- Of all the obstacles you have encountered in your working life, which was the hardest one to overcome? How did you do it? Any that you did not overcome?
- Has there been a particular project or event that has significantly influenced the direction of your career? If so, could you talk a little about it? How did it stimulate your interest? How did it develop over time? How important was this project/event to your creative accomplishments? Do you still have interesting, stimulating experiences like this?

Part D: Working Relationships

- Has there been a significant person in your life that has influenced or stimulated your thinking and attitudes about your work - can you describe this person / how they influence your work / what you learnt from them?
- Length of time with current creative partner? Describe that relationship / how you came to work with each other / describe how you work together / main influences etc.
- Describe your main career goals / how have these changed over the course of your career / have you fulfilled any of your goals
- At any time in your life, have your peers been particularly influential in shaping your personal and professional identity?

Part E: Working / Habits / Structure

- How would you define creativity within advertising?
- How would you describe your style of creativity?
- Describe the processes you go through when tackling a brief
- How would you describe your working methods?
- Have your methods changed over the years? (If so, describe how)
- What about changes in the way you think and feel about your work?

Part F: Agency Structure & Relationships

- How would you describe the structure and culture of this agency – has it changed since your time here / does it enhance your creative productivity (does this differ from other agencies you have worked in – how etc.)?
- How would you describe the role of the account manager within creative process in this agency (explore relationships if not spontaneous)?
- How would you describe the role of the account planner within the creative process in this agency (explore relationships if not spontaneous)?
- How would you describe the role of your creative director within the creative process in this agency (explore relationship if not spontaneous)?
- How would you describe the role / level of interaction among different creative teams within this agency?
- What advice would you give to a young person starting out in advertising? Is that how you did it? If not how is your current perspective different from the way you started?
- Do you notice differences between younger/older teams in advertising?
- Describe the main changes have been in the advertising industry in your time working within it
- Describe how these changes (if at all) have affected your work / working methods
- Describe how you think the advertising industry will change over the next ten years
- Describe how you think these changes may affect creatives and their methods of working / agency structures & cultures

Appendix B

5th April 2005

Mairi XYZ
Agency X
London W1

Dear Mairi,

I am currently a PhD student at Edinburgh University exploring the lives of UK advertising creatives. The PhD aims to shed some light on the processes of advertising creativity by looking at life histories of creative people. I have been fortunate enough to get some great names / agencies involved in the study. I saw your work for [well-known charity] in Private View last week and thought you and [creative partner], would be perfect for my study.

I am planning a second fieldwork trip to London mid-May and wondered if you and [creative partner] would consider giving me an interview. Basically all it would involve is a confidential chat (individually) about your background, your career to date and your work. The interview would be at a time and place convenient to you.

Hopefully you will be interested. If so, I would be grateful if you would reply to me at the email address below.

I hope to hear from you soon.

Best regards,

Charlotte Gilmore
PhD. Student
(email: s0239579@sms.ed.ac.uk)

Appendix C

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