'The Temporal Space'

The Development and Manifestation of Individual Creativity and its Organisational Relevance

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Abstract

This thesis uses biographical narrative interviews to follow the lives of four individuals who have been successful in a variety of creative careers. It explores the development of their individual creativity through the inter and intra-psychic experiences that have helped or hindered the development of their creativity; how these early experiences manifested in later life and the relevance this has had on their careers and on the organisations they have existed in.

The findings show four main states of mind / valences in the enactment of creativity: connecting, disrupting, outsiding and storytelling, and explores how they emerge through the participants' experiences. There is an exploration of the interconnected relationship of each of these valences and how the participants' creativity flows between them from the point of initiation to enactment.

It also explores the way the participants create a space that invites others to join them in their creativity and how organisations can either give them a space for their creativity to emerge and flourish or become too restrictive for it to be initiated.

Finally, this thesis places the findings in the context of existing theories within the psychosocial field of individual and organisational research to consider possible implications for the wider field of study.

Keywords: Creativity, transitional spaces, valence, reverie, temporal regression, maternal relationships, latency, play, life and death instincts.

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"Great things are done by a series of small things brought together."
– Vincent van Gogh

"Creativity is seeing what everyone else has seen, and thinking what no one else has thought."
– Albert Einstein

"Creativity doesn't wait for that perfect moment. It fashions its own perfect moments out of ordinary ones."
– Bruce Garrabrandt

"Learn the rules like a pro, so you can break them like an artist.'
– Pablo Picasso

[https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/creativity]

Section One: The Why and How of Researching Creativity

Chapter One: Introduction

Organisations are becoming increasingly focused on how to 'improve' creativity and innovation as they are considered important functions for the sustained development and existence of organisations. However, there is often limited exploration of the inter and intra-psychic factors that enable creativity to happen, therefore this research will explore the subjective experiences of four participants, all of whom were selected due to their established reputation within their field of creativity, as well as the wider group, organisational and social experiences that they believe have been important in the development of their creativity and creative careers.

As this research is based on the experiences of four people who are already successful in their creative careers, I do not aim to make grand, generalised statements about how all organisations should function to enable creativity to be initiated, but I do believe it offers the opportunity to explore the common themes experienced by the participants and to reflect more widely on the way organisational creativity can happen.

Creativity is something that I believe is a part of everyday life, and not something that is unique to certain individuals or groups, therefore I hope that this research will also raise questions for you about your own experiences of creativity, as it has done for me, details of which I will share with you throughout this thesis.

Thesis structure

This thesis is structured in four main sections which explore the development of the area of study through to the key findings, thoughts, and considerations about possible practical applications within organisations.

The first section of the thesis provides a background to how I became interested in researching creativity through my personal and professional experiences and interests, and how it is positioned within the wider theoretical field of study. This is then followed by an exploration of the research questions and methodology for the study.

The second section is an introduction to the participants, their stories and a detailed description of the key themes that emerged from each of their interviews. This is followed by the third section which explores the cross-case themes that emerged through the similar experiences shared by the participants.

The fourth and final section explores the core findings, my own hypotheses, and a reconnection with both previously explored and post-analysis literature that connects to the main findings in an attempt to extend some of what is already known and thought about creativity in organisations.

For confidentiality reasons, the core identifying characteristics of the participants, such as names, organisations, geographical references, and names of individuals connected to them have been changed; all other elements are true to what the participants shared with me in their interviews.

Choosing an area of research

I never set out to research creativity; it was a happy accident.

I had worked as an organisational consultant for a few years before applying for the doctorate, and in that time, I had mostly worked in public sector organisations that work with children, young people and their families / carers and professionals. I specialised in working within the context of trauma and abuse, helping the adults around children and young people to understand the impact of their experiences on their relationships, and on understanding their behaviour as a communication of their unmet needs. During this time, I noticed that professionals were significantly impacted by being exposed to the unthinkable experiences of the children and young people they were working with, so was initially determined to research the impact of working in and around trauma on organisations and the people in them.

However, I quickly got to a point of feeling as though I could be trapped in a space focusing on trauma without a light at the end of the tunnel. This triggered a thought process of *'so what? We know trauma impacts organisations. We know 'trauma breeds trauma', so people working in and around it can be impacted by* it'. What we do not know is how some people and organisations find the capacity to be incredibly creative despite the traumatic environment they exist in.

This thought process, alongside my continued work as a consultant in both the same and other sectors, triggered a curiosity in me around what individual, group, organisational and systemic conditions enable creativity, and specifically creative thinking, to happen.

The more I looked and the more I read, the more I could see that we tend to look towards the products of creativity rather than the source of it in group / organisational contexts. There are a whole host of business management '*how to*' books that tell stories of people who have successfully turned their ideas into realities and what steps others need to follow to replicate this success. But none of these resources answered the question of how do some ideas get externally validated and mobilised in an organisation, whereas others, that seem equally valid, do not?

I noticed that there seemed to be an idea that creativity is something unique and special that only some people can 'do', and I started to wonder about the 'normal' or little moments of creativity. The ideas that pop into our minds when we are walking down the street. The way a simple question in a meeting might change the direction or outcome of a piece of work. The times when we talk to other people about the same moment or situation that triggers a new way of thinking about it. This led me to become interested in how these ideas emerge, rather than what happens to them once they have already come into existence.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

For the past few decades, psychologists and organisational researchers have become increasingly interested in how creativity develops for individuals, but also how organisations make best use of individuals' creativity to increase impact / outputs.

Creativity is very well documented in psychosocial literature and particularly focused on the development of the human capacity for creativity. As I am researching from a psychosocial lens, I will begin by exploring these theories in more detail, connecting them to my work experience and how my interest in researching creativity developed. I will then reflect on any questions that emerge from the literature and ones that remain unanswered in terms of the factors needed for creativity to occur within organisations.

The term 'creativity' has been widely used to define a multitude of things from personality traits to the process of initiating new ideas; the outcome of these ideas and the environments that support the emergence of new ideas (Rhodes: 1961). I initially thought I would use Simonton's (2001) idea of creativity for this thesis as he describes it as being the capacity to produce ideas that are '*both new and workable or functional*'. However, reflecting on this definition, I felt as though it could translate to the practical application of creativity, i.e. only the ideas that can translate to something '*workable or functional*', which misses out the importance of thinking new thoughts without necessarily translating each thought into tangible actions. Therefore, I will define creativity as the process in which new thoughts emerge.

Furthermore, it is important to outline my thinking around the difference between creativity, change and innovation as they are often written about in relation to one another, especially in terms of literature on organisational creativity, and creativity is often positioned as the 'thing' that is needed for change and innovation to happen.

To clarify, I believe that creativity is the process in which new thoughts emerge, but it does not necessarily result in a change, whereas change and innovation are the outcome and / or enactment of creativity. Creativity is essential to these processes as change or innovation without creativity would merely be a replication or repackaging of what already exists, rather than the creation of something new. Therefore, I will be holding creativity, change and innovation as separate but interconnected concepts / functions.

Section One: Development of Creativity in Individuals

As the focus of my research is on the development and manifestation of individual creativity and its relevance for organisations, it is important to first explore how an individual's capacity for creativity develops to understand the core aspects that enable or hinder creativity before then exploring the application of this in organisations.

As I am researching from a psychosocial lens, I will predominantly be looking at psychoanalytic and social theories and will do so in a way that shows the evolution of theoretical ideas of creativity over time and the gaps in knowledge and understanding that remain.

Infancy and childhood:

Ferenczi (1916) and Freud (1919) describe the origin of creativity as stemming from the phase in early infancy where babies develop a sense of omnipotence - where they believe they are able to influence the actions of others, i.e. they dream of the breast and the breast then arrives for them. This ability to be able to project ideas and fantasies into the future is a core skill of creativity, but it also needs to be balanced out with a realisation of the limitations of our own ideas and fantasies. This is something that Winnicott (1971) later explores by stating the importance of the resolution of this phase of development where the baby experiences a gradual and tolerable disillusionment of this sense of omnipotence. Key to this is the support from emotionally attuned caregivers who are able to help the baby manage their

disappointment and frustration of this realisation. This is important when considering the way in which creativity develops for individuals as it is not just the ability to have a creative thought but also the importance of being able to be resilient in one's attempts at creativity.

Freud (1924;5) also stated that children engage in play as a way of turning away from, or denying, the frustrations of reality and that *'part of creative mental work serves for the fulfilment of wishes',* and it is through the exploration of these unfulfilled wishes that our creativity emerges. He also argued that creative expressions act as a defence against neuroses as the creative outlet is a more socially acceptable way of the child fulfilling unconscious, and often socially unacceptable, wishes and desires. This hinges on his previous theory (1911) on the development of mental functioning which outlines two aspects, the Primary and Secondary processes. The Primary Process which is derived from what Freud (ibid) refers to as the '*Pleasure Principle'* is driven by the most primitive and emotional part of the mind, the id, and is focused on wish fulfilment and pain avoidance, thus where play originates. The Secondary Process is driven by the part of the mind that represents consciousness, the ego, and intervenes as a regulatory function of the id, resulting in the ability to connect to the external world and act accordingly, otherwise known as the '*Reality Principle'.*

Melanie Klein (1957;180–186) extended Freud's ideas stating that creativity originates in the infant's need for reparation from unconscious attacks on the 'good breast' (an internalised good and attentive mother) as *'the breast in its good aspect is the prototype of...creativeness'.* However, if the experience of frustration towards the 'bad breast' (an internalised less attentive and frustrating mother) is either excessive or not followed

by gratification, the infant would be deprived of the relevant experiences necessary for the development of a capacity for creativity, as '*conflict, and the need to overcome it, is a fundamental element in creativeness'*.

Segal (1974) furthers this as she states that it is through repeated experiences of loss and the following development of a capacity for restoration that the capacity for creativity emerges. This connects to Kolodny's (2014) idea that the relationships we have with others impact our ability to be creative as:

'Creative work requires that we be able to experience ourselves and function as separate beings, have a mind of our own, be able to be absorbed in the work without fear that we will be abandoned or destroy others. Such capacities begin in infancy and involve a lifelong dialogue between oneness and separateness. If experiences in infancy make feeling separate seem too dangerous…how can we be absorbed in concentration and in our own ideas?'

(Kolodny, S.: 2014;94)

This is important when considering the factors that enable the development of individual creativity and the manifestation and application of this creativity in organisations, as this would mean that if the individual does not feel secure in the context and / or comfortable with being separate from the group, then it would be impossible for them to enact their own creativity.

What I observed in organisations I have worked in / with is that internal and external (real and imagined) pressures, conflicts and losses appeared to instigate a need for creative thinking and action. For instance: the breakdown of a child's foster placement; changes in government policy; changes in senior leadership; a loss of funding, and a fear of another organisation creating the same product first, etc. This was particularly prevalent during the Covid19 pandemic as organisations needed to be creative to survive such radical changes. Therefore, perhaps a certain level of conflict, pressure

and loss is necessary for creativity to occur but can only be possible if the relationship systems are safe enough for this disruption to be tolerated?

In his book 'Playing and Reality', Winnicott (1971;96) extends Klein's (ibid) ideas stating that an individual's capacity to live creatively is *'directly related to the quality and quantity of environmental provision at the beginning or in the early phases of…living experience'*.

He states that Klein's (ibid) theories on aggressive impulses and destructive phantasy are important when considering the development of the human capacity for creativity, but that they do not get close enough to the core notion of creativity itself. He instead focuses more on the relationship between experiences of hope, living and creativity, arguing that creativity is a fundamental part of being human that everyone has the capacity for, and, due to the existence of hope, it is something that cannot be extinguished. However, the exception he gives is of people who live in environments of sustained suffering, such as concentration camps, who, if they no longer hold onto hope of their suffering ending *'must have lost the characteristic that makes them human, so that they no longer see the world creatively'* (Winnicott: 1971;91).

What Winnicott does not explore however is the extent to which these external experiences are internalised by individuals differently, as two people may experience the same external reality in different ways, impacting their ability to sustain ideas of hope and creativity. Therefore, it is important to explore these environmental conditions in more detail, alongside an exploration of individual tolerances for sustained hope, when considering individual capacity for creativity and how this is

either helped / hindered through the ongoing external experiences of the groups, organisations, and wider social systems we all exist within.

Furthermore, Winnicott (1967) was interested in where cultural experiences existed within the mind and argued that Freud's (1905) topographical model of the mind did not have a place for cultural experiences. He later explored this explored this further in his book 'Playing and Reality', stating that there is a:

'Third area, that of play, which expands into creative living and into the whole cultural life of man. This third area has been contrasted with inner or personal psychic reality and with the actual world in which the individual lives, which can be objectively perceived.'

(Winnicott, D. W.: 1971; 138)

It is in this space, which is not orgiastic in nature (as with Freud's [1905] psychosexual stages of development) but more a transitional space between fantasy and reality that creativity and cultural experiences sit.

Winnicott (1971;139) continues to say that this *'potential space'* develops from the point where a baby starts to experience themselves and their mother as separate but connected (initially through the use of transitional objects) and that this third space '*can be looked upon as sacred to the individual in that it is here that the individual experiences creative living'*. Therefore, perhaps the capacity for individual creativity and its later manifestations can be seen as stemming from the third space existing between the baby and the mother where enough connection to feel safe / tethered enough to explore the world whilst also being separate enough for play and creativity to exist.

Csikszentmihalyi (1997;1-2), like Winnicott (ibid), believes that creativity is '*a central source of meaning in our lives'* and that '*when we are involved in it, we feel we are living*

more fully'. This may help us to understand why creativity can be experienced as joyful, but again does not make sense of why we are driven towards it or how it develops for individuals.

Furthermore, as highlighted in Sternberg and Lubart's study (1996), most research into creativity fails to consider how the social and cultural context in which the individual exists within that influences their ability to develop a capacity for creativity.

Kupers et al (2019;115) also found that *'literature on creativity is heavily steered towards methods aimed at capturing creativity as a latent trait (rather than studying it as a socially embedded, enacted and constructed).'* This is reinforced by the socially held notion that creativity exists within the right side of the brain, and people are either right or left brained, as if it is the same as being right or left-handed. The impact of this reductionist view of the development of creativity again ignores the social context in which the individual exists.

Briggs (2002) came closer to exploring this in his work with children from travelling communities stating that:

'For children raised within a culture that operates, for the most part, in the paranoid-schizoid position, splitting off from consciousness certain experiences and feelings, it is likely that the capacity for symbolic thought will be greatly impaired'.

(Briggs, A.: 2002;178)

Bloom (1985) also recognised the transgenerational patterns in successfully creative people (i.e. pianists) finding at least two familial generations of the same skill in the people she interviewed, yet still there was no exploration of the inter and intra-psychic

dynamics that were present in the development of these particular types of creativity or, as Briggs identified, the reduced capacity for symbolic thought (which Winnicott (ibid) argues is a core component of creative thought).

What is also interesting about the above theories on the development of creativity is that they tended to emerge as a secondary element of research into other things. For instance, Klein (ibid) being interested in the importance / impact of maternal relationships and the infant's projection of self onto the other (mother) led to her finding that envy stems from the infant's envy of the mother's capacity for the creation of life. Perhaps this is connected to the topic of study itself, i.e. creativity as an emergent process that is impacted by a multitude of interactions, experiences, and relationships.

The role of the unconscious

The theories stated above can help us to understand the importance of relationships in the development of creative thought, but they do not explore how these thoughts emerge, what drives them, or how early relationships may impact the later manifestations of an individual's creativity.

Freud's (1920) 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' could be used to help understand the unconscious drivers that motivate thoughts to emerge as he identified two drivers for human behaviours which he termed the *'life and death drives'*. This theory was extended by Klein (1923) who identified a third drive, the epistemophilic instinct, which

is the curiosity drive. It is through this drive for curiosity that the origins of creative thoughts can be considered to emerge.

Bion (1962) later extended Freud's (ibid) thoughts and connected the life and death drives to the emotional states of love and hate (which he called L and H) and added further concepts of knowledge (K) and truth (O). For Bion, (ibid), K refers to the emotional experience of knowing the 'other' which exists in the space between L and H. It is in this space that frustration emerges which is important as '*a capacity for tolerating frustration thus enables the psyche to develop thought*' (Bion: 1962b;306-7). Therefore, thinking develops from a need to manage thoughts, which is similar to Kant's (1787) idea that a thought can only be known if something happens to trigger it into being known.

Furthermore, Britton (1998) supported this, stating that the drive to know (Klein's epistemophilic instinct) is as important as the love and hate (or life and death) drives and is the mechanism in which the infant moves from the Pleasure Principle to the Reality Principle. However, the distinction he makes between the drive to know and the love and hate drives is based on the idea that the drive to know is not '*a component instinct, but as an instinct with components [such as] exploration, recognition and belief*' (Britton: 1998;11).

These instinct and drive-based theories are helpful in understanding the aspects of the mind where creative thinking may originate, but do not explore the ways in which unconscious thoughts emerge and how unconscious experiences translate into conscious (creative) thoughts and actions.

Bion (1962) describes this process where the transfer of unconscious experiences and emotions that are not yet conscious (Beta elements) come into contact with a contact barrier (a trigger / the place where conscious and unconscious thoughts interact) that then triggers them into conscious thoughts (Alpha elements).

Bion (ibid) continued this theory by suggesting that one's capacity for thinking can only be developed through the interconnection between the self and the other, therefore suggesting that thoughts are social in their development. He extended this by stating that thoughts exist in the unconscious systems and are *'in search of thinkers'* (Bion: 1967b;166). He later described this process further in the context of group analysis, saying that for the analyst:

'A thought, an idea unclaimed, may be floating around the room searching for a home. Amongst these may be one of your own which seems to turn up from your insides, or one from outside yourself, namely, from the patient.'

(Bion, W.R.; 1980: 11)

This suggests that thoughts exist in the psychic space where the individual and the group minds interconnect, thus meaning that creativity (using the definition of creativity as the creation of a new thought) would originate in the space between individuals and the group.

This can help us understand how a creative thought might be initiated, i.e. through something external triggering it into existence, and the component qualities it may take, but again does not tell us about how that thought came into existence in the way that it did. For instance, why do specific ideas / thoughts come to a person's mind at that particular time?

Creativity in adulthood

As mentioned previously, the theories shared above are based on the idea that our early experiences influence our capacity for creativity as well as the types of creativity enacted in adulthood.

The gap in research that looks at the way in which thoughts emerge and the social context in which creativity develops in childhood is also true of the research that explores creativity in adulthood. But research into adult creativity tends to focus on the need for adults to regress into childlike spaces for creativity to occur.

For instance, in his paper 'Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming', Freud (1908) argues that writers behave in a similar way to the child at play as they create *'a world of phantasy which he [the writer] takes very seriously…which he invests with large amounts of emotion – while separating it sharply from reality'* (Freud: 1908;14).

In other words, phantasies become the adult way of engaging in play and are motivated by unsatisfied wishes which, in childhood, would have been explored through wish-fulfilling play. This suggests that adult creativity takes place within the mental functioning of the Primary Process, rather than the Secondary one and is driven by the id for the purpose of wish-fulfilment. However, this consequently suggests that regression is involved in the process of adult creativity, which raises the question of how creativity is sustainable in adulthood without impacting one's ability to engage in reality-testing and connecting fully with the external world.

Winnicott (1971;72-73) also stated that it is *only in playing that the individual child or adult is able to be creative*. This again highlights the importance of the adult's ability to gain access to a childlike state where they can engage in a playfulness that enables creativity to emerge. However, Winnicott (ibid) acknowledges that the adult remains in contact with their adult self and does not enter a fully regressed state. This connects to Milner's (1952) idea that concentration in adults is similar to children playing, but there still remains a lack of clarity on how this happens and how thoughts are initiated through this process.

This is something Dimkov (2018) more recently explored in his research on the neuropsychology of creativity, where he argued that creativity happens within the continuum of Freudian Primary and Secondary thought processes, creating a third thought process that exists in the middle of both mental functions:

'To be in the flow of creativity is to alter one's mind functioning towards the primary thought process, reaching subsequently the third thought process via a regression in the name of the ego.'

(Dimkov, P.: 2018;70)

This suggests it is not a regressive state that the individual enters, but a third space between the id-driven Primary Process and the ego-driven Secondary one. This connects to my experiences of working with adults who work with children / young people who have experienced trauma, especially when they are alongside a child in a state of distress, as they are able to hold a containing adult position whilst also being able to think creatively, and often playfully, about ways to help the child regulate / deescalate.

This third space also connects to Winnicott's (1971) ideas of the transitional objects and the creative act of symbolism required by the infant to project certain aspects of their primary caregiving relationship onto an external object (i.e. teddy / blanket) to be able to manage the anxieties evoked by separation. Therefore, perhaps it could be considered that the third space that Dimkov (ibid) describes could be an extension of the third, transitional space Winnicott (ibid) identified in infants. This would then raise the question of how the individual's specific early experiences manifest in later life and how this may influence the types of creativity in adulthood.

Furthermore, Bollas' (2018;5) work on the transformational object goes some way to explain the need for creativity in adulthood as he argues that there is a *collective search for an object that is identified with the metamorphosis of the self*. This manifests itself in the hope that we attach to objects such as a new job or relationship which represents both *'a request for a transformational experience and, at the same time, [to] continue the 'relationship' to an object that signifies the experience of transformation'*. Although this has a future focus through the need for something new to change in the current reality, *'it is an object-seeking that recurrently enacts a pre-verbal ego memory'*.

 Therefore, this would suggest that adult creativity is driven by a desire or hope for the future to be better than current reality but is deeply connected to earlier (pre-verbal) experiences. This is important when considering the ways creativity develops for individuals and how it later manifests in organisations as it suggests that a connection back to what was (tradition) is needed when thinking about what could be possible in the future (innovation).

Section Two: Creativity in Organisations

Over recent years, there has been an increasing focus on how to develop creativity and innovations in organisations. This started with more vigour in the 1980s with a focus on the factors that either support or hinder creativity to flourish (Amabile: 1988) and has turned more recently into a 'how to' approach with many popular sources focusing on individuals recalling stories of successful people, authors outlining steps to best make the most of your own creativity (Glebb: 2022), and recommendations on how to get others / organisations to be creative (Collister: 2017).

In 'Creativity Training'[1,] Mitch Jensen (2020) recommends that:

'Childish creativity ought to be studied and imitated. Let yourself believe that anything is feasible. This is going to assist you in establishing creative connections. The non-creative mind states, 'I can't', however the creative mind states 'I can, and here's how''.

(Jensen, M.: 2020;8)

This partly connects to the possibly regressive state needed for creativity to be enacted in adulthood, as mentioned previously, and an omnipotent self-belief. However, Jensen (ibid) positions creativity as something you either do or do not have, which ignores the generic human capacity for creativity, as explored above, and limits creativity to a group of special people. This reinforces the individualistic / personality trait approach to creativity (Runco: 2004) which discounts the complexity of the human interactions that either help or hinder the initiation and development of creativity.

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1 This was an Amazon bestseller at the point of writing this thesis

Furthermore, Steiner (1965) suggests ways leaders can / should manage creative individuals, which again locates creativity in individuals rather than considering the group dynamics present, and also suggests that creativity is a thing that needs to be managed in a person rather than something that should be explored / developed between individuals and groups within an organisational context.

Another popular source for organisational creativity is The Harvard Business Review. In 'The Importance of Creativity in Business' (2022), Boyles states that creativity *'not only combats stagnation but facilitates growth and innovation'*. They continue to outline the following seven steps needed for organisational creativity:

Table 1: 'The Importance of Creativity in Business' (Boyles: 2022)

1	Don't be afraid to take risks
2	Don't punish failure
3	Provide the resources necessary to innovate
4	Don't try to measure results too quickly
5	Maintain an open mind
6	Foster collaboration
7	Encourage diversity

Some aspects of this are list relatable to my experience of working in and with organisations, such as needing to enable failure to happen without punishment; not measuring results too quickly; being open-minded; fostering collaboration and encouraging diversity. However, these steps are only possible if the organisational structure and culture enable them to happen. For instance, I have found that organisations that tend to be more creative have environments where people are clear on what is expected of them; know where to get help if they need it; are curious about root causes of things that go wrong rather than blaming; have clarity of organisational purpose / understanding of why they exist (Sinek: 2009) and value activities that

support achieving more purpose. However, the internal / external pressures of achieving designed outcomes that are usually set at the beginning of a project with specific timelines and associated costs tend to foster an environment where failure, or even deviation from project plans, is not allowed which makes creativity almost impossible.

The need for collaboration is interesting when thinking about how organisations are set up, as most are structured in siloed departments that have differing (often conflicting) priorities that make collaboration difficult, if not impossible, and instead evoke high levels of competition between teams and drive a 'them vs. us' dynamic.

The focus on measurement is something that has been a focus of organisational creativity literature but is often hard to do which tends to lead to a more individualistic focus again, i.e. Kaufman's (1993) idea that self-assessments of creativity are *not ideal but better than you think*. This raises the question: why do we try to measure creativity as if it is a thing that some people or organisations have more or less of? Who decides what constitutes good or bad creativity? What happens when it is a non-traditional type of creativity, such as changes in thinking rather than products or tangible outcomes?

As well as these more popular literature sources being somewhat reductionist through a focus on creativity stemming from individuals and not considering the wider social and political contexts in which people and organisations exist, they also tend to be based on people's subjective experiences, with limited data or analytical insights included, yet are translated into generalisable processes for everyone to follow.

I will now turn to look at some literature on organisational creativity from a systems-psychodynamic perspective to show some more depth of insight into how creativity happens in organisations. It is important to note here that the body of literature on this specific subject is sparse, which is one of the reasons I am interested in researching this particular area of study.

As will become clear in the later chapters, William Halton's (2004) application of systems psychodynamic ideas of creativity in organisations in his paper 'By What Authority? Psychoanalytic reflections on creativity and change in relation to organisational life' has been a core and influential theoretical paper for this thesis. Halton (ibid) draws on Kleinian thinking to highlight the relationship between organisational change theories and psychoanalytic theories in relation to creativity. He identifies three different stages of creativity (initiatory, reparative, and evolutionary); their manifestations within organisational contexts; and the way in which specific leadership styles may impact organisational creativity.

Initiatory creativity *'relates particularly to the mental power of the individual'* (Halton: 2004;107) which is linked to Winnicott's (1971) notion of omnipotent creativity where the infant explores the phantasy that they have created their own world and the people in it and evokes (or hinges on) paranoid-schizoid functioning (Klein: 1929).

This also connects to Hoyle's (2004) work where he identifies a continuum of responses to change from sycophant to saboteur where the sycophant follows the leader blindly without thinking, whereas the saboteur (unconsciously) attempts to ruin

or impede the change. Perhaps these positions are indicative of initiatory creativity as the two positions could represent the paranoid-schizoid split?

I have seen these dynamics in start-up organisations or subsidiaries of organisations I have worked in / with and can see the need for an omnipotent belief in the purpose of the organisation at the offset. But it also raises the question for me as to whether there needs to be a process of unbounded and omnipotent dreaming at the beginning of the creative process before the group is ready to tolerate the frustrations and restrictions of reality?

Halton (2004;109) argues that reparative creativity '*relates to the capacity for care*' and functions within the depressive position (Klein: 1940). Within organisations, reparative creativity:

'*...is based on a concern to repair damage arising at work. It recognizes the human dimension of organizations...[and] keeps in mind the needs and feelings of the individual performing the role...*'

(Halton, W. 2004; printed in Huffington, C. et al.: 2004;111)

Consequently, for reparative creativity to succeed, there needs to be a recognition of these more destructive dynamics and an ability to tolerate the associated guilt that can be evoked.

Halton (2004;111) states that evolutionary creativity is characterised by the '*capacity for openness to uncertainty*' and is in response to a need to develop. This connects to Miller's (1983) perspective of organisational creativity as he suggests that to manage the experience of not having a clear primary task (in relation to a change process),

organisations need to engage in imaginative thinking, phantasy, and play. Perhaps the capacity for thinking and acting in a playful way is an initiatory factor in organisational creativity but can only be effective when there is enough containment (Bion: 1985) offered to manage the uncertainty.

Halton (ibid) continues to state that evolutionary creativity requires patience, what Bion refers to as *'reverie'* (1962), as it evokes feelings of both loss and gain. The split between feelings of loss and gain has a manic-depressive quality and remains part of the depressive position (rather than a paranoid-schizoid split), similar to bereavement. Perhaps it could be considered that for evolutionary creativity to occur, the organisation needs to go through each phase of grief (Kubler-Ross and Kessler: 2005)? However, this does not explain how creativity can come out of the process of loss / grief, or what happens when an organisation gets stuck in an earlier phase.

Krantz (2001) supports this as he states that:

'...in wishing away the destructive impulses and debilitating conflicts that are elicited by membership in work organisations, important generative forces also get overlooked, since the unconscious is the source of creativity as well as of destructiveness.'

(Krantz, J. 2001;155)

This connects to the idea of creativity stemming from early, unconsciously driven experiences. Yet, it does not get to the depths of how this happens nor what unconscious mechanisms are at play in the initiation and development of an individual's creativity. It also does not help explain how the capacity for creativity can be reduced when people are in organisations. For instance, Bayles and Orland (1993) found that 95% of the people they interviewed who graduated from art school stopped

making art within the first five years of leaving. This raises the question of what happens in the workplace that hinders people's ability to be creative?

Furthermore, all these theories into organisational creativity evoke further questions such as: how do the conscious and unconscious elements serve to support (or impede) creativity? What is the tipping point for organisational creativity? How does a creative thought get mobilised and then enacted? Why do some organisations manage to fulfil their creative potential whereas others do not? How do some people translate their vision in an accessible way that results in creative action? What happens to creative people in organisations that are not able to create the environment needed?

Section Three: Creativity in Basic Assumption and Work Group Functioning

As I am researching organisational creativity from a psychosocial perspective, it is important to spend time reflecting on Bion's (1961) work on basic assumptions and work group functioning to see how group dynamics may be applied to the understanding of creativity in a group context, so, I will explore each basic assumption in turn.

It is important to acknowledge that there have more recently been two more basic assumptions identified: Oneness (Turquet: 1974) and Me-ness (Lawrence, Bain and Gould:1996). However, I believe oneness to be an extension of dependency and me-ness to be an enactment of fight-flight dynamics, so will focus on Bion's three basic assumptions.

Bion (ibid) stated that a (sophisticated) work group is characterised by the collaborative meeting of a group to perform a certain task and that rational, scientific approaches to a problem are inherent during work group functioning. This may explain how the process of creativity is maintained without envious attacks, but it does not explain how creativity is initiated / mobilised. In other words, collaborative working, and rational thinking may be needed in order to think practically about how to make a creative thought a reality, but it does not explain why and how the creative thought was offered to the group in the first place.

As mentioned earlier, Bion (1967b) describes the process whereby a thought emerges in the group in search of the thinker, as part of the group dynamic process, but this

still does not explain how a creative thought emerges and the relationship between the individual and the group that enables this to happen.

Bion (ibid) identified three Basic Assumption (Ba) group functions (Dependency, Fight-Flight and Pairing) which are prevalent when there is significant stress and anxiety in the group and hinder them from engaging in Work Group functioning.

In Ba Dependency (BaD), the group sees the leader as being skilled and competent whilst viewing themselves as incompetent and inadequate. Kernberg (1998;4) states that these groups are characterised by '*projective identification, projected omnipotence, denial, envy and greed*.' Therefore, if the organisation is functioning within BaD, perhaps creativity is initiated by a movement within the members in response to the need to view the leader as an omnipotent force that can lead them to survival?

In Ba Fight-Flight (BaF-F), Bion (ibid) states that the group comes together to fight or flee a threat in the form of (real or imagined) external enemies and view the leader as being able to fight against the enemy and to protect them from fighting one another. However, this is not the reality and organisations functioning within BaF-F will often form subgroups that will fight or flee one another. Kernberg (ibid) argues that these groups are characterised by '*splitting, projection or aggression, and projective identification…[and]…by conflicts over aggressive control, suspiciousness, fighting and dread of annihilation.*' This suggests paranoid-schizoid functioning (Klein: 1929), which may hinder the initiation of organisational creativity. However, perhaps if mobilised externally rather than internally, (like in reparative creativity), paranoid-schizoid

functioning could act as an initiatory factor in organisational creativity to defend against external threats.

This is something that I noticed when working with a team of electrical engineers at a car manufacturing company. During an inter-departmental meeting set up to discuss the progress of their fully electrical car, groups were arguing and blaming one another for the failure of a recent test. At this point, one member said *"we just need to hurry up and make a decision so we can get our car out before X [manufacturer] does."* This led to a change in focus and mood within the meeting where the group began to think creatively about how they could work together to find a solution. Perhaps the intervention offered by the member managed to transfer the internal fight (blame) to an external one (competition), which in turn led to an increase in creative thinking / problem solving.

Bion (ibid) states that whilst functioning within Ba Pairing (BaP), the group focuses on two people (usually a male and a female, but not always), who hold the group's expectations and hopes of (re)creation, enabling survival. Kernberg (ibid) argues that these groups experience '*general intimacy and sexual developments as potential protections against the dangerous conflicts over dependency and aggression.*'

Within educational organisations I have worked with, I have noticed that BaP can get acted out by the children pairing off adults as a projection of idealised parental figures, and inter-staff or inter-organisational pairings that will verbally / consciously desire a close working relationship but will repeatedly fail to come together. This process maintains the phantasy of the idealised pairing as it can never materialise, thus limiting

the organisation's ability to think about the organisation as a whole, and to turn thoughts into actions.

Furthermore, as BaP links to the creative act of procreation, perhaps the need for survival is an initiatory factor in organisational creativity?

Section Four: Complexity and Creativity

The other area of literature I would like to explore in thinking about the development of individual creativity and its manifestation and relevance for organisations and the groups within it, is the relationship between complexity and creativity. Both Complexity Theory (Waldorp: 1992; Kauffman: 1993) and Chaos Theory (Gleick: 1988) highlight the 'non-linear dynamics' of self-organised groups with the belief that there is always some form of order within chaos. So, within this section, I wish to explore how Complexity theory may support the exploration and understanding of the initiatory factors necessary for organisational creativity to occur.

Morgan (1997) explores the way in which organisational change can be supported by drawing upon Lorenz's (1963) mathematical theory of *'attractors'* in which complex systems combine order and disorder. He argues that leaders in organisations need to be able to '*facilitate the process and flow with the change, rather than try to predesign and control*' it (Morgan: 1997;267). In other words, leaders cannot control the outcome of the change, however, they need to offer a space that enables creativity and change to occur. Failure to do so would result in a repetition of existing models of work. This space creates:

'…*'contexts' in which appropriate forms of self-organization can occur…[as] transformational change ultimately involves the creation of 'new contexts' that can break the hold of dominant attractor patterns in favour of new ones.*'

(Morgan, G. 1997; 267)

This feels important when looking at how individual creativity can be applied in organisational contexts, as it suggests that one particular characteristic of the leaders

within organisations is the ability to sit with not knowing and tolerate complexity (as in evolutionary creativity), and to offer containment (Bion: 1985) for the members of the organisation. This would require leaders to be able to engage in a state of mind that Bion (1970;125) referred to as '*negative capability'*, where the individual has the ability to let go of the need for certainty of knowing and to sit in a space of uncertainty and not-knowing. Eisold (2000;65) describes this as *'precisely the ability to tolerate anxiety and fear, to stay in the place of uncertainty in order to allow for the emergence of new thoughts or perceptions.'*

This connects to Stacey's (2001) idea that:

'…when networks operate…at the 'edge of chaos'…they are capable of evolving, that is, producing new patterns of relationship. When the dynamics are stable the network simply repeats its past: its own internal dynamics make it incapable of evolving novel responses to changes in its environment. A network that is 'stuck' in this way would be endangered by the evolution of other networks it might be interacting with, eventually leading to its extinction. Similarly, operating in the chaotic or disintegrative dynamic would lead to extinction. At the edge of chaos, however, a network is capable of endless variety and thus novel responses to changes in its environment.'

(Stacey, R.: 2001: printed in Gould, L. et al.: 2001;96)

Therefore, if creativity occurs at the edge of chaos, it is important to consider what the tipping point (Gladwell: 2000) is between being stuck and being in chaos. This also connects to the earlier theories explored around the relationship between the way thoughts develop and creativity, especially Bion's (1967) work on Alpha elements (conscious thoughts) and Beta elements (raw, unconscious, and emotional data) as it would suggest that creativity is initiated at the point of the contact barrier (the area in which unconscious and conscious thoughts interact).

Furthermore, whilst discussing the way Group Relations Conferences (GRCs) can lead to changes in one's personal identity, Halton (2010; 221) states that GRCs offer an '*empty space'* so individuals can be freed from existing roles and responsibilities in order to try out new ones. Perhaps this 'empty space' sits at the 'edge of chaos' and / or offers the containing function that anchors the organisation from tipping into chaos?

Bollas' (1989) theory of the forces of destiny and fate may also help to understand the link between chaos and order in relation to organisational creativity. He states that:

'*A person who is fated…has very little sense of a future that is at all different from the internal environment they carry around with them. The sense of fate is feeling despair to influence the course of one's life. A sense of destiny, however, is a different state, when the person feels he is moving in a personality progression that gives him a sense of steering his course.'*

(Bollas, C.: 1989;41)

Therefore, perhaps this empty space at the edge of creativity enables individuals, groups and organisations to be able to project creative ideas about the future, consequently serving as an initiatory factor in organisational creativity?

These theories come closer to explaining the unconscious processes that may help the initiation of creativity, but again do not take a more systemic lens when considering the wider influencers and changes. This could be seen during the time this thesis was written in organisational responses to the Covid19 global pandemic which has seen some organisations work incredibly quickly and effectively and others not able to survive.

Section Five: Research Questions

As explored in the previous chapters, the exploration of current literature on creativity alongside my own personal and professional experiences helped to make sense of some aspects of the development of creativity in individuals and how this can be applied in organisations. However, after having read a variety of different theoretical and research papers, there were many questions that remained unanswered, such as what unconscious processes are at play in the formation of creative ideas; how particular ideas emerge at certain times; what the relationships are between the individual, group, organisations in the emergence of creativity, and why some ideas gain momentum in organisations whereas others that can be considered equally relevant do not.

Consequently, the following research question emerged: '*what are the psycho-social factors at play that impact an organisation's ability to initiate creativity?*'

As I began to explore this research question further, the following sub-questions developed:

1. What are the conditions that either help or hinder the initiation of creativity in organisations?
2. How might group and individual processes be connected in terms of the development of creativity within organisations?
3. What particular kind of incidents, situations, or events prompt organisational creativity?

4. What are the narratives of creative organisations? How is creativity described? What are the ideas about developing thoughts? And, what are the things that are thought to either support or inhibit the creative process?

5. What is the relationship between tradition and innovation in the mind of leaders when thinking about their experiences of initiating creativity? What are the resilient factors required for creativity in organisations?

At the beginning of this research, I had intended to explore each of these sub-questions, however, as I will explore in more detail in the participants section of the methodology chapter below, when seeking participants, I came across an unexpected hurdle of not being able to gain access to leaders working in organisations. The unintended consequence of this is that I could not answer all of the above questions so had to reconsider the sub-questions. Below are the questions that I did answer through the research with the four participants I interviewed:

1. What early, relational experiences, incidents, situations or events influence the types of creativity that individuals develop and how does this get translated into later organisational functioning?

2. How might group and individual processes be connected in terms of the development of creativity for individuals and how does this influence the manifestation of their creativity into their chosen careers?

3. How do creative individuals apply their creativity to organisations? What are their experiences of being creative in organisations?

4. What are the narratives of creative individuals? How is creativity described? What are their ideas about how their creativity has developed? And what are the things that are thought to either support or inhibit their creative process?

I will later explore how the research data and findings connect to these revised sub-questions but will now take you through the methodological approach taken to attempt to answer these questions.

Chapter Three: Methodology

The following chapter will explore the development of the chosen research design to help answer the research questions outlined above and will be structured in two parts – data collection and data analysis. The reason for this differentiation is to outline and explore the interconnected, but different, approaches I have taken and the reasons for doing so.

Research design

Early thoughts

Having identified the area of research and related questions as outlined previously, I started to become curious about which methodology would best suit the questions. Previous research into organisational creativity has been based on interviews, surveys, questionnaires, reflections on consultation interventions and individual accounts.

The interviews, surveys and individual accounts appeared to hold a narrow lens that explored creativity from people's subjective experiences of their own creativity and / or without a deep exploration of the complex ways creativity develops.

Conversely, interviews and consultation reflections gave more detailed, qualitative insight and data, but they still had limited or no presence of other human relationships that may have influenced the types of creativity that emerged.

My initial thought was that to research creativity, I would need do design a creative method. I considered using psychoanalytic observations (Bick: 1964), which I am highly familiar with, and then using semi-structured interviews, Social Dreaming (Lawrence: 1998) and playful facilitated group processes which I would have designed to see how creativity happened in action / the initiatory processes emerging in the moment.

My idea for using observations was to observe individuals or groups in organisations who were at the start of a creative process (i.e. idea forming sessions) to be able to get in touch with the (un)conscious group processes at play during this phase. I would then follow this with some interviews to get a deeper understanding of how people in the groups made sense of their experience and how they interpreted the emergence of the ideas. These accounts would then be compared to see how much related to what I had seen and what these differences would tell me something about the internal world of the creative individual.

I then thought I would use Social Dreaming (ibid) with a group of people who did not know each other to see what parts of the creative process could be seen as being related specifically to the individuals in the group and / or the unconscious group processes that were at play that could be generalised more widely. I would have triangulated this data with the observational and interview data gathered.

The next phase would then be to take the emerging hypotheses from the first few stages of the method to be tested out within a facilitated group process with a new

group of participants. For instance, if the original group of participants were saying in the interviews that their creativity had flourished when they had supportive leaders and clear objectives for their work, I would have tested this by giving the second group activities with varying degrees of structure and objectives.

However, the more I went into the development of a possible design of a methodology that included some or all of the above, I realised that to have such a creative methodology may become a distraction and would only give me insight into the here and now moments in the method and not connect to the previous and wider (social) experiences that may have influenced the type of creativity that emerges and how it does so.

Furthermore, I felt that I needed to find a method that not only fitted with my psychosocial / social constructionist perspective, but that also enabled (or encouraged) a more objective connection with what the participants were sharing in the interviews, without being clouded or driven by previous assumptions. This would mean the use of a method in which the researcher has to engage in a '*suspension of disbelief*' (Coleridge: 1817) and to engage in more active listening to the participant without reflecting on their own associations or considering ways to respond. This goes against what Pinney (1981) describes as being the more general conversational skills and is another reason why I chose not to use a more traditional / conversational interview method. Consequently, the idea of using a more narrative based method emerged.

Selecting the method for data collection

In addition to the development of my thoughts about ensuring there is space for the participants to explore their creativity in an uninterrupted / undistracted way, I also became increasingly interested in the relationship between the individual, group, and wider organisational / systemic contexts. This highlighted a desire to be able to gain deeper insight into the participants' individual lived experiences and how they have internalised their group and social experiences in the development and enactment of their creativity. This then raised the question for me about how the chosen methodology would enable this to happen, as:

'Research is only a more formalised and systematic way of knowing about people, but in the process it seems to have lost much of the subtlety and complexity that we use, often as a matter of course, in everyday knowing. We need to bring some of this everyday subtlety into the research process.'

(Hollway, W. & Jefferson, T.: 2000;3)

Therefore, it was important for me to be able to bring the complexity of the varied relationships into the research to get a deeper understanding of both the interrelated and individual components that enable creativity to emerge and influence how it manifests throughout an individual's life and the relevance this has in organisations.

Moreover, due to the nature of the research question and sub-questions, the research design had to be a retrospective exploration of the lived experiences of those who have successfully been able to initiate creativity within their organisation / sector; anything else would be assumptive. Therefore, using an in-depth qualitative research method would better enable me to explore the identified research questions. I would also need to choose people from different backgrounds and sectors to see if there

were commonalities between their experiences but also to compare any differences. Having participants from one sector would only tell me about that context, not the way in which creativity emerges as a psycho-social phenomenon. Therefore, I decided to interview people who had successfully initiated creativity within their organisations / sectors and to use Biographical Narrative Interpretive Method (BNIM) to collect and analyse the data due to its focus on '*eliciting narratives of past experience rather than (just) explicit statements of present (or remembered) 'position''*, (Wengraf, T.: 2001:19).

I will explore BNIM in more detail shortly, but it feels important to recognise the reasons for not using Free Association Narrative Interview (FANI) method, as this is a significant and important psychodynamic interviewing method.

FANI was developed by Hollway and Jefferson in 2000 and was designed to incorporate an acknowledgement and understanding of the unconscious processes that are at play within the research process:

'*Given our understanding of the way in which unconscious defences affect the information that is produced in the research relationship and the way in which it is interpreted, we wanted to incorporate this idea into our use of a narrative method'.*

(Hollway, W. & Jefferson, T.: 2000;31)

As FANI focuses on the participant's narratives, this would have revealed the '*significant personal meanings*' (Hollway and Jefferson: 2000;36) the participants attach to the research question as well as giving insight into the relationship between people's subjective (and possibly defended) representations of their experiences and the experiences themselves. Together, these aspects could shine a light on some of the

ways the internal world of the participant has been shaped by the relationship with their external world.

Furthermore, both FANI and BNIM enable an engagement with highly defended subjects. Although it is highly unlikely that any participant that I would select would be highly defended, a defensiveness may be evoked within the research due to: the status of their roles; their thoughts about the organisation-in-their-mind (Armstrong:2005); pressures of being seen as being creative individuals, and the personal / emotional investment in creative processes that I had previously witnessed in my work. Therefore, in order to attend to this potential defensiveness, alongside the desire to further explore the wider group, organisational and systemic dynamics that will be both conscious and unconscious in nature, it was important to select a research method that would enable a deeper dive into both the conscious and unconscious individual and group experiences of the participants.

However, the more free-flowing approach of FANI would not have given me the structure that I feel was needed to enable the participants' creativity to emerge, as mentioned earlier. BNIM, on the other hand, has a more systematic and structured way of surfacing these meanings, and allows for the more complex aspects of the participants' experiences to emerge through their biographical narrative whilst also providing data and insight into the individual, group, organisational and social influences that would need to be considered as I am researching creativity from a systems-psychoanalytic perspective.

Additionally, the mechanical structure of BNIM and the way the interview is conducted also helps to mitigate some of the researcher bias as there is less scope for pointed or leading questions to be asked.

The development and structure of BNIM

Biographical interview methods originated in the early 1990s (Rosenthal and Bar-On: 1992 and Schütze: 1992) within the field of Sociology as an exploration of the impact of the Holocaust on survivors and Nazi soldiers. Therefore, the main focus in the design of the method was to create something that would be suited to working with participants who may be too defended against the topic of study to answer direct questions about their experiences. Consequently, biographical methods are based on the underlying thinking that there is a Gestalt in how an individual describes their experiences that can tell us something about the wider social influences and hidden meanings.

BNIM is a biographical interview that was initially designed by Wengraf (2001) and then further developed by Wengraf and Chamberlain (2006). The intention is to focus on the individual's experience and the interview is structured in a way that '*gives priority to eliciting narratives concerning people's biographies in an uninterrupted way*' (Clarke and Hoggett: 2009;11) to enable both individual and systemic thoughts and dynamics to emerge.

There are several phases of the BNIM interview which I will explore in more detail now.

Pre-interview:

- Once the participants are selected (I will outline the selection process later), the next phase is the pre-interview phase where the participant receives information on what the research is about, the role of the researcher and how information is used and stored. The participants can then either agree to take part in the interview or not and are informed of their right to withdraw[2].

- BNIM then suggests contacting each participant 7-10 days before the interview to arrange the details of the interview and answer any more questions they may have at this stage.

Interview:

The BNIM interview is set up differently to more traditional interview techniques as it requires the researcher to create a space for the participant's subjective experiences to emerge. This is done through the structure / process; how the researcher interacts with the participant and the type of questions asked.

During the first phase of the interview, the main research question is posed as a statement followed by clarification that the participant will not be interrupted and that notes will be taken for the following phase. The purpose of the statement is to induce a narrative; hence it being called the 'Single Question Inducing Narrative' (SQUIN).

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2 An example Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form can be found in appendix one.

The SQUIN I used was:

"As you know, I am exploring the factors that support the initiation of creativity so please could you tell me the story of your life from where you first thought you were interested in creativity and how it has all developed for you up until now. All of the events and experiences that have supported you in your professional career, you can start wherever you like, take as long as you like, I will not interrupt you and I will just be making notes for the follow up questions".

The participant then freely responds to the SQUIN for as long as they feel comfortable / wish to. During this phase, the researcher needs to engage in active listening, as mentioned previously, to be able to truly hear what the participant is saying and bring on both a conscious and unconscious level without colouring it with their own assumptions or biases, as much as is possible. In addition to this, there is also a need for the researcher to hold in mind the purpose of the interview and the research questions they are trying to explore. This is what Wengraf (2001) refers to a having double attention where…

'…you must be both listening to the informant's responses to understand what he or she is trying to get at and, at the same time, you must be bearing in mind your needs to ensure that all your questions are liable to get answered within the fixed time at the level of depth and detail you need.'

(Wengraf, T.: 2001;194)

The structure of notetaking in BNIM supports this as it suggests the following categorisation: Situation, Happening, Event, Incident, Occasion, Occurrence, Time (SHIEOT). This model then enables the researcher to identify the follow-up questions that are asked in the second subsection, again in a way that will evoke a narrative response, so they need to be open (non-leading) and follow the narrative order in which the participant initially raised them during their initial response to the SQUIN.

These questions are called Topic Questions aimed at Inducing Narrative (TQUIN) and are identified in a small intersection between the first and second sub-sessions of the interview.

During the second sub-session, the researcher asks the TQUINs in a way that models the desired answer, such as "*can you tell me the first moment you…*", using the exact language that the participant used, not an interpretation of it. This is to ensure a further dive into the participant's experience whilst also ensuring they are clear on what the researcher is looking for, i.e. memories and moments they can recollect not theoretical or abstract thoughts. As with the first phase, the participant is given the space to answer until they have reached an ending or feel as though they do not wish to continue into that area of conversation.

There is also a third sub-session of the first phase which is designed to enable the researcher to ask any related, non-narrative questions, such as "*is there anything else about the experiences you've had and the way in which your creativity has developed that you think is important for me to know?*"

Once the interview is complete, the BNIM process requires the researcher to immediately make notes about the interview, i.e.: their experience; anything that stood out, emerging associations, etc. I followed each of the steps as outlined above, but I also decided to draw pictures to represent both the main content of the interview and my experience of it[3].

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3 See appendices 2a-d

As I had not used BNIM previously, I engaged as a participant in a BNIM session facilitated by my primary thesis supervisor who is experienced in using BNIM. During this session, my research question was posed to me, and it really enabled me to connect on a deeper level to the conscious and unconscious reasons why this research topic is important to me and how my own creativity developed. I will explore this further in the discussion chapter.

Consideration of the limitations

As well as the benefits of using BNIM that have been outlined above, it is important to note the limitations, such as only needing between four and six participants, meaning the research could not be generalised more widely, and the underlying assumption that how an individual expresses their experiences and world views through their biographical narrative tells us about the wider group and systemic experiences and dynamics. Having said that, it enables a much deeper and more fluid / emergent view of the impact of individual lived experiences, which, due to my epistemological viewpoint, I believe cannot be explored in isolation from the groups and wider systemic contexts they exist in.

To counteract these limitations, if the outcomes are ambiguous; if some of the research questions remain unanswered (yet still relevant); or if there are any gaps identified in response to the initial findings, my intention was to revisit the research design and ideas about participant selection to gather more data.

Ethical considerations

Throughout this research, the British Psychological Society (2009) Code of Ethics and Conduct which is based on respect, competence, responsibility and integrity were adhered to. I ensured that the individual participants and wider organisations are protected, and that any data gathered through this research will be held confidentially in accordance with data protection policy. This was particularly important as I needed to record the interviews.

It is important to note that although the roles that the participants hold may suggest they are resilient, psychosocial research can uncover things that the participant is not expecting. Therefore, I needed to pay attention to the emotional experience of the participants throughout the interview as it may have triggered emotional memories and experiences at a level that was unexpected to them. I also created a participant pack that outlined the potential risks associated with research, reinforced their right to withdraw at any point, and signposted them to further support if needed.

Additionally, it was important to consider the impact of the topic of study here too as the set-up of the interview, how the participants were selected and the nature of being creative may have evoked a sense that they either must withhold information (to protect their creativity) or give me more details than they felt comfortable with (to prove their credibility). Therefore, I made sure to repeatedly let them know they could withdraw completely at any point whilst also acknowledging that if they withdrew after write-up, some of their data may have influenced my developing thoughts.

Participant selection

As BNIM is a deep-dive method with small participant groups (between four and six people), I felt this method would enable me to get deeper insights into the experiences of creative people, but also meant that the participant selection needed to be diverse. This needed to be in terms of the age, gender, ethnicity of the participants, but also in terms of the types of creativity they specialise in.

My initial thought regarding participant selection was to approach organisations I was consulting with and ask them to engage in the study as it would enable me to gain a better insight into the organisations I had already developed a trusting, working relationship with. However, researching these organisations would have offered a potential risk to the work I was engaged in as it may have blurred the boundaries of my role as a consultant and have possible ethical implications regarding the power relationships I would already be engaged in, i.e., if I asked them, would they feel they had to participate? It may also have increased the potential for researcher bias as the participants might have been (un)consciously drawn to giving an answer they felt I would want to hear to please me due to the ongoing nature of our working relationship. Furthermore, the findings may be harder to analyse as the research would be taking place within the context of wider / supporting work, thus possibly providing more favourable outcomes than if carried out in isolation.

Therefore, my aim was to select participants in leadership roles who have been instrumental in implementing a creative change within their organisations; successfully set up a creative venture, and / or successfully launched a product or organisation. For instance, this may be a head teacher that has a particularly creative vision that is

supported both organisationally and within the wider social community; a leader that has designed a creative response to a stressful event; a leader that has managed to think creatively about a solution to a particularly challenging problem; a designer or inventor who is constantly needing to think creatively, or a comedian who constantly creates new material.

Furthermore, the BNIM methodology suggests that participant sampling should be with the focus of either selecting people who meet specific criterion (i.e. people in creative leadership roles) or who would be able to confirm / disconfirm initial, emerging analyses and to test emerging hypotheses, so it made sense to recruit participants one after another.

Furthermore, Hollway and Jefferson (2000) state that:

'We need to account for individual differences in the way in which people make sense of the available information; that is, the discourses or systems of meaning within which they may be positioned'.

(Hollway, W. & Jefferson, T. 2000;13)

Therefore, the participant selection needed to be varied to gain broader insights into different types of organisational creativity to be able to test emerging hypotheses, so I began researching innovative organisations and using my personal and professional network and then approached participants by sending a letter outlining the aims of my research and inviting them to participate.

I initially thought it would be quite easy to find participants as my experience had been of people wanting to engage in conversations about my research, and even though

BNIM states four people as a minimum viable participant number, I had intended to select six. However, the selection was more difficult than expected and between the first and last participants, I had a further six people agree to participate but they all withdrew before signing the consent form. This meant I had to keep searching to reach the viable size of four participants.

Furthermore, all the six potential participants that withdrew before interview were in leadership roles, which meant that only one of the four participants I interviewed was in a current leadership role within an organisation at the point of interview. This may have impacted the data, but I think it is an important methodological finding in relation to this topic, which I will explore in Chapter 14.

This change in research participants meant that I needed to change the research sub-questions as I was now no longer able to research the origins of creativity within organisations but instead focused on how creativity developed for individuals and its later manifestation and relevance in organisations. BNIM was still the most appropriate method for this due to the way in which it enables a deep-dive into the intra and interpsychic world of the participants and the way it connects individual experiences to the social and political contexts they exist in.

It is also important to mention that the first two participants were selected and interviewed in-person, pre-Covid19, whereas the second two interviews occurred during the pandemic and were held via Zoom. Although this led to a delay in conducting the third and fourth interviews, it was also positive as it meant I was able to connect to people who were geographically further away, thus increasing the

diversity of the participant group, and they took place over two virtual sessions which gave me time to identify the pins and formulate my follow-up questions in more detail.

Data analysis

Selecting the method for data analysis

The process of analysis as outlined in the BNIM methodology is a derivative of Glaser and Strauss' (1968) Grounded Theory method and is based on Breckner's (1998) identification of the '*principles and procedures of the biographic interpretive* method', which outlines five steps of analysis that are designed to explore the relationship between the *'lived-through past and the present story in the horizon of future expectations'* (1998:92).

Table Two: Principles and Procedure of the Biographic Interpretive Method
(Breckner: 1998)

Step 1	Analysis of the biographical data presented in relation to the chronological order of their lived life
Step 2	Thematic field analysis used to analyse the gestalt in the story the participant told
Step 3	Exploration of the participant's experience of their past events and how this may have influenced the development of their future experiences
Step 4	Micro-analysis of specific parts of the transcription to gain in-depth insight into the inter-related nature of the past experiences and current presentation to check emerging hypotheses
Step 5	Use of information gathered in the previous four steps to explore the relationship between the chronological life of the participant and the story in the way the told it, contrasting the two and creating hypotheses.

After this, the next phase of the BNIM methodology is interpretation, where the researcher works with a focus group in a 'future-blind' way where a small section of

the transcript is revealed in narrative order, and the focus group predicts what comes next. The aim of this is to help reduce the impact of researcher biases when interpreting the data.

My original intention was to follow BNIM methodology for both data collection and analysis due to its structured nature, as mentioned previously, and to use my dreams as a way of exploring my own unconscious thoughts, experiences, and biases, etc. that may be related to the research. This is in relation to Freud's (1899;623) notion that *'interpreting dreams is…the royal road to knowledge of the unconscious in the life of the mind'*. My reflective journal and supervision notes would also be used to support this.

However, after having completed the interviews, each of which were substantive in length (2–3.5hours), and after having completed the lived-life / told-stories, I could see the data was freely available. So, staying closer to the narratives of the participants through line-by-line analysis felt more appropriate.

The impact of this change in data analysis method meant that I would not use the group to do the future-blind work to help test my researcher biases and test my assumptions. So, in addition to the continued use of my dreams and reflective journal, I also decided to bring aspects of the data to my supervision sessions with both my primary and secondary supervisors, and to the research seminar groups, so I was still able to explore my own counter-transference to the data and to test my emerging hypotheses.

Grounded Theory data analysis

Grounded Theory emerged as a methodology in Glaser and Strauss' (1968) research into the experiences of death and dying in US hospitals in the early 1960s. The approach they developed was the first of its kind that used such systematic strategies within qualitative research.

In 2000, Charmaz further developed Grounded Theory to bring in to focus the way in which the researcher constructs their ideas: '*I brought relativity and subjectivity into epistemological discussions of grounded theory*' (Charmaz: 2014:13-14). This was an important development in the methodology as it enabled space for theory construction rather than just fitting the data into thoughts about current theories.

Charmaz's (2014:18) Constructivist Grounded Theory is structured as follows[4]:

Figure 1: Charmaz Constructivist Grounded Theory (2014;18)

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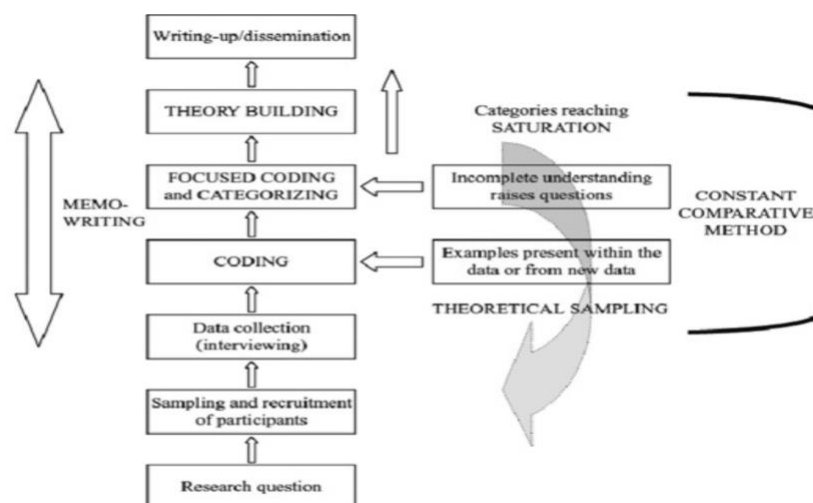
4 (Figure originally by Alison Tweed in Tweed, A. and Charmaz, K. 2011;133)

These adaptations enable a more fluid emergence of the themes which also connects to the more evolutionary nature of creativity (Halton:2004), which is another reason why I believe it was better suited to my research topic and questions.

Therefore, the process I took was to write the transcription, complete the Lived-Life: Told Stories as outlined in BNIM5 and then use Grounded Theory (Charmaz: 2014) to analyse the data in the following way:

Table 3: Data Analysis Structure

3.Theory	1. Transcription	2a. PINs	2b. notes, associations, questions and reflections on PINs

I began by highlighting the PINs and focusing codifying them (2a) at the same time as making further notes, associations, questions and reflections based on the PINs (2b). Once I had completed all the initial data analysis, I then returned to the transcription and added high level notes to highlight different psychosocial theories that were being raised in the transcription (3).

Consequently, this approach enabled me to stay very close to the narratives of the participants through the line-by-line analysis without fitting the data into current theories, but to then challenge the emerging thoughts in relation to relevant theories.

Section Two: The Participants

Individual participant data analysis

The following chapters will explore each of the participants in turn, sharing the key themes as they were told in the interviews.

There are several narratives that emerged for the participants; I will explore each theme and then share some of my experiences of the interviews to reflect on the unconscious processes involved in the interviews that may be important when considering the factors that enable creativity to be initiated.

Below is a table of the patterns of the narratives that emerged for each of the participants. Although there are differences in the participants' experiences, for the purpose of analysing common themes, I have clustered them in core subsections with the occasional variation. However, Dave and Luca also had additional themes that I have included as failing to do so would have impacted the accurate depiction of their stories.

Table 4: Overview of participant themes

Participant1: Angela	Participant 2: Dave	Participant 3: Luca	Participant 4: Helen
Early family life (and death)	Early family life	Early family life	Early family life
School life	School life	School life	School life (and education)
Relationships with others	Relationships with others (and organisations)	Relationships with others	Relationships with others
Thoughts about creativity	Thoughts about creativity	Thoughts about creativity (and success)	Thoughts about creativity
	Death and illness	Sexuality and gender	

Chapter Four: Angela

At the time of the interview, Angela was 55 years old, and had just been touring the UK with her second book which she wrote shortly after returning from having toured the world promoting her first book.

I originally met Angela when she came to a book club I was part of; this is where our conversation about her being part of my research initiated. Angela is the only participant I had met before the interview.

Early family life (and death)

Angela was born into a working-class family in 1970's England. She describes her parents as being "very ordinary, working-class people" (p1); her mother was a dinner lady at her secondary school and her father was a fireman. She shared that they did not have much money and remembered that her mother would worry about where their next meal would come from. This worry about money instilled in Angela a heightened focus on having her own financial stability as an adult.

Angela has one sister, two years younger than her, who became unwell at the age of two (when Angela was four). Angela recalled her family being told they needed to keep her sister alive for six years until she was old enough for an operation[6]. This happened,

_____

6 Angela never mentioned what the illness was or what operation was needed, just that her sister had been unwell.

and she was alive at the time of the interview, but the impact of the worry was significant for Angela and the way in which her creativity developed through books:

"My sister was ill and that was very worrying in the family so perhaps I had a particular reason for wanting to be able to put myself to one side and enter into this absolute mind changing world…I was very shy…so I think there was several aspects to my love of reading that it was the thr, the thrill of adventures that I wouldn't have dared to have in real life [pause] and then it was being able to lose yourself entirely and be absolutely immersed in these imaginary worlds which for the time the duration of the reading were the only, your only reality." (p10-11)

Angela continues to describe the importance of having books to escape into as a way of escaping her own worrying reality. This was particularly prevalent for Angela when reading Enid Blyton books as she enjoyed reading about children who would do dangerous things without consequences. She described this as offering her the opportunity to explore feelings of fear without *"being exposed to danger"* (p11). It seemed as though her fear of dying triggered by her sister's illness was counteracted by the experience of reading about omnipotent and powerful children who could overcome the challenges / issues that adults could not solve.

School life

Angela described primary school as a place where she was unseen / unnoticed and where she could go under the radar. However, at secondary school, she felt that the teachers *"twigged that the quiet, mousy one, who never opened her mouth was actually quite bright and they paid attention to that"* (p8).

Angela also mentioned how her parents really valued her educational successes and were proud of her achievements. She said that they were not able to help her with her homework but that they were *"really encouraging"*. This encouragement felt important as she experienced external validation coming through her academic success.

Whilst discussing her experience of school life, Angela made limited reference to her peers other than saying that they *"were actually the children of very middle-class families"*. However, she frequently described moments where key adults (in addition to her parents) such as the librarians at school and the mother of a peer lent her books that would otherwise have been outside her reach. She recalled being eleven when the librarians at her local library noticed how much she read and gave her access to adult books. She said: *"I don't know what impact that had on my later creativity that but I'm pretty sure it did"* (p10).

As Angela recalled this memory, it felt as though she was excited by what felt like an illicit crossing of boundaries into adulthood, getting access to a world that was not yet meant for her.

This experience of an adult recognising something in her and the resulting crossing of a boundary and / or beginning to enact her own creativity was most prevalent when she was describing an English teacher at secondary school who, despite not teaching her directly, actively and repeatedly encouraged her to develop. She described him as being the first grown-up outside of her family to have paid attention to her abilities and said that he saw *"things in myself that I so plainly wasn't seeing…and that my family background sort of made it unlikely that I would see by myself"* (p29), such as being a writer.

She later describes a moment where he encouraged her to apply for university:

"...[he] ran after me when I left school at the end of the day and I was halfway down the high street and he came running after me and said 'Angela, Angela, where are you going?' And I said, 'well I'm going home,' and he said, 'yeah but it's the meeting for university application' and I said, 'yeah but I'm not going to university', and he said 'oh I think you are". (p39-40)

Interestingly, at the end of the interview, Angela said she had met him recently and recalled this event to him but he could not remember it. This suggests that the internalised experience of this interaction was an important part of the way Angela thinks her creativity has developed. She later mentioned that if this interaction had not happened, she would not have gone to university or then become an author and would have stuck with her own *"unambitious"* ideas of her future.

What feels important to note here is that there was something powerful in the way the external validation / affirmation Angela experienced in this interaction were introjected in a way that enabled her to mobilise / realise her own creative potential.

This external validation combined with the freedom her parents offered for her to follow her own path felt to be significant in terms of the development of Angela's creativity.

Relationships with others

As mentioned, Angela's experiences of connecting with others and receiving positive, external affirmation of her skills, abilities and creative potential were key in the development, and enablement, of her creativity. The most prevalent person she speaks about is the teacher described above, but she also describes other people who played a significant part in both the restriction and development of her creativity / career.

Firstly, Angela described the significance of her relationship with her mother, but in terms of the way in which she internalised her mother's anxieties and cautiousness. She said that her mum was quite *"an anxious, nervous sort of person"* and that she thinks that children *"learn a lot of your confidence from your same sex parent"*. Angela then stated that she felt her mother's risk aversion had influenced her own ability to take risks and how she thought she should just *"live a small life and not expose myself to risk"*. Angela continued to say that this and her class background combined as internalised limiting factors that meant, as a child, she could not envisage herself becoming an author:

"...overwhelmingly it was a class thing, that, umm, that I felt that there were people out there who were special, and uh, made of different stuff, and they, things like jobs on the TV and writing books would be done by people like them and that people like me were you know, readers, and that my job, my role would be to be a reader and other people would be the ones who would write the books, so, I just think that, you know, family tradition of keeping your head down, live a small life, make yourself secure, close to home, not expect too much from the world outside, and being a girl, and yeah, class, so those were the things". (pp15-16)

However, when she later experienced positive recognition / affirmation from the teacher, she began to consider possible alternatives to this restricted view of her potential.

Another key relationship Angela mentions as important in the development of her creativity was with a cousin who died after a short illness when they were both in their early thirties. This relationship seemed significant as they were both similar ages, but the experience of her death was also important as it was another experience of her being in touch with death and impermanence (like when her sister was unwell), but also jolted her out of her ideas of her capabilities. She said:

"...on my way back from the funeral I just thought it's no good sticking in a job that makes you unhappy when and thinking you can live the life I really want when I'm retired because [pause] you just don't know how long you've got". (p2)

This fear of death counterbalanced Angela's need for financial security as she felt that the *"risk of being poor"* (p21) was not as important as the risk of losing yourself being unhappy in a job.

Death and a fear of losing people close to her was a core theme through the interview. Angela said she thinks death is the theme that runs through her books: *"it's what all my books are about really, in different ways, umm, yeah, it's kind of, it's my topic, it's the big unanswerable question"* (p26). She also mentioned that death is the big, unanswerable question in a post-secular world, and that it is something she feels characterises and drives creative people, specifically. It felt as though Angela was saying that her focus on death in her books is a way of managing her feelings of the total annihilation of the death of herself and / or others. Perhaps by writing a book Angela is attempting to avoid the annihilation of death by creating something that will exist beyond her?

Angela also recalled attending a Christmas party which, due to illness and the weather, was only attended by the two hosts, Angela and one other person who later became a world-renowned author. It was meeting this author, alongside the death of her cousin that made Angela realise that she was unhappy and *"risking doing real damage to myself by clinging on to the security of this job that I'm not happy in"* (p4).

This author was also important for Angela as she challenged her ideas of what creative people are like: "*I thought she hasn't got two heads, she wasn't born with a silver spoon in her mouth, she isn't like some miracle, you know, nuclear brain person, she just, she's just an ordinary woman like me"* (p3).

It felt as though Angela's sense of what creative people look like was challenged so significantly because she could identify with this person who had already trodden the career path she so desperately wanted to follow. It was as if Angela's realisation of the 'normalness' of the other person made being an author feel more achievable for her, which contrasts with her earlier idea that creativity is magical and unobtainable for 'normal' people like her. This felt to have released Angela's internal grip on the anxiety she described as having inherited from her mother.

Thoughts about creativity

Angela immediately described her love of reading from an early age and how this developed into a love of writing stories: "*when you consume enough, ummm, stories it just turns your brain into a brain that knows how to and wants to produce stories*" (p1). However,

this love of reading and enjoyment of reading did not translate into a career until later in life as she felt that being working-class did not lend itself to creative roles. She countered this by stating that her cousins were in creative roles, but they were *"of a real practical hands-on type"* of creativity such as hairdressing or painting and decorating, and that she "*just didn't think that people like [her] could be writers"*.

This highlights the importance of the social world around Angela and the expectations of the kind of creative outlets and jobs available within the boundaries of her social class but that this is something she managed to surpass and seemingly led to her continued sense that her creativity is magic:

"…if you do spend long enough putting the words down and making the sentences that somehow it will happen…it does still seem like magic, <u>it doesn't feel like magic when I'm doing it</u>, it just feels like hard slog…I still think yeah, it is magic…it's like a powerful force right behind you…you are in the grip of an external force and that you don't even know what word is coming next but somehow when you need it, there it is, and you occasionally get really powerful moments like that, and I think, I've got a feeling that a lot of readers who don't write think that is must all be like that, or at least that its more common that you know, three 15 minute periods in 3 years" (p12-13)

Angela's repeated use of the words "power" and "powerful" when describing both the creative process and her connection with it (i.e. writing and reading), suggests something of the nature in which she experiences creativity. It is as if there is something outside of her control powering her desire to create something but also that the book creates a space for hers and the reader's minds to connect in a way that makes something different for them both afterwards. Perhaps this connects to the more social purposes of creativity as a method of connecting people in a common cause / purpose?

In addition to Angela's thoughts about the creative process and how it happens, she also shares the internal ideas she used to have about what creative people are like:

"I always thought that creative people were very um, relaxed, devil may care, don't worry about money…I knew a lot about 19th Century poets, and they all seemed to have sexually transmitted diseases, and I can remember thinking 'oh I don't want that, uh' so I just sort of had this [chuckle] notion of what a creative life would be like…" (p22).

This extract highlights Angela's internalised view of what a creative person would be like in relation to money and to other people. Perhaps this internal perspective also added a slight resistance to her enacting her creativity, i.e. to be creative would be to be morally different to her true self and to be risky with money which she is already anxious about.

Chapter Five: Dave

At the time of the interview, Dave was 46 years old and working as an organisational consultant and artist. I knew of his work from a colleague and initially reached out to him via email.

Early family life

Throughout the interview, Dave made minimal reference to his pre-school experiences and family other than to describe his working-class background and how his parents encouraged him to get a job as soon as he left school. This felt important in terms of his development of creativity, not only because his narrative was more focused on his peer relationships and the other relationships he developed in adulthood, but also because his main description of his family was connected to what he described as his transition into a phase of life (when he joined the factory) where he felt he started to exchange his creativity for money.

Dave did mention his parents had a large record collection and a tape recorder that he would use: "*I'd record radio shows…and play musing and then introduce the songs and things like that*".

Other than that, the only early family memories he shared were when his mother's friend came round and interrupted his favourite television show which I will describe later, or mentioning his Dad's uncle who would get them record players:

"I dunno where he got them from…uh they might have been nicked or something, who knows…and I remember they only used to last like about 2 weeks before they'd break and then I'd get another one…he also wanted to give me a shotgun as well, itssaysum, it it says a bit about my family…"

School life

Dave describes his experience of being at primary school as being full of creative endeavours and of deeply connected interactions with peers where he is central to both his and their creativity. He describes primary school as being the foundation of his creativity and the *"sweet spot between being able to function as a human being and doing creative stuff"* (p1). This evoked a sense of dislocation between functioning as a human being (possibly connected to fitting in with groups), and his ability to engage in creative activities. He later mentioned that *"anything could be a creative invitation"* at this stage and described multiple moments of being highly creative in interactions with his peers (I will explain this in more detail in the next subsection). However, he also started to become aware of the external, social responses to his creativity and feeling restricted:

"…I could be immersed in a drawing, or…making up something or getting immersed in doing this weird dance with a plastic axe handle, um, then there comes a point where people will say 'stop daydreaming', 'don't do that'…" (p29).

This suggests that the development of an awareness of wider social context not only interrupted his creative flow but also introduced experiences of being restricted and potentially shamed.

Dave described the summer between primary and secondary school as being the *"peak point of uncensored imagination and creativity, urm, and being able to articulate and have the dexterous skills to be able to do it"*. It was at secondary school however where Dave felt like his experience of being able to be fully himself in all creative ways was swapped out for fitting in. He said he entered secondary school knowing himself and what his *"super-powers"* were but left not knowing these things. He described it as being *"a process of becoming more and more creatively lost"* and like a *"death of a thousand cuts"* as there was not *"enough play space"* for creativity to emerge. It felt like he was also telling me that he was not like other people and that he did not fit into the 'norm'.

One of the main reasons Dave attributes to the loss of his creative self was the way creativity was externally validated / assessed. In primary school, being different and engaging in creative endeavours was encouraged, whereas at secondary school, Dave felt there was a clear notion of what was good or not. This was represented initially through the *"horrific"* streaming process and then more formal examination at the end. This experience stuck in his mind as being an important validation (or lack thereof) of his abilities as a person as he continuously mentioned that he got a D in A-level Geography when discussing his achievements in later life.

Relationships with others (and organisations)

Throughout the interview, Dave referred to key people he had relationships or connections with that were instrumental in the development and enactment of his creativity. This started as a child, where he described moments of connecting with his

peers in a way where they partly enacted his creative ideas. For instance, he described

playing keyboard with a peer:

"...there was another girl, ur, an Indian girl at school had the same keyboard and we did a concert in assembly that I only vaguely remember, and it would of just been we were all just playing the same random notes or something like that but to go and perform that in front of the school, was, was wonderful". (p1-2)

And later, a moment where he played David Attenborough in a group performance

with some children that again he described as *"wonderful"*. Dave recalls these

moments as happening accidentally, without a set intention to begin with and in a way

that feels freeing for them all.

Also, these moments highlight a shift from his individual creativity (e.g. drawing) to

paired creativity (performing) and a place where he received positive affirmation. This

is a key theme that runs through Dave's moments of connectedness with others:

"I'm someone who needs external affirmation, I think cause I'd spent so many years not being myself and getting affirmed for not being myself, and I, I need that, I still need that in my work now". (p12)

Dave later describes how his creativity has developed more when he experienced

external affirmation. This was a theme through all career development moments

recalled and also what pushed him to join the Masters course he did - he described

the course lead as repeatedly approaching him and asking him to join despite him not

having had much previous academic success.

This again highlighted how Dave's ability to connect with other people made them see

something in him that he did not always see in himself or have the confidence to act

on if he did. It also highlights how these relationships enabled him to break through the boundaries of what would normally happen, i.e. an interview process, and again he describes it as happening almost accidentally and without action or intention from him.

Throughout the interview, Dave also referred to his daughter and how creative she is. He mostly focused on her being diagnosed with dyslexia and receiving support at school that he did not[7], which enabled her to be more comfortable with her creativity. He also got his daughter to draw the pictures for his presentations and later his book (when she was seven). This felt to be a significant relationship, not just because of her being his child, but also because being her parent seemed to offer him the opportunity to repair some of his early experiences of his creativity being diminished and externally restricted.

This very connected way Dave described his relationships with peers and significant others is very different to the way he described his relationship with organisations. For instance, he talked about his first job as being the time he began *"trading [pause] who I naturally was, no, it probably started at primary school but this exasperated it cause now moneys involved; trading who I naturally was for being accepted"* (p6).

He continues to say that his confidence declined significantly when in the organisation, despite his work being *"brilliant"*, because of a *"fear of getting found out, or, or fear of not knowing…what I was doing"* (p8).

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7 Dave has not been formally diagnosed as having dyslexia but described his daughters experience as being similar to his, and that he thought he probably is dyslexic.

Again, he is sharing the internal view that his work / creativity is special and different, but that it could not exist within the organisation he was in. He talked of working in corporate environments with an element of shame, again connected to money, but even when he had some time working for a charity on a secondment basis, he still felt inhibited by being there as he felt he had to *"be on brand"* (p15).

This highlights how Dave's experience of the boundaries of the organisation resulted in him feeling he had to change himself to fit in. This also evoked an image in my mind of an animal being branded as a way of showing who they belong to.

Later, Dave described the moment where he had handed in his notice at the large, corporate organisation and the nervousness this evoked*: "…it's like my inner critic saying you've pushed this too far now…you fucking idiot, what have you done here…"* (p14).

Interestingly, although Dave felt as though he could not exist within the organisation, his inner-critic voice heightened at the point of leaving. This connects to his need for money and how this is a difficult balance for him to strike with the idea that he was exchanging his creativity for money which may mean that to be creative you will not be able to be financially secure. Perhaps this also evoked a worry about experiencing less external affirmation for the work he did after he left?

Thoughts about creativity

As mentioned, Dave's idea of a creative person, and how he thinks about himself as a creative individual, is based around the idea that he is on the periphery of whatever

group or organisation he is in. This theme of being on the outside and a feeling of 'out-of-placeness' flows through the interview, whether that is by his creativity not being recognised and validated in secondary school; starting his Masters course and thinking *"I do not belong here, I'm in the belly of the beast here"* (p12), or working at the factory, doing work that was different, unexpected and outside the 'norm'. However, this is also in contrast to the reality of him having been successful in his roles which made me wonder about what happens when the external reality does not meet internal sense of self.

Dave continued to describe how his Masters thesis also focused on being an outsider and the importance of spontaneity in the process of creativity and that it was his being an outsider that enabled him to look at things differently: *"the brilliant thing about being an outsider is you don't know the way in which things work"* (p13). Here, Dave was sharing how the experience of not knowing how to do something could lead to a more innovative approach. This continued into his working world where he then set out to do everything in a *"subversive"* or *"opposite to the norm"* kind of way with the intention of using his *"creativity to cause some sort of disturbance"* (p19).

This evoked a sense that the process of creativity, and the creative person, is disruptive as it makes you challenge what you already thought you knew. He later said:

"That's what I'm trying to do in my work, trying to provoke something, to disturb something…you don't necessarily have to do something with it, this, this is one of the things of around, urh, creativity in the workplace, the moment you try and measure it, you kill it…or the moment you have a formula or a timescale on it, you, you kill it" (p27).

This naturally does not fit within the structure of an organisation though as they are set up to measure productivity and outcomes, which then raises the question of how does true creativity get initiated, enacted and maintained in an organisation? It felt as though Dave was telling me that for him, creativity, or more specifically creative people, cannot exist in organisations, which was why he had to leave. He continues to say that, for organisations to truly enable creativity to happen, they must start in a place of not knowing and that organisations need to *"embrace some of this counterintuitive way of doing things, of um, I only do work in organisations if I can find a way of using guerrilla tactics…"* (p28).

The language used here seemed aggressive and suggests an internalised idea of creativity as disruptive, and evokes a sense that aggression is needed to break through the conventional boundaries of the organisation.

Furthermore, Dave later said:

"If we're interested in change and creativity…we need to show up as weird, it doesn't mean that we deliberately try to be weird, but it means that we are different enough to what is the norm." (p48)

Again, this highlights his experience of needing to be on the periphery of what is expected to be creative, but he also stated that this brings additional challenges of managing the emotional responses that are triggered by the social responses, such as shame.

Death and illness

Another theme that arose during Dave's interview was death and illness. The first incident of death was Dave talking about insects he had killed as a child…

"I can remember every animal I've killed and they're mainly insects, well they would be insects, I remember running over a woodlouse with my trainset, I remember killing a wasp, urm…and squashing a spider….There was this spider called Sid that lived in my Nan's bathtub…I remember one day going in there, and…she had a pumice stone…I saw Sid, and I, I wasn't particularly scared of spiders, and I didn't wanna kill it, but it was just curiosity and I just dropped the pumice stone on it and it just splattered…" (pp32-33)

Interestingly, Dave focuses on the difference between intent of outcome and the creative act, but the outcome leading to guilt and not wanting to own up to it due to the fear of the outcome. He continued to say that the death of the spider was important as it connected to the idea of permanence which he feels is crucial for the creation of a space where creativity can happen as the role of *"most organisational structures and hierarchies, [is] to create this false sense of permanence"* and that he felt killing insects were *"early experiments in impermanence, coz once that spider was dead, it would never ever be alive again"* (p34).

It felt as though Dave was exploring the boundaries of life and death through recalling the finality of his decision to squash the spider and how this connects to a fear of creativity in organisations as the fear of changing something and not being able to reverse it if it does not go well.

Later, Dave described a time where he had a sudden pain in his hip and ended up not being able to walk for two months. He describes it as a *"time of complete inactivity"*

(p15) and said that this time was significant in terms of the development of his creativity. He said it "*was such a creative time*" because he was not able to do anything else, which gave rise to him being more creative again:

"That was such a chilled-out time, because, ur uh there's no expectation of me I could do whatever I wanted, but the other thing was, urm, it was aaa, if I had been, working for myself and just starting on my business and not having that part time, that would've been really a financial problem…" (p17).

What also seemed significant was that during this time of inactivity, Dave was able to bring together multiple types of creativity simultaneously, whereas previously he had oscillated from one type to another. This felt to be a more integrated experience, which made me wonder if being free from the constraints of expectations enabled him to play more with what was around him in a creative way. Interestingly, the impact of being financially protected and supported by the organisation through the private healthcare he was receiving, reduced the financial stress. Maybe a reduction in the stress and pressure of the financial worry enabled more freedom for his creativity to emerge.

Chapter Six: Luca

At the time of interview, Luca was 46 years old, working as a fashion designer for large fashion houses and lecturing at a university. He had previously had his own label and won awards for his designs (one of which started a global fashion movement) but decided to work for others again after having experienced high levels of stress.

A doctoral peer introduced me to Luca as they know each other through a social group.

Early family life

Luca grew up with both his biological parents (who separated in his teen years) and his two older brothers. He recalled being very close to his family but had particularly strong relationships with his mother and maternal aunt and grandmother.

Luca described himself as *"quite a hyperactive child that was…creative in many different ways"* as he used to create his own toys, games and outfits. He also described a frequent vision he had of retreating into tiny spaces *"like a little person, um and to kind of like create, you know, like phantasmagorical sort of places"* which drove and shaped many of his more memorable moments of play as a child and was a core way of connecting with his peers at primary school.

This exploration of small / magical places was mirrored in his exploration of his grandmother and aunt's cupboards and jewellery boxes. He described himself as someone that was…

"…really driven by this, unravelling things, looking into things, finding out how, not only how necessarily it works, but how it's made, you know, I wanted to touch things, I wanted to experience things, so I would be the type of child that would, would be, um, you know, like, in heaven being at my Auntie's place, uh secretly opening her cupboards and just finding things, and that would happen also with my Grandmother's place and that would happen everywhere…I just really like things, seeing things, like I really like beautiful things, I still love looking at beautiful things, it just makes me happy…" (p5).

Here, Luca's description of the exploration of the world around him seemed both magical and tactile but also somewhat illicit. The retreat into the hidden treasures of the female members of his family also evoked an association in my mind with a retreat to, and exploration of, the womb.

He later described these moments of curiosity as being "*naughty*" which indicates an internalised idea of him crossing the boundaries of what was and was not allowed. This connected to other moments Luca described of his early life where he was not allowed to do things due to his gender, such as playing with dolls and wanting to be a dancer when he was older. However, he repeatedly found ways to overcome these restrictions stating that they pushed him to…

"…find alternative ways to create all of these elements…for example if I would like a crinoline dress I would like do the lamps of my mother and I would take the structure that holds the lamp, the top part of the lamp to create a crinoline or bustle for a Barbie doll and then I would kind of start kind of creating on top of it…" (p3)

Here, it felt that Luca was describing the boundaries between free-flowing creativity and structure as having masculine and feminine associations. Perhaps he was finding

a way of connecting with his desired need for creativity in a way that was more socially acceptable for a boy, i.e. more structural and with an element of engineering.

The other key event Luca recalled from early childhood that influenced the development of his creativity was when his parents took him to see a psychologist to *"check, uh if I'm of, if everything is ok"* with him. He said this memory stuck clearly in his mind, particularly as:

"The psychologist said that I'm, like, actually your child is very intelligent, or like he's quite intelligent, it's just like the way he is…I think they, they were quite surprised by his answer, they, they were like you know 'he's just a creative child, he's just basically thinking differently." (p13)

It felt as though Luca experienced this as an important moment of external validation for being different but also a confirmation of his creativity. This theme flowed throughout the interview as Luca spoke of many examples where he did not conform to social norms and expectations.

School Life

Luca immediately described himself as a child in relation to his peers at school and shared how they offered him love and affirmation for his creativity:

"I was one of these children that would be very um sort of like loved at school because he was very creative, um however also troublesome, because I wouldn't, I wouldn't be really like, um [pause] um, you know, like as attentive in in my school years as one would hope as, as a parent". (p2)

This suggests that Luca had internalised an idea of what was to be expected at school in terms of his academic achievement and how this did not always connect to his creative abilities which felt to be experienced by others (or internally thought of) as troublesome or disruptive in some way.

Throughout the interview, Luca shared moments of having failed at school or achieved limited academic success which led to him "*convincing*" his parents to let him go to different schools, one of which was in a different country.

Luca describes his experience at the first chosen school as being a place to develop his creativity as it was more focused on the technical aspects and was a place where he became aware of his *"biggest passion"* of creating things with his hands, and how he is *"much more fulfilled as a creator when I can actually provide something myself"*. He later described how this became more of a challenge as his career progressed as he became more removed from the whole process and had to outsource elements of the creativity to others, i.e. to teams of fabric cutters and stitchers, etc.

At the end of the interview, when asked if there was anything else he felt was important in terms of the development of his creativity, Luca expressed a wish to have had a school experience where he would have been encouraged to develop in different ways:

"I sometimes feel like it would've been so great for me having, to have been in a school where my creativity could have flourished…I think if I would have had the right tutors and the really, the right sort of people behind it, it might have seen, because [pause] in your creativity you need to be happy [small pause] it, be fully kind of happy, I'm not sure if I'm hap, 100% happy, it's never too late but I think to like creativity [pause] when there comes a tactic, it's very hard to like come out of it I think". (p27-28)

It felt sad when Luca was describing this as it felt as though he did not feel he was able to fully flourish and now he is existing in a world where he still does not feel like he fully fits. I wondered what impact his success may have had on this, i.e. possibly feeling trapped in the world he is in because he is successful at it?

Relationships with others

Throughout the interview, Luca made frequent and repeated reference to the relationships he had / has that have influenced the development of his creativity. He made specific reference to his mother, aunt and grandmother as people that shaped not only his ideas of what he could achieve but also the types of creativity he then enacted.

"I think, being, um, surrounded by very strong characters, um, and this particular thing I mean women, probably fascinated me more than anything, probably this is something that, if I would research why I did the things I did, I'm sure it would have a very strong link back to my mother and my aunty…" (p8).

He continued to mention how he had always been fascinated with the female form, with the vibrancy his mother and aunt would exude, and the impact this had on his desire to be a dancer, which, as he was not able to do, led to him being fascinated with the shape and movement of the female form. He continued to say:

"I was so attached to them [maternal relationships] and I think this is probably, you know, why I also chose to do what I did, like the, you know, this kind of element of being close to women that were creative yet not really creative at the same time…" (p9)

This highlights the importance of the way Luca internalised these key relationships with the 'inspirational women' around him, especially his mother, and is a key theme that runs through the description of the development of his creativity.

When he was at school in another country, Luca described feeling lonely as he was disconnected from his family and felt to be too different as he was the only boy in a school of girls. This difference also highlighted for him the beginnings of his realisation of being gay which, as he was in a more conservative country that his home country, meant he felt as though he was again not able to flourish. Luca's description of this time was important when thinking about the development of his creativity as it was another example of him feeling that he was *"suffering"* because he was on the outside of what was thought to be socially acceptable.

Whilst there, Luca's parents divorced and his grandmother died, both things he describes as significantly influencing the development of his creativity as…

"…it was quite an impactful time, to became aware of death, oh death, of course, so like young, creative, nonchalant, creative child being alone there, homesick, all these things were like, had a huge impact on me, huge…"

This made me wonder about how creativity changes throughout different life stages, as he described himself as being a *"young, creative, nonchalant child"*, specifically in relation to the ideas he had as a teenager that he would become successful, *"feel like a pop star"* and feel like *"fuck all that, like I'm just gunna do my own thing and I'm gunna feel empowered through my, through muh, through the things I do best"*. (p16). This boundless vision for himself felt to contrast with his experience of his grandmother's death which put him in touch with definite endings and the impermanence of human

life. It was as if his realisation of the ending of relationships was counterbalanced by the omnipotent sense of being full of abundant ideas and creativity.

In contrast to the relationships outlined above that Luca describes as being key to the development of his creativity through the affirmation and connection he needed / needs to develop his creativity, he also referred to relationships that did the reverse. This was particularly focused on other people who exist within the fashion world and were described with a level of criticism that was unique to them (not seen in other parts of the interview).

He described these people as being too focused on the fashion world as the creativity of fashion becomes a lifestyle which he said he finds *"ridiculous"* as they are "*determined"* and "*dictated*" by *"the idiotic perception that you live in this kind of like made up world of glamour and all that stuff"*.

Luca described this as creating a tension for him as *"it kind of fights with the other sort of like important element that is the part of reality…you know human relationships"*. It felt as though Luca was saying it was almost as if he is two different people existing in two worlds that he oscillates between, and was another example of him being different to the 'usual' people in fashion.

I wondered if this need for oppositional spaces and people / the positions people take up is an important part of the creative process for Luca as it connected back to the dualism of the need to create / the character he is as a creator, and his real, deep and

connected personal relationships. It feels like the two opposing worlds cannot exist without one another.

Furthermore, this oscillation between wanting to be connected and separate to others was mirrored in Luca's experience of existing within, and relating to, organisations. For instance, during the times when he was working in or with commercial organisations, his creativity was defined by the client, but Luca found ways of bringing himself into the process, i.e. through flexing the design briefs to enable his creativity to emerge.

Thoughts about creativity (and success)

As mentioned previously, Luca frequently described himself as being different to others and cited this as an important part of him being a creative person – this was legitimised by him in the recollection of being taken to the psychologist as a child who clarified that his differentness was him being creative / thinking differently to others.

What this seemed to do though was interrupt Luca's ability to receive praise from his peers or those within his industry. For instance, when he finished his Masters and received awards for his work which then triggered a global design movement, he said:

"The label had a bit of an instant sort of recognition because it was, as it normally is in London, flavour of the month, new kid on the block, you know…they're [fashion people] very drawn to the frivolity of it, the glamour aspect of it, I wasn't really interested in that, I did like the aspect of how you can actually, um, trans, trans, translate or, kind of create, um [pause] sort of like characters, and how you can, you know um [pause] you know, create also like women that are amazing characters and all that stuff so it was back to storytelling also" (p6).

Here, it also felt as though Luca was telling me he is more motivated intrinsically but also by something bigger and more meaningful, i.e. the creation of characters. I also had a sense that he was telling me he is different to the 'usual' fashion type that is drawn to the shallower elements and that he connects to something deeper and more value driven.

Luca later spoke about the need to continue after his successes and not to celebrate too much or to rest on his laurels: *"I obviously enjoyed the success but...I just really felt ok, now I've done something quite, uh successful so I need to kind of continue this, let's do the next thing"* (p26).

This highlights Luca's experience of the internal and / or external pressure(s) to continue creating and producing successful things which I thought might be connected to the moments he later described of having *"depressed"* and *"low"* feelings, and how he had reached a place of burnout. This made me wonder how possible it is to maintain this level of creativity in, and for, organisations? Or at least what impact this has on individuals.

Luca then continued to describe the cyclical nature of his creative process saying that it felt to be a *"cycle of ever-changing creativity"* which can be enjoyable if you are the kind of person that enjoys the pace and energy of it. However, he feels that it is important to *"quickly, get out of this zone, of this creative zone and have another reality, whether this is [pause] family life, or, you know, um, by being back to nature, with the elements, it's really, really nice, I have that for example, this ability..."* (p8).

Although Luca had framed this ever-changing cycle of creativity in a positive way, as he was saying it to me, I felt tired and as if there was something a little heartless and destructive about the experience of constantly creating, especially for someone that puts so much of themselves into the work. This was highlighted when Luca described the time of his life where he had moved from working with different brands and then decided to start his own brand as he was "*very tired*" and felt he would be better off financially working for himself. However, after ten successful years of his own brand he started to feel exhausted again.

As the pressure never went away for sustained periods of time in either the organisation or his own business, it raises the question of what part of this particular type of creativity might be dependent on stress or pressure to be initiated, and what impact that may have on people.

Sexuality and gender

Throughout the interview, Luca made repeated reference to his sexuality and how the exploration of his sexuality mirrored the development of his creativity. He specifically spoke about the time after the school abroad where he moved to study in another country[8]. It was here he became fully aware of his sexuality and stopped "*lying to*" himself. He said:

"I kind of became aware of my sexuality, this was also kind of like an interesting time because from a creativity perspective because I probably started [small pause] letting loose a little bit more". (p4)

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8 Luca's eldest brother had been studying in the same city for a couple of years before he moved there.

Interestingly, this physical transition to another city enabled him to realise and experience his own sexuality, which mirrored his move for the last school which also enabled him to become more in touch with his passion for the whole creative process.

Luca shared with me his experience of his family finding out that he was gay and the impact it had on him. He said:

"...they sat me down, the whole family meeting, called me in and, all of them sitting in front of me asked me what is it, are you gay? Why are you, why are you hanging out with gay people? Or only with gay people?[pause] so, petrified [pause]yeah [pause] story of my life (laughs) it was really not nice, and then obviously I had support from my brothers but, it came with small doses, you know, and I was not necessarily 100% expressive of like since this meeting happened I should just voice it, yes I am and that's it, I just probably gave them like hints, but they didn't like it at all, it was a drama, it's the only two people that were kind of ok...[my] parents were [pause], yeah not happy at all, anyhow this, this was it [pause] think it was worth mentioning that because sexuality obviously has an important impact on creativity..." (pp23-24)

Luca seemed vulnerable in the recalling of this memory and evoked a real sense of sadness, which is partly why I did not feel as though I could explore the way he positioned sexuality having an important impact on creativity in such a concrete and definite way. I later reflected on this and thought that I connected sexuality with primitive creativity (the creation of life), so it matched this position internally for me, but it also felt too invasive and personal to ask more about. This made me wonder how creativity might be experienced in organisations if sexuality is a prevalent factor, i.e. does it open up rejections of creativity if it feels too risqué?

Chapter Seven: Helen

At the time of the interview, Helen was 50 years old, was taking a break from her Human Resources career and was focusing on her work as an artisan craft artist.

I was introduced to Helen through a work colleague who had worked with Helen previously.

Early family life

From the beginning of the interview, Helen repeatedly referred to her relationship with her brother and how the differences between them that emerged in early childhood enabled her to see herself as being creative. She described them as being "*complete opposites*" as:

"He was reading somebody's creativity whereas I wanted to be doing something. I actually wanted to be creative for myself, so that is where I probably would say I first knew that I, I did things differently to, to other people." (p1)

This narrative of her early life highlights Helen's differentiation between being creative for yourself and engaging with, or being on the receiving end of, someone else's creativity, and sets out the idea she has about herself as being different to others. She continues to say that she knew early on that she was *"definitely a creative thinker"*, because of being different to her brother and peers.

It felt as though Helen was telling me that a creative person is someone who thinks differently to others and does not just follow instructions. This was also the first moment Helen recalled being recognised externally for creative work; this recognition seemed to reinforce the idea that she is special because of her creativity and was a theme that continued through the interview.

Helen also repeatedly described moments she spent with both her mother and grandmother as a child knitting / crocheting and how this helped develop her creativity, as knitting and textile creation is one of the main forms of her creativity now.

School Life (and later education)

Helen's primary school was newly built when she started (she was in the first year that started from nursery), which she felt was important in the development of her creativity as it had a *"different ethos"* and there were teachers who *"drove things out of you"*. Helen later explored this further and explained that she meant the teachers were able to see skills the children had and helped them overcome their internal barriers and nervousness of their own abilities to reach their potential.

She described this school as being '"*forward thinking"* in the way it enabled learning to happen in lots of different and creative ways and how they were allowed to go on holidays during term time as the school though it as *"important to learn about different culture as it is to learn about, you know, your a, b, c's, so yeah…I thought they were very progressive*" (p26).

It felt as though Helen was telling me that her experience of this school was of being somewhere where boundaries were crossed / explored which enabled a more creative way of learning and engaging with the world around her. She later referenced how Ofsted would not allow this to happen now which felt like she was raising the idea of how creativity is controlled and regulated, with Ofsted representing an enforcement of the boundaries.

Helen's experience at primary school was also filled with creative moments that reinforced the idea of her being different (creatively) and receiving praise for her work. For instance, the class was asked to draw a picture for the Queen Mother and instead of a drawing, she made a portrait out of paper tissue which she received a letter back from Buckingham Palace thanking her for her creativity. Another example was when her class were studying space (the year after Apollo) and had to bring things in to make a large rocket: She said…

"…you know, 9 times out of 10 people brought toilet rolls and tin foil, um, whereas I'd gone and raided, my mum and dad had built various houses and I'd gone and raided their old sort of building bits and pieces. And I bought in things like switches…and old pieces of wire and things like that, and plumbing foam and um things that looked more industrial and, and, and, actually they actually, I knew that they had purpose". (p2)

Here, the difference Helen was suggesting between herself and her peers was based on her thinking being more developed and complex than theirs, i.e. the ability to bring in things that connected to the insides of the rocket, not just the exterior. Perhaps this connects to her idea of a creative person being able to look at things deeper and in a more complex way. This theme flows throughout her description of her education, for instance in secondary school she wove a rug but did not do one or two colours and

instead made a mixture of colours to give the impression of depth and complexity of colour.

In contrast to Helen's experience of freedom and creative exploration at primary school, *"things were really different at senior school, it was, you know, it was almost as if the teachers were restraining you as opposed to, encouraging you"*. This was compounded by her experience of the adults who she felt did not recognise her for her own abilities but instead created an environment where she felt she had to fight to find her own (rightful) place. For example, she describes a teacher making judgements on her based on his ideas about, and experiences of, her brother: *"oh, you're, you're uh Simon's younger sibling are you, so this'll be an interesting take."* She also gives multiple experiences of the school not allowing her to do things, such as learning to fly planes with the RAF Air Cadets whilst at school, or training to become a physiotherapist once she left. These experiences were frustrating for Helen and were amplified by her experience of the adults having limited expectations for her:

"I wasn't expected to do, massively well at my GCSEs, they actually messed up, when I did my options, they messed up, because I was supposed to be virtually in the top band of everything and they messed up and I went into school and I was put in the bottom band for virtually everything. It took 6 months or so for me to be put back where I was supposed to be". (p3)

It felt as though Helen was telling me the adults failed to see who she really was / what she could achieve which meant that the external expectations were less than what she was capable of. It also felt like she was saying she had to overcome hurdles and fight her way back up to her rightful position, which meant she felt like an outsider, unknown, not valued. This made me wonder about her internalised ideas of authority figures and how much of this was an external or internal boundary or restriction that she was feeling. It also felt like she was giving another example of how she felt to have

been underdeveloped and unsupported in a way that connected to her abilities and interests. This continued into her post school studies as she "*wasn't encouraged to do any other sort of academic, um, studies at university…I don't know why they didn't encourage me.*" This led to her doing a foundation degree in textiles and textile science which gave her the opportunity to combine her mathematical and creative sides, but it felt as though she was telling me she had to forge her way into combining these experiences as she was not encouraged to follow a more academic route.

Throughout the interview, Helen's description of her experiences of school were based on her relationships with adults and her peers were not often present but when there were recollections of peer connection, they were based on incidents that were scary, competitive, or damaging in some way. For instance, when she fell off her bike "*rather spectacularly*" and "*scratched up the whole of the side of my face and I had black eyes and everything like that*", or when she ran into a friend and they "*collided so hard that her, her, she hurt her front teeth.*"

I wondered if the scariness might be connected to her feeling that there was a risk that she was not seen, i.e. do her peers act as a competition for her need to be recognised by the adults?

Relationships with others

The relationships or moments of connections with others that Helen described as being important for her in the development of her creativity were all with people who

she sees as being different too. For instance, her teacher at primary school who Helen described as being *"a white chap but he had a massive great big fro",* was creative in his teaching methods, e.g. getting the class to build a rocket in the classroom when learning about space.

The way Helen described this teacher was coloured with awe as she talked about him as being someone who crossed boundaries of what was expected and was creative in how he engaged the class with the learning. The excitement she felt was palpable.

Helen later described coming across a boy whilst traveling in Africa. The group she was with had parked up close to a river, and Helen wandered across to sit by it when a young boy approached her who she described as being "*stunning*" as the shape of his eyes *"were almond as opposed to being round"* and all of his "*features were so different to everybody that I'd seen so far…I was quite fascinated in him as much as he was fascinated in me."* It was after having seen this boy that Helen then returned to the place they were camping and started to draw the monkey that stayed there:

"He was a wild animal but he had been adopted by this campsite and he was an absolute bugger {laughing} um but, he, he, at times he would actually sit quite still, and, because I'd been fascinated by this kids eyes, I started looking at Sparky's eyes…I drew Sparky, and he was my first illustration that I did…every time I draw an animal now, it, it, you, I start with the eyes, um and it's all because of that kiddie that I had, that came and approached me and sat next to me." (pp32-33)

It felt as though Helen was describing a moment of true connection with this boy, and a moment where they both really saw each other, which led to a development in her creativity in terms of how she drew from then. This moment also felt to be reparative in some way for Helen, perhaps this experience of really seeing someone / something when she had not experienced being seen at secondary school.

Helen also described the last manager she had in her previous role as being able to see how she combined her creative thinking and mathematical approaches into her work. She described the moment where he took her aside and said:

"It's actually a very rare quality because HR people are not often numerate, they are um, um, more sort of verbal…he said I think you'd work well in project HR…he got me into my first projects and I just fl, flew from there." (p13)

It felt as though Helen was saying this experience of being seen as different was a good thing as it enabled her to integrate her creativity. This felt important as it seemed as though she was saying that if you are in the right environment with the right people who see who you are, and the skills you have, you are able to reach your potential, which felt opposite to her slightly regretful experience of secondary school where the inability for her to be seen had limited her experiences and potential.

In contrast to this, Helen's experience of how people respond to her and her artisan colleagues at the fayres they sell their work at, saying that most people look down on them thinking that it is all they do and how she has to put them straight, saying that this is her *"hobby"* and *"passion"* and when she describes what she does for a living, it *"knocks their socks off"*. She continued to say:

"I hate it actually because…people have this bigoted view that because you're working in this industry, you're, you're lesser, and it's 'what did you think, you think I'm a school drop-out, do you think this doesn't require intellect to be able to, to be creative', um in fact it's, it's the science and the mathematics and things that allows me to do what I do." (p18)

I felt as though Helen describing people not recognising what goes into the creative process was important as it evoked a defensive response as she felt she had to prove her intelligence / value.

This need for reassurance and to be seen by others as intelligent and special was present in the interview as Helen sought reassurance from me that what she was saying was interesting and different: *"I hope it is and obviously I don't know who else you've interviewed and things but I am hoping it's different to what somebody else has done"* (p19). This is something she did again at the end of both subsections of the interview.

Thoughts about creativity

As mentioned above, Helen repeatedly described how her brain was more attuned to patterns and mathematics and how this is a theme in / structure of her creativity, i.e. through connecting to patterns within the physical environment around her and / or patterns in the social systems or organisations she is trying to understand, in order to enable decisions to be made regarding changes to organisational structures and designs.

Helen mentioned becoming aware of this at primary school and said she believes her brain was structured in a way that enables her to see patterns. This is the golden thread of creativity that has run through the see-saw moments of being in and out of organisations.

The first moment she described doing this in adulthood was when she was teaching in a school in Africa and she asked children in the school in Africa to bring things from the environment around them to create things. Having a group of children that had money and could access all kinds of resources alongside children who were incredibly poor meant that Helen had to be creative in her approach to the work and think creatively about how to engage them all fairly. For instance, she got the children to find something that had an *"interesting pattern on it"* or that *"sparked a memory…you know, somebody that doesn't have very much can bring in a beautiful leaf that they've picked up from the floor."* (p8)

It felt as though Helen was saying that connecting to the environment around them enabled a level of inclusivity that would not have otherwise been possible, and that it meant they could all experience creativity together. This continued as a theme as the use of the environment around her is the main outlet for her current creativity too. For instance, at the time of the interview, Helen was using cement and leaves to try a method called 'eco printing' and said that *"it's only through my knowledge of science that I've worked it out how I can do it."*

This need for recognition in her creativity, and a constant tussle between feeling creative and needing to exist within the group around her that would not always see and value her creativity, was a theme that ran through the interview. This reinforces Helen's perception of a creative person being someone who exists on the boundary of the group and creativity, whilst holding the idea that they are separate to the group.

This was particularly prevalent when Helen described being paid for her creativity which started when she presented her work at the university end of degree textiles show where people from "*the corporations*" would take your details if they thought they could sell your work. During the show, Helen had several agents who took her work and sold it for her but said that she was "*a bit of a control freak*" and found it difficult as the income was not guaranteed but also because she struggled with the experience of having external people deciding whether what you have is worthy or not, which disconnected Helen from those that were on the receiving end of her creativity. She later said that she stopped this way of selling her work as she did not enjoy the experience of people telling her they would buy her work if she made changes to it. This seemed to be the starting point of Helen's see-sawing of her creative work and her paid work for organisations:

"…what I did was my work became my side-line work, my, my creative, my, my design things became secondary to that because as I said you just never know what you're gunna sell, um, and, it was then a case of [pause], uh, people started to ask when, once your work is out there [pause] people start to say well I really like this piece of work but, I don't like, um, I don't like the butterfly I want it to be a dragonfly or something like that…I didn't like people telling what they wanted me to design, um, so I did it for a period of time and I was saving, saving, saving…"
(pp7-8)

Helen then decided that she would go travelling with the money she had saved and did so for three years. The length of time travelling was extended due to her starting to sell the artwork she created, as, with the help of a fellow traveller, Helen used the pictures (starting with the monkey) to make postcards and calendars that she then sold to groups of travellers for them to send home or keep as memories of their times there. Helen stated that she *"actually did extraordinarily well from it"* (p9).

This use of her creative drawings for income continued as she moved to Australia as when she was *"working in pubs and restaurants and things like that, I ended up doing murals and things like that for them. As a means of income"* (p9). These were the first experiences Helen described of being able to sell her creativity for an income that could sustain her.

Once Helen returned to England after travelling and started working in a corporate environment again, her creative endeavours once more got side-lined until she then had an accident at work where she became *"a little bit disabled…I didn't know if I was ever going to have full use of my thumb again."* Helen then ended up suing the company and whilst she was off work, she started to be creative again. She then said she thinks:

"You're very lucky if your creativity allows you a financial security, sadly in this country…you know I have been on a good wage, with [last company] but I don't, that's not what, that's not what drives me, it's not my motivator, my motivator is me being happy in what I am able to do, um which I think is, is, you know, it's, it's very different to a lot of other people where money and belonging, belongings and material things are the motivator." (p16)

Helen then continued to say how this relationship between work, money and creativity felt to have levelled out again for her, as having left her last role she is now getting more space to play and to find time for her creative work again. This made me wonder what is it about work and money that makes play and creativity less possible?

Section Three: Cross-Case Analysis

As outlined in the chapters above, each of the participants shared in-depth insights into the unique aspects of their lived experiences that have helped shape, inform, and develop their personal creativity and careers. However, there were several common themes that emerged throughout the interviews that may tell us more about: the early experiences that influence individual's development of creativity and how this is translated to later organisational functioning; the group and individual processes that influenced the types of creativity the participants focused on; their experiences of being creative individuals within organisations; their ideas about creativity and the resilient factors needed for organisations to make the most of individuals' creativity.

I will explore these key themes in more detail, looking at both the similarities and nuanced differences in the ways that these themes emerged, and how they shaped, helped, and hindered their ability to be creative both individually and in organisations.

It is important to clarify again that I am defining 'creativity' as the process whereby new thoughts emerge, and 'innovation' as the enactment and productisation of creativity.

High-level analysis

Before I dive into the thematic analysis in more detail, I wanted to share three methodological findings that seem important in terms of the understanding of the process of creativity.

The first is the length of the interviews. Wengraf (2008) states:

'You need a minimum 2hour slot: if possible, 3 hours, though you are unlikely to use all of it. Total time normally 90-120 minutes, first sub-session one-third of total time, second sub session two-thirds of total time.'

(Wengraf, T.;2008:7)

This is an extension of the model since Wengraf launched it in 2001 as he originally expected sub-session one to last between 5 and 10 minutes. However, even with the development of the model, each of my interviews lasted much longer than the total time expected with a much larger amount of time spent in sub-session one than anticipated (see table below). There was also little or no variation between the pre-Covid19, in-person interviews (Angela and Dave) and the post-Covid19, remote ones (Luca and Helen) which were split into two different calls for each sub-session.

Table 5: Interview Timings

	Total interview time	Sub-session 1 time	Sub-session 2 time
Angela	2 hrs 27 mins	36 mins	1 hr 51 mins
Dave	2 hrs 59 mins	1 hr 38 mins	1 hr 21 mins
Luca	2 hrs 13 mins	44 mins	1 hr 29 mins
Helen	2 hrs 53 mins	1 hr 23 mins	1 hr 30 mins

My experience of the interviews was that each of the first sub-sessions ended with a feeling of stillness / reflectiveness which was highlighted by the participants verbally

reflecting on both their own experiences of the interview and on what they assumed my experience would have been. For instance, at the end of the sub-session one, Angela said "*um, that was really good…[really long pause]…I think I might have come to the end…*"; Dave said "*so that's my story I think...[long pause]…*"; Luca said "*that's yeah…[pause]…that's it…I hope it was, um, helpful*" and Helen said "*I hope it is [helpful] and obviously I don't know who else you've interviewed and things but I am hoping it's different to what somebody else has done…*"

This deep sense of reflectiveness may explain the length of the first sub-session as it felt as though they all dived into an internal and intimate reflection of the experiences that helped shape / develop their creativity, and it was as though at the end they were emerging back from the memories and wanting to check that this was what I had wanted or needed from the interview. This was even true with Dave's interview, which I personally experienced as being more intense, and of him as being more defended as he spoke rapidly and would often follow moments of recollection (*"I forgot about that"*) with moments of clarifying his original thoughts or current status ("*in my TedTalk…' / 'I wrote about this…"*). This seems to be both due to the nature of the method which is best used for defended subjects / topics, but also connected to the area of study which involves an oscillation between both inter and intra-psychic connections – I will explore this further in the discussion chapters.

The second interesting methodological finding was the high number of Particular Incident Narratives (PINs) recalled and the number of Thematic Points made (as highlighted in the table below).

Table 6: Breakdown of PINs, Pseudo-PINs and Thematic Points

	Angela	Dave	Luca	Helen
Total no. of PINs / Pseudo-PINs	73	89	58	79
No. of Thematic Points	472	538	198	360

To clarify, by a PIN, I'm using Wengraf's example of particular incidents or specific moments that are recalled with detail:

'The individual must be free to wander in and out of recovered memories, in particular those that are seemingly trivial…as the small memory evokes the self-state that prevailed at the time…'.

(Wengraf, T.: 2001;2)

And I am using the term 'Pseudo-PIN' to describe moments the participants recall as memories but without the quality of description of being in the moment.

A Thematic Point for example is something relating to one of the core themes, such as a moment recalling death or loss, or a description of feeling connected to others, or on the outside of the group, etc.

The table below has examples of a PIN, a Pseudo-PIN and a Thematic Point for each participant, and I have included more in the appendices for you to gain a better sense of the extent to which the interviews were filled with examples of the participants' creativity and / or creative experiences.

Table 7: Examples of PINs, Pseudo-PINs and Thematic Points

Participant	Example of PIN
Angela	*"I was invited to a party, a Christmas party, and half the other guests had flu because it was a terrible year for flu and it was a really harsh winter, and it was snowy, and it was icy, and this party, the house that the party was in, to get to the front door you had to go down this quite steep slope, and it was in it was in Lancashire, and in Lancashire nobody goes…girls don't go out in the evening without high heels, and most of the guests just couldn't get down the slope to the front door so even the ones that didn't have flu most of them got you know, a few yards from the front door and just said 'um my god I can't get to the front door' and turned round and went home again because the ice, but me being a Southerner, I was wearing boots, Doc Martins I think, and I got down the slope really easily…"*
Dave	*"I can remember every animal I've killed and they're mainly insects, well they would be insects, I remember running over a woodlouse with my trainset, I remember killing a wasp, urm…and squashing a spider….There was this spider called Sid that lived in my Nan's bathtub…I remember one day going in there, and…she had a pumice stone…I saw Sid, and I, I wasn't particularly scared of spiders, and I didn't wanna kill it, but it was just curiosity and I just dropped the pumice stone on it and it just splattered…"*
Luca	*"What happened that night afterwards because he left with his friend, left me there with my, the boy, the boy that I was, just, just in school with, and suddenly the club, probably having taken a bit of drugs…I…um, I started kissing someone, and of course this was like the first time, like was kind of crazy, you know, for me, so…so, yeah, that's that's it. Obviously after that it was very troublesome because a) I couldn't to any, many people about it, I was suffering because I couldn't express it to my family [hmm] or my friends, I could express it only to like newly made friends."*
Helen	*"…um literally there was this whole floor, um and there were just rolls and rolls of fabric and all these different colours and textures and then, you know, you'd turn around and there was this wall of, of wool basically which I, I'd never seen anything like it before, you know, coming from the country again, um…you know, our, our local wool shops and things like that which, you know, we had a very good wool shop, in fact my nan used to knit for the wool shop, she'd, they used to, they used to commission her to make things and sell them in the shop but nothing like on the scale of what this was…um, and I, I was, I remember, I mean I've probably still got bits of fabric that I would pick up from the remnants bin and things like that because I was just flabbergasted by it and then, I remember, I just needed, I needed a lot of education because I didn't know what a lot of things were."*
Participant	**Example of Pseudo-PIN**
Angela	*"I always loved reading when I was a child [pause] and I think my interest in writing stories started really, really early and I wrote a lot of stories when I was at school and when I was at home when it wasn't set work."*
Dave	*"I used to write stories about a character that I invented called **yappy** dog, which I think must have been based on my dog Toby, at the time…um and I can still draw yappy dog."*

Luca	*"I had quite a tough time so I decided to take, take a break, live a healthier life and um, and decided to consult for other people, for other brands which I still do…I stared doing the same again and stressed out again, and uh, now obviously with maturity you can see creativity in a different way."*
Helen	*"We went to see, you know, some careers advisors, um and therefore all of your, you know, you had to be told what you were expecting, what the expectations were of what you were going to get to be able to take them to the careers advisors, um and mine weren't that scintillating."*
Participant	**Example of a Thematic Point**
Angela	*"It didn't come naturally to me to think of myself as a writer."* (theme - low sense of self / abilities)
Dave	*"Shame starts to grow from flow being interrupted at an early age…interrupting creative flow that is where I think we start to disconnect with [creativity]."*
Luca	*"I wanted to be able to flourish within the um, my creative sort of capabilities which I couldn't do properly here probably, and I wasn't supported in the right way."*
Helen	*"I think it was just the whole…it was the whole rigidity of, of moving, well as soon as we got into secondary school, um, the whole rigidity of it…was, um, I found it quite, quite strange."*

The sheer number of PINs, Pseudo-PINs and Thematic Points goes some way to explaining the difficulty I experienced in selecting the most important and substantial individual and cross-case themes but is also not common for BNIM[9], so suggests it may be connected to the topic of study. I believe this is connected to the way the participants engage in storytelling to invite the receiver (myself as researcher in this case) to join them in their creativity which I will explain further in chapter 13. It is as if the more descriptive they can be, the more alive they are making their internal world in someone else's mind, which is a core intra-psychic aspect of the creative processes they all described.

I also feel that this mirrors the descriptions the participants gave regarding their experiences of the creative process where they described a build-up of small events rather than a few almost magical, lightbulb kind of moments.

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9 This was verified both by Tom Wengraf and a wider group of people who are using BNIM in their research.

The third methodological finding was that the participants all had little or no variation in the way they recalled the moments that were important for them in the development of their creativity and the chronological order they happened in. This is a particularly unusual finding from a methodological perspective as the design of the lived-life, told-story phase of data analysis is designed to identify importance based on the order stories are told in.

Wengraf (2008;2) describes stories as being '*non-linear*', which is particularly important when considering the more linear / chronological way the participants told their stories as although there were emerging events through the storytelling, there was little movement or flow to the storytelling which I had expected. I will explain this further in chapter 13 but am mentioning it here as a unique and interesting methodological finding.

Chapter Eight: Searching for (and Sourcing) the Object Not Yet Found

The first theme that emerged in the interviews was the importance of the relationships the participants had, or have, with the key people in their lives - initially family relationships and then peer and teacher ones. The way the participants experienced these early relationships was later translated to significant others in adult life, such as their line managers and mentors, and impacted their experiences of working in organisations.

These relationships were heavily characterised by the participants' need to have a more intrinsic reward and connection with other people through their creativity. This was either through the need for affirmation and recognition from others as a way of seeing their own creative abilities enough to be able to enact them, or through the need for others to enact their creativity for them as a way of having someone else to share potential shame or rejection.

These early relational experiences were then internalised, and the participants all described moments where this connectedness was then sought out in the organisational environments they later found themselves in. Their ability to negotiate the complex feelings these experiences evoked had a significant impact on the development of their creativity in organisational contexts.

This chapter looks at these sub-themes in chronological order, exploring the similarities and nuanced differences of each of the participants' experiences and the golden thread that ties these sub-themes together.

Searching for the mirror: connections and projections

This first sub-theme explores the participants' significant relationships and how their creativity was triggered by, or developed in relation to, other people. These relationships were either characterised by the participants finding creative acts to feel connected with significant others or connecting with others within the creative process as a way of managing their anxieties around how their creativity could be received / responded to.

These moments of connection also meant the other person became a receptor for the participant's creativity so that it could either be shown back to them in a way that enabled them to connect to their own creativity, or as a way of outsourcing it to reduce shame.

For instance, Angela and Dave both described having strong and important connections with peers or people they can identify with as a representation of an extension of their dream selves, or as a current mirror image of their internal views of themselves.

For Angela, this was most prevalent during her description of the Christmas party where she met the famous author who she described as being *"just an ordinary woman like me"*. It was through seeing similarities between herself and the other author that enabled her the space to consider herself in that creative role and being able to achieve being an author, which is something she had always dreamt of doing but never thought possible.

Whilst Angela describes moments of connections with peers at a later stage in life, Dave described more moments of deep connectedness with his peers at primary school, all examples of which were characterised by a narrative that his peers adored him for his creativity and joined in his endeavours as they were drawn to how exciting these moments were. He describes these moments as almost accidental, without pre-thought or planning, like the moment he performed on the keyboard with a peer in a school assembly: *"it would of just been we were all just playing the same random notes or something like that but to go and perform that in front of the school…was, was wonderful" (pp1-2)*. Or when he "*somehow convinced*" a group of his peers to get together to do a school play. These narratives were highly coloured by this unplanned, out of his conscious control type moments, as if he was telling me he somehow has an ability to connect with others in this way without actively trying to, or that his creativity is so enticing it draws others to him without him being fully conscious of it.

Interestingly, this accidental nature of connecting with others was characteristic of both Dave and Angela's most significant connections. They both described the moments as fate-like, e.g. everyone else being poorly or not able to attend the Christmas party due to the weather, or performing without any preparation and just coming together.

On the other hand, Luca and Helen both connected more deeply and significantly (in terms of the development of their creativity) to maternal family members. For instance, Luca reflected on the importance of the connections with his mother, maternal aunt and maternal grandmother as being the source of his creativity: *"if I would research why I did the things I did, I'm sure it would have a very strong link back to my mother and my aunty."* This also connects to his exploration of their jewellery boxes and cupboards

that he describes as being an initial trigger for his interest in "*beautiful things*" which he connects to his later creations. He also stated that these relationships had enabled his fascination with the female form - not in a way that he wanted to be female or to dress in female clothing, but in a way that he could admire and observe from a distance. This significantly impacted the development of his creativity as a female fashion designer, but more specifically the close-fitting style he uses.

Helen also refers to these maternal relationships as being important and recalls her earliest creative memories being with her "*mother and my grandmother [who] both knitted, um and they taught me to knit from a very young age.*" She also describes the first gift she remembers receiving as being a sewing bag from either her mother or grandmother (she could not remember whom) with a hidden base that she could keep her creations in. This is something she still has as an adult and holds significant and fond memories for her as being when she first became truly interested in being creative.

What is interesting (and felt emotionally significant as they were telling me) is both Luca and Helen's connection with the maternal members of their family alongside the exploration of hidden spaces for treasures to be kept (jewellery boxes and sewing bag). It felt as if there was something important about the safeness experienced in these relationships that enabled a particular space where they felt able to explore their creativity and as if their later creative works (clothing and material designs) were connected to the joy they experienced within these moments.

Therefore, it seems as though the way in which each participant's creativity was experienced by, and responded to, externally had a significant impact on their ability

to enact their creativity. This connects to the next theme which focuses on the way in which the participants experienced external responses to their creative energy and endeavours, and how these responses impacted both their ability to be creative and the way their creativity manifested.

Affirmation and recognition

Throughout the interviews, each of the participants described moments of being connected to key people in a way that offered them external recognition and affirmation of their creativity. This was not just surface-level praise and recognition, but more deeply connected to an early insecurity for them, which then either triggered the initiation or an adaptation of their creativity.

For instance, Angela describes having an English teacher at secondary school approach her and say how he had heard about her writing abilities:

"I can remember him saying to me at school 'oh you could be a writer… I've been, been hearing about you, you could be a writer, you know'…" (p39)

It was this same teacher who later convinced her to apply for university. These interactions were key for the development of Angela's creativity as this teacher not only saw something in her that she could not see for herself but also supported her to achieve her goals, i.e. having conversations with her parents about the financial support she could receive to go to university. Angela later stated that this interaction was a key trigger that had enabled her to progress and to develop her career (and creativity), as she would not have had access to the education needed to develop her

mind, or to have unleashed her ambitions which were previously restricted to her ideas of what working–class, female creativity would be, i.e. hairdressing, like her female cousins.

As mentioned previously, Angela said she had spoken to the teacher a few months before the interview and had recalled the incident of him running down the street after her, but he did not remember it. This suggests that something happened for Angela within the internalisation of this experience of external validation that felt more significant for her. As Angela was describing the interaction, it felt to be full of hope and ambition for her future which was in contrast to her description of her experience of her family, particularly her mother whom she described as being *"unambitious*" and "*nervous"*.

This connection to people in positions of power being able to see the creative potential in a way that enabled or released internal restrictions was something Dave also raised in the interview. For instance, he repeatedly mentioned that he only had a D in A-level Geography, but that people could see past that and could connect to, and affirm, his abilities. This was present in the Organisational Development Director at the factory he worked at when she offered him a job (without an interview) based on the work she had seen him do, not on his academic achievements. This also happened when he was invited to take part on a Masters course by the course lead:

"[I said] I've got a D in A-level Geography, I couldn't do a Masters, and he [course lead] goes, 'well, I think you'd be up for it', and he asked me three years in a row and I kept saying no…and on the third time he just said…'so are you doing it or what", I said OK, OK, I'll do it and he went that's your, that's your interview, you're in'." (p11)

This seemingly highlighted how Dave's ability to connect with other people made them affirm something in him that he did not always have the confidence to act on (even if he did see it in himself), and that this relationship enabled him to break through the boundaries of what would normally happen, i.e. being interviewed. This also has a similar characteristic to his description of himself as accidentally connecting to others through his creativity.

He continues to say:

"I'm someone who needs external affirmation, I think 'cause I'd spent so many years not being myself and getting affirmed for not being myself, and I, I need that, I still need that in my work now…" (p12)

Here he was specifically describing his experience of secondary school where he felt his creativity was not valued as it highlighted how different he was to others in a way that meant it was hard to measure his talents, i.e. not being able to pass the set exams so feeling as though he was failing.

Helen also describes moments in her career where she has received (and sought) external validation and affirmation of the work she had done, which in turn enabled her to continue to develop. For instance, her last boss who recognised her critical thinking abilities as being "*a very rare quality because HR people are not often numerate*" and then moved her into his team where she felt she was able to *"flourish"*.

This external validation is something that Helen also seeks now from her peers at the artisan fayres: *"I trust my colleagues a lot for, for feedback, and, and, for their thoughts"*

(p39). She continues to say that once she has received their feedback, she develops her ideas and then starts to sell her products more widely.

Luca, however, had a slightly more ambivalent relationship with the affirmation and recognitions he received, as he would seek it out but would also minimise it. For instance, when discussing how his fashion label became quickly recognised and triggered a global fashion movement, he said it was just that he was the *"flavour of the month, new kid on the block"*. This felt as if he was slightly disassociating himself with the feedback and / or minimising it which may be connected to his internal ideas and opinions about the people who were giving it whom he described as living a *"ridiculous"* way being driven by fashion as a lifestyle not part of life.

This felt to be said with a judgement. Perhaps this critique may impact his ability to internalise their feedback in a way that motivates his creativity further, which is different to when he describes moments of having feedback from key family members.

This need for reassurance and affirmation was also a theme in terms of how the participants experienced the interviews. For instance, they all asked if the sessions had been helpful, hoped I had learnt something interesting and new from them, and that what they had given me was different or special in some way, e.g. *"I hope it is [helpful] and obviously I don't know who else you've interviewed and things but I am hoping it's different to what somebody else has done"* (Helen: p19).

This could be important when considering the organisational factors that enable creativity, as it would suggest that the organisation would have to be an open receptor

to what is being offered alongside offering recognition in a way that felt meaningful for the participants. This raises the question for me of how this happens and what the consequences are for both individuals and organisations if this is not possible, for whatever reason.

Searching for environmental conditions: spaces and places

As outlined above, each of the participants had multiple significant relationships that helped (and hindered) their ability to develop their creativity both individually and then consequently within organisations. They all also mentioned the importance of having the right environment for their creativity to happen, whether this be a physical place or a space in their minds. This felt to be an important factor when considering how organisations can either support and make use of, or hinder, the development of an individual's creativity.

Interestingly, the participants described both internal (psychic) spaces and external (physical) spaces as being important to their ability to be creative. For instance, Angela describes a moment where she was feeling disappointed with the ending of one of her favourite book series and consequently thinking about how a conversation with the author would be. She then thought:

"Well, Angela, there's no way you're going to persuade a dead writer to write the book to order just because you want to read it, if you want to read this book, you're gunna have to write it yourself." (p5)

It was as though the internal space created in her mind between herself and the author triggered the idea that she could and would have to write herself. This then resulted in her writing a letter between two characters which formed the basis of her first book.

This space in the mind is something that Angela describes as being significant in the process of writing books as she says it is only when her words in the book meet the mind of the reader, that her creativity is fully formed. She describes this process as being so "*magical*" and "*powerful*" that you can get lost in the space created between minds through a book. She then said:

"Someone read my book in the bath and got to the end of the book, and they were sitting in stone cold water, and they hadn't, they hadn't realised that they were in completely cold water, and I thought blimey…wow, a story that is capable of overwriting that, that, that's powerful stuff." (p10)

This description evokes the idea that the reader experienced a total immersion in the world of the book that she had created; as if the place in the reader's mind (through the book) was so powerful, it overrode their physical experience of the place they were existing in.

Furthermore, Angela shared her expectations of what sitting down and writing a book would feel like as being a time where she would have loads of "*wow" / "lightbulb*" type moments, where the writing is energetic and exciting. However, she describes her reality of this as being a "*slog*" with the other (exciting) moments being "*few and far between*". Angela describes these times are as though she just has to sit with not knowing what the book will be like and then it "*magically*" arises.

Both of these examples highlight the importance the space a book can create between the reader's and the author's minds, and Angela's ability to find comfort in being in a figurative space of not knowing. This space seems to enable her creativity to emerge, which was in complete contrast to her description of *"the deadness of being in an uncreative workplace"* (p17) that she experienced when working in the university.

Similarly, Dave's description of his experience of being in an organisation that felt too constrictive for him and of it being a place where his creativity could not flourish; even one that matched his values (i.e. working for a charity rather than 'corporates'). He described being in an organisation as restricting his work but also impacting his identity, i.e. making him feel as though he had to dress a certain way, as if he was *"branded"*. This felt to be an important aspect for Dave in the development of his creativity as it meant that he did not feel he could exist in an organisation at the same time as being creative, hence becoming a consultant working on the periphery of organisations.

Dave later became increasingly interested in the spaces that enable creativity to happen, so when working as a consultant that supported others to be creative in their work, he would facilitate spaces in a way that enabled a freedom from expectations and the resulting shame that would emerge if those expectations were not met. He later created a social experiment space which he intended to be a:

"…place to experiment and be experimented on anyone could come along, and either bring an experiment or do and experiment…the only criteria is for an experiment was its something you've never done before, you don't know what's going to happen and it's got a positive human intent." (p22)

This is also where his notion of doing everything in the reverse emerged: *"I became interested in what's the opposite of what's normal…what is the opposite of normal, how, how, how can I [pause] use my creativity to cause some sort of disturbance.*" It was also here he found people were able to learn new things, take up new roles, and explore freely without shame, which is something he believes is closely connected to creativity and is a common inhibitor for creative practice within organisations.

Luca also mentioned the importance of the space he had to be able to explore his creativity. This originated in his childhood when he used to go to an upstairs room[10] at his mother's duplex specifically so he could play with his toys in the quiet as the "*quietness allowed me to obviously like take things and just like work on them…I would be quite hidden.*" This felt like a physical escape which had a similar feeling to the one evoked when he described the exploration of his grandmother and aunt's cupboards and jewellery boxes.

In adulthood, this seemed slightly more complex for Luca as he found that his work creativity and personal creativity (and relationships) could not exist simultaneously. This was particularly prevalent when he described his need to keep his working and family worlds separate, and how he is fortunate as he can *"quickly, get out of this zone, of this creative zone and have another reality, whether this is [pause] family life, or, you know, um, by being back to nature...*"

Helen's experience of being in organisations was very similar to Luca's as she too had a see-sawing aspect to her creativity. The difference though was that Helen's

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10 Luca was in the same room for both interviews

oscillation between being creative and not creative happened during times when she was employed and times where she was not, whereas Luca's experience was that he had to separate off his life into work time and non-work / family time.

Furthermore, the internal (psychic) and external (physical) environments that enable or hinder creativity was expressed in all but Angela's experiences of primary and secondary school. For Angela, the key relationships with teachers in secondary school enabled her to be less introverted and to nurture her creativity, whereas each of the other participants described primary school as being freeing and a place where their creativity was nurtured, whereas secondary school was too restrictive and a place where their creativity was not encouraged. For instance, Helen summarises this by saying:

"I think in primary school I was very free, secondary school was really quite controlled, and then frustrated because you know, anything that I was, anything that I was looking at as a career was poo-poo'd". (p16)

This is important when considering how creative individuals can apply their creativity to organisations, as it raises the question of how the relationship between safety, freedom and control can be managed in a way that is supportive of creativity. This also raises the question of what happens to the space for creativity when we start to measure success in concrete ways, as was described by the participants in their experiences of being in secondary school and then later the workplace.

Finally, it is important to mention the experience of the spaces that either enable or inhibit creativity in the interviews themselves. Angela and Dave's interviews took place pre-Covid19 whereas Luca and Helen's took place during and after Covid19.

Therefore, the first two interviews were single sessions with a small break between the first and second sub-session and took place in temporary spaces: Angela's was at her neighbour's house as she was having renovations on her own home, and Dave's was in a room at an art / music venue that I hired as it was close to where we were both working. Conversely, Luca and Helen's interviews both took place virtually over two separate sessions. Also, Luca's interview took place whilst he was at his mother's home (where he grew up) and she was present at different times during the interview, and Helen's was at her home where she had access to key early memories. Both Luca and Helen showed me physical objects they were referring to, i.e. a house Luca made and a drawing Helen did.

The difference in the physical spaces for the interviews created a difference in terms of how the interviews were structured as Angela and Dave's both took place in one session (with a small break) whereas Luca and Helen's were over two sessions. This gave me more time in between sessions to look for PINs and to frame the follow up questions, but also created a slightly disjointed feeling.

The similarity between all the interview locations however is that they were all temporary or transitional spaces for connections, either in a space that was not their own (Angela, Dave and Luca) and / or in a virtual space shared just for that moment in time (Luca and Helen). It felt as though the temporary nature of the interactions and spaces positively impacted the participants' comfort in sharing deep and detailed experiences that have helped to influence the development of their creativity. It made me wonder if they would have been less open and exposed less vulnerability to me if

there was the potential for an ongoing relationship, or if the physical spaces were ones that were more permanent.

Interestingly, this theme was the one that was most closely mirrored in my own experience of writing this thesis as I often struggled to find the right environment that would enable the headspace needed to engage in the data, or to be able to think creatively and deeply about the emerging themes. For instance, I found being sat at my home desk too restrictive and would often only be there for more practical parts such as the methodology or literature review chapters. Whereas being sat in the courtyard I share with my neighbours or in a public café (not too loud or busy though) would be somewhere I felt I had more space to do the more creative and deep-thinking work. This raises the question for me about the physical space organisations create that may help or hinder the ability for individuals and groups to engage in creative thought or action, particularly in this post-Covid19 world.

Chapter Nine: Power of the Paradox: a need for contradictions

The next common theme I would like to explore is the need for contradictory or opposing states that the participants would oscillate between, creating energy for their creativity to emerge. This could be seen throughout the participants' narratives in terms of: their ideas of what a creative person is like; experiences of big feelings that existed at the same time; and through experiences and ideas of life and death and the resulting fear of annihilation that appeared to drive or initiate their creativity.

In the previous chapter, I explored the importance of the significant relationships each participant had in relation to the development of their creativity. This theme is connected to that as it hinges on big feelings of love and relatedness with significant others but is different because these moments are also connected to things (not just people) and to feelings of hate, aggression, shame, and guilt. It is in the moments where the participants describe these feelings as existing simultaneously that their creativity seems to be initiated, rather than enabled or developed as with the relationships with others explored in the previous chapter.

Here, I will explore the different ways in which this need for contradictory states to oscillate between emerged, and how this seemingly shaped their ideas of what it means to be a creative person. I will also explore the impact of the external relationships and environmental conditions that the participants described as enabling this oscillation to be possible and constructive rather than overwhelming and destructive.

The grit *and* the oyster

The participants all shared moments where they felt jolts, disruptions, embargoes, restrictions, and exclusions which then triggered or initiated a particular type of creativity or creative energy. For instance, they all recalled moments or periods of time in their lives where they were having big feelings of connectedness that were jolted, interrupted, or counterbalanced with big feelings of loss, hate and aggression. The important part of this is the experience of disruption that jolts loving feelings, and the friction caused by the oscillation between these juxtaposed feeling states that I wish to pay more attention to.

An example of this was during the moment Dave describes as the first time he recalled doing something creative as a child. He was watching his favourite cartoon which was something he looked forward to every week, when his mother's friend came in and interrupted it. During the description of his mother's friend in the interview, Dave's aggressive and frustrated feelings came across as he was being very critical of her hairstyle, dress sense and *"overbearing perfume"*. He continues to describe the moment as follows:

"...[I was] walking round on all fours, with my dressing gown and then walk, you know pretending to be some kind of animal and then walking over to this woman Lucinda, and saying "Lucinda, lift up my dressing gown' and she lifted it up and I pulled my pants down [both laughing], she just saw my arse, my mum getting really annoyed, [D laugh], and I get sent to bed or something, but I think that was an act of creative rebellion because she was disturbing the muppets…I thought it was a genius intervention no, it's, it's brilliant isn't, because you don't, you don't have a voice when you're younger, coz if I'd said can you stop talking coz I'm watching the muppets, it wouldn't've worked." (p31)

This description evoked a sense that his creativity was an aggressive response to having experienced his mother's friend as a disruption to his enjoyment of his favourite

programme and to the resulting sense of powerlessness (voicelessness) he experienced in the moment too.

When Dave described this moment to me, we both laughed, and I found it hard to stop and reengage with my research position. On reflection, the continued laugh I had felt like a nervous one in response to the jolt of aggression after a moment of joyful reflection that I experienced through his telling of the story.

This experience of feeling interrupted which then triggers creativity was also similar for Angela when she described working at the university in the 1990s, in a team with mostly men, as a time where her voice was not heard as she would repeatedly be interrupted when she was expressing her (creative) thoughts:

"...there was that thing where a woman said something in a meeting and it kind of passes without comment, and then, a minute later, a man says the same thing and people nod and say 'oh yeah, yeah', and that happened to me..."

It was during this time that Angela experienced significant and positive feedback and support from family and friends which led her to set up a writing club for women. It seemed as though the juxtaposition of Angela's frustration at not being heard at work in contrast to feeling valued in her relationships outside of work, mobilised the energy for her to initiate a creative space for herself and for other women with similar interests.

Similarly, Luca also described moments where he felt a friction between different emotional states. This started earlier for Luca as he recalled moments of being a young child (in primary school) where he felt *"adore'"* by his peers for his creativity, whilst being feared by his peers' parents and being taken to a psychologist by his own

parents to check he was ok. This narrative of having two opposing feeling states continued into adulthood and could also be seen when he described his love of creating things whilst existing in an environment that did not match who he feels he is as a person.

The paradoxical nature of the opposing feelings could also be seen in the way the participants related to others, as explored in the previous chapter. For instance, Dave, Luca and Helen all had an overt desire to be seen as different to others and for their creativity to be recognised and reaffirmed in those relationships. This was slightly different for Angela as it was the external view of herself being different to her internal image of herself that triggered her ability to enact her creativity fully.

This theme raises the question for me about a possible need for a destructive emotion alongside connected relationships in the process of creativity, i.e. the need to resist or aggressively respond to something (or someone) whilst at the same time needing to feel deeply connected to, and supported by, others. This is particularly interesting when considering how individual creativity can be applied in organisations, as aggression and disruption would seem counterintuitive when thinking about organisational culture, so perhaps this needs to be mobilised externally to the organisation to be constructive?

Life, death, and a fear of annihilation

Another key theme that emerged was the relationship between life and death which each of the participants shared as being instrumental in the development of their creativity. This started with Angela who shared right at the beginning of her interview that her sister being ill as a child had put her in touch with the idea of death from a very early age (approximately six years old). This experience of being aware of death triggered her escape into books:

"I wasn't living, well I was, I suppose, my sister was ill and that was very worrying in the family so perhaps I had a particular reason for wanting to be able to put myself to one side and enter into this absolute mind changing world…it was being able to lose yourself entirely and be absolutely immersed in these imaginary worlds which for the time the duration of the reading were the only, your only reality." (pp10-11)

This mindset around death was then later compounded by the sudden loss of her cousin which more directly instigated (along with the experience of meeting the author, as mentioned previously) her career move into being an author, as well as being a topic of focus within her writing: *"I think it's [death] what all my books are about really, in different ways."* Angela described this in a way that made it feel as though her creative explorations of death through her writing were ways of her being able to manage her anxieties about death in a similar way to her escapes into books as a child felt. Angela stated at this point that the realisation that the risk of staying in her stable career at the university was a bigger risk to her than that of taking the risk of being an author. She also mentioned that it was as though the permanence of the books she wrote helped her to mitigate her fear of annihilation.

Similarly, Luca described both the loss of his grandmother and his parents' separation whilst he was studying in another country as key moments that influenced his creative trajectory. He said this time was important as it made him realise he was unhappy as he was not able to be his full / true self, which in turn led to him moving to study closer to his oldest brother. It was here that he became more in touch with his sexuality and went to study fashion which then led to his first big career success as a designer.

For Angela and Luca, these moments of death, or fear of death, started when they were children and later put them in touch with the idea of endings being permanent, prompting them to look at their current experiences in a way that made them realise their true, creative selves were not being expressed fully. It was this realisation that motivated them to make a change, which influenced the biggest shifts in their careers.

Although Dave did speak about being curious about impermanence as a child when he squashed the spider in his Nan's bathroom with a pumice stone, or when he ran over a woodlouse with his toy train, both he and Helen connected with this idea of impermanence and a fear of annihilation later in life, and in terms of their own mortality, not the mortality of others. For both Dave and Helen, it was their personal experiences of significant (although temporary) injuries as adults that put them both in touch with a fear of annihilation. This then triggered a change in their careers.

Dave and Helen described these times of being impaired (or *"a little bit disabled",* in Helen's words), triggered their creativity. Dave described his time in hospital being unable to move as the most creative time because it was a *"time of complete inactivity"* and there were no expectations on him, which enabled a space for him to become

more creative. This also made him realise that his work in the corporate organisation had led to a pause in his creativity, as though he was "*just keeping it alive, barely alive like in an induced coma.*" But this period of inactivity put him in touch with his own fragility and eventual impermanence which retriggered his creativity.

This was similar for Helen as the year she was not able to use her hand properly (after a work injury) meant she had time not working so had the capacity to be creative, but also had to think creatively about the way she could be so, as it was her drawing hand that was impaired. It was also then that Helen realised her creativity see-sawed between times when she was in and out of organisations, i.e. when she is not at work her creativity develops or increases, whereas when she is at work, she only maintains a minimal level of doing creative things, e.g. knitting.

Dave later described this tussle between permanence and impermanence in relation to organisations as follows:

"I'm really interested in urm, in permanence, and I think our denial of impermanence is the cause of most of our human problems, it's the cause of most organisational structures and hierarchies, to create this false sense of permanence…" (p34)

This made me wonder about the relationship between things being predictable and stable whilst also allowing space for change and flexibility of thoughts and actions to emerge, and how being in an organisation might help or hinder this.

The (conflicted) creative-in-the-mind

The next aspect of this theme of a need for paradoxical and opposing thoughts emerged in the participants' descriptions of what they thought a creative person is like. Unlike the other sub-sections above which have a more micro lens in terms of the participants' individual experiences or moments they recalled as important for the development of their creativity, this theme has a more macro lens in terms of what they feel the function a creative person serves for wider society.

During the interviews, each participant had a clear and significant internal view of what a creative person is like that influenced their ideas of themselves as creative people (or not). Interestingly, they all shared ideas of creative people as existing or acting outside the realms of what was considered as 'normal' or 'socially acceptable'. There was also a shared sense of the creative person being unique; carefree and often misunderstood by those around them. These internalised ideas of a creative person significantly impacted their ability to see themselves as creative.

For instance, Angela described not being able to see herself as a creative person as she would often be worried about money and had a strong need for stability, which contrasted with her internalised ideas of what creative people are like:

"I always thought that creative people were very um [small pause] relaxed, devil may care, don't worry about money, they're only thinking about the work, and that maybe that actually is one of the reasons what, another reason why I had myself down as an uncreative person, because, I've always been very anxious about [pause] the fundamentals of life…" (pp22-23)

It was only when Angela later experienced meeting someone who was successful in their creative career who she felt was *"normal"*, like her, that she could allow herself to feel like she too was a creative person.

In contrast to Angela's resistance and disconnect to the outsider, *"wild"* creative person, it was this external position that the other participants related to which made them feel as though they too were creative people.

For instance, Dave explicitly described himself as being an outsider and that this position enabled him to be creative as you can challenge the status quo more easily which in turn enables space for more creativity to emerge: *"the brilliant thing about being an outsider is you don't know the way in which things work*."

Similarly, Luca described himself as a creative person who is different to the 'norm' and even considers himself different to other creative people as he sees himself as being *"a craftsman rather than an instigator"*. He also described moments throughout his life where he realised he was creative as he thought and behaved differently to the people around him. For instance, when he described himself as being *"naughty"* for looking in his aunt and grandmother's jewellery boxes, and when he took apart a lamp to make a crinoline dress for a doll. Or being different from his peers at primary school whom he would create games for, or his peers in the fashion world who he considered more interested in the surface level, status aspects of being in fashion.

Helen also described herself as knowing *"from quite a young age that I was definitely a creative thinker, um and I didn't necessarily think as, you know, as everybody else did*." This

suggests that she thinks creative people are different from everyone else. She then continued to say that *"you're very lucky if your creativity allows you a financial security"* (p16) and that she was different to other people as she is not driven by external, material motivators.

These statements suggest that not only does a creative person in Helen's mind act and think on the outside, they are also not recognised by the main group of society as having value, as they are not financially validated for their work.

Interestingly, this relationship between the creative person and money was a theme throughout all the interviews, whether it be Angela who felt like to be creative you had to not worry about money and then realising that the risk of financial security in the job she had at the university was bigger than the risk of trying to be an author and potentially struggling more financially, or Dave, who when reflecting on the moment he started his first job at the factory, said:

"I think that was the start of [pause] this, trading who I naturally was, no it probably started at primary school, but this exasperated it 'cause now money's involved, trading who I naturally was for being accepted..." (p6)

Similarly, Luca described feeling stuck in his creativity because he is successful and financially stable as a result of the creative realm he works in, even though this is not what he would have wanted to do if he had been exposed to other types of creativity as a child. This is something he reflected on, and described in a way that gave the sense of him being trapped in his creative role due to his (financial and status) success: *"I'm not sure if this is the medium that makes me ultimately happy."*

It felt as though the notion of receiving money and financial recognition for one's creativity was difficult for each of the participants and that they would all exist in the space between wanting to be financially stable and recognised by others for their creativity, and feeling as though creativity is unique and not fully understandable by others.

I initially wondered if this focus on money was because it is an easy measure for success, i.e. the more money you have, the more valued your creativity is. However, this was not how it translated to the participants' experiences, as the more money they received, the more ambivalent they seemed to feel. Perhaps this is because this creative-in-the-mind is someone who does not (or possibly should not) have the same relationship with money, and to receive money and feel valued through money for their creativity rubs against the internal ideas of being someone who is not driven by material gain, but rather more intrinsically motivated based on relationships and sharing their creativity with others. This raises the question of how creative people may experience existing in organisations where their creativity is being exchanged for financial (and sometimes intrinsic) rewards.

Chapter Ten: Types of Creativity and How They Manifest

Having explored the key cross-case themes based on the relationships, experiences and moments that have influenced the development of the participants' creativity, four common states emerged. I wish to use the term 'valence' to describe these states as it connects to the way in which the states are enacted.

To clarify, I do not mean Bion's (1961;116) term '*valency*' which he describes as being '*the individual's readiness to enter into combination with the group in making and acting on the basic assumptions*' but instead refer to the similar but different chemistry use of the term '*valence*' which the Cambridge online dictionary defines as '*the ability of an atom to combine with other atoms, measured by the number of electrons it will lose, add, or share*'. The reason for this is because the participants all described their interactions of high creativity as being characterised by intense and deeply connected moments where they relate to others. It is as though in these moments they deeply connect with others in a way that significantly amplifies their creativity.

It is important to note here that although there were other ways each participant enacted their creativity, I am highlighting the core / common ways their creativity manifested in behaviours and interactions. I will explore each valence individually as well as highlighting the interrelated nature of them.

Furthermore, the valences are not rigid personality types that people either are or are not, or characteristics that they either do or do not have, but more fluid states of mind that the participants were able to flow in and out of at different times, for different

purposes. Consequently, I have named them ending with an 'ing' not 'or', i.e. connecting not connector, to encompass the active states in which they are characterised.

Examples of each valence have been highlighted previously, so I will describe each one in turn and highlight the overview of how each participant enacted the valence but will spend more time exploring the interrelatedness of these valences.

Connecting

This valence is characterised by the participants' need to be connected to others in the creative process and their need for affirmation. This could be seen in the moments where the participants described deep connections with others through the creative moments or as a way of receiving feedback and praise for their creativity. It was also through these moments of relatedness that the participants were able to see, accept and then enact their creativity, and through their experiences of how their creativity was received by others.

This was particularly prevalent during the moments where the participants described their creativity as being reliant on other people either in the enactment of it or the receiving of it, e.g. Dave's example of a whole school musical performance with a girl who had the same keyboard as him and Helen's connection with the boy at the lake in Africa.

The extent to which an organisation was experienced by the participants as being a receptive and safe place for them to experience these connections influenced their ability to be able to stay there.

Disrupting

This valence is characterised in two ways: either something external disrupting and / or jolting the participants' creative flow, or by a need to be on the outside of 'social norms' and to be the one that disrupts the status quo.

For instance, each of the participants shared a disruptive state of mind when describing their ideas of what a creative person would look like. They also all overcame significant hurdles, embargoes, and challenges such as death, sexuality, gender, class, and organisational constraints. Interestingly, the creativity that occurred after the hurdle appeared to be an extension of the original creativity, i.e. Luca wanting to become a dancer and then moving to have a fashion line that was connected to physical form and movement. This evoked an image of wonky carrots that grow past the stones that are blocking their way – the carrot is still the carrot, it is just in a different shape due to the process of overcoming the hurdle, and its growth is not stunted by the hurdle either.

The other aspect of this typology was where each of the participants described moments where they were disruptive in terms of their thinking being outside the 'norm'. Angela, Luca and Helen tended to enact this subtly through curiosity and asking why

things are as they are which in turn led to them influencing a wider change. However, Dave continued this further by saying that he actively aims to be disruptive in his work to enable creativity to emerge:

"That's what I'm trying to do in my work, trying to provoke something, to disturb something…[I] think it's only when an organisation can start to embrace some of this counterintuitive way of doing things, of um, I only do work in organisations if I can find a way of using guerrilla tactics, because…that usual thing kills everything before we've even started…" (pp27-28)

The extent to which organisations and groups can tolerate this disruption impacts the way the participants were able to connect with organisations, i.e. if they could stay within it or if they had to exist on the periphery, as a consultant or temporary worker for example.

Outsiding

This valence is characterised by the struggle to exist in organisations and the impact this has on one's creativity, usually resulting in the need to separate creativity from work. This is deeply connected to the participants' ideas of the creative-in-the-mind being someone who is both central to others through the group adoring their creative abilities, whilst also being on the edge of society; someone who rejects social 'norms' and expectations and is experienced by others as being illusive and almost mystical. It is also connected to the capacity to tolerate disruption, as outlined above.

This could be seen in the participants' struggle to exist in an organisation and to be fully creative, i.e. Helen's creativity reducing when she is in an organisation; Luca

needing to separate off his life into two compartments of family life and creative life; Dave feeling *"branded"* by being in an organisation, and Angela moving away from being in an organisation to work solo on writing her books.

Storytelling

This valence is more about how the creative person expresses their internal thoughts to enable the other person / people to come on their creative journey with them by connecting to them and then enacting their creativity with or for them.

For instance, all the participants were able to evoke extremely visual images in my mind, and in the minds of my peers and supervisors who have seen some parts of their transcriptions through my supervision sessions, when they were describing important events to them. Their ability to evoke such images resulted in a deeper emotional connection with them on an individual level and a sense of belief in their abilities to successfully enact their creativity. This also evoked in me a sense of guilt when thinking about editing down their interviews to gather core themes as it felt as though I was chopping off important parts of their story.

Furthermore, as mentioned previously, each participant told their story in almost completely chronological order, meaning that the Lived Life - Told Stories had little variation. This could be considered a result of the SQUIN used having started with *"can you tell me the story of your life…"* but, as this is a common starting phrase for a

SQUIN in the BNIM methodology, the telling of the story with little variation from chronology is an unusual finding. It seems as though this is linked to the way the participants projected their creativity into the mind(s) of others through the vehicle of storytelling. Therefore, it feels to be more connected to the topic of creativity, rather than the question asked.

How the valences connect

The table below shows the similarities and differences in how the valences emerged for each participant. I have not included the storytelling valence as this is more the vehicle for the other valences to be mobilised / enacted.

Table 7: Examples of similarities and differences in participant valences

	Connecting	**Disrupting**	**Outsiding**
Angela	Connection to the English teacher at school and the author she met at a Christmas party that triggered an internal belief in herself which led to her changing direction educationally and in terms of her later career. Description of her creativity as only existing in full when her mind and the reader's mind connect through her books.	Curiosity about, and frustrations with, the current status quo, especially in her role at the university. External ideas of herself that disrupt her sense of what who she is and what she can achieve, i.e. teacher and famous author.	Felt as though she could not be creative at the university as what to teach and how to teach it was not within the remit of her role. Realising the risk of staying in the stable, university job was bigger than the risk of trying to become an author. Sense of self in comparison to her family, particularly in relation to her 'unambitious mother'.

Dave	Dave's connections with his peers at school to create plays and musical shows. Relationship with the OD director at the factory that saw his skills and creativity and created a role for him. Relationship with Masters tutor who he describes as having encouraged him to do the course.	Seeing his role as being the person to disrupt the status quo in organisations he is working in. Describing his first memory of being creative as the moment when he 'flashed' his 'arse' to his mother's friend as a child. Decision to turn things on their head, i.e. the conference, his book launch etc.	Feeling of being 'branded' by organisations he was in, as he experienced the diminishing of his personality the longer he stayed in organisations, even ones like the charity that match his values Description of joining the factory as the first time Feeling of being on the outside of the norm at secondary school, especially when being assessed. Realising through his daughter's dyslexia diagnosis that he is neurodiverse.
Luca	Relationships with his mother, aunt and grandmother. Connection with peers through his creativity in primary school (making games for them). Receiving praise and recognition for his work in London.	Luca being experienced as a 'difficult' child by the parents of his peers at school. Being taken to the psychologist as a child to see if his disruptiveness was 'normal' or not.	Description of self as different as a child and as being on the outside of the fashion industry. Oscillating between his creative world and his personal one, feeling like an outsider in both parts.
Helen	Relationship with teacher at primary school. Connection with line manager in last HR role. Use of her peers in the artisan group to gain feedback on her work and develop creativity further.	Description of her having a 'non-traditional' HR mindset which led to her being the one leading the organisational restructures and redundancies (link to being the one to break things apart and reshape them).	Feeling as though she always had a brain that worked different to others, e.g. making the rocket in primary school. The reduction of her creativity when she is in an organisation and the increase of it when she is not.

As mentioned, the valences outlined above are not rigid states of mind or personality traits that are always in existence, they are fluid states of mind that arise in similar but also different ways for the participants in the service of their creativity. The visual below outlines the interconnected ways the valences emerged:

Figure 2: Map of valences

If the connections that are made felt rejecting, and the participants' creativity was not externally reinforced, they would remove themselves from the organisational context. However, if the connections are deeply secure, they are able to take up the position of the outsider which enables them the space to play with the ideas of what could be different, thus creating the space for new ideas to emerge.

If the connections made feel emotionally safe and as if the relationship can tolerate some challenge or stress, this enables the ability to be able to disrupt the status quo without fear of rejection. Failure to feel safe means that creativity is not possible and current ways of thinking, being or doing are maintained.

This is the method of connecting with others and communicating creative ideas in a way that enables others to internalise and then enact it in a way that the individual planned for it to happen.

Connecting

Storytelling

Outsiding

Disrupting

If the creativity is experienced as too disruptive, the person is pushed to exist on the outside of the group / organisation. This then hinders the individual's ability to feel connected and limits creativity as the need to be connected to others is central. However, if the individual can exist safely (relationally) in the organisation, the capacity for disruption increases which consequently enables the space for play to occur.

Therefore, when considering the organisational conditions for creativity to be initiated, it is important to consider the way relationships are fostered to be secure enough to allow space for the disrupting and outsiding to be possible. Failure to do so would mean that there is not enough safety to think about potential ways of doing things differently.

Chapter Eleven: Findings in Light of New Research Questions

As mentioned previously, the intended research sub-questions identified pre-interview were only partially met due to the difficulty in gaining access to leaders currently working in organisations. The table below shows the original sub-questions and the subsequent sub-questions that the research actually answers.

Table 9: Original vs. Actual Sub-Questions

Original sub-questions	Actual sub-questions
1. What are the conditions that either help or hinder the initiation of creativity in organisations?	1. What early, relational experiences, incidents, situations, or events influence the types of creativity that individuals develop and how does this get translated into later organisational functioning?
2. How might group and individual processes be connected in terms of the development of creativity within organisations?	2. How might group and individual processes be connected in terms of the development of creativity for individuals and later within groups and organisations?
3. What particular kind of incidents, situations or events prompt organisational creativity?	3. How do creative individuals apply their creativity to organisations? What are their experiences of being creative in organisations?
4. What are the narratives of creative organisations? How is creativity described? What are the ideas about developing thoughts? and, what are the things that are thought to either	4. What are the narratives of creative individuals? How is creativity described? What are their ideas about how their creativity has developed? and, what are the things

support or inhibit the creative process?	that are thought to either support or inhibit the creative process?
5. What is the relationship between tradition and innovation in the mind of leaders when thinking about their experiences of initiating creativity? What are the resilient factors required for creativity in organisations?	N/A

I will now explore how the research findings connect to each of these flexed / actual sub-questions in turn.

Sub-question one: What early, relational experiences, incidents, situations, or events influence the types of creativity that individuals develop and how does this get translated into later organisational functioning?

Throughout the interviews, the participants all clearly describe the importance of their early family relationships; key situations and incidents that have influenced the types of creativity. For instance, Angela's early family experiences of her sister's illness and how this led her to wanting to retreat into books as a form of escapism. Or, how her experiences of her mother's own nervousness translated into a nervousness of, and resistance towards, embracing her own creativity.

For Dave, this emerged in his deep connections with his peers in primary school and how he experienced adoration for his creativity. His types of creativity changed over time and moved from more individualistic types of creativity, such as drawing, to more paired or group creativity, such as school musical and drama performances. This translated into his creative career as he has ended up focusing on supporting groups and organisations to be more creative too.

These early relationships and experiences were particularly significant for Luca as it was through his exploration of his grandmother's and aunt's jewellery boxes alongside his fascination with the women around him and the restrictions he experienced that led to him becoming a fashion designer (rather than a dancer).

Similarly, Helen's relationships with her mother and grandmother were highly significant in the development of her creativity, particularly the experiences she described of being sat with them and their friends, being taught how to knit. This is the one creative outlet that always exists for Helen, even whilst she see-saws between moments of high and low creativity and times in and out of organisations.

Sub-question two: How might group and individual processes be connected in terms of the development of creativity for individuals and later within groups and organisations?

This is very similar to the original second research question but the nuanced difference focusses on the way in which the individual and group processes from early life translate to later organisational experiences.

This could be seen in the ways in which the participants' relationships with siblings and parents translated to their relationships with peers, teachers, managers, and mentors in later life. For instance, the way Dave connected with his peers and then repeatedly sought out the same connections with peers and groups in later life (i.e. through the explorative spaces he set up); how Helen's experience / idea of being different to her brother was then repeated through her peer relationships and work (i.e. being more analytical than other HR people); how Luca was taken to see a psychiatrist as a child as he was seen to be different to his peers and how this was mirrored in his experiences of being different to the other people within the fashion industry.

This could also be seen in the way each participant internalised the idea of the creative-in-the-mind as being a person who exists on the periphery of the group / organisation whilst also maintaining a central role.

Furthermore, the participants each described the way in which the affirmation from, and connections experienced with, others around them significantly impacted the development of their creativity and enabled them to initiate the enactment of their creativity (i.e. Angela becoming an author after internalising external ideas of herself) or further develop their creativity (i.e. Helen developing her artisan products with feedback from peers).

Sub-question three: How do creative individuals apply their creativity to organisations? What are their experiences of being creative in organisations?

One of the core elements of this question can be addressed in the way the participants all experienced their creativity being restricted whilst in organisations and had high levels of ambivalence when they were working in an organisation.

For instance, Dave feeling as though he needed to be *"branded"* when in an organisation but able to help organisations be more creative when existing on the periphery. His ambivalence could also be seen in the way he sought value for his creativity alongside feeling shame for receiving money for it.

Helen's creativity changed when she was in organisations as her traditional creativity (art / textile making) reduced, but she also amplified what she felt was more technical / scientific creativity (what she described as her analytical mind).

Luca's ambivalence of being in an organisation was more prevalent, possibly because he was the only participant that was actively working in an organisation at the time of interview. This manifested in the critical way he spoke about his peers and the splitting off of his family and creative / work-life.

For Angela, being in an organisation coincided with an inability to see herself as a creative person. When she was jolted into the idea that she could be creative, both through the death of her cousin and in meeting the author at the Christmas party, Angela left being in an organisation to take up her creative career as an author.

The fact that each of the participants felt they had to either tweak their creativity to exist in an organisation, or that their creativity was used and not valued appropriately by the organisation, is an important finding as it highlights that organisations need to be able to create the right environment for creative individuals to be able to engage in their creativity.

Sub-question four: What are the narratives of creative individuals? How is creativity described? What are their ideas about how their creativity has developed? And what are the things that are thought to either support or inhibit the creative process?

As mentioned previously, each participant had a very specific narrative about the 'creative-in-the-mind' whom they described as being someone who existed on the periphery of groups, organisations, and society. This is how Luca, Dave and Helen first began to see themselves as creative individuals but is why Angela was reticent to acknowledge her capacity for creativity until she could connect to the image of someone who was creative (the author she met).

These ideas about creativity developed for the participants both through their experiences of being with their peers and how they were both revered for their creativity but also seen as different to others because of it, i.e. Luca being admired for his creativity by his peers whilst being taken to a psychologist to see if he was 'OK'.

The process of creativity is described by the participants as almost accidental, i.e. Dave's idea that his creativity and collaborations with others just happen; Angela's idea that the characters and story come to her, and the writing does not comprise of the exciting, lightbulb type energy she had expected, but instead was more of a slog.

Each of the participants also had ideas of how their early experiences, stemming particularly from their experiences of being at primary school, have helped shape the kinds of creative careers they have, and the affirmation and recognition needed for them to engage in their creativity over time.

Section Four: Discussion

Having explored the key themes for each individual participant, and the key cross-case themes in the previous chapters, I will now share some thoughts that have emerged when considering the original research questions and literature review and connect them to the main valences to explore the source of these valences. I will then place these thoughts in the context of wider theories within the psychosocial field of individual and organisational research to consider what possible implications these ideas have for the wider field of study.

This will be structured by first looking at how these valences emerged for each participant in the enactment of their creativity and then by looking at the development of these valences through the participants' experiences, i.e. through childhood and then the inter and intra-psychic relationships and systemic dynamics that enabled and influenced the development of the participants' creativity. I will then consider the wider methodological and organisational implications and applications before sharing some personal reflections, learnings, and further areas of interest.

Chapter Twelve: Oscillating states: a space between

Throughout the interviews, one of the most prevalent themes for all participants was how they experienced oscillating emotional states as a core, initiating factor for their creativity, and how this translated to the way they moved between each of the valences identified.

Before I explore the origins of the inter and intra-psychic dynamics that underly these valences and how they were presented in the participants' recollections of the situations, relationships and experiences that supported the development of their creativity, I wish to show how each participant flowed between the different valences, and the mechanisms used to move between them.
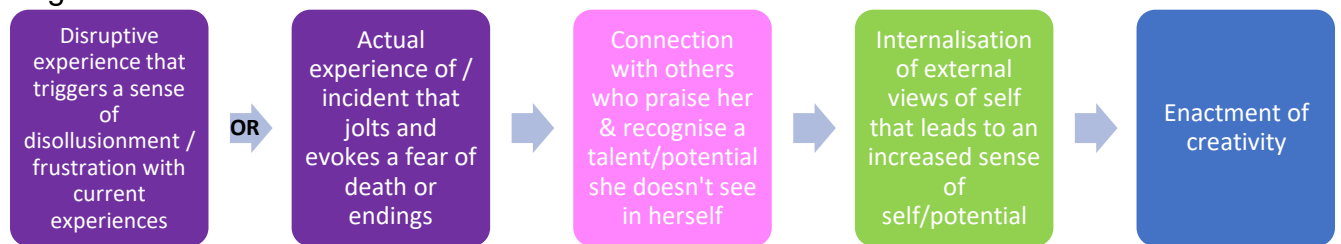
Creative flows

At the start of this research, I had assumed that the people I interviewed would have described entering a state of flow (Csikszentmihalyi: 1990)*, and the incidents, situations, and events[11] that enabled this to occur in organisations. However, what I found that I could not have predicted, was the way these creative flows took shape.
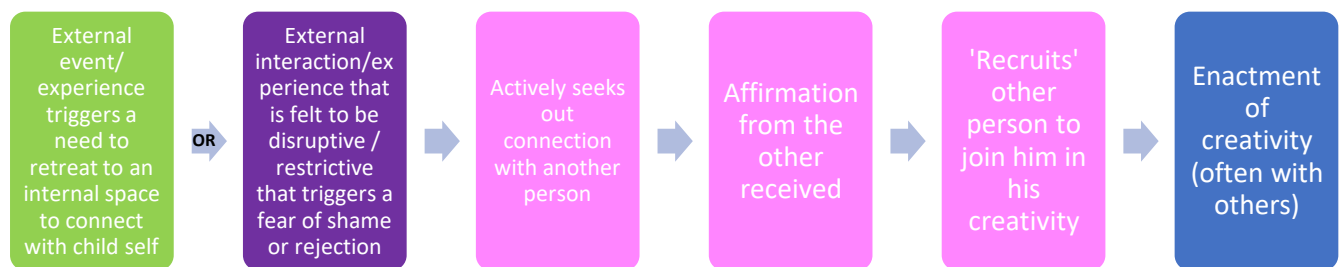
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11 Research question 1

Below is a diagram that shows these general patterns of flow[12] - there were of course exceptions, but in the main, the descriptions of their creativity took shape in the following ways.

Figure 3: Participant Creativity Flows

Angela:

| Disruptive experience that triggers a sense of disollusionment / frustration with current experiences | **OR** | Actual experience of / incident that jolts and evokes a fear of death or endings | → | Connection with others who praise her & recognise a talent/potential she doesn't see in herself | → | Internalisation of external views of self that leads to an increased sense of self/potential | → | Enactment of creativity |

Dave:

| External event/ experience triggers a need to retreat to an internal space to connect with child self | **OR** | External interaction/experience that is felt to be disruptive / restrictive that triggers a fear of shame or rejection | → | Actively seeks out connection with another person | → | Affirmation from the other received | → | 'Recruits' other person to join him in his creativity | → | Enactment of creativity (often with others) |

Luca

| Personal failure / rejection from others / seen externally as being on the outside or different | → | Seeks out an internal connection with key maternal figures | → | Intraverted / solo exploration of creativity (done on a small level) | → | Repeated experience of failure / being different to others | → | Reattempt at creativity (connected to original theme) | → | Connection with others to align them to his vision | → | Enactment of creativity |

Helen:

| Interactions with / observations of others & setting up self as different | → | Desire to be noticed & externally recognised as being different to others | → | External validation of difference / specialness / success | → | Enhancement of creativity and further development, often connecting with other creative people to do so | → | Enactment of creativity |

| **Key** | Pink = Connecting | Blue = Outsiding | Purple = Disrupting | Green = Internalising |

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12 Examples of each participants flows to be found in appendix 3

What can be seen in these flowcharts is that although each of the participants displayed elements of different valences at different points, none of them start in the same way or from the same valence. For instance, Angela starts with something external disrupting her; Dave begins with an internalisation of an external event that leads to an internal retreat; Luca experiences a rejection and Helen experiences interactions with others that trigger a desire to take up an oppositional stance. This challenged my initial assumption that there would be a commonality in the participants' experiences at the point of their creativity being initiated.

Also, as you can see, each participant followed a flow along a linear axis which was unexpected as I had assumed there would be more movement, especially as they had described the 'creative-in-the-mind' as being unpredictable and someone who exists outside the constraints of social 'norms' or boundaries. However, they all had clear patterns that could be seen in several examples of creativity throughout their interviews. This also connects to their stories being told chronologically, which suggests there is an internalised containing structure that enables them the freedom to play with ideas of difference, or of being different, which are apparent in their creativity.

By containment, I am using Bion's (1985) idea of the maternal relationship providing containment for the infant to be able to manage unmanageable feelings, such as a fear of annihilation. Bion (ibid) states that it is through the process of projective identification (Klein:1946) that the infant internalises an…

'...apparatus for regulation of a preconception with the sense data of the appropriate realization. This apparatus is represented by a model: the mating of pre-conception with sense-impressions to produce a conception'.

(Bion, W. R.: 1962;91)

In other words, it is through the internalisation of an experience of a '*good enough*' mother and resulting environment (Winnicott: 1949) that the infant can develop the internal mechanisms to be able to conceptualise ideas, which is a fundamental aspect of creativity.

Winnicott (ibid) states that with a '*good enough*' mother, the infant soon experiences their environment in a way where they internalise the good enough environment as a perfect one, which consequently releases the mother from ideas and pressures of perfection. He continues to suggest that the infant that is more quickly able to tolerate imperfect moments (i.e. the mother not always / immediately attending to either instinctive or primitive needs and impulses) has a higher IQ than those who are less able to tolerate imperfections. What could be seen in the interviews is the participants' ability to tolerate imperfections and to continue with the flow of their own creativity when confronted with challenges, hurdles, and embargoes. I will explore the importance of the participants' maternal relationships in more detail in the next chapter, but it is important to explain here that this internalised containing structure is connected to the participants' internalisation of deeply connected maternal relationships, albeit ambivalently so for Dave and Angela.

What was also interesting here was that although there was a linear flow or pattern to the way in which the participants moved from the initiation of their creativity to the enactment of it, they all oscillated between opposing states of mind or opposing

thoughts as a significant trigger for the movement between each of the states. For instance, Luca and Helen have an outsiding moment that is followed by a connecting one which mobilises the enactment of their creativity, whereas Angela and Dave both have a disrupting moment that is followed by a connecting one. However, for each of them, the experience is of a 'too far vs. too close' quality, e.g. Luca's experience of being on the periphery (in the school abroad where he was the only boy) which drives him back to family connections (moving to study in the same city as his brother), enabling his creativity to flourish. For Angela, the mechanism that underlies it is more around a fear, or actual experience, of loss. This was seen clearly when her cousin died but was more nuanced as this triggered a fear of losing herself too, i.e. her realisation that *"the risk of staying the same"* was bigger than the risk of taking the leap to try being an author.

Another similarity I can see in the participants' flows is the need for oscillating emotional states as not only an initiatory factor for their creativity but as a driver for their movement through the flow. This connects to Bion's (1962b) idea that frustration, and the capacity to tolerate frustration, is a core component of the development of thoughts as it is as though a contact barrier is experienced at each transition point that moves the participants from one state to the next. What can also be seen in the participants' descriptions of how this happens is that there is a need for a deeply connected (actual or previously internalised) interaction to enable this transition. For instance, Angela's connection to the teacher who saw her creative capabilities in a way she could not at that time; Dave's relationship with his peers at school, and both Luca and Helen's relationships with their maternal family members.

This could be evidence of the participants experiencing the contact barrier as a source of creativity, but does not explain how this happens, the contributing factors involved, or the way they not only experience this oscillation but seem to actively seek out this oscillation in everyday interactions and experiences. This connects to Watson's (2002) idea that, in the modern world, where things are easily and immediately accessible, everything can have the potential of being a contact barrier. This helps to make sense of how the participants have a different way of seeing / experiencing conflicted states and through their tendency towards, and need for, difference and disruption in the initiatory phase of their creativity. It is as though the participants have a way of internalising experiences that triggers and / or motivates their creativity.

What is different in what I have seen in the participants though is the quality of the frustration shared where they hold feelings of both big love and big hate at the same time[13]. It is as though they (seek to) exist in a space between connectedness with others and disconnectedness or individuation. This has a quality of ambivalence (Freud: 1915) but is more complex as it is based on an ability or capacity for cognitive dissonance and is more active than simply existing in a feeling state. It also has a more definite action to it that suggests it is not being driven simply by unconscious factors. This also connects to Stacey's (2001) notion that creativity happens at the edge of Basic Assumption groups and extends his ideas as the way the participants described their experiences felt to be a more sophisticated use of the dynamic. What could be seen is that the participants were using Basic Assumption functioning not as a defence as Bion (1961) suggests but instead in service of the creative task, i.e.

drawing on unconscious dynamics as an energy for progressing creativity rather than an inhibitor for action.

In other words, the move between these valences seems to be based on the individual's capacity to hold, and then seek and create this dissonance through a contact with earlier (containing) states and internal relationships, whilst maintaining contact with their current, adult-selves, which I will explore more in chapter thirteen.

Furthermore, the linear way the participants' creativity flows felt as though they have an energy always pushing them forward as they do not seem to be able to stay still, unless forced upon them by external influences, e.g. illness. This could be seen in the way they describe their creativity as emergent / coming to them, e.g. Angela saying her characters come to her; Dave describing his creative collaborations as "*just happening*", and Helen referring to ideas coming through her curiosity in the natural world around her.

Freud's (1911) theory of the life and death instincts goes some why to describe this as he argues that human behaviours are predominantly driven by life or death instincts. The life instinct is connected to survival, pleasure and reproduction and the death instinct (which is in opposition to and balance with the life instinct), is connected to feelings of hate, fear, and anger.

However, this theory seems somewhat reductionist as it does not consider the importance of social relationships and the context the participants highlighted as highly significant factors in the development of their creativity, nor does it go far enough to

explain how the oscillation happens. Having said that, it does connect to the opposing states seen in the participants' descriptions of their creativity, particularly in relation to their fear, or actual loss, of themselves or others that created an enhanced motivation for creativity, e.g. Angela's cousin dying; Luca's grandmother dying, and Dave and Helen's injuries / accidents.

When thinking about the life instinct, it seems easy to assume that it could be a source of creativity, especially when considering primitive creativity as sex and the creation of human life. Whereas the idea of the death instinct as being a source of creativity was unexpected as Freud (ibid) described it as being the source of more destructive elements of human behaviour, which seems counterintuitive for creativity. However, Halton's (2004) description of evolutionary creativity can go towards explaining the participants' creative flow and the oscillation between these states as:

"The emotional flux required for evolutionary growth through the assimilation of something new could be seen as comparable to the process of bereavement. Disruption and rebuilding take place in both cases. In evolution, feelings towards the new object oscillate between a depressive fear 'There is everything to lose by it and nothing to gain from it' and manic hope 'There is everything to gain from it and nothing to lose."

(Halton, W.: 2004;114)

Perhaps this flux or movement could be seen as an avoidance of the depressive position (Klein: 1935) due to the need for opposing states which could be considered more an enactment of paranoid-schizoid functioning due to the splits that are apparent, i.e. life and death. However, this does not help make sense of how the participants can project ideas of themselves into the future through their relationships with others. For instance, Angela's connection with the author that enabled her to see herself as being an author in the future; Dave's ability to connect with his peers, and Luca's ability

to help others connect to his creative ideas in order to create his designs for him. It also does not make sense of how the participants internalised external views of themselves, and how this contributed to the enactment of their creativity.

Bion's (1962b) notion of the importance of frustration and the capacity to tolerate it in the creation of thoughts and his ideas of containment (1985), alongside Winnicott's (1971) ideas of transitional objects and spaces, can both be used to help make sense of the way in which this happens. For instance, each participant has deeply connected relationships with significant others (starting with their mothers) that enable them to feel safe enough in their connections to tolerate uncertainty and to maintain what Bion (1970) referred to as negative capability (the ability to maintain a space of uncertainty and not knowing). This, alongside their ability to create a third, transitional space where this oscillation between life and death / known and unknown can exist is a core mechanism in the way in which the participants' creativity flows from initiation to enactment.

Another important aspect of the way the participants' creativity flowed from initiation to enactment was the difference between the way they described their ideas of creativity, in comparison to how this emerged through their flows or their prevalent valences. Below is a table that highlights the initiatory factors present and the more dominant valence for them which, except for Helen, did not align with their descriptions of themselves:

Table 10: Participant Descriptions of Self vs. Dominant Valences

	Description of self	Dominant valency & why
Angela	• Rule abider • Cautious • 'Normal' • Working-class • Different to her ideas of a creative person • Shy / quiet	**Disrupting** – although this is not Angela actively seeking to be disruptive but more an external situation or incident that disrupts her ideas of the current status quo or her internalised sense of self (and the associated limitations) which builds a frustration. It is through this frustration that an energy builds in her and mobilises her into enacting her creativity.
Dave	• Disruptor • Enjoys playing with boundaries • Misunderstood by most others • Exists on the outside of the group/organisation	**Connecting** – although this wasn't the initiatory moment, the majority of Dave's creative flow is spent connecting with others. This was surprising as his narrative was more about being an outsider but could be seen in the way in which he 'accidentally' connected with significant others in a way that meant they were able to join him in the enactment of his creativity.
Luca	• 'Hyperactive' as a child • Different to peers • Driven by intrinsic motivations • Incorporates all senses into creativity	**Connecting** – with others at the beginning and end of the creative process as he retreats to an earlier, womb-like space after connecting with his internalised ideas, and external real experiences, of the women in his maternal line. It is then at the point of failure that he reconnects with others in a way that changes the route of his creativity (although the source is still the same) in a way that then enables him to safely and effectively enact his creativity.
Helen	• Thinks differently to others • Creator of creativity not passive recipient • Mathematical and artistic • Misunderstood • Frequently not supported to flourish	**Outsiding** – experiencing something and setting herself up in opposition with them / the status quo. Connections with others comes through external validation of her creativity which reinforces her ideas of herself as being different to others. Once having experienced validation, Helen then is able to develop and enact her creativity more widely.

This shows that Angela and Dave's creative processes are driven by more intra-psychic dynamics / mental functions whereas Luca's drivers appear more inter-psychic. Helen however is slightly different as her drivers seem to be inter-psychic in the way she connects to others at the beginning of the flow, but this is in relation to positioning herself as different to them.

Again, this highlights the way these opposing / oscillating energies are enacted during their creative flows. For instance, how the focus on death acts as a driver for the participants' creativity, e.g. Angela's fear of loss of her sister and actual loss of her cousin; Dave's illness that stopped him from walking and triggered a shift in his creativity; Luca's loss of his grandmother and experience of the ending of his parents' marriage, and Helen's loss of the use of her arm for a short period of time which initiated a connection back to her more creative self. It is as though the feelings evoked by a fear of death and annihilation triggers a life energy that helps the initiation of their creativity, and it is during this third space (that exists on the boundary of life and death) in which their creativity is initiated. The participants then become compelled to recreate this emotional state as it is where they experience possibilities of what comes next; where anything is possible, except the idea of returning to where they have already been or what they have done before.

As mentioned, this connects to Halton's (2004) idea of the manic-depressive position as it highlights the active energies involved in the participants' creativity. Yet, they do not display the manic qualities this position would assume, and their creativity is not characterised by the ebbing and flowing between the two positions but instead the creativity is mobilised through this place of cognitive dissonance where the two opposing positions exist simultaneously. It is as though the energy of the manic-depressive state Halton (ibid) describes can be seen in the interviews as being born out of the oscillation between these valences, but when connected with their self-belief and / or an internalised notion of self as a creative person, there is not a manic energy. This suggests that the participants' containing structure could be connected to their

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sense of self and the development of their sense of agency (Stern: 1985), in a way that helps them navigate the disruptions experienced, and build the resilience needed to continuously develop their creativity.

Furthermore, when looking at the participants' flows, the other commonality is that they all seem to have a sense that something creative is there to be found but not knowing what it is, which evokes the association in my mind of someone being pregnant where you know there is a baby but you do not know what kind of person they will become to be. There is a sense of hopefulness that they are in touch with, and a sense that the creative 'thing' will emerge, and that they will be able to facilitate its emergence. This connects to Stern's (ibid) idea of the development of a sense of agency as they have a sense of self as being people with an internal apparatus to be able to change not knowing into something. This also connects to Bollas' (1989) theory on forces of destiny and fate as it is like they believe creativity is their destiny, which they are the curator of. They expect something to happen, they just are not sure what that will be.

Dancing on the edge

As well as the oscillation that can be seen in the way each participant moves along their creative flow and how they engage in their relationships with individuals, it can also be seen in the way they oscillate in and out of existing in organisations.

I will explore this further in a moment, but before I do, it is important to mention again that Luca was the only participant I found who was working in an organisation at the time of interview. Everyone else was either not in an organisation or working on the boundary. For instance, Angela had removed herself totally from wider organisations to become an author, and although she still has some connection to a wider group / organisation through the publishers, she still feels as though she has more agency and control over her creativity now[14]. Dave clearly communicated in the interview that he could not exist in organisations, even ones like the charity he worked for briefly, as he felt as if he was too restricted to flourish there. Therefore, he worked as a consultant at the periphery and actively sought out groups of other people who also identify as being outsiders, i.e. through the creative lab he set up for consultants to "*play with new ideas*". Helen was not working in an organisation at the time of interview and clearly communicated that the time she spends not working / focusing on her creative artisan products is where she is most free to 'play'. This see-sawing was most prevalent for her but could also be seen in Luca's ambivalence in being in an organisation and how he then had to split off the different parts of his life.

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14 This is something Angela spoke about in the book club I attended when I first met her, and she described her experience of having other people interested in her thoughts whilst feeling as though she doesn't have to write what other people want her to write.

I wonder if this difficulty existing in an organisation whilst being creative may be connected to how creativity is measured within organisations. For example, the participants repeatedly spoke about their experiences and ideas of creativity being measured through what is socially considered 'right' or 'wrong'. This started for them at the point of the transition from primary to secondary school, e.g. Dave stating this is the point where he started to exchange who he is to fit in, and Helen describing multiple experiences of having her abilities diminished and potential opportunities removed (flying school / physiotherapist training).

This connects to Winnicott's (1971) idea of the relationship between the human need for creativity and the relationship to the reality of the outside world:

'*It is creative apperception more than anything else that makes the individual feel that life is worth living. Contrasted with this is a relationship to external reality which is one of compliance, the world and its details being recognized but only as something to be fitted in with or demanding adaptation*.'

(Winnicott, D. W.: 1971;87)

This could be seen in the participants' conflicted experiences of the demanding adaptation needed to exist within organisations that clashes with their own ideas of themselves as creative people, and of the 'creative-in-the-mind' being someone who exists outside of the boundaries of what is expected in society or seen as 'normal'. This oscillation between the need participants expressed for affirmation from the social groups in which they existed in, and the need to be free from the constraints of organisational life, drives them to a place where they can more safely play with the idea of being different without social rejection. It is within this space that their creativity appears to flourish.

Mackinnon's (1962;31) study links to this as they found more creative people showed high levels of an *'openness to experience…freedom from petty restraints…high levels of energy…[and]… unquestioning commitment'*. Perhaps this helps to explain how the participants' creative flows happen (i.e. the unquestioning commitment) and the way they are free from the restraint of needing to exist within organisations.

Conversely, although the participants described their ideas of a creative person as existing on the periphery of the group or organisation and have themselves not been able to sustain existing in an organisation whilst also fully enabling their creativity to emerge, they actively sought (and seek) a replication of group experience through the relationships that were crucial to the development of their creativity. This was both through the affirmation they received (e.g. Dave's relationship with the OD director that promoted him) and through their desire to be seen as different, e.g. Luca's description of himself as different to other *'fashion people',* and Helen's description of her brain being different to that of other HR professionals due to the focus she has on data.

To summarise, the participants actively sought / seek to replicate an earlier space where they experience the oscillation between strong opposing emotional states (particularly life and death). I will explore the origins of this space more in the next chapter, but what can be seen here is the way they enact their creative flow by ideating an end point in their mind (the creative idea) and then connecting with, or relating to, others in a space that oscillates on the boundary of the organisation and then, through the connection with others, their creativity is initiated.

In other words, it is as though the participants are compelled to recreate the highly charged experience where they navigate the space between opposing states as it provides a space between endings and new beginnings where the only thing that is impossible is returning to what has already been. It is within this space that the oscillation happens, and their creativity is initiated and mobilised.

Chapter Thirteen – Seeking and (re)Creating Temporal Spaces

When starting this research, I was curious about how group and individual processes might be connected in the development of organisational creativity[15]. My assumption was that creativity would be initiated when people experience safe, containing (Bion: 1985) relationships within organisations. What I have found has been connected to this but what surprised me was that the participants did not focus on relationships experienced within organisations but instead on the development of their key relationships with their maternal figures, and how this then translated to their relationships with peers and other important figures.

This could be explained by the fact that only one of the participants was working in an organisation at the time of interview, however this does not align with the way they entered a state of *'reverie'* (Bion: 1967) in the description of the events; how this then seemed to be a source of later creativity, and how they actively sought out the same relational experience(s) throughout their lives in the creation of a space that enables their creativity to be initiated and then to flourish. Furthermore, even when recalling previous moments experienced within organisations, the impact mentioned was more in relation to their experiences of heightened potential for rejection from multiple others, as if the organisation represented a powerful group superego (Freud:1923), with the presence of maternal relationships and the spaces between individual minds being more prevalent.

I will now explore in more detail the origins of these spaces.

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15 Research question 2

A return to latency

One of the most interesting similarities in the interviews was that when asked to tell me the story of their life from when they first thought they were interested in creativity[16], each participant immediately returned to their early primary school memories[17]. When thinking about childhood memory recall, returning to this phase in life may not seem surprising as although it is thought we start to recall memories from about two and a half to three years old, most memories become clearer, and more accurately recalled, from the age of seven. This has been researched since the 1800s (Henri and Henri: 1898) and is commonly referred to as 'childhood amnesia' (Freud: 1905, Bachevalier: 1992, and Bauer: 2007). However, from a psychosocial understanding of the development of human capacity for creativity, this is an interesting finding as it goes against other research / theories which suggest children's development slows at this phase (latency - Freud: 1905). Yet, each participant immediately returning to this phase at the beginning of their interview suggests they experienced this time as a source of their creativity, or at least a phase that felt most creative for them. For instance, Dave described this phase as being his *"peak creativity"* and each of the other participants described moments at this phase of their lives with a level of passion and an energy that was unique to this time.

Furthermore, the participants had a way of telling the story of moments, interactions, and situations during this phase of their lives that had an introverted quality. By this, I am not referencing the personality types of introvert and extrovert, but to the way the

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16 The research question/SQUIN
17 Aged approx. 6-8 years old

storytelling valence happened here with a dream-like quality, similar to Bion's (1962)

notion of 'reverie' which he describes as:

'That state of mind which is open to the reception of any 'objects' from the loved object and therefore capable of reception of the infant's projective identifications whether they are felt by the infant to be good or bad. In short, reverie is a factor of the mother's alpha-function.'

(Bion, W.R.: 1962;36)

In other words, reverie is the space in which the mother expresses her love for the

infant, and it is through this relational space created between the mother and infant

that the ability to tolerate frustration (a core component of creativity) is developed.

Ogden (1994a) extends this to state that there is a kind of reverie experienced within

the relationship between the therapist and client; a third space between both of their

subjective experiences which he refers to as the '*analytic third'*. This could be seen in

the interviews with the space that was created between the participants and myself

through their storytelling which was highly engaging, and as if they all drew me into

their worlds so I could experience the memory with them, like one of Charles Dickens'

(1843) ghosts of Christmases past walking alongside them as they recalled their

memories. For instance, the almost romantic way Angela described the moment the

teacher chased her down the road to get her to apply for university; the way Dave

described the "*arse flashing"* moment to his mother's friend where I viscerally felt the

shame and excitement of the moment and struggled to stop nervous laughing; when

Luca described the moments where he explored his aunt and grandmother's jewellery

boxes overflowing with treasures, and how Helen described the first time she visited

a wool shop in London, calling it an "*Aladdin's cave"* of treasures and describing it so

the colours felt so clear it was like they popped out of the shelf, into my mind. Each of

these moments were so vivid in their storytelling, it was more than just engaging and is hard to verbally describe, which suggests something powerful and unconscious was present during these descriptions.

Bion (1967) describes reverie as entering a dream-like state and it is this that could be felt in the participants' recollection of the moments, incidents, and relationships they feel enabled their creativity to be initiated and developed. But what was most interesting was the way this then translated into the participants' later enactment of their creativity and how they would almost recruit people into their creativity through this dream, child-like quality.

Perhaps, as Freud (1905) thought that a failure to resolve each psychosexual stage of development would result in behaviours / pathologies in later life[18], this return to latency could be seen as the libidinal energy being internally focused (as seen in the introverted, reverie-like state), not dormant or latent as Freud (ibid) had argued, consequently acting as a source of the participants' creativity. This was shown in the way the participants' creativity maintained a connection with focus they had during this stage, for example, Luca's deep connection to his maternal relationships and his becoming a fashion designer for women with a particular focus on the shape of female bodies; Angela's continued focus on death and endings as a core component and driver in her books, and in the way her books almost immortalise her and Helen's focus on creating things with wool. So, it could be considered that the psychic energy, or latent libido to use Freud's (ibid) term, could be fixated at the point where the creative energy is first fully experienced or released by the individual. However, unlike Freud's

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18 i.e., smoking in adulthood as a failure to resolve the oral phase of development

descriptions of his patients, the participants did not show a pathology or 'stuckness' but it was more that they held a connection to the kind of creativity that was prevalent at this phase.

The role of the mother

Although the participants all started the interviews with a return to the latency phase, looking chronologically at the development and influence that their key relationships had on the development of their creativity, each of the participants began with an exploration of their maternal relationships. Luca and Helen both held ideas of their maternal relationships in a way that enabled them to develop a sense of their selves as creative people and described these as inspirational relationships for them, e.g. Luca saying that the source of his creativity had *"a very strong link back to"* to his mother and aunty, and Helen recalling being introduced to knitting by her mother and grandmother.

Conversely, Angela and Dave's relationships with their maternal figures were at times described as a potentially limiting factor in the development of their creativity, for example, Angela stating that she feels you *"learn a lot of your confidence from your same sex parent"* and that her mum *"always felt that the world was a potentially threatening, rather worrying place"*. This was also replicated in her relationship with the *"dead author"* whom she felt frustrated / disillusioned with, which then jolted her into writing the character's letter that formed the basis of her first book. This was similar to Dave's description of his parents as having left school early (similar to Angela's) and prioritising work over creativity, e.g. his mother encouraging him to get a role at the

factory which he experienced as being the beginning of him selling out who he was (a creative person) to earn money.

However, although Dave and Angela may have experienced their maternal relationships as a boundary or embargo to overcome, their descriptions were not fuelled with hate, aggression, or frustration; it was more that their internalised ideas of their maternal figures represented a restriction or boundary they (eventually) used to push against in the propelling of their creativity, similar to how Helen positioned herself in opposition to her brother and peers.

Even though the specific relationships the participants had with their maternal figures differed, one similarity was the early exploration of a connection with, and retreat to, spaces that connect with their internalised maternal figures as part of their creative process which they sought to replicate throughout their lives. This connects to Bion's (1967;116) idea that '*the mother's capacity for reverie is the receptor organ for the infant's harvest of self-sensation gained by its conscious.*'. In other words, it is the mother's ability to take in, through projective identification (Klein: 1946), the infant's raw emotional experiences (Beta elements) and then process and return them that enables the infant to experience them as manageable, actionable thoughts and experiences (Alpha elements). This could be seen through the incandescent descriptions of the participants' experiences of this retreat to womb-like spaces. For example, Angela's description of books being a space where two people's creativity connect and her description of baths after one of her readers read a book in its entirety in the bath; Luca's exploration of small spaces and jewellery boxes, and Helen's sewing box to store her treasures in and the "*Aladdin's cave*" material shop.

This retreat to the womb connects with Freud's (1905b) link between boxes with the insides of the mother. However, as mentioned previously, this return to the mother / womb was not in an envious or jealous way, as suggested by Klein (1957) when she described envy as being driven by a desire to rob the womb of its creativity, but instead characterised by an identification with the mother and with a feeling of hope and a sense that they are in touch with the creativity of the womb. Furthermore, this retreat to the womb is not like they are searching for the lost object as Klein (ibid) argues, but more searching for the object not yet found. In other words, the identification is with the hidden object; the bright new things that are not yet found; the treasures and ideas yet to be discovered, not searching for / attempting to replicate something that feels to be lost. Here, the participants are driven forward through the oscillation between the life and death drives, as mentioned previously, rather than seeking out a return / regression to the womb.

Perhaps the participants' ability to creatively find gaps in the market and to create new ideas is connected to this search for the object not yet found in the womb-in-the-mind, e.g. the new ideas in Angela's books; Dave's creative spaces for consultants to try new ideas; Luca's new fashion designs, and Helen's creations using familiar objects such as concrete and leaves in a new and different way. It is as if they actively seek to recreate and amplify the ideas of the creative possibilities of the mother's womb in the way they seek out and / or actively create spaces to safely explore new ideas, thoughts, and activities with others.

Furthermore, the way the participants enacted their creativity was more proactive than the Kleinian description of trying to make sense of something that already happened

or existed, as they repeatedly sought out new thoughts or spaces yet to be explored. As mentioned previously, this connects to Bollas' (1989) idea of forces of destiny rather than fate as the participants are not resolved to a position of fate where they do not have agency over their creativity and would be envious of other's creativity or hindered by the limitations imposed by others. For instance, Angela's mother's nervousness or Dave, Luca and Helen saying that if they had experienced different adults at secondary school that were more encouraging of their creativity, they would have had different careers. Instead, they describe their creative successes as being inevitable, as if it was their destiny to fulfil their creative potential; it is just the way their creativity is materialised and later manifests that changes, e.g. Luca being a fashion designer not a dancer.

Throughout the interviews, the participants gave examples of moments when they would actively seek to replicate their experiences from this phase of their development. However, it is important to note that this retreat to an earlier phase of development is not the same as the participants entering a state of '*formal regression'* (Freud:1900) where an individual returns to an earlier state of psychic functioning, as they were all still able to hold an adult-like mental space. This state connects more to Freud's (ibid) idea of '*temporal regression'* as they do not fully regress. It is like they create a third, transitional space in their minds where they are able to hold both the old and the new / their younger and present selves simultaneously.

When starting this research, I was curious about the potential connection between tradition and innovation in the creative process[19], with an assumption that creativity

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19 Original research question 5

would be phoenix-like where the new thing is formed from what has been before whilst what no longer serves a helpful function is removed or left behind. However, what I found was that the participants were able create a space where both what was, and what is to be, are held in a third space between the old and new. This could be seen in how they communicated their earlier experiences in such a way that made it feel as though the emotional states were live and recent but not overwhelming or uncontained (Bion: 1962). This seems to be a key aspect of their ability to maintain creative states in adulthood as they all described moments where they reconnect with their childlike state through play or playfulness whilst also not fully regressing into a child-like state as this would not evoke the responses / calls to action the participants evoked in others around them.

This connects to Winnicott's (1971) notion of play and his idea that this earlier state needs to be engaged in later life for creativity to happen, and highlights the importance of the space to be able to retreat to an earlier phase of psychological development without entering a formally regressive state, which is core to the participants' ability to continuously develop and maintain their levels of creativity. This also goes some way to answer the research question of how creative individuals apply their creativity to organisations[20] as what could be seen is the need for a space to be able to safely enter temporal regression, i.e. for the organisational environment to enable people to get in contact with their childlike capacity for play whilst not regressing into a dependant state.

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20 Actual research question 3

The other characteristic prevalent when the participants described their return to this earlier phase of development, and connection with their maternal figures, was their ability to be deeply curious about the world around them with a sense that they have control to influence it. For instance, they all described an intense curiosity about the world around them as if they sought to deeply understand what they were experiencing which triggered a desire to replicate it. I wonder if this connection to their maternal figures through this curiosity and exploration of the world around them then encouraged them to seek to replicate and take control of the creative process connected to their development of a sense of agency (Stern: 1985) as infants. The reason for this thought is both how they all (excluding Angela) connected with their maternal figures in a way that seemed to evoke a sense of connectedness with the mother's capacity for creativity that enhanced their slightly narcissistic / omnipotent ideas of themselves as creatively able. This is similar to a pairing dynamic (Bion: 1962) with a sense that the temporal space they created in their minds connected them with the mother in a way that enabled them to have the power to collaboratively create the 'messiah'. This manifested in later life in the way they created a temporal space where they are joined by the task in the pairing dynamic, creating a third space where the inter and intra-psychic worlds come together with the task.

This also connects to Halton's (2004;108) idea that charisma in leaders is similar to childhood omnipotence as it functions '*to persuade others to follow a better way to a new world…followers feel that by participating in the enterprise their ordinary lives are elevated to a higher plane*'. This could be seen in the way the participants were able to get other people to connect to their ideas of creativity (especially Dave), but it does not go far enough to describe the way they did this through the creation of the temporal space

that they could collaboratively enter with the 'other'. This notion of the charismatic leader as the persuader also evokes an idea of power which was not present in the interviews.

To summarise, the participants repeatedly sought out / actively recreated a temporal space where they could regress to an earlier phase of development and experience a connectedness with their maternal figures in a way that then enabled them to maintain connections with their adult-states of mind at the same time. The quality of the temporal space they repeatedly created enabled them to be able to connect with others in a way that not only got the other people alongside them on their creative journey in a safe and non-threatening way (i.e. not characterised by a fear of rejection from others or envy), but also enabled them to powerfully project their creative ideas into other people's minds as a way of enabling the enactment of their creativity.

This goes some way to respond to the research question of what individual and group processes are important in the development of creativity in organisations as it shows how the participants experienced the external world and how they experienced others in a way that then shaped their ideas of themselves as creative people. The participants also described moments where they were locating their psychic creative energy into others to be able to remove or reduce the fear of shame or rejection of their creativity and to also mobilise others to enact their creative vision. Therefore, when thinking about the application of this learning in an organisational context, it is important to focus on the way the group experiences the creative offerings as well as the way the individual experiences the group. This must include an experience of

connectedness without the individual feeling overpowered and consumed by the group.

A space between

As mentioned previously, the participants all returned to the latency stage of development at the beginning of the interviews and described moments where they entered a state of temporal regression where they connected with their internalised maternal figures to mobilise and enhance their creativity. However, what was also interesting about this return to latency was how the participants then mobilised their creativity from this phase of development onwards in a way that that was characterised by an internalisation of their (real or imagined) sibling and peer relationships. This both encouraged their ideas of themselves as creative people and offered them a safe place to play with new ideas without fear of being rejected by others. For instance, the way Angela created a phantasy of peer and sibling relationships through projecting herself into the Enid Blyton books as a defence against the anxiety of the potential loss of her sister; Dave's connection with his peers in school performances in a way that reduced the potential for shame or rejection from the wider group; Luca's connection with his peers through his drawings and constant narrative as being 'disruptive' and different from his siblings and peers, and Helen's positioning of herself as being a creator of creativity rather than a receptor of other people's creativity, like her brother.

This could be explained through Erikson's (1950) psycho-social stages of development, specifically '*initiative vs guilt*' (IvG) and '*industry vs inferiority*' (IvI)[21] as the IvG stage is the time where the child is focused on their connections with peers and characterised by the use of play as a vehicle for the child to explore their interpersonal skills, and IvI is where the child becomes more focused on their peer group and where there is an increase in the child needing to demonstrate skills and behaviours that are more widely socially accepted.

Furthermore, if, during IvG, too much control is experienced by the child, then 'guilt' becomes more prevalent, however, if the right boundaries are experienced then 'initiative' prevails. And, during IvI, if the child experiences rejection from their peers at this time, a sense of inferiority can be enhanced, but if they receive positive connections and affirmation from their peer group, 'industry' prevails. This could be seen in the interviews where the participants described the difference between their experiences in primary and secondary school and how they became more aware of how their peers experienced them and how they started to identify themselves as being creative (or not) in relation to others.

This could be seen as the source of the valences of 'connecting', 'disrupting' and 'outsiding' as the participants described moments of connecting with their maternal figures, then the adults in school and their peers in a way that introduced the notion of in and out groups which highlights the disruptive nature of the creative outsider. For instance, Angela's initial reluctance to see herself as a creative ('careless') person; Dave's desire to be central to the group whilst also being noticed as being different

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21 Erikson's (ibid) IvG and IvI stages are chronologically aligned to Freud's (ibid) latency stage.

and special; Luca being experienced as different by his peers, as disruptive by his peers' parents to the extent that his parents took him to be assessed by a psychologist, and to Helen's desire to be different from her brother and later peers, e.g. bringing in different objects to create the rocket in the class.

Additionally, as this stage of childhood (latency) is also characterised by the increase in a child's awareness of their peer and sibling relationships as being a space for them to play and enact their curiosity, it seems as though the energy which appears to be refocused on the development of their cognitive and social functioning (of which creativity is considered one [Csikszentmihalyi:1999]) is being remembered by the participants.

This connects to Kolodny's (2014) idea that it is through the resolution of the Oedipal dynamics and a taming of the libidinal energy at this time that enables the child to engage in their learning at school. Kolodny (ibid) also links this to Erikson's (1950) psycho-social stages of development and highlights the importance of the core relationships a child develops with their teachers and other adults as having a crucial role in the development of their creativity.

This also connects to many theories of child development, especially those focusing on sibling and peer relationships (Dunn: 1998/2004/2005; Music: 2014), yet none of them explore the nature of these relationships or the way these relational experiences are internalised and then replicated, i.e. through the creation of the temporal space they repeatedly sought out. These theories also focus solely on the differences between parental / adult and sibling / peer relationships, which is too dyadic in nature

to fully connect to the complexity in the way in which the participants internalise their relational experiences with both adults and children, and the way in which these combined experiences help shape their creativity.

It could be seen in the participants' biological narratives that their development of a strong sense of self was formed both in relation, and in opposition, to the internalised parental super-ego (Freud: 1923) and then tested out within their sibling and peer relationships which gave rise to the participants' creative identity. It is then through this move from a focus on the inter-psychic to the intra-psychic dynamics that a third space is created between the individual and the group that creates the space for their creativity to be possible.

The creation of this third space between the participants and the others around them is like the temporal space they created but different as it is not characterised by the regression into an earlier psychic state but more a place where the connection with others happens. This is something that the participants experienced from an early age and continued throughout life, and is what characterises the valences identified.

Another interesting element of this third space is that the participants not only have the capacity to hold the space between themselves and others but also between what is known and unknown - this is something others may find unsettling, but they then actively invite and incite it.

This connects to Halton's (ibid) idea that in evolutionary creativity:

'There is an element of surrender to non-purpose thinking that opens the boundary between conscious and unconscious parts and allows a free flow of ideas, images, dreams, feelings, memories, perceptions, and new imaginings to enter consciousness…the transition from an old synthesis to a new one involves a period of flux during which there are feelings of both loss and gain'.

(Halton, W.: 2004;112)

This is true of the participants, as it is through this third space that they gain contact with the less conscious thoughts which enables this free-flowing too happen, but it also misses the extent to which they trust their own abilities to create something, despite not knowing what that thing will end up being. Perhaps there is a space between initiatory creativity that hinges on the paranoid-schizoid position, and evolutionary creativity which hinges on the dependency position?

This also connects to Bollas' (1989) ideas of forces of destiny vs. fate as it is another example where they enter a space of uncertainty with a sureness of their own ability to create something which enables them to tolerate uncertainty of what exactly will be created. This could be seen in the way Angela described the process of writing a book not with a certainty of what the book will be, but as an emergent process whereby the characters came to her. And in the way that Dave described the accidental way in which he played keyboard with the girl at a school performance, as though they just entered a creative space with each other where the music just happened. When Luca took apart his mother's lampshade and ended up making a crinoline dress for a doll with it, or when Helen had leftover concrete around the house and went for a walk and the idea to combine leaves she found with the concrete in an artistic creation just 'playfully' emerged.

It is as though the participants' internalised containing frame[22], alongside their previous experiences of being able to tolerate the mess of creativity, acts as a container for their potential anxieties, or risk of shame and rejection that creativity evokes. This is what they actively seek out / replicate both in terms of the relational and environmental conditions they find themselves in, in later life. This is supported by more recent search in neuroscience (Xu et al: 2022) and in psychosocial development of curiosity and resulting creativity (Stokoe: 2021) as Xu et al (ibid) found that people's brains worked more effectively on creative problem solving when working with a partner. And Stokoe (2021;55) argues that '*the concept of a third position turns out to be crucial for the capacity to think, and especially for the capacity to think in a hostile environment'*, which reinforces the importance of human connections in the development of creativity. However, these theories still do not explore the social and political context people exist in, but more recognise its importance.

Furthermore, the external environment is really important in terms of how the different valences emerge and the extent to which this third space is enabled. What could be seen in the interviews is the participants' need for an environment (relational and group context) to adjust to their individual needs whilst not rejecting them from the group to be able to make it work. In other words, although the initial 'trigger-motivator' for their creativity stems from an internalisation of external social, relational and political factors and has an internal focus, they need a 'receptor-container' to receive their creative offerings in a way that is not rejecting of their creativity or too controlling.

Chapter Fourteen: Methodological Reflections and Considerations

Having explored the core findings and emerging thoughts from the research, I will now share some of the key reflections on the methodology and potential implications for further research.

Mirroring of experiences

When researching within a psychosocial framework, it is well known that individual experiences are important to consider as impacting factors for the reason behind why one may be drawn to the topic and method of study. However, what was particularly unexpected was that each aspect of the research journey has been mirrored in my personal life and experiences. For instance, the move away from trauma in the thesis topic mirrored my work moving from working for an organisation that directly supports children and young people who experienced trauma to then working in an insurance company, and then finding my way back to another children's charity that then works with trauma. This happened at the exact same time the focus of my thesis moved from wanting to understand the impact of trauma on organisations to then wanting to focus on creativity, and then the emergence of death and loss as a theme emerging from the data.

This mirroring also happened in the way I approached the methodology of data collection and analysis as I started wanting a wild, free and creative methodology but then realised the potential risk of the creativity sitting in the method not the content, so

I turned to something with more structure and boundaries (BNIM) but this then felt too constrictive when approaching the data analysis, so I found a method that was connected (as BNIM is based on Grounded Theory), but found a more generative and evolutionary approach that enabled the themes to emerge more freely.

As mentioned previously, another theme that emerged was the way the participants would seek to create a space for others to engage in their creativity with them. This was mirrored in my own experiences of the interviews as they all made me feel like they were inviting me to join them in a paired / even way. This was prevalent for me in the way I felt on a peer-like level with them where neither their 'expert at creativity' role nor my researcher role were felt to create a power dynamic between us. This could have been seen as an enactment of Bion's (1962) Basic Assumption Pairing (BaP), but as both the space created in the interview and the way they recalled multiple experiences of being productive with others in their creativity throughout their lives, it does not connect to BaP where the group is invested in maintaining the status quo so never achieve productivity. Instead, what could be seen was the temporary relational system created in the interview and the experiences of being creative in groups they described were examples where BaP was being used in service of the task (creativity or interview), almost as a more productive and effective pairing created through the temporary relational systems / experiences.

Furthermore, my experiences throughout the interviews and thesis writing process have mirrored the themes of the participants, for instance, the need for mine and their work to be seen as special, important, and different. This was challenged for me with the conscious / logical knowledge that not everyone will find this topic interesting and

recognising that although four participants is a viable sample size for the methodology, there are limitations in terms of the generalisability of the findings. This also connects to a nervousness I felt about getting my thoughts out of my head to be shared with others and how these thoughts may be received by others. This is something I noticed in Winnicott's work when he was writing about his experience of the response to his ideas on Transitional Objects: *'I am interested in the fact that right through the field of child-care this idea has caught on, and sometimes I feel that I have been given more than my due reward in the area'*. (Winnicott: 1971;54).

Therefore, it seems as though a potential nervousness at how one's creativity may be received by others, alongside feeling excitement for these thoughts, could be connected to the topic of creativity.

Finally, the other aspect of mirroring that emerged for me personally in the research was how trauma and loss impact the drivers for creativity as a significant early life trauma emerged for me during the exploration of the data analysis, which when explored further in therapy, I could see as an early source of my creativity through the process of disassociation.

Lived life as a told story

As mentioned in the cross-case analysis chapters, one of the most interesting and unusual aspects of the methodological findings is that each of the participants shared their biographical stories in a way that had limited, or no variation to the chronological order in which these events happened. It is as though the chronological order acts as a container for the re-telling of their stories about the development of their creativity, similar to the containing framework internalised through the development of their maternal relationships.

It is as though the participants have built up a story about themselves, and a deep faith and belief they give themselves, that their story is solid, even when they have external experiences that challenge this. For instance, the way Angela recalls the teacher following her down the road from school and encouraging her to apply for university as a life changing moment that influenced her ability to unleash her creative potential, but the teacher not remembering the interaction when she mentioned it to him years later.

To clarify, I am not questioning the validity of this experience but merely shining a light on the way in which the participants develop narratives about their experiences that have supported the development of their creativity, which are set and reinforced by external interactions, even when these interactions may evoke some doubt. This reinforcement of the idea of a creative narrative could also be seen in Dave's interview, particularly when any moments of surprise recollection ("*I forgot about that*") were swiftly followed by a description of a moment of his creativity that was reinforced by

the presence of a peer or external sources that could validate his experience, e.g. referencing his TED talk or paired work he has done.

Furthermore, these narratives are very coherent which is an unusual finding from a methodological perspective as it is expected that there would be moments of recollection that would waiver or be confused in some way, but the participants were all very clear on their stories and continued along the path of their story without deviation. This may make sense of why the first sub-sessions lasted longer than anticipated, as it is as though the SQUIN opened up a space for the participants to reflect on their life stories and to share them with me. But it seemed to be in contrast to the theme of mirroring and the flexibility that was needed in the approach to the method, and in the participants' flexibility in the enactment of their creativity when faced with embargoes / hurdles.

Chapter Fifteen: Summary and Conclusion

Having initially set out to explore the initiatory factors necessary for organisational creativity to occur, I had anticipated there being a mixture of individual, group and systemic processes at play, but what I had not anticipated was the extent to which the internalisation of these group experiences shaped the participants' sense of self a creative people, the format in which their creativity took shape, nor the way this research would change me and the way I feel about my own creativity.

It is important to note again here that I am not making generalised statements about the factors necessary for creativity to happen in organisations, but what I feel I can say is that the common experiences shared by the participants helped me to gain some insights into not only their experiences but also mine and that of the people I have worked with, and for, since starting this research.

One main dynamic that emerged was the relationship between the individual and the group / organisation in how difficult it felt for the participants to exist in an organisation. This is clearly a lens that is coloured by the fact that I could not get access to participants currently leading in organisations but is also something that I have experienced myself and have seen in others, which suggests it could be something about the nature of the creative person.

However, in the moments where it has been possible for the participants to exist within organisations, what has been present is a space where they are able to explore their creativity in a way that feels freeing for them and safe in terms of how their creativity

will be experienced by others. I would like to position this relationship between the internal world of the individual and the culture and environment of the organisation as the relationship between the 'trigger-motivator' and the 'receptor-container'.

The individual's internal trigger-motivator is also connected to their internalisation of core relationships, which for the participants, hinged on their initial maternal relationships and the resulting internalised image of their mother figure having a capacity for reverie that could then be replicated in group and organisational settings. The receptor-container capacity is where their creativity could be affirmed and recognised in a way that did not evoke envy of their creativity, or a sense in the individual that they were being used for it.

Furthermore, the participants' exploration of their maternal relationships in the enactment of their creativity is characterised by their capacity to go beyond parental (and organisational) embargoes and taboos, and to step outside externally set limitations in order to pursue their creative endeavours. This, alongside their ability to draw on a sense of agency to create a space for creativity to happen, seemed to be an initiatory factor. To expand further, this initially was an internal process that they then drew on through the process of temporal regression and then the participants continuously sought to replicate this as a space outside / with others which they then enacted through the vehicle of storytelling.

Finally, the three valences that emerged highlight the importance of the inter and intra-psychic relationships that are essential in the process, but they also highlight that for the participants there needed to be a fine balance between feeling connected to others

whilst also being able to remain on the outside of the group so they could provide a level of disruption that was a core component of their creativity. This is because they were fundamentally disrupting theirs and others' ideas of what is normal and possible in the creative process, a failure to do so would have been a repackaging of what currently was and not creativity that led to change and innovation.

Furthermore, the way this happens is interesting as, through storytelling, they are able to create imagery in the minds of others that appears to invite them into their third / temporal space. It is as though they initiate an invitation to join in their minds, which then evokes a sense that it becomes all-consuming and mobilising. This is because the third space they create enables a parity in the relationships as they exist on a lateral level, which replicates the nature of lateral / peer relationships developed in childhood, as shown through the participants' return to latency.

Whilst recognising the limitations of an in-depth study, these findings are important in the search for clarity around the organisational conditions that enable creativity to occur as it is the balance of containing relationships with enough freedom to play that enables the space for creativity to occur.

Perhaps it could be considered that the role of an organisational consultant is to provide both the containment and jolting needed to challenge the organisational status quo, triggering creativity and consequently change / innovation.

Further areas of interest

As well as shining a light on the individual experiences of the participants that helped and / or hindered the development of their creativity and their ability to be creative within group and organisational settings, this research has opened up an abundance of questions that I feel could be researched further.

Firstly, I am curious why it was so difficult to find participants in creative leadership roles in organisations. Is this because they do not exist in organisations as they either leave, outsource their creativity or exist on the periphery of organisations? Or are they too busy to free up time to engage in reflections about their creativity and the sources of it? Does it feel too exposing to share thoughts about their experiences? Or does the potential exposure to envy of their creativity hinder their ability to share their thoughts?

I would also like to further consider the way each participant returned immediately to latency and the way in which the temporal regression to a childlike state happens without fully regressing emotional states / staying in an adult headspace.

Another thing I would like to find out more about is the connection with maternal relationships that each of the participants raised, especially if there is a disruption in the relationship as all the participants still had their parents around at the time of interview and described good enough maternal relationships.

I would also like to consider the impact this research may have on the ideas of how organisations are structured and the way in which organisations can create the space

for creative individuals to feel both connected to the organisation and its purpose whilst also being enabled to disrupt the status quo.

This would need to be researched and tested, but the initial hypothesis based on the themes that have emerged for these participants is that they would need to be in thought leadership type roles where they are able to explore the potential for things in the organisation to be different without being part of the organisational structures. I would particularly like to test out the possibility of having more linear / lateral leadership structures rather than more traditional, hierarchical ones too, or for those self-identified creative individuals to be outside of people management completely.

In other words, instead of organisations being divided by functions based on skillsets, i.e., finance, IT, customer service, HR etc. the organisation would need to be structured in terms of the task / desired outcome. This could be structured by having multi-disciplinary teams segmented in relation to the task / phase of the work or customer need / demand.

The organisational measures would also need to be aligned to this structure as what organisations measure impacts the ways in which creativity can happen. This was highlighted in the interviews through the participants' experiences of their creativity being measured which started from secondary school and was compounded in organisations as they felt that the ideas of what was good / bad limited their ability to play with ideas of difference and test these out.

In conclusion, the experience of researching the development and manifestation of individual creativity and its organisational relevance has been a deeply intimate and explorative one that has raised many questions as well as answering some, and shining a light on some things I had not originally considered.

It has also highlighted the importance of the relationships with others and the ability of an organisation to be able to tolerate the disruption needed for creativity to happen without rejecting individuals or evoking group feelings of shame, and to offer a sense of connectedness and containment that is needed for the process of creativity to feel safe for individuals.

It has also shown me that these themes, such as a need for a third space, a retreat to the womb and temporal regression have been prevalent in the works of creative people, but not explicitly known, noticed or verbalised. For instance, the Room of Requirements in Harry Potter (Rowling: 2000) that creates a space where people can come together and have anything they need; the retreat to the womb the children take through the wardrobes filled with furs into a magical world in The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (Lewis: 1950), or with Peter Pan (Barrie: 1904) representing the perpetual child-like state that never leaves creative people.

'*Every child is an artist, the problem is staying an artist when you grow up*'.

(Pablo Picasso)

(Word Count: 47,588)

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Appendices

Appendix One: Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form

Tavistock and Portman Trust Research Ethics Committee
Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form

If you have any queries regarding the conduct of the programme in which you are being asked to participate, please contact:
Trust Quality Assurance Officer

The Researcher
Name: Stephanie Davies
Address:
Telephone:
Email:

Consent to Participate in a Research Study
The purpose of this letter is to provide you with the information that you need to consider in deciding whether to participate in this study.

Project Title
The Tavistock Research Ethics Committee have given ethical approval for the following research project:
"An exploration of the initiatory factors necessary for organisational creativity to occur"

Project Description
This research is interested in exploring how creativity happens in organisations and the process of creativity.
Participants will be required to commit to one face-to-face interview (in person or via Zoom / Teams depending on location and Covid19 restrictions). The interview will last for a minimum of one hour and could last up to three hours, depending on how much information the participant shares.
The interview will be structured by having an open question at the beginning, such as 'please could you tell me about your experience of setting up this [organization / project / venture]. This is followed by a series of clarification or follow-up questions.
The type of interview method used may lead to participants uncovering things they were not expecting, which may have an emotional impact on participants. A participant pack will be provided to offer signposting to relevant external support if needed, and a follow-up meeting with the interviewer post interview if required and appropriate.

Confidentiality of the Data
The data gathered from the interviews (recordings of the interviews and written transcription) will be held electronically and shared with a data analysis focus group comprising of five members of a data analysis focus group and two thesis supervisors, all of whom are bound by confidentiality.
All data gathered will be stored securely and in accordance with up to date GDPR guidelines, and any identifiable features will be removed from the content before being added to the written thesis or any other publication. The only exception to the data being held confidentially is if there is a risk of imminent harm being caused to or by the participant.
All raw / unprocessed data will be permanently deleted three years upon completion of the programme.

Location

Interviews will take place during working hours (as defined as 9:00 am – 5:00 pm) unless otherwise requested by the participant. Face-to-face interviews will take place at the participant's work location or a neutral venue hired by the interviewer.

Remuneration

No monetary payment will be made for engaging in this research.

Disclaimer

You are not obliged to take part in this study and are free to withdraw at any time during the interview phase. Should you choose to withdraw from the programme, you may do so without disadvantage to yourself and without any obligation to give a reason. The only exclusion to this is if withdrawal is requested at the point where data collection has been completed and the write up is in process.

Consent to Participate in an Experimental Programme Involving the Use of Human Participants

I have the read the information leaflet relating to the above programme of research in which I have been asked to participate and have been given a copy to keep. The nature and purposes of the research have been explained to me, and I have had the opportunity to discuss the details and ask questions about this information. I understand what it being proposed and the procedures in which I will be involved have been explained to me.

I understand that my involvement in this study, and particular data from this research, will remain strictly confidential in terms of individual contributions. All individual contributions will be anonymised in the event of the completion of the thesis or in relation to any later publication relating to this subject area. Only the researchers involved in the study will have access to the data. It has been explained to me what will happen once the experimental programme has been completed.

I hereby freely and fully consent to participate in the study which has been fully explained to me. Having given this consent I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the programme at any time without disadvantage to myself and without being obliged to give any reason.

Participant's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

………………………………………………………………….
Participant's Signature

…………………………………………………………………………………..
Date: ………………………….

Interviewer's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS):
STEPHANIE DAVIES
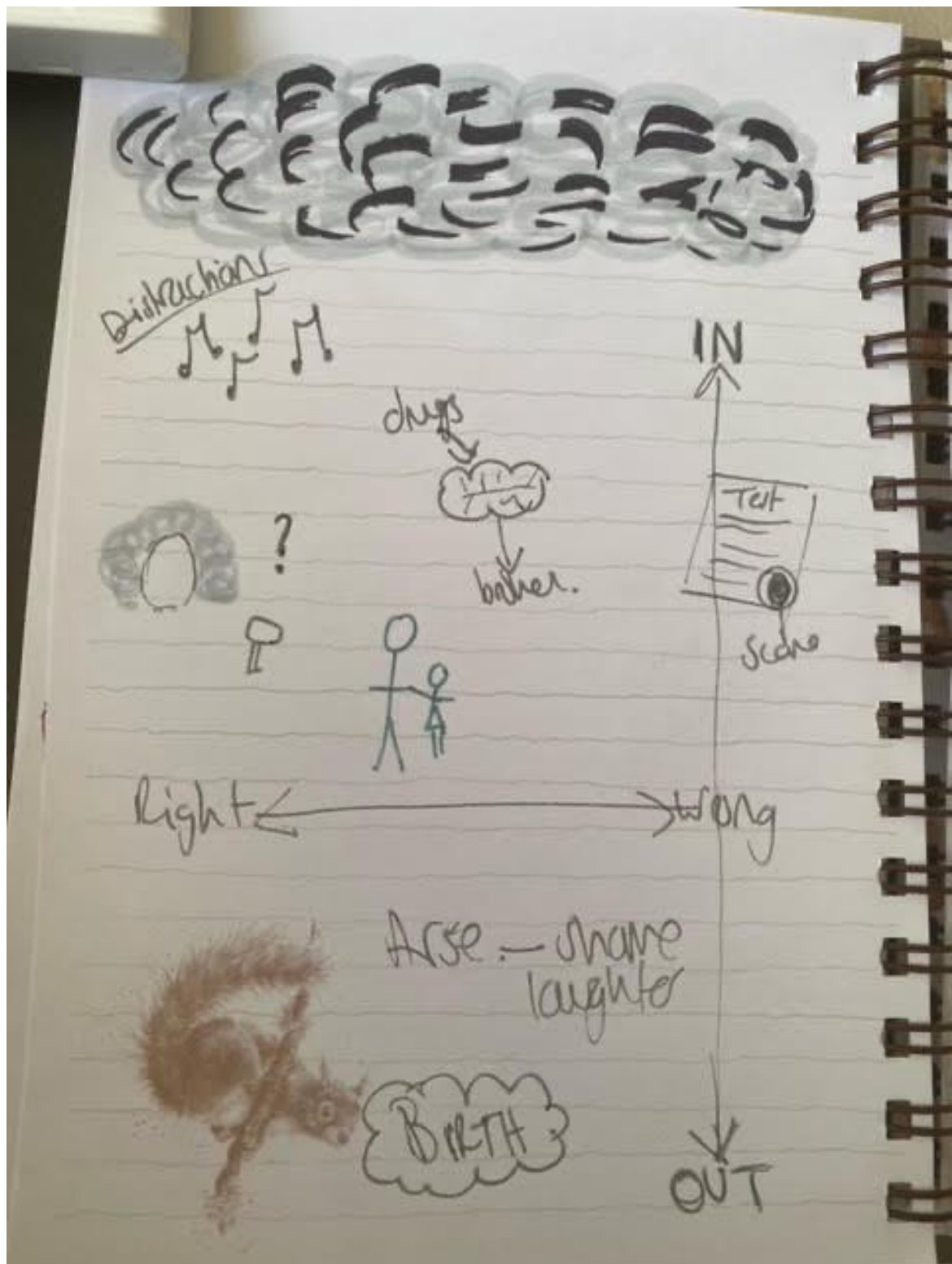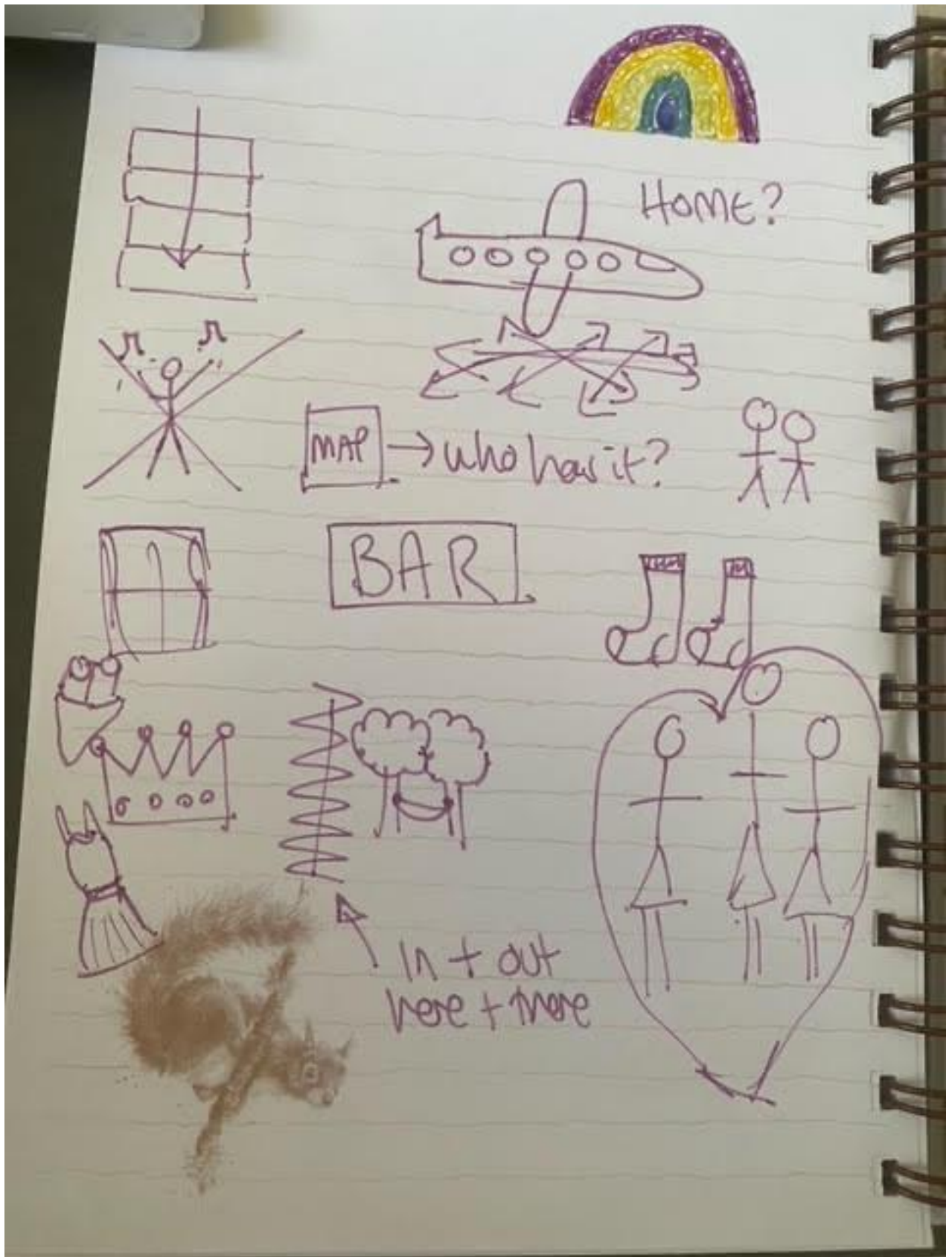Interviewer's Signature:
Date:

After each interview, I spent a few minutes drawing the first things that emerged in my mind as a way of visualising my experience of the interviews with the aim of gaining insight into the conscious and unconscious dynamics that may have been at play during the interview.

A2a: Angela

A2b: Dave
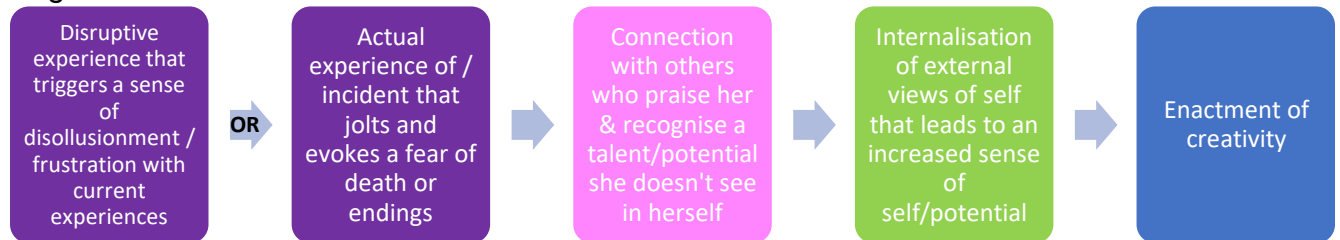
A2c: Luca

A2d. Helen

Appendix Three: Examples of creative flows

Below are the creative flows for each of the participants with an example to highlight the way they moved through the flow in practice/throughout their lives so far.

Key   Pink = Connecting   Blue = Outsiding   Purple = Disrupting   Green = Internalising

Angela:

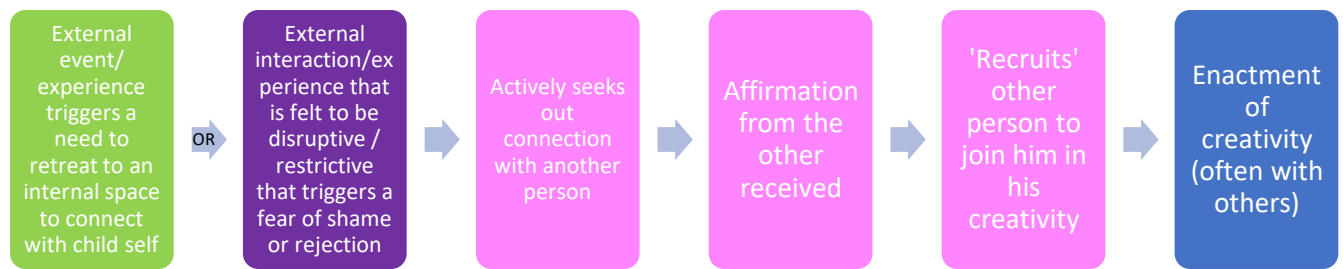| Disruptive experience that triggers a sense of disollusionment / frustration with current experiences	**OR**	Actual experience of / incident that jolts and evokes a fear of death or endings	→	Connection with others who praise her & recognise a talent/potential she doesn't see in herself	→	Internalisation of external views of self that leads to an increased sense of self/potential	→	Enactment of creativity

Example:

1. Sudden death of her cousin which put her in touch with her own mortality, triggering earlier (childhood) anxieties about death, annihilation, and a fear of being forgotten.
2. Connection with someone who had recently left their job to become an author – this was someone that Angela connected with due to seeing similarities between herself and this other person, i.e. not coming from a wealthy background.
   At the same time, receiving praise and support (emotional and financial) from others around her to help her become an author, i.e. a family member signing her up to, and paying for, a creative writing course.
3. Realisation, through the internalisation of this external praise and affirmation, that she does have a creative mind and that there was a bigger risk on her as a person if she stayed in a secure but non-creative role than if she took the jump to try being an author.
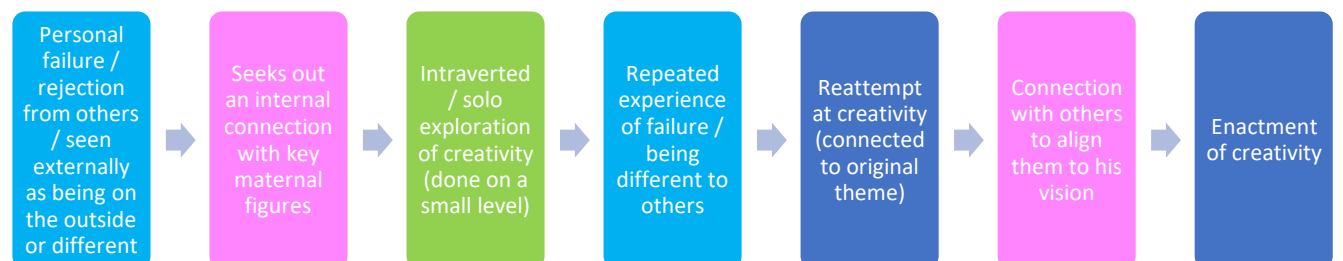4. Writing her first book

Dave:

| External event/ experience triggers a need to retreat to an internal space to connect with child self | OR | External interaction/experience that is felt to be disruptive / restrictive that triggers a fear of shame or rejection | → | Actively seeks out connection with another person | → | Affirmation from the other received | → | 'Recruits' other person to join him in his creativity | → | Enactment of creativity (often with others) |

Example:

1. Failing at school and being told he had to get a job at the factory, triggering a sense of shame (for academic failures) and then being rejected by the group (peers at the factory) for being too different to them.
2. Connecting with OD Director at the factory to work alongside.
3. Praise received from the OD director who then offered him a promotion without interview.
4. Paired work with the OD director in a piece of work with senior scientists.
5. Repetition of the space created through the connection with the OD Director in the creation of a space for OD professionals to come and play with new/new to them tools and intervention methods.

Luca

| Personal failure / rejection from others / seen externally as being on the outside or different | → | Seeks out an internal connection with key maternal figures | → | Intraverted / solo exploration of creativity (done on a small level) | → | Repeated experience of failure / being different to others | → | Reattempt at creativity (connected to original theme) | → | Connection with others to align them to his vision | → | Enactment of creativity |

Example:

1. Being recognised as different to his peers and taken to see a psychiatrist to test out if he is ok. Feedback that he is fine, he is just creative and thinks differently to others.
2. Retreat into his mother's sewing room and description of exploring his aunt and grandmother's jewellery boxes.
3. Described being alone in his mother's room, taking objects apart and finding structures to make clothes with (i.e. using lamp to make crinoline dress for doll).
4. Repeated experience of failing at school, moved country to go to another school and felt to be treated differently as he was the only boy there.
5. Re-exploration of the more structural aspects of fashion design.
6. Creation of a line of clothes that received praise widely.

Helen:

| Interactions with / observations of others & setting up self as different | → | Desire to be noticed & externally recognised as being different to others | → | External validation of difference / specialness / success | → | Enhancement of creativity and further development, often connecting with other creative people to do so | → | Enactment of creativity |

Example:

1. Noticing that there is a societal increase in wasting leftover items, so wanting to be able to make use of everything that is around her.
2. Desire to try techniques in new ways, i.e. imprinting technique, so took leftover concrete and some leaves and started to make placemats.
3. Showing her artisan fayre colleagues who praised her and offered a few suggestions and recommended a personal connection.
4. Connected with a colleague's brother who uses concrete in his work to learn another technique.
5. Applied this to create concrete artwork and sells this at the artisan fayres.