

What's in a word? The discursive construction of
'creativity'

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

October 2010

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ABSTRACT

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What's in a word? The discursive construction of 'creativity'

This work begins with the idea that creativity is a problematic concept generally and in education particularly. I argue that it is necessary to shed a belief in an 'essence' of creativity in order to understand how knowledge about creativity is produced.

In a review of different approaches to creativity I identify the ways in which 'truth effects' are produced in scientific and popular texts. Of particular interest here are approaches and assumptions (expressed through language and operations) in the domains of psychology, education and the arts.

A post structuralist analytical methodology, drawing particularly on Foucault's work, is justified in relation to the significance of concepts such as discourse, ideology, rhetoric and myth which, I argue, are crucial in understanding how creativity is made meaningful.

The primary analysis is of key documents from the last decade which have sought to inform education policy on creativity: *All our futures* (NACCCE 1999); *Creativity: Find it, promote it* (QCA 2004); *Nurturing creativity in young people* (Roberts 2006); *Learning: Creative approaches that raise standards* (Ofsted 2010a). Attention is given to the discursive processes of authorising particular models of creativity in these documents, the ways in which tensions and contradictions are dealt with and the implications for 'creativity' in education.

An explicitly reflective mode is adopted where appropriate, in order to highlight my epistemological development during the course of the research. This takes the form of 'interruptions' between chapters.

I argue, ultimately, that there is a case for only operating with the term 'creativity' in a reflexive, meta-discursive way and that this is a particular necessity in education.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This work was made possible with a full-time bursary from the Centre for Excellence in Media Practice in the Media School at Bournemouth University, and I am enormously grateful to the Centre for affording me the time and space to pursue an analysis of the theme of creativity without any imposition of conditions or restrictions.

Particular thanks go to my supervisors Dr Jenny Moon and Professor Stephen Heppell whose unfailing encouragement, interest and support enabled me to maintain my commitment to the conceptual wrestling, and to my colleagues in CEMP and the Media School, especially Richard Berger, Jon Wardle, Jim Pope, Shaun Kimber, and Bronwen Thomas, who have all, in their own way, contributed to my thinking.

Thanks also to the Bournemouth University Graduate School for its excellent Postgraduate Researcher Development Programme, from which I have undoubtedly benefited.

I would also like to express my gratitude to colleagues from other institutions who have been generous with their time and advice: Jane Quinn, Lizzie Crump, Jeffrey Goodwin, Nick Mahon, Kirsten Hardie, Tzu-Bin Lin, Silke Lange, Pete Fraser, Julian McDougall, Dave Trotman, Paul Kleiman and, particularly, Martin Barker.

Finally, I have to thank Helen for her patience, kindness and understanding during the many long dark nights of the soul. Apologies for ruining the word 'creativity' for her.

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1 Starting points

1.1 Introduction

Given that writers in the field of cultural studies often cite one of Raymond Williams' definitions from *Keywords* before analysing a concept, it may be too much of a cliché to begin by quoting him here but, nevertheless, Williams sums up some of the problems with the concept of creativity when he tells us that:

The word puts a necessary stress on originality and innovation, and when we remember the history we can see that these are not trivial claims. Indeed we try to clarify this by distinguishing between innovation and novelty, though novelty has both serious and trivial senses. The difficulty arises when a word once intended, and often still intended, to embody a high and serious claim, becomes so conventional, as a description of certain general kinds of activity, that it is applied to practices for which, in the absence of the convention, nobody would think of making such claims. Thus any imitative or stereotyped literary work can be called, by convention, creative writing, and advertising copywriters officially describe themselves as creative. (Williams 1976, p.74)

This difficulty is evident today in all discourses which contain (or, as I would suggest, *produce*) creativity; the importance of novelty/innovation, the determination of 'value' and the relationship between the descriptive term and the nature of the activities categorised thus. It is a central contention of this research that 'creativity' is not, and cannot be, merely a descriptive term because it is a *concept* and, therefore, when it is applied and used it is always implicitly theorised. A key research question for me then is

- How is creativity implicitly theorised?

In order to answer this question it is necessary to identify some contexts and examples in which this implicit theorisation might be teased out and made

explicit. It is also necessary to choose and implement an appropriate methodology which will make this possible – a methodology which is sensitive to the specificities of enunciation and signification.

1.2 A problematic concept

What is really intriguing about creativity as a concept, particularly within education, is that it is able to attach itself to different interests with a high degree of promiscuity; it is simultaneously bereft of and rich in meaning, and has a polymorphous quality which makes it impossible to pin down. (In the context of post structuralism this is, arguably true of all words, but I would argue that there is a qualitative difference between the respective stability of the signifiers 'creativity' and, say, 'cat'). Yet, despite its instability there are many documents and practices which claim to have secured the term for the purposes of, promoting, implementing or assessing it.

Creativity is a concept with a history, but it tends to be used in an a-historical way, as if it has the status of something universal and transcendental like 'good', 'evil' and 'love'. It is this implicit disavowal of its dependence upon specific cultural and historical conditions for its meaning(s) that constitutes some of the implicit theorising of creativity. Even Williams' etymological definition above, although it situates the term historically, betrays an attachment to an essential notion of creativity ("to embody a high and serious claim") and, in doing so, presents a history of dilution, dispersal and abuse of, what is for Williams, a valuable concept. The implicit 'theory' here is that creativity does not need to be theorised. In his discussion of Nietzsche's genealogy Foucault endorses a rejection of such essentialism:

Why does Nietzsche challenge the pursuit of the origin...? First, because it is an attempt to capture the exact essence of things, their purest possibilities, and their carefully protected identities, because this search assumes the existence of immobile forms that precede the external world of accident and succession. (Foucault 1977b, p.142)

A comprehensive history – a ‘genealogy’ to use Foucault’s term – of the development of the concept of creativity would be impossible here, but it will be possible to identify some moments and discursive formations where it is made visible in particular ways and in addition to account for the ways in which it is made meaningful. The value of such work, at least in an educational context, is that it will constitute grounds for treating the term with a greater degree of caution and understanding when it is used as a learning outcome, an assessment term or a course title. This approach, of course, runs the risk of becoming stuck in a nihilistic mire of postmodernism and I need to make it clear from the outset that I do not believe in ‘creativity’. This is a kind of nihilism, in that I begin with the idea that there is no ‘thing’ there. However, as with other forms of belief, faith in creativity produces real effects – academic research, assessment criteria and policy, for example - and it is the production of these real effects that I am interested in.

1.3 Comparable concepts

Creativity is not unique in being a common sense concept which is problematic when it is pressed into service in a technological or operational context. A key concept for me in providing a comparative case is that of violence, because violence can be seen to operate conceptually in similar ways; it exists as a common sense concept – ‘we all know it when we see it’ – and has also been the subject of extensive social and psychological research. And the research, in both cases, tends to posit a particular definition, categorise examples on the basis of this definition and then establish causes through empirical work. Like the literature on violence, creativity literature covers a wide range of very different behaviours, activities and outcomes and argues that they all have something in common.

In this sense, much work on creativity, like much work on media effects, is necessarily ‘backwards’; in other words, it identifies a phenomenon (e.g. the ‘creative act’) and then works in reverse to explain the conditions necessary to produce this phenomenon. The problem here is very similar to the problem identified by both David Gauntlett (2001) and Martin Barker (2004) in relation to the category ‘violence’. Gauntlett, for example, argues that the

media effects model inadequately defines its own objects of study – for example, very mild and very strong representations of violence would be bundled together as ‘violence’, as would the physical breaking of objects to achieve positive goals within the narrative. (Gauntlet 2007, p.5)

Similarly Barker argues that

‘violence’ is not an object which researchers have discovered, in the way that *Australopithecus* was discovered. ‘Violence’ is an arbitrary re-labeling of behaviours, and then also of representations of those behaviours. (Barker 2004, p.57)

And Schlesinger, considering the methodological implications of defining violence, offers an insight which, if transferred to ‘creativity’, has the potential to undermine every proposition in each of the documents which constitute the primary analysis in this thesis:

For to define ‘violence’ is not by any means to offer a protocol for its study and analysis. We might agree on a definition but still disagree about the details of subsequent categorization and what is to count as an adequate method for assembling evidence. (Schlesinger 1991, p.7)

My argument then, is that the category ‘creativity’ is as arbitrary as the category ‘violence’, encompassing activities as diverse as artistic production, business management and solving mathematical problems. Janet Wolff identifies similar issues with the universalising claims of ‘aesthetics’:

...the task of discovering the essential common feature of a Beethoven quartet, *Middlemarch*, Vermeer’s *Music Lesson* and Chartres Cathedral...now appears as both ideological and misguided, for why should they have anything at all in common? By a series of historical events and accidents, they have been taken to epitomise the received canons of the arts...and assessed in accordance with certain, socially agreed criteria of excellence. (Wolff 1983, p.17)

Barker's challenge to common sense about violence is an explicitly political project – he asserts that the construction of the category

...excludes many actually harmful behaviours by those in power and authority. It turns these into the “solutions” to those it doesn't like. And it dismisses, before they can even be posed, explanations of the re-labeled behaviours in terms of various kinds of conflict. (Barker 2004, p. 57)

My challenge to common sense about creativity cannot claim to have equal engagement with issues of social justice, but at a time when there is enormous intellectual, financial and emotional investment in 'creative' projects, it feels as if some kind of intervention is necessary. This intervention is, perhaps, analogous to Terry Eagleton's engagement with the concept of 'culture' in which he argues that “we are trapped at the moment between disablingly wide and discomfortingly rigid notions of culture, and that our most urgent need in this area is to move beyond both.” (Eagleton 2000, p.32) I would argue that we have a similarly urgent need to move beyond equally problematic notions of creativity and that it is necessary to investigate how the term is produced and understood in order to make sense of the practical and ideological implications of this.

1.4 The rhetorics of creativity

A key influence on this work (as will become apparent from the frequency with which it is cited) is Banaji et al.'s *The Rhetorics of Creativity*, in which the authors argue that

the idea of creativity is constructed as a series of rhetorics: claims emerging from the contexts of academia, research, policy and practice. The purpose of such an approach is to help educators and practitioners to see more clearly how such constructions work, what claims are being made, and how they might locate themselves in relation to these rhetorics. (Banaji et al. 2006, p.4)

I am clearly indebted to this formulation and I also try to maintain a degree of fidelity to the authors' aims, in order to avoid sliding into nihilism and thus

damning everything done in the name of creativity. But although I see my work as responding to some of the prompts set out in this document (by examining in detail the rhetoric of creativity in policy documents, for example), I would also like to resist, or even reject, some of the questions with which it concludes. For example:

Is creativity an internal cognitive function, or is it an external social and cultural phenomenon? (Banaji et al. 2006, p.59)

This question, although it is succeeded by sub-questions which include references to cultural production, seems to be dependent upon an ontological premise of creativity, that 'it' exists, that there is a real phenomenon which we call creativity. There is a similar sense of commitment to an essence of creativity here:

Is creativity a pervasive, ubiquitous feature of human activity, or a special faculty, either reserved for particular groups, individuals, or particular domains of activity, in particular artistic activity? (Banaji et al. 2006, p.59)

These questions are, of course, designed to provoke debate and to destabilise common sense about creativity and I acknowledge that, in the context of this document, there is a necessity for the authors to retain the utility of the term, whilst questioning its value. My contribution to this debate, my attempt to respond to the provocations in this document, is to move beyond its perspectivalism and strike a more radical pose – to argue that there is no essence of 'creativity' and, therefore, to ask what it is or how it is brought to being is to give it *a priori* status. This is, in itself, a rhetorical stance, and a dangerously philosophical one for a non-philosopher, but just as atheists might call for proof of God before actions are carried out in His name, I would argue that the evidence for creativity has been adduced by 'believers' who have designed procedures and tools which have (inevitably) revealed what they have sought. Therefore, it is not unreasonable to begin from a position of non-belief, and to do so constitutes a move which is both ironic and appropriate given the

rhetoric of faith and spirit which obtains in much writing about creativity. Like Foucault, I am sceptical about this

notion of 'spirit', which enables us to establish between the simultaneous or successive phenomena of a given period a community of meanings, symbolic links, an interplay of resemblance and reflexion, or which allows the sovereignty of collective consciousness to emerge as the principle of unity and explanation. (Foucault 2002b, p.24)

The rhetoric of faith, which is arguably at odds with the discourse of science, yet can often be identified within it, is highlighted by the language used by those who seek to challenge the orthodoxy, such as Kleiman (2007) who suggests that he is now "agnostic" in relation to creativity and Wagner (2009) who criticises the "almost messianic formulation" of the word 'creativity'.

My further contribution to this debate is to develop the application of Banaji et al.'s use of the term rhetoric in order to encompass the idea of discourse. The reason for this is that rhetoric retains the notion of representation and agency (I discuss this further in subsequent chapters) whereas discourse, without slipping into philosophical idealism, provides a way of understanding knowledge production and 'truth effects'. The work (albeit, selectively used) of Foucault has been of particular importance here in providing support for a position which seeks to challenge certainties and identify the ways in which concepts are mobilised within particular historical periods. I argue later that Banaji et al. often use the term rhetoric in a way which is congruent with a Foucaultian¹ version of discourse (although they also explicitly state that their "rhetoric" is a "subset of

¹ I have used the adjective 'Foucaultian' as opposed to the (perhaps) more familiar 'Foucauldian' throughout this thesis. One reason is that this is the term used by the Foucault scholars I find most convincing and consistent – Kendall and Wickham (1999; 2006) – and it also seems to be the preferred term in the journal *Foucault Studies*. Another, although more tenuous, reason involves a reference to phonetics; the 'voiceless retroflex plosive', 't', constitutes an interruption in the word, which is eased by the alternative, voiced plosive 'd'. This awkwardness in enunciation, this disruption can, arguably, be seen as a way of drawing attention to the reduction of a complex body of work into a simple adjective.

discourse”) which is why I think it is worth developing in this way. At one point, for example, the authors mention the “discursive construction of creativity” (Banaji et al. 2006, p.24) – a conceptual formulation which is absolutely at the heart of this research.

1.5 Ideology and post-modernity

I am also influenced by a postmodern conception of ideology which argues that ‘false consciousness’ becomes ‘real’ through its implementation in lived experience. The application here, although almost certainly a gross simplification, would be that a particular concept of creativity might be contrary to one’s own experience, but through its implementation it acquires the status of truth and reality. Žižek explains the power of such an ideological ‘hold’ in terms of fantasy and fetishisation and argues that:

An ideology is really ‘holding us’ only when we do not feel any opposition between it and reality – that is, when the ideology succeeds in determining the mode of our everyday experience of reality itself. (Žižek 1989, p.49)

In the context of creativity, this might mean that it is perfectly possible to have questions and doubts about creativity, to acknowledge that there are different perspectives, yet continue to *feel* that there is something about creativity which is ineffable. I argue that this ‘ineffability’ is fundamentally ideological and that it affords creativity a particular value within a discursive economy; in other words creativity’s mobilisation within networks of power and knowledge gives it, in different contexts, particular functions and positions in hierarchies. Judith Williamson argues for a similar theoretical position in relation to advertising:

As a teenager, reading both Karl Marx and ‘Honey’ magazine, I couldn’t reconcile what I knew with what I felt. This is the root of ideology, I believe. I know I was being ‘exploited’, but it was a fact that I was attracted. Feelings (ideology), lag behind knowledge (science). We can learn from their clash. We move forward as the revolutionary becomes obvious. (Williamson 1978, p.9)

Unlike Williamson, I am not proposing a full scale 'revolution' and I cannot concur with her equation of knowledge with science, or, indeed, her opposition between science and ideology, but I am proposing a modest revolt against the ways in which creativity has been put to work ideologically, hegemonically and rhetorically. This work is, at least, an assault on policy initiatives which are built around something which cannot be adequately defined and, in addition, an attempt to maintain some kind of critical opposition to a concept which has been formed uncritically. I am not sure whether or not I can claim that there is a constituency being 'exploited' by creativity, although, arguably, the modelling of creativity as something which must be purposeful and productive could be seen as depriving young people of 'creativity' as, for example, unstructured play. Nevertheless, the elision of a romantic notion of freedom and an administrative notion of evidence-based assessment and inspection in the documents under scrutiny in this research indicates that there is significant ideological activity here and that some kind of intervention is necessary.

1.6 Research design

As I have indicated above, creativity is a promiscuous term used in many different contexts and would sustain (and has sustained) myriad research projects. Some of the key objects of study for this research are prosaic – four UK education policy and advisory documents – but, as I comment below, it has proved necessary, in order to make some progress with analysing the signifying properties of 'creativity', to seize instances of its explicit manifestations in discourse. In these four documents under scrutiny I suggest that creativity is reified, mobilised, operationalised and delimited and, I argue, that an analysis of the rhetorical strategies, ideological traces and discursive modulations is a necessary initial step in a larger project to destabilise 'creativity'.

The design of this research emerged from a series of early failures on my part to identify ways in which sense might be made of creativity. My initial aim was to explore processes of identifying and assessing creativity, but I soon became convinced that such judgements were inevitably constituted by and constitutive of discourse and, as a consequence, the focus shifted to an examination of the production of creativity as a concept, rather than ways of accounting for it as a

phenomenon. Having committed to this position, it was necessary to identify contexts and examples in which this kind of discursive work could be analysed. Personal interests and enthusiasms drew me to areas such as screenwriting and advertising, and although it would have been possible to analyse the construction of creativity in these domains, I was not convinced by the value of such work. It became apparent to me that in education, at all levels, the stakes were higher, the dependence upon evidence and accountability greater and that there was, as Burnard puts it:

...an unprecedented resurgence of activity in the field of creativity in education as an area of scholarship, as a key element of the shifting policy context, and official agenda in relation to efforts to improve our schools. (Burnard 2006, p.313)

As I argue later, the commitment in UK education to a notion of 'transformation' has led to an uncritical and unproblematic embrace of the concept of creativity (the rhetoric of which promises 'transformation'), regardless of relatively minor disagreements over how it can be nurtured and realised. This embrace has been reinforced and fuelled by policy and advisory documents, which is why my research has focused on four key documents from the past ten years. Policy, a word which shares a lineage with 'policing', is where we can find the production of boundaries and limits, the assertion of definitions and the prescriptions of practice. The term 'policy' is itself not without variations in definition and use; Hogwood and Gunn, for example, highlight ten different uses of it (Hogwood and Gunn 1984, pp.13-19), but they acknowledge that

If forced to indicate a priority, however, we would have to say that in our eyes the defining characteristic of policy analysis, as well as its novelty and value, lies in its prescriptive aspect. (Hogwood and Gunn 1984, p.3)

Their recognition of the importance of analysing the *prescriptive* function of policy texts underpins my own choice of objects of study in this research; the four key documents I have selected are key examples of the construction of creativity in education, because they:

- Are unified by an inter-referential relationship
- Reify creativity in order to make it implementable in education
- Represent a move of power in the validation/invalidation of particular definitions and evidence
- Draw upon a relationship with the government in order to authorise such moves of power
- Exhibit a gradual shift from 'diagnosis' of creativity to 'prescription'
- Are characterised by contradictions and fractures

I argue that this kind of analysis, although it represents merely a strand of a possible 'Foucaultian genealogy', is necessary before the production of creativity is investigated within specific local contexts, perhaps in the form of ethnographic work utilising approaches drawn from Actor Network Theory (e.g. Mol 2003; Dugdale 1999).

1.7 Research questions

As indicated above I have some key questions that this research has been designed to answer:

- How is creativity implicitly theorised?
- How is creativity explicitly theorised?
- What can an analysis of key examples, such as educational policy documents, reveal about this theorisation?
- To what extent can creativity be demonstrated to be a social, rhetorical and discursive construction?
- What are the implications for research, policy and practice of such a demonstration?

These questions underpin the work of this thesis, including the analysis of popular and academic constructions of the concept. The systematic nature of the enquiry will be spelled out more clearly in the section on theory and method, but it is worth noting here that the analytical approach to the examples under scrutiny has been wholly determined by these questions, and the examples themselves have been chosen because they seem to offer significant opportunities to identify the formation and transformation of the concept.

1.8 The structure of the thesis

This outline of the thesis provides a brief overview and rationale for each chapter. It should also demonstrate the logical progression from each discussion to the next.

1.8.1 APPROACHES TO CREATIVITY

I begin with an overview of creativity literature or, to be more accurate, a more or less representative sample of different kinds of thinking about creativity. I approach these examples with the same kind of methodological framework that I use for the primary analysis of policy and advisory documents, in that I highlight rhetorical features, ideological assumptions and evidence of discursive formation. This chapter encompasses a range of approaches to creativity which include scientific, popular and educational expressions of knowledge and implementation, and I make any connections between them explicit.

The exploration of such examples of thinking about creativity is a key stage in my selection of educational documents to analyse in more detail in a later chapter; it is through the discussion of these examples that my own thinking about creativity becomes more focused and I acquire a sense of what might be at stake and of significance in official formulations of the term.

1.8.2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK (RHETORIC, DISCOURSE AND IDEOLOGY)

I move on to discuss explicitly these three conceptual terms – rhetoric, discourse and ideology – in order to draw attention to potential issues, problems and contradictions in their use. This provides a necessary preliminary discussion before I show how these terms can be mobilised methodologically.

I argue that it is necessary to retain all of these terms for the purposes of this research, but suggest that the concept of discourse is paramount. I also deal with some of the implications of using these terms as ‘count nouns’ and explain why they may be most useful when referring to broader conceptual terrain.

1.8.3 THE PRACTICE OF THEORY (METHODOLOGY)

In the 'methodology chapter' I rationalise a 'Foucaultian' approach to the analysis of documentary evidence. There are problems with using Foucault's methods, as Kendall and Wickham acknowledge, commenting on the various qualitative research methodologies which have sought inspiration from his work, particularly Critical Discourse Analysis:

This strategic use of Foucault stems from a combination of the extreme difficulty of deriving a clear methodological guide from Foucault's work (hence his 'relegation' to theoretical inspiration, as opposed to direct methodological use) and the attractiveness of Foucault's diagnosis of modernity (a diagnosis that chimes with a long tradition of critical sociologies). (Kendall and Wickham 2006, p.2)

In this chapter I discuss my use of Foucault in more detail and acknowledge that I too may be merely using his work as 'inspiration', to bolster a position which seems counter-intuitive and seek validation for a critical strategy which could be seen as obstinate and perverse. But I try to adopt the principles advocated by Kendall and Wickham in their earlier work on Foucault's methods (1999) and, when more practical tools are needed I also draw upon the Critical Discourse Analysis advocated by Fairclough (1989; 1995; 2003). I acknowledge that, given my embrace of some of Foucault's methods, that my attempt in the review of different approaches to creativity to construct a 'taxonomy of discourses' probably exemplifies methodological infidelity and I continue to grapple with some of the contradictions and conflicts; indeed the notion of fidelity is a recurring theme for me, which is probably appropriate given my focus on the production of 'truth' (or, to be more precise, the production of 'truth effects').

1.8.4 ANALYSIS OF EXAMPLES

The next four chapters discuss, respectively, the documents which are the focus of the primary research. These are:

All Our Futures: Creativity, Culture and Education (National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education 1999)

Creativity: Find it, Promote it (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority 2004)

Nurturing Creativity in Young People: A Report to Government to Inform Future Policy (Roberts 2006)

Learning: Creative Approaches that Raise Standards (Ofsted 2010a)

My project in this research is a kind of deconstructionist one, in that I am seeking to reveal how creativity is best understood, even in those places where it appears to be most explicitly fixed (or perhaps it is more accurate to say, *especially* in those places where it appears to be most explicitly fixed) as rhetorical play of signification – as unstable and contingent; Richard Rorty suggests that “philosophy is best seen as a kind of writing” (Rorty 1978, p.143) and, by the same token, I might argue that creativity is also best seen as a kind of ‘writing’. By this I mean that the concept of creativity is constituted through the activation of particular tropes which make sense of, and mobilise, a whole range of disparate, real activities and processes. Some of these activities and processes are internal and cognitive, some are external and practical, but in different contexts - scientific, pedagogic, spiritual and artistic for example – they are all nominated as ‘creative’, and as a result of this nominalisation these processes and activities become meaningful, valuable, connected and useful or *applicable*. So can policy also be read in this way? Its discursive features can be remarkably anodyne – generally there tends to be a minimal use of metaphor, an avoidance of hyperbole (although this is less true in the advisory documents analysed), an air of responsibility which resists analysis. But it is this very resistance which means that we should approach it with the tools of rhetorical analysis; policy might be fruitfully read not merely in terms of what it says, but in terms of how it says it. Policy is not neutral, despite its attempts to create a transparency between sign and reality. By attending to the sign, we can see how reality is being constructed, rather than represented. And because creativity is an abstract noun, the need for policy and advisory documents to pin it down and fix it to particular manifestations or reifications leads, inevitably, to contradictions and fractures. It is the nature of these documents to be assertive, to produce ‘truth effects’ or ‘truth values’ (cf. Williamson 1994), but the empirical, positivist paradigm, despite strenuous efforts, cannot support such

claims made of an abstract noun, hence the use of the rhetorical, poetic mode which is evident in these documents.

I argue that the concept of creativity in these four documents undergoes a transformation from something inchoate to something defined by a set of prescribed practices, and that this transformation is not determined by the inexorable process of science and technology which uncovers the 'truth', but by the exigencies of regulatory bodies which require something amenable to administration and inspection.

1.8.5 CONCLUSIONS

Here I draw together some of the key strands produced by both the narrowly focused analysis of policy and advisory documents, and the more widely ranging examination of creativity, and consider how the research as a whole might have some value and potential for some form of application. I suggest, cautiously, that I may have provided sufficient grounds for undermining the use of 'creativity' in education and for insisting that whenever it is used the rhetoric is questioned and the implicit theorising is made explicit.

I advocate, generally, interventions in discussions about creativity in the form of meta-discursivity and argue that these should take place in the domains of research, policy and practice.

1.8.6 REFLECTIVE INTERRUPTIONS

The 'grappling' I discuss in 1.8.3 is demonstrated particularly in the reflective 'interruptions' throughout the text. These represent an attempt to introduce a meta-cognitive voice into this work, the value of which is to:

- Chart my own epistemological development in this work
- Make more explicit the reasons for adopting particular methodologies and pursuing particular lines of enquiry
- Introduce an emotional element into the work
- Create variations in tone; this is partly a rationalisation on aesthetic grounds, but also it constitutes an attempt, however clumsy, to make

more permeable those barriers between institutional categories, such as 'analysis', 'autobiography', 'criticism' and 'philosophy'.

These interruptions provide a commentary on and an addition to the primary 'voice' in this research and, although it could be argued that they are dependent upon a notion of the 'self' which is otherwise challenged in this work, they attempt to reveal how that self is divided, multiple and discursively produced. At best, they constitute evidence of internal dialogue which, for Falzon, is a clearly indicated and positive direction after a Foucaultian "questioning of the transcendental subject". (Falzon 1998, p.5)

Interruption 1: Reflecting on reflection

In traditional thinking, research is seen as an impersonal venture in which the contaminating effects of individual feeling and circumstances are scrupulously eliminated by the use of proper scientific methods. Impersonality is seen as defining the character not just of the researcher's conduct but also of the various relationships which research involves... What is suggested here is not merely that real research is indelibly personal but that its personal character, thoughtfully worked through and honestly set at issue, represents its greatest strength.' (Salmon 1992, pp.20-21)

It has been a challenge for me to adopt this reflective mode of writing about my research; despite my resistance to positivistic, scientific approaches to human behaviour I know that I am tempted to offer analysis of my objects of study as if it were 'pure, logical critique'. But given that my purported aim in this research into creativity is to highlight tensions, to tease out contradictions and to assess implications it would be at best ironic, and at worst negligent, if I did not apply the same standards to my own work. I will use these reflective interruptions to comment on aspects of my thinking about creativity and aspects of the research process (sometimes these are the same thing).

Foucault's work is a significant presence in this thesis and it is possible to introduce him into these interruptions too; responding to a question about the relationship between his "kind of philosophy and the arts in general", he says:

...For me, intellectual work is related to what you could call "aestheticism", meaning transforming yourself... I know that knowledge can transform us, that truth is not only a way of deciphering the world... but that if I know the truth I will be changed... This transformation of one's self by one's own knowledge is, I think, something rather close to the aesthetic experience. Why should a painter work if he is not transformed by his own painting? (Foucault 2000b, pp.130-131)

These reflective interruptions constitute an attempt to register this kind of transformation, to consider how my thinking has developed, how I continue to find particular obstacles insurmountable and how I reach accommodations with others.

2 Approaches to Creativity

2.1 Introduction

This section constitutes a kind of 'literature review', or perhaps a 'conceptual review'. My aim here is to cover some of the most significant approaches to or versions of 'creativity' via a taxonomical/discursive strategy. In other words, what I want to do here is create some categories of statements about, and concepts of, creativity and in doing so encompass a representative, but necessarily selective, amount of relevant literature, both academic and popular. This strategy for reviewing is consistent with my analytical approach to the subject, which seeks to reveal the significance of particular discursive formations of creativity, rather than to discover a notional essence or to suggest how it might be implemented. The resulting 'review' will, therefore, be organised conceptually and will make connections between statements about creativity which occur in disparate domains. The advantage of this is that it obviates the need for several 'literature reviews', but enables sense to be made and coherence to be identified between literature and other evidence from psychology, neuroscience, popular culture, the arts and so on. The justification for this is also that, despite, what I call later, the 'technologisation of creativity', its status in policy and advisory documents is often underpinned by the same kinds of common sense that we can identify in non-scientific, non-educational and non-technological contexts. In the final section I draw together some of these strands in a review of education-specific approaches that relate to creativity.

2.2 A historiography of creativity?

I am continually negotiating with the notion that this chapter exemplifies historiographical work, in that it assesses how particular 'stories' about creativity have been constructed. Regarding historiography, Bentley argues:

The task lies not in providing an original reading or interpretation of any single writer or school but instead to seek freshness of viewpoint by

offering a synthetic account which searches for connection and comparison and which is not afraid to look beyond the subject of history for explanation of what historians do and how they think. (Bentley 1999, p.viii)

The analogy is not a direct one, but my aim here, albeit in relation to work about creativity, is similar; I am trying to offer a synthetic account of what creativity researchers, advocates, users and critics do and how they think and operate. My organising principle is not a historical one, but a thematic or conceptual one – hence the ‘synthesis’.

However, I am no historian and the most I could claim to be offering here, in this context at least, is a very selective, discontinuous, recent history of ideas about creativity. This may be ‘Foucaultian’, but unlike Foucault I am avoiding making any ‘epochal claims’ on the basis of my findings; the conclusions that I draw from the diverse material in this chapter, and the more narrowly circumscribed collection of educational documents in a later chapter, could well be woven into various possible histories, but that is not my aim here. By avoiding such universalising claims perhaps I can also avoid incurring the kind of criticism which Merquior levels at Foucault when he asks:

...whatever kind of historiography he was up to – the historian’s one, or any other – Foucault was the first to claim that the evidence was on his side. Therefore, we can hardly exempt his historical analysis from the standard assessment of such studies. Hence our right to ask: are his interpretations borne out by the record, or are they too strained or too fanciful? Now while some of them are truly suggestive and even cast a genuinely new light on the historical evidence, many others are...just tall orders largely unsupported by the facts. (Merquior 1985, p.144)

2.3 Categorising creativity

Before beginning this work it is necessary to discuss how a set of categories of creativity or, perhaps, a taxonomy of creativity discourses (although, as I point out later, I am wary of using ‘discourse’ as a ‘count noun’) might be created.

Firstly it is necessary to explain how a discourse might be identified and to relate this to rhetorical and ideological dimensions. There is an excellent model for this approach in *The Rhetorics of Creativity: A Review of the Literature* (Banaji et al. 2006) in which the authors explain:

By rhetorics we mean in this context a subset of discourse, characterised by specific properties:

- They are highly elaborated structures, drawing on distinctive traditions of philosophical, educational, political and psychological thought
- They are organised to persuade as a form of ‘communicative action’ (Habermas, 1984), seeking to bring about consensus, leading in some cases to intervention in specific contexts of practice
- They produce discursive frameworks such as key terms and taxonomies which can be learnt by practitioners who either need them or are obliged to use them. In this way they feed back into more general ‘popular’ discourses of creativity. (Banaji et al. 2006, p.5)

A key question in relation to this work is why the authors have opted to use ‘rhetorics’ rather than ‘discourses’ as the defining mode of expression. Perhaps it represents a desire to distance themselves from ‘common sense’ or lay uses of the term to refer, with no critical criteria, to different types of speech about things. The statement that ‘by rhetorics we mean...a subset of discourse, characterised by specific properties’ seems to reinforce this, as does the comment on methodology which states the hypothesis that

organised, conscious, structured models of creativity, whether they emerge from policy imperatives, philosophical traditions or empirical research, are always mobilised, or ready to mobilised, in the interests of intervention in practice or policy and can be termed rhetorics as distinct from discourses. (Banaji et al. 2006, p.6)

Whilst I would concur that many statements about creativity are certainly rhetorical, I believe that it is also possible to identify statements (and clusters of

statements) which are not designed primarily to persuade (which implies intention), but which instead produce ways of thinking and acting in relation to creativity about which we do not need to be convinced – which operate as ‘common sense’. A Foucaultian approach to discourse, according to Kendall and Wickham, begins by “the recognition of a discourse as a corpus of ‘statements’ whose organisation is regular and systematic” (Kendall and Wickham 1999, p.42) and entails the recognition that “statements involve ‘things’ as well as ‘words’”. They counsel that “The crucial thing here is to avoid the idea that [discourse] is a purely linguistic term (as in most incarnations of ‘discourse analysis’).” (Kendall and Wickham 1999, p.35) To illustrate how this strategy might be more useful we could look, for example, at the way in which behavioural psychology produces creativity discursively, not only through its language and arguments expressed in academic papers, but through the tools which it has devised in order to identify the object of study, such as psychometric tests, and the administration of these tests in laboratory conditions. These processes are implicated in the language and arguments, and they also inform the language and arguments. Consequently I prefer the term discourse in its Foucaultian colours, in that it frees us from a specifically linguistic focus, although, regarding speech, writing and apparent intention, I will, like Banaji et al., inevitably, refer to rhetorical features.

Gibson also provides a valuable analysis of statements about creativity which, unlike Banaji et al., he refers to as ‘discourses’ – “...a somewhat eclectic selection of ten discourses that all appeal to creativity to sustain their positions” (Gibson 2005, p.149), although his emphasis on language and the absence of an explicitly Foucaultian context for the term suggest that, in this case, ‘rhetorics’ might have been the more useful term. The example highlights the potential problems with using the term ‘discourse’ – how one can easily slip into using it merely to refer to a disciplinary or institutional category of communication (I discuss these issues more fully later). It is possible that my aim here of producing a set of working categories, or a ‘taxonomy of discourses’ may even betray a lack of fidelity to a Foucaultian project in that it seeks to produce knowledge in a reductive, expedient form, given its roots in scientific classification and the identification of essential common qualities between

objects (cf. Popper 2002). The concept of discourse, although it can be simplified as a “systematic body of knowledge” (Powers 2007, p.18), can seem as problematic in its own way as, ironically, the concept of creativity. But perhaps, if I operate with the term critically and reflexively it may be possible to hang onto it; the word ‘discursive’ has a relationship with the word ‘ideological’, but is freed from the latter’s connotations of Marxian theory and its association with ‘false consciousness’. *Discursive* qualities of objects and actions refer to the networked, relative nature of these things, which make them meaningful and give them agency, but ‘discursive’ qualities do not necessarily indicate a predetermined place within a coherent order (unlike ‘ideological’ qualities for, say, Althusser (1977) and Bourdieu (1992; 1993; 2010)). So showing how creativity becomes discursively active as a concept entails locating it within particular contexts and identifying how these contexts create the conditions for creativity to be manifested in a particular way. And discourse, as a concept, enables us to see the relationships between rhetorical enunciation and power; power, that is, as a force by which meaning is asserted – through language, institutions and operations – not necessarily power as a notional monolithic, repressive force.

In summary then, what follows is a series of categories – a taxonomy of *discourses* (despite my unease around the term as a ‘count noun’) rather than *rhetorics*, but I acknowledge that sometimes the difference between them will not be significant and that my process of identification may sometimes be clumsy. I have acknowledged above that the notion of the category is inherently problematic, so I need to be explicit about the fact that this review is a work of construction, rather than mere registration and that I am actively involved in producing and developing particular categories by arguing implicitly and explicitly that they represent particular ways of *thinking* about creativity.

The nine categories used by Banaji et al. (2006), in their review of creativity literature pertaining to education, provide a valuable starting point and include: ‘creative genius’; ‘democratic and political creativity’; ‘ubiquitous creativity’; ‘creativity as a social good’; ‘creativity as economic imperative’; ‘play and creativity’; ‘creativity and cognition’; ‘the creative affordances of technology’; ‘the

Creative Classroom'. I would like to develop some of these categories and introduce some of my own.

2.4 Categories of creativity

The term creativity is used in a variety of ways and contexts; the quotidian, 'common sense' usage can refer to almost anything – sometimes it is a synonym for 'artistic', sometimes it refers to a kind of problem solving, but always it signifies *difference* from the norm. Some examples of this will be discussed later. The psychological approach attempts to pin it down as a cognitive function, whereas in the artistic context creativity is invoked as mystifying and alchemical. When it is invoked in popular contexts it can signify all or some of these qualities – usually aligning it with qualities of inventiveness, originality and artistry.

Albert and Runco, in their history of research into creativity, suggest that concepts of creativity emerged from developments in secular, scientific thought and that

...the debates through the eighteenth century...eventually came to four fundamental acceptable distinctions, which were to become the bedrock of our present-day ideas about creativity: (a) Genius was divorced from the supernatural; (b) genius, although exceptional, was a potential in every individual' (c) talent and genius were to be distinguished from one another; and (d) their potential and exercise depend upon the political atmosphere at the time. (Albert and Runco 1999, p.22)

This suggests that there was, and continues to be, a degree of coherence in conceptions of creativity, but even in the field of psychology, according to Kahl et al.'s bibliometric study, "approaches to and definitions of creativity remain highly divergent." (Kahl et al. 2009, p.1) Beyond this academic domain conceptions of creativity are even more diverse, although some common themes and discursive features emerge and are persistent. Despite Albert and Runco's assertion above that genius was "divorced from the supernatural", for example, I would argue that rhetorical associations with mysticism, faith and

spirit continue to be evident, even in some of the policy and advisory documents discussed later. This kind of engagement with utterances about creativity represents a break from the sort of chronological, teleological story told by Albert and Runco (1999) because it seeks difference, contradiction and 'mess'. Albert and Runco look for historical progress and a gradual, inevitable demystification of creativity, enabling them to conclude that:

Now to close the circle. We have observed over its history that research on creativity is able to progress as science when, at times blind to the next step, it is empirical, as Bacon...told us science should be. (Albert and Runco 1999, p.28)

For Albert and Runco creativity is a scientific problem, the solution towards which we have been working, through the Enlightenment and the period of modernity. An alternative historical approach is offered by Nelson who, with a Foucaultian inflection, argues that creativity should be seen as emerging from specific conditions of possibility suggesting, for example, that

The emergent discourse also needs to be understood as a product of the new system of the arts arising in the eighteenth century, with its now familiar dualities of art/craft, aesthetic/purpose, genius/talent, creative/mechanical... (Nelson 2010, p.66)

Although they may adduce similar material, the respective perspectives of Albert and Runco and Nelson are significantly different; the former seek to show how understanding of creativity became increasingly sophisticated through scientific and philosophical progress, whereas the latter seeks to demonstrate how the concept of creativity has been dependent upon specific historical conditions. It seems like a subtle distinction, but the fundamental difference lies in the respective investments in a notional essence of creativity; I share Nelson's resistance to the notion of such an essence and this underpins my research.

The following review of different approaches is necessarily selective, but provides reasonably extensive coverage by being organised into sections which represent some of the key approaches to creativity. Some approaches focus on origins and processes, some on products and some on reception and interpretation. Some literature has been included if terms such as 'genius', 'art' and 'culture' appear to be used synonymously (or metonymically) with creativity, even if the term itself is not used. It will become apparent that all of the approaches to creativity, with the exception of the sociological concept of attribution, take as a starting point the notion that creativity exists as a trait, a state or a quality and that, therefore, the project becomes to identify its *nature* in order to realise its conditions of production. In this sense creativity research, analysis and commentary are not dissimilar to alchemy; all seek the conditions for recognising and producing 'gold'.

2.4.1 CREATIVITY AS A SPECIALISED FORM OF HUMAN PRODUCTION

This category could equally be called, as Banaji et al. (2006) do, 'creative genius', as it explores the ways in which the persona of the creative individual is constructed. This conception, I would argue, is a familiar one, which underpins many of the 'casual instances' of creativity in the later section of this chapter and which also represents the starting point for much creativity research (for example: Gardner 1993; Gruber and Wallace 1999; Martindale 1999; Houtz et al. 2003; Simonton 1999). Consequently I will illustrate this particular conception through a primary focus on Storr's work which takes the exceptional individual as the *sine qua non* of creativity.

Storr (1972) is explicitly concerned with the motives of creative individuals and, in exploring this, reinforces the idea that creativity is the preserve of 'special' individuals who produce something new, extraordinary and unique:

...there are certainly some people who are gifted at drawing, or who have a particularly lively sense of colour, but who are not impelled to use these talents for anything more exciting than a holiday sketch book or the decoration of a house...in spite of their endowments, they do not express their day-dreams in creative fashion. (Storr 1972, p.50)

For Storr, then, creativity is the sign of elite endeavour and that evidence of this is provided by the production of remarkable, extraordinary work. Storr's work is a detailed analysis of creative impulses and manifestations using an explicitly Freudian framework; it seeks to explain why some people are creative, or driven to be creative:

Creativity is one mode adopted by gifted people of coming to terms with, finding symbolic solutions for, the internal tensions and dissociations from which all human beings suffer in varying degree. The less gifted find other, less obviously creative solutions; but are equally debarred from obtaining the whole of their satisfaction in life from instinctual expression. (Storr 1972, p.252)

Storr's treatment of creativity as symptom (and therapy) will be referred to in a later section, but here it is worth noting that his category of "gifted people" has been produced by enlisting a canon of artists and scientists who have achieved high status. This list includes, for example: Ian Fleming; van Gogh; Conrad; Rossini; Mozart; Schubert; Brahms; Beethoven; Thackeray; Darwin; Chopin; Einstein; Keats; Strindberg; and Baudelaire. These people are self-evidently creative (Storr does not provide any criteria for their inclusion) because of their canonical status, and therefore the questions which seem inevitable and natural are to do with why these people were driven to be creative, rather than in what sense they could be called creative. Implicit here is the notion that these people are creative because they have been recognised as being creative. This is not a sound starting point, philosophically or logically, but it enables Storr to focus on the psychopathology of these individuals. The ensuing shared catalogue of sublimated desires, wish fulfilments and neuroses seems to justify the selection of this group of creative people. It is probably not a conscious rhetorical strategy, but this process of 'working backwards' from a tenuous starting point and the subsequent sense of circular logic seems to be characteristic of writing about creativity; we can certainly find instances of it in some of the education documents analysed later. Having established the psychopathology of the creative individual Storr is able to include a chapter on Einstein without even addressing the shift from arts to science:

To label as schizoid a man so universally admired as Albert Einstein is to court attack from the psychologically naïve. Yet Einstein provides the supreme example of how schizoid detachment can be put to creative use. (Storr 1972, p.85)

Thus the conditions are created for extraordinary people in any field with particular behavioural traits to be categorised as creative. It is a subtle work of classification because, like something involving sleight of hand, our attention is directed elsewhere, but we are left with a picture of the creative person as troubled, male and somehow 'other'.

This is, as Pollock points out, bound up with the notion of the 'genius':

The preoccupation with the individual artist is symptomatic of the work accomplished in art history – the production of an artistic subject for works of art. The subject constructed from the art work is then posited as the exclusive source of meaning...and the effect of this is to remove 'art' from historical or textual analysis by representing it solely as the 'expression' of the creative personality of the artist.' (Pollock 1980, p.59)

As Pollock suggests, what is missing from such accounts of creativity is the function of historical and cultural context in producing the category; creativity within this discourse exists outside and above such prosaic factors and the creative individual has an essential, special quality. Even Csikszentmihalyi's work, in which the importance of the 'field' and 'domain' is acknowledged, is based on 91 interviews with "exceptional individuals" (Csikszentmihalyi 1996, p.12) and he attributes a high degree of homogeneity to the characteristics of creative people:

I would say that the original contribution made by the person is likely to be similar across cultures, while the contribution of the field and the domain will bear the distinctive stamp of the culture in which the creative process takes place. (Csikszentmihalyi 1996, p.405)

Although, unlike Storr, Csikszentmihalyi is sceptical about the application of a Freudian framework to creativity, like Storr he has no problem in identifying creative individuals:

There were three main conditions for selecting respondents: The person had to have made a difference to a major domain of culture – one of the sciences, the arts, business, government or human well-being in general; he or she had to be still actively involved in that domain (or a different one); and he or she had to be at least sixty years old (in a very few cases, when circumstances warranted, we interviewed respondents who were a bit younger). (Csikszentmihalyi 1996, p.12)

This group of living participants does not have the same status as Storr's dead geniuses, nevertheless, some of the names are familiar and reinforce the validity of the list with their familiarity: Stephen Jay Gould; Nadine Gordimer; Oscar Peterson; Wayne Booth; Linus Pauling; Ravi Shankar; and E. O. Wilson. All of the interviewees' names, together with their accomplishments, are listed in an appendix which, with the selection criteria, brings into being a kind of contemporary canon of creative individuals. This, as I shall suggest later in relation to a similar feature of *All Our Futures* (NACCCE 1999), constitutes a discursive operation in which authority is claimed for a certain kind of knowledge and achievement is equated with creativity:

The in-depth analysis of these interviews helps illustrate what creative people are like, how the creative process works, and what conditions encourage or hinder the generation of original ideas. (Csikszentmihalyi 1996, p.12)

This ideologically rich notion that some people are simply 'special' is an enduring one; even Boden (1992; 1999), whose work seeks to demystify creativity through "computational psychology" reinforces the ideology of the extraordinary individual – here with regard to "motivation, emotional involvement, and self-confidence":

Thus, we see a characteristic personality type of highly creative individuals, many of whom are driven, and in turn drive their associates even unto death: Florence Nightingale, lying on her sickbed, dictated (in both senses) to her male helpers, some of whom sickened and died under the strain. (Boden 1999, p.352)

This elitist model of creativity is in continual tension with more democratic expressions of creative possibilities. Perhaps this tension can be understood by slipping back into a Freudian framework and suggesting that the value of creativity within a psychic economy is maintained by its rarity; if it becomes open to all it loses this value. And to maintain focus on an economic model, the elitist model integrates easily with concepts of and demands for originality and innovation; if the creative individual is defined by his or her ability to produce original work then they constitute a valuable commodity in a national economy.

2.4.2 CREATIVITY AS ANY FORM OF EXPRESSIVE ACTIVITY

The notion that everyone has innate creative potential and that, therefore, any kind of expressive production can be classified as creative is attractive in an educational context and to those who embrace a democratic, anti-elitist version of creativity; it validates the efforts of those “who struggle endlessly to produce original work, but who lack the innate ability to do so” (Storr 1972, p.17) by removing the need for any outcomes to be objectively ‘original’ or ‘valuable’.

For Gauntlett ‘creative methods’ in an identity project are

...methods in which people express themselves in non-traditional (non-verbal) ways, through making something...So this particular understanding of creativity involves the physical making of something, leading to some form of communication, expression or revelation.
(Gauntlett 2007, p.25)

Freely admitting that this is a ‘common sense’ definition whilst acknowledging the complexity of creativity, this is clearly a pragmatic move necessary in order to progress with a larger project. However, this notion of creativity obtains in a

much less interrogated fashion in the education policy documents such as *All Our Futures* (NACCCE 1999) and *Nurturing Creativity in Young People* (Roberts 2006) which will be discussed in more detail in later chapters. The latter “is predicated on a core belief – that all children and young people can be creative and should have access to creative experience”, (Roberts 2006, p.15) a statement which raises some key questions for creativity research, namely, what constitutes a ‘creative experience’? and does having one necessarily make one ‘creative’?

Robinson endorses this concept of creativity, arguing that

We all have creative abilities and we all have them differently. Creativity is not a single aspect of intelligence that only emerges in particular activities, in the arts for example. It is a systemic function of intelligence that can emerge wherever our intelligence is engaged’ (Robinson 2001, p.12)

and argues that it constitutes a social asset which must be harnessed.

For Willis the priority is not to enlist creativity in the service of economic well-being, but to champion the “vibrant symbolic life and symbolic creativity in everyday life, everyday activity and expression” (Willis 1990, p.1). His version of creativity is ‘without walls’ and inextricably bound up with a project to validate the culture of young people. As with the ‘specialised’ category discussed above, there is a ‘creative subject’ at stake in this particular discourse; the difference is that the subject here has low ‘official status’. Willis, however, finds aesthetic and symbolic value in all activities of young people and argues, as Hebdige (1979) also does, for the active production of identity to be recognised as creative, suggesting in the process that this represents a mobilisation of power:

Grounded aesthetics are the specifically creative and dynamic moments of a whole process of cultural life, of cultural birth and rebirth. To know the cultural world, our relationship to it, and ultimately to know ourselves,

it is necessary not merely to be in it but to change – however minutely – that cultural world. (Willis 1990, p.22)

This inclusive discourse of creativity ironically usually entails a qualitative distinction to be made between different types of creativity, and championing the type which has low status. Craft (2001), for example, differentiates between ‘big C’ and ‘little c’ creativity:

‘Little c creativity’ is distinct from ‘high creativity’, which I take to mean the extraordinary creativity of the genius, in any particular field such as science, art, dance, mathematics, etc...The admission of new creative minds into a domain by the field is the recognition of the potential of ‘big C creativity’; in other words, of the kind of creativity which actually changes the domain, they refashion it. (Craft 2001, p.46)

This is a distinction similar to that which Barsalou and Prinz make with the terms ‘exceptional’ and ‘mundane’ creativity when they argue that “Whereas exceptional creativity graces a few individuals, mundane creativity graces everyone.” (Barsalou and Prinz 1997, p.267) It is also a distinction made by Boden, although she uses the nomenclature ‘P-creativity’ and ‘H-creativity’:

One sense is psychological (I call it P-creative, for short), the other historical (H-creative). Both are initially defined with respect to ideas, either concepts or styles of thinking. But they are then used to define corresponding senses of ‘creative’ (and ‘creativity’) which describe people. The psychological sense concerns ideas...that are fundamentally novel with respect to the individual mind which had the idea...The historical sense applies to ideas that are fundamentally novel with respect to the whole of human history. (Boden 1992, p.32)

The key similarity here is that in all cases the ‘inferior’ form of creativity is one accessible to all; Barsalou and Prinz argue for a biological basis for linguistic-cognitive creativity; Boden argues for the status of personal novelty in idea production; and Craft makes the case for personal coping strategies to be

defined as creative. But it is only this 'democratic' characteristic which connects these different conceptions of creativity in any way at all – an observation which perhaps reveals the rhetorical significance of naming and definition – the recruitment of a range of disparate activities under the seductive and powerful protection of 'creativity'.

Conceptually it is conceivable that the notion of 'craft' could fit into this category, but the relationship between creativity and craft is a problematic one, despite its inclusion in the erstwhile Labour government's category of the 'Creative Industries' (DCMS 2001), which includes craftspeople and technicians as well as artists in its retention of its 1998 definition of the sector as:

Those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property. (DCMS 2001, p.4)

But this is an expedient organisation of a range of disparate professions, including "advertising, architecture, the art and antiques market, crafts, design, designer fashion, film and video, interactive leisure software, music, the performing arts, publishing, software and computer services, television and radio." (DCMS 2001, p.5) Ideologically, stereotypically, the 'craftsperson' is different from the 'artist; they are different kinds of people, they approach their work in different ways, they produce different kinds of things. The Turner Prize winning artist Grayson Perry, for example, referring to the low status of crafts (such as his own specialism, pottery) in the 'art world', and the "over privileging of the idea" claims that "I often call myself, mockingly, a conceptual artist masquerading as a craftsman." (*Thinking Allowed* 2008)

In terms of their implications for practice and implementation these ideas are the most valuable for education policy because they offer the possibility of the acquisition of skills and the development of learning. We can identify versions of Boden's 'P-creativity' and Craft's 'little c creativity' in policy documents (e.g. NACCCE, Roberts) and elements of Willis's celebration of youth culture (Roberts particularly), but they are in continual tension with the notion that an

emphasis on creativity in the curriculum will produce exceptional, flexible, entrepreneurial workers.

2.4.3 CREATIVITY AS DIVERGENT THINKING

This approach sees creativity as something beyond rationality and logic, hence the advocacy (at the extreme end of this way of thinking) of 'release mechanisms' such as sleep (dreams), drugs (Stafford & Golightly 1967; Bourassa & Vaugeois 2001), surrealist games, automatic writing and brainstorming. Creativity in this context is dependent upon hidden areas of the mind, which creative processes and strategies can somehow realise.

De Bono's work (1977; 2007) utilises some of these strategies, such as the use of random words in order to 'develop creative habits of mind' (2007, p.5) and the idea that creativity is a kind of thinking ('idea creativity' to use de Bono's term) has led to the development of intelligence-type tests in order to measure it. Guilford's 'Structure of the Intellect' test and Torrance's Test of Creative Thinking were both designed to generate multiple responses to prompts which were then assessed in terms of fluency, flexibility and originality. (Plucker & Renzulli, 1999, p.39) However, as Dietrich argues

divergent production is not a process...Rather, it is more an outcome of a set of specific underlying processes. This makes these instruments a dead end in the search for the fundamental nature of creativity. (Dietrich 2007, p.23)

This approach to creativity is one of the more accessible and 'instrumental', although it has been recognised that divergence in itself does not necessarily lead to a desirable outcome and that another stage involving *convergent* thinking may be necessary; Boden, for example, is critical of the notion (which she attributes to "some modern psychologists") that "the more unusual ideas are the more creative ones" (Boden 1992, p.30) and argues that "creative thinking is made possible by constraints, which are the opposite of randomness. Yet many people see unpredictability as the essence of creativity." (Boden 1992, p.217)

Although the sorts of psychometric tests which might establish divergent thinking seem to have given way to more qualitative investigations in psychology and social psychology (exceptions being Fink et al. and Rubenstein's recent work described below, which both utilise tests of the former kind), the idea that creativity involves surprising and unexpected thinking and questioning has ideological potency and can be identified in to a degree, for example, QCA's illustration of how pupils might exemplify creativity:

Creative pupils explore possibilities, keep their options open and learn to cope with the uncertainty that this brings. They:

- Play with ideas, experiment, try alternatives and fresh approaches...

(QCA 2004, p.11)

However, as I discuss later, this divergent experimentation is always in the service of a 'higher purpose' and only valid if it leads to specific outcomes. Nevertheless, as recently as 2007 Fink et al. argue that:

Recent research efforts in the field of neurosciences have expanded our knowledge about creativity to a considerable extent. Different frameworks and theories about possible mechanisms underlying creative thinking have been proposed. Basically, theoretical and empirical advances in these disciplines have – along with psychometric approaches – displaced the viewpoint of creativity as an unsearchable phenomenon.

(Fink et al. 2007, p.68)

Having established, rhetorically at least, that creativity is amenable to scientific scrutiny, the authors justify an approach which involves measuring brain activity during the execution of 'creative' tasks (such as problem solving, story composition and divergent thinking). The outcomes of such tasks are rated in terms of creativity by the scientifically acronymic 'CAT' procedure derived from research by Teresa Amabile – a procedure which sounds less convincing when it is expanded into 'Consensual Assessment Technique' and revealed to be dependent upon the judgements of appropriate observers.

It is research such as this which can reinforce the notion that creativity is a kind of thinking or a kind of intelligence; the apparatus and discourse of science produces a persuasive case for this. But to refute this and argue that creativity is something ineffable which cannot be measured is merely to substitute one discourse for another; the ways of thinking about creativity are different but exemplify similar foundationalism.

Divergent thinking is conceived as a positive attribute and characteristic of creativity in the examples of above, however the obverse of this notion is exemplified in the conception of creativity as psychopathological, discussed next.

2.4.4 CREATIVITY AS 'MENTAL ILLNESS'

This approach to creativity can be found in academic literature in the fields of psychology, neuroscience, psychoanalysis and also features as an aspect of the 'folk psychology' (Bruner, 1990) about creativity. Prentky (in a special issue of the *Creativity Research Journal: Creativity and the Schizophrenic Spectrum*) for example, tells us that "Since the days of Aristotle, there has been a romantic notion that madness is allied with genius." (Prentky, 2000, p.95) It is also a popular conception of creativity, particularly exemplified in a documentary about Spike Milligan in which he is repeatedly referred to as a "mad genius" and his creativity is attributed to his manic depression. The psychiatrist Anthony Clare imparts professional weight to this notion in the film and provides this observation:

The manic...can be extraordinarily productive, be it a painter, a writer, be it a composer like Schuman. And then in depressed periods – nothing.
(*The Unseen Spike Milligan* 2005)

A recent interview with Milligan's daughter invokes the same perspective, commenting that at the height of his popularity Milligan

was also having periods of manic depression, which fed his creativity and plunged him into terrible black moods. (Lambert 2010, p.2)

A psychoanalytical framework finds the aetiology of creativity in the early formative experiences of the individual; Freud attributes Leonardo Da Vinci's creativity, for example to the infantile formation of his psyche:

In Leonardo's case we have had to maintain the view that the accident of his illegitimate birth and the excessive tenderness of his mother had the most decisive influence on the formation of his character and on his later fortune, since the sexual repression which set in after this phase of childhood caused him to sublimate his libido into the urge to know, and established his sexual inactivity for the whole of his later life. (Freud 1985, p.229)

And Storr, in characteristic Freudian mode, concurs that

we can see that the persistence of pregenital traits which are usually, and pejoratively, labelled neurotic, may also promote the human tendency toward creative, symbolic endeavours and syntheses. (Storr 1972, p.214)

However, he doubts that schizophrenia can easily lead to artistic production, because

creative work tends to protect the individual against nervous breakdown [and]... the acquisition of the skills required to practise an art, or to transmute an idea into comprehensible form, demands a 'strong ego'. (Storr 1972, p.51)

There is psychological research which links, or at least explores the notional relationship between, mental illness and creativity. Rubinstein, for example, states that

Many studies show that there is a link between creative ability and the risk of mental disorder. The prevalence of mental problems among

creatively gifted people is often, but not always, significantly higher than among the general population. (Rubinstein 2008, p.806)

His hypothesis, however, (in line with Storr, coincidentally) that schizophrenics lack the “healthy carriers” (Rubinstein 2008, p.807) necessary to score highly on a creativity test seems to be borne out in an experiment in which three groups of hospitalised patients – schizophrenic, anxious/depressed and personality disordered – are compared with each other. This research raises many questions, not least the categorisation of the patients and the nature of the ‘Tel-Aviv Creativity Test’ used to ascertain their abilities, but, nevertheless, it represents a particular approach which reinforces a notion of creativity as both symptom and (potentially) therapy.

Alternative, but related approaches, use cognitive psychology to provide means of understanding creativity, as Prentky says:

...the crucial question is not whether creativity and mental illness are causally linked but whether our understanding of mental illness offers insight into the creative process. (Prentky 2000, p.99)

And neuroscientific approaches may agree that creativity can be a symptom of some form of malfunction, but the cause is sought in the machinery of the brain, rather than the psyche. The case of Tommy McHugh, described in Rix (2007) and Giles (2004) exemplifies the sort of brain injury (subarachnoid haemorrhage) which is seized upon by neuroscientists and neurologists as proof that creativity is the product of particular physical regions in the brain. Neurologist Alice Flaherty attributes McHugh’s ‘manic creativity’ to changes in his temporal lobe and supports the argument by asserting that “Van Gogh almost certainly had temporal lobe epilepsy.” (Rix 2007) This view is not universally accepted, however, even amongst neuroscientists, one of whom argues that “There is no such thing as a neural center for a complex behavior or mental process.” (Dietrich 2007, p.25)

This version of creativity tends to gloss over the differences between activities such as writing, sculpting and painting and avoids engaging with qualitative judgements about the nature of what is produced. Instead, it focuses on the obsessive, compulsive nature of some kind of ‘symbolic production’ and draws comparisons with the supposed habits and routines of acknowledged ‘creative artists’. The idea is a seductive one, perhaps because it fits well with the familiar image of the tortured artist, for whom creativity is a curse and a compulsion. Csikszentmihalyi also mobilises this image when discussing van Gogh:

...we should remember that a hundred years ago those canvases were just the hallucinatory original works of a sociopathic recluse.

(Csikszentmihalyi 1999, p.321)

From this position it seems like a logical step to return to Storr’s notion that creativity can have a prophylactic function – the painful struggle as an alternative to collapse. It also provides a seductive and appealing explanation for some people’s extraordinary achievements in which there seems to be an element of *schadenfreude*; it is easier to enjoy the work of, say, Spike Milligan, van Gogh and John Lennon, if we believe they were unhappy and sick – if the price they paid is one which we would be unwilling to pay. It also provides a psychopathological explanation for ‘extraordinariness’, which exempts us from it and provides an excuse for our own ordinariness.

This observation leads us to another approach to creativity – not a discourse in itself, but a theory which draws attention to discursive features in the constitution of creativity.

2.4.5 CREATIVITY AS ATTRIBUTION

Whereas the creativity project in psychology has been designed to identify mental processes that can be measured and qualified, the focus in sociology has been to identify the ways in which creativity is attributed to individuals – the development of a kind of ‘social reception theory’ in which the judgements of social actors are afforded the same kind of scrutiny as the activities of notionally creative individuals.

Kasof argues that creativity research has tended to be dispositionally biased, in other words it has sought to identify the traits of creative people and explain how these traits lead to creative work:

Dispositional approaches to creativity...have almost entirely neglected the subjective reception of creative products – the evaluation and causal attribution of original products. (Kasof 1995, p.355)

Kasof's alternative approach is to suggest that creativity is a sociological rather than a psychological phenomenon; it is situational rather than dispositional. He identifies a range of factors which influence perceptions of creativity, arguing that particular conditions will make it more likely that creativity will be attributed; even the name of an artist is considered significant, causing Sternberg to title his rebuttal: 'If You Change Your Name to Mark Twain, Will You Be Judged As Creative?' (Sternberg 1995)

The criticisms of Kasof's approach by Sternberg (1995), Paulus and Asuncion (1995), Magyari-Beck (1995) and Runco (1995) all reveal a fundamental investment in an essence of creativity. Sternberg argues that Kasof's "article does not even deal with creativity per se, but rather with attributions of creativity." (Sternberg 1995, p.367) Paulus and Asuncion take issue with his suggestion that "status cues and pseudonyms" might be significant:

Are these strategies necessary or even contemplated by truly creative individuals? We presume that creative genius will be recognized independent of such characteristics. Possibly such accoutrements of creativity are required for modestly creative individual whose true level of creativity is somewhat debatable. (Paulus and Asuncion 1995, p.400)

Magyari-Beck disputes Kasof's "agnostic" position on personal dispositions, arguing:

Perhaps I am not mistaken in my observations that most creativity scholars have found enough evidence for studying the disposition for creativity as an existing phenomenon. (Magyari-Beck 1995, p.84)

And Runco is more dismissive, merely acknowledging that “Kasof...takes us closer to an understanding and prediction of acclaim and its correlates”, but insisting that

I do not think that Kasof has helped us understand creativity per se. In fact, I fear he has contributed to a trend that is taking us away from clear understanding of the creative process...My emphasis is on the need to distinguish between the mechanisms that underlie creativity and those involved in the expression and reception of the resulting insights. (Runco 1995, p.377)

Runco’s rhetorical use of the term “I fear” may actually betray something literal; Kasof’s article seems to have prompted a degree of fear, anxiety and hostility in those for whom the search for creativity and its “mechanisms” is like a Grail quest. The suggestion that there may be no Grail, that there is no ‘thing’, but a complex network of societal factors that sometimes coalesce into a meaningful social sign, must feel like heresy.

But although Kasof’s work has radical potential (discussed more fully later), his article does not entirely dismiss ‘creative ontology’; he refers to “creative behaviour” (Kasof 1995, p.322), “precocious creators” (Kasof 1995, p.319) and lists creative people such as Einstein, Miles Davis and Brian Wilson. But even here there is the possibility of quotation marks – the suggestion lurks that these terms are always already flawed and ideologically constituted.

His work has explicitly influenced some later research in the ‘creative’ domain of screenwriting. Elsbach and Kramer’s research into perceptions of unknown screenwriters in Hollywood pitch meetings seems to confirm Kasof’s theories of attribution; they conclude that executives (or ‘catchers’ in the pitch/catch relationship) make decisions largely on the basis of the way in which writers conform to particular ‘prototypes’ and that they ‘...often rely on cues that are the

opposite of those known to be correlated with *actual* creativity'. Although this particular statement seems to cling to a notion of some kind of essential creativity, the research constitutes a challenge to this:

This finding suggests that having a perceived handicap (such as being unpolished) sometimes leads catchers to judge a pitcher as more creative than individuals who appear more conventional. This phenomenon might be termed the "Woody Allen effect" after the famously neurotic but talented writer, director, and actor. (Elsbach and Kramer 2003, p.292)

This notion of attribution can be found elsewhere; Gauntlett also acknowledges the importance of situational factors to a degree, stating that "If I'm not known as 'an artist'...we are then less certain about whether we can label my stuff as creative" (Gauntlett, 2007, p.24) and Csikszentmihalyi's 'systems model' also recognises the importance of the judgements of the gatekeepers in a particular domain who will ascertain the degree to which an original and valuable contribution has been made:

To have any effect, the idea must be couched in terms that are understandable to others, it must pass muster with the experts in the field, and finally it must be included in the cultural domain to which it belongs. So the first question I ask of creativity is not *what* is it but *where* is it? (Csikszentmihalyi 1996, p.27; emphasis in the original)

This approach is valuable because it problematises common sense assertions about value and quality, revealing their dependence upon cultural contexts, but Csikszentmihalyi's examples tend to be 'canonical' as I have mentioned above – outstanding figures in their respective fields – and consequently, as with Gladwell's (2008) research into successful individuals, the theory feels rather retrospective and self-validating. The historiometric approach to creativity outlined by Simonton (1999) makes a virtue out of such 'canonical production' and Boden (1992), too, views her "H-Creativity" as an unproblematic index of exceptional individuals. Csikszentmihalyi, whilst acknowledging the significance

of the social basis for the validation of achievement and discovery, considers that Kasof goes

...too far, inasmuch as he views creativity exclusively as a process of attribution and impression management, neglecting entirely the substantive contribution of the person. (Csikszentmihalyi 1996, p.407)

And it may be indicative of Csikszentmihalyi's disdain for this notion that he consistently misspells Kasof's name as "Kosoff". (Csikszentmihalyi 1996, pp.407; 436)

There is radical potential in a theory which focuses on attribution, which a return to a Foucaultian notion of discourse might help us realise. Kasof's discussion of how creativity is reported by "observers", namely their tendency to ascribe causality to the disposition of the creator – even when the "endogenous creator" ascribes causality elsewhere (Kasof 1995, pp.335-339) – can be fruitfully linked with Foucault's notion of the 'author function', which Foucault argues:

...results from a complex operation whose purpose is to construct the rational entity we call an author. Undoubtedly this construction is assigned a "realistic" dimension as we speak of an individual's "profundity" or "creative" power, his intentions or the original inspiration manifested in writing. (Foucault 1977a, p.127)

It can also provide an example of how elements of a discursive construction of creativity are invoked and reinforced, thereby being constituted *by* and constitutive *of* that discourse; Kasof's notion of "illusory correlation" (1995, p.326) describes the way in which truth effects are produced through responses to and reproduction of stereotypes and ideologies of the artist, for example. His set of 'widely understood' and 'applied' attributes of creativity correlates with Soussloff's analysis of the concept of the "absolute artist" in which she identifies the discursive importance of the biography of the artist in the production of a particular mythology. (Soussloff 1997)

I have devoted a significant amount of space to this theoretical framework because it provides some valuable conceptual tools for the analysis of the policy documents later. The need to judge and attribute creativity is fundamental to QCA's (2004) assertion that teachers should identify creative thinking and behaviour and Ofsted's (2010a) assumption that prescribed practices can be inspected, for example, and these documents presuppose that such objective observation and assessment is possible.

2.4.6 CREATIVITY AS THE ANTITHESIS OF COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY

This is a popular conception of creativity and exemplified in the artist Billy Childish's manifesto for *The Idler* magazine which includes such aperçus as: "The true artist, by nature, is always an amateur and never a professional" and "The professional's violence against creativity and the rewards for his cowardice must be exposed and finally ridiculed". (Childish 1998, p.12) Less polemically, Anthony Storr demurs that "...the skilful technician can engage in the highly profitable occupation of writing music for the cinema; though at what cost to his creativity is hard to determine" and suggests that "most composers...rate film music as 'incidental' music, and separate it sharply from original compositions which truly reflect their own creative personality". (Storr, 1972, p.54)

At stake here is a concept of the individual, autonomous subject – like that described in the section on creativity as a specialised form of production. But here it is starkly defined in opposition to applied, commissioned and even 'craft' works. There is an alignment here between a spiritual concept of the self which must be protected from the contaminating influence of money – a concept which, even if it does not have its roots there, chimes with the classical/Christian concept of 'care of the self' discussed by Foucault:

We see that Christian asceticism and ancient philosophy are placed under the same sign: that of the care of the self. The obligation to know oneself is one of the central elements of Christian asceticism. Between these two extremes – Socrates and Gregory of Nyssa – taking care of oneself constituted not only a principle but also a constant practice. (Foucault 2000a, p.227)

To know oneself, to be ascetic, principled and vigilant – these are all elements of an artistic discourse in which life, theory and practice are all inextricably entwined and stand in opposition to ‘selling out’ and compromising one’s integrity. In fictional representations of creativity this opposition is also apparent; the narrator of *The Love Secrets of Don Juan*, for example, reflects upon his plan to escape from advertising:

So I decided I was going to abandon the nine-to-five, Freddy's Fifteen Fruit Flavours and Yogi's Yoghurt Fizz, and instead of writing clichés, I would live one. Like many in advertising before me, I was going to write the great existential novel. I was going to abandon pseudo-creativity for the real thing. For art. (Lott 2004, p274)

The distinction between ‘commissioned’, profitable work and ‘authentic’ work is one which has been evident in representations of the popular music industry in which figures of soulless profit-driven executives are evoked and bands which ‘sell out’ are scorned. In Ondi Timoner’s film *Dig!* (2004) the contrast is made evident between rival bands The Dandy Warhols, whose fortunes change when they licence a track to Vodafone for a television commercial, and the stubborn and uncompromising Brian Jonestown Massacre. Mistrust of the profit motive in general and the music industry in particular is much in evidence in the film, summed up by musician Genesis P. Orridge who expresses a sense of the violation of the self – the rupture of mind and body – in those who seek to profit from creativity:

I have no respect for anyone working for any major label in any capacity whatsoever in the executive. They're all liars, they're all mediocre people with no talent, they don't know talent, they don't understand or like music in any way whatsoever. I dread to think what they're like in bed trying to have sex, because, you know, their mind and body are not connected. (*Dig!*, 2004)

This sense of the incompatibility of ‘art’ and ‘commerce’ can be traced back certainly to Adorno’s critique of the ‘culture industry’ which

lives parasitically from the extra-artistic technique of the material production of goods, without regard for the obligation to the internal artistic whole implied by its functionality. (Adorno 2001, p.101)

And we can also find evidence of this opposition in George Gissing's *New Grub Street* in which "the struggling novelist Edwin Reardon, who believes in old-fashioned literary values...has 'never written a line that was meant to attract the vulgar', and he dies destitute. His opposite number is the young journalist Jasper Milvain, ambitious, cold, shallow and prepared to do anything for money." (Carey 1993, pp.107-108)

The concept is so embedded in common sense that it almost needs no explication; an interview with the writer and performer David Mitchell emphasises the contrast between his supposed wealth and the fact that he lives in "an ex-council flat, off a dowdy strip of Irish pubs and bingo halls in unlovely Kilburn, north-west London" causing the journalist to speculate "I wonder if his reluctance to upgrade the fabric of his life stems from fear of losing his creativity." (Aitkenhead 2009, p.9) The presupposition here is that creativity is a product of asceticism and that financial and material wellbeing are antithetical to it – a position which Nelson criticises, arguing that:

...it may well be that the contemporary valorisation of creativity, of the artist as loner/outsider – in short the ideal of a purer realm of art unsullied by economic or political imperatives – though superficially beguiling, is wilfully blind to its own ideological compromises, and impoverished for this reason. (Nelson 2010, p.56)

As the selection of material in this section indicates, this discourse of creativity tends to be manifested in popular rather than academic texts, but statements which equate material poverty with creative potency are persistent. It is interesting because it constitutes an apparent inversion of the marks of success in a capitalist economy; here poverty is valuable because it ensures independence and, therefore, artistic integrity. Perhaps also it constitutes a kind of 'negative nurture' and, therefore, is congruent with a discourse of faith in

which the ascetic must suffer in order to open themselves, and subordinate themselves, to God. 'True creativity' in this discourse cannot be bought or produced to order. It is, of course, problematic in practice, in that this inverse relationship constitutes an ideal – an ideal probably best exemplified by narratives of artists such as van Gogh who endured a miserable, penurious existence and whose 'worth' was realised posthumously. As such it is incompatible with the "Creativity as economic imperative" rhetoric described by Banaji et al. (2006, pp.30-34) and, therefore, has a curious status as both marginal and fundamental – marginal in any kind of operational discourse, but fundamental ideologically.

This explicitly cultural formulation is distinctly different from the evolutionary model discussed below; the former is predicated on a notion of the free, autonomous subject – an existential model, whereas the latter posits creativity as an inevitable feature of organic progress – metaphorical in some cases, but actual in others.

2.4.7 CREATIVITY AND EVOLUTION

There are some explicit links in the creativity literature between creativity and evolution; Ward et al. tell us that:

It will come as no surprise to readers...that humans are an enormously creative species. In a relatively short span of time, geologically speaking, we have gone from fashioning rocks into our first primitive tools to building spacecraft that allow us to retrieve rocks from other planets...There really is something uniquely generative about human cognition. (Ward et al. 1999, p.189)

Claxton (2006) similarly, in an article which challenges stereotypical concepts of creativity, proposes a "knowing system' embodied in our biology" and a "layered model of memory" which, along with his use of the term "epistemic evolution" and the notion of "thinking at the edge", imply an evolutionary progression towards greater insight and self-realisation which he labels "soft creativity". (Claxton 2006, pp.355-356) And more explicitly, Csikszentmihalyi suggests that:

...creativity can be seen as a special case of evolution; specifically, it is to cultural evolution as the mutation, selection and transmission of genetic variation is to biological evolution. (Csikszentmihalyi 1999, p.316)

Despite his use of the term 'cultural', it is probably more accurate to describe Csikszentmihalyi's concept of 'domain' and 'field' as *environmental* given the implications here of inevitable progress and the suggestion that 'culture' is relatively unproblematic and homogeneous:

What we call creativity always involves a change in a symbolic system, a change that in turn will affect thoughts and feelings of the members of the culture. A change that does not affect the way we think, feel or act will not be creative. (Csikszentmihalyi 1999, p.316)

This positions and produces creativity within what we could call a teleological discourse – an order of thinking in which human beings are agents of, and subject to, an inexorable historical process of progression and improvement. Creativity is seen, here, as a defining element of that change – both catalyst and index; catalyst in that it brings about cultural shifts and index in that, retrospectively, it becomes a trace of itself. This latter function is paradoxical – the status of creativity is ascribed to something because of the change that occurred – effect precedes cause. This is better illustrated in Wilson's description of evolution, to which he ascribes creativity:

Three features of evolution conspire to give it great creative potential.

The first is the vast array of mutations...All populations are subject to a continuous rain of such new genetic types that test the old.

A second source of evolutionary creativity is the speed at which natural selection can act. Selection does not need geological time, spanning thousands or millions of years, to transform a species...

The final creative feature of natural selection is the ability to assemble complicated new structures and physiological processes, including new patterns of behaviour, with no blueprint and no force behind them other

than natural selection itself acting on chance mutations. (Wilson 1992, pp.76-77)

Creativity for Wilson represents novelty, change, adaptability, appropriateness and progress, and the 'agent' is nature. The evidence for 'creativity' consists in the products of natural evolution, about which there is the assumption that each successive iteration improves upon the last. This concept of creativity, when transposed into a cultural context (as Csikszentmihalyi does) gives agency to humanity and the process of natural selection to gatekeepers. As an analogy it is seductive, but ideologically it serves to naturalise a cultural concept and limit the range of products (and associated activities) that have value. It also effects an elision between culture and nature, because it implicitly ascribes creativity to humanity as a natural, inherited trait from the process of evolution. Nelson identifies this tendency when she argues that the shift away from an eighteenth century notion of a "fixed and immutable universe" towards "a universe unfolding within a metaphysical structure that is malleable enough to impart a new sense of freedom to human endeavour":

...gains its most characteristic expression in Darwin's theory of evolution – and no less famously, in *The Descent of Man*, the work in which Darwin aligns human imagination with a narrative of continuous novelty or invention. (Nelson 2010, p.67)

The seductions of evolutionary creativity are evident in Kimbell's work, in which he cites Jacob Bronowski's assertion, in his TV series *The Ascent of Man*, that:

Man...has what no other animal possesses, a jigsaw of faculties which alone, over three thousand million years of life, make him creative.
(Bronowski 1973 in Kimbell 2000, p.206)

Kimbell goes on to link this evolutionary capacity with "the uniquely human qualities" that underpin design and technology work in schools.

Nature and technology often work as binary opposites within discourse, but this teleological discourse (metaphorically driven by 'descent' and 'ascent')

respectively in the examples above) effects a harmonisation between them; if we accept that technology is an evolutionary trait of a human-dominated era, then it becomes possible to see it as an extension of humanity in a creative history. Boden reinforces this in an argument for making sense of creativity in a technological context:

The creative strategy of evolution, you may say, is *Random-Generate-and-Test*: new biological structures are generated by random mutations, and then tested by natural selection. So randomness, not carefully mapped guidance, is seemingly all that is needed for generating fundamental change. (Boden 1992, p.209)

The notion of randomness, however, is questioned by Wolpert in his discussion of whether or not scientific progress is 'creative':

What is so impressive about good scientists is the imaginative solutions they come up with. Perhaps the analogy is with chess – choosing the right line many moves ahead: to think of the chess maser as making random searches, like a crude computer programme is quite misleading. (Wolpert 1992, p.60)

Wolpert's implicitly historiometric approach challenges the 'computational thinking' model proposed by psychologists such as Boden, arguing that

One only need recall that Einstein's discovery of the theory of relativity was influenced by his posing the following problem: what would be the consequences of running alongside and then catching up with a point on a light wave? Computers couldn't 'think' like this. (Wolpert 1992, p.65)

Nevertheless propositions based on the connections between technology and human creativity have been made persuasively; the next section examines the ways in which technology is discursively linked with creativity.

2.4.8 CREATIVITY AS A FUNCTION OF TECHNOLOGY

Banaji et al (2006, pp.46-48) examine the different ways in which technology is conceived in the context of education. They cite a project in which teachers were convinced that digital video technology enhanced the creativity of their students because of its liberating potential, but note that the study found that the most 'effective' work was conventional and carefully researched. So, 'creativity' is not an inevitable consequence of using technology, but, here, a result of awareness of the medium and "specific pedagogic practice".

The language used to sell computer software, however, is less cautious and often makes unambiguous promises about the transformative and liberating power of technology:

Sony Creative Software inspires artistic expression with its award-winning line of products for digital video, music, DVD, and audio production.

Sound Forge, ACID, and Vegas software have defined digital content creation for a generation of creative professionals, amateurs, and enthusiasts. (Sony Creative Software 2009)

and:

Adobe Creative Suite 4 delivers tightly integrated software and services that measurably improve productivity and enable you to produce richly expressive work in print, web, interactive, video, audio and mobile. (Adobe Creative Suite 2009)

Both of these use a version of creativity which is tied to artistic production - the software is 'creative' because it is designed to enable the production of images and sound. In both cases the software facilitates the 'expression' of the user; there is no contradiction here between the romantic image of the 'artist' and the modern image of the computer user - the two merge harmoniously. And in the case of CS4, the old contradiction between art and commerce - 'creativity' and 'productivity' is also resolved, or at least presented as unproblematically complementary.

There is clearly something at stake in this representation of computer programmes – it is not simply that 'you can still be creative with technology' (and even this argument has not been universally accepted), but 'this technology will *make* you creative'.

An alternative, satirical, point is made in Adam Buxton's sketch show *Meebox* (2008) in which a parody of a software tutorial illustrates how 'Moviemaker' (a "great bit of kit") can produce an entire feature length screenplay after the user selects some crude elements (such as 'a plot twist' and 'cameo'). This representation of technology in the creative process embodies a suspicion that technology makes it easy for people to *appear* to be creative which is, arguably, related to Benjamin's (1973) assertion that mechanical reproduction of art destroys its authenticity and, ultimately, changes the purpose of future artistic production. Sennett's humanist plea for a recognition of the value of *craft* expresses similar concerns about technology, asking: "Is it a friendly tool or an enemy replacing the work of the human hand?" (Sennett 2008, p.81)

Technology's relationship with creativity in education is, on one level, an unproblematic one; given the saturation of everyday life with technology it is generally taken for granted that these tools and extensions enhance, enrich and enable creative endeavour. But the ideological resistance to 'machines taking over' constitutes the opposition to this acceptance, for it undermines the investment in the notion of human creative agency. To end this section with Margaret Boden again, her work simultaneously undermines and reinforces 'creativity'; it undermines the 'romantic' concept by arguing that creativity can be broken down into a set of procedures, and it reinforces the operational concept by the same means. Boden (1992) argues that, theoretically, artificial creativity is possible because creativity can be conceived heuristically or algorithmically as a series of computational stages. This model of computational thinking, whilst antithetical to the concept of creativity as an essential human trait, lends itself to an operational model in education, where for Roberts (2006), QCA (2004) and Ofsted (2010a), creativity is dependent upon creating the conditions for particular kinds of outcomes to be generated.

2.4.9 CREATIVITY AS 'QUOTIDIAN ENHANCEMENT'

This is a category which would not survive scientific scrutiny, given that it is loosely bounded by 'conditions of reception' – in other words, these instances of creativity are classified by the everyday conditions in which they are encountered – on walls, in notes, magazines and websites. Nevertheless, I have become fascinated by casual invocations of the concept of creativity. By casual, I mean that the term is used as self-evident, it is not defined and no attention is drawn to its usage. I would argue that these instances of usage within 'found texts' are particularly valuable (like the definitions discussed later) because of their apparent 'naturalness' and, therefore, ideological nature. This category clearly does not constitute a 'discourse', but it is possible to discern the discursive production of the concepts of creativity here.

In the following example creativity is invoked as both noun and adjective; it is an article from the 'Work' section of *The Guardian* in which a young woman, Sarah Hallam, is interviewed about the nature of her media sales job for a listings and entertainment guide:

One might be forgiven for thinking Hallam waved goodbye to her creativity when she "settled" for sales, but she says, that isn't the case at all. "Working in media sales for a good magazine or a good radio station can be so creative", she argues. (Davis 2008, p.7)

It is, perhaps, less significant that the article endorses the idea that "The commercial side of print and broadcasting offers plenty of scope for creativity" (Davis 2008, p.7), than that it is represented as so desirable; the assertion that the job is creative gives it value. Creativity here is constituted more by association than definition – the evidence of 'creativity' in the job itself is minimal and involves client liaison and advising on "what sorts of adverts they should use" (Davis 2008, p.7) – but the environment is described in seductive terms:

The city-centre *Leeds Guide* office is a funky affair, all brick and white plaster, music blaring at one end of the office, posters everywhere. A

couple of fashionable types walk past with geometric hair and the MD is squatting down by a computer in the sales area. There is activity everywhere and if there's something happening in Leeds, the Leeds Guide appears to be on it. (Davis 2008, p.7)

These are the sorts of indices of creativity that would fit Richard Florida's concept of a 'creative class', which is built upon (perhaps paradoxically) a notion of romantic individualism and "people's intrinsic motivations" (Florida 2002, p.101), despite his entreaty in the final chapter for the creative class to

...evolve from an amorphous group of self-directed, albeit high-achieving, individuals into a more cohesive, more responsible group. (Florida 2002, p.316)

The sketch above of the *Leeds Guide* office activates a number of elements on the basis of which Florida might attribute creativity: the physical environment with the suggestion that it is a reclaimed, once-cheap, ex-industrial, revitalised space; the flexibility and 'alternativeness' of work attire; the appearance of collegiality in the MD apparently dirtying his hands with technology; the saturation of the environment with expressive or artistic work; and the impression of energy, connectedness and excitement conveyed by all of this and the terms "funky" and "fashionable".

Given this information we might be persuaded, as Kasof (1995) would suggest, to attribute creativity to this environment and those who work in it. It is also possible that the employees may be persuaded, via a similar process of attribution, that they are actually creative and for this to become constitutive of their identity (as it seems to have done for Sarah Hallam). It is irrelevant to claim that they are mistaken or correct, but more important to identify how this particular construction of reality is produced and how its claims to truth are rendered. This fundamentally simple proposition underpins the primary analysis in subsequent chapters, but in the case of education policy and advisory documents, there is more at stake in the implications for particular practices and ways of knowing.

In other contexts creativity functions to convey an intangible otherness – a promise of artistry and taste. (Figures 1 and 2)



Figure 1



Figure 2

The names of these small businesses: ‘Creative Décor’ and ‘Creative Lighting’ respectively, suggest, through the mobilisation of the adjective that what is being offered is special, different and valuable. And although it is easy to mock such instances, I would argue that even in the official documents analysed later, this notion, however crude, obtains.

Similarly, in Figure 3, the first page of a feature in *Good Housekeeping* (October 2010) about “creating the right impression”, the interviewee claims “I’m a creative person on the inside, but I don’t look it on the outside” and achieves this transformation through a change of wardrobe. Creativity, here, is an index of self-worth and such expressions of it, Kasof (1995) and Elsbach and Kramer (2003) would argue, constitute a form of self-attribution. From a Foucaultian perspective, creativity here can be seen as illuminating the notion of ‘technologies of the self’ – the “inside/outside” formulation suggests that creativity is a force which has been imprisoned and which can be released via a ‘power move’ against the incarcerating self, thus reinforcing the illusion of the autonomous individual.

Now we look like we MEAN BUSINESS!

Creating the right impression at work is now more important than ever, and that starts with looking - and feeling - first class. We helped four readers stuck in a style rut to find the perfect look for new and exciting challenges in their jobs...

Cardigan, £29.99, XS-L; Benetton. Dress, £385, XS-XL, Leona Silvestroni. Slip (worn under dress), stylist's own. Boots, £165, 2-10. Dress, Next/Next, £65, and ring, £33, both Sukie Lau. Mugs and clock, Hea's

I want to show my creative side

FINISHING MATERNITY LEAVE
NAME HELEN SILK
AGE 40

THE PROBLEM All my dreams came true in my 30s - I got married and had two gorgeous children. But my maternity leave has nearly finished now, and when I go back to work as a primary school teacher and art co-ordinator, I want to dress with flair. I'm a creative person on the inside, but I don't look it on the outside. I used to only wear plain trousers and a blouse at work, but now that I'm 40, I'd like to find my style instead of just "making do".

THE SOLUTION Playing with layers and patterns is a great way to achieve an arty look. This striking print dress makes even more of a statement paired with a new-season chunky knit cardigan and boots. Add beads or a quirky brooch for fun.

THE VERDICT I do see pieces I like, but I never know how to put an outfit together - this has really helped. I said I wanted a makeover for my birthday, and now I've had one!

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Figure 3

For the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), “creativity is the lifeblood of our organisation” according to a plaque in its London headquarters at White City. (Figure 4) This rhetorical formulation, invoking a physiological metaphor, creates a false sense of tangibility; “lifeblood” has a physical presence, admittedly, but it is hard to conceive of creativity pumping through the organisation (especially as the “heart” apparently consists of “Audiences”, two lines above). The aim here seems to be, through the ‘body’ metaphor, to construct the BBC as a kind of ‘super human’ and to invoke the notion of creativity as an essential human capacity. If the BBC is super human, then it will be capable of ‘super creativity’.

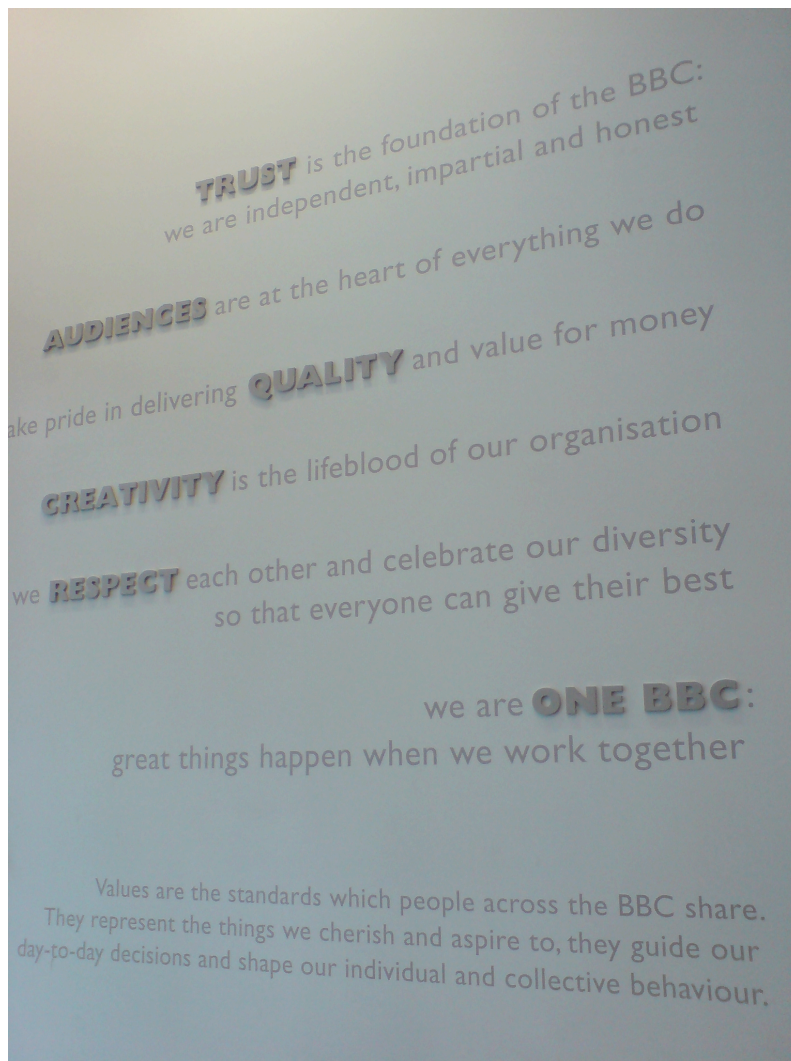


Figure 4

An interview with Gwyneth Williams immediately following her appointment as controller of BBC Radio 4 elicited a similar invocation of creativity; in response to a question about how much she wanted to change Radio 4 she replied:

I guess what I want to do really is build a more relaxed, creative Radio 4 – try and add that to Mark’s [Damazer – former controller] sort of intellectual rigour – and make sure we add pleasure, surprise, wit and as much creativity as we can, because there’s so much of it out there, let’s get it all on air. (*The World at One* 2010)

When pressed for an example of this, she was hesitant before suggesting that it might mean “some more surprising commissions”. There is no body metaphor here, but there is the same “semantic aura” (Wagner 2009, p.1); creativity here

is more valuable when it is not interrogated, when it is allowed to be a non-specific, desirable quality which infuses an organisation.

An alternative representation of 'corporate creativity', which ironically undercuts such rhetoric, is a cartoon from *Harper's Magazine*. (Figure 5) The humorous inversion of the rhetoric of freedom used by businesses to aspire to a notion of creativity (e.g. 'thinking outside the box'; 'blue sky thinking') invokes the emotional, ideological opposition between creativity and commercial interests. It deftly activates the irreconcilable tension between a rhetorical, emotional concept of creativity and the demands for employees (and students) to produce evidence of this.



Figure 5

2.4.10 CREATIVITY AS EDUCATIONAL NECESSITY

We have seen how creativity has been constructed in a variety of ways and subject to different interpretations and applications in a wide range of spheres. The launch of the Creative and Media Diploma in 2008 has been a catalyst for this research because it is a course with 'creative' in its title and represents in some way, therefore, a reification and operationalisation of idealistic notions of

creativity which have been circulating in education for some time. It is a central assertion of this research that in the last ten years, within particular policy and advisory documents, it is possible to identify passionate calls for, positive responses to and, finally, regulation of creativity. It is necessary, therefore, to examine how this concept has been generated. This chapter examines some ways in which creativity has been constructed, argued over and lauded in the domain of education specifically, given its special status here; as Jeffrey and Troman argue:

An international policy text now highlights the importance of creativity...Its use in education at a macro level is seen as unleashing or releasing human potential to develop western knowledge based economies. Within education circles it is a discourse that is liberatory in values in that it sees creativity as a way of developing a meaningful, relevant life for individuals to control more of their work and to take ownership of it celebrating their innovative activities. (Jeffrey and Troman 2009, p.2)

Discussions of creativity in education have historically betrayed a tension between a notional 60s liberalism and assessment-driven accountability and standards, a history sketched by Marshall (1991) who argues creativity has been associated

...with the so-called progressive education and, in particular, the notion that academic standards have been sacrificed on the altar of the personal growth of the child. (Marshall 1991, pp.116-17)

This tension is evident explicitly (as disavowal) and implicitly (through structural oppositions) in the primary documents which will be analysed later. Banaji et al. paint this vivid picture of:

...the 60s stereotype – someone who provides a lot of materials and shouts ‘have fun, enjoy, create’ but then leaves the class to their own

devices without directing or evaluating, making suggestions or placing limits. (Banaji et al. 2006, p.50)

The position of value and desirability which creativity occupies today is one which it has enjoyed for a relatively short time; David Hartley observes that under Chris Woodhead (the Chief Inspector of Schools from 1994 until 2000) Ofsted approved of “more traditional whole-class, brisk, subject-specific, directly-focused method(s) of teaching’ rather than ‘progressive orthodoxies in the classroom.” (Hartley 2003, p.85) Hartley suggests that a key moment of change in thinking about creativity in UK education was the publication of *All Our Futures: Creativity, Culture and Education* by the National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education (NACCCE) which argues that “a national strategy for creative and cultural education is essential” (NACCCE 1999, p.5) and I have selected this document as my starting point in the primary analysis of successive chapters because of its significance in this context. And at this early stage in creativity’s gradual, but inconsistent, shift from the margins to the centre of educational concerns in the UK, the anxiety about the perception of creativity as *laissez-faire* pedagogic practice was evident. Hartley (2003) identifies a moment of tension in the government’s response to the NACCCE report in which there is an attempt to retain traditional principles whilst embracing the new:

Creativity and the grasp of the basics are not in conflict. The ability to draw on a body of facts is an essential stepping stone to the development of creative thought which translates imagination into practical implementation. (Blunkett and Smith 2000, p.1)

I will return to these documents in subsequent chapters in order to analyse them in more detail, and to address, particularly, how this tension is dealt with. The remainder of this section, however, examines some key examples of how creativity is produced in educational research, with particular reference to concepts of value, utility and cognition.

Recent pedagogic work on creativity is overwhelmingly positive about and uncritical of its conceptual and ontological status. I will not pretend to represent this work comprehensively, given its popularity and the vast range of material which covers the age range from nursery to post-graduate education. What I am able to do, however, is address a number of examples which are connected by their advocacy of creativity. This may seem like an arbitrary criterion, but it provides rhetorical coherence between disparate works. Ken Robinson, in the preface to a key collection of essays on creativity, for example argues that:

Like *All Our Futures*, these essays aim to give a textured understanding of what creativity is, why promoting it is a necessity not an option, and how it can be done in a sure-footed, professional and reasoned way. (Craft et al. 2001, preface)

And the introduction to this collection makes a similarly rhetorical move to simplify and operationalise creativity:

The framing and evolution of this book reflects changing thinking about the elusive concept of creativity and its relevance to the current contemporary world of education and we suggest there has been a universalization of the conception of creativity. (Jeffrey and Craft 2001, p.1)

Both of these extracts indicate how an agenda is being set for creativity in education; it is established as a 'thing' which is necessary in education and which, thanks to increasingly sophisticated thinking, has become universally understood and, therefore, can be implemented. The only possible challenge to this universalisation in Craft et al.'s collection of articles comes from differences in priorities – between 'creative teaching' and 'teaching for creativity', for example, and differences in implementation. (Jeffrey and Craft 2001, pp. 4-11)

Despite the advocacy of a range of potentially valuable and worthwhile activities, this collection does not (can not) make sense of creativity because, like *All Our Futures* from which it derives its energy and campaigning zeal, it

mobilises myths of creativity, uses familiar rhetoric and, ultimately, uses 'creativity' as a brand for a range of vaguely alternative pedagogic theories and practices. Gale (2001), for example, proposes four models "within which a creative approach to post-compulsory teacher education might be developed" (p.103) and, although he emphasises the mutable and non-fixed nature of these, the notion of creativity is treated as a given. The question is acknowledged, but side-stepped when he explains:

Space does not provide the opportunity to examine vast numbers of theoretical expositions on the nature of creativity; however, it will be possible to identify and briefly examine four major areas in which a creative approach may be applied with relevance and apposition to post-compulsory teacher education. (Gale 2001, p.105)

Thus, creative approaches are invoked here as things which are not explicitly conceptualised (the implicit assumption is that they do not need to be) but which refer to alternatives to dominant modes of thought and action. This is not to say that what Gale proposes is without merit, but his use of 'creative', I would argue, has a primarily rhetorical function. One of his four models is a "post-structural model" in which he draws upon Foucault's work in order to advocate a critical evaluation of dominant practices:

Not only will such a strategy offer the possibility of new and fresh approaches to teaching and learning practice within post-compulsory teacher education, but also it will begin to unearth the way in which the discourses in question have established truth claims... (Gale 2001, p.112)

The link with creativity here is established by the arbitrary statement that this strategy will be brought about by "creative teaching practitioners". A similar arbitrary insertion of creativity is evident when Gale argues that:

The use of narrative represents a post-structural means of fostering a creative approach to teacher education within the post-compulsory sector. (Gale 2001, p.112)

It would be possible in nearly every case to substitute the word 'alternative' for 'creative' in this essay without disruption; of course it would change the meaning, given the rhetorical force of 'creative', but not the 'sense'. The irony is that Gale is advocating four models of pedagogic practice which are reflexive and meta-discursive without practising the same reflexivity in relation to the concept of creativity which is being produced here. When he argues that:

The use of narrative, therefore, can provide an approach to post-compulsory teacher education that encourages autonomy, imagination and above all creativity. (Gale 2001, p.113)

he is, in effect, mounting a challenge to one discursive formation through the instatement of another. Creativity here is loaded with assumptions about its 'otherness' and the way that it is used here to encompass, absorb and represent a range of disparate (but alternative) approaches to teacher education imbues it with value and is, therefore, a move of power. This manoeuvre, although well intentioned, exhibits the same conditions of possibility as we find in, for example, Ofsted's prescriptions for creativity in which a different set of activities and approaches are yoked to the term.

Other writers yoke creativity to other pedagogically worthy concepts and activities, for example, spirituality (McCarthy 2001), parenting (Haringman 2001), the ability to deal with life's vicissitudes (Craft 2001) and effective school management (Imison 2001) – a range of concerns through which creativity is modelled as something learner-centred, productive and humanist. There is a sense in which these essays, about a range of different things, are connected only by a sprinkling of 'creativity dust'; Imison's chapter, for example, includes this over determined statement:

Creativity is, I believe, a special kind of flexibility and a conscious attempt to challenge existing assumptions and preconceptions – an active attempt to unlearn; a drive to find out, to introduce, construct or reconstruct something new. A key means to achieve these creative objectives is being innovative. It has been a central part of my practice and means using imagination, creativity and strategic action as a leader to solve challenging problems. (Imison 2001, p.145)

As with some aspects of the policy and advisory documents discussed later, such a move of definition does not perform conceptual clarification; it is not clear, for example, whether creativity is constituted by all or merely some of these elements, whether it is synonymous with innovation or exists in a cause and effect relationship with it. But such amorphousness enables disparate elements to be made to cohere rhetorically.

There is some discursive dissonance, however, even within education – one example being criticisms of the way in which ‘critical thinking’ is sometimes subordinate to ‘creative’ thinking. Buckingham, in the field of media education, for example, argues against the “Romantic notions of ‘creativity’ and ‘self-expression’ which have sometimes informed student production”, but also that ‘production work should be much more than a mere illustration of pre-determined “theoretical” insights.’ (Buckingham 2003, p.137) He identifies the scepticism amongst 80s critics, such as Bob Ferguson, whose

...main criticism was directed against the notion of ‘creativity’, an idea imported from Art and English teaching, which he condemned as mystical and individualistic. The emphasis on creative self-expression through media was seen to reflect a dangerous ‘romanticisation of the working class’. (Buckingham 2003, p.124)

He notes that writers on media education, such as Alvarado, Gutch, Wollen and Masterman advocated approaches which

explicitly sought to oppose and subvert dominant forms of professional practice; and in the process, the 'expressive' or 'creative' potential of production was rigorously subordinated to the demonstration of critical understanding. (Buckingham 2003, p.125)

By a curious coincidence the space adopted by those who see 'critique' as more important than 'creativity' is one that it shares, but for different reasons, with the advocates of traditional 'standards', for whom 'creativity' lacks academic rigour. An analogy might be the space uneasily shared in the 80s by feminists and the right-wing moralists, both groups of which were opposed to pornography, but on different principles (see Levinson 2003). This tension is one which the policy and advisory documents seek to lay to rest.

In all of the documents analysed in the later chapters which constitute the primary focus of this research there is absolute certainty that creativity exists – they all ask “what is creativity?” and all strive to provide an answer. The investment in finding an answer to this question and the determination to find ways of implementing and realising creativity are both significant, and I argue that they reveal the evidence of production *by* and production *of* particular discursive fields. The production of creativity as a 'problem', for example, legitimates a practical response to it which draws upon a technological (or, I suggest later, a 'medical') order of thinking and, through rhetorical adroitness, the abstract noun becomes elided with specific, demonstrable evidence. But attention to the specifics of expression can reveal the instability and insubstantial nature of the concept; Banaji et al. in their review of key literature pertaining to “the creative classroom” note that the diffusion of the concept into a variety of existing activities and ideas could result in the disappearance of 'creativity':

In its most positive incarnation, then, the 'creative classroom' rhetoric may be seen to promote forms of learning that are generally held to improve the experience of children in education – holistic learning, active learning, expanded notions of intelligence, attention to social and cultural contexts, social learning and ethical human development. By the same

token, though, it runs the risk of losing what is distinctive about ‘creativity’ itself – if it cannot be distinguished from all these other things, where is its explanatory power? (Banaji et al. 2006, p.54)

The discursive construction of creativity in education is doubly uncritical of it; uncritical about it as a ‘force’ and uncritical about it as a concept. The four key documents discussed later all fall into this category (although the QCA document, at least, raises the *possibility* of a creativity which is not necessarily a force for good). A striking example with which to end this section is a recent article by Samuel Hope (2010) which exhibits many of the tendencies and contradictions I identify in the main documents later. It is a particularly pertinent piece of work for this research because it explicitly links a discussion of creativity with policy initiatives in education. Hope sometimes appears to be challenging the rhetoric and commonsense around creativity such as in this point in his conclusion:

In education policymaking circumstances, arts educators need to work to ensure that:

1. Terms like *creativity* and *innovation* are used realistically and do not become rhetorical or conceptual substitutes for the arts or other disciplines either singly or together, else such terms otherwise gain a connotation of superficiality. (Hope 2010, p.46)

And:

I am concerned that the word *creativity* is becoming yet another generic surrogate for *goodness* that is insufficiently connected to something concrete. (Hope 2010, p.41)

But despite his rejection of rhetoric and acceptance that “creativity is not an automatic good” (p.41), Hope is committed to an ontology of creativity and uses rhetorical strategies to persuade the reader that an ideal creativity can and should be enshrined in American education policy. This is one example of the kinds of textual contradiction that we find in the UK documents under scrutiny. Another is the mobilisation of set of regulatory principles by which creativity is

constructed; in Hope's paper this mobilisation coexists with an overt denunciation of standardisation and regulation of creativity.

As with some of the documents which will be discussed later, we can identify a number of common elements: textual moves to make creativity concrete; use of the language of faith and belief; a metaphorical system which contrasts organic growth with technological sterility; and the masking of logical inconsistencies with rhetorical urgency. Hope's main strategy of reification is the alignment of creativity with knowledge and skills; he argues, for example, that:

Creativity is evident every time we speak. Yet the range of creative knowledge and skill in the verbal realm is vast. (Hope 2010, p.39)

In other words it is necessary to have a complex of creative knowledge and skills all working together over a long span of time, and all in multiple relationships between stable frameworks...and immediate creative decisions. (Hope 2010, p.40)

...we cannot divorce the issue of creativity from knowledge and skill development. Pitting creativity against knowledge and skill development is a disastrous policy for students and for our nation as a whole. (Hope 2010, p.41)

There are many more examples of this kind of alignment here, all of which are reminiscent of the assertion in the UK documents that creativity and standards go hand in hand. The problem created in both contexts is that such reification results in the vanishing of creativity; the equation of it with knowledge and skills and, crucially, the demonstration of knowledge and skills by students, tends to leave us grasping at some intangible 'other'. Hope employs three different rhetorical strategies to hide this problem. The first is to put forward utilitarian arguments, such as, to fail to align creativity with knowledge and skills would bring about "another anti-creativity backlash" (Hope 2010, p.42) and that "creativity, knowledge and skills all lift each other to ever higher achievement". (Hope 2010, p.42) The second is to invoke the language of faith in order to

persuade us that this intangible 'other' exists. This language includes references to inspiration and the spirit:

Creativity is not only extremely complex, but it is also mysterious, and thus it is wise to be humbled before it. (Hope 2010, p.40)

Instead of confining us in word, thought, and process prisons, the spirit of creativity leads us on. It produces more because it always tells us that there is something more, something richer in mind, spirit and action. And, of course, there always is. (Hope 2010, p.46)

The third is to align creativity with the American national identity. Hope tells us that "creativity is a natural attribute of human beings", linking genetics with biblical scholarship when he argues that

Noah was known for building an ark, but he also possessed the innate capability to create computers, build airplanes and operate complex distribution systems. (Hope 2010, p.41)

But towards the end of this paper we find that *Americans* exhibit these innate tendencies *par excellence*:

Since our beginnings, we in the United States have been wise in the ways that we have nurtured these [framework-detail] relationships in many of our most basic decisions...And, in an overall sense, these decisions have enabled us to succeed. Our success is astounding. Here are two sobering facts. Because population numbers are higher, China and India have larger numbers of naturally gifted people than we do. But in 2003, the campuses of the University of California generated more patents than China or India. Will we be able to say something similar in 2013 or 2023? (Hope 2010, p.46)

Creativity as a national characteristic becomes aligned with freedom in this section of the paper, because "The natures of education and creativity work far

more like farming than running a factory” (Hope 2010, p.45) and, therefore, the metaphors of organic growth, cultivation and nurture are contrasted with the routine, standardised constrictions of mechanised production. In addition, because of the reference to China and India, this freedom acquires political connotations and there is the implication that to fail to embrace this version of creativity is to be un-American. There is a correspondence here with the assertion in the *Government Response to Nurturing Creativity in Young People* that “Creativity is something we do well” (Lammy and Adonis 2006, p.2).

I have devoted a considerable amount of space to this single article because it constitutes a useful bridge between the literature about creativity, particularly in an educational context, and the (critical) discourse analysis of the UK policy and advisory documents which follows. Here we can identify many of the features, characteristics and strategies to which I will draw attention later, such as the alignment of creativity with existing policy priorities, the use of particular tropes and, perhaps most important of all, the construction of creativity as something subject to regulation. In Hope’s paper there is a clear contradiction between what it says and what it does; in a set of recommendations to policy makers at the end of the paper he argues that:

In education policymaking circumstances, arts educators need to work to ensure that:

...

8. Assessment and other management schemes reduce content and method standardization, centralized control, or demands for teacher conformity, at least to the extent that creative development is expected. (Hope 2010, p.46)

Yet this rejection of standardisation appears in a document which includes a twelve point checklist for verifying “If I have ‘learned’ to be creative” (Hope 2010, p.43) and an eleven point checklist for identifying a “creative environment” (Hope 2010, p.44). Admittedly, what I am adducing here as standardisation is different in quality and degree from the standardised assessment regime which obtains in the US, but there exists an unresolved

tension between the plea for freedom from constraint and inevitable constraints that characterise any work of classification. I argue later that this constitutes the biggest conceptual problem in the efforts to classify and operationalise creativity in the UK education system.

2.5 Concluding comments

This selective review of creativity literature has been organised into different categories. These categories have been influenced by the existing classificatory work of Banaji et al. (2006) and through them I have sought to make connections between statements about creativity based on apparent conceptual and rhetorical similarities. As with all work of classification it also attempts to differentiate between things – to indicate how particular academic, aesthetic or political investments in the ‘nature of things’ causes creativity to be modelled in different ways. But one thing they all share is a sense of defining and accounting for ‘human extraordinariness’, which is a term sufficiently vague to encompass the diversity of activities and achievements attributed to creativity. And this, I would argue, is the problem with such work on creativity; if one is sceptical about the existence of ‘something’ called creativity then one must, necessarily, be sceptical about research and practice which begins with this assumption – and most of it does. It is tempting to denounce the entire history of creativity research, as Barker does with the tradition of research into ‘media violence’:

Hard though it may be to accept that an entire research tradition is based on thin air, this is my case. I challenge the research tradition to show a single reason why we should treat cartoons, news, horror, documentaries, police series, westerns, violent pornography and action adventure as having anything in common. (Barker 1997, p.28)

To adopt a similar stance here would necessitate arguing that a research tradition which focuses empirical work on subjects who are already presumed to embody the qualities being sought, must be questionable. Particularly as the identification of those subjects is driven by both an implicit theory of why they are significant, and ideologically pre-formed notions of the nature of that

significance. So, even though Gruber and Wallace (1999) make explicit the ideological nature of research, stating that:

Methodological issues are never purely and simply methodological. Overtly or not, they always call into play deeply held convictions about the nature of knowledge and truth. (Gruber and Wallace 1999, p.93)

their own assumptions about the “knowledge and truth” of creativity are not addressed and we are offered the Wright brothers, Picasso, Eliot, Einstein, Stravinsky and Gandhi as self-evidentially exemplary. The term “unique creative people” forms part of the title of this particular essay and the assumed existence of creativity is merely a starting point for their case study approach, focusing particularly on Darwin. Simonton’s explanation of his ‘historiometric’ methodology betrays the founding assumptions of such work which, ironically, seems to overlook the specificities of history:

Historiometric samples contain personalities who have “made history” in an important domain of human achievement. In the particular case of creativity, historiometric researchers will study those individuals who have some claim to the epithet “creative genius”. (Simonton 1999, p.117)

He concludes that historiometry has unique value in the field of creativity research:

The most obvious of these assets, of course, is the ability to engage in the scientific study of creativity in its most stellar form. The subjects of historiometric inquiries are undoubted exemplars of creative genius. (Simonton 1999, p.125)

The rhetorical insistence on genius and the “undoubted” evidence of creativity in such exemplars may seem crude – especially when placed in this critical context – but this is a persistent starting point for much notionally scientific and pedagogic research in this area.

This assessment of different approaches, then, indicates a rather chaotic and contradictory situation regarding the understanding of 'creativity'. Most usefully I have shown how educational literature about creativity embodies notions which are inevitably ideological and which determine particular proposals of practice and implementation. I suggest that this simultaneous plenitude and absence of meaning make creativity, as an abstract noun, particularly amenable to any number of exemplifications and reifications – a characteristic which can be identified explicitly in the policy and advisory documents discussed later.

Interruption 2: The Romantic vs. The Puritan

One tension was evident in my formal application to undertake this research; when I re-read the application now, it seems as if I was clearly aware of the need to make sense of the concept of creativity in the context of education and the ‘creative industries’, but my original reference points of screenwriting and advertising betrayed an excitement with the products of these domains. The way that this tension has subsequently been manifested is in an internal dialogue in which the seductions of artistic creativity are countered with a kind of puritanical zeal to treat them as mere discursive products.

This has brought about an attitude to creativity which is both bellicose and apologetic; the bellicosity is expressed through an irritation with work which treats creativity as an essential quality and the apology is expressed through parodying my position as a nihilistic killjoy. This is not a comfortable position to occupy, not least because I know that I run the risk of dismissing subtle and nuanced work on creativity merely because it has not (as I have) identified its instability, but also because I can see that so much exciting, challenging and valuable work is being done in the name of creativity. In times of doubt I wonder whether I am merely quibbling over terminology. But at such times my earlier work as a postgraduate English student returns to comfort me and I remember the lessons of post structuralism – that language is not merely a set of labels, that it produces meaning rather than merely registering meaning and that attention to the construction of concepts is necessary and important work.

But then, again, the doubts – a key influence on my work is Martin Barker’s analysis of violence in which he shows how violence is produced in documents and in interviews as a concept with explanatory force. And violence is a concept which is used to define certain kinds of activities and then, in turn, legitimise particular kinds of oppressive responses. But creativity? Creativity is a ‘good thing’ – what is the justification for approaching it so aggressively? Surely there are no comparable ethical grounds? I try to convince myself with my answer, that it is similarly (if not equally) necessary to adopt a critical stance in relation to the ‘creativity orthodoxy’ which, although encompassing many different methodologies, largely adheres to the ‘find it, promote it, nurture it, assess it’ strategy. This uncritical embrace is a provocation to me, so critical work feels like a necessary counter to it, despite the fact that, on an emotional level, I am equally seduced by the myths, practices, personalities and outcomes of creativity. This dialogue with myself also reveals a path which provides the ethical justifications I have felt

wanting; in the domain of education creativity has become a key concept and its increasing acceptance as important is justified in terms of alternative, innovative pedagogy. I am impressed by advocates such as Ken Robinson who is witty, articulate and committed to improving education. But, at the same time, I see a term, which can be made meaningful in many different ways, being modelled in some quite specific ways within documents which are likely to have significant impact on how it is taught, understood and rendered valuable or ascribed utility. This realisation enables me to argue (not just to myself any more, but to conference delegates, colleagues and people at parties) that this is not merely a work of critique for its own sake – not merely an academic exercise in analysis – but work which pokes at and unscrews bits of the conceptual machinery of creativity at a moment when it appears to be being sealed in a ‘black box’².

The ethical justification then, whilst not as obvious as Barker’s (no-one is going to be oppressed for being creative, after all), is that the category of creativity is being defined and limited in particular authorised ways, that this category legitimises certain educational activities and outcomes whereas others, in this educational economy, are rendered value-less. In this sense, creativity could be seen as something oppressive and limiting (how ironic). Maybe, to return to my earlier aside, one could be oppressed for being creative if it were manifested *in the ‘wrong way’*, or for *not* being ‘creative’.

At this point the Romantic Idealist in me wants to reclaim an inclusive concept of creativity in which anything is valid – the dyad of the public versus the state is momentarily invoked with a rebel yell as we storm the castle and seize ‘creativity’ from our masters. But the post structuralist Puritan quickly appears and talks him out of such folly, explaining that to do so would be merely to seize one myth rather than another. ‘So what does that leave us with?’ asks the Romantic Idealist? ‘Nothing?’ ‘Nothing will come of nothing’ as a retiring fictional king once said. So what’s it all for?’ The post structuralist Puritan explains that it is OK to find that there is no ‘*there*’ ‘there’, that there is no essence of creativity to be found and held aloft and that the battle is to reveal how the stories create the myth – ‘Now we see as through a glass darkly, then as face to

² I have borrowed the term from Latour (1987) who uses it to refer to the simplification of complex and contingent processes in science so that they become a ‘given’. This reduction also creates a resistance to questioning, or opening the ‘box’.

face' he elaborates, but quickly realises that an analogy with meeting God might undermine his anti-essentialist position and moves on.

A problem remains with my 'critical posture'. My commitment to a methodology which depends upon the concept of social construction could slide into endless relativism were it not for the desire to stake some kind of ethical claim above. But, as Kendall and Wickham point out

...the relativistic turn in academia looked attractive to many social researchers – but only as long as it enabled them to undercut the truth claims of those enterprises to which they held an ideological opposition...social constructionism is often directed to unmasking one form of truth – and is quick to posit replacement (more palatable) truths. This is the moment of critique. (Kendall and Wickham 2006, pp.3-4)

I should acknowledge then that my 'truth claims' can only ever be claims; I can argue, cite evidence, use rhetoric, demonstrate, in fact, some of the very characteristics called 'creative thinking' described in the documents upon which I am launching a critique. But through *this* mode of writing I can, at least, personalise and contextualise my truth claims and, by revealing their contingent nature, avoid hiding behind the "dehistoricisation of the persona of the critic." (Kendall and Wickham 2006, p.4)

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3 Ideology, Rhetoric and Discourse

3.1 Introduction

It is ironic that, in order to make sense of creativity, I am using three other equally slippery conceptual terms. On discourse, for example, Mills suggests:

The term 'discourse' has become common currency in a variety of disciplines: critical theory, sociology, linguistics, philosophy, social psychology and many other fields, so much so that it is frequently left undefined, as if its usage were simply common knowledge. It is used widely in analyzing literary and non-literary texts and is often employed to signal a certain theoretical sophistication in ways which are vague and sometimes obfuscatory. It has perhaps the widest range of possible significations of any term in literary and cultural theory, and yet it is often the term within theoretical texts which is least defined. (Mills 2004, p.1)

And on rhetoric, Dixon says:

The critic may perhaps be excused for feeling that he is in the position of a man trying to dissect and reassemble a jellyfish – for the word, as [T.S. Eliot] went on to acknowledge, is notoriously slippery and imprecise. It has served to designate a number of radically different stylistic qualities. It has been invoked in order to praise writers, and at other times in order to condemn. (Dixon 1971, p.1)

And Booth concurs that "No one definition will ever pin rhetoric down". (Booth 2004, p.3)

Regarding ideology, Eagleton, similarly argues:

...the term 'ideology' has a whole range of useful meanings, not all of which are compatible with each other. To try to compress this wealth of

may have had in to a single comprehensive definition would thus be unhelpful even if it were possible. (Eagleton 1999, p.1)

Despite the issues, these three terms provide the conceptual apparatus for the methodology adopted here; it is through the debates around and analyses of discourse, rhetoric and ideology that analytical approaches to policy and advisory documents can be developed and applied. And because I want to speak of 'rhetorical strategies', 'discursive constructs' and 'ideological implications' in relation to these documents it is essential that I elaborate my understanding of the terms and how I intend to mobilise them.

Each of these terms will now be dealt with in turn, their value made apparent through an explanation of how they might (and will) be applied to the key documents in this research which construct creativity. I will endeavour to highlight how these terms provide different analytical frameworks, the important distinctions and overlaps between them and the methodological implications of using them.

3.2 Ideology

Here we can draw a useful distinction between the use of the term ideology in different contexts. Frowe (1992), for example, points out that

The purely descriptive or neutral sense of the term, where it simply refers to a set of beliefs such that all beliefs are, *ipso facto*, ideological, renders it otiose. Similarly restricting it to describe only political positions, perhaps its most widespread use, ignores other areas and can lead to a somewhat misconceived characterization of its pejorative connotations as nothing more than knee-jerk reactions. I have my beliefs; my opponents, ideologies. (Frowe 1992, p.43)

But Frowe is resistant to an 'Althusserian' view of ideology which sees it as 'an ineliminable level of social formations' (Frowe 1992, p.43) and comes to the conclusion that 'To describe something as 'ideological' entails the conclusion

that it is unsatisfactory in some way; that it provides an incomplete or deficient understanding of the situation.’ (Frowe 1992, p.43)

For Fairclough, whose development of Critical Discourse Analysis has been a key influence on the methodology of this research, the relationship between discourse and ideology is a crucial site of distinction:

In claiming that a discursive event works ideologically, one is not in the first instance claiming that it is false, or claiming a privileged position from which judgements of truth or falsity can be made. One is claiming that it contributes to the reproduction of relations of power. (Fairclough 1995, p.18)

This indicates how we might retain a sense of the importance of ideology in producing and maintaining power relations, whilst avoiding a reductive Marxist conception of the term whereby it is a synonym for ‘false consciousness’. But even here the notion of ‘reproduction’ is difficult to negate entirely, despite Fairclough’s disavowal of conceptions of ideology which see it as ‘mechanical or deterministic’. (Fairclough 1995,p.18)

So what might it mean to talk of ‘creativity’ as ‘ideological’? To follow Fairclough, it would enable us to see particular versions of it as more powerful than others and to attempt to understand the processes by which these versions become more dominant and accepted as orthodox (a ‘hegemonic’ model). The question remains as to whether we could refer to alternative or oppositional versions of creativity as similarly ideological, given that they may be equally dependent upon a coherent set of beliefs. It becomes problematic, however, if one imagines references to an ‘anti-professional ideology of creativity’, because ideology here suddenly becomes partial, pejorative and similarly ‘false’. The term ‘discourse’, whilst being far from unproblematic itself, offers a way of referring to systems of knowledge and language without necessarily being dragged into binary relations of domination and subordination. It also enable us to recognise that authorised, powerful versions of creativity, such as those produced by government appointed bodies and government departments are

not necessarily unitary or even coherent; a focus on discourse, therefore, facilitates an approach which sees meaning as a site of conflict and contestation. Nevertheless, to argue (as I will) that creativity is ideological is to assert that it is a concept rather than a product of nature, so there is considerable value in retaining this term, and to link it with Barthes' comparable notion of 'myth', in order to critique the process of naturalisation.

3.3 Rhetoric

For Banaji et al., the term rhetoric provides some mileage in relation to issues of creativity. They stipulate a working definition of rhetoric as a 'subset of discourse, characterised by specific properties' and argue that rhetorics are

...highly elaborated structures, drawing on distinctive traditions of philosophical, educational, political and psychological thought. (Banaji et al. 2006, p.5)

A formulation which sounds like a substitute for Foucaultian discourse, although a little later they argue that rhetorics

...produce discursive frameworks such as key terms and taxonomies which can be learnt by practitioners who either need them or are obliged to use them. In this way they feed back into more general 'popular' discourses of creativity. (Banaji et al. 2006, p.5)

The distinction becomes explicit with the statement that

...organised, conscious, structured models of creativity, whether they emerge from policy imperatives, philosophical traditions or empirical research, are always mobilised, or ready to be mobilised, in the interests of intervention in practice or policy, and can be termed rhetorics, as distinct from discourses. (Banaji et al. 2006, p.6)

The conception of rhetorics as being "organised to persuade" and "seeking to bring about consensus, leading in some case to intervention in specific contexts

of practice” (Banaji et al. 2006,p.5) echoes the ‘classical’ definitions that can be found elsewhere (e.g. Dixon 1971 and Booth 2004) and indicates that for these authors rhetoric is conscious, linguistic production by an active agent. And perhaps it is agency which is at stake in this document and which has necessitated a focus on rhetoric rather than discourse, despite the Foucaultian resonance of many of their comments on particular statements. It also appears that, despite the comment that “This report takes as its basic premise the notion that the idea of creativity is constructed as a series of rhetorics” (Banaji et al. 2006, p.4) the status of ‘construction’ is not quite as radical as Foucault’s, that it constitutes representation rather than reality. The ontological status of creativity is not being challenged here, but rather the notion that there is a single definition; the “key objectives of the review are”:

To identify a distinct set of rhetorics of creativity which can be of use for researchers and practitioners in the field of creative learning

To identify a set of cross-cutting themes, posed as questions, which can similarly be used in planning, evaluation and research

To make the argument that creativity is to be seen more productively through these rhetorics than through narrow and unchanging characterisations that seek to endorse particular definitions, making different stances more entrenched and more difficult to reconcile and debate. (Banaji et al. 2006, p.5)

This report, then, perceives the problem of creativity as one of communication and, therefore, focuses on issues of rhetoric rather than discourse.

Nevertheless, there is a claim that rhetoric emerges from discourse:

This review will explore what the different discursive positions claim about creativity, and how they function as rhetorical stances. (Banaji et al. 2006, p.5)

A statement which reveals, perhaps, a tension in this document between what is ‘rhetorical’ and what is ‘discursive’; on one hand we have ‘discursive positions’ – a spatial metaphor suggesting a range of stable locations – and on

the other we have the suggestion that these can function as ‘rhetorical stances’ – another spatial metaphor suggesting a physical pose. At the risk of appearing to nit-pick, it is difficult to understand exactly how these metaphors work; a ‘position’ cannot ‘claim’ and neither can it adopt a pose. A human agent, however, can do both of these things, so how might we interpret this? Does the absence of the human agent, but the transfer of her abilities to discourse, represent an unease with a post structuralist position? Does it reveal that a focus on rhetoric necessitates an agent? Or is this kind of figurative stumble inevitable when grappling with the concept of discourse which, for Foucault, entails a disavowal of the independent, essential human agent? It seems to be the case that this document, like many it critiques, is designed to create the possibility of operationalisation – to produce something which is functional and useful, particularly for those in education. Its institutional context – ‘Creative Partnerships’ – provides a justification for this:

Creative Partnerships aims to influence policy and practice in both the education and cultural sectors. It was established by the Arts Council England, with funding from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) in response to the National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education (NACCCE) report by Ken Robinson...It spearheads a raft of initiatives designed to develop creativity and encompasses social, personal and economic domains. (Banaji et al. 2006, p.2)

This statement from the foreword of the document is not written by the authors, but by representatives of Creative Partnerships who make explicit links with the reforming agenda established by *All Our Futures*. This might explain why *The Rhetorics of Creativity* feels torn, at times, between the radical denunciations of nature and essence offered by analysis based on ‘discourse’ and the far more modest claims about persuasion and style offered by rhetorical analysis. This is not to negate its insights, many of which have provided me with starting points for my own analysis. And my analysis, at best, represents my aspiration to offer ‘critique’, but it may at times function merely as more ‘commentary’.

It is also ironic (and I am sure that the authors cannot fail to see this irony) that in their critique of *All Our Futures* (1999) they comment that:

According to the NACCCE report, and despite its almost overwhelming visual emphasis on drama, dance and art projects, there is a dynamic relationship between technology, science and the arts. (Banaji et al. 2006, p.15)

But in their own publication there is an identical tendency to include images of arts-based 'creativity'; sculpture, painting, dance/theatre and computer arts for example. Some of the captions for these pictures indicate an affiliation with Creative Partnerships, which suggests that they have been included because of institutional determinants, and it is likely that they were all selected at the editorial stage by someone other than the authors. Nevertheless, without speculating for long about the possible origins, it is worth noting that they tend to function illustratively (and rhetorically) rather than critically. And like the images in *Nurturing Creativity in Young People* (2006) (similarly based on drama, dance and art work) and the marginal quotations in *All Our Futures* (1999), there is the suggestion that these are 'safe', self-evident representations of creative endeavour. The images which include human figures either show 'artists' engrossed in creative work or joyful children 'performing' with others. The images of sculptures all depict figurative work (two of human figures, one of a peacock); one of Anthony Gormley's figures in *Another Place* seems to gaze at the horizon in one of them. We might, therefore, argue that a 'rhetoric of the image' (Masterman 1985) is at work here; the pro-social, arts-based rhetoric that Banaji et al. identify in other reports, which, perhaps, they attempt to undermine through analysis, bursts out of their own document, refusing to be repressed.

Creativity may be expressed rhetorically, but rhetoric does not inevitably persuade or become accepted as true or 'common sense' – in other words 'ideological'. It is also possible that there may be rhetorical similarities between statements which are discursively different; in this context, the notion that 'rhetoric is a subset of discourse' may not be helpful. Nevertheless, rhetoric as

term to account for persuasive textual (linguistic and visual) strategies, intentional or not, is an important and useful concept and one which I use repeatedly throughout this research.

3.4 Discourse

As Toril Moi points out, in relation to Cixous' concepts of masculine discourse:

Theoretical discourse is in other words inherently oppressive, a result of masculine libidinal investment. Even the question 'What is it?' is denounced as a sign of the masculine impulse to imprison reality in rigid hierarchical structures. (Moi 1988, p.111)

As Moi's example illustrates, discourse is a useful concept because it identifies the 'performativity' of statements (and, for the purposes of this research, statements about *creativity*); in this context, they do not merely register with differing degrees of 'accuracy' a pre-existing reality, but they construct that 'reality'. The emphasis here on the question 'What is it?' is reminiscent of Popper's focus on 'What is?' questions (Popper 1992, p.62); both Cixous and Popper problematise these simple, quotidian formulations by demonstrating that they produce knowledge in particular, partial ways whilst appearing to be neutral and objective.

In a consideration of the problems with the concept of ideology (which, for him, brought about, therefore, the development of the concept of discourse), Foucault argues that

...the problem does not consist in drawing the line between that in a discourse which falls under that category of scientificity or truth, and that which comes under some other category, but in seeing historically how effects of truth are produced within discourses which in themselves are neither true nor false. (Foucault 1984, p.60)

This is a neat summary of the analytical approach I have adopted to the subject of creativity in specific documents; having identified it as a site of contradiction

and contestation, I am keen to investigate the ways in which it is mobilised in documents which have authority in the domain of education and to consider the implications for such mobilisation.

Garnham (2005) argues similarly for an interrogation of the term 'creative industries' in government policy documents, the use of which

serves a specific rhetorical purpose within policy discourse. It serves as a slogan, as a shorthand reference to, and thus mobilises unreflectively, a range of supporting theoretical and political positions. This lack of reflexivity is essential to its ideological power. It disguises the very real contradictions and empirical weaknesses of the theoretical analyses it mobilises, and by so doing helps to mobilise a very disparate and often potentially antagonistic coalition of interests around a given policy thrust. (Garnham 2005, p.16)

Although he makes an excellent argument, Garnham's use of the term 'discourse' here is virtually synonymous with 'genre' or category of enunciation; nevertheless, the dynamic activation of meaning that he describes is congruent with a Foucaultian concept of discourse. It is tempting, in this research, to attempt to name discourses, to develop a taxonomy of, say 'discourses of creativity', and use the term as a 'count noun' as Lin (2008) does in relation to 'the discourses of media education', but this has a necessarily limiting effect on the conceptualisation of discourse and on what can be said about a particular discursive formation. It also confers upon 'a discourse' a degree of coherence and homogeneity that may not actually be the case, given that a particular statement may activate competing or incompatible discursive frames.

When discourse becomes the adjective 'discursive' it can, like the adjective 'creative' free itself from the rigour and specificity of definition and lend itself to anything which pertains to language and communication, which may be why Fairclough (1995) prefers the term 'discoursal', although Stillar's (1998) use of 'discoursal' seems synonymous with 'discursive' in the general sense. And, as I discuss in the Methodology chapter, the ways in which the term is mobilised,

even within the contiguous disciplines of linguistics, social psychology and cultural studies, can have very different implications.

Whilst I would concur that many statements about creativity are certainly rhetorical, I believe that it is also possible to identify statements (and clusters of statements) which are not designed primarily to persuade (which implies intention), but which instead produce ways of thinking and acting in relation to creativity about which we do not need to be convinced – which operate as ‘common sense’ – and therefore discourse becomes a more useful concept. A Foucaultian approach to discourse, according to Kendall and Wickham, begins by “the recognition of a discourse as a corpus of ‘statements’ whose organisation is regular and systematic” (Kendall and Wickham 1999, p.42) and entails the recognition that “statements involve ‘things’ as well as ‘words’”. They counsel that “The crucial thing here is to avoid the idea that [discourse] is a purely linguistic term (as in most incarnations of ‘discourse analysis’).” (Kendall and Wickham 1999, p.35)

A key example of discourse analysis as a *linguistic* enterprise is Brown and Yule’s (1983) work in which discourse is a synonym for spoken or written communication, although the authors make it clear that theirs is a branch of linguistics which prioritises the utterance and the context – a branch they relate to “pragmatics” (Brown and Yule 1983, p.26). Their analytical strategies are particularly useful in the context of interpersonal communication and they illustrate how concepts such as frames may be useful in decoding printed communication. However, this kind of analysis tends to be limited to understanding discourse as

- Functional
- Intentional
- Isolated interactions.

Stillar’s work, similarly, although theoretically broader in scope, is based on a notion of discourse which he describes as:

...the social activity through which we make meanings with linguistic and other semiotic resources. This term emphasizes the forms of interpretation, interaction, and exchange that pattern text meaning potentials. Discourse concerns the participants involved, the particular kinds of situations in which text plays a part, and the social systems and structures that bear upon how and what texts can mean to those involved. (Stillar 1998, p.12)

A Foucaultian mobilisation of the concept of discourse does not neglect the specificities of language use, but it requires us to conceive of a field of power/meaning which catches us and 'performs' us. Discourse in this context is fundamentally ideological in that through it we construct our identities and make particular kinds of sense of the world. To illustrate how this strategy might be more useful we could look, as mentioned earlier, at the way in which behavioural psychology produces creativity discursively, not only through its language and arguments expressed in academic papers, but through the tools which it has devised in order to identify the object of study, such as psychometric tests, and the administration of these tests in laboratory conditions. The term discourse then, in a Foucaultian context, frees us from a specifically linguistic focus, although, regarding speech, writing and apparent intention, I will, like Banaji et al., inevitably, refer to rhetorical features.

3.5 Summary

Despite the slippage between these terms at various points depending upon context and writer, I think each has value in informing and underpinning an analysis of creativity literature, naturally occurring data and policy/advisory documents.

Ideology is a term with baggage, but I shall implement it to refer to culturally specific beliefs, rather than propaganda-induced 'false consciousness' – the product of a coercive state – or partisan political beliefs. Barthes' (1973) notion of myth provides a touchstone here, as does Žižek's (1989) concept of ideology; both argue that all aspects of lived experience, thought and consciousness are ideologically informed and underpinned. Ideology here, as formulated by

Althusser (1971) can be conceived as 'fields' of power which exist in and around us.

I shall endeavour to avoid using rhetoric and discourse as 'count nouns'.

Rhetoric is a valuable and recurring term for me in this research, but most useful when it refers adjectivally to the persuasive strategies of language use – the use of tropes such as metaphor, simile and hyperbole, for example, as well as structural features, such as the use of syllogistic reasoning. Rhetoric does not, of course, exist in a vacuum and I will relate it to ideological and discursive functions where necessary.

Discourse is perhaps the most difficult term to pin down, but Foucault's use of it refers to the production of knowledge and 'truth' through the language and practice of everyday life and, therefore, makes it invaluable in a discussion of creativity. Discourse in this sense, entails taking into account the material conditions of 'statements', as well as what the statements 'say'. In other words, and with particular reference to the objects of study in this research, it means taking into account the fact, for example, that a policy document exists in order to regulate creativity in education, and considering the implications of this for practice and the construction and validation of particular things as 'knowledge'. Foucault's concept of discourse enables us to conceptualise language, documents and practices as interrelated elements in the production of 'reality' and 'truth'.

Interruption 3: Authorship

I am not unaware of the irony of using a reflective mode – a mode which is predicated upon the notion of the creative, self-determining subject – in the context of work which is theoretically predicated upon the absence of such a subject. But the justification is that transparency of discourse is at stake. Perhaps ‘transparency’ is the wrong word, but explicitness about discursive determinants might be better. And my theoretical mentors, Barthes and Foucault, despite seeking the dissolution of the subject, have often adopted a meta-discursive mode in order to highlight their own cognitive struggles or, alternatively, to draw attention to their own captivity within discourse. Consequently I will attempt to use these interruptions in a similar way and, at the same time, acknowledge that this mode is in itself a discourse with rules, limitations and conventions.

It is a mode well suited to drawing attention to the processes of production which are usually effaced and, as such, it enables me to connect it with my earlier educational work in which this was the primary aim; teaching about documentary, for example, was not simply a process of identifying stylistic conventions, but of arguing that those conventions perform an ideological and rhetorical function in that they seek to persuade an audience to adopt a particular point of view and to accept the transparency of the representation. So, in this mode, I can reflect upon the nature of enunciation in this document – I can draw attention to the shifts between my representation of a subject position as “I” or “we” and speculate why this might be the case. I can also draw attention to the logic of inclusion and exclusion, which might otherwise go without comment; the process of learning to be a researcher is a process of decision making – including, of course, the decision to produce these interruptions – and this mode creates a space in which some of these decisions can be discussed more frankly, perhaps.

The references which are littered throughout this thesis, for example, perform (perhaps primarily) a rhetorical function; they persuade the reader (I hope) that the work is well-researched, that arguments have been synthesised from those proposed by others and that, therefore, I can claim some degree of authority. But the source of such references is rarely addressed in work like this or, rather, *the means by which the references were sourced*. I can claim, with a degree of honesty, that many of the references that appear here were found by trawling through bibliographies and an iterative process of searching various databases with variations of key words. But some of them resulted

from informal encounters and chance: at an academic conference a chat with a colleague turns to Susan Leigh Star and her work on classification; whilst browsing in a charity shop I come across a salient anecdote in Michael Simkins autobiography; a book which contains a collection of comments about faith edited by John Brockman (on my shelf for years) takes me to a similar collection on the subject of creativity. I mention these examples because they reveal the extent of serendipity in this work and remind me that I can make no claims to have produced anything definitive, objective or ‘scientific’. Regarding Foucault, whose presence can be felt throughout this research, I feel as if I have a relationship with his work like that of Nicholson Baker’s to John Updike:

Hardly a day has passed over the last thirteen years in which Updike has not occupied at least a thought or two; and while his constant summonings were at the outset brought on more by skeptical admiration than by simple enjoyment, the enjoyment and admiration were increasingly there as well. (Baker 1991, p.30)

Baker then goes on to confess how little he has actually read of Updike’s work – “fewer than five pages” here, “fewer than twenty pages” there, concluding that he has read “less than half the words Updike has written.” (Baker 1991, p.32) This combination of intimacy and ignorance is a familiar one, but not an easy one to admit to.

It is also impossible for me not to address my own mobilisation of forms of address, given the degree to which I am using this as an analytical strategy in this chapter. When I use the pronoun “we” instead of “I” what does this signify? There is a sense in which I am trying to share the responsibility for particular observations in order to make them more legitimate – it is not just “I”, but “we” who can identify X or Y; in other words – “look, it’s obvious!” I notice that I often pair this “we” with a modal verb – “can” or “may”. For example, a particularly tentative offering will begin “we might infer from this that...”, in which the pronoun shift and modal qualifier remove most of the responsibility for the assertion from me. On the other hand, it is possible that by using this particular device I hope to imply that a banal observation has the status of a profound one because I am attempting to remove myself from being implicated in it – a kind of double sleight of hand.

4 The practice of theory (methodology)

Any body of knowledge or discipline in the human sciences that claims to produce definitions in its own area of expertise, is today faced with the observation that so-called empirical definitions change historically and discontinuously; that they do not reflect transcendental or universal subjects meanings, structures, realities, or processes. (Allen 1986 in Powers 2007, p.25)

4.1 Introduction

It is significant that so much of the work on creativity, so many of the conversations about it seek to define it. So what do these attempts to define a concept reveal about the situations within which they occur? And what do the different mobilisations of these definitions reveal about the operation of those situations, fields and disciplines? If “The act of defining or re-defining something...constitutes a move of power” (Powers 2007, p.25) then it is necessary to examine the discursive production of definitions of creativity and assess the nature of such operations, to disentangle the threads (and, in doing so, inevitably perform another discursive operation). The challenge is to avoid imposing an arbitrary explanatory model and to avoid merely providing another gloss or commentary on the texts under scrutiny.

4.2 Textual/discourse analysis

My analytical strategy in this work is to decode – to apply a theoretical approach which reveals how texts construct versions of creativity which are always relative and ideologically or *discursively* based. This is not a typical approach to creativity, although some notable examples are Banaji et al. (2006), Gibson (2005) and Neelands and Choe (2010). All of these researchers pay attention to the detail of enunciation in policy documents about creativity and refer to rhetoric, discourse and ideology, although with slightly different respective inflections, and my research is undoubtedly influenced by and an extension of the work done here. However, I am trying to take account of more than just the ‘texts’ with which I am working; I do not wish merely to provide another

“commentary” (Mills 2004, p.61) on them (in fact, I argue that they provide this commentary for each other) but to demonstrate how they authorise and grapple with particular versions of creativity. Methodologically then my influences can also be found in post structuralism and post modernism, in that this research is not about using scientific method to uncover a universal truth, or even generalisable theory, but to examine the ways in which such ‘truths’ are produced about creativity. It constitutes a circumvention of the ‘what is?’ question, on the basis that the search for such equations merely reproduces and defers meaning; instead it is built upon ‘how is?’ questions, which seek to identify the conditions of the production of meaning.

Eagleton, in describing the ‘gains of structuralism’ in literary theory explains that it represents ‘a remorseless demystification of literature’ and tells us that

Loosely subjective talk was chastised by a criticism which recognized that the literary work, like any other product of language, is a *construct*, whose mechanisms could be classified and analysed like the objects of any other science. (Eagleton 1983, p.106)

Whilst acknowledging that analytical work on policy documents about creativity is not the same as analytical work on ‘literature’, there is a sense that their common investment in their subject is not dissimilar to “The Romantic prejudice that the poem, like a person, [harbours] a vital essence, a soul which it [is] discourteous to tamper with” (Eagleton 1983, p.106) and, therefore, an analytical methodology which exposes the mechanisms at work in such discourse seems entirely appropriate. Although the language of, say, *All Our Futures* is not ‘poetic’ (although, as I point out later, it uses certain poetic and rhetorical devices), I argue that its investment in the importance and an ‘essence’ of creativity is ‘Romantic’.

My methodology, then, also owes something to ‘critical discourse analysis’ which is, itself not a unitary term for an orthodox set of procedures, rather it describes an approach to research which, as Bryman suggests, is *anti-realist* and *constructionist*.

...it denies that here is an external reality awaiting a definitive portrayal by the researcher and it therefore disavows the notion that any researcher can arrive at a privileged account of the aspect of the social world being investigated...the emphasis is placed on the versions of reality propounded by members of the social setting being investigated and on the fashioning of that reality through their renditions of it. (Bryman 2001, p.360)

In these terms, the practice of discourse analysis could easily overlap with rhetorical analysis, in that it becomes a form of sceptical reading. And it is true that a systematic scepticism and refusal to take anything for granted underpins analysis of rhetoric, ideology and discourse – even in the Foucaultian sense. Fairclough’s version of discourse analysis adds the word ‘critical’ before it which gives it an overt political purpose – the explicit goal of which is to critique “the social reproduction of relations of domination.” (Fairclough 1995, p.24)

What is at stake in the different inflections of discourse analysis is the *agency of the subject*: in the ‘textual/rhetorical’ mode subjectivity is not an issue – the individual’s control and manipulation of their own enunciation and marshalling of the repertoire of resources available to them is not considered problematic; in the ‘Foucaultian’ mode the focus is on the ways in which textual (and material) conditions limit the possibilities of particular kinds of utterances and limit the range and nature of subject positions available. Both modes will appear to, and may actually, be doing the same things at particular times, but the stakes are higher in the latter, in which the stance is more radical and challenging. It should be clear, however, that this ‘anti-realist’ stance is not the same as philosophical idealism – Foucault admits the ‘extra discursive’ existence of things, but argues that such things only become *meaningful* within discourse. For my purposes, then, I am not, of course, denying the physical existence of art, music and literature, but arguing that they are only constituted as ‘creative’ through discursive processes. I hesitated for a moment when writing ‘art, music and literature’, aware that I was using exclusively arts-based examples as illustrations; if I were to accept the proposition that ‘creativity’ includes work in

the sciences, the examples would be likely to be conceptual breakthroughs, rather than the physical production of something – they would not have a ‘physical existence’ in the same way. This, perhaps, might explain why the general emphasis on creativity tends to be arts-based – the situation is analogous with this description in Rowntree’s comments on assessment:

For a student’s work to count for anything, it usually has to result in a product – a painting, a laboratory notebook, a three-dimensional model, or the perennial essay...They appear to exist for all to see in the same tangible form, with some ‘true value’ that we feel we ought to be able to agree on. One is reminded of the ecologist examining the regurgitated pellets of owls or the faeces of badgers as a more convenient means of establishing the creatures’ diets than hanging around trying to observe what they eat. (Rowntree 1977, p.137)

In the context of Foucault’s work, however, discourse analysis is more than simply ‘textual analysis’, rather, as Kendall and Wickham explain, it entails an examination of how subject positions are constructed and power is produced, in other words, “the identification of rules that ensure a practice is material and discursive at the same time”:

These rules...ensure that knowledge cannot be reduced to thinking, thoughts, opinions, ideas, and so on, but is best understood as a material practice with definite, public, material conditions of operation like literacy training, schooling more generally, printing, professional organisations for only some knowledge endeavours (the sciences, engineering, medicine, etc.), and many others. (Kendall and Wickham 1999, p.45)

The documents that constitute the primary research in this thesis are not merely ‘texts’, but can be thought of as resonating nodes within particular discursive fields – education, psychology and government, for example. A Foucaultian approach to them can help us reveal how they are constituted through pre-suppositions about the nature of knowledge, assessment and cultural value and

how the abstract concept of creativity emerges as a more or less operational term within this context. Similarly, as Mills argues

...the main reason for conducting an analysis of the structures of discourse is not to uncover the truth or the origin of a statement but rather to discover the support mechanisms which allow it to be said and keep it in place. (Mills 2004, p.45)

So why is this work necessary? Firstly because creativity has become such a significant concept in contemporary culture – it represents personal growth, effective management and a vibrant economy, for example. Secondly, because much of what has been written and said, although ostensibly about one ‘thing’ – creativity – is actually about many different things (one of my questions is why this glossing, this conflation is so desirable/seductive and what the effect of this might be). Thirdly, creativity has recently been moved to the foreground of education – it is a key focus of government education policy, features in the title of a new qualification and, most significantly it is operationalised in the recent Ofsted document (analysed in Chapter 8) in which “creative approaches” become aligned with a set of pedagogic prescriptions.

The austerity of a Foucaultian approach is difficult to maintain, but perhaps necessary given the seductive and promiscuous nature of the concept under scrutiny. It seems like an appropriate approach given the ways in which creativity is often the site where different, often opposing, rhetorics meet and their contradictions ignored or resolved as creativity is glimpsed, disappears and is reformed through other discursive operations. Sheridan’s description of Foucault’s approach to ‘madness’ provides an apt analogy:

...when Foucault speaks of ‘madness’ he does so not from the standpoint of reason. He offers no definition of the term. He refuses to see it as a constant, unchanging reality, man’s growing understanding of which is reflected in an ever more refined vocabulary. The word is useful to Foucault precisely because it is non-medical, because it is used by everyone and spans the entire period with which he is concerned.

Madness is not initially a fact, but a judgement - even if that judgement becomes itself a fact. It is a judgement passed by one part of the human mind on another. One person on another. (Sheridan 1980, p.13)

Creativity, as I have discussed in the review of different ways of conceiving it, is sometimes explicitly equated with 'madness' or, at least, symptomatically related to forms of psychological or neurophysiological aberration, but despite this congruence, my point here is a methodological one; Foucault circumvents definition and rejects essence, focusing instead on judgements and I, identifying some similar features in the reification of the abstract noun 'creativity', am attempting something similar. However, it is likely that the rigours of such analysis will prove, at times, too inflexible and that it will become necessary to produce re-formulations of existing statements in the forms of codes and taxonomies, thus slipping into the sort of epistemological production that Foucault critiques.

Central to my methodology is the concept of discourse and, although I have distinguished between this and the concepts of ideology and rhetoric in the previous chapter, it is necessary to take some time to explain the methodological implications of this; through an examination of approaches to discourse by, for example, Fairclough and Foucault, the theoretical foundations for analytical activity will become clear. I will then explain how such theoretical foundations will necessitate particular analytical operations on particular texts.

4.3 Using Foucault's methods

A Foucaultian engagement with texts which produce creativity is predicated on the idea that language and discourse are not neutral or transparent means of describing or registering the real world; rather, they are always active in constructing 'reality' by making it meaningful. The approach also avoids a conception of the concept of creativity as some kind of evolution or linear progression, but rather attends to the particularities of its various contexts of construction. This means avoiding the temptation to account for the shifts in the concept of creativity by deferring the explanation to a notional overarching logic – that of the economics of capitalism, for example, although this may be one in

a network of elements which has prompted the generation of policy and advisory documents. Giddens explains Foucault's approach thus:

In Foucault's work, the decentring of the subject became both a methodological and, in a certain sense, a substantial phenomenon. History was constituted in epistemes, or more latterly in fields of power, through which human subjects were disclosed; and, in the current age, we were moving away from an era dominated by a particular type of constitution of subjectivity. We were witnessing the 'end of the individual'. (Giddens 1995, p.262)

And although Giddens is averse to the erasure of the subject from history, his summary of Foucault's position highlights the issue of subjectivity and opens up the possibility of using this as a way into understanding discourses which produce the 'creative subject' – the creative student and creative teacher, for example.

This approach is, arguably, legitimated by the fact that, as I assert, there is no such thing as 'creativity'; creativity does not have ontological status - it is a concept which, unlike things which have a physical as well as discursive existence – Africa, weapons and young people, for example – is inferred through the material existence of other things – art, inventions and mathematical calculations, for example. Therefore, an 'anti-realist' approach might prevent us from being seduced by the rhetoric of 'creativity. I am mindful, at this stage, of Kendall and Wickham's prescription that the analysis of discourse should entail "the identification of rules that ensure a practice is material and discursive at the same time" (Kendall and Wickham 1999, p.45), but although creativity becomes manifest through material and discursive practices, it does not have a physical, pre-discursive existence. There is a qualitative difference here which Kendall and Wickham highlight in a later work in a discussion of social construction:

...the emphasis on social construction – a nominalist approach – is useful for some examples, but the nominalist approach can easily be

over-extended: one would not want to be too nominalist about rocks, for example. (Kendall and Wickham 2006, pp.3-4)

Mills (2004) draws attention to the different ways in which discourse is used as a concept in different disciplines and their associated methodologies. She highlights the fact that discourse analysis within linguistics is a kind of functionalist approach to language; it

...aims to make explicit those implicit norms and rules for the production of language, and is particularly interested in the way that discourse consists of sets of structured hierarchical units. (Mills 2004, p.124)

As such, however, it tends to ignore the ways in which social relations bear upon, and are manifested in, speech and written texts; although it usefully draws attention to the ways in which meaning is not merely inherent in the content of communication, it tends not to problematise the nature of such meanings, the nature of interpretation and the differential stakes that might obtain.

A discursive analysis of advisory and policy documents has been chosen as an approach because it can reveal the ideological underpinning of the construction of creativity. Advisory documents are frequently translated into policy and, subsequently, teacher training and specifications and, although there may be disagreement over content, they tend to be accepted as rigorous, neutral and authoritative. The assumption tends to be that they have been thought through and written by experts and are, to some extent, unimpeachable. Jeffrey and Troman, identifying the significance of such texts argue that:

A number of policy texts are present in educational settings at any one time and each influences the power and significance of others. Policy discourses are one of the main means whereby policy texts, in the settings in which they operate, influence the value, the implementation and the embedding of those policies. (Jeffrey and Troman 2009, p.2)

Similarly, Fairclough, in a defensive stance, and advocating the use of discourse analysis argues that

The best way of convincing social scientists is by doing socially and culturally sensitive discourse analysis, using analytical frameworks which are accessible, clearly suited to social research, and complement other form of (e.g. ethnographic, or organizational) analysis. What will clinch the argument is showing that textual analysis is better able than other methods to capture sociocultural processes in the course of their occurrence, in all their complex, contradictory, incomplete and often messy materiality. (Fairclough 1995, pp.185-186)

So an analysis of how these supposedly neutral documents are actively constituting and producing the concepts which are assumed to be pre-existing will be a valuable exercise. It may be argued that a focus on 'texts' is too limiting, and it is true that this research can only provide a selective and partial discussion of how creativity is constructed; future work could usefully examine how the concept is mobilised and made meaningful in actual classrooms, studios and laboratories (Jeffrey and Troman (2009) have begun to do this in the context of primary education, where they find a dynamic negotiation by teachers between the 'creativity' and 'performativity' discourses). The selected documents, however, constitute evidence of how creativity is being constructed in specific institutional and temporal contexts, how it is being modelled in a particular authoritative way and how particular rhetorical, discursive and ideological factors can be seen to be at work. The documents are, in themselves, a form of practice as well as implying and influencing other forms of subsequent practice. The results of this research could establish some concrete starting points from which to interrogate creativity in specific conditions of material existence and lived experience.

There is a connection here with the 'policy sociology' practised by, for example, Stephen Ball who, in an analysis of the background to the 1988 Education Act, identifies the determinants of and conflicts within educational policy. He argues that "...values do not float free of their social context. We need to ask whose

values are validated in policy and whose are not.” (Ball 1990, p.3) Ball sees the ideological imprint of Thatcherism in education policy here and, regarding the emergence of ‘creativity’ as a policy term, some have taken a similar approach to it and identified the ideological imprint of the erstwhile Labour government’s ‘knowledge economy’. Although my critical stance is comparable, I am not seeking to demonstrate that creativity is determined unproblematically and coherently by the exigencies of the economy in the documents selected for analysis. But there is a focus on the construction of value and the ways in which a concept is translated into suggestions and even prescriptions for practice. Taylor et al. describe this stance as “critical” in their review of the literature of policy analysis:

Most of [the] early literature tended to be positivistic in its methodology and functionalist in assumptions. While this work continues, and is particularly evident in political science, some more recent work in the US is critical of this tradition and is generally referred to as *interpretive* – meaning that it takes an anti-positivist methodological stance. In the British and Australian literature, work taking a similar methodological stance tends to be termed *critical* and included neo-marxist approaches utilising conflict rather than functionalist perspectives. (Taylor et al. 1997, p.38)

This type of analysis can be criticised for focusing narrowly on one type of data and, perhaps, using this data to imagine the effects and impact on a notional constituency (c.f. Mills 2004, pp.140-141). And Fairclough acknowledges the arguments against “Text analysis in isolation from audience reception”, commenting that

The argument is very relevant to CDA [Critical Discourse Analysis], for part of the critique is directed at analysts who postulate ideological effects solely on the basis of analysis of texts without considering the diverse ways in which such texts may be interpreted and responded to. But there is a danger here of throwing the baby out with the bathwater,

by abandoning textual analysis in favour of analysis of audience reception. (Fairclough 1995, p.9)

Fairclough argues, therefore, that a focus on texts is legitimate and that analysis of them “is therefore an important part, if only a part, of the picture”. (Fairclough 1995, p.9)

The implications of this argument are clear for my own research; the focus is narrow, but the documents have institutional significance. And as to imagining the effects on an audience, I would argue that, now that creativity has become something that Ofsted is prescribing to schools and colleges in order to raise standards, the model of creativity which it has adopted, translated and reinforced will necessarily have some kind of impact. The nature of this impact is beyond the scope of this research, so I have restricted my speculations and conclusions to asserting that, for example, Ofsted’s position on creativity determines and legitimates certain kinds of activities. It is also possible to assert that Ofsted has power and authority and that the implementation of its inspection regime regulates and modifies the behaviour of teachers and institutions. So even if it cannot be demonstrated that teachers and parents will read and interpret *Learning: Creative Approaches that Raise Standards* in a particular way (although I will argue that the mode of address and construction of subject positions limits the range of possible readings) it is reasonable to assume that in most schools and colleges there will be individuals who will have the responsibility of doing this and then translating it, resisting it or negotiating with it at a local level. Future research could examine this process of translation and implementation and consider the implications for meaning and conceptual production. This research, then, involves analysing texts as productive mechanisms and identifying the material consequences of their discursive work; Jeffrey and Troman argue (regarding policy texts generally) that:

These texts are written documents but they also contain values through specific discourses mediated by language and beliefs about the role of education in society and the economy. These discourses bring objects into being...and they construct particular types of social relation through

the relative strength of the practices they determine. (Jeffrey and Troman 2009, p.5)

4.4 Widening the net

In addition to the analysis of documents, another strategy which has been used to produce 'data' is the generation of definitions; at every opportunity during the course of the research – workshops, training days, conferences, teaching sessions – I have asked the participants to write their definitions of creativity. The value of such responses – included here as an appendix – is that they constitute evidence of the desire for and struggle with reification. They also provide a small bridge between the analysis of the documents (which inevitably lacks discussion of real people and real practices) and constituencies which might have a stake in creativity. Analysis of these responses reveals patterns – 'repeatable statements' – which can be illuminated through analysis of their discursive features. It would be surprising if there were no rhetorical conformity between some of the responses and, although no cause and effect relationship is asserted, it is possible to argue that particular cultural myths about creativity obtain in both the documents and the participants and, in addition, that similar 'textual manoeuvres' are necessary in order to make sense of, operationalise and possess the concept.

The method, overall then, is to look for things in texts which are contradictory – look for tensions within them and look for certain kinds of nomenclature. The questions I want to ask are:

- Is there a sense of struggling against alternatives in the formulation of the idea of creativity?
- What kinds of things are being drawn into the discursive 'frame'?
- What kinds of things are neglected or rejected in this frame?
- What kinds of presuppositions are evident?
- How do descriptions of and prescriptions for practice generate creativity conceptually?
- How, generally, is creativity being modelled through rhetorical and ideological means?

The key documents have been selected because they have the concept of creativity embedded in them. My analytical strategy is to unpick the ways in which the concept has been embedded through using elements of critical discourse analysis – at the level of the word, the sentence and larger units of meaning. These larger units might include headings, the way a page is laid out, illustrations, typographical features and mode of address. There will be particular attention paid to moments in the texts where there is a need to articulate the concept, the moments where the implicit is made explicit. When the articulation of the concept is required to be explicit there is an opportunity to identify how certain approaches are rejected and others retained by examining the ways in which they are framed. The hunt is for the implicit concepts which become evident when the discursive frame is active and where it is possible to identify the kinds of discursive practices which are necessitated or validated through the mobilisation of such concepts.

Clearly this work does not fit into the canon of creativity research in any particular field – not psychology and not pedagogy, for example. But it should illuminate aspects of both of these; it should reveal how ideologies, discourses and rhetorics of creativity circulate in a particular set of educational documents and how they borrow from (intentionally or otherwise) each other and from other discursive fields.

4.5 Creativity and ‘superstructure’

It is necessary to acknowledge arguments that the discursive production of creativity in the context of education is determined by the needs of the economy; some suggest that the inevitable requirements of the economic ‘base’ lurk secretively behind the utopian rhetoric which is merely designed to deceive (“rhetrickery” to use Booth’s (2004) term). These arguments are persuasive – it might be the case that post-industrial societies are investing in the idea of becoming knowledge economies, but this does not necessarily or wholly account for the ways in which creativity is framed/constructed. In fact one of my suggestions is that in the process of being defined, the concept of creativity disappears and appears simultaneously; if demonstrable this would make it hard to argue convincingly that creativity has been decisively co-opted in an

instrumental way to support the economy, despite overt strenuous efforts to do this (cf. Selzer and Bentley 1999). I suggest, at the moment, that whilst it is possible to see the ideological imprint of the political need for the 'knowledge economy' in the documents in question, that 'creativity' is far too opulent and, paradoxically, impoverished a signifier to be contained in this way; elsewhere I have used the metaphorical adjective 'slippery' in relation to creativity and the image this conjures up of, perhaps, an eel may be appropriate in conveying something of the experience of attempts to pin down creativity. Sometimes it is possible to see the concept congealing in a particular way – the eel being jellied, perhaps – but this is only ever temporary and partial.

Amernic and Craig (2004) provide a model for this kind of 'infra-structural' analysis and their stance constitutes opposition to a perceived attempt at global domination by AOLTimeWarner. In their analysis of the company's internet policy statement they state their aims clearly (referring to other work on organisational discourses):

...we endeavor to dismantle dichotomies and expose them as false distinctions; examine silences or what is not said fill voids by 'attending to disruptions and contradictions [in] places where the text fails to make sense'; decipher taboos by 'focusing on the element that is most alien to a text or context'; and interpret metaphors 'as a rich source of meanings'. We conclude that the centrality of rhetoric in the AOLTimeWarner statement is a means of privileging strategic perspectives of a mega-corporation and of influencing public policy and social expectations.' (Amernic and Craig 2004, pp.22-23)

My methodological strategy may have some common elements with this, but the ideological stance is different; I am not assuming that there is a 'conspiracy' to define creativity in a particular way because this could be translated in to power and influence for particular stakeholders. So my aim is not to demonstrate that 'authorised versions' of creativity are partial, deficient or faulty and, subsequently, offer a more 'complete' or 'proper' version; rather, the aim here is to demonstrate how these versions are, inevitably, constructed

discursively, ideologically and rhetorically, as any version is or would be. The point is not to counter one version of creativity with another, but to challenge the investment in a notional 'essence' of creativity by showing how this is effected in key texts. Is this just so much quibbling about words? In a way, yes. But, to construct it more persuasively, more rhetorically, it is an engagement with the construction of a concept – a concept which garners time, attention, money and which dictates changes to practice. It is also a set of case studies which reveal the necessary rhetorical strategies if an abstract concept is to be reified and operationalised and, in this sense, it tells us something about the relationship between knowledge, power and institutionalised education.

The four documents which have been selected for analysis are:

- *All Our Futures: Creativity, Culture and Education* (1999)
- *Creativity: Find it, Promote it* (QCA 2004)
- *Nurturing Creativity in Young People* (the 'Roberts Report') (2006) and the *Government Response* to this document
- *Learning: Creative Approaches that Raise Standards* (Ofsted 2010a)

The rationale for this selection can be summarised thus:

- *All Our Futures* produces a particular model for creativity in education which is partial, contradictory and explicitly 'stipulative' and 'indicative'.
- This version has been adopted and translated by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and is then manifested with explicit references to existing authorised practice in *Nurturing Creativity in Young People* and the Government response to this. The version acquires authority via the 'commentaries' and 'translations', however, it also marks a shift towards a 'cognitive', 'inspectable' model of creativity which is utilised in the Ofsted document.
- The Ofsted document produces a version of creativity which depends explicitly upon the authorisation which precedes it, and identifies it with a set of pedagogic practices within the standards framework. Thus it is operationalised and betrays the determinations of an inspection context.

I argue that these documents form an 'intertext'; they comment on and modify each other, reinforcing a definition of creativity via their individual, borrowed and

shared authority. This definition is necessarily limited and exclusive, despite the overt claims of inclusivity. However, it cannot be 'explained away' by identifying determinants in the ideology of the 'knowledge economy'; rather, *it is necessary to attend to the specific details of the documents where we can observe creativity's shift from something abstract into something which can be regulated and administered.*

4.6 Analysing policy

This application of discourse theory is characterised by an attempt to suspend the temptation to denounce everything which develops within education as an inevitable characteristic of a component of the 'ideological state apparatus'; instead it is characterised by an attempt to show that, despite the rhetoric, creativity is becoming something in official documents which can be managed within existing structures and translated into tasks. And in this sense I am examining 'policy documents', although the inverted commas indicate that this term may be as contentious as many of the others roped into service in this thesis. Taylor et al. highlight some of the problems with defining policy, citing Cunningham's observation (which sounds remarkably similar to a particular statement about creativity) that "policy is a bit like an elephant – you recognise one when you see it, but it is somewhat more difficult to define". (Taylor et al. 1997, p.23) They conclude that

Policy processes accrue both prior to the production of a policy text and afterwards, through the stages of implementation and reinterpretation. Policy is rearticulated as it is recontextualised across the policy cycle. This is why it is difficult to pin policy down and give it a simple definition. (Taylor et al. 1997, p.35)

It might be useful, therefore, to see these documents as constitutive of a policy process, whereby creativity is articulated and rearticulated, modelled and remodelled across a selective portion of space and time. However, this research is not 'policy analysis' in the institutionalised, academic sense described by, for example, Hogwood and Gunn (1984), rather, it takes policy documents as examples in which creativity is discursively produced.

My approach is essentially ‘micro-synchronic’, in that I am taking a temporally narrow snapshot of what I consider to be significant and important in four key documents dispersed over a ten-year period. There is, undoubtedly a larger scale diachronic job to be done here as well, of the kind, perhaps, begun by Fleming (2008) with his history of arts education. And whilst I am indebted to Foucault’s methods, I have resisted the temptation to even consider a diachronic macro analysis on the basis of some micro evidence, partly because of pragmatic reasons – the limitations of a PhD – and partly because I have tried to maintain the suspension of judgement throughout this work and reach any conclusions tentatively.

One practical approach, illustrative of this kind of methodological strategy, is exemplified by Fairclough in his analysis of the use of the term ‘enterprise discourse’ in Lord Young’s speeches in the 80s, and a Department of Trade and Industry brochure. Fairclough’s strategy is to tease out

an unstable picture of various senses being structured and restructured in relation to each other according to shifting strategies – a field of potential meaning, and sets of transformations upon that field according to wider political strategies – rather than a meaning. (Fairclough 1995, p.112)

And his focus upon documentary evidence provides us with some examples of durable, assertive data. The ‘various senses’ referred to above are the different versions of ‘enterprise’ in this evidence, versions which Fairclough derives from the ‘non count’ dictionary definitions of the word. In this analysis he finds evidence of the different senses of ‘enterprise’ being “hierarchized” for strategic purposes through the means of different linguistic devices (he does not use the term, but I would suggest that ‘rhetorical devices’ would be an appropriate term of reference here) and argues, ultimately, that this particular discourse

is not a well-defined closed entity, but rather a set of tendencies – transformations within fields that, at least at the level of transformations

across discourse types in the order of discourse, are of a diffuse nature.
(Fairclough 1995, p.127)

The key methodological gains, for me, from utilising this approach are:

A focus on the construction of meaning rather than seeking to identify a gap between reality and representation;

- A focus on vocabulary, grammatical features, syntax and rhetoric to account for the production of both creativity and authority;
- A use of the concept of intertextuality to account for the ways in which discourses exist through and between texts (rather than merely within texts);
- Identification of the importance of temporal and spatial dimensions in constructing meaning;
- The use of the concept of equilibrium and instability to model the contingent nature of meaning.

All of these suggest what things may be salient in the documents I am analysing, as well as offering some ways of engaging with them in a methodical, systematic way. There is even a link between our respective themes when Fairclough suggests that concept of enterprise may be opposed in different domains and, possibly therefore, subject to transformation as different discourses struggle over it:

This may be, for example, a matter of struggle over the meaning of 'enterprising' by perhaps applying it to activities distant from business, or of drawing upon an alternative vocabulary (e.g. focusing upon cultivating creativity rather than enterprise in education). (Fairclough 1995, p.122)

Despite the value of this approach, there are three areas in which I would like to push the methodology further or modify its assumptions. Firstly, although Fairclough focuses on the ways in which the concept of enterprise is modified, transformed and positioned within particular hierarchies, there is less emphasis on internal contradiction and conflict. Opposition and resistance are referred to as possibilities between domains, but I suggest that it is possible to find manifestations of this even within particular documents. In the analysis of

'enterprise' Fairclough argues that particular inflections or "senses" of the term become dominant at particular points, but doesn't seek to argue that these different meanings may undermine each other, merely that they create a diffusion of meaning. Secondly, and this is a closely related point, there is a tendency to assume that the characteristics of a text are strategically determined by the producer and to ascribe this intention to broader political and economic changes in society. This creates a sense of inevitability about the nature of discourse in authorised contexts – that it will be subordinate to the aims of those in power and be a tool in a hegemonic process; despite any diffusion, it will essentially constitute an element in the plan to establish consent. Whilst I acknowledge that this possibility exists in the documents about creativity, I would suggest that the meanings and understandings of this term are so diverse that the attempts to marshal it in a particular, coherent, instrumental way are undermined. This constitutes then, on my part, a slight shift towards textual autonomy. Thirdly, I am uneasy about attributing names to discourses, as Fairclough does here; his use of the term 'enterprise discourse' is a useful pragmatic move in the context of this analysis, but it suggests that there is a coherent, homogeneous, stable entity with specific characteristics – 'discourse' in the popular sense, in other words. But having said this, it would be remiss of me not to point out that 'enterprise discourse' appears in inverted commas in the chapter title, which, in full, is "What might we mean by 'Enterprise Discourse'?" so there are qualifiers here. And, in addition, Fairclough points out that

A discourse type from this perspective is just a configuration of elements with greater or lesser durability – or rather network of related (and perhaps quite loosely related) configurations across discursal domains. (1995, p.128)

which suggests a far less unitary conception of discourse than I have imputed to him above. The previous chapter explored in more detail the ways in which the terms discourse, rhetoric and ideology are used and, specifically, how I intend to work with them in this research.

Another set of methodologically useful strategies has been derived from Gale's work on Critical Policy Sociology (2001), in which he demonstrates how three different approaches to higher education entry policy in Australia may serve to reinforce the rigour of such research whilst helping to define the "what, how and why" of such work. He argues that these approaches are not mutually exclusive and that there may be overlap between them, depending upon the agenda of the researcher. His use of Foucaultian terms, such as archaeology and genealogy make them particularly appealing to me, especially as he admits "to not being fully attentive to Foucault's renditions of archaeology and genealogy, even though these have influenced the methods of policy analysis I imagine here." (Gale 2001, pp.384-385) He argues, in his defence, however, that Foucault invites researchers to take license with his methods and, for me, this offers a way of retaining Foucault as an epistemological influence whilst sometimes failing to maintain the methodological fidelity advocated by Kendall and Wickham (1999).

Gale's categories of Critical Policy Sociology are:

- Policy Historiography
- Policy Archaeology
- Policy Genealogy

There are certainly elements in the first two of these which provide some analytical strategies and justifications for the kind of work I am doing on the documents I have identified as significant. Gale's period for his historiographic analysis was 1987 to 1996 and this enabled him to ask the following questions:

(1) what were the 'public issues' and 'private troubles' within a particular policy domain during some previous period and how were they addressed?; (2) what are they now?; and (3) what is the nature of the change from the first to the second?... (4) what are the complexities in these coherent accounts of policy?; and (5) what do these reveal about who is advantaged and who is disadvantaged by these arrangements? (Gale 2001, p.385)

He explains that:

data analysed were predominantly documentary and included primary sources (such as government policy texts, departmental records and reports, commissioned research, media releases, and minutes of meetings. (Gale 2001, p.385)

All of which provides a framework and some pertinent questions for my analogous work, given that it covers a comparable period, is designed to similarly revealing about complexities and shifts in meaning, and is interested in the implications for practice. Using this strategy I can, for example, identify the formation of a particular set of educationally applicable ideas about creativity at the start of the decade, examine their durability and transformations at key stages during the decade and, finally show how the inherent complexities have been repressed in the service of accountable evidence at the end of the decade. Admittedly, my data are more limited than those described here by Gale, but my claims are about particular, specific examples, rather than major trends. Using this approach he was able to argue that

The organizing logic of entry policy had shifted, at least in its rhetoric, from 'elite sponsorship' (selection by association) to 'fair contest' (selection by competition). (Gale 2001, p.386)

It is also possible to find methodological ammunition in Gale's formulation of 'policy archaeology', which he has developed from Joseph Scheurich's work, and which uses explicitly Foucaultian terminology. The emphasis here is on the policing of the policy agenda, the exclusion and inclusion of particular policy actors and the conditions that regulate the patterns of interaction of those involved. It is the concept of 'policing' that has the most potential value for me, as it suggests the existence of some form of agency which has an impact on the nature of particular policy statements. However, this notion of agency does not simply attribute effects to the causes of "conscious actions of social agents", as Gale comments that "archaeology in Foucault's hands is purposely devoid of conscious subjects" (p.389) Instead he argues that, through his interviews with policy actors, he has

not been interested in subjective analysis of policy actors, but in their objectification. That is, what is important to uncover is not so much who speaks but what is spoken. (Gale 2001, p.389)

Gale's third "lens", policy genealogy, provides a similarly Foucaultian focus on conflicts, discontinuities and "temporary policy settlements" (p.389) through an analysis of the strategies of policy actors. In doing so it manages to reveal how such settlements are effected, through what means, and with what impact on our understanding of the end result.

As I stated earlier, these approaches are not mutually exclusive and they are all partially connected by an interest in Foucaultian questions about power, relationships, histories and meaning. Similarities can be found in some of the research which has become labelled 'Actor Network Theory'; Dugdale's (1999) work on health policy making, for example, uses elements from all three categories above and emphasises the observation that "compromise or closure does not imply the stability of a single outcome." (Dugdale 1999, pp.131-132)

4.7 Concluding comments

This discussion of methodological issues creates a number of questions and challenges which relate to this research, particularly the extent to which I can infer action, control and power from the discursive constructions of creativity in the documents under scrutiny. Fairclough points out, in relation to his analysis of HE prospectuses and whether or not they constitute a "restructured hegemony":

It would be unwise to leap too quickly to such a conclusion before there has been some sort of investigation of the reception of and response to the sort of changes I have illustrated amongst various categories of higher educational institutions. It may well be, for example, that largely 'top down' changes in discursive practices are widely marginalized, ignored or resisted by certain categories of staff and/or students in a significant range of their activities. (Fairclough 1995, p.159)

However, given the authoritative position held by Ofsted and the general mobilisation of creativity in education as a desirable process and outcome in almost every respect, I suggest that creativity is a special case and that although the “reception and response” may take a variety of forms in education, this will inevitably be done in relation to the assertions and mobilisations of power in government documents.

I cannot, of course, make any claims to be definitive or comprehensive, but this methodology provides a tentative way of exploring the production of meaning within a specific context and indicating how this sort of knowledge construction is linked with power. The issue then is philosophical, in that it cannot be resolved by any conclusive argument or ‘proof’, but my treatment of it is ‘anti-essentialist’ rather than ‘anti-realist’; the often expressed certainties about creativity are the provocation for this work and it is these that I seek to challenge. However, this may mean that I run the risk of slipping into the category of thinking which Norris describes with considerable contempt as

A far-gone sceptical, anti realist, strong-sociological, or cultural-relativist viewpoint – that widely held beliefs have often been (and indeed still are) plain wrong, and moreover that their wrongness has much to do with the influence of certain linguistically entrenched or acculturated ways of thinking. (Norris 2006, p.79)

I hope that my tinkering with the construction of creativity in some specific contexts does not fall into this trap; Norris’s ire seems directed against anti-realist perspectives particularly and, as I have argued before, I am not seeking to deny the existence of objects, but to investigate how a particular concept is made meaningful. Hence the appeal to ideological theory in order to explain how particular beliefs become dominant and emotionally invested; an approach which has enabled me to argue that *creativity depends upon an ideology of essentialism*. As such, it seems irrelevant to argue whether a particular version of creativity is ‘true’ or ‘false’, but important to investigate how particular truth claims are effected rhetorically and ideologically. This is a different enterprise from the ‘language games’ of Wittgenstein, so disparaged by Norris (2006

pp.155-157) because of the nature of the 'truths' I am investigating; they are 'truths' about creative behaviour, attributes, dispositions and domains, rather than 'truths' about the nature of physical existence. However, at points I invoke philosophical perspectives on the nature of subjectivity and consciousness in order to reveal how they inform and reinforce particular concepts of creativity, but argue that these constitute examples of an implicit invocation of 'philosophical common sense' rather than examples of philosophical propositions.

For Fairclough, grappling with similar issues regarding the "marketization discourse":

Critical discourse analysis cannot solve this problem, but it can perhaps point to the need for a struggle to develop such a new 'language' as a key element in building resistance to marketization without simply falling back on tradition, and perhaps give a better understanding of what might be involved in doing so. (Fairclough1995, p.165)

And this goal of resistance gives the methodology distinct purpose, particularly with regard to the concept of creativity which 'holds us' even as we critique it.

Ultimately the methodology adopted in this research can be summarised simply by Stillar who presents the "principal goals for the critical analysis of everyday written texts" thus:

Critical analysis must be capable of identifying and interpreting the systemic, functional and social characteristics of texts and text practices. It must be carried out with a theory that is requisitely diverse, systematic, and applicable. It must also enable researchers to produce explicit critique, participate in the textual practices they analyze, and provide a vocabulary with which to communicate their analyses. (Stillar 1998, p.7)

I am putting this into practice by focusing on a specific set of texts and analysing their characteristics, ideological contexts and practices. My theoretical

framework is post structuralist and founded upon the belief that knowledge, power and meaning are interwoven and, therefore, the object of critique is

not simply...to unpack the hidden assumptions of a given piece of language, but to press them to a point where they visibly buckle under the strain of their own (hitherto unnoticed) ambiguities. (Norris 1983, pp.20-21)

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Interruption 4: The siren song of creativity

Resisting the lure of creativity has been (and continues to be) a struggle – the conventional wisdom is that, like ‘love’, it hits you in the gut – you know it when you see it, you *know* what it is (Justice Potter Stewart of the US Supreme Court made a similar, often quoted statement about obscenity in 1964). The character John Morgan in David Hare’s film *Wetherby* says:

I only know goodness and anger and revenge and evil and desire...these seem to me far better words than neurosis and psychology and paranoia. These old words...these good old words have a sort of conviction which all this modern apparatus of language now lacks. (*Wetherby* 1985)

There is a similar emotional myth about creativity – one feels it, one knows it on a fundamental level, and do resist this, or do otherwise, indicates a deficiency.

And having used the word ‘myth’ the door is open again for Barthes and, at this point, I can share with him some of the discomfort of navigating a course between being and knowing, between epistemology and ontology. Barthes recognises that the “mythologist...constantly runs the risk of causing the reality which he purports to protect, to disappear.” (Barthes 1973, p.158) He tries to resolve this problem by asserting that objects have particular qualities independent of myth; to use Foucaultian language, he seems to be describing the ‘extra-discursive’ dimension. Wine in France, for example, is wrapped up in narratives, ideas of potency and morality – it has a mythology – but, in order to address its existence, Barthes suggests:

wine is objectively good, and *at the same time*, the goodness of the wine is a myth: here is the aporia. The mythologist gets out of this as best he can: he deals with the goodness of the wine, not with the wine itself. (Barthes 1973, p.158)

This is a good summary of tensions in my own work and its implications for my methodological stance; I do not want to deny or cause to *disappear* the work that people do that is called ‘creative’, much of which I find exciting, entertaining, moving and beautiful, but *at the same time* I need to reveal that creativity is a myth. And this is not to use myth in the way that Grayson Perry uses it when he talks about “myths of creativity” (*Grayson Perry on Creativity and Imagination* 2010), or Scott Berkun when

he talks about “myths of innovation” (Berkun 2007), as lies or misconceptions, but myth as taken-for-granted assumptions, myth as something culturally and historically specific passing itself off as natural and inevitable. The relationship between reality and myth for the mythologist is one characterised by tensions, but myth cannot simply be seen as a mis-representation of an existing reality, but as something that exists in the dimension of beliefs and ideas that may, but need not, coincide with reality. Barthes, in a reflective footnote, comments that he “[finds] it painful constantly to work on the evaporation of reality” (Barthes 1973, p.158) – a state which I recognise, especially given the ‘value’ of creativity and the various investments in it.

Barthes, at the end of *Mythologies*, cannot see a way of reconciling the “split in the social world” and comments:

We constantly drift between the object and its demystification, powerless to render its wholeness. For if we penetrate the object, we liberate it but we destroy it; and if we acknowledge its full weight, we respect it, but we restore it to a state which is still mystified... And yet, this is what we must seek: a reconciliation between reality and men, between description and explanation, between object and knowledge. (Barthes 1973, p.159)

Creativity is not an object, but it *is* a quality ascribed to objects and to people, therefore it should be subject to similar analytical ‘demystification’. The aim, of course is to create greater clarity around this particular myth, but this outcome is far from certain; Culler suggests that

we can certainly infer from what has happened since the publication of *Mythologies* that demystification does not eliminate myth but, paradoxically, gives it a greater freedom. (Culler 1990, p.39)

I am not assuming, of course, that this work will inevitably have impact, but even if it were to, it is quite possible to imagine creativity reasserting its mythological hold, even after a little ‘local disturbance’.

5 *All Our Futures* (1999)

5.1 Introduction

This document was commissioned by the Department for Education and Employment, and the Department of Culture, Media and Sport. The National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education was chaired by Ken Robinson, “one of the UK’s home-grown creativity gurus”. (Schlesinger 2007, p.382)

Schlesinger also points out, with particular reference to the ‘creative industries’ construction, that this report, together with *Nurturing Creativity in Young People* and the *Cox Review* constructs “a highly self-referential universe” in that particular definitions are reproduced from report to report. (Schlesinger 2007, p.383) I argue throughout my primary analysis of these policy and advisory documents that the ones I have selected also constitute a self-referential circuit, but that this is not one in which simple repetition and reproduction occur, rather it is one in which translation and modification occur. QCA’s *Creativity: Find it, Promote it* (2004) uses *All Our Futures* as a primary reference point, and then modifies its definition in order to translate it into practice; *Nurturing Creativity in Young People* cites both the QCA documents and *All Our Futures* and fits them into a policy framework; Ofsted’s *Learning: Creative Approaches that Raise Standards* includes *All Our Futures* in its reference list, but makes no explicit reference to it in the body of the document, favouring instead QCA’s translation of creativity into specific practices which are then pushed further into prescriptive territory.

In addition to its significant presence in the policy and advisory documents above, it is, more generally, an influential document in the field of creativity in education; it is cited in numerous subsequent UK works in this area, even if they are sometimes critical (e.g. Banaji et al. 2006) and its definition of creativity has acquired the status of orthodoxy because, I would argue:

- It does not challenge common sense
- It lends itself to a liberal/reformist education agenda

- It is amenable to operationalisation
- It is rhetorically powerful
- It is inclusive to the extent that any positive aspect of teaching and learning can come within the ambit of ‘creativity’

The rhetorical nature of the document is signalled by the title, *All Our Futures*, which could equally be applied to a document about climate change; the message is clear – change is needed in order to ensure happiness and prosperity for everyone in the future. And it is this sense of urgency, which is produced both rhetorically and through appeals to rational arguments about economic necessity, which serves to mask the rather chaotic nature of the document; there is an element of nearly every possible concept of creativity here – all connected by the urgency of the entreaty to embrace the project and their contradictions masked by this same urgency.

My analysis of this document focuses on some key themes and strategies and, through this, I demonstrate how it produces creativity in particular rhetorical, discursive and operational ways. Moreover, I indicate that, because of the contradictory nature of the different versions of creativity invoked, the ultimate effect is simply a sense that some kind of vague ‘change’ is desperately needed. Given the dimensions and scope of the document I will focus primarily on Part One in which creativity is defined and theorised.

5.2 Marks of authority

It is not a frivolous point to suggest that ‘size matters’; *All Our Futures* is a huge document – 242 pages including notes and references – and it makes 60 recommendations. Its size constitutes a discursive statement – it is literally weighty and the metaphor follows easily. There is also the implication that, because of the quantity of information, it is likely to be comprehensive – an implication also created by the title, which encompasses what is to come for *everyone* – *All Our Futures*.

Quantity is a significant factor in this document; there are five pages of references and it acknowledges ‘written submissions from over 200 groups,

organisation (sic) and individuals.’ (NACCCE 1999, p.228) There are fourteen pages at the end of the document in which every individual and organisation which contributed to the research and consultation process is listed in alphabetical order. The individuals are given with their institutional affiliation which confers authority upon them.

This report is not signed by Ken Robinson – as Honan points out, ‘the signature does not necessarily signify authorship, but does signify authorisation.’ (Honan 2004, p.272) – but its authority is established through the statement that the committee was established by two secretaries of state (David Blunkett and Chris Smith respectively), and through the list of eighteen committee members, including any titles, honours and professional positions. The expertise of the committee and the complementary reinforcements from the marginal ‘call out’ boxes are where the authority of this document is located. There is very little formal citation of research and little sense that it is an ‘academic’ or scholarly report, yet its assertions are unambiguous, confident and bold. The sense of a committee of experts is a significant factor here in the potential for this document’s findings and assertions to be accepted as truth and, in turn, for this ‘truth’ to be acted upon in the form of educational policy and practice. At times, the address or enunciation is located in the ‘non-human’ space of the document, for example, “This report argues that a national strategy for creative and cultural education is essential to that process” (NACCCE 1999, p.5), suggesting that the proposals are more than just people’s ideas, not merely the thoughts of individuals, but statements which carry the weight of authority, publication and the absence of a sole enunciator. “This report” is the ‘voice of god’ – omnipresent, yet absent. At other moments the plural pronouns “we” and “our” are used which provide a persuasive sense of consensus, but without locating opinion with individuals.

All Our Futures is constructed, as most advisory and policy documents are, in relation to a problem – the problem in this case is that Britain’s economic prosperity is in jeopardy unless the potential of every young person is unlocked; the solution is a national strategy for “creative and cultural education”. (NACCCE 1999, p.5)

Honan (2004), with reference to English education policy in Australia, argues that the address of the documentation she examines constructs the compliance of teachers:

Their own assumptions about language and learning language must be subsumed by the [Education] departmental assumptions included in the texts. The compliance of teachers to this regulation (regulation of their own thinking it could be said) is unquestioned. (Honan 2004, p.272)

So who is *All Our Futures* for, and how might we identify similar textual manoeuvres? The introduction tells us that

Formally, our report is addressed to the Secretaries of State, and many of our recommendations do call for Government action at various levels. But education concerns everybody: children and young people, parents, employers, those in work, out of work or in retirement. Consequently, our report is also written for a wider audience. (NACCCE 1999, pp.6-7)

This appeal to wider audience has a rhetorical function – there is no-one who does not fit into one of the categories above and, therefore, the report includes everyone. But the word “concern” constructs “everybody” as stakeholders in education and, therefore, a position is produced from which the report does not merely speak *to* everybody, but *for* everybody. This rhetorical move has the effect of empowering the ‘voice’ of the report and constituting it as a kind of petition to those in authority – those who need to be persuaded that action is necessary. But this championing of the masses takes a rather bathetic turn when the “wider audience” is nominated as “...parents...teachers and headteachers...school governors...other organisations...business and union leaders...” (NACCCE 1999, p.7)

Schlesinger’s reading of this document highlights the elements in it which seem to be determined by the requirements of the job market; he notes, for example, that the report was a response to policymakers’ wish to develop young people’s employability attributes, such as creativity, adaptability and communication.

(Schlesinger 2007, p.382) He positions this report in the context of other policy documents which, together with *The Cox Review* (2005) and The Creative Economy Programme, constitutes evidence of the establishment of creativity “as a hegemonic term in an increasingly elaborated framework of policy ideas.” (Schlesinger 2007, p.377) In this context *All Our Futures* has a unity and coherence which represent the political agenda of New Labour; the challenges to it come from ‘outside’ in order to show how it constitutes and reinforces specific political shifts and how it is determined in some way by economic exigencies. This reading, with its attention to discursive features and explicit connections with a political agenda is valuable, however, I would like to put this document under a slightly different kind of pressure in order to reveal some of its inherent tensions and contradictions and, by doing this, reveal more about the ways in which creativity is mobilised conceptually by it. The strategy, as discussed in the methodology chapter, is to work with three conceptual touchstones: discourse, rhetoric and ideology which, I argue, can help us make sense of creativity in this document.

The strategy is designed to tackle features of enunciation and address in the document, to show how its rhetorical elements have a discursive function and that there is an ideological underpinning to them. From a Foucaultian perspective I am interested in asking, what sort of statements about creativity are possible here, how inclusive and exclusive categories are constructed, and how does this document creates those conditions of possibility.

5.3 The poetry of urgency

The report contains the following statement:

Above all, our aim is to urge the need for a national strategy which engages the energies of all of these [parents, teachers and heads, governors and other ‘stakeholders’] to provide the kind of education, in substance and in style, that all young people need now, and to enable them to face an uncertain and demanding future. (NACCCE 1999, p.7)

It may be grammatical pedantry to point out that the phrase ‘to urge the need’ does not survive parsing; the verb ‘to urge’ requires a human actor as its object, and then the sentence would conventionally proceed with the thing that needs doing; for example, ‘our aim is to urge everyone to accept the need for a national strategy...’ So is this merely a slip, a mistake? It is quite possible that there are comparable errors in this thesis, but perhaps I should acknowledge that they betray not only (not even?) grammatical ineptitude, but also represent an irruption of something desired, misunderstood or repressed. To treat this example as a symptom entails a temporary adoption of a kind of Freudian methodology – a perspective from which it might be legitimate to argue that the desire of the authors to impress upon the readers the urgency of the need for change has led to a slight syntactical breakdown. This extract also exemplifies a kind of ‘poetry of urgency’, which is perhaps consonant with its emphasis on creativity as Holy Grail and panacea. The repetition of ‘all’ signifies inclusivity. ‘Our’ refers to the committee. The words ‘urge’, ‘engage’ and ‘energies’ with the repeated soft ‘g’ sound, reinforce themselves and also create a sense, through phonic association, of ‘urgency’. Again, to venture into the methodological territory of literary appreciation may be inconsistent with my stated approach to this document, but my point here is that, as with the other documents under scrutiny, it is possible to identify moments of over determination in which logical inconsistencies are multiplied and are reinforced, or masked by rhetoric. This observation of a ‘poetry of urgency’ becomes a much more significant insight if, as I argue later, it constitutes a discursive move, whereby attention to contradictions is deflected by it.

5.4 A stipulative definition

This document positions creativity at its centre; creativity is the first term in the trio of terms in the subtitle. Yet it avoids defining it immediately. Instead, there is an urgent entreaty to accept the necessity of creativity, often offered as ‘call outs’ from politicians in boxes in the margins. So, for example, we read that “...we cannot rely on a small elite, no matter how highly educated or highly paid. Instead we need the creativity, enterprise and scholarship of all our people” from David Blunkett. (NACCCE 1999, p.5) Chris Smith (then Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport) adds “We must change the concept of creativity

from being something that is 'added on' to education, skills, training and management and make sure it becomes intrinsic to all of these." (NACCCE 1999, p.5)

Perhaps because of the support from these authoritative statements, the document is able on the following page to make two unambiguous statements about creativity:

Creativity is possible in all areas of human activity, including the arts, sciences, at work at play and in all other areas of daily life. All people have creative abilities and we all have them differently. When individuals find their creative strengths, it can have an enormous impact on self-esteem and on overall achievement. (NACCCE 1999, p.6)

Creativity is not simply a matter of letting go. Serious creative achievement relies on knowledge, control of materials and command of ideas. Creative education involves a balance between teaching knowledge and skills, and encouraging innovation. In these ways, creative development is directly related to cultural education. (NACCCE 1999, p.6)

What is remarkable, firstly, about these statements is the lack of doubt about what creativity is and what its benefits are; they have the quality of evangelical statements. (I comment later, in the discussion of the Government response to the Roberts Report, that the rhetoric of faith can be mobilised to seductive effect in the context of creativity). The all-pervading quality of creativity in the first statement is rhetorically seductive and performs a manoeuvre which takes it out of the purely 'artistic' realm. For Schlesinger, there is a political/economic agenda evident here:

There is a clear affinity between the notion that all are possessed of creativity and the idea that in businesses all personnel should be creative or, at the very least, support the creative endeavour of those specifically designated as 'creatives'. (Schlesinger 2007, p.382)

There is also a seductive inclusivity in the statement that ‘all people have creative abilities and we all have them differently’; rhetorically it encourages assent because it produces a position for the reader which we could call the ‘creative subject’. If one were to reject the assertion, one would be rejecting the existence of one’s own “creative abilities”

We should also note here the use of the ‘adjectival hedge’ – it is significant that the statement is not ‘all people possess creativity’, but ‘all people have creative abilities’. This may seem like a subtle distinction, but it is a characteristic of statements about creativity in general and here, in particular – as a noun it is bold and abstract, but the adjective often takes over for the purposes of reification.

We can identify the same phenomenon in one of the Diplomas introduced into the UK education system in 2008 (incidentally, endorsed in Tom Bewick’s section of *Nurturing Creativity in Young People* 2006, pp.57-59). In the title of the *Diploma in Creative and Media* the word ‘creative’ occupies the space of a noun, yet it cannot function in this way. Adjectives cannot become nouns unless they are altered in form - happy becomes happiness, ugly becomes ugliness and so on. So it is legitimate to ask why the form of the word has not changed in order to accommodate it grammatically within this context. This would make the title of the specification *Diploma in Creativity and Media*. There is a sense then, in which this formulation is being avoided. Why might this be the case? The formulation ‘Diploma in Creativity and Media’, as we have already identified, makes ‘creative’ into the noun ‘creativity’ and ‘creativity’ is a much more troublesome term than ‘creative’. As an adjective, creative can be applied to a range of disparate activities and entities, such as ‘creative industries’, ‘creative process’ and ‘creative artist’ without causing too much controversy, because it functions to enhance those things in a non-specific but generally positive way. ‘Creativity’, conversely, must stand on its own; it cannot function to enhance another term, but is naked and vulnerable to scrutiny.

In the second statement we might also reflect upon the phrase ‘serious creative achievement’ with its concomitants ‘knowledge’, ‘control’ and ‘command’. There

is evidence of a tension here between the ideas that creativity is available to everyone, but also exclusive, by virtue of the implied necessary work involved.

5.5 The illusion of dialogue

The report is built around five themes:

- The Challenge for Education
- Creative Potential
- Freedom and Control
- Cultural Understanding
- A Systemic Approach

Each of these has independent status in the report, but they are all underpinned by the notion of the need for urgent change. 'Change' is prominent in the document – in fact it feels more prominent than the eighteen instances of the word in 242 pages might suggest. The possible effect of the entreaty to accept the urgent need for change is to cause us to ignore some of the more unconvincing statements, such as the uneasy pairing of 'creative' and 'cultural'. The document also displays neophilia; there are well over a hundred instances of the word 'new', usually in the context of an entreaty to embrace change, to see change as improvement. The rhetoric may be driven by the anticipation of dissent:

For some people, the very theme of this report may seem a distraction from the main business of raising standards. We do not think so. Our concerns are the same as everyone else's. (NACCCE 1999, p.13)

So, rather like the Ofsted report which will be discussed later, there is a textual pre-emptive strike here; an acknowledgement that 'creativity' may be seen as peripheral or even irrelevant to the main business of education and, a consequent rebuttal of this view in advance. There is also the use of the plural pronoun to give the committee's position some weight and the committee is constructed as representative of common sense and common people. The negative questions which are anticipated - *preformulated* - and responded to in the report are:

1. Isn't an emphasis on creativity and culture a distraction from the core concerns with literacy and numeracy?
2. How are creative and cultural education relevant to raising academic standards?
3. What has this got to do with helping young people get jobs?
4. Is this committee a lobby group for the arts?
5. Is this a return to the progressive teaching ideas of the 1960s?
6. Teachers are already under enormous pressures. Are these recommendations going to add to the burden? (NACCCE 1999, pp.14-15)

In the focus and articulation of these questions we can identify some interesting things, one of which is the way in which the figure of the nay-sayer uses the terms established by the report – connecting the adjectives “creative” and “cultural”, for example. We also need to examine how the questions have been preformulated in particular ways and their status within the document.

Fairclough alerts us to the terms ‘difference and dialogicality’ with reference to textuality and intertextuality, developing five scenarios which might obtain in texts and interactions:

- a) an openness to, acceptance of, recognition of difference; an exploration of difference, as in ‘dialogue’ in the richest sense of the term;
- b) an accentuation of difference, conflict, polemic, a struggle over meaning, norms, power;
- c) an attempt to resolve or overcome difference;
- d) a bracketing of difference, a focus on commonality, solidarity;
- e) consensus, a normalization and acceptance of difference of power which brackets or suppresses differences of meaning and norms. (Fairclough 2003, pp.41-42)

I would argue that although *All Our Futures* appears to fall into the first of Fairclough’s categories – that of being open to difference - that this is in effect a rhetorical move, and actually any potential dissent or opposition is being bracketed and neutralised. The neutralisation of these six potential oppositional

voices creates the effect of a comprehensive and irrefutable counter to all opposition, but, as we shall see, there are other absences which make their presence felt. The dialogue which is enacted here is rhetorical, persuasive, because it dramatises an encounter in which the 'voice' of the report succeeds in countering a set of objections to a 'creativity agenda'.

5.6 The creativity equation

We are encouraged to accept many of the statements in this document as fact or truth, merely through assertion. The strategy, which Jordan (1978) refers to as "credibility by insistence", is not guaranteed to be effective – "It is an unfortunate fact that we cannot make objective readers believe that a statement is a fact merely by saying it is." (Jordan 1978, p.4) So how does *All Our Futures* constitute such a persuasive presence? There are some key characteristics which contribute to the power of this document convince; one is its appeal to common sense – a conceptual framework which, as Sara Mills suggests, is significant:

In the process of apprehending, we categorise and interpret experience and events according to the structures available to us and, in the process of interpretation, we lend these structures a solidity which it is often difficult to think outside of. Foucault does not consider these structures to be simply the invention of institutions or powerful groups of people, as some Marxist thinkers have suggested in their formulating of the notion of ideology, nor does he propose that they are simply abstract and arbitrary. Rather, he considers that there is a combined force of institutional and cultural pressure, together with the intrinsic structure of discourse, which leads us to interpret the real through preconceived discursive structures. (Mills 2004, p.49)

I would argue that one of the key strengths of this document in establishing a notional 'nature of creativity' lies in its ability to rhetorically construct propositions which sound like common sense. However, when it produces a specific definition of creativity we can identify the emergence of fractures and fault lines. It is when creativity is defined that the discursive frame becomes

active – we can see the explicit modelling of ‘creativity’. Saarinen (2007) makes a similar point when explaining why the notion of ‘quality’ in OECD and EU policy documents is *not* asserted explicitly:

A test on the persuasiveness of the presuppositions might be to assert them explicitly in the text. If the existence of, for instance, valid judgements of quality of higher education as a commodity was asserted, these would be open to scrutiny and more easily challenged. (Saarinen 2007, p.355)

The authors of *All Our Futures* acknowledge that

Defining a process that covers such a wide range of activities and personal styles is inherently difficult. Ours is a stipulative definition, but it takes account of what we understand about the nature of creative processes and of the ways in which key words are used in different contexts. It is also in a sense an indicative definition in that it points to features of creative processes that we want to encourage for educational purposes. (NACCCE 1999, P.30)

There are a couple of elements here which need exploring:

- The need for definition
- The characteristics of ‘definition’

It is significant that the term ‘stipulative definition’ is used here; the analytic philosopher Arthur Pap notes that

The question is often raised and discussed whether a definition can be true or false, or whether it is just an arbitrary stipulation to use a word in a certain way. The obvious answer is that some of the statements that are, in everyday life, and in science, called “definitions” are merely stipulative and others are not. (Pap 1964, p.49)

Pap distinguishes here between stipulative definitions and propositions; the latter constitutes an assertion, about which it is appropriate (within the context

of analytic philosophy) to ask whether it is true or false. The former, however, constitutes a “proposal” which one “can accept or reject”. Despite the explicit use of a ‘stipulative definition’, the report goes on to use it as if it were one of Pap’s propositional definitions – an “empirical proposition” to be more precise, as it is one “whose truth or falsehood can only be determined by experience”. (Pap 1964, p.49) The fact that *All Our Futures* invokes a stipulative definition and then goes on to work with it as if it were an empirical proposition constitutes, arguably, a weakness in its argument, however, it could also be argued that it is a strength; it is a rhetorical manoeuvre in which a ‘proposal’ becomes a ‘proposition’ without drawing attention to itself. If we return to that key defining section we can see that the report yokes together two of Pap’s ‘epistemological classifications’; here an empirical proposition:

[our definition] takes account of what we understand about the nature of creative processes...

And here a ‘linguistic proposal’:

...and [it takes account of] the ways in which key words are used in different contexts. (NACCCE 1999, p.30)

Arguably this constitutes methodological infidelity on my part; analytic philosophy sees language in terms of symbolic logic, rather than as socially invested performance. However, the report explicitly advertises the fact that it is using a ‘stipulative’ definition and, as I mentioned earlier, I am identifying this as a rhetorical manoeuvre, rather than attempting to use it as an indicator of fixed meaning. In other words, it is possible to argue that *All Our Futures* uses the *rhetoric* of logic and, therefore, my confrontation with it continues to be on discursive rather than logical grounds; I am not refuting the definition on logical grounds, but drawing attention to the rhetorical construction of that definition.

With such discursive scaffolding, a subject position is constituted from which it is difficult to move – this is a document characterised by over determination –

the audience for it is universal, its definition all-encompassing, its enthusiasm promiscuous and rational probes are shrugged off with a rhetorical flourish.

This report works harder, by which I mean it takes up many more pages than any of the other documents being scrutinised, to define creativity and, as I have mentioned above, its definition is quoted and modified in *Creativity: Find it, Promote it* (QCA 2004), *Nurturing Creativity in Young People* (2006), the *Government Response to Nurturing Creativity in Young People* (2006) and (indirectly) Ofsted's *Learning: Creative Approaches that Raise Standards* (2010a). It is, therefore, an influential definition, perhaps not least because it can be neatly summarised in four bullet points:

Our starting point is to recognise four characteristics of creative processes. First they always involve thinking or behaving imaginatively. Second, overall this imaginative activity is purposeful: that is, it is directed to achieving an objective. Third, these processes must generate something original. Fourth, the outcome must be of value in relation to the objective. We therefore define creativity as:

Imaginative activity fashioned so as to produce outcomes that are both original and of value. (NACCCE 1999, p.30)

As will become apparent later, this definition has acquired the status of truth through repetition and modification, and we can note here an almost biblical quality in the way that the definition is 'spoken into being'. The problem with definitions, as Schlesinger notes (and I have referred to in an earlier chapter), is that to define something

...is not by any means to offer a protocol for its study and analysis. We might agree on a definition but still disagree about the details of subsequent categorization and what is to count as an adequate method for assembling evidence. (Schlesinger 1991, p.7)

To apply this caveat to the definition provided in *All Our Futures* is to alert us to the multiple possibilities inherent in nearly every term of reference:

“imaginative”, “purposeful”, “original” and “value”. The document works to exemplify these concepts in the context of creativity in such a way as to make them desirable and able to be implemented in education, but in doing so creates a rupture between rational assertion and rhetorical enthusiasm. I suggest that the central irony in this document is that it produces the most influential definition of creativity for a decade (in UK education) yet embraces, champions and promotes a chaotic melange of activities which undermine the apparent austerity of the definition. Nelson points out that:

...it is only once creativity is reified and named that it makes itself available as an object for scientific study. Once named, it can be measured and dissected by psychologists and brain surgeons, and political and educational institutions can create policies for its cultivation. (Nelson 2010, p.68)

This insight indicates the necessity for the report to name and reify, but also indicates that this process makes the concept more vulnerable and amenable to scrutiny. The rationalisation and codification of creativity in *All Our Futures* has the appearance of rationality and logic, but is most effective on a rhetorical level; its subsequent exemplification (without, to quote Schlesinger, “a single protocol for its study and analysis”) actually undermines it.

5.7 A creativity smorgasbord

Banaji et al. point out that

While it may appear that the rhetoric used in the NACCCE report supports ‘democratic’ notions of creativity, and encourages an appreciation of cultural difference, many of its promises about the benefits of creative education betray elements of more elitist and romantic notions of artistic endeavour, and the traditional artistic practices and forms associated with them. (Banaji et al. 2006, p.29)

While I would agree that there is evidence to support this assertion, I would disagree that the return of this particular ‘repressed’ ideology has the inevitability or coherence implied here. *All Our Futures* is a difficult document to analyse because it applies its stipulative definition of creativity in the most promiscuous ways and, in addition, attempts to make this cohere with notions of culture and cultural education. It has the qualities of an octopus; no sooner has one dealt with the activities of one tentacle, one finds multiple different issues to tackle and the cumulative experience is enervating. Nevertheless, it is necessary to show how this document is made up of heterogeneous versions of creativity, yet constructs a rhetoric of homogeneity. This rhetoric of homogeneity and common sense is exemplified in the introduction to the document:

There are many misconceptions about creativity. Some people associate creative teaching with a lack of discipline in education. Others see creative ability as the preserve of a gifted few, rather than of the many; others associate it only with the arts. In our view creativity is possible in all areas of human activity and all young people and adults have creative capacities. Developing these capacities involves a balance between teaching skills and understanding, and promoting the freedom to innovate and take risks. (NACCCE 1999, p.10)

Implied here is that this document will put an end to any “misconceptions about creativity”; misconception is a serious word here, telling us that it is *incorrect* to associate creative teaching with a lack of discipline, to see creative ability as the preserve of a gifted few and to associate creativity only with the arts. The alternative, according to the rhetorical structure of this paragraph, instituted by the words “In our view...”, must, therefore, be correct. This phrase “In our view” has an understated rhetorical force; it is similar to the phrase “in my opinion”, which can be persuasive through the appearance of humility. But here it is far from humble, given that “our view” refers to the opinion of the many experts on the committee, expressed in 242 pages. Also significant here is a kind of sleight of hand by which creativity, the abstract noun, becomes elided with “creative teaching”, “creative ability” and “creative capacities”. So, for example,

to “associate creative teaching with a lack of discipline in education” is to harbour a “misconception[] about creativity”.

The more one reads this document, the more incoherent it becomes, and its meaning so blurred by so many assertions that one is left with two very general impressions:

- *All Our Futures* is ‘right’ about creativity
- Creativity is a ‘good thing’.

As a piece of rhetoric, then, perhaps it is successful, especially as it appears to offer a ‘scientific’, researched and fixed model of creativity which is actually a malleable one and, as we shall see in subsequent documents, therefore amenable to being operationalised in specific contexts.

When we read that “Creativity is obviously to do with producing something original” (NACCCE 1999, p.28) and that “Creativity is a basic capacity of human intelligence” (NACCCE 1999, p.37) it is easier to accept than resist. These are rhetorical devices – the use of ‘basic’ suggests that creativity is as essential and innate to being human as, for example, oxygen and water being basic necessities for human existence. The use of ‘obviously’, as with other strategies in this document, limits the possibility, or indeed, rationality of an alternative viewpoint.

One final point about the universal embrace of this document; the marginal ‘call out’ boxes which appear on several pages, contain quotations about creativity and/or education, which are positioned in order to emphasise or provide illustration of the argument in the body of the document. In Chapter 9 on Funding and Resources, for example, the boxes tend to provide anecdotal evidence from trainers, politicians and beneficiaries which emphasise the value of ‘creative and cultural’ projects; “Information provided by Prue Leith”, for example, tells us that:

A school in a deprived area set up an after-school cooking club. A couple of boys who had dropped out came, got so enthused that the next thing they asked was to be allowed back into French classes, believing that

they would never become great chefs without being able to speak French. (NACCCE 1999, p.169)

This anecdote functions to reaffirm the congruence between 'creative' extra-curricular work and conventional educational standards. It also reinforces the notion underpinning the entire document that education should be learner centred and that motivation is most effective when it is intrinsic. The quotations in Part One, however, are a gnomic and contradictory collection. Jung is cited, for example:

The creation of something new is not accomplished by the intellect alone but by the play instinct. The creative mind plays with the object it loves. (NACCCE 1999, p.32)

And is followed by Einstein:

Imagination is more important than knowledge. (NACCCE 1999, p.32)

The document uses this strategy of 'elite citation' in order to authorise, sometimes indirectly, its assertions. The above quotations sit next to assertions about the relationship between creativity and originality and provide rhetorical reinforcement, despite the fact that each, potentially undermines the explicit argument. This tension is both literal and discursive; the rhetoric of the Einstein quotation, for example, sits uneasily with the report's need to retain 'knowledge' in a complementary relationship with 'skills' and 'imagination' in education. Discursively there is also a tension in the fact that, in this section, those afforded the privilege of a quotation box are 'exceptional individuals' who have emerged from a traditional, 'pre revolutionary' education system. So the comment that:

In our view exceptional individual achievement – that is, of historic originality – is also more likely to emerge from a system of education which encourages the creative capacities of everyone. (NACCCE 1999, p.32)

although it is voiced with confidence, has a questionable quality.

5.8 Summary

All Our Futures is a difficult document to analyse on a rational level because of its apparently boundless embrace and incorporation of a range of desirable activities and outcomes into the category 'creativity'. It seems grossly reductive, but tempting, to suggest that creativity in this document could be defined as 'things we like in education' and stands in opposition to 'things we don't like in education'. Despite its appearance of authority and rigour it is inherently contradictory and chaotic, glued together with the poetry of novelty and excitement and reinforced by the rhetoric of economic necessity. Despite this it is cited repeatedly, has provided the impetus for an entire collection of essays about creativity in education (Craft et al. 2001) and is seen as providing a clear agenda for creativity in education. Joubert, for example, argues that:

In an ideal world we would want the government to commit to the promotion of creativity in education and to implement all the recommendations of the NACCCE report, ranging from a new curriculum structure to new assessment, inspection and teacher training arrangements...The government may be waiting to see if there is enough support from the teaching profession before committing to a creative education agenda. If this is the case I would urge the profession to provide this support. (Joubert 2001, p.31)

Joubert suggests that "a new order of creativity in education" is being obstructed by a range of factors – political, ideological and bureaucratic, for example – but her most significant recognition threatens to undermine all of this:

Creativity is a very elusive concept to define, and even when defined, it is interpreted in a variety of different ways, e.g. is creativity in education the same as creativity in business?...We still lack a common conceptual language, understood by all, to enable us to discuss creativity in education and across other sectors. It seems that even scholars of

creativity do not have a shared language for creativity. (Joubert 2001, p.29)

However, the insight that there is no conceptual coherence is not sufficient to halt the passionate advocacy of the adoption of creativity in education. The lukewarm government reception of the many recommendations made in *All Our Futures* (see Joubert 2001, pp.28-29 and Buckingham and Jones 2001) may well be attributable to the barriers adduced by Joubert, but it may also be also be related in some way to the over determined, rhetorical quality of the document.

Nevertheless, *All Our Futures* has provided the three remaining educational documents with a persuasive, authorised, yet stipulative, definition of creativity that we can observe undergoing particular transformations.

Interruption 5: Black holes and violence

My epistemological shift is a transition from believing that there is ‘something’ to look for, to scepticism about this belief. Instead I am examining the *construction* of the beliefs that there is something there. An analogy might be the search for black holes; there is a belief that they exist because particular things happen that suggest they are there. But instead of joining the quest for black holes, I am asking questions about the ways in which belief in black holes is expressed and constructed. In a curriculum context, the analogy becomes a bit more tenuous – I am critiquing the ways in which particular pedagogic and administrative strategies are built upon the notional existence of black holes.

I spent a long time asking ‘what is creativity?’ – a question which all of the documents under scrutiny ask (and answer). But the attempt to define it was impossible, and other definitions, despite making rhetorically similar noises (originality, purposefulness etc.) identify it in very different ways – as a mindset, as outcome, as attitude. One of the key problems, I have realised is the rhetorical unity of writing about creativity – it is generally positive and overlooks differences in methodology and philosophy; even if there is acknowledgement of differences in conception or causes, these are glossed over because there is general agreement on the outcomes or the value of the kinds of things that are included. As Cropley argues:

It may thus seem that the term is so widely used that its meaning has become diffuse and uncertain. However, as will be shown in more detail in following sections there is a common core to all discussions, especially when educational or psychological considerations are emphasized. (Cropley 2004, p.5)

The analogy with violence is not an outlandish one; there is a similar tendency to ignore contradictions, methodological incompatibilities and differences in categories because there is general agreement on the negative value of ‘violence’. Research in different modes in different traditions, therefore, is seen as having cumulative worth and contributes to a greater degree of certainty in the existence of the concept as an objective phenomenon.

I keep coming back to violence – a common-sense word loaded with complexity. It occurs to me that the language of critical theory – post structuralist theory in particular –

is characterised by metaphors of violence; we talk of ruptures, interrogations, stretching things to their limits and ‘mobilising’ concepts and operations as if they were part of a military strategy. Perhaps this kind of language offers a kind of comfort – a set of metaphors of physical certainty in order to deal with the ambiguity of meaning. Norris (1983) points out that the conceptual language of philosophy is metaphorical and Althusser draws attention to the metaphorical basis of Marx’s theory of the state (1977), and these observations legitimate an approach to understanding concepts based on attending to rhetoric. But my own rhetoric must be subject to the same kind of scrutiny and I am aware that the muscular invasiveness of my analytical language may be a kind of compensation for a lack of certainty about the usefulness of a particular conceptual stance. It is also, certainly, compensation for the absence of robust empirical work which produces large quantities of data from which theories can be inferred. My own metaphors, I’ve realised, involve disease and infestation; I talk of ‘nit-picking’ or ‘scab-picking’. I seem to feel that my ‘work’ is parasitical and an irritant.

6 *Creativity: Find it, promote it*

6.1 Introduction

This is a collection of materials which existed on the QCA website before being published as a print version “in response to...demand.” (QCA 2004, p.4) This document explicitly addresses Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 in the UK education system – or ages 5 – 14 and, therefore, provides an interesting example of how the concept of creativity is modelled to be functional within the context of the National Curriculum.

An application of discourse analytical techniques to it reveals how it represents a transitional stage between the more utopian, liberal language of Robinson and Roberts and the more prescriptive, operational language of Ofsted. I might venture, then, that those documents which have been commissioned as exploratory tend to emphasise philosophical issues of value and worth, whereas those concerned with practice and implementation tend to be pulled towards prescriptions of valid activities. In both cases there are tensions as they attempt to make sense of complexity, but in the latter case resolutions are found which depend upon practical, unambiguous means. So, my use of the term ‘transitional’ may be misleading; I do not mean to suggest an inevitable progression from X to Y, rather that we can identify the occupation of a border between two different territories. It is also the case that although the QCA materials succeed the Robinson Report, they precede the Roberts Report, so I wish to avoid any specious conclusions based on chronology. Nevertheless, ‘transition’ often incorporates a sense of the temporal as well as the spatial, so the metaphor may not hold.

There are some significant characteristics which enable us to see this transition. The contents page, for example, reveals that, of the six numbered sections, four of them have interrogative titles:

What is creativity?

Why is creativity so important?

How can you spot creativity?

How can you promote creativity? (QCA 2004, p.3)

The emphasis on questions suggests an openness to different interpretations, indeed the subheading for the first section tells us that it is “A starting point for agreeing what your school means by creativity” (p.3). But this openness to ambiguity is limited. One strategy for unpacking this particular text is to identify key points where two different discourses are in tension and conflict. These discourses can be conceived in the following terms:

- A discourse characterised by complexity, ambiguity, questioning and freedom
- A discourse characterised by simplicity, disambiguation, certainty and limits.

My analytical strategy then is to identify key points in the document in which we can identify these discourses and explain how the tension is manifested and managed. This entails attention to vocabulary, grammatical features, mode of address, conceptual oppositions (explicit or implicit) and a consideration of the implications for putting particular procedures into practice. This is a document with an explicit aim – to introduce good practice around creativity, and an implicit aim – to standardise such practice. As such, it inevitably is engaged in the production of a category of teaching and learning and, therefore, it inevitably establishes boundaries around this category. Attention to the nature of the boundary (to what is and is not included) and how the boundary is policed (by what means differences and distinctions are maintained) will reveal the discursive and ideological constitution of creativity within this context. And to borrow from a deconstructionist approach to texts (cf. Norris 1983), I am looking for evidence of a ‘textual economy’ in which parities are established and values asserted.

6.2 The cover image

The image on the cover of this document is, in Masterman’s terms *rhetorical*, and I am reminded of his approach to image analysis in the media, when he argues that “[images] are continually used to authenticate a particular point of

view” and that “ambiguous visual images, containing many possible free-floating meanings, can come to legitimate particular interpretations”. (Masterman 1990, p.144)

The image is a low-angle shot of a young girl, frozen mid-jump, suspended in the air and framed against the sky above and greenery below. Her outstretched arms suggest triumph, joy and freedom. The image is cropped so that we do not see her face – she represents all young people, perhaps. The purple of her vest is nearly identical to the purple of the word “Creativity” in the title, which is superimposed on a stylised splash of yellow, the kind that might be formed if Jackson Pollock had just loaded his brush. The replication of this configuration of text and colour splash below gives it brand status for this document. The splash icon also appears on the contents page, but without the text, which arguably has become unnecessary now that the image has been anchored to the word “creativity”.

It is a strange image. It is ambiguous, even with the text to anchor it (cf. Barthes 1977); like a news image with a caption, the splash of colour and the words “Creativity: find it, promote it” printed across the image invite us to read the image as representation or illustration of this. In what way, we might ask, does this image represent or construct creativity? Is the child jumping because of her joy at being creative? Or does her jumping signify that she is creative? Perhaps this approach to signification is too literal; perhaps this is not ‘icon’, but ‘symbol’, to use Peirce’s taxonomy of signs (Peirce 1955, pp.102-103) As a symbol it has a certain potency, but it would be possible to be cynical about it as a representation of creativity; it is a cliché – exuberance signified through an ‘every child’ jumping for joy and it is, in this sense an example of utopian rhetoric – creativity as a ‘good thing’. But to understand the image in a ‘mythological’ context we need to, as Barthes does, move beyond the notion of the symbol because “This type of focusing is that of the producer of myths, of the journalist who starts with a concept and seeks a form for it.” (1973, p.128) To read the myth means to examine what is being naturalised here which, is the equation of creativity with immediacy and ‘untutoredness’. This reading is made possible by the apparent lack of artistry in the construction of the image – it

appears to be flash-lit (like a domestic photograph), on location (rather than in a studio or other controlled space) and the child is framed in such a way as to exclude her face, one of her arms and her feet (attributes which would be criticised as crude in a conventional photographic context).

This serves to naturalise the idea that children are inherently creative, that creativity really is something which can be found or discovered, like any other naturally occurring object or quality. And we have come across this idea in the literature, in Willis' (1990, 1998) work, for example, the idea that almost any aspect of young people's activity – production and consumption – is always already 'creative'. In the context of this document, however, this naturalisation is established in tension with the other term in the title – the idea of 'promotion' which, with its associated ideas of organising and reconfiguring raw material for a wider audience, has the potential to undermine the very thing which makes creativity worth finding in the first place.

The form and address of the cover of this document threaten to limit the range of possibilities of creativity, partly through the corporate stamp of QCA in the bottom left corner – an imprimatur of official sanction and quality – and partly through the subtitle "Practical materials for schools" which suggests a set of standardised activities. Similarly, the abstract splashes of colour which continue throughout the document in various contrasting combinations of acid yellow, blue, red, pink, orange and green, promise abandonment and freedom from constraint – perhaps even freedom from the constraints of *taste* (cf. Bourdieu 2010) – are literally marginalised after the contents page and restricted to the left hand fifth of each page. The vertical line marks the boundary between this free and liberal mode of expression and the ordered discourse of headings and bullet points which prescribe both the questions that must be asked and some of the answers to them. This antagonism between these two poles continues throughout the document.

6.3 We seek it here

The title of the document suggests a sequence of events; first one finds creativity and then one promotes it. The verb 'to find' is reassuring because it

confirms that creativity exists to be found, that it has an existence independent of perception and opinion. The verb ‘to promote’ encourages collaboration in this worthy enterprise and offers a kind of recompense for the effort of finding creativity. Taken as a whole, the title is a terse imperative, an instruction barked at those who might have doubts that creativity is something worth finding or promoting. As such it echoes the urgency of *All Our Futures* in its entreaty to embrace creativity in schools. But the creativity in this document is not identical to that in Ken Robinson’s report, despite its apparent indebtedness to Robinson’s formulation.

6.4 Circular logic

The problem of perception and definition is one that this document attempts to efface through rhetoric and specious reasoning and is best exemplified here, in the sub-section on originality:

When pupils are writing a poem, choreographing a dance or producing a painting, their work can be unique if it expresses their ideas and feelings. But what about work in subjects like science, history and maths? While it would be wonderful for a pupil to be the first person to discover a new scientific principle, this is highly unlikely. Does this mean that pupils can’t be creative in these subjects? Not at all. Skilled teachers can help pupils tackle questions, solve problems and have ideas that are new to them. This makes pupils’ ideas original, the result of genuinely creative behaviour. (QCA 2004, pp.77-8)

This section of the document is structured around the four characteristics of creativity outlined in *All Our Futures* (1999): “Imagination and Purpose”; “Originality”; “Value”. The suggestion is that “debating the characteristics highlighted by this definition can be a helpful starting point for agreeing what your school actually means by creativity.” (QCA 2004, p.7) Like *All Our Futures*, it uses the rhetorical device of question and answer in order to create the impression of debate and the sense of dialectical progress towards harmonious agreement. But the formulation used to explain how pupils can be creative in

science, history and maths reveals how ‘creativity equations’ or ‘creativity syllogisms’ do not work. Let us break this one down:

Proposition: Pupils cannot be creative in science, history and maths because they are unlikely to produce original work.

Counter: Not true, because they can learn how to tackle questions, solve problems and have ideas that are new to them.

Result: Therefore their ideas are original, because they have resulted from creative behaviour.

The image of Ouroboros comes to mind – the serpent which swallows its own tail, forming a circle; the suggestion is that originality is a constituent of creativity, but also that it is the result of creativity and, therefore, impossible to locate; it is everywhere and nowhere. The rhetoric is seductive because it elides creativity and originality and suggests that these treasures are available for everyone. But this breaches the taxonomical work of *All Our Futures*, upon which the document depends. Cropley’s book on creativity (2004) features the cover image of a chicken and an egg – symbolically and axiomatically potent, but perhaps unwittingly deconstructive of scientific and logical approaches to creativity in that it represents a comparable circular story. There is a similar example of this in the section headed “Why is creativity so important?”, where we read that “Creativity improves pupils’ self-esteem, motivation and achievement” (QCA 2004, p.9) – all characteristics of behaviour and action that sound like indicators of creativity, rather than *products* of creativity. To put it another way, pupils who are encouraged to do things we call ‘creative’, tend to do these ‘creative’ things.

Heidegger describes a similar logical problem when defining a work of art:

What art is can be gathered from a comparative examination of actual art works. But how are we to be certain that we are indeed basing such an examination on art works if we do not know beforehand what art is? And the essence of art can no more be arrived at by a derivation from higher concepts than by a collection of characteristics of actual art works. For such a derivation, too, already has in view the definitions that must

suffice to establish that what we take in advance to be an art work is one in fact. But selecting characteristics from among given objects, and deriving concepts from principles, are equally impossible here, and where these procedures are practiced they are a self deception.
(Heidegger 1978, pp.149-150)

Heidegger acknowledges that this is a “circle”, but argues that “we are compelled to follow the circle” (p.150) and, rather than seeing the situation as presenting an insurmountable logical obstacle he sees it as providing a necessary examination of the “thingly element” in the work of art. However, no such philosophical strategy is proposed here, or in any of the policy documents under scrutiny, rather an analogous, but implicit, leap of faith is masked by the appearance of rational reasoning.

A key problem for this document is that, despite appearing to introduce creativity as a debate, it needs to define it, to define how it is manifested and to define its worth. Consequently it is rife with contradictions. We move from the apparently interrogative domain of Section One into the assertive domain of Section Two, featuring sub-headings in which uncertainty does not exist any more:

Creativity improves pupils’ self-esteem, motivation and achievement.

Creativity prepares pupils for life: an important aim of the National Curriculum.

Creativity enriches pupils’ lives. (QCA 2004, p.9)

As we have seen previously, the strain of maintaining conviction in a concrete phenomenon of creativity inevitably gives way to a utilitarian approach. In this section it does not matter what creativity *is*, it only matters what creativity *does* and, therefore, the concept is modelled in reverse; the desirable outcomes are clear and real, so the nebulous concept can be reified in order to fit these.

6.5 Look who's talking

Jakobson's work reminds us to attend not merely to lexical, grammatical and syntactical features of language:

Insistence on keeping poetics apart from linguistics is warranted only when the field of linguistics appears to be illicitly restricted, for example, when the sentence is viewed by some linguists as the highest analyzable construction or when the scope of linguistics is confined to grammar alone or uniquely to non-semantic questions of external form or to the inventory of denotative devices with no reference to free variations.

(Jakobson 1988, p.34)

This realisation means that we must give equal attention to the function of language and texts, and their communicative contexts, in order to avoid attributing meaning too simplistically to language's notional 'internal' operations. In the case of all of the documents under scrutiny this means, for a start, considering the way in which an addressee is produced by the texts – the way in which a reading, practising subject is constructed in particular ways.

I have commented above how the imperative nature of the title of the document produces a subject which is essentially passive; even though s/he is encouraged to act (by finding and promoting creativity), s/he is the recipient of an instruction delivered by an authoritative institution. The second person pronoun is implied here – there is a notional 'you' who is being instructed to find and promote creativity – but its literal omission diminishes this potentially unappealing tone and creates, instead, what we might call a 'manifesto tone' in which the individual may buy into the mission, without feeling like a conscript. So, as with the urgent entreaty to save "all our futures" in the Robinson Report, we have a hegemonic mode of address in which consent is sought by any means necessary. The difference here is that this document contains "practical materials for schools" and, therefore, it contains examples of activities which represent good practice and which should be adopted in some form. This instructional mode, which assumes and constructs power in its relationship with the addressee, can be found at various points in this document.

But the instructional mode exists alongside another mode of address, a mode which is less overtly powerful, less overtly authoritative and more 'collegial'. On the contents page, for example, we see:

1. What is creativity?

A starting point for agreeing what your school means by creativity (QCA 2004, p.3)

As I have mentioned already, the interrogative form of the section title suggests openness to debate and discussion, and this is confirmed by the subheading which invites the (now personalised) reader to *begin* the discussion at a local level. The offer here is for creativity to be result of local negotiations and for the reader to gain a degree of ownership of it. The fact that a "starting point" is nominated suggests that this negotiation could go in a variety of directions. There is similar degree of personalisation in the headings on the contents page for sections three and four:

3. How can you spot creativity?

What you are likely to see when pupils are thinking behaving creatively in the classroom

4. How can you promote creativity?

How can teachers promote creativity?

How can teams of teachers promote creativity?

How can senior managers and governors promote creativity? (QCA 2004, p.3)

There is a noticeable shift in address here from the second to the third person; section three maintains the address to 'you' and suggests that the addressee can acquire expertise in identifying creative behaviour. This positions the teacher/reader/addressee as a professional locus of some kind of power to observe and judge. (I will return to the implications of judging creativity on the basis of visual evidence later). The heading for section four seems, initially, to continue to position the reader as professional, with a similar interrogative prompt and second person address, but the sub-headings move into the third person and therefore constitute a kind of rupture in the mode of address. If the

question is now about how “teachers” can “promote creativity”, then who is being spoken to? And if “teachers” are being spoken *about* rather than *to*, they are now removed from the collegial embrace set up in the earlier mode of address. One could argue that this is merely an example of the kind of imprecision and inconsistency that one often finds in official documents, but I would argue that we can find in it the central tension identified above; the tension between creativity as something open to negotiation and subject to local agreements, and creativity as something limited, accountable and subject to institutional supervision. The heading for section two stands out in this context because there is no suggestion of this collegial gesture and no use of the second person address:

2. Why is creativity so important?

Improving pupils’ self-esteem, motivation and achievement: preparing pupils for life; enriching pupils’ lives (QCA 2004, p.3)

This represents a significant break from the mode of address adopted in the headings for section one; there is no explicit addressee and the subheading is in the form of a list, rather than the prose we find in sections 1 and 3. In addition, despite its construction as a question, the heading limits the range of possible responses by making it impossible, without an aggressively oppositional reading, to challenge the notion that creativity is important. And in a further act of closure, the list which constitutes the subheading provides ‘answers’ to the question in the heading. The absence of an addressee moves the question about creativity from the particular to the universal; there is no possibility of local negotiation here, no suggestion of a debate to be had, instead we have a declaration of a universal truth – creativity is important – and this is reinforced by some reasons why.

6.6 Service provider and client

The stated audience for this document is:

mainly...teachers, headteachers, senior managers and governors, although others with an interest in education may find it useful. (QCA 2004, p.5)

and this may provide a rationale for the shifts in address. However, I would argue that there is a relationship between the construction of subject positions and the construction of creativity and that by analysing one the other is illuminated. Unfortunately there is no simple correlation between, for example, the second person mode and a conception of creativity as fluid and open and, conversely, the third person mode and a conception of creativity as fixed and standardised. But an analysis of specific moments of enunciation can reveal how the tension manifests itself and also enables further exploration of my idea that *what is at stake in constructions of creativity is the status of the subject*. A good example in this respect occurs in the introduction:

Using this booklet and the examples

Sections 1, 2 and 3 could provide a starting point to:

- discuss what pupils and teachers think is meant by creativity
- reconsider the school's learning and teaching policy and how pupils' creativity is currently being promoted through their school's curriculum. (QCA 2004, p.5)

The bold heading uses what we might call a 'service discourse', in that it offers guidance to the potential user; it is the same mode of address that we find in manuals for technical equipment – my 'Airport Express' manual, for example, tells me to "read this guide to get started using it". This mode is also evident in the foreword, where we find that

Many people have expressed interest in obtaining a print version of *Creativity: find it, promote it*. These materials are published in response to this demand. (QCA 2004, p.4)

Both of these examples produce a reading subject that is a service-user or client and, within the structural economy of service-provider and client, creativity

(or, more accurately, *understanding* creativity) here becomes, temporarily, a commodity to be provided. The ‘gifting’ verbs in the introduction provide further evidence of this – “Section 3 provides...”; “Section 4 provides...”; Section 5 gives...” What is significant here is that the subject is not a ‘creative subject’, but a ‘consuming subject’ and this focus on mode of address helps us to see how creativity appears, disappears and mutates at various points. In the context of this document creativity functions as a reason for dependence – the dependence of the teacher upon the expertise of the authority – but this is masked by the rhetoric of freedom and self-fulfilment.

To return to the example at the beginning of this section, which begins with the ‘user guidance’, we can identify inconsistencies in the mode of address which further reveal the complex network of temporary bonds around creativity. The tentative tone with which it begins, for example, is produced with a modal verb, “could”, which is a verb of possibility rather than compulsion. It is followed by the verb “provide”, which is consistent with the ‘service discourse’ noted above, and the thing which could be provided is “a starting point”. There is an implied addressee here; the sentence could be reconfigured to address a notional teacher if the words “for you” were inserted after “starting point” and this would be consistent with the quality of the second person mode described above. However, this would not work in this context, because the succeeding bullet points seem to address a second person who does not fall into the category “pupils” or “teachers”. This second person is positioned as hierarchically superior to ‘them’ – the “pupils and teachers” – and is offered the privilege of discussing what *they* “think is meant by creativity”. (QCA 2004, p.5)

Again, we might argue that this is merely a case of syntactical infelicity, but I suggest that the fleetingly glimpsed subjects are constituted by different degrees of power regarding their ability to control how creativity is realised in institutions. It is clear from the first bullet point that the addressee is not a teacher (or, indeed, a pupil) and this recognition is confirmed by the second bullet point, in which the subject is invited to “reconsider the school’s learning and teaching policy and how pupils’ creativity is currently being promoted through their school’s curriculum.” (QCA 2004, p.5) Creativity here is something

which should be encysted in policy and should be promoted – in other words, it is something over which the school should assert control and ownership. But is also something ‘owned’ by pupils (in as much as they are given a possessive relationship with it) so, as I mentioned above, what is at stake is agency – how creativity is ‘enacted’ or performed within an educational context – and who can claim it, retain it and maintain it.

This shifting between subjects could well be a feature of educational policy more generally, but it is particularly revealing in relation to the nature of the tensions around creativity.

6.7 From incompetence to competence

Section 5 of the report: “About QCA’s creativity project”, is exemplary in its moves towards a ‘creativity hegemony’; by this I mean that through a range of rhetorical manoeuvres it encourages acceptance of a set of principles about creativity in education.

The description of project represents it in terms of academic research and governmental authority. We read first that QCA was asked by the Secretary of State for Education and Skills to investigate creativity as a national curriculum priority, which confers upon the research the power of official sanction. The research then describes a fairly conventional academic process, which includes a review of literature, and practice and policy relating to creativity in other countries. This is then mobilised in an empirical project with practising teachers, informed by the research and “discussions with experts.” (QCA 2004, p.18)

It is significant that QCA in this research claims to have “adopted the definition of creativity in *All Our Futures*” (QCA 2004, p.18) which, as I have pointed out previously, was offered as “stipulative” and “indicative”. Here it is cited with a full reference, including every word in the committee’s name so that it covers nearly three lines – a quantitative representation of its significance – and there is no suggestion that it may constitute the “starting point” suggested in the first section. Given this disparity, I would argue that it is the act and the fact of referencing that is more important here than any particular use of the content of

the original document. And even though the reader is referred to section one, the engagement with the key concepts from *All Our Futures* (“Imagination and Purpose”; “Originality”; “Value”) is so general that they can easily be yoked into service to lend credibility to the QCA research. In short, then, there are moves here which signify authority through the mobilisation of what we might call ‘academic discourse’. This authority is, by association, conferred upon its development of a particular model of creativity.

The use of “we” to refer to the QCA research team connotes a personal form of address to the reader and the headings “what did we do?” and “what did we learn?” mark a return to the collegial address noted previously. However, in this second section, the QCA team is not referred to at all, rather it is the teachers involved in the project who seemed to learn things. Given this disparity, the “what did we learn?” question seems to represent an illusory collectiveness – rather like a teacher may ask her class “what did we learn today?”, and it is in this section that the persuasive rendition of group enlightenment about creativity is executed. What is described here is story of progress from ignorance to understanding and, because QCA is no longer implicated in the “we” form of address, it is the teachers who make this journey and QCA which guides them as the authority. This means that the final set of bullet points about creativity are supported by the strength of an apparently rigorous research project and winning the consent of “120 teachers” (QCA 2004, p.18).

An analysis of the rhetorical strategies employed in the “What did we learn?” section reveals how creativity is allied with certain kinds of pedagogic activity and differentiated from others – to return to one of my key research questions, it enables us to understand how the category ‘creativity’ is produced through the production and maintenance of boundaries around it. In addition we have a teleological narrative structure, which has a persuasive function in that it describes the gradual accumulation of knowledge and experience towards the goal of sophisticated engagement with creativity; it implies, in effect, that the movement towards this particular understanding of creativity is a necessary and valuable form of epistemological development for teachers. The section begins:

Initially, the teachers involved in the project had very specific views on how to promote pupils' creativity. Some thought that creativity arose from unplanned or unstructured activities. Others thought that activities such as role-play, visits and debates were key. Many art and design and music teachers assumed that because their subjects involve a creative process, pupils were thinking and behaving creatively all the time. (QCA 2004, p.19)

The implication here is that the teachers at the start of this project were naïve; their understandings of creativity were limited, too rigid or simply wrong. As this was the *initial* stage of the project, the narrative expectation is established that there must be some progression *from* these positions, and so the boundaries and divisions begin to emerge: creativity is not the product of anything “unplanned or unstructured”, neither is it inevitably characteristic of work in art and design and music. Because these boundaries emerge by implication and through the rhetorical attribution of a ‘creative fallacy’ to untutored teachers, the danger of losing an ‘essence’ of creativity is not explicit. But it is this notional essence which is at stake, particularly in the next paragraph:

As the project progressed, the teachers began to realise that creating something is not the same thing as being creative. They saw that being creative has as much to do with the quality of thought taking place and the process or journey as with what is ultimately produced. They also discovered that creativity can happen in extended project work, discussion and short question-and-answer sessions. (QCA 2004, p.19)

The key differentiation here is between a *product* and a “quality of thought” and a “process or journey”; to be ‘creative’ pupils must demonstrate a certain kind of thinking and a certain kind of behaviour. The problem created here is how this kind of thought and behaviour can be distinguished from any other kind of thought and behaviour, particularly when the teachers in the research equate “a creative moment in a lesson” with “a moment when there appeared to be a breakthrough in thinking.” (p.19) This equation threatens to absorb or efface the ‘specialness’ of creativity so it then reappears in this paragraph as something

which “happen[s]” and something which “flourish[es]” as a consequence of effective pedagogic practice:

Teachers also realised that creativity did not happen in a vacuum. Pupils needed subject-specific knowledge and skills for their creativity to flourish. (QCA 2004, p.19)

Despite its apparent indebtedness to *All Our Futures*, this report marks a shift from the former’s liberal inclusivity to something more standardised and, therefore, less ‘different’. *All Our Futures* argues that the “key is to find what children are good at” (NACCCE 1999, p.14), but this openness to diversity is not apparent in the QCA document; instead we find a set of prescriptions for more effective teaching and learning onto which ‘creativity’ is grafted as a brand. This can be seen clearly in the conclusion to the research summary:

By the end of the project, all of the teachers agreed that:

Opportunities for creativity arise in all types of activities

- By making only minor adjustments to their lesson plans, they could promote creativity
- To teach creatively, they needed to feel confident in their skills and subject knowledge
- Sharing practice with teachers of other subjects and age groups was helpful
- Pupils can’t be expected to think and behave creatively in every single lesson
- Thinking and behaving creatively is not appropriate in all lessons.

(QCA 2004, p.19)

It is worth noting the achievement of consent from “all the teachers” which has a rhetorical function here in that it serves to make the list of realisations more plausible. But more importantly it is striking how invisible creativity has become: it is something which can be promoted via an adjusted lesson plan; it is a possible attribute of the application of traditional pedagogic ‘craft’ skills; and it is something which cannot be expected in every lesson, and is positively

unwelcome in some. Only one of these points ties in explicitly with the stated aim of this document and I suggest that this represents a retreat from complexity; creativity exists here as a vague, but exciting promise of otherness that can, paradoxically, only be achieved through rigorous application of pedagogic craft skills. The illustrative case studies, which all emerged from the research project, can provide further evidence of this.

6.8 Creativity in action

Section 2 of this document, “Why is creativity so important?” represents a break from the ambiguities of definition and value and an embrace of utility. In other words, this brief section liberates itself from the requirement to pin down a concept and simply implements that concept, as if it were secure, within some concrete scenarios.

As I have noted already, the use of questions as titles for the different sections creates a space for the reader to respond and thereby become complicit in the project by filling the gap. Arguably this is a strategy for winning consent, although the quality of the consent at this stage is not fully worked out. The title of Section 2, unlike the others, dispenses with the second person form of address and, despite the appearance of interrogation, is actually declarative; it is stating that creativity *is* important and the only space left for the reader is to suggest different ways in which it is. It is worth examining the nature of some of these declarations in order to show how ‘creativity’ functions here as a kind of rhetorical glue which brings about the adhesion of disparate, otherwise ‘non-stick’ elements:

CREATIVITY IMPROVES PUPILS’ SELF-ESTEEM, MOTIVATION AND ACHIEVEMENT

Pupils who are encouraged to think creatively and independently become:

- more interested in discovering things for themselves
- more open to new ideas
- keen to work with others to explore ideas

- willing to work beyond lesson time when pursuing an idea or vision

As a result, their pace of learning, levels of achievement and self-esteem increase. (QCA 2004, p.9)

I have reproduced the capitals here as they express something of the importance and weight of the declaration – perhaps one might even argue that they are over determined – they ‘protest too much’. It is a big claim to assert that creativity improves self-esteem, motivation and achievement, especially as the measurement of such things is problematic, but the bludgeoning ‘volume’ of the capitals diminishes such cavils. This statement, however, is followed by one, in lower case letters, which is more modulated and uses the passive voice to suggest that what is needed is the *encouragement to think creatively and independently*. What is at work here is the rhetoric of the tabloid newspaper, in which an arresting, assertive, unambiguous headline is subsequently moderated by successive elaborations and refinements. In this case the qualitative assertions in the heading become more tentative quantitative assertions in the list of bullet points; the encouragement to think creatively and independently will bring about increases in interest in discovery and openness to new ideas as well as increases in the willingness to work with others and to work for longer hours. The final statement here performs the function of a registration of proof – a kind of *Quod Erat Demonstrandum* – the hypothesis has been declared, the evidence presented and the hypothesis proved. The repetition of the terms from the ‘headline’ statement, “achievement” and “self-esteem”, are persuasive in encouraging us to accept that a logical process has been followed, but this rhetorical structuring masks, or diverts us, from the shift in terminology from “creativity” to being “encouraged to think creatively and independently”.

Like all of the arguments in this section, it is essentially utilitarian and, consequently, creativity becomes a panacea, important for what it *does*, rather than what it *is*. As such it acquires a protean quality here, which is useful in terms of the general project to persuade us to accept the value of creativity, but it also threatens to undermine the notion of creativity as something distinctive and special. In the second declaration and ‘proof’ there is almost a sense that

creativity is functioning like a quantum particle, simultaneously present and absent. The declaration is that:

CREATIVITY PREPARES PUPILS FOR LIFE: AN IMPORTANT AIM OF THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM

The *National Curriculum Handbook* outlines the importance of creativity: 'By providing rich and varied contexts for pupils to acquire, develop and apply a broad range of knowledge, understanding and skills, the curriculum should enable pupils to **think creatively and critically, to solve problems and to make a difference for the better**. It should give them the opportunity to become **creative, innovative, enterprising** and capable of leadership to equip them for their future lives as workers and citizens.

It should enable pupils to **respond positively to opportunities, challenges and responsibilities, to manage risk and to cope with change and adversity.**' (QCA 2004, p.9)

The capitalised declaration is implicitly syllogistic: creativity prepares pupils for life; preparing pupils for life is an important aim of the National Curriculum; therefore creativity is an important aim of the National Curriculum. It is worth noting that this constitutes a discursive move, in that the statements are quoted from the authoritative source of the National Curriculum Handbook and used to reinforce other statements in this document. And it is also worth noting that this constitutes a distortion; firstly the use of bold typography – a kind of meta-discursive statement telling us that these statements constitute evidence to support the argument – which is absent in the original document (*National Curriculum Handbook 2004*, p.11). In an academic context one might indicate that one had italicised key phrases or, alternatively, that the italics (or emboldening) were present in the original source. The absence of such explicit reference to the source here constitutes a rhetorical manoeuvre, bringing about coherence by association between the emboldened items and implying that this coherence exists in the authoritative source document. Secondly, the absence of ellipsis fails to make it clear that the statement beginning "It should enable

pupils...” comes from a different section in the handbook, albeit on the same page; the subject is still the curriculum, but there is no mention of creativity in this section. So, once again, we have an example of rhetorical glue being used to stick together:

- Thinking creatively
- Thinking critically
- Solving problems
- Making a difference for the better
- Becoming creative
- Becoming innovative
- Becoming enterprising
- Responding positively to opportunities, challenges and responsibilities
- Managing risk
- Coping with change and adversity

And this rhetorical elision of creativity and virtually anything positive in the National Curriculum means that it emerges sometimes as cause, sometimes as function and, most curiously, cause *and* function. It is not clear, for example, in the excerpt from the *National Curriculum Handbook*, whether “think[ing] creatively” is the same as “becom[ing] creative”; there is a suggestion that through thinking creatively students will become creative – a formulation which creates a kind of tautologous collapse. There is a shift after this into two further assertions:

Creative thinking and behaviour can be promoted in all national curriculum subjects and in religious education.

Pupils who are creative will be prepared for a rapidly changing world, where they may have to adapt to several careers in a lifetime. Many employers want people who see connections, have bright ideas, are innovative, communicate and work well with others and are able to solve problems. In other words, they need creative people. (QCA 2004, p.9)

The rhetorical urgency here is reminiscent of that in *All Our Futures*, in that there is similar expression of the need to equip young people for a fluid job

market. But it is also a further instance of that collapse of difference into homogeneity and the co-opting of a litany of employability skills in order to consolidate rhetorically a concept of creativity. The key phrase here is “In other words, they need creative people”, for it constitutes an explicit equation between employability and creativity. But, in this move, ‘creativity’ loses its ‘otherness’.

The final declaration is an attempt to reclaim that ‘otherness’:

CREATIVITY ENRICHES PUPILS’ LIVES

By promoting creativity, teachers can give all pupils the opportunity to discover and pursue their particular interests and talents. We are all, or can be, creative to some degree. Creative pupils lead richer lives and, in the longer term, make a valuable contribution to society. (QCA 2004, p.9)

The final point is, of course, a utilitarian one – it is a long term investment, but “creative pupils” will eventually “make a valuable contribution to society”. But it is significant that the nature of this contribution is not specified and that the notion of enrichment dominates here. Enrichment is not quantifiable, indeed it is barely qualifiable except in the most personal terms, so it exists here as a stake in the otherness of creativity. I have used the term ‘over determination’ already, which has Freudian, Althusserian and rhetorical connotations, and would argue that it is a legitimate concept in contributing to an understanding of the construction of creativity in this document and the others under scrutiny. If something is over determined it is constituted through multiple causes and, as Freud has argued, these causes may be contradictory or incompatible. Creativity can be allowed to retain its wraithlike quality in a poetic context, but in a policy context it is forced to materialise, and the means by which this materialisation is effected are often mutually destructive. But these contradictions are ignored or effaced so that we can see the coexistence of multiple discourses and attributions of cause and effect; it is as if the quantity of enthusiasm should carry the argument, regardless of the logical inconsistencies.

6.9 A return to behaviourism

Section 3 of this document asks “How can you spot creativity?” and suggests that:

When pupils are thinking and behaving creatively in the classroom, you are likely to see them:

- Questioning and challenging
- Making connections and seeing relationships
- Envisaging what might be
- Exploring ideas, keeping options open
- Reflecting critically on ideas, actions and outcomes (QCA 2004, p.10)

At stake is the creative subject and here the creative subject is inferred through specific behaviours. These behaviours are problematic, because it is assumed that they mean something specific. Arguably one could be “thinking creatively” when one is staring into space scratching one’s head, but this is not listed as valid evidence. So we can identify here a set of behavioural prescriptions which assume that character and ‘spirit’ are inevitably indicated through particular activities. We can identify the same mobilisation of behavioural characteristics in the Ofsted document, which also models creativity as something defined by observable activity. Here we have the promise that the website:

Shows pupils thinking and behaving creatively across the national curriculum and religious education at key stages 1 to 3. (QCA 2004, p.4)

This elision of behaving and thinking which seems to be necessary in a project to make creativity accountable, is a problem; thinking itself cannot be observed. How does one *show* that one is thinking? How can one be sure that someone else is thinking merely by *observing* them? Michael Simkins in *What’s My Motivation?* tells the story of how, in acting class, he and his peers desperately try to “express the sensation of beads of mercury travelling up and down our various limbs”. Others are told by the tutor that they’ve “got it”, but not Michael, who tries so hard that he is criticised for “signalling”:

Then eventually, one lesson, just when I'm least expecting to, I hear her say the words I'm aching to hear:

'That's it, Michael, you've got it.'

It takes me by surprise because I've actually fallen asleep on the floor.

(Simkins 2003, p.41)

A light-hearted anecdote, but it has illustrative potential; if behaviour is believed to provide access to thought it becomes the most important thing to observe. It is, in effect, a manifestation of one type of behaviourism – a moderate version which does not deny the existence of internal mental states, but which seeks to identify them through the outward manifestation of action. There is an irony here, that creativity which, in other contexts represents at least freedom from constraint, is represented as something which only exists (for administrative purposes) if it can be inferred through particular modes of behaviour.

There is also an irony in the subsection entitled "Questioning and challenging" where we are told that:

Creative pupils are curious, question and challenge, and don't always follow the rules. They:

- ask 'why?' 'how?' 'what if?'
- ask unusual questions
- respond to ideas, questions, tasks or problems in a surprising way
- challenge conventions and their own and others' assumptions
- think independently. (QCA 2004, p.10)

Again we can identify the tension between freedom and constraint – the freedom which characterises the "creative pupil" constrained by a set of bullet points which define it. It also significant that creativity has now become an essence; it is possible to *be* a "creative pupil". This ontological bias is evident in the verb "becoming" in the previous section, but this is the first time in which pupils are described as *being* creative. In a classic empirical move, existence is inferred through observation and it is this move that lays the foundations for the rationale in the Ofsted document, discussed later.

But this does not solve two central problems, which become apparent at various stages in the document. The first is that, if pupils are creative, according to this list, they could be manifesting this in ways which are difficult to categorise – how ‘unusual’ does an “unusual question” get before it becomes a bizarre and counter-productive question, for example? Just how “surprising” can a response to a problem be in order to be considered the work of a creative pupil? Such difficult questions reveal the underlying pro-social common sense in this work of classification, because what is not said, but clearly essential, is that these manifestations of independence and rule-breaking should not be designed to subvert or undermine institutionalised education. The second is a logical problem; if pupils can *be* creative then for whose benefit should this be exhibited? If it is something which they can own (suggested by “pupils’ creativity” (p.13)) then, presumably their lives will inevitably be enriched and their employability enhanced and there should be little need for it to be pursued.

The key observation then is that this document constructs creativity in ways which are not only in conflict with constructions in other documents, but in conflict with themselves. The over determination of creativity here gives it rhetorical force, but results in something which is everything and nothing, everywhere and nowhere: it is something ephemeral and enriching, achievable by all, but it is also a set of observable skills which will mark out exceptional learners; it is something surprising and rule-breaking, but only within the confines of prescribed activities.

6.10 Foot note

The final image in this document is a call back to the cover image – it is the cropped portion, missing from the cover, showing the child’s right foot, frozen, mid-jump, partially bleached out by the flash, illuminated against a garden fence and shrub. We may speculate about the content of the image – is a foot, like Christy Brown’s left foot (*My Left Foot* 1989), with which he proved himself to be an artist and writer, a symbol of creativity? Perhaps this is too arcane and oblique a reference. Rhetorically, though, the image acts as a second bracket around the document and functions to persuade us that this document maintains an investment in the ‘otherness’ of creativity that comes from play,

experiment and abandonment – an instance of Banaji et al.’s rhetoric of ‘Play and creativity’ (2006, pp.35-38) exemplified in, for example, the work of Sandra Russ (1998). As we have seen, however, there is little space here for such playfulness, as the discourse of simplicity, disambiguation, certainty and limits tends to occupy a superior position.

My approach to this document has been driven by the assumption that creativity is a problematic concept and, therefore, that a policy document which promises to offer ways of identifying it and promoting it would exhibit tensions and peculiarities of construction. Such a document depends upon clarity of definition, assertion and simplicity and I have argued that it is at moments when it is most assertive that the cracks and contradictions can be identified. The mode of this document strives for neutrality and objectivity – it avoids rhetorical tropes such as metaphor, simile and hyperbole – but its aversion to poetry does not mean that it escapes analysis on the basis of rhetoric. I have suggested that its use of interrogatives (sometimes misleadingly) and its positioning of the reader are equally rhetorical, equally persuasive in encouraging the acceptance of particular things as unarguable or inevitable. I argue that its mobilisation of familiar discursive constructions, such as that of ‘service provision’ and that of academic research also perform a rhetorical function in that they suggest, respectively, that a need is being fulfilled and that authority is being invoked. Both, in different ways, contribute to the construction of ‘truth effects’.

In the context of the other documents being scrutinised in this research, this one is significant in its use of selective quotation from *All Our Futures*, its authoritative institutional context as a QCA publication and its use by Ofsted in justifying a model of creativity which is built on observation of behavioural characteristics.

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Interruption 6: Promoting creativity

It is ironic that I have played a part in 'promoting creativity'; in 2002 I am approached by the editor of a series of books aimed at teachers of film and media studies. She already knows me because we have worked for an exam board as senior examiners/moderators and she also knows that I have taken a sabbatical year with the explicit aim of getting into the creative industries as a writer or script editor. So I am offered the title *Teaching scriptwriting, screenplays and storyboards for film and TV production*. (Readman 2003) Flicking through this slim volume several years later, I am struck by how casually I refer to creativity:

It can also provide a much needed creative outlet for those students who have strong narrative and visual ideas, but, for whatever reason, find that they cannot give satisfactory realisation to these ideas via cameras and editing equipment. (p.5)

The aim is to enable students to combine these elements in finished products which are creatively informed as well as critically engaged. (p.6)

Unthreatening, confidence-building exercises are necessary to create a supportive environment for sharing and discussing creative ideas. (p.7)

While the creative dimension is crucial to this work, it is important that we recognise that we are not simply assessing good ideas, but the command and application of a range of skills designed to tell a story in an effective way for a specific medium. (p.7)

It is useful for teachers to have access to some of these texts for reference and, although they may be a bit daunting for many students, they would be of interest to those who are particularly creative and motivated - especially those producing screenplays for AS/A level Film Studies. (p.16)

Criticisms might be that it is a prescriptive, formulaic approach to a creative activity, that it is biased towards the mainstream Hollywood film and that it leaves little room for deviation from a conventional linear mode of storytelling. (p.18)

Some students will seek to avoid conventional modes of narration and insist that their ideas cannot be creatively constrained, but it is unlikely that their knowledge of convention is sufficiently sophisticated to challenge it successfully. (p.18)

I can barely remember what I meant by this, but I seem to be suggesting that creativity is, variously:

- About ideas rather than physical production
- Different from critical engagement
- Nurtured by a supportive environment
- Dispositional
- Not formulaic or prescriptive

These assumptions are not surprising, but the absence of critique is, especially when the term is used to provide a rationale for certain kinds of behaviour and thinking.

Interestingly, references to creativity dry up after page 18 when I start to outline specific activities – it is as if I have realised that creativity has conceptual value when it is ideal and aspirational, but little operational value in a practical context.

7 *Nurturing Creativity in Young People*

7.1 Introduction

This chapter actually deals with two documents: *Nurturing Creativity in Young People* and the *Government Response to Paul Roberts' Report on Nurturing Creativity in Young People*. Through my analysis of these documents I argue that:

- It is possible to discern ideological conflict, both within them and between them, over the 'nature' of creativity
- They represent a bridge between the unwieldy rhetoric of *All Our Futures* and the terse prescriptions of Ofsted's survey
- The latter document performs a limiting operation on the former, whilst appearing to endorse it in its entirety

Nurturing Creativity in Young People (Roberts 2006) provides useful examples of how some of the tensions and contradictions around creativity are manifested. It was commissioned by both the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Department for Education and Skills and, given this status, it arguably constitutes an 'authorised version' of what creativity in education might be. In addition, its subtitle is 'A report to the government to inform policy', so its recommendations had the genuine potential to become translated into legislation and practice. And although quantitative measures are crude and limited indicators, the fact that the document features the noun 'creativity' 356 times and the adjective 'creative' 426 times suggests a degree of confidence in its application and gives some kind of indication of its significance. Unlike some others, this document is not afraid of 'creativity' as a noun – it is in the title and it forms the basis of some bold assertions. But, to mix metaphors, this brave embrace gives a hostage to fortune.

It is also significant in terms of its relationship with the other 'authorised texts' in this research, given the way it makes reference to both *All Our Futures* and the QCA document *Creativity: Find it, promote it*.

The review draws on the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority work on creativity. This in turn takes a starting point of creativity as defined by the report of the National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education that there are “four characteristics of creative processes...” (Roberts 2006, p.12)

The inter-citation between these documents suggests that there is coherence and a high degree of homogeneity between their respective conceptions of creativity, but closer inspection reveals some significant differences which, along with other internal conflicts, tend to be disavowed, ignored or glossed over. The Ofsted document, for example, includes *All Our Futures* in its reference list, but avoids its ‘four characteristics’ formulation, preferring instead the more cognitive model proposed by QCA as a translation of this. As we shall see later, the Roberts Report maintains a focus on imaginative, purposeful, valuable, productive activity because its model of creativity is tied firmly to a model of the ‘creative industries’.

7.2 Authorship

Paul Roberts is explicitly nominated as the author of the report (although sections within it which are authored by others are credited appropriately) and his personal address to the reader in the introduction is a good example of how he is constructed as an authority in his field:

I was delighted to be asked by Ministers in DCMS and DfES to undertake this review. In it I have drawn on my experience as teacher, inspector, Director of Education in Nottingham and Haringey – but most of all on the large number of colleagues in Education/Children’s Services and Creativity Sectors who have contributed to the debate and writing for this report.

I am particularly grateful to the Improvement and Development Agency for allowing me to undertake this work. (Roberts 2006, p.2)

It is straightforward enough to analyse this preface in the way that Stillar (1998) analyses the prefaces in two writing handbooks, that is, by identifying in it the

ideational resources of language [which] are called upon to structure experience, to represent a particular arrangement of “reality.” (Stillar 1998, p.28)

Making use of the components used by Stillar, namely: process type and participants; circumstances; time and perspective; and concept taxonomies, it is relevant to note, firstly, that Roberts as the author/‘processor’ demonstrates a ‘reactive’ mental process in that he is “delighted” to be asked to undertake the report. Secondly that he draws upon ‘circumstantial’ elements, such as his various professional roles, which have the effect of validating and authenticating his reactions and proposals. And this micro-level analysis of language, inspired as Stillar indicates, by Halliday’s functional linguistics, can be valuable in revealing the meaning of utterances within a language system. However, following Foucault, we can take a step back, adopt a wider field of vision and, in doing so, suggest that it is possible to identify a discursive function in this preface. Firstly, Roberts’ “delight” is significant as it sets up a connection between creativity and pleasure; but to be “delighted” is to be more than “pleased” so, arguably, creativity as the focus for this review, is the subject of a familiar enhancement – it is magical and extreme. Secondly, Roberts’ expertise in education and experience in the challenging areas of “Nottingham and Haringey” serve to model creativity as something which requires expert intervention; just as, historically, certain human behaviours were ‘medicalised’ (cf. Foucault 1989), creativity, here, is being ‘educationalised’. These two observations can be made to cohere by suggesting that the latter is determined by the former; creativity is something extreme, therefore it needs to be contained and tamed in some way. The metaphor of nature which I am teasing out here can be more easily seen working in the *Government Response* to this report, which I discuss towards the end of this section.

7.3 methodology

As I have mentioned elsewhere, reaching conclusions about the meaning(s) of a text is always problematic if one accepts that meaning is generated through the dynamic process of reading (cf. Fish 1988). However, this should not negate attention to the textual characteristics which play some part in producing possible readings. This document, like *All Our Futures*, but unlike the others under scrutiny here, includes a response from its audience – an official ‘government response’ with a foreword from the ministers at the time, David Lammy and Andrew Adonis. It also includes an appendix in which there is a summary of the responses to Paul Roberts’ ‘Creativity Review’. These elements, taken as a whole, could be argued to constitute a ‘dialogic’ quality; appendix 2 is even titled ‘The voice of children and young people’ and, consequently, there are more seams and fissures in this document than in, say, the Ofsted survey.

My use of the term ‘authorised version’ in inverted commas above is indicative of a particular stance taken in relation to knowledge and power and with those two words Foucault is again invoked. A Foucaultian approach to this document entails examining the mechanisms it uses to attempt to fix creativity in particular ways. It means paying particular attention to specific details of articulation and identifying how these function to reify this concept in relation to others which are included or excluded. For Foucault, this conflict is never finished or complete; discourses are always vying with one another, overlapping with each other and any domination is always tenuous and contingent.

My earlier analysis of this document (Readman 2009) took as its template *The Rhetorics of Creativity* (Banaji et al. 2006) and, whilst the categories given in this work provide a way of disentangling different languages of creativity from each other, it is worth attempting to engage with it without necessarily seeking to impose a set of pre-existing categories. It may be more useful to attempt to identify, for example, internal conflicts and contradictions and to suggest that the document constitutes an example of ‘creativity wrangling’. I am aware that my own metaphors which pertain to creativity tend to be animalistic – I have described it as ‘slippery’ (like an eel) and, here, something which needs

'wrangling' (like cattle). And this expresses something of my hunch about creativity in these documents; despite their attempts to fix it, to co-opt it, to annexe it, there is something about its connotations, its conceptual baggage, which makes this impossible. No matter how 'stipulative' or pragmatic the definition, 'creativity' always threatens to subvert it; we might argue, following Freud and Althusser, that it is 'over determined'.

Despite this goal of avoiding pre-judgements and pre-categorisations, it is difficult to ignore a strong imprint here of what Fairclough (1995) calls the "marketization discourse" in education, particularly in the 'key messages' section where we read that, despite the "rich array of creativity work" in schools, it is not systematically supported and:

Stronger connections between that creativity work and the emerging policy context in education and children's services would produce a "win-win" – creativity embedded in these developments and, reciprocally, these developments enhanced by the impact of creativity. (Roberts 2006, p.5)

This "win-win" concept, the notion that creativity will benefit everyone and everything, is similar to the celebration we find in *All Our Futures*, but unlike *All Our Futures* which, as an independent report, is able to indulge its utopianism unfettered, *Nurturing Creativity in Young People* has to conform to existing policy initiatives, such as the Every Child Matters agenda, the impending new inspection regime and the expectations for the 14-19 Creative and Media Diploma. Consequently there is tendency in this report to construct creativity as something which can be offered in a pseudo-commercial sense:

There is a need to construct a more coherent 'creativity offer' which is then actively managed/brokered into the new context of school and personal autonomy. (Roberts 2006, p.5)

This construction is particularly problematic in this report, given the economic configuration established here; the constitution of creativity as a commodity

which can be 'offered', as the capital in a deal which can be 'brokered' is continually in tension with a notion of creativity as something already possessed and which can be released through 'nurturing'. Despite its dominant place in the title of the document, I would argue that 'nurturing' is subordinate to implementation, but that there is a fault line between the two.

As Dugdale suggests, in her analysis of an Australian IUD consumer information leaflet,

It is standard procedure of semiotic analysis to explore how it is that readers are constituted by textual moves of one kind or another. It is therefore not breaking new ground to argue that this text is performing its reader in a particular way. (Dugdale 1999, p.127)

And in this document the readers, the government ministers perhaps, are constituted as those who can 'make creativity happen' in education through the implementation of strategies and policies. This is certainly the implication of the Government Response document which was published just a few months later.

7.4 Play and the arts

Banaji et al. draw our attention to the "almost overwhelming visual emphasis on drama, dance and art projects" in the NACCCE report (2006 p.26), a characteristic which, as I have observed elsewhere, also obtains in their own report. *Nurturing Creativity in Young People* exhibits the same tendency; the images in this report are:

- A circle of children sitting and lying on the floor sketching (cover image)
- An ornamental sculpture (inside cover image)
- A closer, ground level shot of (the same?) children sketching (p.4)
- Children working with clay (p.8 and p.10)
- A large group of people on a beach, dressed in white, arranged in a line, arms raised as if in triumph (p.16)
- A ballet dancer on stage in front of an audience of children (p.18)
- A child glimpsed through fronds of paper (p.20)

- A long-exposure image of a tracery of lights, within which children can be glimpsed (p.26)
- A group of children dancing/performing (p.32)
- A group of children playing brass instruments (p.38)
- Children painting a mural on the floor (p.44)
- A girl using a large interactive exhibit/console (p.50)
- A child in elaborate carnival costume (p.56)
- Young children on a window seat, reading books that seem to have come from the 'Bookstart treasure chest' between them (p.60)

My descriptions are sparse, but even so it should be clear that these are all arts-related images which, by implication, offer illustration and definition of creativity in this document. They also show a range of children engaged in purposeful work – work which requires (or has required) craft skills, patience and discipline. There is certainly no sense of the 'untutoredness' that is evident in the image of exuberance on the cover of the QCA document, from which we might infer that any theories connecting play with creativity have now been firmly excluded.

As I have mentioned already, this document is overtly wedded to a notion of creativity that sees it as integral to the creative industries; the stated impetus for the report is given as James Purnell's 2005 speech at the Institute for Public Policy Research in which he:

...reflected on what it was about our educational system that fosters creativity, indicating that "we should build our policies on that success... to look at what more we can do to nurture young creative talent", and to look for "a clear set of policy assumptions which will help to inform the basis of our future policy on creativity". (Roberts 2006, p.11)

This statement falls into Banaji et al.'s (2006) "creativity as economic imperative" category – the argument that the 'creative industries' (a term which some would argue already represents a triumphant rhetorical marriage of two incompatibles) constitute an area on which the future of the economy will

depend to an increasing degree. Consequently a creatively skilled workforce is required in order to facilitate its continuing growth and profit, so we find that TV programmes such as *Dragons' Den* and *The X Factor* are valuable reference points for students because “successful participants go through a process of auditioning, presenting and pitching, honing their skills through criticism and turning themselves into a brand...These programmes are all about self-improvement and risk-taking in a creative and entrepreneurial economy.” (Roberts 2006, p.23). But also we find that creativity is equally valuable in a generic employment context:

The capacity for creativity - to work in teams, to share ideas, to identify problems and critically analyse solutions - is increasingly important in all walks of life. Indeed these are the attributes most often valued by employers in particular when making recruitment decisions. Creativity is not just about self-expression. It requires teamwork and discipline. (Roberts 2006, p.57).

It is here that we can identify the ‘pull of the generic’ – the tension between a creative industries model and a ‘generic skills’ model of creativity. Generic skills appear to have ‘won’ in the Ofsted survey (although the tension still exists), but here they are merely flirted with momentarily, as James Purnell’s challenge “...to make Britain the world’s creative hub” dominates the proceedings. If this challenge is to be met by changes in policy, then these policy initiatives must be required to demonstrate specific outcomes and it is likely that these would need to be quantitative increases in the scale and success of the creative industries, rather than just a general increase in ‘employability’. This aspect is referred to as “the wider context”, together with the assertion that “creativity is increasingly required across the whole workforce – not just that of the Creative Industries.” (Roberts 2006, p.11)

7.5 Nurturing, fostering, promoting

I have suggested that there is a significant difference between this document and the Ofsted document – a difference between the operational verbs used in relation to creativity. Here creativity is something which is nurtured and fostered,

there it is something which is promoted. This is perhaps indicative of the different contexts and forms of the documents – the Roberts Report is about informing policy, advising on the conditions in which creativity can thrive, whereas the Ofsted survey is about changing practice, ensuring that particular tasks generate particular outcomes. But this distinction may be too crude.

One significant difference can be seen in the different conceptions of the relationship between creativity and the National Curriculum; for Ofsted there is no conflict – the two are complementary, but for Roberts this complementarity is limited:

Britain will need an education system that encourages the widespread development of generic skills of creativity which include: idea generation; creative teamwork; opportunity sensing; pitching and auditioning; giving criticism and responding to it; mobilising people and resources around ideas to make them real. The national curriculum may support the acquisition of many of these skills. But an award or qualification more directly focused on creative skills may be needed. (Roberts 2006, p.22)

7.6 The rhetoric of release

The metaphor of unlocking or releasing potential has transferred easily to creativity here. We read of Ofsted's report on the Secondary National Strategy which "paints a mixed picture of the use of ICT in schools: a tool which has enormous potential for releasing pupils' creativity, or deadening it." (Roberts 2006, p.62) It is not too difficult to recognise the rhetorical allure of such an image; 'unlocking' and 'releasing' are things which are done to captives – if 'we' (society) have the ability to bring about the unlocking of young people's creativity then, by implication, it is we who are playing the part of ignorant jailers. Enabling young people to throw off their shackles becomes an imperative and, as with all imperatives, the urgent need to do something is at odds with the time needed for critical scrutiny. We can identify a similar rhetoric of urgency in *All Our Futures*, where the overwhelming sense that 'something must be done!' inhibits a critical engagement with the concept(s) of creativity being proposed and made instrumental.

7.7 Creativity, culture and personal growth

There is another tension in this document, which is evident almost from the outset. The fourth “key message” states (after asserting the need for creativity to be embedded in education policy):

This would provide a more secure, valued and cost-effective framework for the further development of creativity, both its own right (sic) and as a support for economic growth, with better outcomes for children and young people. (Roberts 2006, p.5)

The syntactical stumble here may indicate a conceptual stumble; creativity is being claimed as a social and personal ‘good’ as a justification for policy initiatives which nurture it, but in every sense it is an after thought, an over determination. We read later that:

While this economic and regeneration driver is compelling it is matched by an equal and moral imperative – the intrinsic importance of giving children and young people creative experience – both to develop personal identity and confidence and to understand and prepare for a 21st century society. (Roberts 2006, p12)

We might call this, after *1066 and All That* (Sellar and Yeatman 1930), the ‘good thing’ rhetoric; it provides a persuasive safety net which, even if the arguments about making Britain into the world’s creative hub do not convince, will catch those with doubts and challenge them to refute the assertion that creative experiences must always be enriching in some way.

This rhetoric is made to harmonise with the rhetoric of assessment and attainment in the “creative portfolio” section of the document, in which there is a commitment to recognising young people’s existing creative skills:

The iPod generation can already listen to music, watch videos and play games virtually wherever and whenever they want. Increasingly they can create at will, using software such as Garage Band and Sibelius. Yet this

creativity and the knowledge they pick up is largely left tacit and hidden.
(Roberts 2006, p.21)

This democratic and uncritical embrace of youth culture smacks of Willis' (1990) celebration of young people's symbolic consumption and production, but unlike Willis, the argument here is that it should be recognised as 'work'. And perhaps this notion of work, rhetorically produced and ideologically loaded might provide a conceptual lever with which to crack open this document. If 'play' and leisure can be accredited they can be seen as work, but only if they are productive, only if there are concrete outcomes. And if the everyday activities of young people are to count as 'creative' then these must also be productive. We could identify this as a discursive move – one which produces and legitimates particular activities and which, by omission, negates others.

Despite the embrace of 'common culture', a tension is established here between an uncritical, democratic inclusivity and a more exclusive elite rhetoric. The democratising impulse is clearly demonstrated in the previous extract, which goes on to nominate as the key constituency:

...children who are highly creative but not academic and do not like school. The generation brought up with 'rip-mix'-burn' as their motto will feed Britain's creative and cultural industries. (Roberts 2006, p.21)

Here then it is vital to recognise and celebrate diverse manifestations of 'creativity' in order to provide encouragement to the disenfranchised. There is no qualitative distinction being made here between different products or processes (which, incidentally, is another unresolved tension) and there is even the suggestion that, through blogging, MySpace and Garage Band, all young people are equally creative. However, in relation to Creative Portfolios, the notion of creative excellence emerges: "EMI should host a site for children with highly musical Creative Portfolios" and "At a higher level one could imagine an award scheme, for people who have gone through a number of creative projects...perhaps this could be called the *Dizzee Rascal Award* or the *Simon Cowell Award* or the *Damien Hirst Award*." (Roberts 2006, p.24). The

nomination of a figurehead for each award here is an indication of an investment in an elitist conception of creativity, regardless of whether or not one considers that Simon Cowell (the music executive and entrepreneur) is a 'creative genius'

Generally this 'pro social' rhetoric serves to provide bridges between more contradictory areas or to create the illusion of homogeneity. Banaji et al. argue that "This rhetoric emerges largely from contemporary social democratic discourses of inclusion and multiculturalism" (2006, p56), and this is apparent in the Early Years section of the report:

...it is crucial that we see our youngest children's creativity at the heart of these new formations. Creativity here is a necessity not a luxury. Evidence from early years practice suggests that creativity is essential to all five of the ECM (Every Child Matters) outcomes. (Roberts 2006, p27)

The key example in this section describes a nursery school in which a pedagogical strategy involving the use of play, outdoor space and exercise has been implemented and had a range of benefits, including increased parental engagement. The point here is not to question whether or not this is good, innovative work (as indeed it seems to be), but to query the co-opting of the term creativity and highlight the way in which it is validated through the 'play' rhetoric as well as the 'pro social' rhetoric. Despite the involvement of 'arts and artists' there is no suggestion that the children's creativity is defined through the production of an artefact, but rather through the exploratory process. And the emphasis on health, happiness and engagement effects a connection between 'community project' and 'creative work' which can be seen in other contexts. In a sense the 'productiveness' is elided with purposefulness in this project; if play has a purpose it is valid, and therefore 'creative'.

7.8 Other voices

Appendix 1 of the Roberts Report is a summary of the responses to the Creativity Review, for which 'Paul Roberts wrote to 106 people in the creative

and educational sectors asking for specific responses to five key questions’.

The questions were:

- What is the notion of creativity for children and young people that underpins your organisation’s work?
- What is it that generates creativity in children and young people?
- How do you assess the creative impact of work with children and young people and the outcomes for them?
- What is necessary to ensure sustainable provision for children and young people in respect of creativity?
- What does the evidence of your work indicate should be assumptions on which DCMS and DfES should base future policy with regard to further encouraging the development of creativity in children and young people? (Roberts 2006, pp.67-70)

The “illuminating quotes” included in this section function to suggest that the conclusions of the report have been reached via some kind of democratic process – like the ‘research project’ carried out by QCA and as with the large committee that produced *All Our Futures*, there is persuasiveness in numbers. But unlike the imaginary negative interlocutor in *All Our Futures*, there are no dissenting voices here, no voice challenging the ‘creativity project’ and this creates an impression of coherent assent. However, there are contradictions; in response to the question “what generates creativity?” one contribution states “Creativity can be taught in a structured and disciplined fashion”, but is followed by another stating “Creativity is generated by children’s own natural curiosity and imagination and cannot be ‘taught’ in a traditional way”. Another contribution says “Creativity does not need generating. It is an innate quality in children and young people. However it does need nurturing and protecting from being constrained or even extinguished by fear of failure...” (Roberts 2006, p68)

These suggest that, on any kind of logical or rational scale, interpretations of creativity are chaotic and that it is unworkable as a term of assessment or as a measurable goal in education policy. Yet this document proposes exactly that, indeed this is its reason for being, and the discursive work we can identify here

is determined by the need to resolve, gloss over, ignore, negate and otherwise deal with the contradictions and conflicts which continually threaten to overthrow it. The repression of dissent and alternatives is more explicit in the Ofsted survey, in which assertions become prescriptions, and we can see the emergence of this in the *Government Response to Paul Roberts' Report on Nurturing Creativity in Young People* (2006), discussed below.

7.9 The government response

It is usually the case when analysing texts that the question is asked: “who is this for?”, which then prompts more or less informed speculations about how it might be read or interpreted. In the case of the Roberts Report we know that its intended audience is “Government” – specifically the departments of Culture, Media and Sport, and Education and Skills – and we have evidence of how it has been read in the form of a short official response. The function of this document seems to be to ‘cook’ the raw material provided by Roberts, by which I mean that it uses particular rhetorical strategies in order to contain and limit some of the excess of meaning which is indulged in the initial report. An analysis of rhetoric reveals that the metaphors which underpin these manoeuvres are structured around ‘faith’ and ‘nature’. In addition, by adopting a more prosaic semantic analysis, it is possible to reveal how particular arguments are tautologous and why this seems to be necessary in order to convert findings from Roberts into policy commitments.

7.9.1 The rhetoric of faith

I have suggested in the discussion of *All Our Futures* that creativity can be constructed as an object of faith and, therefore, something about which it is possible to evangelise and proselytise. I think we can identify something of this in the *Government Response to Paul Roberts' Report on Nurturing Creativity in Young People* (2006), particularly when the authors say

This publication is a response to that report. It demonstrates the importance that we place on creativity; shows how we believe creativity can contribute to other key agendas and highlights the main actions that

we will be taking to ensure that creativity can flourish. (Lammy and Adonis 2006, p.2)

The word “believe” is clearly important here; rhetorically it has the same construction as an article of faith and is not so very different from “We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost” from the Christian liturgy. Of course the similarities are limited, for Lammy and Adonis are not claiming to believe ‘in’ creativity, but merely that it can “contribute to other key agendas”, thus reminding us of the tension between creativity as a moral good, in and of itself, and creativity as utilitarian – something valuable because its effects are valuable. A little later, however, there is a statement which is constructed more strongly as a set of articles of faith:

We believe, as QCA makes clear, that:

- Creativity involves thinking or behaving imaginatively;
- This imaginative activity is purposeful: that is, it is directed to achieving an objective;
- These processes must generate something original;
- The outcome must be of value in relation to the objective. (Lammy and Adonis 2006, p.4)

This, of course, is the creed handed down from *All Our Futures*, via QCA’s *Creativity: find it, promote it* and, like all good creeds, it can be interpreted in a variety of ways, which is probably why the Ofsted survey abandons it in favour of a model requiring less interpretation – a move we might see as a kind of conceptual schism. Perhaps there is an irony here, given that the Ofsted survey directly resulted from the commitment to “key actions” in this report:

We will make more explicit that schools and teachers should undertake activity that fosters creativity. From 2007-2008, creativity will be a theme which is incorporated in and picked up as part of all Ofsted subject surveys and we will work with them as they develop the details of the surveys. (Lammy and Adonis 2006, p.8)

But as I suggest in my discussion of the Ofsted survey, this research reveals that creativity in education ‘policy’ is subject less to conceptual coherence and more to the exigencies of administration.

‘Faith’ can underpin important discursive moves in these documents and, despite its philosophical conflict with the utilitarian rhetoric, the two are often pressed into the appearance (sound?) of harmony. It is the work of this thesis to identify the dissonance and consider the implications. Earlier in the report we read that:

The commissioning of the review of creativity in schools sprang from a genuine belief that creativity is important and that, from a position of strength, it is vital that we continue to build on those things that make creativity thrive in this country. (Lammy and Adonis 2006, p.6)

The “genuine belief” expressed here asserts a degree of sincerity which, if accepted here, must diminish the quality of belief expressed on p.2. In any case it is redundant as a qualifying adjective because it conjures up the notion of believing ‘falsely’, which, arguably is an oxymoron, given that the act of believing is inherently sincere, even if it is in error. This semantic nitpicking I think reveals the way in which faith functions rhetorically here to efface the notion that this commitment to creativity is merely utilitarian; the notion of belief sets up a resonance with notions of spirituality and faith, which represent an ‘excess’ beyond the everyday economic and institutional concerns. But, as I have already pointed out, it is something which needs to be retained, whilst being inoperable – hence the tension. My argument, or rather my primary methodological principle, here and throughout, is that described by Norris in a discussion of Paul de Man:

...meaning is always undone by the radical uncertainty which leaves it suspended between statement and suasion, logical form and rhetorical force. (Norris 1983, p.19)

From a Foucaultian perspective we can find meaning not through semantics or definition, but from identifying the function of this document as an instrument of control – a move to assert power over conceptual terrain; it represents a move to hold creativity, to fix it within a regulatory network of governmental and quasi-governmental bodies, to equate it with existing criteria for good practice and to align it with existing policy initiatives in education. But because creativity and what creativity represents only exist rhetorically, the enactment of this move to power is continually threatened by the suspension of meaning described by Norris above. In the following section I show how the metaphor of ‘nature’ underpins the rhetorical strategies by which this *Government Response* attempts to ‘cook’ creativity.

7.9.2 Creativity: raw and cooked

Perhaps because this *Government Response* is short and focused on implementation its rhetorical operations are clearly identifiable. I suggest, first of all, that we can make sense of them by introducing the technology/nature dyad. This is a classic analytical strategy of structuralism and, although I have pointed out the limitations of such an approach elsewhere, it seems like a fruitful way of revealing how this opposition provides the conceptual poles of the document. And, significantly, the document features explicit denials that any such opposition exists, given its frequent appeals to inclusivity. So the starting point for the analysis may be one based on a binary opposition, but methodologically it will develop beyond positing fixed meanings to signs and suggest, instead, that these signs are subject to forces by which they are constituted differently within a signifying system in conflict with itself. The ‘technology’ pole of the dyad I am equating with references to and use of science, logic, education and policy; the ‘nature’ pole I am equating with the ‘other’ of creativity, which is only referred to obliquely through metaphor.

The technologisation of creativity in this document is evident in aspects of its style. The foreword, for example, constructs it as something with primarily economic benefits; it puts the Roberts Report into a historical context and links it with a political agenda and it concludes with a statement that a new advisory board is to be set up in order to “drive forward this agenda”. (Lammy and

Adonis 2006, p.3) The style is terse, the paragraphs short, the mode assertive; there are businesslike capitalisations (DCMS, GDP), percentages of economic growth and references to “new technology”. (Lammy and Adonis 2006, p.2)

However, even here, there are suggestions of the ‘other’ which resists technologisation; we are told that “Creativity is something we do well” – a reference to the “creative industries” sector (itself a problematic category as discussed in an earlier chapter). It is hard to make logical sense of this statement – how does one “do” creativity? It may be an adoption of a contemporary rhetoric of business and politics in which an ‘inactive’ noun is yoked together with an active verb – Alastair Campbell (2010) telling a journalist that “we don’t do God”, for example – and constituting a kind of grammatical violence. In addition to this, the sentence suggests that “we” (the British people? British industry?) have a particular aptitude for creativity – a statement which contains the possibility that creativity might be a human trait and, therefore, potentially problematic when it comes to teaching, training and learning. The tension is evident in this paragraph:

More and more young people are finding ways of exploring *their own creativity outside of formal education settings* – not just through *traditional forms of arts and culture* but increasingly through the use of *new technology, which allows them to shape their own creative experiences*. This interest and enthusiasm *needs to be harnessed and translated into the school setting*. Engagement can boost self-confidence and motivation and helps young people to achieve their goals, especially those who, for whatever reason are disengaged from the learning process. (Lammy and Adonis 2006, p.2; my italics)

The opposition is established here between activities which take place “outside of formal education settings” and notional activities which should take place inside formal education settings. Currently young people are “exploring their own creativity” in an untutored way – their creativity is like something wild and untamed and they are aided and abetted – empowered and permitted – by “new technology” which also carries something of the unknown with it. Despite the

rhetoric of inclusivity and the promise of boosting “self-confidence and motivation”, the means of resolving the structural conflict here is to “harness” and “translate” these activities, to formalise them, standardise them and, by implication, make them amenable to assessment. I have commented elsewhere on my own mobilisation of animalistic metaphors and considered the implications of these on how I understand creativity and want it to be understood. In this document the verb “harness” features only twice, but it is a potent metaphor, conjuring up the image of an animal, tamed and recruited for service with a set of restraining straps. Similarly, the verb “translate” has connotations of colonialism, suggesting that the ‘native’ activities of young people need to be made comprehensible *inside* formal education settings, if they are to be of any value. To use Levi-Strauss’s (1992) terms, I argue that this constitutes evidence of creativity being conceived as ‘raw’ and, therefore, something requiring ‘cooking’ in order to make it functional and acceptable within an institutional context.

A different metaphor, with a similar function is also evident throughout this document, and the Roberts Report itself; that of plant growth. This metaphor is less potent than the ‘harnessing’ metaphor discussed above, but it has similar implications and can be found first in the verb ‘nurture’. Nurture on its own is a word so commonplace that it perhaps has no metaphorical significance at all, however, it forms part of an image system in this document which includes the concept of ‘flourishing’ (which has more obvious etymological roots in *flower* growth), ‘enrichment’ and ‘thriving’. This image system produces a notion of creativity as something organic, wild and natural, but which requires tending, organising and feeding; like a plant in a garden, it cannot simply be allowed to grow in an undisciplined way. The section heading “Where does it thrive?” provides an example of this, using the key word “thrive”, but also the spatial preposition “where”, suggesting that particular conditions can be produced which will generate growth. The first response to this question is also significant:

Creativity thrives where:

- It is embedded in the ethos of the school and a range of creative experiences within and beyond the national curriculum is a normal expectation of teachers and young people. (p.4)

So creativity, like a plant, thrives when it is “embedded” somewhere nourishing and, like something essentially wild, it has enormous vitality. However, the process of “harnessing”, “translating” and “embedding” must, within the relational framework of the document, run the risk of taking away that which makes creativity special, that which makes it vital and desirable. This tension between logical form and rhetorical force is reflected in the rather tortuous configuration here, particularly if we omit the first object phrase in the sentence, which results in this:

Creativity thrives where... a range of creative experiences within and beyond the national curriculum is a normal expectation of teachers and young people.

In other words, creativity thrives where people expect creative experiences – an example of creativity being offered as something self-evident and self-identified. This rhetorical closed loop of definition is self-perpetuating and is indicative of the logical and definitional problems with creativity in this document, which will be discussed in more detail below.

7.9.3 The creativity equation (again)

This document, a Government Response to a review, does not want to engage with the problems of defining creativity – this was the job of the review, after all. However, it cannot avoid offering and working with definitions which can be converted into policy actions and its terms of reference, therefore, are more limited than the rather more promiscuous and plural versions of creativity in the Roberts Report itself. I have commented above on the ways in which particular metaphors create a state of tension with the overt argument in the *Government Response*, but here I examine examples of assertions about the ‘nature’ of creativity and how this necessitates particular courses of action. This is explicit at the beginning of the document:

WHAT IS CREATIVITY?

In order to be clear about the action that needs to be taken it is first necessary to clarify exactly what it is we are trying to achieve. To do that there needs to be a clearly stated and widely accepted definition of what we mean by creativity. *Nurturing Creativity in Young People* took a lead from the National Advisory Committee for Creative and Cultural Education (NACCCE) 'All Our Futures' report and from the work produced by Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA). (p.4)

There then follows the now familiar definition of creativity quoted verbatim from *All Our Futures*, although credited primarily to QCA, and then:

Creativity is not limited to the arts but should be embedded across the whole curriculum. Creativity is not at odds with raising standards or an end in itself but should produce outcomes of real value. (p.4)

In the first extract there is no explicit reference to the possibility of multiple interpretations of creativity; *All Our Futures* and *Creativity: Find it promote it* both include acknowledgement that there are different perspectives and *Nurturing Creativity in Young People* includes the different definitions from the respondents and refers to "the important emphases on the overlap between creativity, independent and effective learning and critical thinking." (Roberts 2006, p.12) So the "clearly stated and widely accepted definition" which is necessary in order for action to be taken is the one which has been authorised by two other bodies, and the reiteration of that definition by this particular body, both benefits from and reinforces its authority.

As I mentioned earlier, when discussing the connotations of faith in the statement "we believe", this definition of creativity is 'spoken into being' by a pair of government departments and its authority is sealed. The second quoted section, however, is not a direct quote or paraphrase from the NACCCE or QCA documents, but the continuation of the argument implies that it is. The assertions that "creativity is not at odds with raising standards or an end in itself" is an act of classification which incorporates creativity into a general

category of 'activities which raise standards'. Similarly the assertion that "creativity is not...an end in itself" indicates the way in which the *Government Response* uses creativity as an 'alibi' for an existing project of 'raising standards'; in other words, creativity becomes a category for alternative teaching and learning work which still gets results. This is also indicated by the statement that "creativity...should produce outcomes of real value", about which there are a couple of interesting features. Firstly, the qualifier "real" here is as redundant, logically, as the qualifier "genuine" in "genuine belief" commented on above; but rhetorically and implicitly it warns us not to be fooled by 'fake value' of the sort that less controlled definitions of creativity might indulge. Secondly, the notion of value is not subject to any kind of scrutiny or questioning and neither, incidentally, is the concept of standards.

The message is clear: creativity will be accommodated, but only within existing frameworks of assessment. As a consequence there is a struggle throughout the document to define creativity as something distinctive, but without allowing it to be *too* distinctive. This results in a sense that creativity has been sprinkled throughout the document a bit like magic dust, providing a quality of general enhancement, without ever being distinctive or clearly identifiable. It is only operationalised, therefore, in association with existing policy initiatives, such as raising standards, personalised learning and Every Child Matters (ECM). The "creativity and standards" section, for example, reveals the struggle to make creativity function as an operational element in a set of assertions about learning:

Creativity and standards go hand in hand. Basic literacy and numeracy skills are a fundamental building block: without these children do not have the skills to express themselves fully or to access material and activities that will stimulate their creativity. However, creativity is also a key component of English and many other curriculum subjects – for example, good spelling and grammar alone are not sufficient to achieve a good grade in English Language GCSE. (pp.4-5)

The union of equals suggested by “hand in hand” is undermined by the construction of creativity as something vague and desirable that can be accessed after the acquisition of basic skills and, as such it is both more and less valuable than these skills. The conjunction “however” is curious here; it implies that creativity was the subject of the first clause and was being spoken about in connection with things other than “English”. Apart from noting the irony of such awkward use of language in a paragraph about English skills, I am tempted to suggest that statements about creativity, when they avoid the metaphorical and overtly rhetorical, often seem to stumble and tie themselves in knots. The final statement in this paragraph equates creativity with generic skills of composition and, significantly, employs this skill in the service of standardised assessment.

7.9.4 The policy connection

The Roberts Report has structured its feedback to its government sponsors in the form of “scoping papers on eight themes”. (p.13) These themes are summarised in the *Government Response* under the heading “Key Actions” and the summary is significant because of the degree to which it incorporates creativity into existing initiatives and, in addition, constructs it as something which must be measurable. The opening statement is:

Nurturing Creativity in Young People focussed on eight areas in which action needed to be taken in order to ensure that creativity was fostered amongst children and young people. A new Advisory Board...will oversee action against each of those areas and will monitor progress on specific deliverables. (p.6)

As we have seen before, the assertion of the need for action provides a rhetorical excuse for stipulative definition and then pragmatic implementation. Here, the use of “foster” indicates the potential problem with measuring the success of this set of initiatives and it is perhaps significant that Roberts’ preposition “in” has been changed to “amongst” which locates creativity much less precisely in relation to the target body. But in order to mitigate this there is the invocation of a regulatory body which will perform an assessment of

“specific deliverables”. Consequently we find that the implementation of the strategies which will “ensure” that creativity becomes more measurable is woven into existing policy practice.

The Creative Portfolio, for example, will be modelled on the Arts Award and the 14-19 Creative and Media Diploma will “be rooted in the needs of the Creative Industries” (p.6). Under the heading of “Early Years” we find that “Current Government policies offer unprecedented opportunities for creativity to be at the heart of...provision” and that “we will ensure that creativity continues to be of fundamental importance in the Early Years foundation stage.” (p.6)

The existing project of Building Schools for the Future will now “provide inspirational learning environments that foster creativity by enabling a range of teaching and learning styles.” (p.6) Under the heading “Leading Creative Learning” we read that “Head teachers and other school leaders can raise the priority of creative education and can regard every subject as a creative subject in which young people are encouraged to think and work creatively” (p.6) and “Practitioner Partnerships” will benefit from being made less “patchy”.

Finally, “Pathways to Creative Industries” will be mapped and progression routes made explicit and under “Frameworks and Regulation” we learn that “Primary and Secondary National Strategies promote creativity by providing teachers with a basis for new and innovative approaches to teaching. Teachers who inspire creativity have a clear understanding of what it means to be creative and develop creativity in all young people, whatever their ability.” (p.6)

7.10 An effective translation

Nurturing Creativity in Young People effectively incorporates creativity into existing policy; whereas *All Our Futures* called for a revolution, *Nurturing Creativity* calmly suggests that this revolution is already taking place and that the evidence is abundant in a range of government sponsored initiatives and good practice in schools. Consequently it has needed to tame the rhetoric of *All Our Futures* in order to make it possible for ‘creativity’ to stand at the top of a

diagram (p.6) which connects such diverse areas as “programmes, projects, agencies” and the “education policy context”.

This document, and its government response partner document, can be seen to perform a key function in the translation of creativity from something amorphous into something rational, technological and implementable, but they both betray the tension involved in performing this operation at moments when the rhetoric erupts. As I have argued already, this is inevitable because, without the rhetoric of creativity all that remains is a fragmented collection of disparate knowledges and practices.

All of the initiatives described in 7.9.4 incorporate creativity into existing policy. The final one is most significant because it sets a creativity agenda for Ofsted which will be examined in the next chapter.

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Interruption 7: Methodological doubts

I continue to have anxiety about the absence of a grand empirical research plan – there are no interviews, no focus groups, no marshalling of samples and processing of data. It would, of course be possible, to carry out ‘elite interviews’ with policy makers as Gale does in his ‘policy archaeology’ but, even though he professes that this is “not an interest in authorship, but in vocality” (Gale 2001 p.389) I am not convinced; as D.H. Lawrence suggests in a proto-post structuralist statement “Never trust the artist. Trust the tale”. (Lawrence 1964, p.2)

I am utilising an approach that I learned in relation to films and literature – consequently I tend to treat everything as ‘text’ – objects which are ideologically/discursively encoded and which need unravelling in order to make sense of them. I am also a pluralist, in that I accept that different readings are possible. But I am also aware of the ethical implications of value-free pluralism and, therefore, wary of the moral suspension involved in pure relativism; I hope I am sensitive to ‘truth effects’ and their implications and, therefore, prepared to object to some discursive formations more than others. The fact that we can observe common processes of construction does not mean that every discursive construction is equally worthy.

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8 *Learning: Creative approaches that raise standards*

8.1 Operationalising creativity

It is in this document that we can identify most clearly the way in which creativity is 'operationalised', that is, as Marcuse tells us, 'the concept [is made] synonymous with the corresponding set of operations.' (Marcuse 1972, p.80) In this chapter I examine how this latest policy document, explicitly concerned with creativity, activates statements from the previous documents, represses others and, through its exemplification of good practice, produces a material dimension which consolidates a discourse of creativity. Jeffrey and Troman argue that texts such as this

...are written documents but they also contain values through specific discourses mediated by language and beliefs about the role of education in society and the economy. These discourses bring objects into being...and they construct particular types of social relation through the relative strength of the practices they determine. (Jeffrey and Troman 2009, p.5)

Ofsted, The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills, is the government department charged with improving standards in education in England. It does this, primarily, through the regular inspection of schools, colleges and Local Education Authorities. (Ofsted 2010b) As I have mentioned previously, it has authority and power through its regulatory, standardising operations of inspecting and grading schools and colleges.

8.2 A prescriptive survey

This document takes the form of a 'survey', but its status as an Ofsted document means that it is unlikely to be read merely as a neutral set of observations. It is more likely that this will be read as a set of guidelines for good practice – practice which, if adopted, is likely to lead to a favourable Ofsted grade in the future. In this sense the document operates as a discursive statement – it is regulatory, administrative and 'limiting'. The link between

creativity and 'good inspection grades' is explicit from the outset:

All the schools selected for the survey had been judged good or outstanding in their most recent inspection in terms of their pupils' enjoyment of learning, their preparation for future economic well-being and the curriculum. (Ofsted 2010a, p.1)

The suggestion is that this document contains good practices which, if adopted, could lead to 'good' and 'outstanding' grades. These good practices have been labelled 'creative approaches'. This equation is reinforced in the contents section where the term becomes 'creative learning':

Design for creative learning: the curriculum
Creative learning: higher standards
Creative learning: personal development
Creative learning: effective teaching
Technical skills to support creative learning
Creative approaches to learning and assessment
(Ofsted 2010a, p.2)

Jeffrey and Troman's work suggests that the nexus between 'standards' (they use the term "performativity discourse" to describe the emphasis on targets and attainment) and creativity is a particularly awkward one in the schools included in their ethnographic research. This has resulted in some teachers negotiating the risks by implementing a "cautious creativity" – "Teaching creatively was the preferred form over teaching for creativity". (Jeffrey and Troman 2009, p.29)

The Ofsted document's production of a creativity discourse in which there is no contradiction between standards and creativity is, therefore, significant and attention to the construction of (or effacement of) the boundary in this liminal area is revealing. My reading of this document emphasises the following:

- The tension between 'creative learning' and the National Curriculum
- The reification of the abstract concept 'creativity' into specific tasks and activities
- The translation of 'creative' activities into 'standards'

- The way in which a notion of creativity inflects the conception of the relationship between teaching and learning

It is important, for the purposes of this analysis, not to anticipate or pre-judge a particular version of creativity, but to attempt to identify the discursive influences – the existing concepts and documents, the institutional determinants and the notional social/pedagogic practice which may result – all of which cause this document to be ‘dialogic’, despite its overt ‘monologism’. The evidence of such dynamics can reveal the tenuous and contingent nature of the authority which is produced by the document and how creativity, specifically, operates as a problematic term for it. The overt aim of this document is to demonstrate how ‘creativity’ can complement the National Curriculum and how particular ‘creative’ teaching and learning activities can improve ‘standards’, but this is also a work of classification, definition and authorisation, and *these* functions are implicit, rather than explicit. As Fairclough argues, albeit in relation to a different document, its “assertions are ‘categorical’ in the sense that they are not modalized.” (Fairclough 2003, p.43) In other words, the statements in this document are not qualified by linguistic modifiers, such as ‘may’ or ‘could’, but make unqualified assertions. So, for example, we read that

A greater emphasis on pupils’ independence as creative learners did not imply any lessening of rigour; challenging topics were explored in creative ways. (Ofsted 2010a, p.14)

The status of the institution, its regulatory power and its rhetorical strategies all contribute to the authority of such statements. The notion of the “creative learner” is not problematised at all, but a given; there clearly *is* such as a thing as a “creative learner” which can be produced through the facilitation of more independence. But, I would argue, creativity continues to be a problematic term given its polymorphous polysemy and, therefore, represents an ever-present threat to the pedagogic project into which it has been ‘press-ganged’ in this document.

Creativity, then, provides us with a loose thread, which enables us to untie this

particular text; when particular activities are described in this context they are automatically legitimised as 'creative' and, if adopted by schools and colleges, they will undoubtedly be categorised thus in inspection reports. But the translation into practice is not as coherent or seamless as is implied.

8.3 Defining creativity

Inspectors found that the term 'creativity' was subject to a variety of interpretations and applications. Teachers were seen to promote creative learning most purposefully and effectively when encouraging pupils to question and challenge, make connections and see relationships, speculate, keep options open while pursuing a line of enquiry, and reflect critically on ideas, actions and results. (Ofsted 2010a, pp.5-6)

Here we can observe a strategy which Fairclough has called "producing an impression of consensus through generalising away from specific evaluations or statements in a way which reduces difference." (Fairclough 2003, p.51) The "variety of interpretations and applications" are undermined implicitly by the statement in the following sentence that the most purposeful promotion of creative learning is characterised by (defined by, perhaps) the encouragement of a specific set of activities. These activities are not traditionally 'arts-based' so the statement simultaneously enlarges the field within which "creative learning" might take place, and narrows it into a set of *observable* operations. The concept of observability is crucial here, and evident in the statement "Teachers were *seen* to promote creative learning..." (Ofsted 2010a, p.5; my italics). Later we read that:

During the survey visit, observations of lessons and scrutiny of the students' work confirmed that creative styles of learning kept them focused on tasks, interested and eager to succeed in all subjects across the curriculum. (Ofsted 2010a, p.17)

Such a confident assertion of cause and effect, despite the absence anywhere in the document of methodological considerations, has the effect of truth.

Creativity, then is translated into specific activities which can be observed and

then graded. As I have mentioned in the discussion of the QCA document, there is a modelling of creativity here which depends upon observable evidence; in *Creativity: find it, promote it* (QCA 2004) students can be observed to be thinking and behaving creatively and the same presupposition obtains here. But given Ofsted's role as a regulator of institutions, there is an additional layer of observation involved here – the observation of teachers. So creativity is not merely something that students do, it is something that teachers and schools must demonstrate through the implementation of specific strategies and activities which are amenable to a superior observer in the hierarchy – the inspector.

There is further evidence of this strategy:

The survey found that the term 'creativity' was widely used in the schools surveyed but there were variations in what was meant, ranging from an innate attribute to an approach and set of skills that could be cultivated. All the schools initially offered examples of 'creativity' in subjects commonly thought of as intrinsically creative, such as the visual and performing arts. However, when the inspectors asked about 'creative ways of learning', examples were offered from most subjects across the curriculum. Teachers and senior leaders most confidently identified and evaluated creativity as an aspect of learning when it was translated into specific activities such as those set out by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's publication *Creativity: find it, promote it*, rather than expressed as an abstract idea. Creative learning was widely understood to be characterised by:

- questioning and challenging
- making connections and seeing relationships
- envisaging what might be
- exploring ideas, keeping options open
- reflecting critically on ideas, actions and outcomes

(Ofsted 2010a, p.8)

It is clearer here that the document is performing an act of classification; again

we have a reference to a generalised population of educators who seem to express confusion about the nature of creativity, even revealing their (implied) naivety in focusing on “subjects commonly thought of as intrinsically creative, such as the visual and performing arts.” (This simplistic connection between the arts and creativity is, as we shall see, something which continues to be problematic in this report.) The turning point in the argument – the ‘however’ moment’ – is based on implied consensus: “teachers and senior leaders” are able “confidently” to identify and evaluate creativity when it is “translated into specific activities”. The activities described (prescribed) here are significantly different from the model of creativity in *All Our Futures* and *Nurturing Creativity in Young People*, most obviously in the absence from this definition of a focus on an objective. This is a curious omission, given the reference to the QCA document *Creativity: find it, promote it*, in which the “What is Creativity?” section begins with an explicit reference to the model in *All Our Futures*:

First, they (the characteristics of creativity) always involve thinking or behaving imaginatively. Second, overall this imaginative activity is purposeful: that is, it is directed to achieving an objective. Third, these processes must generate something original. Fourth, the outcome must be of value in relation to the objective. Debating the characteristics highlighted by this definition can be a helpful starting point for agreeing what your school actually means by creativity. (QCA 2004, p.7)

A closer look at the QCA document reveals that the process of operationalising creativity starts here, particularly in its efforts to relate the whole curriculum to the concept, and, in this extract, to the requirement for ‘originality’:

But what about work in subjects like science, history and maths? While it would be wonderful for a pupil to be the first person to discover a new scientific principle, this is highly unlikely. Does this mean that pupils can’t be creative in these subjects? Not at all. Skilled teachers can help pupils tackle questions, solve problems and have ideas that are new to them. This makes pupils’ ideas original, the result of genuinely creative behaviour. (QCA 2004, pp.7-8)

We can see here a transition from the abstract to the concrete; the difficult concepts in the NACCCE report, such as 'originality' and 'value' are quickly translated into activities which are demonstrable by pupils and, therefore, more amenable to inspection, if not assessment. The reference point for the Ofsted document is the QCA document in which the work of translating abstracts into concretes has been done. So it is now possible for Ofsted to draw attention to an authoritative text which has legitimised particular activities and to state that a general population of teachers has embraced and found meaning in these activities, as if they had emerged spontaneously, naturally and inevitably. The legitimacy produced for this knowledge about creativity is effected, we might say, intertextually and through a generalising, unsubstantiated claim about real practices – an assertion via consensus.

The activities described in the Ofsted 'survey' then are not merely illustrative, but prescriptive; by implication they represent not only 'good' practice, but 'creative' practice. Some examples of these will be considered later.

8.4 From 'nurturing' to 'promoting'

Although the Roberts Report, *Nurturing Creativity in Young People*, is cited in the references for this document, it is not quoted at all and neither is the word 'nurturing' mentioned. We might infer from this that the model of creativity produced in the Roberts Report is not one which works for Ofsted. We have seen how QCA's *Creativity: Find it, promote it* is a key reference point for the Ofsted document and, to re-invoke the concept of operationalism, I would argue that the QCA document provides a model which is more amenable to practical implementation. The concept of 'nurturing' with its more passive, maternal connotations has been neglected in favour of the more active, masculine notion of 'promoting'. And given that the Roberts Report (2006) succeeds the QCA document (2004) this also provides a good example of a 'discontinuous history' in which, arguably, a particular version of a concept becomes dominant, not because it is 'right' or 'true', or because it evolves inevitably in a particular way, but because it is amenable to implementation, administration and regulation. The QCA document is subtitled:

Promoting pupils' creative thinking and behaviour across the curriculum at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. Practical materials for schools. (QCA 2004, p.1)

which provides a more tangible, practical model for creativity than the Roberts Report, with its emphasis on policy and frameworks.

8.5 The question of standards

The title of this document indicates that 'creative approaches' are only of value if they lead to an improvement in standards. The standards here are very definitely those enshrined in the National Curriculum and creativity, therefore, becomes something which can be administered in the service of those standards. In a section entitled 'Creative learning: effective teaching', creativity is linked to the Every Child Matters agenda; we learn that

The schools that encouraged creative approaches to learning deliberately set out to promote a variety of ways of thinking and problem solving. The survey judged eight of the 24 nursery and primary schools to be outstanding in boosting pupils' achievement and enjoyment of learning, 15 were good, and one was satisfactory. (Ofsted 2010a, p.22)

A statement which indicates that not only can 'creative approaches' be measured and graded, but that they are not legitimate as creative approaches unless they conform to this assessment regime.

Creativity, however, as we have seen is not a concept that lends itself to easy definition and which carries with it a range of meanings, many of which are about resistance, opposition and subversion. This document manages this problem by using the authority of QCA's *Creativity: find it, promote it* to model creativity as, essentially, a set of generic skills, but tension between the regulated order of the National Curriculum and the potential wildness of creativity is ever-present. We read, for example that:

Good examples of creative styles of learning were embedded successfully

within the National Curriculum, both through the presentation of individual subjects and through cross-curricular approaches. (Ofsted 2010a, p.4)

And:

In schools with good teaching, there is not a conflict between the National Curriculum, national standards in core subjects and creative approaches to learning. (Ofsted 2010a, p.4)

So the argument is that there is no inherent contradiction, no intrinsic problem with the relationship between the National Curriculum and creativity, in fact it is the index of a good school that creativity has been 'embedded' and pressed into the service of 'core subjects'. The tension here is between the regulated regime of assessment and the absent voice which might propose an alternative model of creativity; it is the tension evident in *All Our Futures* when the dialogue about 'freedom and control' is articulated.

The tension is also clear in the examples in the report of work observed in the survey, which includes 'failures' as well as 'successes'. An example of a failure is described thus:

A number of year groups had inexperienced staff who did not make the most of enjoyable activities to develop pupils' skills in enquiry, decision-making, inventive problem-solving and self-evaluation. Pupils were, for example, clearly enjoying designing a time machine so they could travel back to meet the Egyptians for their topic work. The impact of this potentially very good activity was limited because the teacher failed to promote any higher order thinking. (Ofsted 2010a, p.14)

Creativity (or its applications/manifestations as 'creative learning' and 'creative approaches to learning') is not mentioned here because the absence of the development of 'skills in enquiry, decision-making, inventive problem solving and self-evaluation' means that, in the terms of this document, it does not exist. The example goes on to explain that:

Pupils were not encouraged to evaluate each other's ideas and opportunities were missed to make connections with mathematics and science, even though there were clear opportunities to do so. (Ofsted 2010a, p.14)

Which suggests that creativity resides in the activity of teachers, that, in order for 'creative learning' to occur, it must be driven and *promoted* by teachers in the direction of National Curriculum standards. In this sense Ofsted retains the notion of 'purpose' which we first found in *All Our Futures* and which occurs repeatedly in this document, although not in its 'working definition'. But purpose is always in tension with pleasure and enjoyment and this is rhetorically resolved by combining them. Here, for example:

The end products were recorded and pupils then evaluated them. They were able to explain the purpose and impact of this activity. It had extended their understanding of pattern and structure, strengthened their recall of multiplication tables and been hugely enjoyable. (Ofsted 2010a, p.12)

8.6 Performativity and Creativity

The regulatory work of this document in modelling creativity in such a way that it becomes instrumental in achieving the aims of the National Curriculum is clearest when it assigns validity to particular activities:

In a small number of the schools visited, pupils' personal development as creative learners was not matched by their progress in core academic skills such as literacy and numeracy. This happened where curriculum planning was not sufficiently well-rooted in the content and skills of the National Curriculum. The acquisition of basic skills remains of fundamental importance. (Ofsted 2010a, p.6)

This statement is predicated on the assumptions that

- Personal development as a 'creative learner' is measurable
- This measurement is comparable with measurement of development as a

‘traditional learner’

The function of the statement is to caution schools and colleges against simply allowing ‘creativity’ to flourish without ensuring that it is subordinate to the National Curriculum, but by establishing the notion that creativity is measurable it opens up the possibility of assessing it, formalising it and operationalising it.

The cautionary note is struck again here:

Pupils made little progress when the outcomes expected were insufficiently challenging and when they received insufficient guidance. Occasionally, teachers failed to grasp that creative learning was not simply a question of allowing pupils to follow their interests; careful planning was needed for enquiry, debate, speculation, experimentation, review and presentation to be productive. (Ofsted 2010a, p.6)

8.7 The irresistible arts

Despite the attempt to model creativity as a set of generic skills and, therefore, resist the tendency for anything arts-based to automatically be valid, we can, nevertheless, identify a tendency in this document to exemplify creative activities in arts-based scenarios. A brief description of each case study will reveal this:

- A curriculum based on “learning journeys”, beginning with a “wow” event and ending with “a presentation to parents or an exhibition or a performance”
- A Year 7 “Fashion Week”
- “Counting the beats” – a maths and drumming project
- Studying medieval England – leading to a performance of the Robin Hood story
- Responding to a painting by Paul Klee
- A performance of *Macbeth* to engage “hard to reach” families
- A “dramatic approach to science” in order to motivate low-attainment students
- A drama lesson based on stories around a 17th Century painting

- A production of *Jack and the Beanstalk*
- The use of narratives in a physics lesson
- Role play in a citizenship class
- Using imaginative “real life cameos” to facilitate understanding of maths
- A radio station project
- Imaginative scenarios to facilitate understanding of the natural world
- “Op Art” in mathematics
- “Hot seating” role play in history
- Role play in *Macbeth*
- Film criticism
- A furniture design project to support students at risk of exclusion
- A “show and tell” approach in a primary school
- Producing a video advert
- The use of role play, “freeze frames” and “talking partners” to improve learning
- The raising of self-esteem “through excellence in the expressive arts”
- A collaborative arts project linked to the re-opening of the town’s arts centre
- A “thinkering space” involving an artist, scientist or engineer
- Improvements in attainment through becoming a Creative Partnerships “change school” (and, for example, working with an artist)
- Using sculpture in geography work on plate tectonics
- Creative writing (Ofsted 2010a, pp.10-44)

There are only a few examples in which arts-oriented work is absent and these tend to refer to the ‘macro’ work of curriculum development and organisation. We can identify, then, across all of the reports, a kind of disavowal of the arts followed by implicit confirmation; first we are told that creativity does not belong exclusively in the domain of the arts, then it is modelled as a set of ‘extracted’ generic skills and then these generic skills are exemplified within particular scenarios. But the scenarios tend to be *arts-based*. This tension continues to be problematic for such attempts to render creativity generic and operational.

8.8 Assessment versus Inspection

There is a tension, it seems, between assessment and inspection. As I have mentioned previously, with reference to Rowntree, assessment tends to demand objects which can be quantified, transported and contained. But the activities described by Ofsted, particularly given its detachment from the objective focused model in *All Our Futures*, do not inevitably provide such evidence, rather, they provide evidence of primarily cognitive processes. How might we account for this contradiction? One strategy is to suggest that education is not an ideologically coherent institution, but that it is a site of discursive conflict, and that the recent focus on creativity can be used to reveal something of this conflict. The need for urgent ‘change’, argued for so passionately in *All Our Futures*, may have been driven by the requirements of the knowledge economy, social justice and educational reform, but any actual changes resulting from it directly (minimal, according to Buckingham and Jones, albeit only two years later in 2001) or indirectly, are not inevitably coherent or demonstrably in the service of powerful interests. These examples of political interventions in creativity in education reveal how resistant ‘creativity’ is to definition and categorisation and how attempts to do this have necessitated a translation into particular practices which may be at odds with existing educational practices. In other words, the process of attempting to sort out the ‘mess’ of creativity actually results in more ‘mess’.

8.9 Creative learning/creative teaching – a taxonomy

The status of creativity in this document is ambiguous; rarely is it confronted directly as a noun, more often is used adjectivally before “teaching” or “learning”. It is also subject to a kind of secondary displacement by being used before “approaches”, as in “creative approaches to learning”. But despite the appearance of homogeneity – an appearance helped by the title – these different formulations can be read as referring to quite different things.

Creative learning

This is something which learners/pupils do in response to ‘creative teaching’ and ‘creative approaches to learning’.

Creative approaches to learning

This is something which institutions and educators do, but the fact that it can be 'effective' implies that it may also have the potential to be ineffective. It depends upon "careful planning" (p.5)

Creative styles of learning

This may be identical with 'creative learning', but the use of 'style' suggests that it may not actually be creative – merely creative-esque.

Creative teaching

This is a subset of 'creative approaches to learning' and refers specifically to what goes on in between teachers and pupils.

The promotion of creative learning

As with 'good practice' below, this category entails a range of operational requirements, but also implies a commitment in principle to creative learning.

Good practice which supports creative learning

Effective management, effective pedagogy, effective curriculum planning, purposeful work, effective partnerships. It is worth noting that 'effective curriculum planning' is bound up with 'the promotion of creative learning', but not exclusively; it also includes an emphasis on "not losing touch with the content, skills and assessment targets of the National Curriculum." (Ofsted 2010a, p.9)

8.10 Methodological inadequacy

There is an irony in this report regarding methodological issues. There is no evidence that a particular methodology has been implemented or even considered, yet definite conclusions are drawn regarding cause and effect - particularly the beneficial effects of 'creative approaches to learning'. It is also the case that, whilst extolling the virtues of approaches to learning which are 'creative and open ended' and in which it is clear that there is "no single right answer" (p.15), it embodies none of this open-endedness itself and is often dogmatic about 'right' and 'wrong' approaches that teachers might adopt.

This may represent another difficulty with the concept of creativity in this report; there is a conventional view that, although it is resistant to definition, 'you know it when you see it', and, perhaps, the absence of methodological rigour in this survey reflects something of this, despite its efforts to operationalise it in

particular ways.

8.11 A movement away from conventional interpretations of creativity

The Ofsted document exhibits a desire to construct a definition of creativity which is different from ones which locate it conventionally within the arts:

Approaches developed successfully in traditionally ‘creative’ subjects, such as the arts and English, were often incorporated into other areas, such as science and mathematics.’ (Ofsted 2010a, p.5)

The use of inverted commas here clearly indicates doubt about such a limited conception of creativity and/or a desire to undermine it (I have performed exactly the same operation at particular points in this thesis – something which should also be subject to scrutiny). No such qualification is implemented when the adjective is used in, for example, “creative learning” and “creative approaches”, which has the effect of rendering these terms unproblematic and legitimate. We have seen how, in all of the documents under scrutiny, there is a drive to locate creativity across the curriculum, rather than just in the arts (although as Banaji et al. point out, this is undermined by their visual rhetoric), but the “working definition” (pp.7-8) in this document constitutes the most significant move away from anything product-oriented towards a set of cognitive skills:

- questioning and challenging
- making connections and seeing relationships
- envisaging what might be
- exploring ideas, keeping options open
- reflecting critically on ideas, actions and outcomes

Here, some of Banaji et al.’s final questions become most pertinent:

What is the difference between ‘good’ pedagogy and ‘creative’ pedagogy?
How is creative teaching and learning different from ‘good or ‘effective’
teaching and ‘engaged’ or ‘enthusiastic’ learning? What is the added value

of using the term 'creativity' in this context? (Banaji et al. 2006, p.60)

These questions are not answered in *The Rhetorics of Creativity*, but their relevance is clear; arguably there is no *applicable* difference in the Ofsted document between 'creative' and 'good' or 'effective'. This has implications for real teachers in real circumstances; the modelling of 'creative learning' (or the re-framed 'creative approaches to learning') as effective pedagogy legitimates further statements about teachers' competence:

Pupils' enthusiasm and sense of achievement were shared by almost all staff in the schools visited. In the four primary and four secondary schools where any concern was expressed about creative approaches to learning being a successful preparation for external assessments or where pupils' achievement was not in fact enhanced, this reflected teachers' lack of confidence in their ability to combine the two effectively or their limited skills in developing pupils' ability to question, speculate, solve problems and evaluate what they had done. (Ofsted 2010a, p.14)

"Concern" here becomes an index of ineptitude; concern about the efficacy of the approaches described in this document is invalid and is the result of either "lack of confidence" or "limited skills". Again, we might refer to the rhetorical devices used here: the use of "any concern" suggests that it is minimal; the reporting of this concern in the passive voice generalises it, distances it from a locatable voice and renders it merely vaguely negative, whereas a quote from an individual might resonate and be disruptive to the flow of establishing consent. It is also worth noting that 'creative approaches to learning' are here wholly identified with "developing pupils' ability to question, speculate, solve problems and evaluate". The reference to teachers' concerns about assessment is also significant; I mentioned earlier that the focus in this document is on observable activities rather than (externally) assessable activities, but any problem with the lack of fit here has been firmly shifted onto the teachers, rather than acknowledging the imperatives of inspection.

8.12 Creativity 'in practice'

We might speculate about the reasons for the use of 'creativity' in this document; we might propose that 'creativity' offers the opportunity to revitalise the familiar with new terminology, or that the document is achieving the necessary goal of appearing to fall in with the 'knowledge economy' agenda whilst hanging on to 'traditional' pedagogic values and practices. But such speculation about motives and origins is less important than identifying the way in which 'creativity' is modelled and remodelled in relation to pedagogy here. To return momentarily to the concepts of rhetoric, ideology and discourse, we can see that this document employs rhetorical strategies in order to create a persuasive case for particular pedagogical approaches, that it bears the ideological imprint of a government's 'knowledge economy' agenda, but, most importantly, it operates discursively to produce and legitimate particular activities as valid and particular interpretations as 'knowledge'.

The Creative Partnerships website posted a comment on this report on 15 January 2010. The sub head reads "Ofsted recognises the benefits of Creative Partnerships in its latest report: 'Learning: creative approaches that raise standards'." The emphasis is on utility; "creative learning practices" (not 'creativity', per se) "are improving standards and pupils' personal development". The piece notes the impact that such approaches has had on aspects such as achievement, attendance and motivation "particularly for schools in challenging circumstances". (Creative Partnerships 2010)

So, here, the value of creativity is its utility; there is no sense that creative work is valuable in itself, but merely that it can improve performance in other areas. And these other areas are ones in which performance can be measured, which in turn, legitimates the use of 'creative approaches'. As is typical, however, the image which accompanies this story is of two children painting.

One final example illustrates the way in which creativity can be discursively framed to be subordinate to conventional notions of educational standards. Figures 6 and 7 show a flyer for an educational conference in which creativity is offered as a discrete commodity which can be 'embedded' in order positively to

influence a range of self-evidently important things. The subtitle: “Embedding creativity throughout your school to enhance learning and raise pupil performance” reveals that creativity here is merely one (albeit a currently significant one) of a number of rational technologies that can be employed in the school/“factory” (see Kendall and Wickham 1999, p.133) in order to generate particular desirable outcomes.

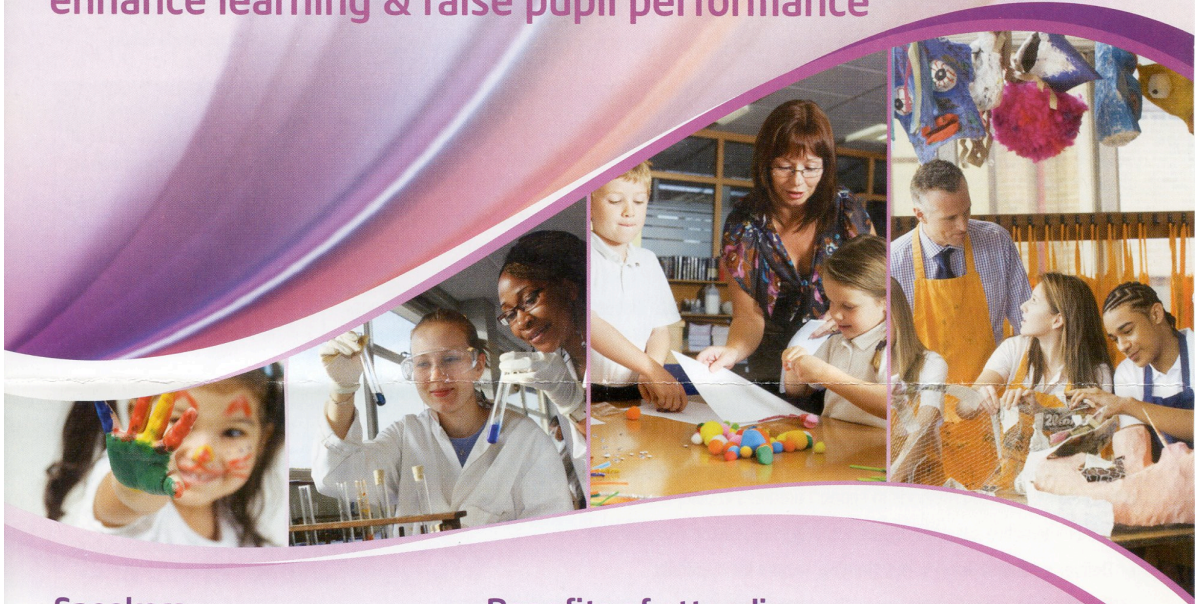
My key point in relation to this example is not that it is a ‘bad thing’ or even a ‘mistake’, but that it is non-acknowledged thing; there is no suggestion that creativity is subject to different interpretations, no possibility of alternative perspectives, but, instead, a mobilisation of the conceptual translation performed by Ofsted and, indeed, endorsed by the presence of Patricia Metham “author of the report ‘Learning: creative approaches that raise standards’, to give you an exclusive insight into how creativity will be assessed in the new Ofsted framework so you can prepare for inspection.” (Figure 7)

26 May 2010 Central London

Creativity in the Curriculum

Embedding creativity throughout your school to enhance learning & raise pupil performance

EXCLUSIVE TO DELEGATES:
Download speakers' presentations and lead training in your school



Speakers

Patricia Metham HMI
Ofsted

John Crookes
Head of Curriculum
QCDA

Joe Hallgarten
Learning Director
Creative Partnerships

Roy Leighton
Educator, Broadcaster and Advisor to schools
& businesses on learning led leadership

Benefits of attending

- * Hear from Ofsted on creativity in the new inspection framework
- * Tap into colleagues' creativity and help them embrace creative teaching methods
- * Plan for progression in creativity to ensure a positive impact on pupil achievement
- * Pick up practical ideas for creative learning activities and projects that support curriculum content
- * Develop a flexible curriculum that promotes creativity and cross-curricular learning
- * Use creativity to support other areas including PLTS, SEAL and literacy

Figure 6

Creativity in the Curriculum

Embedding creativity throughout your school to enhance learning & raise pupil performance

Download speakers' presentations after the event to use in training

"For most schools in the survey with a wide ability range, a focus on creative learning was driven by the need to break down barriers to learning and improve achievement. In all cases, the survey found that this was effective."

Learning: creative approaches that raise standards; Ofsted report, January 2010

Creativity in schools is not just about after school enrichment and Arts week. It is about developing students who are independent thinkers, who make connections between subjects, find innovative solutions and have original thought. It is about developing the sort of learner who not only passes exams and adds value at school, but develops an enquiring mind that adds value to society. Creativity is at the core of a successful, inclusive curriculum, and at the heart of high quality teaching and learning. **How effectively is your school using creativity to raise standards?**

Creativity in the Curriculum is a one-day national conference on 26th May in central London, where you'll learn how to embed creativity in your school's curriculum to improve learning and raise achievement. Attend this event to receive nuts and bolts advice on how to champion creativity among staff and students at your school, and develop a flexible curriculum that supports creative approaches to learning.

We will be welcoming *Patricia Metham HMI, Ofsted, and Author of the report 'Learning: creative approaches that raise standards'*, to give you an exclusive insight into how creativity will be assessed in the new Ofsted framework so you can prepare for inspection.

John Crookes, Head of Curriculum, QCDA, will also be there to discuss the government's expectations for creativity in schools and how creative teaching methods can be used to raise achievement. John will show you how to develop a flexible curriculum that promotes creativity alongside delivering subject knowledge and functional skills.

Roy Leighton, Educator, Broadcaster and Advisor to schools and businesses, will run an inspirational keynote address on how to get your staff to buy into creative approaches to learning and explore their own creativity, while *Jackie Beere OBE, AST, SIP and former Headteacher*, will share her top strategies for using creative teaching methods to support progress in other areas such as PLTS, SEAL and literacy.

In further interactive sessions, leading practitioners will show you how to:

- ✓ Deliver an Ofsted level 1 'outstanding' lesson for creativity
- ✓ Develop cost-effective resources that support creativity alongside curriculum content
- ✓ Write schemes of work that embed creative approaches to learning
- ✓ Develop a culture of teacher collaboration to foster cross-curricular learning

You'll also pick up a range of practical ideas that support creative approaches to learning both inside and outside the classroom, including assembly ideas, cross-curricular projects and lesson plans.

Please find the full conference programme on the opposite page and a booking form on the back of this brochure. We look forward to welcoming you in May.

Comments from last year's delegates:

"Superb, thank you for such a great day. I have a lot to do but am now ready to take on the challenge!"

R. Peters, Roade School

"Thorough, engaging, enjoyable and most of all, useful for my task ahead."

A. Jordon, Lord Lawson School

"Thought provoking, stimulating and inspiring."

K. Wild, Parkfield High School

"A balanced look at the area with lots of very practical advice and strategies. I am leaving with lots of ideas and inspiration."

W. Aridela, Lanchester School

"Very inspiring seeing and hearing examples of how it can be done in a school."

Doris Evans, Chislehurst & Sidcup Grammar School

Who should attend:

Creativity Coordinators
Curriculum Managers
Deputy & Assistant Headteachers
Directors of Learning and Teaching
Headteachers
Classroom Teachers
LA Advisors

Attend to:

- * Raise the status of creativity at your school
- * Plan creative lessons that build on pupil's experiences, community and culture
- * Plan for progression in creativity at KS3 to ensure pupil progress
- * Develop a plan of implementation for the new primary curriculum 2011
- * Inspire staff to use highly creative teaching methods

Figure 7

Interruption 8: A final reflection

As I approach the final chapter of this thesis the familiar uneasiness about the nature of the research returns; within the technological/rational structure of the thesis I feel as if the conclusion should present some ‘proofs’, that there should be a sense of ‘QED’.

And in the concluding chapter I try to address the ‘so what?’ question in order to justify the analysis that has preceded this – clearly there has to have been some purpose and some sense of a goal. Although this research has not been ‘policy analysis’ in a conventional sense, I have felt the need to make some suggestions regarding the use and construction of creativity in a policy context, and also the contexts of research and practice.

My purpose has been to investigate the production of a key concept and to present some evidence to challenge foundational or essential notions of creativity. By doing this I hope to have made an intervention in the relentless, uncritical rise of creativity in education which, I think, is constituted by rhetoric, confusion and vague aspiration.

But I have to acknowledge that I am a subject of discourse too; ultimately this work has merely been a certain kind of reading of some specific texts. And it has been a reading performed by someone who did a ‘pre-critical theory’ literature degree, a post-critical theory MA and who has taught media studies for several years. All of these domains of knowledge and performance have ‘produced’ me in different ways and inevitably determined the kind of analysis I have carried out.

Despite my scepticism about Romantic notions of creativity, I am in part a product of this discourse too, which is why, in these interruptions for example, there is evidence that I have constructed this work as a ‘quest’ through the rhetoric of the ‘Hero’s Journey’ (see Vogler 1999), complete with the preparatory stages of assembling ‘armour’, ‘weapons’ and planning a strategy to increase my chances of returning with the ‘elixir’. To recognise that one sees oneself as a self-determined actor in a narrative is to accept a central irony in a piece of work which seeks to undermine such foundational notions. But it also makes it possible to accept that such work is inevitably contingent and compromised by the overt desire to produce knowledge whilst challenging the concept of knowledge.

And, again, it is ironic that acceptance of this ‘failure’ is ameliorated through literature – one of Beckett’s many existential voices, for whom life and death are universals, experienced subjectively:

Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better. (Beckett 2009, p.81)

Which, at least encapsulates the sense of having attempted something.

9 Conclusions

The wide range of approaches to creativity – the ways of thinking about it which are embedded in the many different popular, everyday and academic documents that I have examined here – are all engaged in the process of fixing creativity – of making it into a ‘thing’ with value and benefiting from that value. It has been necessary to explore and establish these various orders of thinking before examining a small selection of education policy documents in which we can identify, to differing degrees, comparable conceptual structures. These documents mobilise creativity as something which can be identified, nurtured, implemented and assessed. As I stated at the beginning of the analysis, this is precisely the reason for selecting them; they are documents with authority which constitute educational policy through advisory and administrative operations. As such they necessarily define creativity and mobilise it as a feature of education, and this combination of explicit modelling and implicit theorising make them particular valuable objects of study for research which seeks to expose the discursive construction of a concept.

9.1 So what?

Nelson argues that:

It is perhaps unlikely that the term ‘creativity’ will be ‘erased’ any time soon. However, by denaturalising the discourse – by questioning the ‘common sense’ appeals of creative industries rhetoric and romantic appeals of the creative arts – we can begin to understand the multiple and contradictory ways in which creativity is deployed in the present.
(Nelson 2010, p.70)

This is insightful; ‘creativity’ is not going to vanish as a term, and it seems unrealistic to adopt Barker’s stance in relation to the term ‘violence’, characterised by “an argument for refusing to operate with the category.”
(Barker 2004, p.57)

So what are the applications of this research? How might it be useful? How might it contribute to understanding and more informed practice? I would suggest there is potential in each of three different areas: research; policy; and practice and that in every area the development of a meta-discursive mode in relation to creativity could represent a more helpful way of conceptualising it.

In order to make explicit the gains of this research it is worth returning to the questions that I established at the beginning of this thesis – I will deal with each one in turn.

- How is creativity implicitly theorised?
- How is creativity explicitly theorised?
- What can an analysis of key examples, such as educational policy documents, reveal about this theorisation?
- To what extent can creativity be demonstrated to be a social, rhetorical and discursive construction?
- What are the implications for research, policy and practice of such a demonstration?

9.1.1 HOW IS CREATIVITY IMPLICITLY/EXPLICITLY THEORISED?

It is the co-existence of complexity and simplicity in the theorisation of creativity which makes it a fascinating case. Implicitly it tends to depend upon a notion of extraordinary, individual agency – a notion which is only made explicit in discussions of historiometry. (e.g. Simonton 1999) And, arguably, it is on this implicit level that it is most coherent and simple because it is here, as Žižek (1989) explains, that we are ‘held’ ideologically by it.

Creativity is a word which carries multiplicity within it, yet masquerades as unitary, so that despite the fact that neuroscientists and educational researchers are examining completely different things, the name ‘creativity’ still obtains. And this situation is indicative of the ideological hold mentioned above.

We have seen how creativity is explicitly theorised in a variety of ways – as specific mental processes, as particular skills and aptitudes, for example, but I

would argue that all of these explicit assertions of knowledge about creativity are inevitably in thrall to implicit theories of creativity – implicit theories that we could call ideological.

The starting point for any explicit theorising of creativity is an act of classification – an assertion of what is and what isn't included. This initial classificatory move is inevitably specific to a domain and a culture and, therefore, is often supported with reference to 'obviously' creative phenomena (the work of Van Gogh or Da Vinci, for example) or existing research (references to a 'persuasive body of research' rarely take into account methodological assumptions and inconsistencies). Such starting points, then, are inevitably flawed and questionable and, given the enormous range, and contradictory nature, of explicit theorising about creativity it is remarkable that it continues to be feasible to operate with it as a concept in academic circles.

One strategy to ameliorate this has been the fragmentation of creativity into smaller, more easily defined elements – the theoretical division between "personal" and "historical" creativity instituted by Boden, for example. Similarly *All Our Futures* produced a distinction between "Teaching creatively and teaching for creativity" (NACCCE 1999, p.102). But this strategy of fragmentation reveals that creativity as a concept depends upon more than the sum of its notional parts and, even when subject to fragmentation, the idea of 'valuable productivity' is still present.

I suggest that the implicit (and emotional) investment in the notion of an essence of creativity holds us so tightly that, even in the face of such chaos, the belief persists.

9.1.2 WHAT CAN AN ANALYSIS OF KEY EXAMPLES, SUCH AS EDUCATIONAL POLICY DOCUMENTS, REVEAL ABOUT THIS THEORISATION?

As I have explained earlier, I have made a selection of education policy and advisory documents which deal explicitly with creativity in order to identify how

the concept is produced, modified and translated within a specific area of a specific domain.

The key finding is that this small set of examples, which appear to offer clarity are, in fact characterised by contradiction. It has been possible to demonstrate that creativity is a site of conflict and struggle in these documents, even when it is presented as something amenable to implementation and regulation. I have suggested that, in all of the documents under scrutiny, creativity has been produced through rhetorical and discursive means, which include the poetic invocations of spirit and self determination as well as the moves of power constituted by authoritative citation and the construction of subjects.

Perhaps inevitably, given the exigencies of education, there is a tension evident between the rhetoric of self-determination – the ‘creative learner’ – and the discursive machinery which situates this learner within a network of valid practices and knowledge. This word ‘inevitably’ suggests an inexorable logic of regulation (but not a ‘grand narrative’) and it has been possible to argue that the concept of creativity has, of necessity in this system, been modulated from the chaotic manifestations in *All Our Futures* to a rhetorically terse reification in Ofsted’s operational document. ‘Creativity’ is, arguably, more coherent in this last iteration, but it is not the ‘creativity’ produced by Robinson’s committee.

The processes of translation evident in these documents reveal something about the process of knowledge production and the ways in which limits and boundaries are produced in order to validate and invalidate certain things, and they also reveal something about the ways in which creativity operates as a concept. Instead of ‘creativity’ we might, after Foucault, (1977a) talk of the ‘creativity function’; these documents (and, by extension, education) mobilise the concept in order to effect particular operations, to assert and delimit, for example:

- The function of education
- The necessary congruence between the economy and education
- The status of the ‘self’ (as learner and teacher)
- The boundaries of self-determination

- The necessity of regulation (and, therefore, the inevitability of monitoring, assessment and inspection).

In this context creativity has provided a valuable site of penetration into such operations; the productive nature of the documents has provided insight into not only the wrestling with a difficult concept, but also provided an example of how knowledge, authority and legitimacy are produced. This is at the heart of the concept of discourse which has underpinned this work; these documents imply certain kinds of practice, and prescribe certain kinds of practice, but they also constitute a kind of administrative and regulatory practice.

9.1.3 TO WHAT EXTENT CAN CREATIVITY BE DEMONSTRATED TO BE A SOCIAL, RHETORICAL AND DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTION?

I have argued consistently that creativity is not a 'thing', that, in other words, it does not have ontological status. This is a theoretical starting point and it has required reference to post structuralist thought in order to argue that there is a difference between concepts and 'things'. I have also recognised the danger in this stance – that it could lead to a post modern nihilism in which meaning is endlessly deferred and intellectual inertia sets in.

But I argue that an anti-essentialism is necessary and valuable for particular concepts – concepts which masquerade as 'natural' and 'obvious', concepts which divide and classify, concepts which have real effects. Creativity is such a concept and I have demonstrated a range of ways in which it is constructed in different ways.

This would be little more than an academic exercise were it not for the ubiquity of 'creativity' in education and its treatment as a measurable capacity or attribute. As I suggest a little later, the attempts of research and policy to treat creativity as such a thing sometimes seem as absurd as an attempt to implement 'love' would be, although their respective discursive operations would, no doubt, produce it as a convincing knowledge object.

No statement about creativity in this thesis has been presented as transparent, as merely a conduit to a ‘thing’. This represents a degree of methodological fidelity on my part – a commitment to the need to assess ‘truth claims’ and to be systematically sceptical about conceptual certainty. This is particularly so when those truth claims are constructed with authoritative machinery and when the ‘right to know’ is assumed and practised by institutions – an ironic state of affairs given creativity’s rhetorical investment in the autonomous, self-determining subject.

9.1.4 WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH, POLICY AND PRACTICE OF SUCH A DEMONSTRATION?

My conclusions above point in a clear direction regarding the implications here; I will deal with research, policy and practice separately, but generally I suggest that there is a need for founding assumptions about creativity to be questioned as part of a meta-discourse.

RESEARCH

It is, of course, easy to be critical of other research – there will always be founding assumptions, methodological quirks and logical lacunae with which one can find fault. Nevertheless, I would argue that creativity research needs to address its starting points in a more critical way. A research proposal which came my way recently (and has secured funding) is based on measuring the effects on “creative functioning” of particular educational interventions and, despite a nod to Csikszentmihalyi’s work on the significance of cultural context, it embraces a cognitive model of creativity which can then be ‘tested’.

I suggest that such research might benefit from abandoning the word ‘creativity’ and, instead, specifying the changes in behaviour that it is seeking. Although, in this case, (and this may be a cynical suggestion) once denuded of the all-encompassing term ‘creativity’, the nature of the putative benefits of the project would have to be more tentatively qualified and may not be as appealing in terms of funding.

Regarding a scientific approach to finding ‘the grail’, whether cognitive or neurophysiological, I would suggest simply, stop. There seems to be a fundamental inadequacy in positivist scientific methodologies when faced with socially constructed meanings.

I have suggested earlier that ethnographic sociological work might be revealing in pursuit of ‘creativity effects’ and the ‘creativity function’ within specific domains. This kind of work, rather than fruitlessly chasing an ‘essence’ could be valuable in creating understanding about how ‘creativity’ functions as a criterion and as a value for particular groups. No universalising claims would, could or should be made on the basis of such research, but creativity as a social construction could be revealed more tangibly.

POLICY

It must be acknowledged at policy level that creativity has no tangible existence and, therefore, attempts to mobilise and implement it are doomed to fail. This is a blunt and provocative statement, but a necessary one, given the seductions of the concept; even if the term ‘creative industries’ were acknowledged to be merely a pragmatic label, we would probably still find ‘creativity’ being ascribed to the employees of such industries.

It may be that for the UK coalition government, in power since May 2010, economic survival rather than creativity is the top priority and we may see its decline as a policy term. But in education it has become, and will probably remain, a key element, as we have seen, in the Ofsted inspection framework.

The problem with creativity as a policy term is that it has been established as a universal concept which can then be implemented in specific domains. The opposite might be more helpful – for subject or domain specific qualities to be identified and developed. We might then find that creativity becomes redundant – even as rhetorical decoration – and that other, less obfuscatory, terms become recognised as valuable.

Interventions at this level are difficult, however, given the speed and nature of policy production but, nevertheless, I suggest that policy needs to be interrogated on both rhetorical and logical grounds; creativity has been indulged as a concept because of, as Wagner (2009) puts it, its “semantic aura”, but could one imagine a similarly vague, but appealing, term like ‘love’ being made into policy?

It is not clear where this conversation could take place, but there is a need for meta-discourse around creativity policy.

PRACTICE

By practice I am referring specifically to educational practice at all levels. I would like to think that this research constitutes an invitation, perhaps a provocation, to engage students, colleagues and others in a meta-discourse around creativity. This would, in a way, constitute a refusal to operate with the category, except on this critical level, and it could be practised within existing pedagogic contexts.

I teach, for example, on an MA in ‘Creative and Media Education’, a course which has ‘creative’ in the title and uses the term ‘creativity’ in its assessment criteria. The students on the course are all teachers of media or ‘creative arts’ subjects and, therefore, accustomed to seeing themselves, their students and their subjects as ‘creative’. The bulk of the learning takes place on a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) on which asynchronous discussions take place on key themes. The ‘Practice’ unit involves the production of an artefact and generates, therefore, considerable discussion about ‘creativity’. I see my role here as providing critical interventions, which means starting discussion threads in which I ask the students to question their assumptions about creativity. This has provoked responses such as this one:

I wonder if we do put creativity up on a pedestal (can you do that with an abstract concept?), along with originality, and talk about it in quite reverent terms. It's as though creativity is something aspirational but necessarily possible for all. Surely though, it's just the capacity to 'create' something. I

would have thought anyone has that ability if it lends itself to their preferred 'intelligence'. (MACME student 2008)

This, and other similar responses, provide evidence of the students starting to grapple with the concept, but also being explicit about when it is necessary to operate with a problematic term pragmatically – to extend to it, as Eagleton does with the contradictory notions of 'ideology', a degree of "charity". (Eagleton 1991, p.7)

Later in this thread the idea that notions of creativity might be allied with class-based notions of taste and distinction emerges from one of the students:

this thread's debate is great - exactly what I've been looking for - what is coming across to me, is the very real, taste and creative, class divides. what is very interesting is where the minority creative/media elite get their confidence/arrogance for their own taste and judgements on an artefact, over that of the masses? (MACME student 2008)

Whilst I am not making any revolutionary claims for such interventions, I will suggest that they constitute a minor, local disturbance to the common sense about creativity; the nature of the cohort, the course and the forum all made possible a discussion in which 'creativity' was decentred. This decentring could be argued to be a move against power – the power of value, status and fixity of meaning. This was effected through the generation of a meta-discursive conversation in which the usual "what is it?" questions were circumvented in favour of reflective questions, such as "how do I conceive it, and why?" I hope, but cannot know, that this quality of discussion, this alternative order of thinking, was carried to the respective students of my students, thus enlarging the impact of this 'local disturbance'.

But the hold of creativity is strong and such ripples of disquiet may not be effective for long. Other strategies I have employed have been the conference paper and the student workshop and, in both cases there has been interest and enthusiasm in an alternative perspective. However, after one such disquisition

on the proposal that there is no such thing as creativity, a student approached me at the end and asked: “so what is creativity then?”

The critical conversation I am advocating is, unfortunately, nowhere in evidence on the website of the University of East Anglia where we read that:

The University of East Anglia has pioneered the teaching of creative writing, world art and entrepreneurship; and is now leading the way in UK academic research into creativity and the creative process. (University of East Anglia 2010)

The creativity pages of the site include a range of quotations that would not be out of place in *All Our Futures* and there is a similar willingness to assert that creativity can be studied “across disciplines”. There is even a “Senior Lecturer in Creativity”.

Whilst acknowledging that ‘creativity’ might be a useful marketing term (links take us to “creativity related degree programmes”), one would hope that the UEA promise that:

You can be part of a creative and intellectual community that is aspiring to not just to do different – but think different and be different. (University of East Anglia 2010)

would involve the suggestion that the orthodoxy of creativity might also be challenged.

This challenge, I suggest, is necessary, not just intellectually, but in order to move against the imposition of a fiction on the professional lives of those in education.

9.2 Summing up

It may be possible to argue that creativity in education is just a smokescreen; that behind the rhetoric of self-determination, freedom to follow one’s dream and

self-actualisation there exists, as ever, a systematic training in particular roles in the economy. In Althusser's terms, students learn "know how" in relation to particular roles, and it is irrelevant whether or not these roles are within the 'creative industries', because

...children at school also learn the 'rules' of good behaviour, i.e. the attitude that should be observed by every agent in the division of labour, according to the job he is 'destined' for: rules of morality, civic and professional conscience, which actually means rules of respect for the socio-technical division of labour and ultimately the rules of the order established by class domination. (Althusser 1977, p.127)

The fact that the rhetoric of creativity, with its investment in the freedom of the individual subject, challenges this notion of class-driven, predetermination does not necessarily mean we should abandon Althusser's model. We might argue firstly, for example, that the kinds of observable 'creative' skills that are encouraged through policy documents are those which might simply produce more flexible, more compliant workers. We might argue secondly, as Crawford does, that the promise of democratic creativity (he critiques Richard Florida's work, in particular) is a myth which, at best, may make people feel better about their menial jobs and, at worst, has caused a neglect of traditional craft skills. (Crawford 2010) We could also adduce Kendall and Wickham's assessment of the modern classroom, which:

...became much more like a laboratory: an exclusive, experimental space where the results of specific strategies can be accurately assessed and new strategies accordingly invented and tried out. However, in becoming more and more like a laboratory, the classroom simultaneously became more like a factory, in that the desire to produce good, moral citizens became the guiding impulse. The classroom now had not only something like a recognisably modern moral tone, it also had a recognisably modern final aim: the manufacture of the young citizen. (Kendall and Wickham 1999, p.133)

The discursive formation of creativity through policy and advisory documents fits into this paradigm of education appositely; it has been modelled through rhetorically scientific means as something which can be implemented, monitored and assessed and, in addition, shaped as something which will enhance the identity and productivity of the learning subject.

But this research has not been concerned with exposing the 'myth' of creativity by juxtaposing it with 'reality', in the sense that there is a lie which can be disproved by confronting it with the truth. It has, however, been concerned with examining the *construction* of the 'myth' of creativity in the post structuralist sense that myth is a product of discourse and, for Barthes, may be used as a synonym for ideology. In this methodological context the work has been to identify the ways in which truth effects are produced about creativity within in various spaces, domains and contexts: in the 'general' or popular domain common sense absorbs contradictions and reproduces resilient myths about creativity; in education there is an observable tension between elitist and democratic myths; and in education policy the requirement to produce demonstrable outcomes has created particular prescriptive versions of the creative student, teacher and curriculum. There are inevitably blurred boundaries between these categories; the 'general' domain is informed by the academic domain – particularly the discourses produced within the arts and science (psychology and neuroscience in particular). And given the popular desirability of creativity, there is also some overlap with the pedagogic domain, at least in the form of self-improvement and management literature.

The overlap between the domains of education and education policy is considerable and, arguably, they belong together, however, one of the primary motives for this research has been to show how creativity can exist as a contested, plural concept within the domain of education, and how pressure is exerted upon it to function as singular and unambiguous in a policy context. The structure of the thesis reflects this principle of moving from the general to the particular, adopting a historiographic approach to the wider literature and adopting more refined tools in order to unpick the discursive and rhetorical devices evident in the policy documents. Ultimately it has been possible to

demonstrate the problems and tensions evident in these documents and to assert that the very effort to produce creativity as a unitary, homogenous, operational concept is that which creates the conditions in which it is undermined.

In this research I have approached creativity as a particular kind of problem – a problem of meaning rather than a problem of practice – and the concept of discourse has enabled me to show how the construction of particular meanings around creativity is constituted by, and constitutive of power/knowledge relations. The methodological armoury offered by Foucault, Kendall and Wickham, and Fairclough has enabled me to decide both what to examine and how to examine it in order to identify the production and transformations of creativity and consider the implications of this.

In order to avoid the pitfalls of idealist philosophy, whilst retaining a foothold in an anti-essentialist position, I would like to follow Popper in avoiding “what-is?” questions. (Popper 1992, p.62) I have argued consistently throughout this work that creativity is not a ‘thing’ and, therefore, it is irrelevant to ask “what is it?” The alternative is to circumvent questions which seek equations for answers and to look at the factors which produce a *sense* of ‘things’ and which give them real effects. In this context there is no ‘true creativity’, but there may be many ‘true creativities’. The concept of ‘contingent ontology’ may be a useful one to account for this phenomenon; this is related to the concept of multiple ontology proposed by Actor Network Theorists such as Mol (2003) and enables us to hang onto the reality of the *effects* of particular constructions of creativity, without capitulating to the notion of an essential nature. This could also provide a theoretical framework for future work on the production of ‘creativity’ within specific material contexts; indeed this sort of work is essential if a Foucaultian project is to be pursued which would identify the full range of discursive and material practices by which creativity is constituted.

Similarly, as Albert argues in a discussion of identity:

If one considers identity to be a question, then the next step is not measurement - one does not measure a question - but rather a discussion of why identity is relevant or important within a particular context, what kinds of answers to the question of identity might be provided, and how adequate they are, and so on. Identity may be precisely that kind of question that eludes standard conceptions of measurement - that may be one of its defining properties... To measure identity may require that one measure its reluctance to being measured, that one study the genius of its disguises and the way it eludes capture while still claiming presence as a core defining feature. (Albert 1998, p.3)

These statements about the construction of identity as a concept chime with my own thoughts about creativity as a concept and, perhaps, indicate a possible way forward; it may be that in order to retain creativity as a concept in education we need to reframe it, to redefine the nature of the questions we ask about it. We would not, in this context, ask any more what it is, how we can make it happen or how we can measure it; instead we would ask why we use it in a particular statement, what are our expectations of it and what do we have invested in it.

Creativity is a privileged term and a powerful concept, but the reality of this privilege and power is not revealed by attempts to define, implement and measure it – all these do is preserve its notional mystery. As Law says, albeit in a different context:

The naming, the fixity and the triumphalism - I want to argue that in current circumstances these pose the larger danger to productive thinking - the larger danger to the chance to make a difference, intellectually and politically. (Law 1999, p.2)

My stance in this work has been both reactionary and radical: reactionary in that I have practised resistance to the seductions of 'creativity', its promises of progress and its apparent uncritical embrace by all; radical in that I have sought to undermine and subvert particular dominant orders of thinking about creativity.

What I have shown, at least, is that a small selection of UK education policy and advisory documents in the last ten years exemplify a grappling with the concept of creativity. I have tried to avoid attributing this to specific causes or situating it within a 'grand narrative', but have attempted to attend to the specifics of conceptual modelling and ideological mobilisation. I have resisted and drawn attention to the way in which creativity has been produced as something with ontological status in most research and particularly in education policy – the way in which it has been mobilised within a teleological discourse as something progressively to be 'known', a view exemplified by Hope's assertion that "As they advance the science disciplines discover things that have always existed." (Hope 2010, p.42)

I argue that, given the abstract, slippery nature of the concept, that any attempt at reification is inevitably productive and that this is inevitably in conflict with the rhetorical investment in an *essence* of creativity. In the context of education policy, which argues for change and illustrates good practice, this results in 'coherent incoherence' – there is nothing here but seductive rhetoric which binds together a range of completely different and often incompatible ideas, activities, behaviours and strategies. This research has been a revolt against "the naming, the fixity and the triumphalism" inherent in the many articulations of 'creativity'.

Ultimately I suggest that this research might provide sufficient evidence to undermine the use of 'creativity' in education or, at least, to provide grounds for unpacking what is always implicit in its invocation and implementation. There is a strong argument here for refusing to operate with the concept unless this is done or, at least, to move towards a position which acknowledges that there is no 'true creativity', in terms of a phenomenon or essence, but that there are multiple 'true creativities' in terms of beliefs and practices, and that attention must be paid to its discursive production. This is particularly necessary in education, at a local and national level, where the rhetorically produced associations with freedom, alternativeness and self-realisation can divert attention from the production of creativity as prescriptive, delimited and determined by the exigencies of authoritative institutions.

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APPENDIX

Definitions of creativity

Delegates at CEMP Media Summit, Bournemouth University (2 September 2008)

Bringing fresh eyes and perspectives to an idea/concept – pushing the boundaries of a (?). Thinking differently in a positive way.

The ability to create emotional intellectual etc. space based on one's own experience, whilst being spacious enough for others to inhabit it as their own. Recognisable and unfamiliar at the same time. What is the purpose of defining creativity in educational context, apart from necessity to justify its inclusion in our marking system (unfortunate?!?).

Creativity is the process of making new and artistic media artefacts for the consumption of everyone around you.

Mad people can have ideas but it's the creative person who manufactures.

Making original statements – juxtaposition of ideas or images – confidence with and command of a medium. Talented/inspired.

A process of making original statement through use of chosen medium/media. Added 'value' to other activity e.g. problem solving – generally a positive.

Making
Developing an idea
Inventing

The will to take ideas and turn them into something solid – a product to show or communicate the concept and develop your imagination.

The novel or unique assimilation and synthesis of the known into something new, unexpected or unknown, or something new not made from extant knowledge.

To add value to an idea in such a way as to grab attention and imagination.

Responding imaginatively to a challenge

Comment: interestingly we talk of “creatives” and (more commonly) “creative industries” – surely all industries are “creative” and therefore populated by “creatives”.

A thought process
Something new or re-interpreted
Artistic expression

Creations in different mediums: writing, painting, drama, dance, music, poetry, cooking, hair/make up etc.

Making, doing (crude) but can be intangible – thinking.

Not necessarily original to all but will be to the learner.
Does not have an end point.
Pulling together of concepts to form new propositions.

Making sense of the confusion of everyday life through all and any artful means.

Originality, innovation, ability to tell a story. Adds to the world view (i.e. the world would be a poorer place without that prog, film, book, play, painting etc.)
Courage, self belief, rebellious (when needed).

Definitely not just problem solving. Scriptwriting is both craft and art!

Curiosity and linking the different ideas encountered.

Creating new or adapting existing concepts or objects with a new perspective.

Creativity. The act of creating

Making something that helps us see things differently.

'Blue Sky Thinking'.

-Thinking outside the box

- Using the resources you have in the most effective way.

BA screenwriting students, Bournemouth University (13 Oct 2008)

Creating – being artistic in the sense that you are trying to make something out of nothing, being original. You have this passion of making something, be it story or image. Interesting. Exciting stuff! As well as to nurture it to fully realise it into being. To be inspired and use that inspiration.

It is a form of expression that delves into the artistic and imaginative realm of one's mind.

Creativity is an extension of having a lot of imagination. It is the ability to create something original or otherwise, out of a trail of thought. Results of creativity can be: useful, beautiful, original, disturbing etc. Creativity can also be very therapeutic. If one feels isolated or depressed, working on something important and being creative can offer great satisfaction.

Creativity is a skill of making something beautiful out of nothing but your own head.

Creativity is a conjuring of ideas in one's mind that can be put into different forms/mediums of practice. To a degree it reflects one's thought process. Some are good at reflecting their ideas into other mediums, whereas some are not. Predominantly it depends on the individual in question.

Creativity is a thought process that is put into physical or mental practice. To a degree it is a talent that not everybody has.

Creativity is the forming of an idea or ideas, generating visions in the mind in your own individual way, depending on their own personal ability.

Being original; creativity works in an established medium that inspires others; pushing boundaries; being true; commenting on issues through one's work. Production of one's own thought and ideals into a familiar medium.

A personal way to convey my ideals or thoughts.

The production of your own thoughts and ideas through your own chosen medium(s) to convey an expression of yourself/ideals/what you believe.

Creativity is the ability to take old ideas and reshape them into new concepts, and in extreme cases create new ideas/concepts altogether. It is being able to differentiate yourself from the norm to think of something in an original way. Creativity is using these new ideas to create something artistic, such as a story or work of art.

To be creative, to think about things rather than being told. To use one's imagination.

Discovering something new and interesting with the help of the subconscious/muse. Through imagination.

Creativity is a way of understanding the world through imagination and observation as well as a desire to tell stories in as interesting a way as possible. Through it you can achieve many things you might not be able to in reality, and can enhance reality by looking at something in a new way (or in an old way that you may have previously ignored).

Thinking outside the box; being imaginative; being able to imagine ideas; ability to turn ideas into a form of realism; observing something and being able to interpret it into something else.

Creativity means, for me, being able to express one's thought and imagination in some sort and by that creating something new. It's also about combining different things, thoughts etc. in an innovative way.

Creativity is to me the ability to create an original piece out of anything, whether it is to prepare a meal in a new and original way, or it can be to write a script about a subject or a character or what that the world did not know they wanted to see. Creativity is the ability to put things that existed separately together and create a unit out of it.

The ability to express one's emotion and feelings through a piece of work??? ; Communicate to others; Therapy – soothing the emotion, for example (especially since many 'creative types' suffer mental health; Escapism (stolen from the person next to me!)

Escapism, opposite situation to the 'now'. Original thought or thought branching from thought it's possibilities of something. (person next to me said: expressing feelings, communication, therapy).

The capacity to organize ideas and thoughts in a unique and personal way. (Is it really a capacity, or rather an ability? Are we capable of being creative or able to?)

Creativity to me means the ability to produce something spontaneously using a skill and/or talent, with ideas influenced by personality and the experience of the writer.

Creativity is basically something people do for fun, and to make life more bearable and interesting. I think it's almost an unconscious thing – people are creative all the time without realising it. But it can also be channelled, and used, to create cool stuff like films and pretty shoes. It can also be used for important means – like raising awareness, etc. So it is a) an escape from reality, b) a way of making reality 'more real'.

Freedom to express yourself and influence others; to bring to the forefront your ideas, concepts and morals, and advertise them to others. Escapism from reality, and like dreaming when sleeping, creating is compulsory for survival.

Creativity means making something out of nothing and being able to express your thoughts and beliefs either through text or images.

Creativity, to me, means freedom of expression, the ability to gather thoughts and ideas and combine them into an original product. It is a practice that not everyone can achieve successfully, but there are some who possess the ability to be original and thoughtful. As a scriptwriter, creativity is perhaps one of the most important abilities to have, without it limits what you can write in terms of its originality and place in a mediated society.

Creativity means the flourishing of ideas into a recognisable product that others can relate to – a generator of new perspectives and ideas. The ability to look at ordinary objects or event in a fresh and enlightened way. Creativity is exciting. Creativity is a means of expressing a personal emotion in visual form.

Creativity is the human ability to create. To manufacture new thoughts, ideas and concepts. It may also be considered to include putting these ideas into a medium. Contrary to popular belief, creativity is not strictly limited to 'art'. Creativity is required in science, sport – even government. Even more important is to note that it is not strictly a force for good – creativity can be used to invent new forms of torture, weaponry or control.

Creativity = planning, creating or practising new or different ideas. (not a very creative answer).

Creativity is an impulse in the mind, it is a force to distract, to delight, to dazzle, to make sense of the world through something that comes from you and that

you “add” to the world through different formats, not just in art. All areas of life not just the arts have ‘creativity’ at its core not just artists but everything from mathematics to coal-mining and everything in between.

The ability to imagine or see things in a different way. Be able to create new ideas, imagine new things.

The expression (or desire to express) some manner of emotion, whether it’s aimed at an audience or purely for self gain/need. I am unsure whether it needs to be physically shown – in fact I would probably say creativity is the activity in the mind, the thought, rather than the expression. Is creativity the same as freedom of thought? Is any expressive or progressive idea a form of creativity?

Creativity is the warm feeling – a glorification of something that feels new. However creativity is typically applying old stimuli and hiding the sources. As a species that imitates, the creative stems from experimenting with that imitation.

I think it means using your own imagination to produce something that interest/captivates a specific audience. Being able to create new ideas and imagine new things.

Expression of thoughts, ideas or skills which captures the imagination and contains emotion.

Originality, Inventiveness, imagination. A good way to express thoughts/ideas. Also ‘a capturing of emotion’.

To capture life, emotion and relevance.

The system of taking that spark within that’s intrigued in all and using it to build and fashion a body of work, capturing emotion.

Creativity... to me can be a process in which one can process, vent and perhaps understand emotions and experiences. I believe creativity on a personal level can to an extent be a basics of personal exploration. When frustrated, sad, creativity can be a satisfying use of positive and negative energy. To create something organic and pure? It can be a constant battle with a cynical side of my self. “I must do something creative now!” This is what has pushed me throughout my life to play music...and now write.

Creativity is the means to turn conscious ideas into something expressive and concrete. Expression, thoughts, feelings etc. The ability to create ideas and the means to express them. Or not. Expression isn’t strictly necessary.

Creativity is about thinking of or producing something new, exciting and different to things that have come before it.

Creativity means you have a good imagination, can think of lots of ideas and are artistic.

Creativity is the ability to make something out of nothing, or to find meaning where it is not so apparent. Creativity is the ability to make something of nothing, or to find or 'CREATE' meaning where it is not so apparent.

Creativity is the desire to and process of producing or imagining something original and new. It is the desire to and process of producing or imagining something original and new from your imagination and from the world around you.

Creativity is a means of expressing myself – using different objects/words etc. to project my thoughts and ideas to others and striving to achieve this in innovative, original and exciting new ways. Creativity is unpredictable, with materials being endless, and responses varying greatly within different generations, and different personalities – these influence our creative juices.

Creativity is seen in many forms such as art, activities, writing, music, acting and so on. In relation to script writing itself I think it can be done in many ways using various ingredients to create a product whether it's a radio production or a film. In film I think you can take into account colours, object, music, people, language. It's a way to express a story or meanings in any which way you want. It's very exciting because the material we can use are endless. We can do what ever we want. I thrive on having an effect on people, entertain and inspire.

BA students, Newman University College (21 November 2008)

I feel creativity is taking an image or an idea and using it to create, say, a picture, video. It's not that I didn't think of some of the things, but the presentation has widened my view for e.g. breaking the rule like drugs making you more creative seeing things differently.

Creativity! Expressing yourself through different mediums. E.g. drawing, writing, making a film, the way you dress.

Creativity. To realise in practice what you imagine using whatever you want or need.

Creativity is the ability to invent new worlds and new sensations in order to produce new things.

Being an individual, creating something unique and different. Imagining something and creating it for the world to see, something which has a purpose to serve, even if it is an extremely small one.

Putting your own twist on things and by doing that I guess that makes you original. Creativity is a characteristic everyone has – some are more in touch with it than others.

To me creativity is an individual's own thoughts and ideas creating a product or a concept. It involves not only thinking outside the box but tearing the box up all together.

To me, creativity is the process in which a piece of work is made – including the idea and how it is handled and made into the final piece of work.

I believe that creatism [sic] is the use of imagination and freedom used in whatever the people are doing and that there is no measure of it but just levels of it.

Process of using personal imaginative input when creating any 'product' of your own design.

Creativity, I feel is something which allows us to form an idea/image etc. through perspective/experiences/emotions. I believe it to be the thought/path to the idea rather than the finished product!

Creativity – one's imagination presented through any means. The freedom to record thoughts and develop ideas.

Making something up that can be about anything and go in any direction. E.g....
Clothes – Goths/rockers/emo's
Written text
Drawing
Video production

People, computers even cars can be creative. Cars e.g.: James May doing the Top Gear theme with cars.

Creativity is influence gained from our surroundings, culture and social background. Creativity is a mechanism found in the brain.

Creating something that is wholly original to you as an individual, group, organisation etc. ('Going against the norm').

MA screenwriting students, Bournemouth University (3 July 2009)

A natural process involving the brain enabling the individual to respond to any form of stimuli which enables them to create a brand new or interpreted form of this. However, just like other expansive terms such as happiness, it is relative and varies between individuals.

The inability to inhabit an environment that I necessarily haven't been to and would never want to go to. Nonetheless, I created it , therefore it exists because of my inquisitiveness.

An unconscious linking or association of disparate ideas that leads to an output of some type.

Being original and non-derivative, and often telling lies.

Re-look at reality. Re-define reality.

To imagine and 'create' an object, piece of writing, art, design, problem solving etc in a way that no-one else has – i.e. be original.

Creativity is creating something which should be liked by others and should raise the awareness of human beings, which should lead human evolution.

Imaginative, working towards individual thought. Exploring ideas, thinking of new ways of doing things, expressing personality in a unique way.

Are you creative?

I like to think so, I love all art forms and when I listen to music or read a book it creates unlimited images in my mind. I am also able to create a whole story from the most simple of starting points. I can also come up with extremely original and dynamic displays of fruit and veg at Sainsbury's.

No more creative than a conduit. No more than a funnel. No less than a mass computer with the ability and ego with human weakness that is self preservation and the desire to leave your mark on the world.

Sometimes. Why? Because it is very important to me. Pleasurable.

I believe everyone is creative, but writers are probably more so. So the answer is yes. Why? Because for various reasons I have had to tell lies and make up stories for most of my life; this engenders originality of thought.

Yes. I want to use narrative and visual (art department work) to tell stories about, largely, anxieties within man, or within each one of us. Also: I want also to provoke dialogue on xxx norms within society.

Yes – relative to my usual environment. Why? 1. Aim to find innovative memorable means of communicating messages, addressing issues. 2. Psychological reasons – toward imaginative rather than proscribed (sic) approaches.

Yes in some situations, no in others. Why? Because of my strengths and weaknesses as a person and an inability to engage in many 'creative' practices such as art, design, problem solving etc.

Partly – part craftsman and part artist – though the term makes me uncomfortable as I'm not yet satisfied with the quality of my output – not enough to think of it as particularly creative, and certainly not as art. Why? There's the potential for lots of challenges – and that's something we need – and also the potential to communicate at a different level to verbal communication. In fact it's probably mostly about that.

Yes.

Yes. Why? Everybody is creative in some sense in a large variety of ways and in different forms of expression. Personally I think I am as the way I think and in various subjects such as writing and music, but also in other skills i.e. leadership and so forth!

I am creative because I take pleasure in it, and in being part of a wider group of creative people i.e. going to see films, exhibitions, seeing the creative work of other people is interesting. I sometimes feel I am being my true self when thinking or acting creatively. I feel committed to it and that it improves the quality of my life through the satisfaction it gives me. I like to develop ideas as I have no idea where they will go and what I will find out about others, the world and myself.

MA in Creative and Media Education students, Bournemouth University (22 January 2010)

Having ideas which inspire you to develop them, they have value. Ideas with potential for development, scope. I don't think creativity comes in isolation – there is often a journey + something to say about it.

Creativity is something that an individual produces/demonstrates that challenges convention in terms of their own perceptions, abilities and positions.

Creativity. Exploring possibilities. Challenging convention.

Creativity is to produce something that has thoughtful intent. i.e. A child choosing to put a paint brush in the Red paint and make a splodge on paper.

Creativity in my opinion is the combination of four elements:

1. using appropriate technology successfully + being inventive.
2. Creating an obvious meaning for the audience.
3. Passion and flair including originality is obvious to the audience.
4. Appropriate codes and conventions used successfully and employed creatively.

Creativity. To create something 'original'. Audience can interpret ideas & draw meaning from the product. Expression.

A combination of (a) new idea(s) produced originally for an audience in an expressive way, that challenges conventions or produces solutions.

Being able to think of a range of solutions to a problem, using a range of methods and possibilities.

Creativity is one's ability to think beyond the sum of their experiences to make something new that adds value.

The application of imaginative processes.

Expressing yourself in a way which is original and innovative for you!

An ability to produce something in an original way.

BA Screenwriting students, Bournemouth University (25 January 2010)

When you said 'what is creativity?' I thought of its definition in the dictionary to create meaning to make. So it is the ability to [] something. Its magnitude and versatility is irrelevant. Buildings are creation, faeces are creation, cake is creation. It's all creative, billions of things are. Utility is irrelevant. We only shun creations we see these examples endlessly. Intelligence and originality and persistence is what interests us. The truth is we do it every day, creativity goes unrecognised by us all. Our choice of creativity relies souly [sic] upon what we decide to define within ourselves as creative. We are all creative, in one way or another. It's what we value that sticks out the most.

Producing something you're passionate about.

Using the collection of thoughts, imaginings and feelings in your mind as building blocks to create something.

To think in an open-minded manner about numerous ideas. – A wealth of ideas.

Creativity. When you see a molehill and make a mountain.

Creativity. An inspiration, undertaken by a person, creating an idea.
The invention of something.

Creativity: The ability to create, be original think outside the box and to place your own, individual mark upon the world.

Creativity. A way of putting your imagination in an expressive way.
Making something new, exciting and as original as possible.

Creativity – The ability to create exciting and imaginative works. In the field of art the works being unique and personal.

CREATIVITY – The act of thinking, making or doing something in a unique and different way.

Imagination; Story Telling; Spontaneous thought; Improvisation; Creating something out of nothing; The process of the above↑ [bullet points on the card]

CREATIVITY making something from nothing

Creativity The ability to use imagination to create something such as art, stories, film, machines, etc. Helps if it is original as it's more creative.

Making something out of what you imagine.

Creativity:- I believe this to mean: one who uses their imagination, skills, talents etc to make anything and everything.

Creativity The artistic use of imaginative ideas to create something.

The ability to produce/think of imaginative things and interesting ideas.

Creativity: The ability to create original pieces of work/stories from your imagination.

Creativity: Building something from nothing.

An abundance of ideas and the ability to develop them into something material and original.

Making or “creating” a form of something. Being original or common use: thought or taught.

Creativity ability to improvise.

Creativity A piece of work spawned from an idea.

Creativity – The imagination and individuality to write episodes of Hollyoaks just like everyone else. Sorry, that didn't really make any sense.

Creativity – harnessing original ideas and realising their importance. – I kept changing my mind. [final comment refers to the crossings out and interpolations].

Bringing something into the world that never existed before. (Not babies) Ideas turned into something physical.

Creativity. Making ideas, thoughts and feelings become real 😊

Creativity – Expression – something personal. Feelings and emotions.

Making something from nothing using just your mind.

Self-expression and relief.

The ability to express your imagination in original and valuable ways.

Creativity is what you make it!

Creativity is...being able to define something imaginatively in sixty seconds!

The ability to imagine and think up new and diverse ideas.

The ability to manufacture an imaginary idea and elaborate into a feasible world.

Creativity [sketch of light bulb and brain].

Creativity – making something from nothing or very little.

Are you creative? Why?

Yes – because before this was a blank postcard and I have created a postcard with writing on it.

Not yet. I still have a lot to prove. Perhaps one day...

Yes...I continuously think of new ideas and try to try new things whenever I can.

Yes! Isn't everyone?! Nothing is unimportant. I see ideas and novelty in things others would ignore – I think that counts for something.

YES* *Because I create stuff.

Yes = Because I can be inventive.

Yes. Because I can't not be. I couldn't do anything else.

Yes. I drew that [arrow points at a small sketch – a sort of segmented wedge].

I try

Creative – I am creative because of my imagination and ability to transcribe it to words and stories.

Am I creative? Probably not, but I do know the meaning of life.

No

I think I am because I see the potential for creativity in many things around me.

Am I creative? I don't know as creativity has so many meanings and I think that maybe nobody truly knows what it means to be creative.

Yes. I believe everyone is in their own way. I think I am because I regularly use my imagination to the best as I can to think of new, fresh ideas.

Yes – But everyone is to some extent because creativity is subjective. What I think is creative, others may not? What is creative?

Yes – in a sense, everybody is creative in their own ways. I'm writing a film about Beastiality, creative enough!

Depends what definition of creativity is.

Yes I think so (even though at time the creativity goes untapped) and not necessarily because I have a talent or ability others don't but because I exhibit a desire to want to explore that talent/ability where others might necessarily not.

Yes, with the ability to imagine and transfer to word or image, I am creative.

Yes. [accompanied by a sketch of what seems to be a smiling, waving carrot].

Am I creative? Not really, but neither is Michael Bay, and he's doin' alright.

Am I creative? Yes, yes I am. I have ideas and often write them down.

Yes. I don't want a real job and writing seems more interesting.

Yes [represented as speech from a stick man].

Am I creative? Yes – but isn't everyone?

Yes. Perhaps it is genetic as I come from a long line of story-tellers.

Yes – because (see other side) [which says: 'creativity is what you make it']

Yes, because everyone is.

Yes but I can't prove it...interesting.

Yes! I think, therefore I am.

Am I creative? Yes...I am Serbian.

Am I creative? I'm not sure, we'll see how much money I make.

Creative and Media Diploma students, Long Road Sixth Form College, Cambridge (22 February 2010)

Everything you do could be classed as creative.

Self-expression. "When I'm creative I express my spirit on the piano." Creativity is something you express visually or any other form. It is the key to being different. You can use any materials and create something in your eyes only.

Creativity. Being spontaneous and expressive.

Creativity? Being expressive. [with arrow pointing to a squiggle]

Creativity? Originality. Being individual.

Creativity? Expressive. Different. Risks?

The undividable moments in life. Writing video treatments. Looking [at] other people's videos.

Creativity is all from the imagination and can be anything you want it to be.

Creativity is an expression of your imagination.

Creativity is – expressing new ideas in an innovative way.

Creativity – is doing or creating something original and inventive. This could be art, or a piece of tech or a story.

Creativity – formulating and expressing new ideas and stuff. [teacher's response]

Creativity is getting excited and making something. [teacher's response]

Creativity. Something eye catching, original, expressive. [BU hospitality student]

Creativity. New ideas. Unique. Inspired. Outside the box. [BU hospitality student]

'Educational Challenge' Conference delegates, Tallin (26 March 2010)

Creativity: ability to apply experiential knowledge (in new situations AND with other people as well).

Being different!

Creativity: something unique and natural simultaneously.

Creativity - concept how to see, to do, etc. differently.

Remaking/remodelling.

Creativity = ability to apply old knowledge, experience, memories, habits to new situations - flexibility - agility.

Creativity: coming up with new things.

Creativity - doing something differently and better.

Old wine in new bottles. Combining two elements or objects, or ideas in a new original way.

Creativity - avoiding traditional, habitual, learned solutions in thought process and practice.

Creativity - unpredicted approaches, non-standard solutions to old situations/problems.

Definition of creativity: ... is an ability to think and act in a manner that is new and problem solving.

Going from conflict to consensus (finding a solution) or going from consensus to conflict (creating a problem).

Creativity: think about things that do not exist (yet).

Definition of creativity as I see it: ideas with courage.

Creativity = linked brains via complex open networks generating new idea(s) towards the growth of knowledge.

The arrival of a new idea that flows from the immediate or the distant and manifests as a revelation.

Creativity = thinking faster than others. Ability to catch attention.

Creativity means seeing things a bit differently, i.e. in a new way. It is a skill to make things differently.

Make or do something that did not exist before.

My definition of creativity is the classificatory work of generating new conventions.

Creativity is an idea or act that establishes or changes a new or existing domain.

A new/original combination of known elements (although sometimes forgotten).

Creativity - ability to see known things in a new light and to develop them further - innovatively in a new way or in a new direction.

Creativity: getting the idea. Innovation: following it through.

Creativity is ability to think and act 'outside the box' whilst in most cases having an understanding of what the box is. It is both a characteristic of the individual and a group, also an environment. Take old and make new.

Association of certain things into new combinations.

(in the presentation, there was the notion of value, but it made me think that most mischief is very creative and could be considered as 'destroying' valuable stuff.)

BBC Academy tutors (31 March 2010)

Creativity: to be able to make something out of nothing.

Creativity is...thinking about things differently, and making them beautiful.

Creativity is having the vision, power, enthusiasm to drive through your ideas in any circumstance - being brilliant and new!

Innovative thinking to deliver a vision or strategy in a unique way.

Creativity the process of generation of ideas.

Creativity exploration of novel ways of problem solving.

Creativity...exciting, thought provoking and fun.

Creativity is the ability to adopt an original and engaging approach to any work or situation.

Creativity is...letting your mind go wild to explore the possible, the impossible and all beyond!

Creativity is...making new stuff.

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