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**THE AFFECT OF LOOKING BACKWARD:
AN ANALYSIS OF THE EMOTIONAL LABOUR OF ADVERTISING
IN TIMES OF RECESSION**

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Abstract: This paper examines the work of advertising in the context of what has been termed an increasingly therapeutic popular culture. In particular it focuses attention upon specific creative strategies adopted during the recent economic recession. Drawing upon Freud's 'Mourning and Melancholia' (1917), the paper explores how advertising creatives mobilise 'the lost object', carefully managing its associated meanings. Through the appropriation of nostalgia via narrative, montage and parody three advertisements for Hovis, Virgin Atlantic and Citroën are examined to explore the ways in which brands seek to insert themselves into history with a view to performing their own emotional labour.

In Freud's view, we can only look forward now by looking back.
Adam Phillips (2006: xiv)

Nostalgia – it's delicate, but potent. Teddy told me that in Greek, 'nostalgia' literally means 'the pain from an old wound.' It's a twinge in your heart far more powerful than memory alone.

Dan Draper, ad executive
Mad Men (HBO, 2007)

Introduction

Britain officially came out of recession at the end of the calendar quarter 31 December 2009 with growth of 0.1% indicated. By February 2010, that figure had been revised upward to 0.3% (Anonymous, 2010a). However, this paper was provoked not by the macro or micro details of fiscal trends *per se* but rather emanates out of a series of observations with regards to how, at the level of the individual and collective conscience, Britain was responding to recession through visual representations on television, in cinema, and, specific to this paper, in advertising creativity. By focusing on three advertisements for Hovis, Virgin Atlantic and Citroën, it can be noted that they share a tendency towards 'looking backward' and that these media objects harness and reflect a collective will to draw on nostalgia as a means of

managing public sensibility in working through difficult times. In this context, the paper explores the emotional labour carried out by the advertising industry and, more specifically, it analyses a particular creative turn that sees a brand's relationship with history used as a vehicle through which we are able to project ourselves back into the security of the past. Concomitantly, however, a brand's visual endurance over time also enables it to offer itself as a symbol of hope for the future. From a Bergsonian perspective, one could argue that our diurnal oscillations across and between historical and temporal moments inform creative practice in advertising. What is more, advertising itself seeks to deal with both the desires and disappointments that emanate when 'looking backward'. In setting out to comment on these processes, the epigraphs included at the beginning of this article, one academic and the other fictional, have proven very stimulating. Adam Phillips (2006: xiv) reminds us of the role of psychoanalysis in the Freudian tradition, how it facilitates our understanding of our everyday emotions and anxieties through our relationship to the past. The second quotation draws on the particular creative strategy under investigation and is poignantly operationalised in the fictional advertising drama *Mad Men* (HBO, 2007 -). Here, in a pitch to Kodak, technologically driven photographic equipment is turned through emotive language into a time machine of memories demonstrating that the application of nostalgia, when employed effectively in advertising copy, has the potential to tie any product to the autobiography of the consumer. *Mad Men*, now in its fourth series, is in itself an interesting example of nostalgia as it too can be situated within this broader retrospective of media content. Set in 1960s Madison Avenue, it charts the lives of the personnel at Sterling Cooper Draper Pryce advertising agency and, in particular, Don Draper, who personifies the highly competitive, masculine environment in which the modern art of selling through persuasion was developed.

However, what unites the work of the more contemporary creatives under investigation here is their mobilisation of the theme of loss, which will be examined through the lens of Freud's 'Mourning and Melancholia' (1917, 2006). Whilst Freud does not discuss nostalgia directly, his attempts to understand the processes of forgetting are extremely useful in contemplating its effectiveness as a creative tool. Furthermore, popular culture, it has been argued, is now a therapy culture and as such offers a mechanism for offloading (Richards, 2007). For example, in a popular women's magazine, *Psychologies*, we encounter this observation in practice as Rosie Ifould tackles the subject of 'The Power of Nostalgia', illuminating how 'indulging in nostalgic feelings could be good for our psychological well-being' (2010: 95). In line with this proposition, a further series of questions are registered

regarding the potential for advertising to adopt such a therapeutic role and what benefits this might bring to the brands it advertises and the consumers who form their target audience.

Therapy culture and the work of advertising

One of the most interesting facets in the development of advertising in the twenty-first century is the extent of the work that campaigns now undertake beyond promotion, which often includes what can be termed 'emotional labour'. This is defined as the way in which brands seek to 'harness consumer constancy through access to and mobilisation of our emotions' (Powell, 2009: 97). The work of advertising performs this service by centring on the 'management of feeling' as it mediates relationships between the consumer and the material world (Hochschild, 2003: 7). This trend can be identified as part of a wider remit whereby contemporary culture makes sense of the world through 'the prism of emotion' observed in terms of how 'therapeutic language and practices have expanded into everyday life' (Furedi, 2004: 1), including the arena of promotion. Yet, whilst Furedi is critical of the way 'therapy culture' helps to construct 'a diminished sense of self that characteristically suffers from an emotional deficit and possesses a permanent consciousness of vulnerability' (2004: 21), I would argue that there are more positive leads to be taken from this specific cultural turn when examining the work of advertising and, in particular, its performance in times of economic recession. For it can be documented that in the examples presented below, two specific types of emotional labour are being operationalised. Firstly, the creatives seek to reassure anxious consumers via the mobilisation of a collective coping mechanism which is underpinned by the harnessing of memories (of the past). These are inextricably linked to the brand but seek to inform its performance in the present. Secondly, in reading these advertisements, the consumer also carries out a particular type of emotional labour: one whereby they might both enjoy and indeed mourn images of the past.

I would argue that the effectiveness of the Hovis campaign under consideration here is achieved through the harnessing of individuals' vulnerabilities which are then galvanised through the brand images on screen. This means that the brand succeeds in ameliorating feelings of alienation and insecurity. Therefore whilst Furedi (2004: 132) argues that therapy culture promulgates 'the individualisation of social experience', I would argue that this is, in fact, countered through the labour of the advertising industry, and the galvanising potential of creatively strong campaigns. As a result, advertising demonstrates the capacity to turn anxieties into tangential forms and provides space for myriad responses through its creative

capabilities. This more positive reading is also articulated by Richards (2009: 59) who positions media professionals as 'leading shapers of the emotional public sphere' having 'particular responsibilities for the predominant patterns of public feeling.' I would include advertising creatives as part of this cohort and therefore these professionals should always be mindful of the 'possible emotional consequences of the words and images they use' (ibid.: 60).

Freud's ideas on mourning and the work of nostalgia

Back in 1960, Ernest Dichter, founder of motivational research, one of the fundamental methods used by modern advertisers in exploring consumers' relationships to the material world, concluded that 'one of the basic frustrations of human life is to want to hold on to time' (2008: 210). Nostalgia, which is principally media-generated today, has become a potent mechanism within consumer culture whereby a sense of continuity between past and present can be constructed, especially if this serves to enhance a brand's positioning in the consumer's mind. Whilst the feeling of nostalgia is 'culturally derived' (Dickinson and Erben, 2006: 223), it has the capacity to be tied to the emotion of grief as illuminated by Freud, initially in his paper 'Mourning and Melancholia' drafted in 1915 and published in 1917. Whilst Freud would go on to develop his ideas around 'mourning work' throughout his life, this early paper is useful in the establishment of a conceptual framework around which a particular creative strategy can be examined and assessed. At its heart is Freud's juxtaposition of mourning and melancholia, both of which share at the outset the loss of a loved object as the precipitator of ensuing grief. Indeed, as Leader (2009: 24) indicates, the initial significance of this work lay in the identification of the relationship between these two states as 'before Freud, the medical literature had not linked them in such a systematic way'. However, whilst mourning involves the process of the withdrawal of libido from the lost object, with the potential for reattachment, melancholia, in contrast, commences with the refusal to accept loss and the consequent inability for the libido to become detached. As a result it lives on, internalised as a part of oneself and the mixed emotions one felt for the love object are drawn back into one's own ego. However, whilst this allows for the connection between the ego and the lost object to be retained, the internalised object lacks in the place of the original, producing aggressive tendencies. As a consequence, 'melancholia, then, is a state in which we have taken the lost loved one inside and kept him or her there, attacking ourselves rather than the person who is lost' (Craib, 1998:159).

Studying Freud's paper and applying its ideas to a particular creative strategy enables us to explore how we deal with that which is lost and, by extension, to examine the qualitative differences in nostalgic emotion. Freud's work here is important for 'it signalled a significant shift in both psychoanalytic theory and in our understanding of how people react to various kinds of loss' (Bradbury, 2001: 212). Whilst Freud saw mourning as an individual task, deaths such as that of Diana, Princess of Wales illuminate the potential for mourning to be a very public act and thus to allow a shared sense of grief to transpire (Merck, 1998). By drawing upon this concept of collective loss, advertising as communication is able to function effectively in becoming the instigator of memories and subsequently to harness the emotional capacity that this engenders for a brand's benefit. Whilst both mourning and melancholia are informed by external influences and centre on the notion of the 'lost object', it is important in this context to note that Freud defines mourning as 'the reaction to the loss of the loved person or an abstraction taking the place of a person, such as fatherland, freedom, an ideal, and so on' (1917, 2006: 310). Therefore, more than a person lost through death, it can also refer to estrangement or separation from others, places and times: indeed, from any reference point that has become important in our lives. Thus, in considering its creative capabilities, it is the temporal dimension associated with a sense of loss that must be handled carefully, for, whilst mourning centres on putting the past behind us, 'melancholia dwells in the past in ways that hold this past open and unresolved' (Ruti, 2005: 646) and thus produces inertia in terms of the potential to move on.

Therefore it is necessary to provide a hazard warning here. Namely that the appropriation of nostalgia in driving creative strategy forward does not come without risk, for, in taking the consumer back to the past, there is always the possibility, especially in times of recession, of encouraging a sense of detachment from the present. For nostalgia emanates from the mixed feelings engendered by a recognition that we can never actually return to any given past period. On a more positive note, however, nostalgia seems to offer a promise that happiness can be derived from remembering. As a result, Wernick (1997: 219) suggests that nostalgia is garnered around a 'sharp regret at the passing of time, symptomatised by a sentimental over-valuation of the "home time" lost' whereby 'home time' is a concept that can be individual or collective. This allows for generalisation on the advertiser's part through the construction of a series of semiotically charged touch points that draw the viewer into the brand's message. Indeed, Wernick adds that nostalgia may even evoke a particular representation of history that 'might never have been present at all' (ibid.). This is highly

pertinent to the analysis of my second example regarding Virgin Atlantic's communication strategy, as I shall go on to discuss.

Case studies

As the credit crunch deepened and as Britain moved economic quarter after quarter further into recession, it became evident that a wide range of brands, including Sainsbury's, M&S, Heinz, Persil and Fairy, to name some of the major players, were turning to nostalgia to forge emotional connections with consumers. A study of the role of nostalgia as a promotional strategy not only allows us to focus on the degree to which marketers take into consideration a product's contribution to emotional life, but also specifically raises questions about how such promotional work might acknowledge the processes of the inner world to inform the management of choice. In particular, the examples considered here – Hovis, Virgin Atlantic and Citroën – evidence how advertising can create points of identification by communicating the meanings of goods that ultimately lie outside the product itself. In this way, it is what the product symbolises rather than how it functions that becomes the core of communication and identification – even when the product is as mundane as bread. The potential of the symbolic to tap into unconscious desires in the context of promotion was first identified by Ernest Dichter and his post-War development of motivational research, as noted previously. Such knowledge allowed for the development of what might be termed a more emotive form of persuasion, relying heavily on symbolism over textual description. It can be argued that contemporary branding builds on Dichter's work with the result that a principal driver of choice emanates from our attachment to particular objects and the way they have the potential to make us feel when others do not. This suggests therefore that a brand's success depends on how it forms and incubates relationships rather than on any particular rational appeal. In recognition of the value of intangible assets in the new economy, goods are marketed in terms of the emotional fulfilment they can provide: individually and collectively.

Hovis

The degrees of nostalgia that circulate around Hovis's award winning 'Go On Lad' are worthy of deconstruction. Launched in September 2008 in an attempt to reverse a decline in sales, on one level the brand is self-reflexively nostalgic for its famous 1974 'Boy on Bike' advertisement – a time when market share was notably more significant. In the 2008 ad, the agency, MCBBD, illustrate the brand's heritage by sending a boy out to buy a loaf of bread but

his return is set against the backdrop of British history including the suffragette movement, two World Wars, the Queen's coronation, the swinging sixties, the miners' strike and the Millennium celebrations. Television was chosen as the primary medium 'because we needed to catapult Hovis back into the nation's hearts and the medium remains unbeatable for engaging people emotionally' argued the agency (Nairn, 2010: 8). Indeed, the ad presented a media first, running at 122 seconds, one for each year of the brand's history. It was later cut down to more affordable 90 and 10 second versions.

The awards that followed stem from the measured effectiveness of the campaign, a fourteen percent increase in sales year-on-year (Lee, 2010: 5). This success is potentially attributable to the way in which the creative content of the ad struck a chord with audiences at a particular moment in time. In essence, the Hovis campaign positions nostalgia as having an integrative, inter-subjective function, bringing a nation together through its brand. However, by journeying on through the past into the present, it simultaneously communicates a positive message for the future. This is achieved through adopting what might be considered a re-enactment of the reality testing that is essential to mourning, namely the replacement of that which is absent with an imagined presence. The advertising image functions as a substitute for the actual loss of past times and as a result, nostalgia works as a creative strategy by being able to tap into this emotional state associated with temporal loss. In that nostalgia is particularly evoked at points of change, hence enabling us to deal with the process of transition, Stern (1992: 12) argues that its utilisation and, by extension, its effectiveness ride on the way in which 'people tend to look to the past to find emotional sustenance and security'.

Chris Ingram, of the agency Ingram Enterprise, commented in an interview with *Campaign* that a major feature of the recession was the need for agencies to understand the mood of consumers. He stated (2009: 15) that 'the majority of consumers are worried and often depressed about their own financial situation or increasingly that of the country as a whole and its likely effect on them.' Furthermore, a worrying trend for established brands such as Hovis was how, during times of economic downturn, consumers switch to 'own label' and basic ranges to save money (Clark, 2009: 28). In response to these observations, Hovis's return to the past is not new. And yet the campaign seemed somehow to want to assert that sense of history more than ever: to locate the history of the brand into the history of the country and consumer behaviour at large. In essence, the language and tone of voice of 'Go On Lad' creates a mood that looks to persuade consumers that it has some added value

over its competitors and it does so through the communication of an intangible benefit, namely, its link with history. The ad seems to be saying, 'We have been through major struggles before and we will come out of this one also, together'. It is possible that the client was assured in committing so much to this costly campaign (£15 million in total) that such expense could be accounted for in terms of the breadth of target audience that the ad spoke to. Indeed, the campaign was a financial success with a return on investment of 5:1 (Nairn, 2010: 19). This was achieved via the production of an overarching realist narrative that embraces the generations; those that are nostalgic through their own participation in scenes revealed and others, much younger, who knowingly see the history book brought to life. The affect produced on viewing is generated by a fusion of pleasure and regret and yet, ultimately, at the point of closure, is informed by hope.

It is on this last point that Freud's early writings on mourning can be applied to our understanding of how this campaign struck a chord within the broader collective unconscious. As indicated above, the primary function of grief work is to allow a severing of ties with that which is lost, preparing the subject to move on and form new attachments. Developing this point, it is important to recognise how the ad reaches closure in the present. For to end in the past would replicate a state of melancholia, whereby the past functions as a means of return for return's sake, a lacuna in which one can only pitifully reattach oneself to seemingly better times. However, the campaign's utilisation of history is constructed through a consistent series of attachments and detachments, demonstrating how our relationship to history is one of both mourning and revival. This process is articulated most coherently by Freud in 'Transience' (1916, 2005), written whilst World War One destroyed both nations and their cultures. Here, Freud develops ideas later published in 'Mourning and Melancholia' where he clearly broadens the impact of mourning beyond the context of individual subjects as he reflects on the destruction and loss that surrounds him. In the paper, he recalls a former time when he walked with some companions on a glorious summer's day. One, a poet, 'admired the beauty of the nature around us, but it did not delight him' (Freud, 2005: 197). The disappointment came from the recognition that such 'beauty' could not last, 'devalued by the fate of transience for which they were destined' (ibid.). On immediate reflection Freud attributed the dour state of his friends to a 'foretaste of grief' (Freud, 2005: 198) but later developed a position whereby it was recognised that it is actually on account of the state of transience that things become more valued. We appreciate what we have, knowing that it

cannot endure indefinitely, but acknowledging that the role of memory allows for ongoing reflection.

Danny Brooke-Taylor, the creative behind the Hovis advertisement, develops this notion and suggests that nostalgia ads are not all about the past. 'It was vital for the boy to end up in the modern day, as it gave the message that the brand is just as important to families now as it has ever been.' (Williams, 2009: 12) Simply wallowing in the past will make the brand seem outdated. Furthermore, for such a campaign to be successful it must make clear to the consumer why a return to the past is necessary and relevant in the context of the brand's current message. In this way, it could be argued that the campaign functions as a means by which to deal with loss by making it 'a part of our lives in different ways' (Leader, 2009: 4), here through the act of consumption. By resurrecting past times and making use of stock memories drawn from a specific socio-cultural context, advertising provides a moment of reflection, implying that all history is transient. The suggestion here is that, whilst good times cannot endure indefinitely, so we might also consider that nor can times of struggle, conflict and desperation. Such an approach is outlined by Iain MacRury (2009: 154), who argues that one of the functions of advertising is 'symbolic mediation' acting 'to help tie products into shared meanings and "living" value systems.' In this way, advertising, as produced for Hovis, not only allows the consumer access to knowledge of a brand but also forges an emotional route to the past with the brand functioning as portal. Yet, how we represent the past also involves processes in which some events are emphasised whilst others are concealed. Therefore 'we choose factual elements that fit our larger master narratives, and ignore or minimize the importance of others' (Meyers, 2009: 733). 'Go On Lad' centres on selection, on the inclusion of events that will appeal to a mass target audience whilst simultaneously neglecting the pasts of those that do not interest advertisers in relation to the product presented. Significant common experiential denominators along with the collective memories such images will induce become the drivers of the advertising narrative. For as the sociologist, Davis (1979: 11), states, 'the ability to feel nostalgia for events in our past has less to do with how recent or distant these events are than with the way they contrast - or, more accurately, the way we make them contrast- with the events, moods and dispositions of our present circumstances.' The relevance of such a view for an understanding of the creative process under investigation here is significant.

Virgin Atlantic

Dickinson and Erben (2006: 225) argue that ‘nostalgia, by contrast with a historical perspective, does not seek to be analytic, but is allusive. This quality of allusive vagueness exists because nostalgia is primarily a feeling and not a cognitive process.’ This position is supported by Meyers (2009: 740) with specific reference to advertising, arguing how ‘the nostalgic appeal of advertising campaigns promises consumers an emotional connection to the past that downplays a more analytical and sceptical historical view.’ We can begin to reflect on these observations through an examination of another ad that evokes nostalgia, this time in celebration of Virgin Atlantic’s 25th birthday. Whereas Hovis took as its starting point the ideal of an accurate re-creation of the past, Virgin offers, in this semiotically charged ad, a playful representation or what might be called a ‘hyper history’. Here I draw on the work of Frederic Jameson (1984: 66) as he critically explores ‘how the new spatial logic of simulacrum can now be expected to have a momentous effect on what used to be called historical time.’ As a consequence, ‘the past becomes a vast collection of images, a multitudinous photographic simulacrum’ (ibid.). It is from this vantage point that Jameson goes on to explore ‘the nostalgia mode’ (ibid.) in which the past is approached through stylistic connotation and where a sense of ‘real history’ is displaced by a history of aesthetic styles.

It is the summer of 2008 and, as oil prices soar, so passenger numbers are in significant decline. In response, Virgin turns not to price promotions to fill seats but instead to an extensive and expensive marketing strategy to build brand identity. In January 2009, the ‘Still Red Hot’ campaign was launched by RKCR/Y&R and sought to capture the essence of the brand: ‘the glamour, sizzle and sense of fun that had always been the brand’s core differentiator against the establishment’ (Cordiner, 2010: 11). Using 60 and 90 second primetime spots in the emotive medium of TV, the ad celebrates the inaugural flight from Gatwick to Newark in 1984. Outside the airport terminal, newspapers remind us of the ongoing miners’ strike, previously referenced by Hovis, but, once inside, sound and image fuse to bring the brand to life. Frankie Goes To Hollywood remind us to ‘Relax’ and, on screen, the supermodel is born and fast food makes its impact on British airport cuisine. Yet, at the centre of this vibrant montage, it is, parodically, the grace, beauty and modernity of the Virgin Atlantic air hostesses that provide the defining image of this commercial homage. In a recession that has brought several low cost airlines to their knees, Virgin knowingly reminds

us that it has been around long enough to be able to deal effectively with this one. Trust is the 'on brand' message here.

It is interesting that Jameson's *Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1984) was written in the same year that Virgin Atlantic was launched. Indeed, drawing upon this text, the ad for Virgin may be perceived as merely simulacrum: an ensemble of signs from a creative team's imagination of what the 1980s were all about. This is heightened by the knowledge that the creatives themselves were probably plundering the archive for inspiration rather than drawing upon their own memories for cultural reference points, bearing in mind the accepted youthfulness of such personnel within the profession. Jameson's critique of nostalgia is based on the premise that postmodernism has no need for history, replacing it instead with historicism (Radstone, 2007: 8). As a consequence, the past is raided and a visual style created and re-presented within consumer culture that positions the object as spectacle so that consumer identity becomes merely a superficial reflection of accumulated brand significations. In this way, the ad remains detached from history, presenting a collage of a moment in time as opposed to a purposeful selection of historical events based on their collective social impact and ability to allow for narrative flow. The flamboyant imagery, in contrast with the sepia tinged Hovis commercial, is a call to recollection. The objects and people that litter the screen are exaggerations of ideal types of 1980s culture: the city trader on his first mobile phone, the emerging paparazzi, globalisation and the food of Americana. All are now accumulated in one place. As a result, in celebrating its 25th anniversary, Virgin Atlantic creatively allows all charges of realism and history as truth to be put to one side.

Research has indicated (Clark, 2009: 29) that consumers recognise that some market sectors are better than others at connecting emotionally and that airlines score relatively low compared, for example, with the food sector, where the highest compassion scores are achieved. Virgin sought to address this issue through the construction of what can be termed an 'escape fantasy' (Stern: 1992: 20). As Stern explains, 'nostalgia's fictionalising process is seductive, in that it offers consumers a sanitized version of the past as an escape from a problem-laden present' (ibid.). Advertising shows its power to both re-create and transcend the past for its own purposes. In this way, we might argue that 'the past is never irrevocably fixed or closed off, but instead remains open to retrospective acts of reinterpretation' (Ruti, 2005: 261) and, thus, the Virgin brand can be positioned playfully within this redefined schema. In essence, this ad seeks to reframe, tongue-in cheek, the significance of a moment

in history, namely, the birth of an airline. In this way, this £8.7 million campaign successfully produced a return on investment of 10:1 (Cordiner, 2010: 12).

Despite their opposing positions towards the re-creation of an historical narrative, both case studies take as their starting point the past as 'lost object' and both positively use the brand in question as a conduit of reattachment that enables something positive to emanate out of the viewing experience. For nostalgia in advertising can only function effectively through a shared recognition that the past cannot be repeated: we may desire to return but know, deep down, that this is not possible. Therefore, 'Go On Lad' carries out emotional work for us that comprises a series of stages commensurate with the mourning process. Here the referent of the nostalgic experience relates to a general sense of loss encountered at the level of the social, and this is connoted through images of times when perhaps a sense of community spirit was stronger, as evoked by the Silver Jubilee street parties of 1977 or the romance of the Millennium fireworks. Alternatively, such images also allow the reader of the ad to insert their personal memories into this collective memory, producing a sense of pleasure, albeit one that is only momentarily achieved and fleetingly eradicated. For to linger in the past, with no sense of reattachment to the present, I would argue, can dangerously allow a slippage into melancholia. This potential risk is creatively countered throughout by an overt sense of movement: the boy runs through time. The second advertisement, for Virgin Atlantic, manages this risk differently, through the implementation of parody. Interwoven through a condensed collage of 1980s images, parody functions to knowingly pay homage to a collective imagining but without chancing the opportunity of allowing a slippage into a sense of history as identifiable at the level of the personal.¹

Citroën

This paper has demonstrated the way in which advertising has positioned itself as an additional resource for both understanding and managing emotional life. Therefore we might say that nostalgia as a creative strategy should prepare an audience to learn to 'read the losses and impasses of its past as a source of future psychic possibility rather than as what condemns it, present and future, to more of the same' (Ruti, 2005: 638). Creative work for Hovis and Virgin has demonstrated that it is possible to generate the affective order of nostalgia through both realism and parodic representation. Thus creative work functions as a mechanism for offloading, especially in relation to concerns surrounding the impact of economic decline. The creative strategies employed rely for their success on a shared sense of

longing to feel secure and to be part of a wider collective affinity. However, to become effective the creative must recognise the existence of a thin line that separates how we might successfully deal with loss as outlined by Freud. Whilst mourning as a process allows one to move on through the use of memory as a mechanism for attachment and detachment, this can inversely veer towards remaining in the past, so that the past becomes 'a hole, an ever-present void which the melancholic cannot give up his attachment to' (Leader, 2009: 199).

In conclusion, I wish to draw attention to a third advertisement for the French carmaker, Citroën, that was first aired on TV in February 2010. Recognising the risks involved in utilising nostalgia as a creative strategy, as outlined in this paper, the work by Euro RSCG plays with both the iconic figure of John Lennon and his own particular response to the role of the past. The 30 second ad is simple in its construction: it is a very short extract from an interview with Lennon followed by a 'Citroën: Anti-Retro' tagline boldly and effortlessly displayed on screen. In the interview, the voice and image of John Lennon reminds us of the dangers of 'looking backward', of plundering the past for inspiration. As Lennon states: 'Once a thing has been done, it's been done, so why all this nostalgia ... Do something of your own ... Live your life now.' In contrast with the other two advertisements considered here, Citroën mobilises the affect of momentary mourning through a very different creative approach. Wary of the potential risks of 'looking backward', the creative team aimed to shape the emotional sphere through a collective strategy of looking ahead. And yet the advertisement was not well received. Fans were outraged that Lennon's estate had allowed his image to be used for commercial purposes (Anonymous, 2010b). This demonstrates that the way we cope with loss, even of our icons, is extremely multifaceted and reveals the unexpected difficulties that advertising encounters in the emotional labour it seeks to perform. For whilst Hovis and Virgin Atlantic allow for a detached return to the past through spectacle and, indeed, in Virgin's case, parody, thereby offering a route out of mourning, the return to the past signified through the simplicity of the close up shot and the voice of Lennon produces a counter response. For, in looking backward, we are reminded of Lennon's iconicity and this arguably leads us to challenge the intended reading of the advertisement.

Such a reaction could be explained through the process of 'idealisation'. Melanie Klein (1952, 1997) argues that, during early infancy, the child passes through two phases, namely the paranoid-schizoid and the depressive positions. The newborn has little conceptualisation of how its needs will be met from the outside and so depends on others.

When the baby is satisfied, it feels at one with its mother; yet when she, or more specifically, the breast, fails, it is experienced as separate and becomes the first distinct psychological object. Through separation, the baby becomes aware of the loss of that which meets its needs and, as a result, experiences the affect of anxiety. In this earliest phase, as the child comes to terms with life outside the womb and the anxieties this produces, it develops the defence mechanism of splitting, dividing the world into good and bad objects so that we come to live in fear of the 'bad' breast as an imaginary persecutor. By extension, through projection, the child unconsciously projects its own bad feelings onto external objects that are deemed persecutory. Such feelings first form around the relationship we have with the breast so that the good breast 'becomes the prototype of all helpful and gratifying objects' (Klein, 1997: 63) and, by extension, the concept of the 'ideal breast' emerges 'and, in so far as idealisation is derived from the need to be protected from persecuting objects, it becomes a method of defence against anxiety' (ibid: 64). Idealisation therefore allows for an understanding of the complex interplay between the world of internal subjective experience and the external world. Through the internalisation of an ideal object, bonds are formed and emotional support rendered. In this way, the adulation of a national hero is a form of idealisation. For, as Minsky observes (1998: 46),

If the object becomes excessively elevated because all the good parts of the one who idealises have been projected onto it, the discrepancy between them and those who idealise them may become so great that comparison becomes impossible and ... worship becomes the only option.

When applied to the public's reaction to the use of John Lennon in the advertisement for Citroën cars, we might argue that disapproval emanates out of his absorption into consumer culture when his initial idealisation stemmed from his role in representing a specific counter-cultural moment. Parody here backfires, unlike in its implementation in the Virgin Atlantic commercial, for, in challenging a particular approach to the past, one that negates the role of nostalgia, it also demonstrates the complex relationship consumers have with the past and its representatives. In denying the need to look backward, Citroën somehow manages to disavow and decontextualise particular sentiments that nostalgia can arouse. In this final example, image and message fracture. The idealisation of Lennon is significantly misinterpreted by the creatives. As a result, the emotive response that ensues in criticism of the ad perhaps

represents a consumer who is, in fact, concealing unconscious aggression towards its materialistic self.

The author wishes to thank Dr. Iain Macrury for drawing her attention to this particular episode of *Mad Men*.

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Notes

¹ However, it is possible in relation to both advertisements considered so far, to put forward an alternative reading and argue that, in fact, the emotional labour undertaken by the creatives on behalf of the client is knowingly only ever going to lead to disappointment when acted upon by the consumer. For, in the representation of an idealised product, namely the loaf, with all its religious connotations, or an airline whose fantasy hostesses champion its brand message, the ad speaks to an inadequate self and the consumer responds to this, believing that they will be changed in some way by the product's acquisition. As a result, consumption can only ever engender further feelings of inadequacy (see, for example, Jhally, 1987). Whilst I am not negating this alternative reading, the purpose of this paper is to focus on the specific aims and outcomes of a particular creative strategy in response to global economic crisis.

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