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CREATIVE ENCOUNTERS

Creativity at Work:

Embedded Structural Tensions in the Organization of Japanese Advertising Production

By Brian Moeran
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Abstract

This essay examines embedded structural tensions in the organization of Japanese advertising production. Tensions arise from the fact that an advertising campaign, like many other creative products, is produced by 'motley crews' of personnel from both within an agency contracted to carry out the campaign (an account team) and freelance professionals hired to assist in the creative work required (a production team). The structuring of advertising account teams in Japan, Europe and the USA depends on how accounts are distributed by advertising clients. The amount and kind of creativity displayed by photographers depends on advertising and the structure of fashion magazine publishing. Creativity itself thus depends on an unspoken set of institutional power relations that enables individuals to compete for recognition as being 'creative'.

Keywords

Advertising campaign; Creativity; Fashion magazines; Photography; Japan.

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Embedded Structural Tensions in the Organization of Japanese Advertising Production ※

This essay examines embedded structural tensions in the organization of Japanese advertising production. These arise from the fact that an advertising campaign, like many other creative products, is produced by 'motley crews' of personnel from both within an agency contracted to carry out the campaign (an account team) and freelance professionals hired to assist in the creative work required (a production team). The tensions are explained in terms of organizational resolutions which themselves depend on broader issues such as the allocation of budgets in the advertising industry (account team) and the relation between advertising and fashion magazine production (production team). In other words, surface tensions are embedded in deeper structural issues primarily connected with the circulation of money.

The methodology employed is that of participant observation – slowly becoming recognized as a key tool for the understanding of business processes (cf. Garsten 1994, Moeran 2005, Kunda 2006, and Ailon 2007 among others). The analytical thrust is anthropological and broadly comparative, seeking to show not only how creative practices in Japanese advertising differ in some degree from those described for the United States and Europe, but also how these differences themselves throw light on the meaning of creativity as a result of structural variations in related professional fields, as well as the need to work in a climate of skills, convention, respect and trust.

This approach in certain important ways mirrors that taken by people working in the advertising industry itself. Advertising executives, for example, like anthropologists, focus on social interaction, beliefs and values surrounding the relation between people and things in a society, while account planning tends to be rooted in qualitative, ethnographic approaches to the study of consumers (Grabher 2002: 248). The work of both anthropologists and

advertising professionals tends to take them into areas well beyond the boundaries set by their technical expertise (Malefyt and Moeran 2003: 14).

For a long time, with one notable exception (Hower 1937), detailed descriptions of the work and organization of advertising agencies came from within the trade (e.g. Young 1991, Hopkins 1998) rather than from academic research. Scholars interested in creative practices were obliged to take at face value insiders' interpretations of what did and did not constitute 'creativity' and of how best to manage it (e.g. Ogilvy 1963, 1983), although they were assisted in their endeavours by the occasional informative journalistic account, albeit painted with a broad brush for effect (e.g. Arlen 1979; Mayer 1991; Rothenberg 1994; Goldman 1997).

From the early 1990s, however, a handful of anthropologists began to explore the world of advertising practices in places as far apart as Trinidad (Miller 1997), Japan (Moeran 1996; McCreery 2001) and South Asia (Kemper 2001; Mazzarella 2003). Their research, in turn, has encouraged others originally trained as anthropologists, but now working in the advertising industry, to reflect on their hands-on experiences and to publish detailed case study analyses of some of the strategies in which agency personnel engage during the course of their everyday work (e.g. Malefyt 2003; Morais 2007). Scholars in other disciplines, such as economic geography (e.g. Grabher 2002), have also made their contributions to the study of organizational forms in the advertising industry.

As a result, we are beginning to get a clearer picture of the kinds of social, cultural, economic and political constraints affecting the production of advertising campaigns. This picture depicts an advertising agency's internal organization and dynamics, as well as external agency-client relations, and focuses on the fact that advertising campaigns are produced by a motley crew, comprised primarily of accounts, marketing, creative and media-buying personnel. One part of this organizational landscape reveals that, like other creative industries, advertising suffers from a number of tensions arising from what Richard Caves (2000: 6-7) has so felicitously described as 'the motley crew'.

Although attention has, as intimated, been paid to advertising practices within an agency, what happens when the latter contracts a studio, photographer, model, hairdresser and other personnel to carry out the actual production of the visual images to be used in one of its ad campaigns has received rather less attention. Here we find a second level motley crew (what I shall here call the 'production team') assigned to carry out the task of transforming a creative team's accepted ideas into visual representations. How is this done? And what tensions arise – and why – from the interaction among these professionals with different sets of expertise and tacit knowledge, as well as between them and the advertising agency's art director who has employed them for the task at hand? Questions like these will enable us to consider issues surrounding the organization of 'creativity' in the conclusion to this essay.

The Account Team

When contracted to handle a client's account, an advertising agency forms what is called an account team whose job it is to define and then meet that client's marketing, sales, promotional and media exposure needs. Every account team brings together a number of people who specialize in rather different, and not necessarily compatible, aspects of the advertising industry. These include accounts (or sales), marketing, media buying and creative personnel as a matter of course, but may also extend to others working in areas like merchandising and special promotions. The fact that every account team inevitably consists of a 'motley crew' of different sets of expertise establishes, at an organizational level, a basis for potential tension, misunderstanding and conflict.

One such tension, highlighted in Moeran's (1996: 116-168) account of a contact lens campaign, is that between marketing and creative staff. While the former are concerned with the gathering, analysis and interpretation of statistical data, the latter somehow have to convert or transform such quantitative data into qualitative words and images. This is by no means an easy task and can lead to sharp exchanges between the parties concerned, since their differences stem from the contested terrain between what are perceived to be 'scientific' and 'artistic' logics (cf. Grabher 2002: 248).

A second organizational tension arises from the fact that it is the job of the account manager, who is usually head of the account team and who acts as the client's representative within the agency, to liaise between agency and client (and thereby act as the agency's representative to the client) (Quinn 1999: 30). His job is to manage all his agency's services conducted for his client – a dualistic role that is inherently contradictory. Precisely because the client awards an agency an advertising account, and precisely because it is the commissions or fees earned from different client accounts that enable agency personnel to be employed in the first place, the account manager has to tread a fine line when trying to satisfy differing expectations held by the client, on the one hand, and his agency's account team, on the other. This can lead to accusations of his 'working for the opposition' when an account manager's colleagues feel that the client's, and not their, needs are receiving preferential treatment that is detrimental to the development of the campaign in question.

Potential friction is exacerbated, then, by the fact that an advertising agency – like a newspaper company, television station, fashion house or film studio – is obliged to make its work appeal to at least two audiences.[1] Although consumers (readers, audiences) are made out publicly to be the primary target of advertising campaigns (or other creative products), in fact an advertising agency cannot ignore the wishes of its clients (in the same way that newspapers dare not ignore their advertisers, television stations their sponsors, and so on).

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[1] It is for this reason that account planning, with its emphasis on the importance of target consumers, was pioneered (cf. Staveley 1999: 36).

Hence, an advertising agency may end up at loggerheads with a client whose internal politics oblige it to insist on a strategy that pays insufficient heed to an account team's market recommendations and creative platform. As a result, an advertising campaign may result, ironically, in being directed more at the client than at the consumers for whom the client's product is in theory intended. This 'multiple audience property' (Moeran 2006b) not only threatens harmony among members of the motley crew; it also encourages a distinction between front-stage declamation and back-stage negotiation as an integral part of an account team's self presentation (cf. Goffman 1959).

One way of overcoming tensions arising from the organizational necessity for an account team is to ensure that specific jobs are for the most part done independently by sub-teams. Thus, the account services team liaises with the client; the marketing team carries out its market research and analysis (often by subcontracting the task at hand); the creative team of copywriter and art director bounces ideas off each other as they try to come up with ideas that reflect the market analysis; the media buyer plans media exposure. Each sub-team reports back initially to the account manager (or, these days, often the account planner), whose job it then is to bring together all the different constituents to iron out differences and to ensure what in the industry people call a 'synergy effect'. It is usually at this point that the account team as a whole has to present and account for its collective ideas before the client, with whom it then renegotiates the proposed content of its creative platform.

The overriding question, then, is how to find a resolution to the paradox that, in order to meet all its client's needs and do its job properly, an agency has no alternative but to bring together potentially incompatible personnel. One device that limits rivalry, Grabher (2002: 249) notes, is the existence of project deadlines. On the one hand, a deadline obliges members of an account team to settle any disputes that they may have. On the other, however, the very limitation on collaboration ensured by a deadline prevents a permanent resolution to the competing logics of 'art' and 'science' held by different sub-teams.

There are other resolutions to the organizational paradox of the account team. One, favoured by the majority of European and American advertising agencies, is to create stable teams of personnel – in particular of copywriter and art director – either working together on a single client account and thus more or less ignorant of the work practices of different account teams, or continuously reforming as a more or less set configuration based on a relatively stable set of core relationships (Grabher 2002: 252). The emphasis here is on project specialization, so that an agency's structure consists of parallel project lines, supported by managerial, personnel, finance and IT divisions. The underlying philosophy would seem to be that, by working closely and continuously together over a long period of time, account, marketing, creative and media personnel will get to understand and tolerate, hopefully even to respect, one another's specific worldviews of advertising and its practices. The downside of this approach is that it leads to team, rather than agency, loyalty

(Grabher 2002: 249). This organizational resolution is driven by the fact that European and American advertising industries operate according to a system of 'competing accounts', which prevents any agency taking on the account of a competing client. Thus BBDO, for example, cannot handle the accounts of both Pepsi and Coca Colas. It has to decide in terms of either one or the other.

A second resolution is that favoured by Japanese agencies, which operate in an industry where a 'split account', rather than competing account, rule prevails (Moeran 1996: 42-48). This enables an agency to handle (parts of) both Toyota and Nissan (and Honda and Mitsubishi and Suzuki, and so on) accounts (usually split by product and/or media), should the client so desire. As a result, Japanese agencies tend to handle rather smaller accounts of a very much larger number of clients. This, in turn, affects their organizational structure, for every agency needs to establish a comparatively large number of account teams. Since the income generated from smaller accounts does not warrant the employment of account-specific personnel, every agency deploys its account, marketing, creative and media buying staff to work on several different accounts. This means that a particular art director, A, may be working with marketing team, M, and copywriter C on one account; with marketing N, and copywriter D, on another; and with O and E on yet another. Although team members may have their preferences (art director A and copywriter D, for example), they cannot rely on working with a relatively stable set of colleagues. The underlying philosophy here is that, by working with all kinds of different people in different parts of the agency on different advertising projects, every member of each motley crew will learn about and appreciate the variety of numerous others' worldviews of advertising and its practices, as well as get a broad range of experience in different kinds of advertising problems brought to an agency by its clients. Thus, in contrast to the European and American emphasis on specialization, Japanese agencies seek to make generalists out of their staff whose allegiance is to the agency as a whole and not just to an account team. The organizational structure adopted is usually a matrix of constant, hierarchically ordered divisions (from accounts and marketing through finance and personnel to creative)[2] interwoven with temporary, presentation- or campaign-specific project (or account) teams.

Not unnaturally, these two rather different approaches to financing and to resolving the tensions inherent in the organization of a motley crew have repercussions in terms of 'creativity'. Is it possible for a copywriter or art director to be 'truly creative' when s/ he[3] is not allowed to concentrate on a single client problem, but has to move back and forth at short notice between a

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[2] This hierarchy is informed by whether a division brings in, or spends, money in the course of its everyday activities.

[3] I have hitherto been using the masculine pronoun to refer to advertising personnel because, in the Japanese agency in which I conducted fieldwork, almost all account, marketing, media buying and creative personnel with whom I came in contact *were* men. I am aware, however, that in other societies women occupy important positions, and sometimes outnumber their male colleagues, in each of these specializations.

number of different client campaigns? Does not limitation to a single client campaign affect one's ability to make use of other campaign experiences to think laterally and 'out of the box'? These are questions that are worth bearing in mind in the light of the discussion that follows.

The Production team

The job of the account team is to come up with an acceptable idea for an advertising campaign that meets its client's requirements and brief. It is during this process that the tensions outlined above tend to come to the fore. However, once the client has given its OK to an account team's proposal, those concerned have to initiate actual production of the campaign in question. It is here that an agency brings together a second-level motley crew, or production team, led by the art director who selects and employs a photographer, model or celebrity, stylist, hairdresser (or hairdresser), make-up artist, studio and, in the case of a television commercial, production company (cf. Aspers 2001: 58-101). Each of these brings with him or her a specific expertise required for the campaign in question. Some are accompanied by their own personnel: a photographer, make-up artist and hairdresser by their assistants; a model by her booking agent; a celebrity by her manager; and a studio by its staff. Almost all of them work freelance and are hired by the agency, for which they work very intensively for two to three days on the project at hand.[4]

How does the production team go about its job, and how do participants come to terms with one another's different spheres of competence? An uninitiated visitor's first impression of a studio set is one of total chaos. Some people appear to be sitting around doing nothing but drink tea and chat, while others are busy arranging lighting, moving furniture, papering one part of the studio floor, and so on. Meanwhile, in a small cubbyhole adjacent to the studio, a model is being tended to by a handful of make-up, hair and fashion stylists. However, such confusion in time reveals a fairly clearly defined demarcation of participants and their duties – a demarcation that is mirrored in the spatial organization of the studio.

Every production team tends to be organized into four distinct spheres of work practice and related personnel. Firstly, whenever a model, actress, or celebrity is being used in a campaign, s/he will be tended to by the fashion stylist, hair and make-up team in what can be called a *beauty room*, leading off the main studio. Their activity is carried on totally independently of what is going on in the studio itself, until the model is called for a session, when she will be ushered onto the set and given final administrations by her attendants before the photographer takes over.

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[4] The data that follow were gathered during participant observation in five studio ad campaign shoots held in Tokyo between 1990 and 2002. All of them involved a model or celebrity who also appeared in fashion magazines, for whom all the photographers also on occasion worked. The analysis that follows reflects this aspect of these advertising campaigns.

Secondly, there are the photographer and his two assistants – one of whom is an assistant to the other – whose job it is to set up the *camera* in a particular spot, arrange the lighting and prepare the film, making sure that each spool is properly numbered and packed after use. They will also develop the film and make the final prints required for the advertising campaign.

Thirdly, there is the art director who usually instructs the studio stagehands in how to set up the *set* and who works closely with the photographer to ensure that, together, they get the image effect that both of them think is right for the job in hand. In this respect, there is some crossover of responsibilities as the photographer ensures that the set, camera and lighting are in accord. The art director, however, does not interfere with the photographer and his assistants.

Although the art director moves about the studio, giving instructions or consulting staff as appropriate, his 'home base' – or fixed point of return – is a table set up in one unused part of the studio (but almost invariably near the studio entrance). It is here that client personnel, and random visitors (of whom there tend to be many, including the occasional anthropologist) are invited to sit, and to which other personnel will gravitate during a slack moment during the day's work. This is the *client base*, which serves as a general liaison point between client, agency art director and subcontracted freelance personnel.

There is one other point of reference in the studio. This is a special stand or table to which photographer and art director repair after every session in order to examine the Polaroid photos (or computer images) just taken. All staff, including the model, tend to gather silently around this *photo stand* between takes, as photographer and art director examine and discuss the images before them. It is from here that further instructions are issued for the next session.

The location of these points of reference reflects the importance of each of the tasks being carried out, as well as of their personnel and the relationships among them. Thus the 'outsider', the client, is located at the point nearest to the studio entrance and thus the 'outside' (or *omote*), while the camera and set are located in the 'interior' (commonly referred to as *oku* in Japanese) of the studio. It is in this highly-charged symbolic space that the two pivotal actors, the art director and photographer, take up their positions, although the art director is obliged, as an 'employee' of the client, to move back and forth between interior and exterior locations. The liminal point linking client to camera and set, and attracting all members of the production team at particular points during the course of the day's action, is the photographic stand.[5]

The primary relationship guiding the production team in its work is that of art director and photographer. Although it is the former who, in conjunction with other members of his account team, has come up with an idea for an advertising campaign, it is the latter who has to transform that idea into a series

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[5] For further discussion and analysis of situational frames in Japanese business settings, see Moeran (2005: 63-65).

of photographs. It is important, therefore, that the art director explain carefully his concept (often with the aid of illustrations or photographs) and that the photographer understand it, before adding his or her particular take.

Other members of the team take on greater or lesser importance according to the product being advertised. In a hair products campaign, for example, the hairdresser will be brought into the art director-photographer discussions, and may even take over the role of the art director entirely.[6] In a cosmetics campaign, the make-up artist will take precedence; in fashion, the stylist. But all members of the beauty team can, and will, make unanticipated interventions, as they feel appropriate, during the day's shooting. In a contact lens campaign, for example, while the photographer was in the process of posing an actress for the second print ad photo, the hairdresser suddenly stepped forward with a pair of chopsticks, twisted the actress's hair upwards behind her head and fastened it with his impromptu 'hair pin', before stepping back theatrically to admire the effect. The photographer checked the image in his viewfinder before inviting the art director to take a look. All agreed that this was an excellent way to pose the model, even though the effect was somewhat different from the art director's initial intention.

Advertising and Magazine Photography

Let us now turn to advertising photography and its relationship with fashion magazines, since this will help us understand the organization of the production team and the lines of demarcation between art director, photographer and client that I witnessed during fieldwork.

In her discussion of advertising photography in the United States, Barbara Rosenblum has argued that the photographer is necessarily constrained in his work by the fact that s/he has to please two clients simultaneously: his client, the advertising agency which employs him; and his client's client, the advertiser who employs the agency.[7] As a result, 'the photographer must supply visual expertise, must possess a cheerful and easygoing manner, must take orders in an accommodating way and must communicate a special quality called "faith in the outcome" to people whose business is fraught with uncertainty' (Rosenblum 1978: 428). My own research supports this point of view.

At the same time, data from Japan today suggest that Rosenblum's research on advertising photography in the USA some 30 years ago is not entirely comparable. It is clear that in Japan photographers by no means confine themselves to working in just advertising, news journalism, or art photography. Rather, they tend to cover as many different spheres as they can, including, in particular, fashion magazines, but also music videos and other kinds of work.

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[6] Thus, in one of the studio shoots that I witnessed – a promotional photograph for a Japanese hair products company – the hairdresser, not the art director, was the one who worked closely with the photographer. See concluding section of this essay.

[7] This mirrors the situation facing the account manager *vis-à-vis* the client and his account team, as well as the account team *vis-à-vis* its creation of an ad campaign that will please both client and targeted consumers.

These are all used to fill a photographer's portfolio or 'book' – the photographic record of his work that is used to solicit more jobs.8 However, in Japan advertising is the preferred form of work, since the amount of money lavished on a campaign permits a photographer freedom to work in different, interesting and 'creative' ways.

The kind of assignments that photographers working in Japan dislike is magazine work. This is understandable, given Aspers's (2001: 94) comment that a magazine editor's task is to hire photographers who, she thinks, will mirror and reproduce her magazine's style. Yet two rather different reasons for this dislike are provided, the first by a European, the second by a Japanese, photographer.

> "One reason why I don't like to work for magazines very much is because there're too many vested and political interests in the shooting of fashion stories or covers. Which means I can never really achieve the kind of effect I'd like. So, when I *do* get involved in this kind of work, it's because I know a freelance fashion editor who's been contracted to put something together for a magazine and I want to help a friend out. I know that then I'll probably get some really good work through the same friend when it comes along. It's a matter of give and take, isn't it?"9

> "As far as I'm concerned, foreign magazines place their main emphasis on *image*. But here in Japan it is always the *clothes* – their flow and the materials they're made of – that are the focus of the camera's attention. In this respect, even magazines like *Vogue* have to adapt to their Japanese readers a bit. As a result, of course, photographers in Japan are more restrained in their work. They can't indulge in the kinds of experiments that European and American photographers, and their employing magazines, take for granted. This makes them seem less 'creative'."10

Why should advertising images in the USA, but magazine work in Japan, be seen as constrained? Why does magazine work in the USA, but advertising in Japan, provide a photographer with the chance to show off his creativity? Why the difference in focus, on images or clothes? Here we need to consider the structure of magazine publishing. In Japan editors need to pay a lot of attention to their readers because their magazines are not sold by subscription, but have to be sold and resold to readers with every monthly issue (Moeran 2006c: 245). This is not the case in Europe or the United States, where the subscription system ensures a stable readership, whose 'vital statistics' are then sold to advertisers who themselves then become more important than readers – a point made clear by the way in which magazine text and advertisements are structured (Moeran 2006b). As a result, photographers can ignore readers'

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8 Portfolios are also used by models, make-up artists, stylists and assistants of one kind or another (Aspers 2001: 70).

9 Interview, Nicky Kohler, November 2002.

10 Interview, Muga Miyahara, Tokyo, November 2002.

expectations and perform all sorts of technical and aesthetic tricks to attract advertiser attention in European and American magazines, but are rather more constrained in Japan until contracted to shoot an advertising campaign. This in fact supports Rosenblum's argument (1976: 111) that creative style is partially determined by socio-economic arrangements relating to work organization and working roles.

It is worth pursuing, at this point, the model's relationship to other members of the production team, since – as the location of the beauty room clearly reveals – she is in many ways peripheral to the work at hand. This point is of interest because of the fact that, in Europe and the United States, there is often a close, or potentially close, relationship between photographer and model, each of whom can advance the other in the A list/B list status game (Caves 2000: 7-8) and ultimately make famous (Aspers 2001: 84-85). As one Swiss photographer working in Japan put it:

> "I always try to do jobs with top models when they come here – Maggie Ritzer or whoever – even though they may be exhausted… Ideally, though, I want to shoot the girls on the rise, the ones whom, in a year or two, *every*one is going to be talking about.[11] Like Karolina K. Do you know her? I mean, I did a television commercial with her three years ago – for underwear – before she became really famous. And now people are saying to me: 'Wow! You worked with *her*?'"[12]

In contrast, a Japanese photographer had this to say about models:

> "The fact that clothes, not image, are the most important part of any fashion picture means that the model, too, takes second place, even though she is, of course, important. As a result, in Japan you don't find the kind of close ties between models and photographers, the way that you do in the West. There really is no mutual building of success through the pairing of talented photographer and beautiful model. Instead, Japanese photographers tend to become well known thanks to the contacts they build up with fashion stylists. It's by being liked by the latter that they can get their work published and advance in the world. Of course, this is true of people working in Europe and the USA, but my feeling is it's a more dominant of the fashion photography world here."[13]

What we find, therefore, is that the photographer-model relationship depends very much on the organizational structure in which their work is embedded – in particular, on the relationship between advertising and fashion magazine photography. Ironically, although models bask in public attention by appearing in advertising campaigns or gracing the covers of fashion magazines, in the actual production of such work in Japan, they are largely ignored as people or

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[11] In this respect, Kohler departs from Aspers (2001: 84) who says that 'photographers want to work with the most famous models, who in turn only want to work with the most famous photographers'.

[12] Interview, Nicky Kohler, November 2002.

[13] Interview, Muga Miyahara, Tokyo, November 2002.

team members. The model is in many ways no more than an object, to be played with, decorated, shaped and molded (by make-up artist, hairdresser, photographer and art director) into an appearance that is not of her own making. She is there for use in a 'creative idea', her face and body like a child's modeling dough, to be formed as others please. Is this, then, the hidden meaning of the word 'model'?

Finally, there are two other points of difference between the USA and Japan regarding advertising photography that are worth noting, since they impinge upon the workings of the motley crew. First of all, in Japan, it is the (advertising agency's) art director – and not the photographer as in the USA[14] – who makes separate contractual arrangements with a studio, photographer, and other employees (hairdresser, stylist, model, and so on) necessary for a particular campaign shoot. Although he may make recommendations about personnel, or help choose the model, the fact that he does not himself directly hire anyone other than his assistants relieves the photographer of a lot of tension during the course of his work, as well as of responsibility when things go wrong.

Secondly, in Japan, the client almost invariably takes a back seat when it comes to the actual shooting of a campaign. Although the advertiser will inevitably engage in long and detailed negotiations with the advertising agency's account team over the exact contents of a campaign prior to its production, when it comes to production itself the client does *not* interfere with the professionals whom the art director has hired – even when, as we shall see below, a disagreement breaks out between the photographer and hairdresser. He does not, therefore, tell the photographer to make sure s/he photographs his product in its best light (Rosenblum 1978: 429), but leaves him to get on with his work in the conviction that s/he – and not the advertiser – is the one who knows best at this point. Similarly, he will leave it to the art director to adjudicate in the case of disagreement among members of the production team and not himself intervene, even when appealed to.

Both these points underline the fact that in Japan an advertising campaign shoot is, on the surface at least, an extremely egalitarian gathering of experts who work together in a climate of mutual respect for one another's expertise. The main actors in the production team – the art director and photographer – cooperate closely, while working for the most part independently, and so mirror working relations in the account team. Decisions are made on the basis of discussion and mutual agreement, rather than as a result of some form of hierarchical control structure. Control is, of course, exercised – but by different actors at different points in the shoot.

This is, perhaps, surprising in a society well-known for its overall hierarchical structure, but it is no more paradoxical than Rosenblum's account

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[14] Aspers (2001: 82, 86) notes that in Sweden, too, it is the fashion photographer who decides who will be part of the production team and employs the stylist, hairdresser and make-up artist.

of a highly structured campaign shoot in a society like that of the United States, which claims to be so 'democratic' in its organizational principles. In the Japanese situation, we do *not* find that 'the social organization of advertising has the net effect of chiseling away at the broad range of knowledge and expertise that the photographer brings with him'. Nor do we find that 'the photographer's contribution is virtually reduced to technical labor'; nor that s/he 'is often given direct orders by the art director and is told to photograph the models or objects the art director's way and not his way' (Rosenblum 1978: 430). The Japanese photographer (or Western photographer working in Japan) does *not* have an unsolicited comment 'overruled by the coalition formed by the advertiser and art director' (Rosenblum 1978: 431). Rather, he is expected to use technical expertise to resolve an art director's conceptual difficulties and to add his own inimitable style to the images that he takes for the advertising campaign on which he is working. Although a photographer's work is evaluated according to his ability to find 'the solution to a technical problem for which there are no standardized solutions' (Rosenblum 1978: 84) – as in when he uses Vaseline on a sheet of plate glass to simulate rain blobs – creativity is also judged by his stylistic inputs.

A Revealing Encounter

Every production team acts as an informal training ground for the acquisition of both technical and social competences. Assistants to the photographer, hairdresser and make-up artist are all involved in on-the-job training, and learn to master a variety of technical solutions to problems arising during the shooting of different advertising campaigns. At the same time, the learning process takes place across professions as photographers learn from the accumulated experiences of art directors, hairdressers from that of make-up artists, models from that of fashion stylists, and so on. Such technical competence is thereby transformed into social competence as different personnel reveal their knowledge in each of the encounters that the formation of a production team creates. It is during this long-term process of multiple membership of production teams that a photographer, fashion stylist or make-up artist, for example, comes to be recognized as an 'insider'. While at their periphery motley crews provide a site for training, therefore, at their core they establish an organizational context in which reputation is established (Grabher 2002: 254; cf. also Aspers 2001: 60-70).

'Encounters' are the social form by which members of production teams describe this social process:

> "Everything starts with the people you choose for a job. Encounters (*deai*) are crucial here. Like my choice of Nicky, for example. I saw his work in a magazine and liked it, so I got in touch with the staff there and asked how I could contact him. Then I met him and really liked him. His work was the start, but it wasn't everything. He's also got love, and a philosophy that I like. He's easy to communicate with, and this makes him much

better, so far as I'm concerned, than some incompetent Japanese. So, it's a spiritual way of thinking, rather than just what's trendy, that influences me in deciding who to choose for a job, as well as what kind of work to do in the first place."[15]

Just how such encounters enable freelance photographers and others in a production team to move from 'outsider' to 'insider' depends on a number of factors. One is the technical and social skills that each brings to a situation and the ability to work within social conventions. A second is explicit knowledge of the 'portfolio of connections' (Bourdieu 1996: 360) – of who's who – in the advertising and fashion worlds. A third factor involves the longer term building up and maintenance of trust as an integral part of social networks (cf. Aspers 2001: 62; Moeran 2005: 118-119, 124-125). Encounters ultimately create trust in 'this is how we do things here' – the taken-for-granted knowledge, unknown to outsiders (including the advertiser), which pervades each production team's activities.

The imprecise nature of interpersonal encounters and trust, however, occasionally leads to misunderstandings that tear the fabric from which social capital is thus woven. For example, at the end of one particular hair products print ad shoot, an unexpected difference of opinion arose between photographer and hairdresser who had assumed the role of art director for the day. The two of them had worked closely together, picking out images that the hairdresser liked best, then rearranging the model's hair, before taking and selecting more photos, until, in the end, just one was isolated for the poster that the Japanese client wished to send out to hairdresser salons all over the country for the New Year.

The photographer checked with the hairdresser that she was happy with the chosen image, then made sure that the client had no objection, before giving orders to his assistants and studio staff to dismantle the set. A few minutes after they had begun to go about their work, however, the hairdresser suddenly came back into the main studio from the beauty room where she was tending the model with two assistants and asked the photographer to take another set of photos. She felt that she could get an even better effect than the one they already had.

The entire production team froze in its tracks. Faced with this unexpected request, the photographer quietly asked why and was told by the hairdresser that she had thought of a new way to style the model's hair. He pointed out that the set was already being dismantled, that the camera had been put away, and that it would take an immense amount of time to re-establish everything exactly as it had been. He noted the extra costs that the client would incur both in terms

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[15] Interview, Michihiro Ishizaki, art director, November 2002.

of labour and studio rental. The hairdresser was adamant. She could do a better job.

By this time, even the music to whose rhythm everyone had been working all day had been turned off. Then, the art director, who had sat all afternoon at the client table without interfering at all in the work being done by photographer and hairdresser, suddenly spoke up. He reminded the hairdresser rather sharply of the sequence of events that had taken place that day, and of her responsibilities to the photographer, client and the production team as a whole. He emphasized the different sets of professional expertise that each had brought to the set, but insisted that each should know where to draw the line in terms of perfection. Should the client be obliged to pay for extra studio rental and labour time for little more than a 'marginal improvement'? Was the hairdresser really going to insist?

Standing in the midst of the assembled crew, and in an icy silence, the hairdresser pondered the situation. After a long 30 seconds, she bowed her head quickly and apologized before going back to the beauty room. The studio staff and photographer's assistants immediately unfroze and went back to dismantling the set. The loud, rhythmical music was turned back on.

The reason for this sharp, but potentially explosive, exchange between photographer, hairdresser and art director had to do precisely with the kind of knowledge 'in the air' (Marshall 1961: 271) that surrounds all production teams. By suddenly demanding that the photographer re-shoot a scene, the hairdresser was questioning the taken-for-granted knowledge that all those concerned had known precisely what they were doing all day. She not only placed her own professionalism in doubt; she opened up an avenue of disagreement that could easily have torn apart the carefully wrought harmony between advertiser and ad agency, on the one hand, and the ad agency's art director and his production team, on the other.

Concluding Creatively?

This essay has analysed how a number of tensions inherent in the production of advertising by motley crews are in fact embedded in larger structural issues relating to the distribution of budgets in the advertising industry and to the relation between advertising and fashion magazine publishing. In this brief concluding section, I would like to add a few words about creativity.

Firstly, it is clear that 'creativity' is enabled, outlined and constrained by various aesthetic (or representational), economic, social, spatial, technical, and temporal factors, none of which is entirely independent of the others. The size of the budget set aside by a client for an advertising campaign, for example, determines choice of personnel (*A List* for high, *B List* for low, budget work), accompanying aesthetic styles, location (Tokyo studio or beach in the Bahamas), and media coverage (television commercial or print advertising). The time

frame in which a campaign must be completed necessarily impinges on the availability and selection of personnel, which in itself has knock-on effects. For instance, the decision of whether to go for traditional film or contemporary computerized images in the selection of two available photographers influences the finished campaign style, since the 'modernist' can manipulate images in a way that that 'traditionalist' finds impossible (and often distasteful).

Secondly, creativity is not the only requirement of creative personnel, since almost all concerned need also to be able to *manage* those who come under their command. This means that 'creative' becomes a sliding category that depends very much on context. An art director is thus 'creative' when trying to come up with a creative platform for his account team's client, but takes on a managerial role once he enters the studio and is required to transform his creative concept into actual production by giving instructions to photographer, studio staff, hairdresser and other members of the production team. Similarly, although a photographer or hairdresser is employed for the creative contribution s/he can make to a particular task, s/he, too, has to manage her assistants and ensure that they do their part of the job in a professional manner. This combination of creative and managerial roles is to be found in many other 'creative' positions – fashion designer, magazine editor, film director, and so on – and so brings into question Caves's (2000: 4-5) absolute distinction between creative and humdrum personnel.

Thirdly, we have seen that the production of advertising is based on a double client system. An agency is employed by an advertiser, but at the same time employs a photographer, hairdresser, model and others in a production team, which ultimately owes its employment to the advertiser. However, this double client system in which power relations are established by the flow of money is carefully controlled by overt recourse to trust and reciprocity in social interaction, and by a classic denial of the importance of 'commerce' in creative work. The hairdresser's intervention at the end of the shoot laid bare, and threatened to upset, this hidden structure. Both photographer and art director were obliged to justify their position not to accede to her request in terms of the financial implications for the client.

So, in spite of appearances to the contrary, the denial of power relations in the everyday work processes of a production team is not based on a sense of social egalitarianism. Rather, it is designed to enable creativity. In other words, acutely aware of the potential constraints imposed by power relations, people in Japan's advertising world do their best to minimize them in the actual production of advertisements. In this way, they hope, participants will feel free to improvise as they go along, for it is such cultural improvisation that enables numerous, and minute, touches of interactive 'creativity' (Ingold and Hallam 2006).

In a sense, then, creativity is itself a double process. It denies the obvious power relations that derive from the advertiser-agency and art director-studio personnel relationships, but permits, instead, the establishment of new forms of

power among art director, photographer, make-up artist, and fashion and hairdressers, each of whom competes with the others to reveal his or her 'creativity'.

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