Success and the TV Industry:

How Practitioners Apprehend the Notion(s) of Success in their Discourses within the Anglophone Transatlantic Television Industry

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Submitted for the degree of PhD in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities,

School of Art, Media and American Studies, (FTM), University of East Anglia 2018

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<u>Abstract</u>

This thesis explores the discourses of *success* within the Anglophone transatlantic television industry through the semi-structured interviews of sixteen industry practitioners.

The TV industry has long been studied in media studies, its working conditions discussed in production studies, its texts scrutinised in TV studies; but what drives the TV industry? *What is 'success' to television industry practitioners*? How do they apprehend it and discuss it? Looking at this key element through those at the heart of it is this research's purpose, and a necessary step for cultural, production and television studies to better comprehend the industry and what drives it and its members.

After discussing the methods selected for this research and bringing forth a new, sevenfold task-based industry categorisation, my research will tackle its subject of enquiry through three main topics:

- the perception of decision-makers by industry practitioners
- the *industrial* executive discourses of success among the different industry constituents (networks/cable/premium/public channels/studios);
- the *personal* definitions of success of all practitioners (and their link to *industrial/professional* success).

This research will engage with many academic fields: from discourse analysis and industrial sociology to organisational research and management psychology, through production studies, cultural studies and film/television/media studies, giving it a clearly multidisciplinary scope. With this thesis, I also wish to further help bridge the gap between academic and industrial expertise. By doing so, and making sense of industrial and personal ideas of *success*, my research aims at developing a new framework for it, thereby proposing to academics a first approach to the notion of *success* in this industry.

<u>Acknowledgements</u>

Studying Success in the Television Industry: An Introduction

'You have to learn the rules of the game. And then you have to play

better than anyone else.' Albert Einstein

Introduction:

This research is entitled: 'Success and the TV Industry: How Practitioners Apprehend the Notion(s) of Success in their Discourses within the Anglophone Transatlantic Television Industry.' This PhD thesis, done part-time from Paris, was started in October 2010 and finished in July 2017. The research itself was conducted between May 2011 and August 2012. This thesis intends to explore the discourses of *success* at that time within the Anglophone transatlantic (US / UK) television industry, through the semi-structured interviews of sixteen practitioners associated with TV series.

The television industry has long been studied in media studies, its working conditions detailed and its economy discussed in production studies, while its link with society and its texts were scrutinised by TV studies; but what drives the TV industry? *What is 'success' to television industry practitioners?* How do they conceive of it, anticipate it, measure it... discuss it? This research aims at analysing the concept of *success* through the discourses of those who are at the very heart of it, namely the industry practitioners. This is a necessary step for media, cultural, and television studies in order to obtain a better comprehension of the industry, and an understanding of what drives and motivates it. Indeed, if I may be so bold (at the risk of stating the obvious), I would venture and say that no industry, organisation or human being ever attempts anything in the aim of *failing*. We want, or at least hope, to succeed in it, and therefore accomplish this endeavour, whichever it may be.[1] As such, when the television industry makes and airs programmes, and when individuals work (to various

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[1] See the discussion on the meaning and definitions of 'success' in pages 3 and 4.

degrees) on these programmes, it is with certain objectives in mind, which they will see as 'success'. Consequently, studying the concept of 'success' in the TV industry – or any other, for that matter – is not simply *important*: it is *crucial*, because if one ignores what practitioners have to say about what drives both them and the industry in which they work– thus about the different success goals and measurements,[2] and about those who make those decisions – how can one even begin to understand the said industry?

As this point, the presentation of the focus and intervention of this thesis needs some refinement. Indeed, while one might ask: to what end does the television industry produce and air programmes – or, more specifically here, fictions – this thesis asks: what is 'success' to television industry practitioners? The distinction, here, is key: focusing on the discourses as opposed to written reports and statistical data has two prompts to it. Firstly, due to obvious (and understandable) privacy reasons (and fear of corporate espionage), it would be difficult to access a number of these documents, and so the level of 'reach' (in terms of studied entities or cases, for instance) would have most likely been much narrower than will be the case, here. Secondly, and most importantly, studying the discourses of practitioners – who are, as I was just writing, *at the very heart of it* – rather than examining cold facts and numbers allows us to focus on the *human element*, with everything that this entails. This includes the inherent subjectivity of their accounts (which is exactly what this thesis is interested in)[3], the choices made to present and represent themselves, their goals and their place in the industry, and the information provided on the relationship between different groups of workers and on the practitioners' perception of industrial success *measurements*, *decisions* and *decision markers*. This gap in practitioner discourses, in particular in relation to 'success' very much needs filling, therefore, because it permits to better understand the television industry, not as a mechanical entity but as an entity made up of people, with their own views, ideas, goals and, indeed,

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[2] See the discussion on the meaning and definitions of 'success goals' and 'success measures' in pages 4 and 5.
[3] As will be detailed in the Chapter I, with regards to the research's methodology.

subjectivity. Note, finally, that the reports and data that studios or channels may have accepted to share with me – in addition to lacking all this precious information – would not have necessarily showed me an image much more faithful to reality either. Surely, such corporate entities, which would likely be even more careful than individual workers about that they would chose to address with me (especially in relation to what may be considered as sensitive information: targets, results, margin), would also be very attentive as to the sort of information and image they would wish to convey.

Far from limiting itself to that, however, this thesis will also study topics relating to sociology and psychology and production studies, such as the relationship of practitioners with power, the decision-making process and the way those taking these decisions are perceived by others. Finally, it will look at the personal success goals of the TV practitioners interviewed. In addition to aiding the understanding of the television industry and of TV practitioners' relationship to success, the content of this research has potential for impact on the field. Indeed, while it would be going too far to talk about intervention analysis (cf. Hartley, 1992: 5-6), as this PhD did not seek to analyse the 'situation in order to change it' (Hartley, 1999: 215), the practitioners I talked to have repeatedly expressed interest in both the subject and their fellow colleagues' opinion about it.

Collins Dictionary (2015) defines 'success' as '1. the favourable outcome of something attempted 2. the attainment of wealth, fame, etc'.; a definition very similar to the Oxford Dictionaries' (2016a): '1. The accomplishment of an aim or purpose [...], 1.1 The attainment of fame, wealth, or social status' (Ibid.). The Cambridge Dictionary (2016), on the other hand, does not attempt to state what elements constitute success but only lists the achievement 'of the results wanted or hoped for' with regard to 'success' as an uncountable noun (Ibid.), thus focusing only on the first item cited by the other two dictionaries: the achievement of something attempted. In this regard, the premise of this thesis very

much follows the Cambridge Dictionary (Ibid.). Of course, success is a complex discursive term, rather than one that could simply be 'resolved' through dictionary definitions. Marketing scholar Aghazadeh asserts that because we are currently living as 'sophisticated human beings, interacting with complicated organizations, dealing with complex and turbulent environment[s], facing ever-changing problems, […] a plain definition of success cannot be satisfactory' and argues that 'we can assume that there are definitions of success equal to the number of persons, groups, organizations, societies, and entities in the world' (2016: 7). When stating that it is looking for the way *success* is discussed by TV industry practitioners, this thesis considers 'success' as the desired result of an endeavour, whatever this desired result may be. What actually constitutes success, in terms of goals or measures, and how these elements are apprehended in practitioner discourses is what this research is interested in, and what it seeks to analyse through the discourses of the participants (who are involved with television series). As a result, the term 'success' (or what constitutes it) is not defined by me, here, but by the participating practitioners themselves, and it is *their* definitions and conceptions of it that are being studied and discussed throughout this research. Finally, there is more than one concept or notion of 'success' in the television industry and among industry workers; hence the 's' in parentheses in the subtitle of this thesis.

In order to address several relevant and interrelated notions, the thesis makes use of a number of expressions, in the likes of 'discourses of success', 'success goals' and 'success measures'. The expression 'discourses of success' refers to the practitioners' discourses in relation to success, gathered from the interviews that I have had with them. They reflect the participants' professional and / or personal perspective on success, and the way they approach the topic. As will be demonstrated, there are different discourses of success, some linked to personal success, others connected to industrial success, and there can be several discourses within these two. The 'success goals' are the reported objectives that are set for a given programme (for instance), and that must be

reached by the said programme in order to be considered 'successful'. 'Success measures', finally, are the criteria used by practitioners to assess, or measure, 'success' (as defined by them),[4] whether these measures are linked to an industrial notion of success or to a personal one. The concepts of 'success goals' and' success measures', both found in practitioner 'success discourses' are therefore close – their main distinction being linked to temporality: while the goals are set in advance, success is measured in retrospect.

With this thesis, I wish to help bridge the gap between academic expertise and industrial expertise, and move beyond the status quo resulting from it (cf. Cornea, 2008: 118). By doing so, and by making sense of an industrial idea of *success* (exploring its exegesis within the television industry), my research intends to develop a new framework for the latter, and thus offer fellow academics a first way of apprehending the notion of *success* in the TV industry in general, and more specifically, in the British and American one. Nevertheless, while certain conjectures could tentatively be made from qualitative research projects (such as mine) involving a few interviewees to look at an entire industry (or a few dozens, when focusing on several industries; like with Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2011), these studies cannot justify drawing systematic, general conclusions on the industry as a whole. Such researches do, still, provide a first element of answer with regard to the various questions asked (here, the perspective of the practitioners interviewed with respect to *power* and executives, the executive success discourse, the personal success goals of the participants), which this thesis will analyse in a qualitative manner.

This Introduction chapter will be divided into two parts. Part I, focusing on the setting of the research and the intervention of the thesis, will first develop key elements of research settings, such as issues related to the cultural industries in general and the TV industry in particular, moving on to other

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[4] Taking into account, as aforementioned, that there can be different types of success, each with its own measures.

elements linked to the television industry and to this specific research, such as the array of industry sections concerned, as well as the transatlantic and the TV series settings. I will then review the literature in order to tackle the academic framework within which this PhD takes places; first by discussing the current context and highlighting where this thesis will – and will not – intervene, before discussing the academic work on *success*, and eventually by specifying the secondary or tertiary fields of engagement of the project. The second part of this chapter will focus on the main research questions of this PhD, before detailing the structure of the thesis, as well as the content and purpose of each chapter.

I. Settings, Literature Review and Intervention:

a. Research Settings:

The Television Industry and The Creative / Cultural Industries

After having presented the topic of this research, it appears important to discuss the issues related to the framework within which it will take place, a setting that Hesmondhalgh and Baker deem 'the most important media (and therefore cultural) industry of all' (2008: 102): the television industry – itself part of what some academics have called the *cultural* industries (Hesmondhalgh, 2002), an expression introduced by Horkheimer and Adorno (1944), or the *creative* industries (Hartley, 2005), first used by Miège (1987). More than just a framework or a reference to a physical workplace, however, the cultural industries concept 'connects to the wider movements in economic sociology to analyze and construct organizational fields, and address the social construction of markets of all kinds' (Hirsch, 2000: 359).

These industries, and their workers, of course, 'are *especially* involved (i.e., other industries are too, but not as much) in the production of symbols and of social meaning' (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2011: 60). From a pragmatic perspective, one must thus realise that interviews taking place in the TV

industry will, in many respects, be different from what they would be in the automobile industry, for instance. Indeed, as stated by Hartley, creative industries, unlike the latter, cannot be named after their product, as 'creativity is an input and not an output' (Hartley, 2005: 26-7). In turn, the work that follows, deemed 'immaterial labour' by Hardt and Negri, 'produces an immaterial good, such as a service, a cultural product, knowledge, or communication' (2000: 290). As such, the notions of creative and cultural industries could be distinguished from a chronological and conceptual standpoint: while the idea of creative industries focuses on the input: creativity, therefore on what comes in at the start of the production process, the idea of cultural industries revolves around the output: the cultural good resulting from this production process. By all means, therefore, the television industry very much belongs to both concepts.

Creativity

Depending on one's own opinion, 'creativity' can mean various things, and can be applied to many different roles and activities, or on the contrary to very little. One could say that creativity is everywhere, and that each and every one of us, one way or another, expresses their creativity. With regards to the industry studied here, whether the jobs of every single member of this industry entail creativity is more of an aesthetics or philosophical question. When it comes to academic research, each of the terms used must be very carefully explained and delineated. How much more so with regards to the television industry, which is part of what is deemed 'the creative industries'. Indeed, the terms 'creative' and 'creativity' being so often used in this thesis, both in the academic literature it engages with and in the very discourses of the practitioners interviewed, it is necessary – for the sake of clarity, precision and relevance – to explain, at the outset, what these two terms are considered to mean within the specific scope of this research.

When this thesis makes use of the expression 'creative workers' and discusses the creativity / control

conflicts, it acknowledges, as Hesmondhalgh and Baker do, 'that there is a division of labour in cultural production' (2011: 9). The issues relating to tensions and contradictions between creativity and control, at the centre of theories ranging from naive romanticism (cf. Adorno, 1991; Faulkner et al., 2008) to much more sceptic ones (such as Murdock, 2003), and everything in between (see Enzensberger, 1974; Hesmondhalgh, 2013) will, in fact, be revisited and engaged with in Chapter II. This thesis intends the notion of 'creative workers' to refer to practitioners involved in the creation or in activities linked with the filming of the programmes. In other words, it is directed at the *non-managerial personnel* (a category which encompasses the primary creative personnel, the secondary creative personnel, the performers and the technical craft workers, as will be developed and explained in Chapter I), as well as at the *super creative personnel*, belonging to the managers-producers category due to their managerial duties (cf. Ch. I, also). They do not include, therefore, practitioners with managerial responsibilities who are not involved in activities such as the writing or directing of the show (unlike their aforementioned counterparts) and executives. All of these groups, of course, are discussed in detail in the first part of Chapter I and furthered in Chapter II.

Negus and Pickering explain that 'an individual can no more realise the creation and exhibition of a movie than be able to manufacture and make function [...] a washing machine'; and that, as a result, 'all judgements about the value and possibilities of creativity inevitably involve consideration of the human relationships and social processes through which an individual or group of people may have come to realise a particular creation' (2004: 56). By contrast, Hesmondhalgh and Baker argue that 'the terms "creativity" and "creative" have been abused and over-used', but that 'they still refer to issues of great importance concerning the potential value of culture in people's lives' (2011: 1). They also explain that the concept of creativity became revered especially because of the interest of business and management researchers, who sought 'in the concept of creativity a way of combining pursuit of the bottom line with a higher purpose' (Ibid.: 3; see also Amabile, 1996; Peters, 1997 and

Prichard, 2002 for more), and because of economists, who assigned 'a central role to idea generation, creativity and knowledge' (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2011: 3) and who considered human activity as the 'ultimate inexhaustible source of growth' (Menger, 2006: 801). The impact of these two disciplines and ways of thinking was such, in the 1990s, that think-tanks started to portray creativity as a source of prosperity (cf. Landry & Bianchini, 1995), to the point that creativity had become a doctrine for policy-makers, an 'object of unceasing advocacy by its proponents' by the 2000s (Schlesinger, 2007: 378). As such, these policies sought to increase in number the jobs centred on 'symbol making' and promote them as desirable on account of their 'economic benefits, but also because they supposedly offer greater fulfilment and self-actualisation than other kinds of work' (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2011: 5). This, in effect, brings in notions of *value*, the value of creativity and culture in people's lives – not just with regard to those consuming such texts, here, but in relation to those *making* the latter.

Value of Creativity and Labour in the Industry

The cultural *value* of television programmes and the notions of *quality* of the said programmes must not be overlooked, and these debates will be addressed at different points of this thesis. Indeed, just as with creativity, it is important to address these two notions as they – and the academic debates thereof – are intrinsically linked to the production and the reception of goods within the cultural industries, and, therefore, to television, production and reception studies. Just as I argue that, in order to better comprehend the television (and more broadly, the cultural) industry, it is necessary to understand what *success* means to the people working there, in order to better comprehend what success is to them, as well as the goods they make, it is necessary to understand what *value* and *quality* mean in relation to those goods and these industries. Indeed, beyond the fact that the academic understanding of the topic under study, here, would not be thorough if it did not consider such discussions, these two notions – especially that of *quality* – may also be of importance to

practitioners with regards to success, as will be demonstrated.

Gibson explains that the 'value' attributed to creativity, itself deemed a 'fluid and uncertain territory', is both linked to the 'creative economy' on the one hand, and to 'cultural value' on the other (2006: 11); a position shared by others, such as Negus and Pickering (2004: vii). As a 'cultural value', Gibson adds, the notion of 'creativity' lends 'to intellectual property a distinctly "cultural" purpose' (2006: 11). Newman and Levine, for instance, discuss in rather similar terms the value which they consider certain well-known 'showrunners' can have, or add, as 'authors', and which they define as 'not merely economic, but also as a form of cultural cachet' (2012: 57). As aforementioned, however, Hesmondhalgh and Baker argue that there has been a critical backlash on this aura given to creativity and creative jobs (2011: 6; see also Menger, 2006; Ross, 2000). Furthermore, as they point out, 'other critical analysts' have tried to demonstrate that jobs within the cultural / creative industries 'are marked by high levels of insecurity, casualisation and long working hours' (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2011: 6), as will be discussed further in this thesis, especially in Chapter II, in relation to job security, for instance, in the TV industry. The scholars turn to the notion of 'self-exploitation', which sees workers 'become so enamoured with their jobs that they push themselves to the limits of their physical and emotional endurance' (Ibid.). Miège, however, seems to disagree with such views, portraying 'artists and artistic creation' in his 1982 UNESCO report as 'the forgotten factor in thinking about the cultural industries', so as to counter approaches which tend to portray creativity as 'contaminated' by industry and commerce, and reduce creative workers to 'victims', 'out of a kind of arcane respect for a social activity that is prized in almost all societies' (1989: 66). The interest in one's job and the importance given to it in terms of one's success goals will be discussed in Chapter IV. However, just as this thesis does not intend to rank certain genres or assert what 'good television' is (as will be explained in the following point), it does not seek to claim a hierarchy in terms of creative work, nor assess 'what forms better creative work would take', as

Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2011: 8) have. As stated on the first page, this thesis does seek to study the discourses of practitioners in relation to 'success', and even though it might occasionally require to distinguish the said practitioners through different task-based categories, this research gives the same value and consideration to each and every one of them, regardless of their respective job or resume.

Miège (1989) and Hesmondhalgh (2002), along with others, such as Ryan (1992), tend to agree on the fact that labour in those industries is characterised by its loose division in the production process, by the high level of autonomy of the creative personnel, and by the vast 'pool' of the personnel, available for a given project (see also Flew, 2005: 351). This loose division of labour occasionally leads to a blurring of each one's tasks, with an individual able to have more than one role (as demonstrated by Hesmondhalgh, 2002: 52 and Tunstall, 2001: 17), as can be the case of writers holding producer titles in the television industry, a situation discussed in the thesis. Further, the autonomy existing for some and not for others may result in quite distinct views on many different topics, such as the perspectives from non-managerial / creative personnel and from channels and studio executives, for instance. The vast pool of professionals from which to choose for short-term contracts also shows the abundance of offer over demand, leading to job insecurity in the TV industry (Berkeley, 2003: 113). In addition, the television industry (along with its peers within the cultural industries) does not only produce 'culture', but its practitioners themselves 'function on a microsocial level as local cultures and social communities in their own right' (Caldwell, 2008: 2). It is this local culture, this social community, as well as its perspectives, values and working practices, that will be at the centre of this research.

Quality and Legitimacy

With the notion of value, come the notions of quality and legitimacy. Frith asks 'who decides what is "good television"? How do they decide this? Is there a consensus view in a production team? What

sort of conflicts do such decisions involve?' (2000: 39). It becomes fundamental, at this point, to understand what is intended by 'good': if it means 'successful', then this is exactly what this thesis focuses on and seeks to address (within its specific scope of investigation). If it refers to a value judgement relating to 'quality', however, as Frith seems to intend it when discussing the 'value of television' (Ibid.), then this is another topic entirely. The issue, when talking about 'good television' – or, to use the more commonly used expression, 'quality television' (see McCabe & Akass, 2007) – is that it implies a hierarchy; good versus bad television. From that perspective, certain forms of television, or genres, would be seen as more original, complex, aesthetic or socially relevant than the majority of the usual offer (see Nelson, 1997; Newman & Levine, 2012; Ouellette, 2016). Indeed, as Thumim explains, 'the understanding that there was a reciprocal relation between the content of broadcast television and national culture and identity was not, of course, confined to current affairs broadcasting' (2004: 119). Thus, as aforementioned, a number of genres were considered as being even more important 'and within this field the most pressing question concerned the cultural "value" of broadcast drama' (Ibid.), as well as other genres, such as documentaries, for instance (cf. Newman & Levine, 2012; Ouellette, 2016). Thumim criticises this dual stance and such *value judgements* (in the literal sense of the term, here) and states that 'it has become a trope of television scholarship to make an easy distinction between "quality" and "popular" drama, where "quality" references not only high production values, celebrated and accomplished writers and performers, but also', the scholar asserts, 'an at least implicit acknowledgement of the canon against which theatrical drama was measured' (2004: 119). Giving an example from the 1950s (and from a British perspective) to illustrate her point, Thumim subsequently explains that 'though it may be simple to distinguish between, say, Shakespeare on television and an imported sitcom such as *I Love Lucy* or *The Burns and Allen Show*, value judgements about their aesthetics, their fitness for purpose of their use-value to audiences are not so clear' (Ibid.).

Newman and Levine, in fact, point to the role that academics and scholarship can actually have in legitimating television and in potentially perpetuating these 'hierarchies of taste, value, and cultural and social worth' which they critique (2012: 153-54). They also remind us that this has already happened: that the study 'in institutions of higher education has historically marked the ascents of cultural forms such as theatre and film to high status, as intellectualization promotes the serious contemplation of meaning and value and aligns new forms with old conceptions of cultural legitimacy' (Ibid.). This is far from being the intention, here, as this research not only excludes documentaries nor focuses on drama only, it also has no wish to rank various programmes (nor to attribute a different value to them), whatsoever. In fact, this thesis seldom discusses specific programmes, but instead focuses on industrial processes and discourses (with regard to success goals and measures). While I believe it is not the place of this thesis to claim what 'quality' or 'good' television is, finally, the presence – or absence – of the notions of 'value' or 'quality' in practitioner discourses linked to industrial and personal 'success' is, obviously, of interest, and will be addressed; in particular when participants would discuss certain awards or perceptions of the programmes which they work on (see Chapter IV).

The Transatlantic Setting

I discuss the *transatlantic* setting, in this research, in the way that Bignell and Knox (2013) do, that is, in reference to the UK and the US television industries, both because of their key stature in television history and because of their enduring influence, whether academically (cf. Oren and Shahaf, 2012) or industrially.[5] This perspective, rather than just the American one still dominating the 'global cultural markets' (Flew, 2005: 356), was chosen because of the ideological differences presented in further detail below, thought to be of interest, here. As Hartley argues, for instance, 'in

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[5] Consider, for instance, in addition to the undeniable weight of American programmes worldwide, the distribution, popularity (and occasionally adaptations) of programmes such as *Downton Abbey*, *Doctor Who*, *The Office* or *Top Gear*.

the USA, creativity is consumer -and market-driven, whereas in Europe it is caught up in traditions on national culture and cultural citizenship' (2005: 5). Indeed, as explained in the following section, even though the US and UK TV industries in this plenty / TVIII / post-network era have radically evolved in the past few decades, their current configuration has retained some of their respective original model specificities. While such a setting has its limitations, namely, a Western and Anglophone-centred approach, studying both industries permits researchers to see to which extent industry discourses and / or practices can be delineated, and will make it possible for this research to see if these differences are noticeable in practitioner discourses in this deregulation and digital / post-broadcast era. Besides, as will be demonstrated in the following point, in spite of the distinctions inherent to US and UK television, these two industries have faced very similar changes in the past thirty five years or more; as such, Johnson states that they resultantly 'offer useful cases for comparing the impact of these changes in commercial and public service contexts' (2012: 8). Such a dual (US / UK) focus, therefore, will allow this thesis both to have a less ethnocentric perspective and to compare the key industries from each geographical part of the Anglophone transatlantic industry with one another.

This transatlantic setting is, in fact, increasingly present in academia (Collins, 1990; Bignell and Knox, 2013), due to its importance in what Corcoran refers to as 'the Anglophone television world' (2008: 174), the two industries and their differences having provided the foundations for much of the academic work on TV history. According to Oren and Shahaf, this is due to the fact that 'despite television's global reach [...] mainstream television studies holds fast to its origins – both of medium and discipline. Just as the technology and broadcasting structure of television are widely regarded as having originated in Britain and the U.S., so the discipline of television studies [...] maintains a U.S. / U.K.-based foundation' (2012: 1). Unlike the two scholars, however, who see this dual perspective as historically-grounded (Ibid.), others, such as Fickers and Johnson, see it as a much more innovative

move (2010: 1). Discussing the increasingly trendy 'transnational' focus in television studies (there, with regard to historiography specifically), the authors state that 'while some interpret this later "turn" [...] as a challenge to older [...] traditions like world or international history, others see it as a new paradigm, superseding the national perspective as the founding frame of reference' (Ibid.). With this thesis, therefore, I wish to remain in the continuation the transatlantic-centred studies listed above (such as Collins, 1990; Johnson, 2012; Fickers & Johnson (2010); Bignell and Knox, 2013), both because of the historical impact of transatlantic television on the medium (Oren and Shahaf, 2012: 1) and for the innovativeness of this dual focus (Fickers and Johnson, 2010: 1), while contributing to such studies by providing original research and unique data on the topic of 'success' within the Anglophone transatlantic television industry.

Historical and Current Differences between the US and the UK TV Industry

Since, as aforementioned, this thesis has chosen to look at the Anglophone transatlantic setting through the two industries where 'technology and broadcasting structure of television' have emerged (Oren and Shahaf, 2012: 1), it is important to take a look, first, at their respective history, both in terms of differences and similarities. Such background information will allow us to better understand some of the processes or discursive elements featured in the analysed interviews, as well as to assess whether observable differences exist between these two industries in practitioner discourses.

In order to so compare the US and the UK contexts while discussing their national specificities, I concur with Johnson when she chooses a model that argues 'for the development of television through three eras: broadcast, cable/satellite, and digital' (2012: 8). This evolution of television in three stages is explained on the one hand by Ellis (2000: 39), whose approach primarily focuses on the British public broadcasting service process (and the competition that arose with commercial broadcasters and satellite / cable channels) through the phases of scarcity, availability and plenty, and

on the other hand, by Rogers, Epstein & Reeves (2002) with the three TVI, TVII and TVIII phrases (initially with reference to the network-based US TV industry). According to Ellis (2000), who looks at the offer proposed to the audience, television during the 'scarcity' era was characterised by the lack of competition (or offer, to the viewer), thus by the duopoly of public channels. This was followed by the era of 'availability', in the late 1970s and early 1980s, when cable and satellite competition arose. This increase in offer has led us in the late 1990s to the 'plenty' era, with further technological advancements, especially digital technology, which have offered even more (non-broadcast based) choices to audiences. Rogers, Epstein and Reeves' (2002) model, on the other hand, rather focuses on the (notwithstanding very similar) history of US television, from an economic standpoint: during the TVI era, with a three-network oligopoly, television was at that time a mass media earning revenue from the sale of audiences to advertisers, in terms of ratings. The change came with the TVII era, in the 1970s and 1980s, with certain cable channels focusing on niche audiences (thus on specific demographics, cf. Chapter III). The TVIII era, finally, as argued by the authors, distinguishes itself from the previous two by the fact that viewers can pay directly for television (with premium channels, for instance, or online VOD (video-on-demand) services, as addressed later on), rather than indirectly through advertising intended to them and paid for externally by advertisers (cf. Doyle, 2002: 60). This approach is close to that of Lotz (2007), who discusses the 'network era', the 'multi-channel transition' and finally the 'post-network era' (Ibid.). As Johnson explains, the rise of cable in the US and satellite and cable in the UK – which meant that TV could be paid at the point of the reception, that television was no longer simply a medium for the masses and that it was not simply a national medium anymore – were further amplified with the arrival of digital television (2012: 9). By the time I started my PhD, therefore, 'television was no longer the set in the corner of the living room broadcasting an ephemeral linear schedule to an undifferentiated mass audience' (Ibid.). This does not mean, however, that the practitioners interviewed necessarily reflected the extent of that change in their success discourses, as will be discussed further on in this thesis

(especially in Chapter III).

While these technological changes have had an impact on the two industries looked at in this research, there are several differences between the US and the UK contexts. For instance, as mentioned earlier, cable competition (to broadcasting channels) arrived long before it did in the UK, where competition came through satellite first, and only at the end of the 1980s, rather than earlier in the decade, as was the case in the US (cf. Johnson, 2013, 280-84).[6] Besides, due to the differences of each industry's history, with a historically commercial-television-dominated US TV industry and a historically public-service-centred UK TV industry, the impact of such changes have had different implications. For Johnson, for instance, 'the most significant aspect of the emergence of satellite and cable in the UK was the broader political context that threatened public service broadcasting, rather than the actual competition for viewers that these new services presented' (2012: 9). On the other side of the Atlantic, it is the emergence of large media conglomerates (discussed below, and in Chapter II), the author argues, which has had 'the most impact' on US TV industry (Ibid.).

Indeed, because of the deregulatory policies of the 1980s and 1990s in the US, which have impacted the rules relating to media ownership, 'it became possible for corporations with significant media holdings to purchase broadcast networks, leading to the emergence of large media conglomerates' (Ibid.: 39). This was especially facilitated by the 1996 US Telecommunications Act, which also allowed cross-media ownership between telephone and cable or TV and radio (cf. Hesmondhalgh, 2002: 130; Hilmes, 2003: 66). The arrival of Internet, finally, that gave space to 'an emerging digital capitalism' (Schiller, 1999: 37), provided 'sophisticated network systems', which 'comprised the increasingly essential infrastructure for engorged transnational corporations' (Ibid. 39-40). Such conglomerates, therefore, which operate both domestically and internationally, can include the

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[6] The different eras of the US / UK, therefore, although similar on both sides of the Atlantic, have certain chronological differences, the former slightly preceding the latter.

Disney-ABC TV-ABC Studios conglomerate, discussed in this thesis through one of our interviewees, but also even larger ones, which would hold simultaneous interests in areas such as publishing, radio, television (networks, cable, studios, etc.), film, music or new media (see Croteau & Hoynes, 2006: 97).

Far from the commercial outlook that one would find in the network-dominated US television industry of the TVI era, the British television industry was originally highly public service-centred (as one may still perceive, based on the enduring importance of the BBC), and was founded in the 1930s on the premise that, alike the already existing radio, television should be a public service, funded by the public (through the licence fee), and shielded from the influence of politics and commerce (see Johnson, 2012: 64; Aldridge, 2012: 1-6). Nevertheless, in the 1980s, the UK television policy was, like the US one, 'largely deregulatory and heavily influenced by governments with neo-liberal and market-oriented philosophies' (Johnson, 2012: 63),[7] and similarly led to a higher number of channels and broadcasters, especially through satellite and cable, and thus competition for the former powers in place from 1950s to the 1980s (here, BBC and ITV duopoly, and NBC, CBS and ABC oligopoly in the US; cf. Ibid.: 21, 63). At that point, therefore, the offer provided by satellite and cable, coupled with Thatcher's free-market policies – and the 1990 and 1996 Broadcasting Act – put a halt to the perception of television as fundamentally a public service (see O'Malley, 2009: 4) and had a significant impact on the functioning of several public and non public service channels, such as Channel 4 and even (commercial) ITV (see Johnson, 2012: 66). Indeed, the influential Peacock Report (1986), which reflected these political and economical policies, had sufficient impact to move the UK policy 'from public service itself as the underlying principle of broadcasting to a notion that broadcasting should be organized as a marketplace for independent voices' (Goodwin, 1998: 92; Collins, 2009).

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[7] With Republican President Ronald Reagan from 1981 to 1989 in the US, and Conservative Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in the UK from 1979 to 1990.

This caused the UK television industry to undergo changes very similar to those of the US industry a few years earlier (including more lenient rules on media ownership), which led to foreign investment in British television and the obligation of public service broadcasters to commission at least one fourth of their programming to independent producers (Johnson, 2012: 66). Lastly, the 1996 Broadcasting Act also instigated the development of the DTB, digital terrestrial broadcasting system (Ibid.: 74-5). In the following years, just as had been the case in the US, the need arose for the British television industry to adjust to technological advances, digital technology in particular, and the highly competitive and transnational-going-global market (discussed above in relation to the US TV industry). In spite of the presence on various types of channel, including through cable and satellite (such as those provided by BSkyB, for instance),[8] the place of broadcast channels such as BBC One, BBC Two, BBC Three,[9] BBC Four (etc.) or Channel Four in the British television landscape shows that public service broadcasting is still heavily present in UK television to this day, just as commercial television remains at the heart of the US TV industry.

Time Frame of the Research within the History of Television

The moment, or timeframe of this particular research, which at the time was the *present time* and is now already representing a *time from the past*, is very peculiar. Indeed, the 2011-2012 period, when the empirical research took place through the various practitioner interviews, was a key transitory moment, coinciding with the beginning of the rise of online, video-on-demand platforms, but just before they reached the major influence that some, such as *Netflix* or *Amazon prime*, to name just a couple, now have. As such, these interviews and discourses occurred during a turning point in TV history (recounted in the previous section), between what was known as TVIII (cf. Rogers, Epstein & Reeves, 2002: 46) and what I, along with others (see Jenner, 2016) would call TVIV; or, to use a

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[8] That resulted from the 1990 merger of Sky with BSB, which provided a first tangible case of competition to the existing oligopoly; see Hart, 2004: 36-7.
[9] Which stopped being a TV channel on 16 February 2016; becoming an Internet TV service only, since (Doran, 2016).

different terminology, between what was the post-network era (Lotz, 2007: 7-8) and what is not so slowly becoming the post-TV era (albeit not just yet, according to some; see Van Esler, 2016). This moment is, therefore, particularly interesting to look at from any angle, in the television industry, but perhaps even more so through practitioner discourses, which will, for instance, reveal the way several practitioners positioned themselves with regards to the technological advancements and the changes taking place at the time.

Scripted Entertainment and Genre

Unlike a number of other industries pertaining to the cultural industries, television is 'for the most part, made as programmes or runs of programmes: series, serials and mini-series' (Brunsdon, 1998: 105). As stated at the outset, this thesis explores the discourses of success within the Anglophone transatlantic television industry of practitioners associated with TV series, that is, with scripted entertainment programmes, whether drama or comedy, science-fiction or adventure. Hesmondhalgh and Baker explain that 'particular sets of values, meanings and behaviours become associated with particular genres. television documentary workers tend to go about their business in somewhat different ways from people who make "light entertainment" talent shows for example' (2011: 14). The range of tasks, and therefore jobs, involved in the production of a given programme also differs depending on the genre. While I will not deny a personal interest in TV series in particular – which is, I am sure, what prompted many other television scholars to become television scholars in the first place and to write about such shows – the scripted entertainment, or TV series setting permits this thesis to include an array of job categories (such as actors, writers, etc.) which would not normally have had a place in other formats, such as non-scripted or non-fictional programmes in the likes of reality TV, game shows, documentaries, sports events, or news programmes (see Bourdon et al., 2008). Choosing this kind of setting thus allowed me to interview a wide range of (job-based) industry practitioner categories. The empirical research for this thesis revolving entirely on

practitioner interviews, selecting and interviewing practitioners having various positions in the industry was deemed important in order to obtain a wider range of perspectives and to represent more practitioner job categories; their differences and commonalities and the link between them (job specificities and their discourses being discussed in Chapters II and IV). The way industry members were categorised and the participants selected, however, will be primarily discussed in the first part of Chapter I rather than here, as it is more of a methodological issue.

For Hesmondhalgh and Baker, genre terms, at the same time, 'are based on shared understandings among producers and among audiences', and 'constantly change in response to the practices of creative workers', but they nevertheless 'provide some kind of institutionalisation and routinisation in a highly uncertain interpretive production world' (2011: 14). The genre, or nature of the content, for instance, has an incidence on the global reach of the original production; some formats such as reality television being more often adapted (that is, usually, strictly copied, but done in another language and location, by different people) in other countries (Hill, 2015) than broadcast in their original form. As such, 'genre is an important dimension of understanding the organisation and experience of creative work in a differentiated way' (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2011: 14). From a production perspective also, a clear distinction can be made between 'scripted entertainment', which 'is exploited with the goal of capturing the highest value from the intellectual properties under copyright, recouping the initial investment and eventually reaching a profit, when they are successful', and 'the distinct intrinsic nature of non-scripted entertainment products[, which] calls for and lends itself to different business exploitations in the global entertainment landscape, [...] oftentimes with distinct features, especially when they are distributed internationally' (Sigismondi, 2012: 63). Lastly, Sigismondi adds that the 'cornerstone of non-scripted entertainment shows lies in the "format" of the programs' (Ibid.), which is 'the total package of information and know-how that increases adaptability of a program in another place and time' (Moran and Malbon, 2006: 7). As a

result, when international sales are discussed by executives in this study, they have to do with the sale of the actual programme (the TV series), rather than with its template.

The Five Entities Studied

While broadcasting fictional and non-fictional programmes to audience members is a practice[10] shared, to an extent, with the radio for instance, the television industry is much more diversified in terms of the entities comprising the former. Indeed, even though academic research has primarily focused on one type of industry section at a time, often commercial TV channels (Hesmondhalgh, 2002) and sometimes public channels (Tunstall, 2015),[11] the entities comprising the television industry are varied, and this thesis seeks to take them into account in their diversity. This research will thus look at five different entities within the television industry: commercial broadcasters (such as networks), cable (and satellite) channels, premium channels, public channels and TV studios. As such, when only the term 'channel' is being used in this thesis, this is to say 'television channel' as opposed to 'television studios'.

- Commercial broadcasters such as networks in the US, for instance, which sell audiences (or specific groups of) to advertisers during the commercial breaks (or 'eyeballs', as one of my interviewees would present it), operate according to Nienhaus' 'second-order commodity relations', where 'symbolic objects or flows producing aggregate individual time for sale to third parties' (1993: 309), the third party, here, being of course the advertisers.

- Cable and satellite channels, to which one has to pay a multichannel cable/ satellite package subscription fee to get access, but which also sell ratings (either overall ones or specific

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[10] Or business model since, like any other industry, the TV industry operates in the aim of generating profit; cf. Hesmondhalgh, 2002: 3.

[11] Apart from certain textbooks such as Bignell & Orlebar's (2005), which do discuss the plurality of the television industry.

demographics) to advertisers during commercial breaks, operate within both Nienhaus'

concept of 'second-order commodity relations' (cf. Ibid.) and of 'first-order commodity

relations', where 'symbolic objects or flows [are] actually exchanged for money or having

prices attached' (Ibid.).[12]

- As for premium channels, such as HBO, for which customers have to pay an additional fee to

  subscribe and get access to, these can be seen as operating within Nienhaus' notion of first-

  order commodity relations as well, but strictly so, since, contrary to cable channels (and

  networks), these usually do not sell audiences or demographics to advertisers during

  advertising airtime, and their revenue therefore only comes from the subscription fees. Such

  channels are described by Rogers, Epstein and Reeves as providing programmes 'free of

  commercial interruption and uncontaminated by the demands of advertisers' (2002: 46).

- Much like premium channels, public service channels such as BBC One and BBC Two are

  often financed upstream by what one could call a compulsory[13] subscription free, known as

  the licence fee, and typically air no, or little, commercial advertising.

- TV studios, finally, are a very distinct entity: not simply because, unlike the former ones, they

  do not 'show' programmes, but because their income comes from neither audience sales nor

  subscription fees. Indeed, television studios mostly get returns from the sale of programmes

  to channels, domestically and abroad, or from ancillary sources of revenue (such as the sales

  of DVD and derivative products linked to the shows which they own the rights of; cf. Hilmes,

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[12] While cable channels were more preponderant in this research than satellite ones, their functioning model is very similar, of course (non-broadcast commercial channel requiring a subscription to access them), and many channels are available both through cable and satellite, such as Syfy for instance ('represented' in this thesis by one of our participants).

[13] Unless one does not watch live television on any sort of device, or under certain criteria (age, blindness, etc. where discounts may apply (TV Licensing, 2016).

2013: 390).[14]

While Chapter III in particular will endeavour to study and classify the industrial discourses of success, showing various points of convergence and divergence between these various entities, each of these has its own singularities, which can be linked, to an extent, to the afore-discussed history and development of television. As such, even though each and every one of these five entities can be encountered on either side of the Atlantic Ocean, the prevalence of some entities tends to vary, depending on the industry / location. This is most obvious in the case of public channels. While these are hardly visible in the American television landscape – where commercial broadcasters were historically the dominant form of television, later rivalled by cable, satellite and then premium channels – public channels have always been an integral part of British television (and still are, despite the ever-increasing competition). After a thorough analysis of *success* within these entities through my participants' discourses, finally, the Conclusion of the thesis will return to the question of national difference in light of those findings.

b. Academic Framework and Intervention:

In this section, I will review the literature and the various key theories related to TV, production, and other types of studies, and will highlight the points that will be engaged with by this research and the frame within which it stands, along with the points that are beyond its scope.

The main fields which my thesis engages with, and contributes to, are linked to are linked to media studies, production studies and television studies. While media studies has been much concerned with cultural economy (Fiske, 1987) and the 'political impact of mass media in terms of reception' (Messenger Davies, 2006: 23), social sciences and the study of workers (such as the works of

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[14] With regard to scripted entertainment, that is; studio revenues from non-scripted entertainment being more linked to format sales (and the adaptation rights going with them).

Bourdieu 1979; 1996, for instance) have always been an important aspect of the field, an aspect which this thesis relates to. The notion of success discourses as such, however, and what drives the television (or other constituents of the cultural) industry has not been paid attention to, even though such a study would fit the historical cultural economy and social research agenda of the field. Just like Pearson and Messenger Davies, then, whose 'interest in talking to the workers was partly [...] to fill a gap in the media studies ideological agenda' (2006: 23); so was mine when I decided to address the crucial concept of the goals behind the production of texts in the TV industry.

The Intersection of Television and Production Studies

The fields and discussions to which this research really does intend to make a contribution to, and engage with, reside where television studies intersects with other fields.[15] With cultural studies, for instance, through discussions on 'creativity' and 'value' (see Nelson, 1997; Negus and Pickering, 2004; Gibson, 2006; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2011), as well as on 'quality' and the 'cultural value' of television content (cf. Thumim, 2004; McCabe & Akass, 2007; Newman & Levine, 2012; Ouellette, 2016), which are addressed earlier in this introduction and further on in the thesis).

This research, however, primarily emerges from and contributes to the topics discussed where television studies meets with production studies (given the key focus of this thesis on discourses related to work and production in the industry), which historically had little weight in TV studies. Indeed, by 1999, Corner warned that 'attention to production processes has sometimes been seen as a neglected or underdeveloped area of enquiry' in TV studies (1999: 71). This situation – now progressing – did persist for a long time, when compared to the wealth of equally interesting work on textual analysis, audience studies, or the history of television, most of the research offering a behind-

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[15] There being the need for a distinction between the topics that arise when two disciplines meet, such as those addressed here (for instance, discussions on the cultural value of TV programmes, at the crossroads of cultural studies and television studies), and several of those discussed above, such as gender studies or textual analysis, which are not intrinsically interdisciplinary, but are applicable and relevant to different fields and disciplines.

the-scenes look at the television industry taking place in production studies or in some more general media studies works. As stated by Messenger Davies: 'production studies – that is, research about people who make television programmes and the way these people work – have never been a major part of the field of television studies' (Messenger Davies, 2006: 21). Some exceptions include the early work of sociologist Todd Gitlin (1983) on primetime television, which looked at the work and policies of executives within the U.S. networks specifically or Kubey's (2004) conversations with US TV practitioners, but which focused more on individual stories and accounts than on a specific theme, or industry workings per se. Further television works interested in practitioner discourses, in the tracks of which my research follows, so to speak, would be Pearson and Messenger Davies' (2004) research, which looked at the contributions of interviewed practitioners to the *Star Trek* franchise in particular, or Mills' (2009) work on sitcoms, for which practitioner interviews were undertaken, the focus of which including the production aspect of sitcoms. In parallel, other works such as Johnson's (2010) have continued paving the way between television studies and industry studies, without necessarily doing it through qualitative interviews focusing on practitioners and on their accounts.

Up to the point where I started my thesis (in 2010), therefore, such works were not that abundant among television studies in general, neither in relation to the other topics discussed above nor when compared to the numerous works made by scholars from fields such as media, social, cultural or production studies, in the likes of Miège (1979; 1989), Bourdieu (1979; 1996), Hesmondhalgh (2002; 2010), Hartley (2005) or Caldwell (2008). Fortunately, the study of 'the television industry as an institution and its production practices and organisation' (Bignell, 2013: 2) has since become one of the main components of TV studies, and qualitative research on the subject has seen an exponential rise in output lately, all around the world. Examples of academics researching such topics with these methods would include Zhu (2012), who undertook a comprehensive study of

China Central Television, including through practitioner interviews, Himberg (2013), who interviewed cable TV practitioners and market researchers to study the impact of industrial beliefs and practices on lesbian programming production, or Redvall (2013), who studied the writing and production process of drama programmes from the Danish Broadcasting Corporation (DR) through participant observation and practitioner interviews. Such a trend in contemporary scholarly output is still growing with, in 2015 alone, to cite a few, Gimpel (2015), who interviewed 22 executives (at different points of what he deems the 'video value chain') about the future of the television and video industry, Quail (2015), who looked at the increase in production and consumption of reality TV in Canada by analysing information collected from industry reports, ratings data and practitioner interviews, or Chávez (2015), who interviewed US TV practitioners about the practices utilised by the industry in order to better understand the Latino audience.

This PhD, which is very much linked both to a television setting and to production studies, thus seeks to add to this movement towards the production aspect and practitioner expertise within the TV studies discipline specifically, and so to further unite television and production studies in that regard. Moreover, many of the works cited in this section, because of the scholars' own interests and for the purpose of their research, were nevertheless quite restricted in their scope, with topics ranging from one type of domestic channel to a specific genre or a particular TV programme or franchise. Despite the small number of interviews – sixteen – (which will be discussed in detail, as explained earlier, in the methodology) the fact that few other research projects have looked at such a broad array of industry sections and practitioner profiles provides yet further justification with regard to the need for such a thesis, which does not only study a highly overseen *yet key* topic relating to television studies (and cultural, production studies more broadly) but also takes into account the scripted entertainment Anglophone transatlantic TV industry in its multiplicity in terms of production-related job categories and in terms of entities. Indeed, by looking at all types of industry institutions prior to

the ascend of VOD / online platforms (networks, cable channels, premium channels, public channels and television studios) and workers coming from each of the seven task-based groups of the classification proposed in Chapter I), this research intends to have as wide a scope as possible while focusing on the very specific topic of interest here, the discourses of 'success', and the way this 'success' is perceived and measured by the industry and its members.

Academic Work on 'Success'

The notion of 'success', personal success in particular, was already studied and discussed in classical antiquity. Greek philosophers such as Aristotle (350 B.C.E / 2015); Aristotle, quoted in Handy, 1993) or Epicurus (ca. 300-270 B.C.E. / 2015) were already making links between happiness, success and pleasure, more than 23 centuries ago. Nowadays, while there exist a wealth of motivational handbooks on how to attain 'success', there is a definite lack of books or research reflecting on the nature, the essence, the definition of success. Some of the literature addressing the subject includes the work of psychologists like Hazan and Shaver (2003), Lyubomirsky, King and Diener (2005) or Jacobs Bao and Lyubomirsky (2012), for instance, who have further worked on causal links between happiness and success in the modern world. Information on industrial practices and measures in connection to *success*, however, has rarely ever been researched before, at least in our line of study, most of the works being undertaken on the subject residing in the fields of management or marketing (cf. Ryans et Al., 2000; Frey & Osterloh, 2002; Smith and Raspins, 2008; Aghazadeh, 2016).

Indeed, very few academic works have, in fact, discussed success in the television industry or the cultural industries in general, even though the matter was briefly addressed – but not analysed – in recent years. In *Production Studies*, for instance, Mayer, Banks & Caldwell mention, in relation to media industries, the conflict and subsequent collaboration 'leading ultimately to creativity and commercial success' (2009: 2). What is meant, however, by 'commercial success'? Moreover,

commercial success is far from being the only type of industrial success, as this thesis (and especially Chapter III) will demonstrate. Similarly, without specifically focusing on television per se (but rather on media audiences in general, social media included), Napoli (2011) does discuss media industry success in a few instances, but strictly focusing on ratings analysis and on its evolution from a commercial perspective, without looking at the different types of success nor at practitioner discourses of it. Also, Hesmondhalgh and Baker, who carried out practitioner interviews as I have, talk about successes in three cultural industries (Television, Music and Journalism) and mention 'the production of success and failure' (2008: 107), but do so without shedding any light on what either item entails. While they later briefly mention 'good texts' in the eyes of TV practitioners (Ibid.: 187) and the relationship between the UK TV industry and the audience (Ibid., 200-1; 214-19), such topics need a much more thorough analysis than what has been done so far in order to properly engage with the question of 'success' in the industry; a gap which this thesis intends to take a first step towards filling.

One of the works closest to mine might be that of Gitlin, who does mention success in his book, when discussing the difficulty of forecasting it when producing programmes – based on the accounts of his interviewees – and argues that commercial imperatives (of networks, specifically) have induced a level of conservatism in the selected programmes (1983). The author, however, never really centres his research on these accounts, being much more focused on the industrial perspective of this particular phase of a programme's life cycle than on discursive elements. More recently, Ursell also cites a number of workers' accounts in her chapter, and states that 'certain programme genres [...] can qualify as successes both on old public-service grounds as quality and on new commercial grounds as good earners' (2000: 817). One is entitled to wonder, however, who the 'successes' are so-qualified by and whether such statements can be made regarding entire genres of programmes, especially in the absence of tangible examples and analyses. Ursell does talk further about strategies implemented in the aim of 'minimizing risk by maximizing the likelihood of

success' (Ibid.), but without explaining what is intended by 'likelihood of success' or how this is evaluated.

The field is there, therefore, and I hope to help make it progress – both in terms of content and appeal to academics – with this thesis. My research will thus take part in these discussions, its primary intervention occurring within production studies, media studies and television studies, as it intends to give further lights on the fundamental questions depicted above, resulting from reflexions on the analyses of scholars in the likes of Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2010), Mayer, Banks & Caldwell (2009) or Ursell (2000), and from the overall lack of literature on the subject of success in the television industry. Identifying this gap in production and media / TV studies scholarship, and intending to take the first steps towards filling it with the help of new empirical research data, is precisely where the originality of this research lies.

Secondary and Tertiary Fields of Engagement

As aforementioned, this research draws on a number of research projects which involved interviewing cultural industry workers, albeit with somewhat different interests in mind. These would include the likes of Banks (2007), Caldwell (2008), Gitlin (1983), Hesmondhalgh & Baker (2008, 2010), Mills (2009) and Ursell (2000; 2006), all cited and discussed earlier on. In its focus on 'success', however, this research will also make links to a wider range of topics (and academics), such as sociology and even psychology. Those would include, for instance, sociologists such as Bellah et al. (1985), Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi and Damon (2001), MacIntyre (1984) or Muirhead (2004), or political theorist Keat (2000), who have taken part in debates relating to *good work* incentives (in some cases, within the cultural industries), thus to the motivations of industry workers for performing well. These topics focusing on the sociological aspect of things, looking at these elements from the side of the workers (as opposed to the motivational elements of job satisfaction

from a managerial standpoint, for instance), they relate first and foremost to sociology; or, more precisely, to industrial sociology.

Moreover, as explained in the previous sub-section, 'success' has long been studied in other disciplines, such as philosophy, by as Aristotle and Epicurus (among many others), and psychology, by researchers such as Hazan and Shaver (2003), Lyubomirsky, King & Diener (2005) or Jacobs Bao & Lyubomirsky (2012), who have similarly tackled the notion of success, but, this time, only in relation to personal success. Still with regards to psychology, other concepts and debates will be addressed at different points in this thesis. These would include: firstly, concepts such as the *pyramid of needs* (Maslow, 1954) a psychology theory focusing on the hierarchy of individuals' needs, often applied to the field of management and marketing for explaining people's behaviour. Secondly, debates relating to the *attribution theory* and *the self-serving bias* (brought forth by psychologist Heider, 1958 and developed by social psychologist Weiner, 1974), that are concerned with the role people ascribe to internal and external factors with regards to the specific outcome of an endeavour. Thirdly, the *cultural dimensions theory* developed by social psychologist Hofstede (1980), studying key elements of a society's national culture; a behavioural science concept also used in management, at the company level, especially with regards to cross-cultural management.

Even though one of the sub-research questions (and, therefore, one of the chapters) of this thesis is concerned with the personal success goals of the interviewed industry practitioners and will take part in such discussions, *industrial* success discourses (and the practitioners' relationships with – and perspectives on – decision makers) are what remains at the heart of the thesis. This will allow it to bring in new research and information in academic areas where none, or little, existed before. Not all academic works related to success will be engaged with, nevertheless. While disciplines such as management and economy do discuss industrial success in itself (see Laabs, 2009; or Serrador, 2015,

for instance), they do so from a purely quantitative angle, using numerical variables referred to as 'success measure' or 'success factor' (Ibid., 38-39), rather than paying attention to qualitative approaches and discourse analysis. As such, due to their radically different standpoint, focus and intervention, they do not actually interrelate with the topic at hand. This is not to say that management research will not be discussed at all in this thesis, however. For instance, the debates around job satisfaction from a managerial perspective, involving for instance psychologist Herzberg (2003) and political-economic geographer Hudson (2005), but also economist duGay (1996) and sociologist Heelas (2002) will also be addressed and engaged with in this study.

Lastly, despite the 'narrow' *success* perspective of this research, the latter will nevertheless offer information on many topics related to creative labour and the cultural industries. For instance, even though evidence of job precariousness in creative industries (discussed by Deuze, 2007, 2011; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2008; Neilson & Rossiter, 2005; Ursell, 2000, among others) are not directly foregrounded, being somewhat remote from the focus of this research, such issues were, nevertheless, palpable (for instance, when a producer joked that his definition of success was 'being employed next year') and will, consequently, be addressed. The innovatively eclectic approach[16] of this research also draws upon – and intends to respond to – various conceptions regarding cultural production (citing the likes of Caldwell, 2008; Hardt and Negri, 2000; Hirsch, 2000; Negus, 1998; or Ryan, 1992), as well as issues such as creativity / control conflicts (Adorno, 1991; Enzensberger, 1974; Faulkner et al., 2008), or Marxist theories relating to production forces and exploitative divisions of labour (Marx and Engels, 1902). Notions of pleasures and satisfaction of working in the industry (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010) and the considerations of satisfaction of doing good work (Bellah et al, 2008; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010; MacIntyre, 1984; Muirhead, 2004; Sennett, 2008), to name a few, will also be addressed, as the chapters will engage with the various authors aforelisted. This research intends, finally, especially through the following chapter and the

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[16] To use Hesmondhalgh & Baker's (2011: 8) expression.

conclusion, to discuss and reflect on issues relating to interviewing practitioners as a qualitative research method (the works engaged-with encompassing those of scholars such as Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Boeije, 2010; Crotty, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010; Kings & Horrocks, 2010; Kvale, 1996; Merriam, 2009; Mills, 2008; Sale et al., 2002; Smith, 1983; and Stake, 2010). Far from only interacting with works belonging to media, production or television studies, therefore, this research truly is multidisciplinary in its outlook and engages with a wide range of authors, works, and disciplines, from management to psychology, through sociology and methodology.

As explained, therefore, this thesis engages with – and seeks to make a contribution to – a number of different academic fields which are very rarely in mutual dialogue: the first field comprising cultural studies, along with film, TV and media studies, as well as the related field of production studies. The second field encompasses industrial sociology, psychology (in particular, management psychology) and organisational research.

Last but not least, discourse analysis is a crucial analytical field to this research. These three fields, which have seldom interrogated one another or been combined, have been 'woven' together in this clearly multidisciplinary research in the aim of making a significant contribution to knowledge with regard to TV practitioners' discourses of *success*, perceptions of peers, and professional aspirations.

After so delimiting in this first part the setting and scope of this PhD, the second part will focus on the specificities of this research: first by presenting its main research question (and sub-questions), then by laying out the structure of this thesis and finally by outlying the main argument and purpose of each chapter.

II. Research Questions and Structure of the Thesis:

a. Main Research Questions:

The main research question of this thesis is: *how do practitioners apprehend the notion(s) of success in their discourses, within the Anglophone transatlantic television industry?* As was briefly mentioned in this introduction, an 's' was added in parentheses to the term 'notion' in order to suggest that, as this thesis will reveal, more than just one notion of success was discussed by the practitioners interviewed, both on a professional level and on a personal one. As such, this thesis will be concerned with the manner in which the interviewed practitioners negotiate both with personal and with what are assumed to be received notions of 'success' within their particular branch of the industry, as well as how they occasionally offer more nuanced and personalised notions of 'success' in relation to their role within the industry.

My research will tackle the subject at hand by focusing on three main topics:

- the practitioners' perception of power and of the decision-makers;
- the *industrial* executive discourses of success found among the different industry constituent (networks, cable channels, premium channels, public service channels and television studios);
- and the *personal* definitions and discourses of success of all participating practitioners (and their link – or lack of – to *industrial / professional* success);

By offering industry-based knowledge and perspective through practitioner interviews, this research aims at better understanding how such a subjective notion as *success*, for which there is no scholarly-agreed definition, is addressed by practitioners, and is therefore reported to be delineated, quantified, or even anticipated by the industry. This will provide insight on the manner in which industrial success is perceived and represented by practitioners, on what is featured as prompting the decisions

taken within its various constituents, and on how these choices, imperatives, processes and decision makers are perceived by industry workers. This focus will also permit, finally, to get further insight into the elements that drive the practitioners themselves, through what they present to be their own, personal definition(s) of success. Of course, each interview lasting between half an hour and an hour and a half, a lot of topics were covered and this research could have addressed the other topics that were discussed during the interviews. This was not so for two main reasons. The first, and most pragmatic one, was that the space allowed in the thesis' word count would not allow for a variety of topics to be discussed in it. A selection, therefore, had to be made; which brings me to the second reason. I have chosen to focus on power relationships (through representations of other groups and of the self), industrial success discourses (as presented by executives) and personal success discourses (as addressed by every participant) because, as I further explain in this Introduction and in Chapter I, my purpose was to centre this research on the human factor, or aspect, of the discourses and on the individuals behind: fallible, subjective… human. Consequently, while some practical and technical elements are, of course, present in the quotes presented here, the core of this research remains the manner in which the people at the heart of this industry talk about themselves, talk about people, talk about their dreams, either professional or personal, and perceive and represent the industry and its 'own' success goals and measurements.

The very existence of *success* is rather impossible to predict, however. As Hartley rightly points out, 'media companies don't know in advance which one of their creative works will be this season's hit, or flop' (2005: 29); how then do they choose which shows should go on the air, and which should not, and how are the existing ones evaluated? By studying the discourses themselves and in particular, by outlining the points of agreement and disagreement between the different practitioners interviewed (with regard to success measures and goals, in relation to those making such decisions, and between each practitioner's personal conception of success), this thesis intends to find a relevant

way to classify these discourses, thereby *mapping-out* the main currents of thought – or approaches – among members of the television industry. While keeping in mind the limitations of the data provided, this insight into both industrial practices related to success and practitioner perspectives on success measures and processes will, nevertheless, allow this thesis to explain more not only about what drives this part of the industry, but also about how it reflects on itself, on its members, on its goals and on its decisions; thus permitting academics to better understand both the motivations and the reflexivity of the TV industry in relation to its own success objectives and measures. This, consequently, will contribute to increasing our knowledge of the (Anglophone, transatlantic) television industry itself; in particular, of its members and their perspective on key industrial issues and practices.

b. Thesis Structure:

This thesis is made of four chapters, along with this introduction and the conclusion. This introductory chapter, which has reviewed key literature for this research while explaining the latter's purpose and intentions, is followed by Chapter I, the methodological chapter. Also divided into two parts, the first part of the chapter presents the different methods available and potentially relevant for this research, and explains the reasoning behind the selection of certain methods over others for this specific project. After arguing in favour of a qualitative approach and presenting the advantages of qualitative interviewing to collect information, I discuss the different types of interviews and justify the selection of expert, semi-structured interviews for this approach. I subsequently discuss the status of 'experts' ascribed to interviewees by academics, before engaging with various industry categorisations and arguing in favour of a new one, together with bringing forth a sevenfold task-based categorisation, used throughout the thesis. After presenting my interviewees and reflecting on this sample's makeup and degree of 'representativeness', I address the differences between face-to-face and telephone interviews, the impact of such choices on the methodology, and finally issues

relating to discourse analysis. The second part of the chapter discusses the manner in which the selected research methods were actually put into use during this research. After first discussing my research ethics, therefore, I move on to address the manner in which the interviews were prepared, and then conducted. The last section, finally, discusses how the interviews were transcribed and subsequently analysed.

This methodology and literature review chapter is followed by three chapters presenting and expounding on the results of this doctoral investigation, and a conclusion. As stated earlier, in order to answer the master research question presented above and its sub-research questions, I will focus on the following points, developed through three corresponding chapters. These are: the perception of decision makers by industry practitioners, the industrial executive discourses of success and the personal discourses and definitions of success of practitioners.

As such, Chapter II, entitled 'How is Power Perceived in the Practitioners' Discourses?', looks at the perception, from all the practitioner categories identified in relation to the production of fictions, of those deciding what is a success and what is not. While much has been written on the working conditions or industrial mechanisms within creative industries, less academic work has really focused on how the various practitioners saw and apprehended one other and, especially here, apprehended the decision makers. The data and analysis offered in this chapter offer a new way to categorise television industry practitioners with regard to their approach and relationship to the powerbase: it consists of non-managerial personnel, managers-producers and executives. The first section of the chapter, focusing on the first group, looks at the conflicts between creativity and control, and attempts to re-contextualise such contentions in relation to two (opposite) academic theories, before finally establishing two reasons behind this alienation. In so doing, it also demonstrates that both romantic positions and refuting ones must be nuanced, the new data brought forth in this research calling for a more balanced position. The second section, which offers a more

articulate and precise presentation of the managerial personnel, argues that different identities can result in different perspectives for managers-producers. As such, it explains how creativity can dissociate managerial outlook, while the evidence brought in allows me to demonstrate that what I define as hierarchical-functional conflicts do unite them in the end. The last part, finally, focuses on executives and shows that their self-reflexivity can be divided into two forms or functions: one to present their activity and themselves, and one to defend those two things. I first discuss the three descriptive ways in which executives talk about themselves, before focusing on their discursive defence mechanism, and on its use. This chapter, therefore, uncovers important information on power relations within the industry, while demonstrating the need for nuancing (and complementary) existing claims on the subject.

Chapter III is entitled 'How Does the Executive Discourse Prioritise Measurements and Apprehend "Success"?' and is also divided into three parts in order to present the three types of industrial success discourses identified within executive accounts. The first one analyses the accounts centred on audience sales, or the 'commercial discourse', and reflects the accounts of commercial-based institutions (such as networks and cable channels). It first focuses on the way in which the audience is discursively apprehended, thereby demonstrating that demographic categories do not simply result from a social construction shaped by discourse but stems from a more complex system, and argues that advertisers are the ones in control of the measurements used in the TV industry. It subsequently discusses the impact of technology on practices and discourses and maps out currents of thoughts within the executive commercial discourse by showing how personal sensibilities can emerge out of the industrial discourse, before illustrating how executives apprehend audiences and revenue, and reflecting on the representational conflicts of interviewees when they discuss their activity and themselves. It subsequently addresses the 'financial discourse' of studios, centred on revenue, and demonstrates that the executive financial discourse links itself to an equation of production cost

versus audience (and other) revenues, and illustrates that audience goals are not fixed, but vary according to the production cost. I then look at how interviewees apprehend the use of such a highly financially-grounded discourse through the *explicative-defensive* form brought forth earlier, before focusing on the other sources of revenue for studios. After denoting the presence of industry myths in relation to them, I demonstrate the interviewed executives' utilisation of self-crediting processes in their discourses to discuss these earnings. This chapter finally discusses the people-centred public (channel) discourses. Analysing both internal and external accounts relating to BBC practices and comparing them to official documents permits this chapter to show that this benevolent aspect appears to be closer to a discursive theme than to an actual emphasis. I subsequently argue that the executive public discourse seems to be as mindful of the image it gives off as one would expect the commercial or financial discourse to be, before linking the importance of high ratings for public channels to international sales, and, the wish for more revenue. This chapter, consequently, allows this thesis to map out – and, therefore, to study, compare and categorise – the industrial discourses of success of the executives interviewed across the different parts of the Anglophone transatlantic TV industry.

Chapter IV, finally, is entitled 'How Do Industry Workers' Approaches of Success Differ From the Industry's?'; it focuses on what motivates practitioners and on what their own success goals are. As such, it looks at the discourses of all the interviewed practitioners. It is divided into two parts and examines the various sets of debates relative to this notion of 'pride' (the most recurring element in interviewees' accounts) and demonstrates that this pride can be based on two different things. The first section focuses on 'internal rewards', linked to one's opinion of one's own work, while the second looks at 'external' ones, linked to others' opinions. As such, this analysis explains that internal rewards can either come from one's own input, or effort put in, or from the one's perspective of the end result / finished programme, while external rewards, related to a programme's reception,

can also derive from either the overall popularity of a programme (i.e. ratings), or from its reception by specific individuals or groups. It also explains how the members of certain groups, based on their activities, have a tendency to share the same personal success goals with other members from the same job category. By contextualising these accounts within psychology and management theories and research, I subsequently demonstrate that all such accounts revolve around job satisfaction. In addition to also looking at what was not said, I eventually discuss the only two practitioner discourses that did not focus on pride and, hereby demonstrate one way or another, that all participants have linked success to happiness.

Last but not least, the conclusion goes back to the five main findings, theorisations and concepts brought forth by this thesis, before reflecting on this research as a whole by discussing the interview undertaking and data analysis process, and by suggesting future possibilities of development for a research within a similar area of interest.

Conclusion:

This thesis, therefore, provides an 'inductive' conclusion to these questions (to quote Mayer, Banks & Caldwell, 2009: 5); a basis of reflexion on those issues which did not exist before, resulting from the data gathered during this research and the analysis thereof. As such, this thesis also encourages further research to be undertaken on similar topics so as to further develop this budding field of inquiry. Such could encompass a study on the discourses of failure, to see how such opposite yet complementary themes would relate to one another, or a wider-scoped, perhaps quantitative, study to establish to which extent the results and proposed conceptions established here could be applied to the industry as a whole.

After discussing, through this Introduction chapter, the industrial and academic context of this

research, as well as explaining the fields it will intervene in and presenting its main research question and its structure, I will present in the following chapter the methodology employed and once again review the relevant literature. I will explain the different methods available and justify the choices made (and, in so doing, provide the first contribution of this thesis through creating a new job-based framework for the industry), before reviewing how those methods were applied.

I. Reflections on Methodological Approaches and on the Industry

Introduction:

Conducting a research project involves following specific methods. The purpose of this key chapter is two-fold. Firstly, it aims at explaining why and how certain guidelines were adhered to during this project; it then presents and contrasts 'the philosophical and theoretical positions' of the various possibilities considered, before justifying the choice of the methods and outlining the 'assumptions embedded in the methodology adopted' (King & Horrocks, 2010: 7). This section then demonstrates how these procedures were applied, in order not only to allow others to evaluate the results, but also to actually make the research reproducible– and verifiable – if need be (Boeije, 2010: 2).

Secondly, this thesis seeks to engage with debates relating to fundamental, empirical research and to the use of qualitative interviews, which it will primarily do in this section, as well as in the concluding chapter. Therefore, rather than taking 'shortcuts' to directly state the method chosen through a brief explanation, I will carefully review literature and debates relating to each part relevant to this research's approach in this methodology section, and will take part in them and position myself with regard to what I believe to be the best approach for projects such as the one undertaken here. Because the guidelines on how to undertake qualitative practitioner interviews for fundamental research projects within the cultural industries were nowhere to be found, leading me to look through dozens and dozens of books to be able to come up with a robust methodological framework, this (admittedly substantial) chapter results from a comprehensive literature review and an application of different tools in order to carry out this discourse-based empirical research within

the cultural industries. Divided into two parts, this chapter will first review literature on the different approaches available for this type of project and argue for the most appropriate ones in this case, before moving on to presenting, in a chronological manner, how the research was carried out.

I. Selecting Research Methods:

While there are many on-going debates regarding the various types of research, research projects per se are usually categorised as doing either fundamental research or applied research, or both (as best summarised by the National Research Council, 2000; also see Gulati, 2009). While the main aim of fundamental research (also called basic, or pure) is to acquire knowledge, applied research (also named mission-linked) deals with applying knowledge to actual situations (National Research Council, 2000). With regard to this definition, whereas there could be applications to this research project, its predominant goal at this stage remains the acquisition of knowledge. Projects such as this one would, therefore, be considered as doing fundamental research.

a. Qualitative or Quantitative Research:

There are many types of fundamental research, such as qualitative, quantitative, participatory, operational, organisational, evaluative, or educational research, to name a few. Nevertheless, owing to the very nature of fundamental research, it appears pertinent to foreground the qualitative and quantitative paradigm, more relevant to the aims of this particular work. To quote Bryman, 'while the exact constitution of the two methodologies varies somewhat from author to author [...], there is substantial agreement about the fundamental antinomies and their practical implications for the conduct of research' (1984: 75). Indeed, as their names indicate, the two approaches are even depicted by some as 'two paradigms of research', representing such radically different currents of thoughts (Holliday, 2007: 5) that 'the one precludes the other just as surely belief in a round world precludes belief in a flat one' (Guba, 1987: 31). The quantitative approach is based on positivism

(see Howe (1992) or Comte (1848) for the origins of the notion); historically and predominantly used in natural sciences and economics, the paradigm assumes that 'all phenomena can be reduced to empirical indicators which represent the truth' (Sale et al., 2002: 44). According to the latter, its ontological position 'is that there is only one truth, an objective reality... independent of human perception' (Ibid.) and, from an epistemological perspective, the researcher and the participant are seen as separate entities, thereby assuming that the 'inquiry takes place as through a one way mirror' (Guba & Lincoln, 1994: 110). On the other hand, the qualitative approach, primarily utilised in social sciences, is based on interpretivism (as explained in Kuzel & Like, 1991; Altheide & Johnson, 1994; Secker et al., 1995) and constructivism (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Its ontological perspective is that there are multiple truths, based on one's take on reality (Sale et al., 2002: 44); since *meaning* and *reality* are not discovered, but socially constructed (so Berger & Luckmann, 1966: 13; Crotty, 1998: 42-3 or Merriam, 2009: 24), they continually change. Moreover, this paradigm argues that from an epistemological angle, reality cannot be accessed independently from our minds, with no 'external referent' for comparing *truth* against (Smith, 1983). Several agree, finally, that researcher and participant are here seen as linked, and the findings as mutually created in relation to the context of the research (see Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; and Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Besides these major philosophical differences, the methods used by each approach are radically different as well. Whereas one focuses on the amount of data collected, the other focuses on the value of the data. Boeije (2010: 5) describes the qualitative method as the following:

> Literature [...] is used mainly to understand [...] the field and to discover theoretical perspectives. [...] During data analysis, the textual accounts of interviews [...] are searched for common themes [...]. The findings consist of [...] [the interpretation of] the participants' view of

their social world.

Furthermore, 'the problem under investigation properly dictates the methods of investigation' (Trow, 1957). According to Stake, professional experience, which is at the heart of the data provided by my interviewees, 'relies heavily on qualitative inquiry' (2010: 199). When it comes to presenting results, he concludes, no matter how refined the methods are, the choices 'will not be mechanically determined but must be reached through interpretation' (Ibid.). As stated in the introduction, this thesis explores the discourses, thus the exegesis of 'success' within the television industry, while attempting to make sense of an industrial idea of 'success'. This has been done by interviewing industry professionals before analysing their discourses, which inherently implies both a disagreement with the quantitative paradigm's ontological approach and a concurrence with the qualitative one. As a result, even though the number and proportion of interviewees (in terms of occupation or focus) is taken into account within this research and similar ones, I have decided to follow Berger & Luckmann, Crotty, Denzin & Lincoln, Guba & Lincoln, Merriam, Sale et al., Smith, and Stake's perspective, and thus use a qualitative approach to carry out this research (as was the case of Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010, Hartley, 2005 or Caldwell, 2008), as it aims 'to capture an aspect of social life – creative labour – as it is experienced and interpreted by participants' (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010: 15). Finally, this project – epistemologically speaking – does not identify with the one-way mirror analogy, but rather argues that there *is* a mutual relationship between researcher and participant.

b. Value of Qualitative Interviewing:

Alike other scholars from my field of production, cultural and television studies, who used similar approaches for their projects (Gitlin, 1983; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010; Mayer, 2009; Mills,

2008), I have decided to undertake qualitative interviews in order to gather information on my subject of inquiry. Indeed, Kvale formulates a valid question, when asking 'If you want to know how people understand their world and their life, why not talk to them?' (1996: 1). There seems to be a lack of consensus over the matter, however, where stances go from Chalmers' (1999: 1), which argues that science (social included) must be 'based on what we can see, hear and touch rather than on personal opinions or speculative imaginings' to Heron's, which advances that interviews are the most 'fundamental mode' of human inquiry (1981: 26). Interviews, referred to by Boeije as a relevant and fitting approach (2010: 5), were selected as an appropriate research method for this thesis as they allow the researcher to learn about a certain topic, here, success in the television industry, through the perspective and experience of those asked (Ibid.: 62), which is exactly what this study is interested in. As explained by Marshall and Rossman, since 'thoughts, feelings, beliefs, values, and assumptions are involved'' in the very heart of this project, it is necessary for this research to comprehend the 'deeper perspectives... captured through' qualitative interviewing (2011: 91). While some authors define it as being concerned with the participants' perceptions and experiences within their microcosm (Rubin & Rubin, 2005: 36), this is only the primary and most basic purpose of the interview. Indeed, the ultimate goal of conducting interviews is to be able to uncover structures or frameworks from the data obtained.

Simply reducing an interview to these two aims would not, however, realistically illustrate qualitative interviews in their entirety. Indeed, Mayer, Banks & Caldwell, for instance, state that such research projects 'borrow theoretical insights from the social sciences and humanities, but, perhaps most importantly, they take the lived realities of people involved in media production as the subjects for theorizing production as culture' (2009: 4). While the way these 'realities' are represented must be taken into account through 'a healthy dose of scepticism and reflexivity' (Ibid.: 7) – and will be, throughout this research, as it precisely focuses on the *discourses* of success – the accounts will also

provide key insight into the industrial practices relating to the production and control of success. Nevertheless, while the goal is to acquire information on the respondents' interpretation of a given setting (in this case, the TV industry), the said interpretation, or *reality* of the answerer is not fixed, and varies both for a given person, through time, and from one person to another, depending on their respective perspective. Therefore, unlike other similar projects (such as Gitlin, 1983), which used practitioner accounts to present working practices within television networks), apart from a few tangible, quantified examples, such as some standards or ground rules of what are the necessary requirements for a programme to be commissioned or renewed, I did not expect to gather high quantities of objective material. Indeed, in such cases of human-centred research, where the human being is both the source and the collector of information, it is necessary to acknowledge the subjective nature of the method – Mills, for instance, arguing that the data obtained should not be used 'as evidence of certain kinds of working practices' (2008: 152). That said, while all accounts were in some respect subjective, a number of interviews did reveal a high level of factuality and detailed explanations from the participants to back up most of their claims. As aforementioned, nevertheless, the value of these interviews primarily lies in the fact that this research is specifically interested in the *discourses* of success, rather than just in the facts as such. Therefore, and as specified in the first page of the introduction, the subjectivity of the interviewees not only did not raise an issue in itself, but was actually sought after.

While interviews are, according to Kings and Horrocks, one of the most used data-producing methods in qualitative research (2010: 6), they were not commonly utilised in our discipline when I started this research in 2010, even though they had recently started to be used more frequently (Cornea, 2008: 117); a trend which has since continued and has led to an exponential growth of media industry studies (see the related discussion in the introduction). Using *interview material* and *doing interviews* are two different things, though, and still few television academics chose to do the

interviews themselves at the time (Ibid.: 118). Indeed, interviews are much more time-consuming than one might think, as one first has to select potential interviewees, then look for interested participants, set up and conduct the interviews (some being sometimes cancelled), transcribe them, and finally analyse the data. Besides, they can be quite expensive when it comes to travelling to a given place to meet with an interviewee, buying the necessary recording equipment, or, if opted for, externalising the transcribing. From a more ideological perspective, however, Cornea suggested at the time that the reluctance of TV academics (as opposed to ethnographers or sociologists) came from 'a fear of losing critical distance and... [of] the acceptance of an underlying "us and them" paradigm' (Ibid.), which is precisely why the topic I wished to study through this thesis had never been approached before, and why I had to ignore the status quo and do the interviews myself in order to be able to collect the required information, both from a television studies' perspective and a social studies' one. Cornea's issue with losing critical distance (Ibid.) was a most relevant point, however, and had to be watched for throughout. As explained by Paltridge, nonetheless, 'Discourse is both shaped by the world as well as shaping the world' (2012: 7). Studying the discourses of success by interviewing practitioners is therefore crucial for our understanding of the working practices, industrial reflexivity and practitioner point-of-views within the industry.

Another important point that is necessary to tackle is that interviews are *performances*. According to Goffman, in a statement reminiscent of Shakespeare's (1623), all individuals play a part during face-to-face (FtF) interactions (1959: 26), such as being interviewed. As the sociologist explicates, these performances can be defined as 'the reciprocal influence of individuals upon one another's actions when in one another's immediate physical presence.' As developed later on, the interviewer must keep in mind that individuals, when appearing before others, might wish the latter to think highly them (Ibid., 15) and could have many reasons to try to control the impression perceived by their interlocutors (Ibid., 26), especially so in television, which reflects 'obsessively back upon' itself,

according to Caldwell (2008: 4). Alike other scholars doing investigative works, nevertheless, I was fortunate enough to have *some* of the 'corporate' aspect filtered out, owing to the academic setting of this research, and I made sure, following Mayer's advice (2009: 145), to insist on this setting and on the educational purpose of this research when first approaching participants. Furthermore, upon asking contributors for their consent with regard to the use made of the data collected, I obviously gave the latter the option of opting out of general press and trade papers publications, which some of them did. The combination of these two approaches, it would seem, allowed me to limit the involvement, or influence of public relations (PR) personnel. As such, even though certain researchers, such as Mayer, have felt that the more they were 'studying up' that is, going up the hierarchical ladder (Nader, 1972), the more practitioners used 'managerial language that stresses their self-worth, the success of the production process, and the uncomplicated benefits of the finished product for both the industry and the market' (Mayer, 2008: 145), I have felt absolutely differently. Furthermore, they regularly displayed the inherent difficulty of their jobs. This difference in results and impressions may have been thanks to the educational aspect with which I have presented this research (although this did not seem to have that effect on Mayer's), but also thanks to some of the consent questions. Indeed, as a major network executive told me, were I to ask him for permission at a later point to publish abstracts of the interview somewhere in the press, he would have had to ask his advisers to review the segments in question, but since my endeavour was intended for a purely scholarly goal, he was – along with my other executive participants – able to speak to me without having his speech further purged by exterior agents. I also made sure not to ask questions which could be considered as 'trade secrets', such as budgets and so forth, so as not to make the participants feel uncomfortable, or feel that they have to censor their answers.

Lastly, I have also realised that, as the interviewer, I myself had a *role* to fulfil, that of instigating motivation – as well as fostering thorough answers – from my interviewees. Far from 'merely

facilitating the process', however, as Boeije (2010: 63) suggests, the researcher plays an active role in this particular research method, I believe. Indeed, not only is the latter a catalyst, bringing forth answers, they also have the ability to approve or not certain digressions on the participants' part. Nevertheless, even though I was the one setting the focus of the discussion, I did not necessarily have the upper hand in this power relationship between interviewer and interviewee since, precisely because my interviewees were practitioners, they could less easily be replaced by other subjects (as argued by Mills, 2008: 150), this value of the participant resulting in the power distribution being rather balanced. As developed further on, however, the true power of the interviewer lies primarily *after* the interview has actually occurred (Ibid.).

c. Different Types of Interviews:

Qualitative interviews are generally classified in relation to either their content or target group (such is the case in Boeije, 2010: 62, for instance), as are the following. *Focus group* interviews focus on the interactions within a group, based on the topics provided by the researcher, who acts as a moderator (see Morgan, 1988: 9-10); they aim at gathering feedback from participants (Myers, 1999: 99). While the industry *is* a group of people within which interactions may certainly be interesting to uncover, this was never the purpose of this thesis. It was, therefore, decided that *individual interviews* would be preferred, this research focusing on the array of discourses. *Topical interviews* are concerned with the facts and outcomes of a given topic of interest (Boeije, 2010: 62). These perform a thorough analysis and explore all the elements coming into the equation so as to 'work out a coherent explanation', according Rubin and Rubin (2005: 10-11). An example would be to investigate why a given show was commissioned or not. Since focusing on specific events would be quite remote from the main aims of the thesis and since this approach would typically leave out the human element, its use did not seem appropriate here. A *cultural* interview, on the other hand, explores the everyday aspects, norms, values and assumed behaviour of a group of people (Ibid.:

2005: 9), and thus broadly studies the cultural setting of the participants. While the potential benefits to fully analyse the exegesis of *success* within the television industry, and while the latter is part of the cultural industries, attempting to consider the microcosm of any industry as a culture as such would require serious anthropological and cultural debates. *Expert* interviews, finally, unlike those previously discussed, are named after their target group rather than after their content; the subjects being informers with expert knowledge on a given topic (as defined by Gubrium & Holstein, 2002 and Boeije, 2010: 63). Deemed more efficient to obtain data than other methods like focus groups or quantitative surveys by Bogner, Littig & Menz (2009: 2), this approach can nevertheless encompass some of the interviews listed above, since interview-based projects usually make use of, to a different extent, both cultural and topical approaches (so Rubin & Rubin, 2005: 11). Consequently, this is the approach which seemed the most appropriate for the research undertaken here, as this thesis precisely sought insider knowledge and opinions from industry practitioners.

As aforementioned, in addition to the content-subject method used here, there are other ways to categorise interviews. Weiss (1994) and Boieje (2010: 62), for instance, suggest distinguishing interviews on the amount of pre-structuring involved, and select four different types of interviews: unstructured / free / in-depth interview, open interview, semi / half-structured interview and structured / standardised interview. While *unstructured* and *open* interviews would likely be too vague and lacking the necessary structure, *standardised* interviews would leave little room for the participants to really formulate their opinions. *Semi-structured* interviews, however, are highly flexible, as open questions set the right direction while follow-up questions, based on the interviewee's answers, are composed on the spot, as outlined by Mukherjee (1997: 61). Based on the literature review undertaken, which has allowed me to identify expert interviews as the most relevant type of interview for this project, semi-structured interviews have also emerged as the most beneficial structure for this type of research. Consequently, seeking a framework, in order not to

deviate from the 'success in the TV industry' scope, but not aiming at restricting freedom of speech with a survey-like questionnaire, I have chosen to use semi-structured interviews with my interviewees.

Definition of Experts Interviews

I will start this section by engaging with the debates relative to this approach, before discussing the status of experts – and, in so doing, presenting a new way to conceptualise the industry and its workers – before finally presenting my interviewees. The level of precision within this section and throughout this chapter is justified by the fact that the importance given to the methodology 'increases proportionally when such interviews... follow the goal that lies at the heart of qualitative research: the reconstruction of latent content of meaning' (so Bogner, Littig & Menz, 2009: 5-6). As argued by the latter (Ibid.: 2), experts interviews constitute for researchers a very useful tool to rapidly obtain good results. The authors suggest that one of the main reasons for this method's popularity is that it is much more efficient for collecting data than other approaches, and can be used in settings where gaining access to a given field might be arduous. Furthermore, one expert may allow the researcher access to many others, opening yet new perspectives in terms of source, depth or range of data acquisition in the course of their research.

I was, nevertheless, aware of the fact that I would not have a direct link to the industry, even through these interviews, all the more so since industry members typically identify with their respective craft over the industry in its entirety, according to Hartley (2005: 28). For that reason, the respondents' values also played a part and altered their personal perceptions; they were thus taken into consideration during the data collection, but most importantly during the interpretive reading phase of the research. Besides, as noted earlier, the practitioners interviewed only expressed the

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information they wanted me, the outsider, to perceive, and may have shaped up their answers so as to underplay any elements deemed inconsistent with an idealised version of themselves or their products (see Goffman, 1959: 56), which could have manifested itself here through a temptation to downplay commerciality and play up creativity (a postulation reflected on and engaged with throughout the thesis). Apart from that, as explained by Mills, by worrying that their answers may not be good enough, interviewees may have also smarted them up because of the academic nature of my research (2008: 150), although I only had that impression once, with a participant who had asked for the questions to be sent to him in advance, and subsequently provided well-framed analyses, in a particularly selected vocabulary.[17]

Definition of Experts

According to Bogner, Littig & Menz, within the context of 'expert interviews', the participants, referred to as 'experts', are 'seen as "crystallization points" for practical insider knowledge and are interviewed as surrogates for a wider circle of players' (2009: 2). Besides this rather general description, however, I should reflect upon what constitutes an *expert*, here, and what specificities apply to them, given the studied industry.

Before doing so, however, I must specify that there is a difference between the innate status that 'experts' have in the eyes of researchers before they even start interviewing them, and the quality that can be attributed a posteriori to interviewees, specifically because researchers have asked them to take part in their study due to the knowledge accredited (adequately or not) to these individuals (following Walter, 1994: 271 and Meuser & Nagel, 2009: 18). According to Mills, practitioners from the TV industry, for instance, are surprised of the interest that people might have in their opinion, assuming that, as academics, researchers know more than they do (2008: 150-52). Apart from a few

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[17] I was surprised, however, to see that this level of analytical skill and well-formulated arguments were consistent throughout, even in response to my follow-up questions, asked on the spot.

instances, I did not have this impression with my interviewees, however. In any case, even though this possible incredulity at being seen as an expert might be seen as conflictual here, it need not be. As Meuser and Nagel argue, assigning expert status to someone on the basis of his work does make sense insofar as expertise is mostly acquired through one's profession (2009: 19). Consequently, even if some interviewees do not typically see themselves as experts, researchers are still entitled to consider them so. Accordingly, those considered as experts for this research were the people who are the most concerned with the success of television programmes, and whose results and very jobs depend on; namely, practitioners. The participants whose profession had granted them both practical knowledge and a shared system of value thus encompassed a wide range of industry members, working at various points of the value (or production) chain of television series.

Re-Visiting Industry Personnel

In order to interview practitioners across a wide range of jobs, I believed it would be better to segment the television industry into a certain number of categories, prior to selecting, contacting and finally interviewing individuals belonging to each of the said categories. There has been a long history in cultural studies to classify the industry under different groups. Negus, for instance, only divides the industry into two categories: the *Creative Artists* and *Cultural Intermediaries*, themselves subdivided in three groups: *The Suits*, *Factory Workers* and *Symbolic Intermediary Activity* (editors, designers, marketing and PR) (2002: 503-8). Gomery and Miège both classify it into three categories: *Cultural Labour* (performers, writers, directors), *Technical Reproduction* (DVD manufacturers, distributors) and the *Editeur* (intermediary and main capital provider, translated as 'producer' by Garnham) for Miège (Miège and Garnham, 1979: 303-4) and 'stars, networking and unions' for Gomery (2006: 61). Basing himself on Ryan (1992), Hesmondhalgh first suggests four categories: *Primary Creative Personnel* (writers, directors), *Technical Craft Workers*, *Creative Managers* (intermediaries between owners creative staff) and *Owners & Executives* (2002: 152-3),

before adding *Marketing personnel* and *Unskilled / Semi-skilled Labour* in his second edition (2007: 65), and keeping it as such in the third one (2012: 78-9). As for Tunstall, he divides it hierarchically into five sections: *Top Individuals* (owners, top managers, stars), *Professionalizing Occupations* (high-level creative / production leadership roles), *Craft & Technical Occupations*, *White Collar*, and *Unskilled* (2001: 7-14). Barnatt and Starskey similarly separate the (UK TV) industry into five categories, once more on a task-related basis: *Specialist Freelancers* (writers, designers, directors, composers), *Facilities Houses* (studios, editing), *Contract Services (*set building, catering, promotion) and *Performing Artists* (and their agents), all evolving around the *Producer* (1994: 258). Finally, the BFI partitions the industry into six sections, based on contract type this time, rather than on job description: *Freelance*, *Independent Staff*, *Broadcast Staff*, *Independent Freelance*, *Independent Owner*, and *Other* (1999).

As illustrated by this overview, there is no consensus on how to segment the industry. As far as this research is concerned, the point being to interview people from various disciplines, the BFI's frame of reference is not relevant here. Also, as will be explained later on, each interviewee was considered significant, their level of responsibility having no importance whatsoever, rendering Tunstall's classification hardly fitting, either. As for Negus, Miège and Gomery's respective two or three-fold segmentations, these appear to be too vague for the purpose outlined earlier. Barnatt and Starskey's already appears much more fitting, although their *Specialist Freelancers* section seems to encompass too many jobs for only one category to hold (and here, from which to select participants from). Hesmondhalgh's original categorisation, finally, appears to be the most appropriate one, if accompanied by some slight alterations. For instance, I have not included *Unskilled / Semi-skilled Labour* because they are only indirectly linked to the industry, no more than the accountants (in-house or outsourced), the IT technicians taking care of the servers in the network's buildings), or the power company providing electricity to these buildings. Besides, it would seem that going as far as including *Unskilled / Semi-skilled Labour* (exemplified by Hesmondhalgh with assembly line

workers in a DVD factory, 2007: 65) would also require one to include the DVD wholesalers and retailers, and thus have Walmart and Asda cashiers considered as part of the cultural industry, which would make far too wide the range of workers considered as being part of the industry. Furthermore, far from denying its impact in the world of contemporary creative labour (see, for instance, Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010: 103-104), *Marketing* – which was similarly only listed in Hesmondhalgh's (second) categorisation – was not included either for somewhat analogous reasons. Indeed, were included in the classification presented below only individuals having *direct* connections to television programmes – either in relation to their conceptions and productions or because of their power to commission, renew or cancel these programmes. People working for a marketing department – though actively involved regarding the packaging or promotion strategies and influential with regard to certain development choices – may only give advice on which shows could or should be commissioned through either audience research or test pilot screenings after the ideas came up (and, often, the pilot was made), but do not create, produce, nor make the commissioning decision themselves. They did not appear, therefore, to fit these criteria.

As aforementioned, while Hesmondhalgh's original approach arose as the most pertinent one here, I have come to realise that some his categories appeared to be sometimes too restrictive, some particular jobs (such as music composers, costume or set designers, for example)[18] not fitting any of these categories. I would like, therefore, to propose a new, seven-fold, occupation-based framework – or segmentation – of the television industry (practitioners), which was first used with regard to the practitioners that were to be interviewed for this research:

<u>Non Managerial Personnel:</u>

- *Primary Creative Personnel*, who control the artistic aspects of the programme: writers and directors (here, Peter Blake, Ashley Way).

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[18] Who feature their own work as supporting the work of primary creative personnel and performers, as shown in Ch.IV.

- *Secondary Creative Personnel*, who have an obvious artistic influence, though not as fundamental as that of the primary creative personnel: music composers, costume designers, set designers, etc (here, Velton Ray Bunch, Deborah Everton).

- *Performers*, who, alike the previous category, do have an artistic input, though very differently approached and featured: actors, singers (here, James Callis, Sara Pascoe).

- *Technical Craft Workers*, who are in charge of the technical tasks: engineers, cinematographers, technical advisors and other crew members (here, Michael Goto, Stephan Pehrsson).[19]

Managers-Producers:

- *Super Creative Personnel*, who are both writers who have created the programme and executive producers of that programme, a position which gives them control or access to almost every step of the production chain: show-runners (here, Donald P. Bellisario, Michael Hirst).

- *Producers*, who serve as intermediaries between the primary creative personnel and the controllers: associate producers, producers (here, Vince Gerardis, John Bartlett).

Executives:

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[19] It was sometimes difficult to decide which category a particular job should belong to. While some of these occupations could be seen as having a key creative aspect, here, and rightly so, they were put into this category because of the craftsmanship required for their particular tasks: for instance, the one necessary to operate the cameras or the lenses for a cinematographer, in a similar way to the technical knowledge required on the part of a medical technical advisor.

- *Executives*, who work either at the producing studio or the broadcasting channels, and in whom lies the power to renew, cancel or commission a programme (subdivided into two due to their different success measures and objectives):
  - Channel heads & Executives (here, David Howe, Nicholas Brown (and James Hedges));
  - Studio heads & Executives (here, James Hedges, Kevin Lygo).

Another hierarchical-based distinction could also be made, and occasionally appeared in the thesis, between the three overall headings listed above: the *non-managerial personnel* (which could roughly stand for what others have referred to as 'creative personnel', comprising the first four categories), the *managers-producers* (standing for both creative producers, also part of 'creative personnel', and non-creative producers, and hence synonymous with the fifth and sixth categories) and the *executives* (analogous to the last eponymous group). When asked with which group category they identified with, however, show-runners (or executive producers – not to be confused with (channel / studio) *executives* as they share none of the decision power of the latter) all replied that they saw themselves as writers, and not as producers. While their evident managerial roles necessitated them to be placed in the managers-producers group for this tripartite hierarchical (executive) distance-based categorisation, this identification on their part further justifies the creation of the *super creative personnel* grouping, both to distinguish them from the *primary creative personnel*, who have no such managerial power over the programme, and from (non-creative) *producers*, whose primary role involves producing, but who neither direct nor write episodes of the show.

Because the various categorisations resulting from participant discourses transcend the remuneration-based *Below-the-Line / Above-the-Line* distinction, finally, it did not appear as a relevant framework for discussion in this research. Indeed, not only would practitioners like channel and studio executives not technically belong to either group, but even personnel categorised as 'above-the-line',

such as directors and producers would find themselves in the same category; while one would be part of creative personnel, and the other may not, and one would belong to non-managerial personnel while the other would be a manager-producers. Having such distinct industry members cohabit within the same system, and others being totally excluded therefrom, would neither be pertinent for this research nor reflect the discourses and distinction in perspectives provided by this project's interviewees. These seven-fold and three-fold industry workers categorisations also proved effective in relation to the analysis, and were therefore used throughout the thesis (sometimes one more than the other, based on the setting or topic in question).

The Interviewees

Before turning to issues relating to the representativeness and makeup of the participating practitioners, I will present the practitioners who were selected and then kindly agreed to take part in this research. The list of interviewees is as follows (in alphabetical order): John Bartlett, Donald P. Bellisario, Peter Blake, Nicholas Brown, Velton Ray Bunch, James Callis, Deborah Everton, Vince Gerardis, Michael Goto, James Hedges, Michael Hirst, David Howe, Kevin Lygo, Sara Pascoe, Stephan Pehrsson and Ashley Way.

- John Bartlett is a British producer, Director of Comedy & Drama at DLT Entertainment. He has been involved in the production of many comedy programmes, most notably as producer of BBC1's popular sitcom *My Family*. He was still working on the show at the time of our interview.

- Donald P. Bellisario is an American creator, writer, producer / show-runner and director. He has been a writer and producer on a number of TV series, including *Baa Baa Black Sheep* and the original *Battlestar Galactica*, and was the creator and show-runner of programmes such as *Magnum P.I.*, *Quantum Leap*, *JAG* and *NCIS*. He had already retired when we had our interview.

- Peter Blake is an American screenwriter. He has worked on shows such as *The Practice*, but is mostly known for being one of the main writers on *House M.D.* (*House*) and *Elementary*, for which he held the title of executive producer. He was still working on *House* at the time of our interview.

- Nicholas Brown is a British executive. He was Director of Drama Production at the BBC at the time of our interview, and thus in charge of overseeing the production of all BBC drama (but without decision power on programme commissions). He has since left the company and was appointed to the board of directors of independent production company Neal Street.

- Velton Ray Bunch is an American music composer. He has composed the music (episodes' musical scores or shows' actual theme) for a variety of programmes, including *Quantum Leap*, *Xena: Warrior Princess*, *The Adventures of Brisco County Jr.*, *Walker Texas Ranger*, *JAG*, *The Pretender*, *Nash Bridges* and *Star Trek Entreprise*.

- James Callis is an actor mostly involved in the U.S. television industry (albeit British-born). He has played on several shows, including *FlashForward* and *Eureka*, but is mostly known for portraying Dr. Baltar, one of the main characters of the *Battlestar Galactica* remake.

- Deborah Everton is an American costume designer. She has created costumes for several films like *The Abyss*, *Star Trek: First Contact* or *Spy Kids*, as well as the original look of the main characters from *The X-Files* and from the modern *Battlestar Galactica*.

- Vince Gerardis is an American producer. He was involved in the production of movie *Jumper*, but most notably on that of *FlashForward* and as co-executive producer of worldwide HBO hit *Game of Thrones*.

- Michael Goto is an American medical technical adviser. He is mostly known for his work on hit medical show *ER*. He has since worked on many medical programmes in the likes of *Miami Medical*, *House M.D.* and *Grey's Anatomy*, as well as well as on other genres, such as *Modern Family* and *Torchwood: Miracle Day*.

- James Hedges is an American executive, for both channels and studios. He was Chief Financial Officer and Executive Vice President (after being senior VP) of both ABC Television Network and ABC Television Studio at the time of our interview. Prior to that, he had been Vice President of Finance at Buena Vista Television. He has since left ABC.

- Michael Hirst is a creator, screenwriter and show-runner mostly involved in the U.S. TV industry (although British-born). Mostly know for his work on the *Elizabeth* movies, he was the creator and show-runner of *The Tudors*, and was working on the development of *The Vikings*, for which he assumed the same positions, when we had our interview.

- David Howe is a U.S.-based executive (and is British-born as well). He has been the President of cable channels Syfy since 2008 (after being its General Manager) and Chiller since 2009. Prior to that, he had been head of the BBC's on-air marketing and creative services division, having worked at the BBC for a total of 15 years.

- Kevin Lygo is British executive. He has been Managing Director of ITV Studios since 2010, before becoming Director of TV at ITV. Prior to that, he worked as a commissioner for the BBC before becoming the Head of Entertainment and Music of Channel 4 and then Director of Programmes at Five before coming back to Channel 4 as Director of Television.

- Sara Pascoe is a British actor, stand-up comedian and writer. She has played on various shows, amongst which *Twenty Twelve* at the time of our interview. She has since appeared as a comedian in various comedy programmes, including *Never Mind the Buzzcocks* and *Have I Got News For You*.

- Stephan Pehrsson is a Danish-born, UK-based cinematographer. He was worked on a large number of British programmes, such as *Holby City*, *The Musketeers* and *Doctor Who*, as well as on *Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell* and on the film *Hammer of the Gods*.

- Ashley Way is a British director. He has directed episodes from numerous shows, including hit sci-fi and fantasy shows *Doctor Who*, *Torchwood*, *The Sarah Jane Adventures* and *Merlin*.

Recent works of his also include medical programmes such as *Frankie* and *Casualty*.

Number of Participants

As explained earlier, all participants belonging to the seven groups listed above had to work in the British or American television industry to be retained for this project. Sixteen people were initially interviewed, even though I was aware that a need for more participants may arise as interviews, or even their analysis, were being undertaken. This figure was reasoned according to the number of people consulted in similar experts / practitioners interview projects. An example of a somewhat similar – but quantitative – study could be given with Ursell's, who conducted an eight-year-long research on the UK television freelance labour market and interviewed, over five years, 103 freelances from northern England (about twenty per year, roughly the time it took me to undertake the interviews for my thesis) (2000: 823). Ursell, however, wanted to make a quantitative analysis of the results and offered more generalised reflections on the industry than this research intends to. Besides, the 103 individuals interviewed only make up for the northern English freelance UK TV labour market, while the present project encompasses many types of workers from two major television industries and geographical areas: at this rate, it would have taken close to a thousand interviews to obtain proportionally similar results.

This contrasts, for instance, with (qualitative) projects in the likes of Mills', where twenty television practitioner interviews were undertaken (2008: 148), or of Hesmondhalgh and Baker's, which featured accounts from sixty-three semi-structured interviews not just for one, but for three different industries (television, music and press magazines) (2010: 10). Indeed, contrary to quantitative studies, in qualitative ones, 'samples are not meant to represent large populations' (Sale et al., 2002: 45). Other qualitative projects – and scholars – have proposed a much smaller number of interviews, however. Upon discussing a research encompassing six different categories (thus, close to the seven

job categories proposed here), Flick states that 'it would be better to have two interviews in every subgroup so that we end up with twelve interviews' (2012: 27). Similarly, Adler and Adler state that between 'six and a dozen' interviews can be sufficient for a qualitative empirical research project, and are fine unless potential subjects are particularly plentiful and easily accessed, such as 'students on [...] campus', or when a quantitative aspect is required (2012, 8-9), neither of which is the case here. There seems to be a range, therefore, in terms of the number of interviewees undertaken and thus relevant for this type of qualitative research projects where a number of sixteen sits well within.

This number of interviewees also permitted me to interview an equal number of members from each industry (US and UK) by category.[20] Consequently, the nationality of the interviewees did not matter, what was of relevance was the industry where they worked; as such, cinematographer Stephan Pehrsson, although Danish, brought information on the British industry, where he has been working for many years; the same happened with executive Dave Howe and performer James Callis, both born in the UK but who have been working in the US for many years, and are thus well-placed to provide insight on this part of the industry. In order to offer a similar number of accounts from each geographical side of the industry, the number of 16 was therefore selected (even though I was, as aforementioned, prepared to interview more would that need come forward), the next opportunity to do so arising at 32. Besides, it was not too time-consuming with regard to the transcription and analysis needed thereafter, while remaining sufficiently high to provide enough material to produce a relevant analysis and an original work. As Adler and Adler also state, finally, it must be noted that the final number of participants is also slightly impacted on by the practitioners' willingness to participate in the study (2012). Indeed, in this case, I had to contact over 245 people to find my sixteen participants (some categories being much more difficult to 'complete' than others, like

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[20] Only one exception occurred, in the case of secondary creative workers, where it was not possible to find an available UK-based participant. Since this did not outbalance the overall 'equal' representation of both sides of the industry, however, another US participant was selected and interviewed, and the project moved forward in spite of this (unique) double representation of the US TV industry in this worker category.

performers, towards whom more than half of the requests were directed) which, incidentally, further illustrates how time-consuming undertaking interviews can be, even just to contact and find willing and relevant participants.

Representativeness and Makeup of the Participating Practitioners

Alike McRobbie's, my research should be taken as a 'preliminary and thus provisional account' (2002a: 517). Besides, as Caldwell specifies, 'such references should not be taken to stand for "the industry" in a totalizing or unified sense. Such a monolith does not exist' (2008: 7). As such, while it may be argued that the results of this research may reflect a larger reality within the industry, it feels important to specify that this project's purpose is only to study and offer an interpretation of the findings resulting from the discourses of these sixteen participants, and could not draw general conclusions any more than, for instance, Hesmondhalgh & Baker's research, which involved participant observation and 63 interviews with various television, music and journalism practitioners (2008: 116), thus encompassing a scope decidedly larger than this one.

The prospective list of interviewees was divided per category as a practical way to classify them and to help in getting a sample of practitioners from each category, so as to have a more holistic approach on the industry. The analyses made for this research were not based on a category in particular, nor necessarily meant to contrast each group's 'opinion' against another. Similarly to Caldwell's research, it 'explores the cultural practices and belief systems' (2008: 1) of TV practitioners, from famous producers to more anonymous workers. Just like Caldwell's, therefore, the discourses studied were 'not just those of the prestige producers and directors but also those of the many more anonymous workers' (Ibid.). On the other hand, while 'relatively little work has focused on our understanding of the "non-creative" staff in the media and cultural industries' (Stokes, 2012: 95), this thesis has also wished to deviate from such trends, and thus to give the same consideration and

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interest to producers and executives as to those deemed 'creative workers'. While, by contrast to certain academics who have tended to portray executives under a rather negative light, going as far as denouncing elements of their discourses and using formulations such as: 'the lies told by film / television executives' (Caldwell, 2008: 273), the portrayal of executives in this thesis may appear praiseful; it is not so. Instead, I have attempted to give a neutral representation of executives, and thus tried try to neither 'promote' or idealise them, nor to demonise them or feature them under a negative light, as I sought to treat all my interviewees with respect, whether before, during or after the interview. The same goes for considering all types of jobs related one way or another to the making of the programmes, without overlooking some (i.e. secondary craft workers, often nonexistent in industry categorisations) and the different entities constituting the television industry (rather than focusing on commercial channels, for example).

Explaining that practitioners from each of the seven categories were interviewed is not to say that all crafts were portrayed, of course. Nevertheless, while this research has never aimed at being representative per se, the seven categories were meant to ensure what Hesmondhalgh and Baker express as 'a degree of representativeness in our interviewees, so that as wide as possible a range of experiences might be made available to us within the limitations determined by our funding' (2010: 15), as well as by time. I attempted to divide the number of participants equally between the seven groups, in direct opposition with what a quantitative approach seeking a representative sample would do (where, numerically speaking, *technical craft workers*, for instance, would have to be much more featured than *producers*), as I aspired to offer equal representation to each of these seven groups, each of them bringing in its own way valuable skills to the industry and having a specific insight into it. Just as the actual statistical situation of these job positions within the industry did not affect this research, neither did the recognition or value (in terms of creativity, power, or the like) attributed by some to certain categories. Consequently, this research gives the same weight to each participant's

observations and interpretations, regardless of job title.

With respect to the makeup of the 'sample', the list of the practitioners interviewed, Hesmondhalgh and Baker state that they made sure to interview 'men and women; older and younger workers' (Ibid.: 14-15), with different amounts of experience, and people from ethnic minorities. I had the same intentions in mind upon selecting my participants. With regard to younger and older people, and the level of experience, even though I was looking for people quite familiar with the(ir) industry, I sought to interview younger people at a rather early time of their career, such as Sara Pascoe, who had just turned 31 at the time of the interview and had started her career only 3 years earlier (in *Free Agents*), as well as older, TV veterans, such as Donald P. Bellisario who was 76 years old at the time, and Velton Ray Bunch, then 63 years old; both with more than 30 years of experience in the television industry. With regard to ethnic minorities, Hesmondhalgh and Baker state that out of their '63 interviewees, 5 were non-white, reflecting roughly the proportion of non-white employees in these industries (though non-white employees are under-represented at higher levels)' (Ibid.: 15). I similarly wanted to have minorities represented within my interviewees; with one non-white interviewee (of Asian origin) out of sixteen, my participants list is proportionally equivalent.

With regard to gender, Hesmondhalgh and Baker do not specify the proportion of women interviewed in their research (Ibid.: 14). While many academics have noted that the primary constituent of the industry were young to middle-aged white men (see Thynne, 2000: 65; Beck, 2003), the situation knows more subtleties. Indeed, while women represent only 1% of cinematographers, they constitute 23% of executive producers and 42% of onscreen (speaking) roles (Todd, 2014); as such, this (sadly highly) unequal presence of women in relation to men within the television industry is not distributed in the same way, depending on job categories. Even though I have never intended (nor claimed) this thesis to be representative of the industry's makeup, I wished

this research to have a somewhat proportionally equivalent number of women interviewed compared to their actual presence in the industry. This somewhat remains the case on a job-per-job basis – given the possibilities of 0 / 50 / 100% available with two interviewees per category – where, whenever the percentage of women was superior to 25% in the industry, one of the two interviewees was a woman (thus, 50% of the participants for the given category), and whenever it was inferior, none was interviewed (thus 0%). Hence, with 42% of onscreen roles, one performer out of two was a female (Sara Pascoe), the same with the secondary creative personnel, where women are highly represented in jobs such as costume designer (my interviewee, here, being Deborah Everton). The other categories all having less than 25% of women (Ibid.), their lack of presence among interviewees in these categories does proportionally reflect the reality of the industry.[21] Despite that fact, I must admit that I would have liked to have more female practitioners involved in this project, to – at least – reflect the proportion of women in the TV industry as a whole, regardless of these specific proportions. Even though I had contacted about as many women and men in my search for participants, I must acknowledge that male practitioners were more prone to participate to this research than women. As for the potential difference in terms of the data obtained, while it would be difficult to extrapolate, I can only state that the accounts of female practitioners did not appear to deviate or show particular differences with the accounts of male practitioners. While I do regret that more women practitioners were not involved in this research, and while respondents were thus not made of an equal number of men and women, the participants of this research, at least, do proportionally represent the TV industry in its makeup – per category, that is – which does still give this thesis a 'degree of representativeness in our interviewees', to use the words of Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2010: 15). Finally, out of regard for my participants' privacy, no questions were asked about their sexual orientation, preventing this variable from being computed with regard to the selection of the participants.

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[21] Again, given the two interviewees per category scope of this research.

This lengthy section has allowed this chapter, therefore, to further discuss the concepts of both 'expert interviews' and 'experts', the status ascribed to the latter by academics, as well as to engage with current industry categorisation and to explain the need for the new sevenfold and threefold task-based categorisations brought forth in this chapter and thesis. I have subsequently moved on to present my interviewees, before finally reflecting upon the makeup of this sample and on its degree of 'representativeness' of the industry.

e. Face-to-face and Telephone Interviews:

Face-to-face (FtF) interviewing is the most common interview method, and offers several advantages. For instance, Opdenakker explains that the presence of social cues (verbal: intonation, and non-verbal: body language, etc.) gives the researcher additional information, and its local setting enables the interviewer to create a good interview environment (2006: 3). Its synchronous nature (also common to telephone interviews), however, is more ambiguous. While it allows participants to be more spontaneous, it raises an issue referred to as 'double attention' by Wengraf, where the researcher must be listening to the interviewee while synchronously thinking of the questions they want to ask next (2001: 194). Another inherent problem of FtF interviews is that they are not only time-consuming but can also be very expensive, especially if they occur across the world, rendering them much less achievable (Opdenakker, 2006: 4). Moreover, King and Horrocks argue that additional difficulties can result from an impossibility on the interviewees' part to make themselves available for an FtF interview, though they may very well agree to take part in remote interviewing (2010: 80). Such is what happened with one of my interviewees who was very busy with his newborn, but was more than happy to talk to me over the phone.

Goffman construes that an individual expresses 'himself in two very different manners: "the expression that he *gives* and the expression that he *gives off*"' (1959: 14), referred to as social cues by

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Opdenakker (2006: 5). Apart from the potential concentration deficit of the participants when interviewed through the phone warned by Christmann (2009: 172-3), the main disadvantage of remote interviewing is precisely the reduction of these social cues. Indeed, according to Opdenakker, the lack of visual cues prevents the interviewer from using elements such as body language as additional information, although voice and intonation remain (2006: 5). Because of that, as Mitchell advances, telephone interviews require much more attention and intonation nuance than FtF ones (1984: 249). Other elements can nevertheless make up for this, such as para-language, which Poyatos defines thus:

> the nonverbal voice qualities, voice modifiers and independent utterances... the intervening momentary silences, which we use consciously or unconsciously supporting, or contradicting the... messages... in both interaction and noninteraction. (1993: 6)

As such, the aforementioned critique on the loss of information due to a lack of visual data was also tackled by Ling, who argues that telephone interviewing, which allows for the inclusion of para-language, provides data in sufficient quality and quantity, the latter being simply transformed from a visual to an auditory form (2000: 72). While it would be an overstatement to claim that switching from one method (FtF) to the other (phone) does not incur any loss of information, para-language is indeed transmitted through the telephone and did not appear to me as lacking, nor did the use of telephone seem to result in a loss of qualitative information.

Furthermore, according to my experience, and as Opdenakker also suggests, the main advantage of such interviews is the broader access to interviewees than one can have with FtF interviews, the former being much easier to set up (2006: 4). As a result, I concur with King and Horrocks on the

fact that, besides being more convenient for some participants and time-saving for researchers, this method renders international research feasible for small-budget projects, notably by saving on travelling expenses (2010: 80). As a result, due to this project's schedule and financial resource, telephone interviews were used for less accessible locations, such as the U.S., while FtF interviews were used *whenever applicable* in the course of this research, being the preferred method with participants living (or reachable) in the UK or nearby. This particular mixed approach has already been used for practitioner interviews by academics in the past, such as in Christmann's research, where fourteen FtF and eight telephone interviews were undertaken for a project about 'Demographic Changes at Universities,' ordered by the Saxonian State Ministry of Arts and Sciences (2009: 157, 178), which comforted me in my decision to use a mix of both methods.

f. Discourses Analysis:

The notion of 'discourse analysis', first introduced by Harris in 1952, can be described in the following manner:

> Discourse Analysis (…) looks at patterns (…) and considers the relationship between language and the social and cultural contexts in which it is used. (…) It examines how the use of language is influenced by relationships between participants (…) upon social identities and relations. (Paltridge, 2006: 2)

The last point to consider, with regard to the selected method, is the key phase of discourse analysis. While one may not obtain definite readings of the interviewees' frames of mind, such intentional accounts, willingly offered to the interviewer and their omnipresent recording device, do give an insight into the practitioners' perspectives on the topics discussed. Discourse analysis, however, is

much wider than one might think. Not only are there no precise rules, there is also no real consensus on how discourse analysis should be undertaken, or even on what it actually is. For Fasold, for instance, 'the study of discourse is the study of any aspect of language use' (1990: 65). Most scholars seem to agree, however, that discourse analysis is more than just analysing language, but rather has a keen interest on the relationship between interviewees and the world surrounding them. Paltridge, for example, argues that 'discourse analysis [...] considers the ways that the use of language presents different views of the world and different understandings. It examines how this use is influenced by relationships between participants' (2012: 2). Similarly, Jørgensen and Phillips claim that 'discourse psychology makes a particular contribution at the empirical level to the understanding of the subject as an agent in dynamic discursive process in social interaction' (2002: 146). Others, however, see discourse analysis as a way to analyse other elements than the relationship between individuals. Fairclough, for instance, albeit focusing on 'critical discourse analysis' (or CDA) in particular, defines discourse analysis not as the 'analysis of discourse "in itself" [...], but [as the] analysis of dialectical relations between discourse and other objects, elements or moments, as well as analysis of the "internal relations" of discourse' (2013: 4), hence giving an even wider scope to the method's applications.

Messenger-Davies brings forth a very important question, however, when wondering: 'if we ask workers about their own work, how valid and credible can we take their answers to be?' (2006: 23). While the author 'addressed the validity problem directly' for a first project when 'test[ing]' her interviewed 'producer's claims about audience reaction [by comparing them with those of] actual audiences', she did not do so with a second one, prepared with Pearson (Pearson and Messenger Davies, 2004), who looked at the 'contributions of labour [...] to the meanings and the value, both cultural and economic, of a major television text' (Messenger Davies, 2006: 23). CDA, as defined by Fairclough, is 'based upon a realist social ontology (Sayer 2000), which sees both concrete social

events and abstract social structures as part of social reality' (Fairclough, 2013: 74). As such, rather than overly relying on theorisation, concrete events and elements must also be taken into account. As the scholar further advocates, 'in order to avoid an idealistic construction that is overly reliant on verbal argumentation, people's claims have to be confronted with the real world' (Ibid.: 261). This leads to the notion of witness reliability. One account from a practitioner, for instance, Michael Hirst, creator and show-runner of Showtime's *The Tudors*, recounts events relating to period-drama *Rome*, in order to demonstrate the importance of DVD sales:

> *Rome*, which cost HBO 120 million dollars, the first series, I think... *Tudors* was 33 million dollars; so *Rome* wasted a hundred and twenty million, so they had to go to a second season, even if they didn't want to, because they had to sell a certain number of DVDs. So they opened the second season, they did about five episodes, and they shut it down; but then, they had enough DVDs, so... they calculated that they could make most of their... their money back.

This account, however, does not rely on the participant's job attributes or personal experience, but seemingly on hearsay, and since this process was not discussed by other interviewees and does not appear as a strategy as such in academic literature, it seems relevant to similarly look at the factual data; this research's interest being centred on both the way in which success-related industrial practices are represented in practitioner discourses, and on the said practices themselves. Here, the *super-creative personnel* infers that only 'about five episodes' were made before the programme's production – alike a factory – was 'shut [...] down'. Regarding the length of the season, twice more episodes – 10 instead of 5 – were in fact produced for *Rome*'s second season, a number very close to that of the show's first season, which consisted of 12 episodes (IMDb, 2013a, 2013b). Also, rather

than 120 million dollars, the press reported a slightly lower figure for the first season at: '$100' million (The Independent, 2005) at the time, or £60 million (Boycott, 2005). While it is not possible to ascertain whether these discrepancies with the reported numbers resulted from a mistake on Hirst's part or from purposeful exaggerations on the show-runner's part, such a case does illustrate the virtue of contrasting a practitioner's discourse with verifiable data, when possible. What is interesting is not to know whether the content of such accounts are 'true' as such, however, but what it reveals about the interviewees: their ways of presenting the situation, their use of language; an aspect that lies at the core of discourse analysis.

This, in turn, serves as a reminder to the researcher of the importance of keeping in mind Goffman's (1959) position on the alteration of discourses for different goals (such as giving a better image of oneself), albeit without applying it as a generality. While doing so is not always possible, or the need for it does not necessarily shine through discourses as patently as it does here, I do believe that anchoring discourses (of practitioners and academics alike) within a wider context is important from an intellectual perspective, even if the subjectivity of the interviewees' accounts is fully acknowledged. Consequently, in cases where accounts would not be based on the participant's own experience, or whenever contextualising the discourse so was deemed relevant, additional elements such as trade press articles, other sources of information regarding certain forms of recognition (such as awards), or even official governmental documents, were cited.

The fact-based element is only one aspect of this kind of gathered data, however. Indeed, the practitioners interviewed are primarily witnesses to the working conditions and setting of the Anglophone transatlantic television industry. As such, their accounts provide unique information on their own perceptions with regard to a number of issues relating to the topic in question; from their relationship to power to the discourses centred on industry's success goals, through their own

personal goals. Fairclough concludes that 'since [the] analysis of such relations cuts across conventional boundaries between disciplines (linguistics, politics, sociology and so forth)' (critical) discourse analysis is 'an interdisciplinary form of analysis' (2013: 4). Nevertheless, as explained by Jørgensen and Phillips (2002: 1) 'there is no clear consensus as to what discourses are or how to analyse' them, which both makes it more difficult, and gives a certain amount of freedom. While this might appear frustrating for the researcher at first, it is also very freeing as we may thus adopt the method that we want, or even a mix of methods, as further argued by the scholars:

> it is important to stress that [...] it is possible to create one's own package by combining elements from different discourse analytic perspectives and, if appropriate, non-discourse analytical perspectives. Such multiperspectival work is not only permissible but positively valued in most forms of discourse analysis. (Ibid.: 4)

As such, this project has used a mix of the discourse analytic perspectives presented here, including the notions of realist social ontology (Sayer 2000) and critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2013), which relate discursive constructions to the 'real world' (Ibid.: 261) so as to anchor these discourses within the wider industrial context, while insisting on their value as the participants' perspective and representation of the situation.

After this first part presented the different methods available and explained why certain methods were privileged over others for this specific project, the remainder of this chapter will be dedicated to the way these selected approaches and methods were actually applied during the course of this research.

II. Applying Those Methods:

This second part of the chapter will highlight the development of this type of research projects, through the corresponding chronological and thematic steps. As such, after addressing the research ethics employed, I will recount the four main phases of the research with regard to the data collection and use. These are: the preparation of the interviews, the conducting of these interviews, the transcription of the data, and its subsequent analysis.

a. Research Ethics:

As mentioned earlier, before properly starting any interview, I systematically asked my participants a series of questions ensuring their informed consent to be involved, recorded and named, as well as for what they said to be distributed (in printed and oral form). While this list of consent questions was provided to me by the University of East Anglia anyway, I believe that it was only normal to ask these questions to people who had given me their time, help and consideration so that I could complete my doctoral thesis.

Even if – or when – not required by an institutional framework, a high level of ethics should always be placed at the centre of academic research, especially when it involves human participants, both for the interviewees and for academia itself, where quality, truthfulness and ethics are paramount for such research projects. In this regard, additional issues had to be considered, for instance preserving the confidentiality of sensitive information such as the participants' email address and phone number. Besides, I tended to share Mills' feelings concerning my responsibilities towards my interviewees beyond what was demanded by my university's ethical requirements, in relation to the transcription, selection and use of the material gathered, where I was risking criticising people who were kind enough to take part in my study (2008: 149, 151). Consequently, like him, I attempted to best

represent my informants' discourses while fulfilling academic writing requirements (Ibid.: 151); a notion referred to as 'hedging' by Holliday (2007: 68-73).

b. Preparation of the Interviews:

First of all, I prepared the questions in a way that would, of course, directly link them to the main research questions involved in this thesis, but without letting those appear too overtly. A template of these questions (which were basically the same for all participants, although slightly tailored to each), was then showed to my supervisors to get their approval (one of the actual questionnaires is included in the appendix). The next task involved selecting the practitioners I wanted to interview, based on the criteria explicated earlier. I then had to look for their contact information, which was sometimes easy, and other times proved very difficult, when not impossible. Once this was done, I could at last contact the prospective participants, some through their agents, others directly (through email or even Facebook). It must be reminded, finally, that the eventual selection of the sixteen participants was not entirely due to my will in every case, as it also depended on an external influence over which I had no control, as evidenced by the very high number of people contacted to find individuals *interested* in the study, and *willing* to take part in it.

Boeije explains that it is at this stage that making sure the topic was of concern to the participants becomes crucial (2010: 63). Accordingly, I briefed potential interviewees about my research with a detailed interview request, also included in the appendix. Gaining the confidence and consent of participants was, once again, not an easy task. Some elements did help, however, such as the interest of some to take part in an academic research, or the educational aspect of the project, which I had put forward in the request (as advised by Mayer, 2009: 145). Once they had agreed to take part in the study, I had to reflect on the likely duration of the interviews so as to give participants an idea of how

much time they would need to set aside. The duration point was in fact more crucial than expected, as I did scare off the first potential interviewee by asking him to set aside what he considered to be too much time. Accordingly, both in order to get an idea of their duration and on the overall process and experience, I originally set up a few pilot interviews: two FtF, and two over the phone. As it happened, telephone interviews were to last twenty-five to thirty minutes, and FtF ones about an hour (some later phone interviews, however, lasted much longer, up to an hour or more).

Finally, prior to doing any interviews, and after having already read significant amounts on the television and creative / cultural industries, on organisational research, on social sciences and on anthropology so as to best prepare for my research, I felt it was both relevant and useful to read about (if not watch) the work of all my participants, as also advocated by scholars such as Meuser and Nagel (2009) and Martin (2001) – another particularity of the expert interviews discussed earlier on. This allowed me to know more about the rules and settings of the participants' microcosm in advance (Meuser & Nagel, 2009: 32), but also to gain credibility in their eyes and to help implement a friendlier environment, having showed them that I was interested in and familiar with their work. It was also important to know about the participants' work and background in relation to the analysis (discussed further on), since, as explained by Martin, if you do not know what the participants do or are not familiar with their culture, 'then you can't make sense of their text' (2001: 151). Once all of this was done, I could move on to undertaking the interviews themselves (a timetable of the interviews undertaken is included in the appendix).

c. Conducting the Interviews:

After doing the four pilot interviews aforementioned, I continued until ten interviews had been done, at which time I started reflecting on the results thus far and on the needs of the study (in particular in terms of interviewees), before conducting the rest of the interview series, based on that reflection.

Actually conducting the interviews remained an intricate task, as one also has to continually think – on the spot – of new additional relevant questions in relation to the new information provided by the interviewee, while evaluating if the answers were sufficient or needed further explanations (as mentioned earlier, and demonstrated by Gorden, 1980 and Boeije 2010: 63). Furthermore, after being warned that it was crucial 'that the questions fit the interviewee's frame of reference' (Boeije, Ibid.), I realised that the questions needed not only to be specifically customised on several levels (industrial, job type, individual) for each participant, but also required to be asked with an understandable vocabulary and – from a more ethical ground – had to match the topic presented to the participants (Ibid.). Additionally, I was aware that, while still having an agenda based on the questions prepared, I would need to make sure to listen with interest, and accommodate my interviewee's needs to dwell longer on certain issues, without interrupting them (Ibid.; Morse & Field, 1996). Not doing it would be perceived as negative and thus should be avoided at all cost, in the continued effort to establish the relationship of confidence sought after. Furthermore, whenever needed, I resorted to 'probing' (Boeije, 2010: 63; Gorden, 1980), which consists in giving encouragement, for example, by nodding or saying 'hmm' when there was no visual contact.

Even though the interviews were digitally recorded, I also took brief notes, mostly to write the follow-up questions I had just thought of and check off those already asked. Some details given by the interviewees were nevertheless written, both in case of a problem with the recorder and, as Opdenakker puts it, 'in case of "malfunctioning of the interviewer"' (2006: 4), that is, would I forget to turn the recorder on. Concerning the participants themselves, while one may expect them to be *familiar* with talking to others about their work and being in the public eye, this is only true for *some* people, such as actors, who were, incidentally, the most reluctant ones to be interviewed for my research. As observed by Mills, most of the others, especially writers and crew members, albeit very

friendly and reachable, were not used to talking about their work (2008: 148). This fact, which was an advantage in the sense that these people appreciated such an opportunity and thus made themselves available, had to be kept in mind.

Finally, as advised by Christmann, due to the lack of visual cues during telephone interviews, I had to make sure neither to interfere too early, cutting my participants' thoughts, nor to remain silent for too long (2009: 176), which proved more or less difficult, depending on the interviewee. Hardly an obstacle, however, I was often able to overcome this with a simple 'hmm' which, if not followed by any sound from the interviewee, indicated to me that the latter had finished answering.

d. Transcription and Analysis of the Data:

I concur with Mills when he argues that *after* the interview is a necessary component of any methodology chapter (albeit not when he says that it is 'more significant [...] than before or during') (2008: 152), in the sense that it is in the transcription and analysis stages that the researcher gets to work on and shape the material by selecting certain parts to write or teach about, over others (Ibid.: 150). Even though it was a very time-consuming assignment, one hour of conversation taking five to six hours to be transcribed for Bryman (2001), or, more in line with my experience, up to ten for Robson (2002), the transcription was not contracted out, both for financial and ethical reasons (so as not to share these documents with outsiders without the knowledge and consent of the participants). The transcripts of the interviews were verbatim, and thus put on paper the participants' words without paraphrasing, and hence included pauses, laughs, and so on. Even though the transcripts also comprised non-verbal elements such as 'hmm' , 'err' and verbal fillers such as 'you know' (as is the case in the transcript included in the appendix), these were subsequently left out of the quotes utilised – both in order to keep a better flow and because of the lack of importance of these elements with regard to the reconstructed data. Indeed, as explained by Paltridge, such 'fillers' are meant to

give the participants 'time to think about what they want to say while they are speaking' (2006: 18). Keeping these in the transcripts, however, was a matter of personal preference, as I still wanted to have a close record of the interviews for myself. Finally, on the one occasion where a transcript showed that a brief clarification or precision was needed on a given point, I contacted my interviewee through email, asking for the required precision, judging it less invasive than another meeting or telephone call.

Once the interviews were transcribed, I attempted to analyse and contrast the different answers collected while best representing the discourses of my participants. As previously explained, the analysis was done in a qualitative manner, through an interpretive reading of the data. While some academics have argued that qualitative data analysis is inevitably tailored to each specific research (Angrosino, 2007: 69), which is obviously always true to an extent, I preferred to follow the steps detailed by Meuser and Nagel (2009: 35-36) in relation to expert interviews specifically, where:

- the data is first *paraphrased*;

- the paraphrased statements of each interview are then ordered thematically, or *coded*, while the frame of reference and terminology of the interviewees is retained;

- such elements from different interviews are then grouped into *thematic comparison*;

- before a *sociological conceptualisation* intervenes, where the common elements are condensed and categorised;

- and finally, the *theoretical generalisation* frames the results, which are connected in order to form typologies and theories.

Such a lengthy process often required me to go back to earlier stages so as to check that the generalisations were adequate – a recursiveness which, the authors state, 'is the typical merit of this approach' (Ibid.). This whole procedure, finally, described by Coffey and Atkinson as transforming

the practitioners' experiences and perceptions into accountable knowledge (1996: 191), is particularly important, allegedly being the only support to validity claims (so King & Horrocks, 2010: 133), and should therefore be thoroughly documented.

As evidenced by earlier works, 'interviews with... producers and craftspeople... can be conceptually rich, theoretically suggestive, and culturally revealing, yet we should never lose sight of the fact that such statements are almost always offered from some perspective of self... promotion', according to Caldwell (2008: 14). Even though I have rarely felt that this was patently the case and will later argue against such generalisations, such a possibility must always be acknowledged and taken into account. Furthermore, as explained earlier, what I was looking for in this research was not only the facts but also the different discourses of success within the industry among various practitioners. This attitude and these research interests of the thesis, finally, are in line with both Taylor (2001) – who highlights the dilemma of whether interview contents should be taken as insight-providing data going beyond the individual's reality, or as a genuine topic directed towards the discourse itself – and with Hesmondhalgh and Baker, who advance that interviews can 'provide relevant knowledge' about both the rhetorical strategies used and the topic of interest of interviewer and interviewee (2010: 16).

Furthermore, while one may think that the wording used in the interviewees' sentences could have been just incidental, I would argue that the participants knew very well who they were talking to and what they were talking about, and knew from the consent questions asked prior to the interview that their accounts would be shared academically and possibly with the general press (for those who consented to that option). They were aware, therefore, of the weight of their words and of the tone chosen, as well as, to quote Goffman, the impression they were attempting to 'give off' (1959: 14). Nevertheless, in cases where some words or expressions, like 'I think', seemed to be more of a verbal tic and appeared throughout the interviews (although these were not deleted from the transcripts),

little attention was paid to them in the analysis. Conversely, when the use of a particular locution was foregrounded as seemingly meaningful, it is implied that the latter was not utilised on a regular basis throughout the discussion (as a verbal tic would, as this would undermine, if not nullify, the ascribed importance of the said expression). The interviewees, when quoted, were not paraphrased, their responses appearing as they would in a smart verbatim transcript (which would remove the fillers or hesitative pronunciations)[22]. Finally, words – titles excluded – originating from quotes appearing in *italics* in the following chapters were transcribed so when orally emphasised by the participants.

Also, in addition to giving attention to what was said, special attention was also given to what was *not said*. The different locations or settings of the interviews were also taken into consideration as having possibly impacted on the participants' answers, and were reflected on when relevant. Besides, the fact that the participants' values are more linked to their respective craft than to the industry in general was also taken into account and reflected on, as values may differ between a cinematographer, a producer, and a writer, or even between two writers. It should be noted, however, that the role of this thesis is absolutely not to rank nor to prioritise some type of answers or perceptions over others, but on the contrary, as King and Horrocks put it, to map out the wide range of discourses of success within the television industry and thus have 'a broad and holistic approach' on the subject matter (2010: 7). Finally, building on Caldwell's suggestion, I stress the fact that such discourses must be 'understood alongside broader developments and threats' (2008: 7) such as the multi-channel age (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010: 12), deregulation (McKinlay & Quinn, 2007), technological advances, censorship and globalisation currently faced by the TV industry community.

Conclusion:

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[22] With the exception of the repeated expressions, which were also removed from the quotes, as justified above.

The first part of this methodology chapter presented different methods available and potentially relevant for this research, and explained why certain ones were chosen over others for this specific project. It thus started by arguing in favour of an epistemologically qualitative approach and by outlining the advantages of qualitative interviewing as a data collecting method, before discussing the different types of interviews that exist and justifying the selection of expert, semi-structured interviews for this research. I subsequently gave more information on such experts interviews and discussed the status of 'experts' ascribed to interviewees by academics, before engaging with different industry classifications and arguing in favour of a new sevenfold task-based categorisation.

I then presented my interviewees and reflected upon the makeup of this sample and its degree of 'representativeness'. The differences between face-to-face and telephone interviews were then discussed, as well as the impact of such methods on the methodology, before issues relating to discourse analysis were approached. The purpose of the second part of the chapter was to discuss the manner in which the various research methods selected were actually put into use during the undertaking of this research. As such, as a preamble, I have decided to discuss my research ethics, a crucial topic when the subject of enquiry is actually the human being. I have then addressed how the interviews were prepared, before talking about the way they were conducted. The last section, finally, discussed how the interviews were transcribed and then analysed.

In Chapter II, I will start unveiling the findings and analyses of my research, by analysing the way in which power and decision makers are perceived by industry practitioners, in order to first (indirectly) introduce the notion of success within the Anglophone transatlantic television industry.

II. How is Power Perceived in the Practitioners' Discourses?

Introduction:

To quote Fairclough: 'discourse is not simply an entity we can define independently, we can only arrive at an understanding of it by analysing sets of relations' (2013: 3). This is why it is important, prior to studying executive discourses in relation to success measurements, to first look at how executives are perceived by the various industry members, which will permit this research to better map out and understand the power relations at play and see how these relations affect the dynamics, perceptions and practices relating to 'success' within the Anglophone transatlantic television industry. Even if the complexity of power relations is 'condensed' in discourses (see Harvey, 1996), this chapter offers a first look at what Hesmondhalgh terms the 'complex professional' relationships, that is, those 'between [...] creative personnel' and the ones who 'commission and employ them' (2002: 256). As such, this chapter revolves around 'industrial reflexivity' (Caldwell, 2008), by looking at how interviewees see those holding decision power, as well as how they present the latter in their discourses.

Dennis Mumby and Robin Clair suggest that 'organizations exist only insofar as their members create them through discourse. This is not to claim that organizations are "nothing but" discourse, but rather that discourse is the principal means by which organization members create a coherent social reality that frames their sense of who they are' (1997:181). This assumption of the two communication theorists can, in turn, be linked to the work of psychologist Abraham Maslow and his hierarchy of needs; more specifically, to the need to belong (1954: 93). This part of the research, focused on how the industry is socially constructed around the decision makers and takes a closer look at how the different practitioners interviewed have defined or discussed these individuals, in their own words, without being prompted to. Indeed, never during the interviews were those powers-

that-be directly pointed at, and never were the participants asked who these were nor how they felt towards them. As practitioners were purposely positioning themselves in one group and distinguishing themselves from another, postulating that industry members tend to identify with their respective craft over the industry in its entirety (cf. Hartley, 2005: 28) was clearly visible, here.

With regard to power relations, this chapter will show that the industry could be divided into three groups. The first one, non-managerial personnel, whose accounts are featured under the title 'Conflict between Creativity and Control', is the largest such subsection in the industry and comprises all the practitioners who are not linked to the decision makers: the creative personnel and the crew. Based on the seven-fold classification presented in Chapter I, these would be the first four categories: *primary creative personnel* (represented by Blake and Way), *secondary creative personnel* (Bunch and Everton), *performers* (Callis and Pascoe), and *technical craft workers* (Goto and Pehrsson). The second identifiable group, managers-producers, whose perspectives are outlined in the part entitled 'Managerial Antagonism to Executive Power', consists of the individuals with a direct link to the programmes (creative and non-creative producers) and would include both the *producers* (here, Bartlett and Gerardis), and the *super creative personnel*, who are the executive producers – or show-runners – of the programmes they have created (here, Bellisario and Hirst). The last group, discussed in the part 'Executives in their Own Words', quite evidently includes all the *owners and executives*, both working in networks (Brown and Howe) and in studios (Hedges and Lygo).

The first part of the chapter will focus on the discourses of non-managerial personnel. Through the analysis of those sources, I will demonstrate that there are two positions identifiable within non-managerial personnel's discourses. I will position the first section in relation to current creativity / control tensions debates and demonstrate that both systematic, romantic positions and opposite positions refuting them must be nuanced, and that the new data brought forth in this study calls for a

more balanced standpoint. I will then demonstrate through participant discourses that antagonism is not constant and that even praiseful accounts can be found, and so affect current debates. Further than merely acknowledging this common yet non-automatic creative alienation, finally, I will argue that there is another kind of alienation identifiable within these accounts, and will attempt to explain the various reasons behind this antagonism on the side of non-managerial personnel, from the romantic creative theory and notions of dual economy, through issues of job precariousness and dimensions of power distance and uncertainty avoidance, to production forces and social relations of production. This will allow both to add nuance to current conceptualisations of the conflict(s) that non-managerial personnel have with executives, and to develop our understanding of these issues.

The second part will look at the discourses of the intermediaries, the managers-producers. I will discuss how the managerial personnel position themselves with regard to executives and their decisions. This part will also illustrate that (even though praising accounts are missing, in this case) both the creative and hierarchical-functional contradictions outlined in the previous part can also be found in the managers-producers' discourses. I will explain how creativity can be transposed into managers-producers' discourses by studying the conflicts featured within their accounts and will permit this chapter to articulate a bipolar vision of managerial personnel, where creativity will serve as arbiter, and so offer a more articulate presentation of that worker category. As such, this section will further insist on and illustrate the distinction presented in the seven-fold industrial categorisation, and discuss some of its implications in terms of practitioner discourses and power apprehension. In order to do so, I will analyse how the two aforementioned types of contradiction expressed in participants' accounts outline this very dichotomy.

The third part, finally, will present the particular case of the executives and study their own self-reflection. It will demonstrate that there are two ways for executives to talk about their activity and themselves: one consisting in merely presenting the situation, and one consisting in protecting

themselves and their activity in front of the interviewer. In the first half, I will discuss the three descriptive ways that executives utilise to talk about themselves; in the second one, I will focus on their discursive defence mechanism and on its utilisation. This analysis, finally, will offer an alternative perspective on the manner in which individuals choose to talk about themselves. All three parts, therefore, based on the data gathered and analysed in the research, will provide new and complementary information to production and television studies with regard to how practitioners from each of the three categories discussed apprehend the power-holding executives, as well as themselves, in their discourses, thus uncovering important information on power relations within the industry, while demonstrating the need for nuancing – as well as balancing or complementing – some of the existing claims on the subject.

I. Conflict between Creativity and Control; Different Theories Collide:

Individuals belonging to the non-managerial personnel, sometimes referred to as creative or 'cultural workers' (Murdock, 2003: 32), who are directly working on the making of programmes, are at the same time the most numerous such subsection in the industry and the most removed one from those holding the decision power – whom they sometimes refer to as 'the networks', but also as 'the people who are commissioning', the 'bosses', 'the financial people', 'the powers-that-be and whatever' or often just as 'they'. In this part, I will first discuss the visible and discursively represented antagonism present between the financial and the cultural paradigms, before moving on to demonstrate that this contradiction is, nevertheless, not systematic in the accounts of non-managerial personnel. This first part, finally, will attempt to establish the reasons behind such alienation(s).

a. Antagonism between Financial and Cultural Paradigms:

Hesmondhalgh and Baker argue that 'there is wide agreement that creative labour is marked by many positive characteristics' (2011: 8). 'Yet', they continue, 'these features are ultimately

understood to be the basis of alienation' (Ibid.) Even though the particulars are still being debated in academia, scholars do agree that contradictions and tensions between those referred to as non-managerial personnel and executives are visibly present in practitioners' discourses. This was, once again, observable in the accounts of a number of non-managerial personnel interviewed for this research, who have foregrounded a specific kind of alienation from power: a creative one, by erecting a sort of intellectual or artistic separation between the 'creative' individuals (themselves), and the 'financial people'. As Fiske explained already a quarter of a century ago, objects such as the programmes discussed here evolve in two different economies, the financial and the cultural one (1987: 311). While the former is chiefly concerned with the exchange of pecuniary value, Fiske continues, the latter focuses on exchanging and circulating 'meanings, pleasures and social identities' (Ibid.). Before debating on the form, reasons or legitimacy of this featured contradiction, I will start by illustrating the degree to which interviewees have established and presented this alienation in their discourse, and how they have used this ideological separation to criticise or even judge executives.

The perspective of non-managerial personnel on this point is particularly evident and well illustrated, for instance, in the account of costume designer Deborah Everton who, while conversing about the importance of international appeal, explains: 'I know it means a lot to us in the creative end, [...] but, I don't know what it means to the financial people'. Here, although not literally passing a patent judgment on executives, the costume designer opposes two very different sides, through a straightforward *us versus them* presentation of the situation. On the one hand, the artistic: 'creative end', cohesive: 'to us', and emotional side:'it means a lot'; on the other, the seemingly greedier and alienated individuals, embodied through the phrase: 'the financial people'. Actor Sara Pascoe, visibly sharing the perspective of her overseas fellow industry member on the matter, offers a very analogous description:

the people who are commissioning just wanna get the biggest

viewing figures ever, and so is the competition. The people that are

creatively involved, I think, are trying to make a really, easy-peasy

programme which we'll all love. (…) it will have an important

moment in comedy, that was defined and that they were part of. I

think that's what's *they're* trying to do.

In this account strictly paralleling the previous *us-creative versus them* construction, the actor similarly offers a very distinct, simplified representation of each group, praising the one while reducing the other. Starting with those descriptively-deemed 'the people who are commissioning', Pascoe does not ascribe any sense of creativity or feelings, portraying them as greedy individuals who 'just wanna get the biggest viewing figures ever'. The actor then moves on to those she defines as 'creatively involved', here the primary creative personnel, to whom is attributed an agenda, for once: a certain desire to leave a mark. Pascoe presents the latter under a much more positive light, giving them a benevolent persona through the use of a lexical field related to simplicity and appreciation: 'easy-peasy programme which we'll all love'. By choosing the third person plural instead of the second one and by accentuating her pronunciation of '*they*', finally, performer Sara Pascoe (who had incidentally written scripts in the past) clearly suggests that she does not feel that she belongs to this 'creatively involved' group of people. This differs, for instance, from secondary creative personnel Deborah Everton's earlier account, and so illustrates a range of self-conceptualisation and identification on the part of creative workers.[23]

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[23] It is possible, however, that Pascoe has chosen to keep herself out of the group either to appear humble or for her rendering of the situation to come out as impartial to the interviewer, in an attempt to control the expression that she 'gives off' (see Goffman, 1959: 14).

This apparent opposition marked by non-managerial personnel in order to distinguish the creative part of the business from the financial one can occasionally turn into such an exacerbated feeling of antagonism that it translates into a belief of Machiavellianism on the part of the decision makers. In this case, the alienation in question is not linked to a creativity standpoint, but focuses on the decisions of executives and their perceived reasons or consequences. Although not representing the majority of the accounts given, two such instances can be found in the discourses of performers James Callis and Sara Pascoe. The *Battlestar Galactica* star, for instance, attributes manipulative and self-serving intentions to the network executives:

> if there's a buzz about it [...], because there's somebody in it who
>
> everybody's very interested in, that kind of thing [...] it's something
>
> that, then, the powers-that-be and whatever can manipulate to use as
>
> a stepladder for the next thing that they do.

Here, while fellow performers are credited as being a major reason for the 'buzz', the ascribed scheming of the 'powers-that-be and whatever' is very crudely presented, through verbs such as 'manipulate' and 'use', their own ambitions being represented through the 'stepladder' image. As such, one can see that certain practitioners can have such a negative image of power and their decisions that they are not even seen as executives trying to run a business, but as egotistic individuals who will use and even 'manipulate' whatever they can for their own personal gain. Pascoe goes even further, by accusing executives of actually taking popular programmes off the air out of mere frustration: 'sometimes TV commissioners don't understand why a programme is popular, and that annoys them, so they cancel it'. Upon being asked at a later point whether she believed executives had cancelled a specific programme on purpose, however, the British actor seemed quite confident of the contrary, in an apparent move to distance herself from her earlier,

rather bold position. Her initial reaction, however, does give a glimpse into how obscure some executive decisions may seem to non-managerial personnel, and how power appears to lack both credibility and fairness in the eyes of some.

As aforementioned, there exist several schools of thought with regard to the presence of antagonism between creativity and control in practitioners' discourses. Murdock, for instance, doubts the reality behind this 'supposed contradiction', and deems it but a (central) 'theme in cultural workers' accounts of their situation' (2003: 32). This very much contrasts with the rather 'naïve' approach of romanticism (see Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2008: 85), which sees creativity and industry control as factually and constantly opposed to each other (Ibid.; Faulkner et al., 2008). Pure romanticism, as shared by Adorno (1991), which suggests that culture and industry are inherently antagonistic, is critiqued by Enzensberger (1974), who sees Adorno's viewpoint as too conservative, yet prefers a more classical Marxist position, which shifts the contradiction between creativity and control to one between production forces and the social relations of production (see Marx and Engels, 1902). Somewhere in the middle sits Hesmondhalgh, who sees 'tensions between commerce and creativity' as a 'fundamental feature of the cultural industries' (2013: 82), emphasising them and making a clear distinction between the interests of each, which differs in terms of absoluteness from romanticism (see Adorno, 1991; Faulkner et al., 2008). I agree with Hesmondhalgh and Baker, finally, when they argue (albeit briefly, in a footnote) that acknowledging the factual existence of these tensions is different from adopting romanticism's absolutism and systematicness (2008: 9), more nuance being necessary, especially when the subject of inquiry revolves around humans.

The one element that these have in common, however, is their incompatibility with Robert's argument that 'creative' and 'non-creative' practitioners are not so different and quite willing to move from one role to the other (2010: 761); a position hardly reconcilable with either the extensive

scholarly work made on such distensions or with the data brought to light in this chapter and throughout the thesis. Out of the various standpoints presented here, finally, my research indicates that Hesmondhalgh's (2013) much more balanced and nuanced position is the most tenable with regard to creativity and control and is, therefore, the most representative of the variety of the workers' accounts, while classical Marxism still retains relevance to this day. This is what I intend to demonstrate in the rest of part I, while illustrating it with the evidence brought forward during this research.

b. Lack of Systematic Contradiction in Non-Managerial Personnel Accounts:

While most examples from this part appear to follow a more romantic position on creativity and control, Callis' and Pascoe's accounts, in their hostility and lack of evidence, do seem to add cause to Murdock's bold position that such an antagonism is no more than a facade (2003: 32). It becomes important, therefore, to assess whether the conflicts outlined here – such as the *us-creative versus them-financial* paradigm – are factual, and so result from the interviewee's inner beliefs and experiences, or if these may result, as suggested by Goffman in related cases, from the participants intentionally expressing themselves in this way, 'chiefly because the tradition of [their] group or social status require this kind of expression' (1959: 17-8). This theory, through the assumed 'central[ity]' of this conflictual 'theme' (Murdock, 2003: 32), proposes a generalisation of what may be discrete occurrences. Furthermore, it tends to attribute a negative trait to 'cultural workers' in general, as it deprives them of a certain level of integrity or genuineness, by stating that they would deliberately and even automatically decry executives solely because it is customary, having become a 'central theme' in their discourse, as further highlighted by the terming of 'supposed' contradiction, which implies a fallacious representation of executives by non-managerial personnel.

The romantic position (Adorno, 1991; Faulkner et al., 2008), on the other hand, suggests the exact opposite, by asserting that contradiction is bound to factually take place between the creative and the financial paradigms (Ibid.; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2008: 85). It is, nevertheless, also based on a generalisation – on an even greater scale – and therefore leaves no room for non-antagonistic relationships and accounts. New information brought to light by this research, however, calls for nuancing such generalisations. The applicability of the romantic position to non-managerial personnel's discourses, in fact, can be rather easily assessed. Indeed, for it to be representative of the interviewees' accounts, this allegedly intrinsic contradiction would need to be constant; in other words, if other lines of thoughts, not relying on opposition, can be found in 'cultural workers' discourses,then this antagonism would not be systematic, and the practitioners' accounts would not fit this romantic position. This would also apply, to a lesser extent, to Murdock's (2003) position on attitude and accounts; as the presence of other, non-negative currents of thought, which would not fit in this theory, would restrict the scope of the scholar's argument (and so somewhat weaken it). I will demonstrate in this second section that the contradiction between creativity and control is not constant – or automatic – in the discourses of non-managerial personnel, and will illustrate this with new empirical data gathered for this research, featuring neutral to positive accounts of executives and their business imperatives.

Indeed, despite the instances of perceptual dissensions foregrounded in the previous section, a number of practitioners did not share such a negative impression of the powers-that-be. Certain interviewees, for instance, would simply discuss the choices executives make, from a primarily descriptive standpoint, without patently emitting any sort of judgement, neither positive nor negative. American Costume designer Everton, for example, describes the interests of those she defines as her 'bosses' in so many words: 'I think they, what my bosses think about is getting a show on the air that lasts'. This neutral account was not chosen randomly, since Everton had already established a

creative distinction between 'us in the creative end' and 'the financial people'. Her initial statement, however, was not a criticism as such and did not necessarily feature a strong antagonism, as she merely discussed what she thought executives wanted (later stating that she did not know what certain 'success' criteria, meaningful to creative people, meant to them). Neither is it the case, here. As such, Everton's case provides a first example that antagonism need not be a feature in workers accounts and that, even in cases where a different ideological perspective is suggested, negativity and conflict can be entirely absent. Other interviewees, furthermore, have replied that they did not know the answer to a number of questions, and that these should be addressed to the 'network executives', who were thus seen as having some sort of superior knowledge on issues related to 'success' in the television industry. Writer Peter Blake, for instance, while attempting to answer every question, repeatedly exclaimed: 'that's a question for the exec... network executives, I don't know.' With this answer, Blake, who works for US network FOX, positions himself as not able to answer and not sufficiently in touch with the financial = reality of the business, while concurrently positioning executives as the only possible recipients for such questions. As a result, the same alienation is foregrounded, but without a sense of conflict. Certain practitioners, however, have used a more complimentary lexical field vis-à-vis the executives. Performer James Callis, for instance, who displayed throughout our interview a pretty good overall knowledge of the industry he works in, expresses a clear intellectual interest in the executives' perspective: 'I'd be very interested to know what the other... the executives think of this.' By choosing the verb 'think', the actor reiterates his position of knowledge: instead of portraying the latter – initially ostracised as 'the other' – as more knowledgeable than he is, these are simply shown as having a possibly different opinion than his, which very much contrasts with Blake's conceptualisation of the deciding executives. In any case, even though this could be much less than 'admiration' as such, there is in this account a distinct lack of negativity and even a level of interest towards executives which is clearly above neutral.

Yet one step further from the interest shown in the previous examples, one of the participating practitioners demonstrates a sense of admiration towards these 'individuals at the top', going so far as ascribing them some kind of prophetic vision, as well as the ability to make things 'happen'. Discussing how assumptions are made about which programmes should or could become successful, Danish-born cinematographer Stephan Pehrsson presents his opinion in the following way:

> there is individuals at the top with opinions [...]; controllers and executive producers who probably have a feeling and say "this is interesting, I wanna pursue this [...]", that's how a new idea can happen.

Despite showing a certain level of uncertainty in his conjectures: 'probably', Pehrsson is quite assertive in his assumption with regard to the 'opinions' and inspired 'feeling' of the 'individuals at the top', clearly giving the latter more creative abilities than any other participant had. Even if these positive and sometimes even revering accounts of executives are not as numerous as the comments emphasising creative alienation or contradiction, they similarly contribute to discussions on relationships among TV practitioners by presenting currents of thought quite singular compared with those usually put forward. As such, their mere presence provides evidence that antagonism is not automatic between non-managerial personnel and executives, and so does demonstrate – albeit for reasons very different from Enzensberger's (1974) – that categorical theorisations of industry relations, such as the romanticism adopted by Adorno (1991), cannot be taken as standing for the industry as a whole, or even part of it.

With regard to Murdock's claim that criticism towards executives is central, if not automatic 'in the cultural workers' accounts' (2003: 32), these occasional praises – or even neutral accounts – can cast

a doubt on the purported centrality of this contradiction and, so, on the extent to which this proposed framework should be considered as binding as a generality. Furthermore, they demonstrate that, alike the romantic position or any theory based on generalisation, it ought to be more nuanced. While such positive or neutral perspectives do not necessarily imply that the contradiction between creativity and control featured in the rest of non-managerial personnel's accounts is more than a discursive theme (so Murdock, Ibid.), Hesmondhalgh's (2013) position, which acknowledges factual – rather than rhetoric – contradictions without sharing the more extreme romantic view, is better supported by the data provided by this research. As a result, by bringing issues such as power distance, uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 1980) and job precariousness (see Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2008; Neilson & Rossiter, 2005; Ursell, 2000) into the debate, I will show in this third section that there exist tangible reasons to explain such an estrangement from the executives.

c. Establishing the Reasons behind this Alienation:

Most of the scholars addressing the tensions discussed in this chapter only focused on those related to 'creativity' and 'control' (see, for example, Ryan, 1992; Frow, 1996; Ray and Sayer, 1999; Slater and Tonkiss, 2001; Negus and Pickering, 2004; or Banks, 2007). In so doing, they left out of the equation a second, highly important type of tension, or alienation, as will be demonstrated here. This alienation of non-managerial personnel from the decision makers can be, in fact, partially explained by some of the more positive (or, at least, less negative) accounts. Indeed, this interest in knowing what 'they' think may very well be linked to something much more crucial than mere curiosity. Medical advisor Michael Goto, for instance, states how difficult it feels to understand the decision makers, here materialised as the general entity itself: 'the networks':

> I don't know how the networks pick and choose what they think will
>
> be good or won't be good. (…) I don't know what this juggling thing

is with the networks, it's just really hard to read what they want... or

what they're looking for.

By linking the verb to 'choose' with the verb to 'think', Goto articulates a vision in which the executives are not seen as using reliable or scientific methods to evaluate which programmes should be successful, but rather as following their own, personal opinions. The low level of conviction implied here, however, would entail something closer to a thought than to an actual belief. But by using expressions such as 'want' and 'looking for' in his following sentence, Goto now seems to insinuate that 'the networks', as he calls them, have some sort of agenda, thereby giving them a more active existence upstream compared to the more passive one offered just before, where they were simply presented with programmes which they merely *thought* would be good or not. The term selected by Goto to refer to executives, finally, is quite revealing and representative of how many other practitioners see the decision makers; with 'the networks', the craft worker does not seem to be referring to individuals, but to faceless entities, devoid of human characteristics.

After comparing the actions and decisions of the executives to 'juggling', Goto states that industry practitioners are trying 'to read' what the decision makers 'want', as if it were important to non-managerial personnel, who wanted – or needed – to know in order to provide executives with ideas and programmes which would be of interest and, consequently, get commissioned. This can be explained by stepping back and re-contextualising this account within the economic reality of the industry. Indeed, the people in question, here, the practitioners without any managerial nor executive responsibilities, are at the very centre of job precariousness (see Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2008; Neilson & Rossiter, 2005; Ursell, 2000). Furthermore, as was just demonstrated with the conflicting statements (pick, choose / want, looking for), there is a lack of awareness, on the crew member's part, for instance, of how executives make their decisions. It is easy to understand, therefore, how

frustrating or even scary this incomprehension of powers-the-be and their choices may be for non-managerial personnel, and how these executive decisions may affect each and every one of these workers in both a professional and an economic manner.

In spite of that, there must be instances where non-managerial personnel would foreground in their discourses a greater level of alienation or contradiction with decision makers than in reality because the tradition of their group would 'require this kind of expression' (Goffman, 1959:17-8), which would relate to Murdock's (2003:32) postulation. Nevertheless, alike Hesmondhalgh & Baker (2008) and, to a different degree, Adorno (1991) and Enzensberger (1974), I argue that the antagonism between cultural workers and executives can, and should, be presented as much more than a simple 'theme' in their accounts, and the contradiction between creativity and control, as far from 'supposed'. Indeed, this antagonism, which was often featured in the accounts of the non-managerial personnel, has been shown to exist for tangible reasons. Firstly, Fiske's dichotomy between the financial and cultural economy across which programmes and industry practitioners navigate (1987), as well as the inherent ideological differences between the two sides – which are at the heart of romanticism (Adorno, 1991; Faulkner et al., 2008) – were both very much evoked in the discourses of the workers.

Furthermore, Hofstede's cultural dimensions of 'uncertainty avoidance', which is linked to the degree of uneasiness of individuals with (future) uncertainty and ambiguity, and of 'power distance', which deals with how hierarchically lower members of a society or a company apprehend power and its unequal distribution (1980) could also transpire from non-managerial personnel's accounts. This expresses itself, here, through uncertainty with regard to the future linked to executive decisions, which remain rather misunderstood; the combination of these, in turn, further participates in this alienation. Indeed, while the commissioning or renewal of a programme means for cultural workers

attached to it that they will have employment and pay for nearly a year, the cancellation of one means that everything stops, their livelihood being jeopardised if they do not find another show to work on in the foreseeable future. It is understandable, therefore, that this can cause doubt, incomprehension and even resentment towards executives and their not-always-understood decisions. This is why, as argued through this analysis of the debates, the industry and the discourses themselves, I strongly second Hesmondhalgh's (2013) nuanced standpoint, which supports an important degree of contradiction without overgeneralising either.

Nevertheless, these notions of uncertainty, incomprehension and even wariness towards power, which are more linked to production forces and to the social relations of production (Marx and Engels, 1902) than to the creativity-versus-control divide, could not be described as creative alienation, but rather as hierarchical, or functional alienation; where the issue lies not with creativity (or the lack of), but with the power coming from the position and responsibilities of the executives, and the consequences – or repercussions – of their decisions. As such, this hierarchical-functional alienation also allows this part of the chapter to show that there may be more than one type, or ground for contradiction between lower ranking and higher ranking members of a given industry (including the cultural ones, such as the television industry). The term 'functional' has been added, here, because this conflict is not strictly of a hierarchical nature, as it is not against all executives in general, such as those without commissioning power (who will be discussed in the third part), but against those who do have that power. As such, albeit related to hierarchically superior industry members, this alienation (or contradiction) is inherently linked to the *function* giving them authority to commission or cancel programmes, hence the dual 'hierarchical-functional' wording. This, finally, permits this section to bring back Marxism and Marxist positions in the likes of Enzensberger's (1974) into the equation, and thus to complete this discussion on the attitudes and discourses of non-managerial personnel towards decision makers. Unlike what Enzensberger (Ibid.) suggests when

positioning his Marxist perspective in contrast with, or replacement of Adorno's (1991), however, the discourses and analyses thereof provided by this research (as well as in other aforecited ones) demonstrate that this is not an either / or situation. As long as creativity is involved and workers identify themselves with the 'creative side', both contradictions (creative and hierarchical-functional) remain and can be expressed in practitioner discourses, allowing both toned down romantic approaches such as Hesmondhalgh's (2013: 82) and Marxist positions such as Enzensberger's (1974) to co-exist within the wider setting of the cultural industries.

After looking at how *non-managerial personnel* apprehended decision makers, and on the conflicts and antagonism perceivable in their accounts, I will look at the same topic, but from the eyes of the intermediaries, the *managers-producers*, in the second part.

II. Managerial Antagonism to Executive Power; Different Identities for Different Perspectives:

While the criticism or frustration of industry workers has widely been approached in academia (Davis & Scase, 2003; Willis & Dex, 2003; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2008), those of managers-producers in particular, as discussed here, had rarely been presented and studied. As demonstrated, there exist two types of alienation, or conflicts, between non-managerial personnel and executives: a creatively-based one and a more practical one, deemed hierarchical-functional. Despite being much closer to executives than non-managerial personnel, the practitioners holding producing responsibilities who were interviewed appeared to be just as alienated from decision makers as individuals belonging to the previous group. This is caused by the same two types of conflicts seen with their non-managerial peers, as will be developed here: on the one hand, with hierarchical-functional conflicts, that can transpire through cases of negative past experience with executives (see, for instance, Hirst and Bartlett's case), and on the other, by creative conflicts since, like with

non-managerial personnel, their 'freedom and autonomy are [...] still delimited' (Cantor, 1988: xxxviii). From 'upstairs, in controllers land' (Bartlett) to 'the guys in suits up there' (Hirst), through even the more descriptive expressions of 'network executive', 'commissioners' (Belissario) and 'controllers' (Brown), the managers-producers do not appear to be any less conflicted, therefore, towards the powerbase than their afore-discussed peers.

This second part will also demonstrate that there are two distinct types of managers-producers, the distinguishing criterion being whether their job or tasks involve a level of creativity or not. This also has visible impact on their discourses, those of the first group featuring both types of alienation, and those of the second one lacking creative issues. I will first examine these two types of producers and analyse the level of power attributed to certain managers-producers by non-managerial personnel. I will then move on to analyse the discourses of these two kinds of managerial personnel, namely the creative producers and the non-creative ones. This will illustrate where different accounts and types of conflict diverge or overlap, as well as the fact that managers-producers are just as alienated from executives as the non-managerial personnel, and for similar reasons.

a. Creativity to Differentiate Managers-Producers:

As aforementioned, there is not one but two types of producers: on the one hand, those belonging to the 'creative part', alike *non-managerial personnel*, and those belonging to the non-creative part, alike *executives*. Both kinds, however, belong to a common category, distinct from the two aforementioned: that of the *managers-producers*, reflecting Miège's category of 'éditeur' (translated in English as 'producer' by Garnham; Miège and Garnham, 1979: 303-4), who serve as intermediaries between creative workers and executives. Those belonging to the first type of producers, often called *executive producers* or *show-runners*, are defined as 'producer-creators' by Caldwell (2008: 211). The expression refers to producers who are also the writers and the creators of

their programmes, in the likes of interviewees Donald P. Bellisario, U.S. creator and show-runner of programmes such as *Airwolf*, *Quantum Leap, JAG* or *NCIS*, and Michael Hirst, UK creator and executive producer of shows like *The Tudors* and *Vikings*. They correspond to the *super creative personnel* category of the task-based industry classification established in Chapter I. Those belonging to the second type, on the other hand, whose job description does not entail creative activities in the likes writing or directing, such as participants Vince Gerardis, American producer mostly known for producing *Game of Thrones*, or John Bartlett, British producer of a number of comedies, most notably *My Family*. They are simply called *producers*, and belong to the eponymous category from Chapter I. Because the feelings of antagonism – or the reasons behind them – displayed in their discourses will differ based on the 'type' of producer that they are, it is important to clearly make this distinction at the onset.

The Rise of the Super Creative Personnel

While this distinction was primarily limited to an ideological paradigm shift, its implications in the current TVIII (cf. Rogers, Epstein & Reeves, 2002: 46), or so-called 'post-network' era (Lotz, 2007: 7-8; Pearson: 2007: 240) are also very much practical. Indeed, a quarter century ago, Cantor was arguing that 'the profit-minded executive, who is more interested in ratings, advertising space, and audience composition, represents a different ideology than producers, who are trained to do a technically good job' (1988: 86-7). While the different ideological issue stands, such positions, which both present executives in a slightly caricatural manner and limit the producing activity as purely technical, are now – at least, partially – outdated. This has been demonstrated by Pearson, for instance, who explains that, in the previous decades, 'executive producers [...] who were also creators, kept a low public profile in keeping with their relative lack of power', before adding that the latter had 'achieved far greater creative freedom' (2007: 241), and going as far as deeming them the 'ever-more powerful executive producers' (Ibid.: 243). As such, certain producers, more

specifically, 'executive producers' have now become powerful figures, at least within the Anglophone transatlantic television industry. *Super creative personnel* have thus gone from being practically anonymous and having a very restricted power to being fully-fledged producers with creative authority, having even become respected and powerful figures. In addition to being linked to an authorial and authoritative status, with some scholars explaining that 'it is the showrunner's defining vision of a series [...] that stamps the series as distinctive' (Caldwell, 2008: 211), other academics have gone as far as describing the 'show runner' as 'an exalted, highly paid position, achieved by very few' (Smith, 2009: 181). This position was, for instance, illustrated in Michael Hirst's account, upon discussing the differences in his role and status as executive producer of the programme he had created from what he was used to as a writer:

> *The Tudors* were my first real TV show... and... I wanted to be as
> involved as I could be in all aspects of it, so I was allowed to be an
> executive producer. Which was so... a novelty for me… It meant I
> was treated with respect, which was also a novelty for me

This testimony on both conditions, obviously, also has implications for the non-managerial personnel, with Hirst – a former such one – reflecting on the lack of respect felt by them, and so providing yet another ground for the alienation displayed throughout the first part. Furthermore, it illustrates the practitioner's own evolution from non-managerial personnel (writer) to manager-producer (show-runner).

Presence of Creative Alienation in Show-Runners' Accounts

Because of this major distinction within the manager category, the contradictions foregrounded in the practitioners' accounts will not have the same nature: while those from the creative side will feature

both a creative alienation and a hierarchical-functional one, those from the non-creative part will simply feature the latter. I will finish this second half of section a. by featuring creative alienation, which sets apart those with a creative element in their job description from those who do not, before studying hierarchical-functional conflicts in section b., which unites creative and non-creative types of managerial personnel alike since they occur in the accounts of both.

As aforementioned, one of the two contradictions displayed by super creative personnel – that is, those belonging to the creative part of managers-producers – was a sensation of *creative* alienation. As such, some of the producers interviewed tended to foreground a clear wish to be distinguished from the executives, in a manner very reminiscent of that expressed by Everton and Pascoe. Executive producer Don Bellisario, for instance, clearly distinguishes the managerial category to which he belongs from the owners and executives: 'unfortunately... most television executives... in the... non-creative part of the business, go truly by tests.' In this account, which clearly establishes itself within Flew's context of 'creative economy' and cultural versus financial duality (2005: 344), Bellisario's use of the term 'business' (a word which he has used six times during the interview) shows that the renowned executive producer considers the TV industry to be primarily a 'business', with a creative part and a 'non creative' one. This view rather reflects that of practitioners from the previous group (non-managerial personnel). It further illustrates that certain managerial personnel, such as show-runners, can be considered – and consider themselves as – part of the *creative* side of the business.

This can be explained by (as well as concludes) this part's demonstration on the two categories comprised in the 'managers-producers' category. As I have shown, individuals belonging to the managers-producers group can come from two distinct job categories, although both carry the term 'producer' in their title. In the task-based industry classification that I have brought forward in

Chapter I, these would include both those deemed as *producers*, who serve as intermediaries between the primary creative personnel and the controllers / executives, and those termed *super creative personnel*, who are the writers / creators of a programme that they also produce, giving them control or access to almost every step of the production chain. And there lies all the difference: unlike the former, who would not identify with the creative 'part' of the industry, the latter, due to their very job specifications, as writers and programme creators obviously do. This, in turn, explains the creative alienation in common with most of the non-managerial personnel, with whom they share some of the (creatively-based) activities. Even in creative producers' accounts, however, this representation of creative tensions remains, nevertheless, highly marginal compared to the wealth of content offered with regard to more pragmatic conflicts relating to their hierarchical superiors.

b. Hierarchical-Functional Conflicts to Unite Them:

Creative Producers' Accounts

Mann states that the 'authors' (yet another term to refer to show-runners, producer-creators, or as they are called in this chapter, super creative personnel / creative producers), 'reveal a more cooperative (if not totally amicable) relationship with their network counterparts' (2009: 109). I have had a very different experience when talking to them, however. The data provided by the discourses presented in this section, for instance, suggests a clear antagonism, from general to quite personal, on the part of creative producers towards executives. This section, therefore, will demonstrate how virulent creative producers and their non-creative counterparts alike may be against executives.

As explained in the previous part, even practitioners with a 'creative' job description display non-creative-based forms of contradiction in their discourses; more precisely so, conflicts which I have dubbed 'hierarchical-functional'. As such, further still than just erecting a creative wall between themselves and the channel or studio executives, some producers interviewed have expressed a clear

condemnation of the methods, used and of the choices made, by the latter to forecast success. Bellisario, for instance, continues his earlier statement about TV executives by displaying regret about how the latter select the programmes that they commission: 'they test the pilots, rather than going on their gut feeling about what might work, what might not work.' By proposing an alternative that he deems better than the method attributed to executives, the U.S. show-runner clearly expresses disapproval over the way these forecast success when developing new projects. Besides, just as non-managerial personnel have done in the previous section, Bellisario uses the rhetorical parallel between the cold, automatic, robotic methods 'they test pilots' and the affective one, full of personal conviction: 'going on their gut feeling'.

Accounts of conflicts with executives can differ on the individual level, however: British show-runner Michael Hirst, for instance, is much more 'personal' and incisive in his perspective on executives. More than illustrating conflict, his account clearly features (harsh) criticism. Hirst does so after first portraying the decision makers in the TV industry in a seemingly harmless fashion: 'usually one person where ultimate power resides and [...] valued executives around'. This choice of word, however, is better informed through the rest of the *Tudors* show-runner's discourse. Indeed, while the latter had already used the expression 'one person where ultimate power resides' (under one form or another) a few times, it only ever was in relation to the main character of his programme: Henry the Eighth. The fact that Hirst would use the allegory of a king to define these deciding executives only but shows the high level of power that he attributes to the latter. What is more, however, is that these decision makers are not compared to just any ruler, here, but to the mad king, infamous for decapitating his foes and spouses. This highly negative metaphor – purposeful or not – does give a revealing insight into how dangerous and reckless those deciding individuals are occasionally perceived by other practitioners. As for the 'value' of the surrounding executives, it seems to only lie in the eyes of the surrounded ones, rather than in Hirst's, who sees them as lacking

the knowledge of the industry as it really is. Indeed, the executive producer also passes a very unfavourable judgment on the majority of such executives, through a compliment to a former channel director: 'the head of *Showtime* at the time (…) had himself been a producer, so he knew more about the world out there than a lot of executives.' This way of making the criticism of several through the compliment of one has clearly not been done by other practitioners interviewed. In this case, the device surely is effective in tackling executives in general: in addition to praising, not so much the said *Showtime* head, but managers-producers in general (like Hirst himself) for their ascribed knowledge, it also sheds a light of incompetence – or at least, of ignorance – on 'a lot of executives'. The expression 'the world out there', finally, resonates quite cynically and pejoratively, presenting executives as amateurish and oblivious to reality, if not as socially inept. This clearly shows a less than amicable relationship of the super creative personnel member with the executives.

The global context within which non-executive / executive relations take place must also be acknowledged. As scholars such as Hesmondhalgh have discussed, fewer and fewer TV channels (or any other company, for that matter) are independent; instead, they belong to bigger entities, thus forming conglomerates of cultural industries owned by yet larger companies (2002: 1-2). Indeed, as explained in the introduction, the economic agendas of the concurrent conservative governments of Reagan and Thatcher, and the Acts that were implemented at the time, namely the 1996 US Telecommunications Act (see Aufderheide, 1999) in the US and the 1990 and 1996 Broadcasting Act in the UK rendered cross-media ownership – and thus such conglomerates – possible (see O'Malley, 1994; Williams, 1996 and O'Malley, 2009). Two slightly different views exist on these policies and Acts: on the one hand, Hesmondhalgh considers that they represent 'the culmination of the trend towards marketisation in US policy' (2002: 130), and on the other, these Acts, according to Hilmes, should be seen as protectionist rather than liberal and deregulatory since, she argues, they were implemented to protect, or enhance the position of existing conglomerates (2003: 66). Regardless of

how one considers the economical or political agenda behind the measures that have permitted these large conglomerates (or 'megamergers' as Hesmondhalgh would call them; 2002: 130), such Acts were not the only things enabling these conglomerates, technology also having a role in it. As Schiller explains, the development of the Internet, giving space to 'an emerging digital capitalism', provided 'sophisticated network systems' that 'comprised the increasingly essential infrastructure for engorged transnational corporations' (Schiller, 1999: 37-40). Such corporations, which operate both domestically and internationally, can include the Disney-ABC TV-ABC Studios conglomerate,[24] for instance, 'represented' in this thesis by James Hedges, CFO and VP of ABC Television and ABC Studios at the time, but can also encompass even bigger ones (cf. Introduction; Croteau & Hoynes, 2006: 97). Aside from Hedges, who did mention 'parent company' Disney at certain points during our conversation, another participant talked about to this global setting. Indeed, at a later point in our interview, Hirst clearly nuances this all-powerful image of the responsible executive, by describing the latter as a sort of constant subordinate, but with a sense of honour and responsibility:

> Bob Greenblatt (…) the head of Showtime. He was answerable to
> their parent company, which was CBS, which must, in turn, answer
> to... (…) there's always someone above you, but (…) it was his
> dollar and he would have to fall on his sword if it didn't work.

When talking about 'his dollar', the executive producer does not appear to give executives a greedy portrayal, as many non-managerial personnel had; but seems to mention it in relation to the responsibility of the said executive, as shown by his final clause. Using the Samurai honour code allegory of the Seppuku (Turnbull, 2011: 72), Hirst even appears to attribute a certain dignity to these

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[24] The Disney-ABC conglomerate is not the only important one in the US, as it shares the market with four other cross-media conglomerates, owning the four other main US networks: NBC Universal (which owns NBC), News Corporation (which includes FOX Broadcasting Company), National Amusements (which owns CBS, and half of the CW) and Time Warner (encompassing the other half of the CW through a joint venture with National Amusement; C standing for CBS and W for Warner); cf. Kidd, 2014: 20.

executives he had so thoroughly criticised earlier; although this assumption may be relativised by the fact that Hirst is again talking about the then Showtime head specifically, whom he had already complimented earlier for being *unlike* other executives. In the only gender-related comment made of out of all the sixteen interviews, finally, the period drama creator outlines a difference that he felt when the *Tudors* pilot – initially written for CBS – was presented to the U.S. network. Discretely hitting at the conservatism attributed to the derogatively deemed 'the guys in suits up there' in the same criticism-through-compliment fashion used earlier, Hirst describes: 'the women commissioning executives really loved it, but the guys in suits up there said "we've never done a historically-based show, we're not gonna start now."' Here again, but even more clearly than before, Hirst discusses a (negative) past experience with executives, describing how they rejected his project right away. Using a literal, metaphorical and ironical higher ground, 'up there', for 'the guys in suits' the show-runner quotes the latter as justifying their negative decision on the base of an absence of track record. In so doing, Hirst both sets them apart from the rest of practitioners due to their business attire and physical location in the building, and presents them as hierarchically higher than the 'the women commissioning executives', whose stated enthusiasm for the project was reportedly not enough for it to get commissioned. As will be shown later, finally, this account will find a direct (albeit gender-free) counterpart in the discourse of a non-creative manager, thus illustrating how well these hierarchical- functional conflicts do unite both types of managers-producers.

Both these testimonies of past experience with executives and more general accounts featuring recurring ideological or factual conflicts with the latter, either creative-based (cf. end of part a.) or hierarchical-functional, offer a radically different position from Mann's when she states that super creative personnel / show-runners 'reveal a more cooperative (if not totally amicable) relationship with their network counterparts' (2009: 109). This was quite the contrary, in fact (based on the practitioners accounts gathered for this research), as the one element missing from executive

producers' accounts, compared to non-managerial personnel's, was the occasional feeling of admiration. As such, different reference groups may have different feelings; perhaps did Mann's interviewees have radically different (more positive) relationships with executives because of different circumstances? In any case, I do not consider it possible to suggest that the difference in data may result from the slightly different time period. Not only because British show-runner Michael Hirst was interviewed only a few years after Mann's study was published (and it seems unlikely that such a negative turn may have taken place in such a short time span), but also because American show-runner Donald P. Bellisario, despite being interviewed not long after Hirst (March 2012 as opposed to May 2011), had a career spanning from the early eighties to the late 2000s, which definitely precedes Hirst's experience, and yet shared a similar stance towards executives.

Non-Creative Producers' Accounts

Unlike those whose statements are discussed above, not all managers-producers are also the creators, writers or directors of the programmes that they produce. As stipulated earlier, the ones who do not belong to the 'non-creative part' of the managerial personnel do not feature this creative alienation. Instead, their discourses solely highlight a lack of understanding – or agreement – in relation to decision makers, which is illustrative of a hierarchical-functional-based alienation. Born, one of the few academics to discuss the complicated relationship between producers and executives (2000: 415), gives a rather dim light on managers / executives relationships. This part of section b. will demonstrate that this non-creatively based conflict transcends all job categories and creative / non-creative distinctions, hierarchical-functional incomprehension (or frustration) being the one common element present across all practitioner discourses in relation to decision makers, and for reasons similar to non-managerial personnel's, job security included.

The said alienation, already tackled above from the creative-producers' perspective, is no less present, nor weaker, here. This is easily distinguishable, for instance, in the speech of producer John Bartlett, who uses the term 'they' to refer to the executives, as opposed to the pronoun 'we', applied to his colleagues and himself, in what appears to be a constant tennis game: 'we've got a script, and if they like the idea they might commission another one, and then we do a series and then they're involved in casting'. In this account, the fact of never naming the individuals in question (solely using plural pronoun 'they') further helps in alienating the latter. Additionally, the incomprehension displayed by non-managerial personnel Pascoe, Everton, Callis or Goto is also shared by Bartlett. When asked how executives decide which programmes to commission, the producer answers and describes this common frustration in the following terms: 'Oh, I wish I knew! (laughs) Sometimes it's simply inexplicable, the decisions they make. I don't know, it's very difficult to know.' The palpable intensity of the expression 'simply inexplicable' clearly lets transpire the irritation of the manager-producer. Here again, one can notice a wish 'to know' or understand the decisions of executives. This is better understood in light of another comment from Bartlett who, upon being asked what his definition of success would be (a topic developed in Chapter IV), answers: '(laughs) Being employed next year! No! (laughs)' Despite the joking manner used by the affable interviewee to answer the question, humour seemingly serving as a way to avoid the issue, or at least to soften the bleakness from the content of the statement, the fact remains that job security was obviously on his mind. Indeed, for producers as well, a cancelled programme means a termination of contract and of the salary that goes with it. This, therefore, provides the same reason for antagonism with regard to power (in addition to the aforecited creative alienation, felt by the creative managers-producers) as that of non-managerial personnel.

Further still than just erecting a wall between themselves and the channel or studio executives, some producers interviewed have expressed a clear condemnation of the methods used and the choices

made by the latter in order to forecast success. Producer Vince Gerardis, for instance, first seems to be quite nonchalant regarding executives and their choices: 'I think that the network executives that make those decisions are sometimes right in their assessments, and sometimes it's the actual content that is simply better [...] or less [so] than what they expected it to be'. So far, the *Game of Thrones* (non-creative) producer appears to give an impartial and descriptive account of the perceived situation. The producer's account, however, is far from being neutral. Indeed; when looked at more attentively, this sentence gives rather little credit to executives, who are portrayed as being right only 'sometimes', as if by coincidence, while being wrong at other times, the programmes doing differently from what 'they expected'. Gerardis, moreover, rapidly sharpens his tone, being the only one to state so openly the alleged level of frustration around executive decisions:

> But, believe me, there's a lot of frustration from the point-of-view of executives, corporate... heads, audience, etcetera, and... what *does* get selected, produced, *how* it gets produced, *how* it gets distributed; it's a human... an ongoing battle.

Interestingly enough, though, upon listing the different types of frustrated practitioners, the American producer does not include himself – nor fellow producers – in this list, going straight from 'corporate heads' to the 'audience', perhaps in order to protect his relationship with executives. By including the executives themselves, however, Gerardis appears not to direct his criticism at the latter, but rather at the decision process itself, at every possible level, going as far as deeming it a 'human, ongoing battle'. This impression that he is not attacking executives per se, however, is corrected a few minutes later, at the very end of our interview: when asked if he would like to add anything to what had been discussed over the past half hour, the U.S. producer concludes by rhetorically asking: 'why does the public complain about the nature of television today and the choices that executives make?' Gerardis, here, offers an outlook quite different from the one shared earlier, unmistakably

focusing on executives and their judgments and success measurements, but in which he – once more – does not criticise nor 'complain about' these choices, but supposedly merely mentions what the public says. This method, less direct than that employed by the other interviewees, is no less effective in targeting and condemning power holders and their decisions. Here again are outlined the functional issues, linked to decisions made by their hierarchical superiors, which lie behind the antagonism featured in managers-producers' discourses.

It is John Bartlett's account, finally, that allows this part to draw particular links with executive producer Michael Hirst, and in so doing demonstrate even further how hierarchical issues with executives, especially 'personal' past experiences, are what 'unites' the discourses of creative and non-creative producers alike. The British comedy producer, similarly frustrated by the decisions taken 'upstairs, in controllers land', shares an unsuccessful past incident, which saw a project of his turned down:

> some years ago, I had... well, the BBC had a comedy, thought it was
>
> a very very good first episode... which we were putting up to make a
>
> series. It involved two cooks, two television cooks... and, upstairs, in
>
> controllers land, they said "no, we can't do it, cause television's no
>
> good at looking at television".

In order to illustrate how 'inexplicable' their decisions may be, Bartlett goes on lengthily about the project and how frustrating the executives' answer was (not quoted here). In this abstract of the account, the producer's discourse clearly shows signs of sarcasm, if not cynicism. The 'controllers' land' expression, remindful of Hirst's, reveals a high level of exasperation, and is insightful with regard to the manner in which certain practitioners confrontationally apprehend and portray executives.

Such conflicts, finally, also differ from the creative (or 'ideological') conflicts of the creative producers discussed earlier. Indeed, while a notion of 'performance' (see Goffman, 1959) could easily be argued when practitioners tend to represent themselves in a certain light, in order to give off (Ibid.: 14) what they perceive to be a better image of themselves,[25] it is more difficult to argue so in cases where participants are describing personal experiences of failures, as is the case in Bartlett and Hirst's accounts, for instance. Nevertheless, as explained by Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 'this dismissal of the opinions of others with regard to creative work is an important way in which creative workers defend themselves against the repercussions of their own close personal involvement in their products' (2011: 183-4); it is therefore not possible to suggest intentions-free discourses either.

Although taking place on a different channel, for a different genre and in a different country, Bartlett's account is particularly similar to Hirst's previous example, to the point of having the exact same narrative construction. After a brief introduction of the soon-to-be rejected programme proposal (the first episode had not yet been shot), the managers-producers mention, in a deprecating manner relating to a literal higher ground, the executives and their remote location (both physically and psychically); the one using the expression 'upstairs, in controllers land' and the other: 'the guys in suits up there'. This was, in both cases, directly followed by past tense verb 'said' and the categorical refusal quote. By positioning their project as directly facing the response of the executives (controllers), simply citing what was said to them, creative producer Hirst and non-creative producer Bartlett outline the perceived lack of discussion or consideration towards their respective project, which illustrates how tense relations to power may be. Although not represented as cruel rulers, executives in Bartlett's perspective emerge as they have been portrayed by many

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[25] Or, to an extent, in the case of Gerardis' account, a certain exaggeration of the situation or a purposeful exclusion of himself in the criticism.

other practitioners: cold and robotic, with an automatic answer, rather than considering and listening to their 'gut feeling'. The similarity in anecdote and presentation of certain accounts from practitioners coming from widely different contexts (one working in the US industry, the other in the UK, one a creative producer, the other a non-creative one), finally, does appear to reflect some sort of overarching, universally shared frustration felt by the 'mediators' (Hesmondhalgh, 2007: 64) that are the managers-producers when faced with a rejection – often seen as abrupt and inconsiderate – on the part of the executives. As explained by Davis and Scase (2000), these controlling and success forecasting processes could be dangerous if they were to be perceived by members from the creative side of the industry (encompassing part of the managers-producers, as well as the non-managerial personnel in general) as inhibiting their potential and hindering their motivations on a creative level.

After studying how members from every job category saw and portrayed executives, the third and final part of this chapter will turn to the last group of industry workers: the executives themselves, and will therefore focus on how the latter apprehend their responsibilities and speak of themselves and their duties.

III. Executives in their Own Words:

Since the discourses presented in this section are mostly an expression of self-analysis and reflexivity, the ones giving the accounts being at the very centre of the inquiry, their content highly contrasts with what has been shown so far. Indeed, some of the participants, such as James Hedges and David Howe (respectively Executive VP and CFO of Disney-ABC and President of the Syfy Channel at the time of these interviews) happened to be the decision makers themselves, or very closely linked to them, such as Kevin Lygo (director of ITV Studios). The only exception was that of the fourth executive interviewed for this thesis, then BBC Director of Drama Production Nicolas Brown, who was slightly remote from the decision centre. I will demonstrate that there are two ways

which executives utilise to discuss their activity and themselves: one primarily descriptive, or presentational, and one designed to protect themselves and their activities in the interlocutor's eyes. The first section will present the three descriptive ways available for executives to talk about themselves within the first context: the neutral view, the collectivist one and the individualist one. The second section will study their discursive defence mechanism as well as when it is utilised, and will, therefore, propose an alternative to Goffman's (1959: 56) approach on individuals' portrayal of themselves by bringing forward this new analysis.

<u>a. Presenting Their Activity and Themselves:</u>

Neutral View – They

The first descriptive way takes the form of an external description, or 'they'. This only truly 'neutral' view on power-holding individuals is given by the single high-ranking executive interviewed who did not have a direct say in the decision making process. BBC's Nicolas Brown gives a no-nonsense account of the process and makes a clear distinction, for instance, between the commissioner and the channel controller, being very familiar with the intricacies of the (British) system. In a very straightforward *we do this, they do that* manner, the drama director thus sketches the situation: 'the department I run, we develop ideas, we pitch them to the commissioner, the commissioner commissions, then we make them and deliver them.' Here, Brown illustrates the 'large degree of autonomy' (albeit carried out under supervision) given to 'project teams involved in creation and conception' of programmes (Hesmondhalgh, 2002: 54-5). In doing so, he also demonstrates that even channel executives may be linked to creative activities, such as running a programme development department. The account given is that of a well-oiled machine, as demonstrated by the industrial (although not financial) lexical field: 'department (…) run', 'develop', 'commissions', 'make', 'deliver'. The choice of the term 'ideas', finally, gives a much more creative connotation than 'products' or even 'programmes', even if these would appear more fitting terms for the trade

terminology, as one would expect the said 'department' to 'deliver' a finished *product* rather than an *idea*. This, in fact, is the first of several instances (as will be shown in the next chapter, for instance), where the seemingly very straightforward executive would actually attempt to 'play up creativity' (Goffman, 1959: 56) or present an idealised version (Ibid.: 44) of elements reflecting directly on him or his job.

With regard to the process itself and who the decision maker is, Brown adds, in a decidedly detached fashion:

> somebody has to make decisions about what shows get made and what don't. And the way it works at the BBC is [...], in every genre, [...] there's a commissioner, and they will [...] make that decision with the relevant channel controller.

Building on the well-oiled machine rhetoric, everything is logical and 'relevant' here: 'somebody has to make decisions', the executive declares, before explaining 'the way it works'. This overwhelming neutrality of Brown's on both fronts may be explained in the following manner: firstly, contrary to the other three participants, he himself does not have commissioning power, and is, therefore, less *concerned* on that level; secondly, his lack of either criticism or praise towards the deciding executives could be due to one of three things: that he simply does not have feelings one way or another with regard to them, that he may not wish to pass judgment on his bosses for fear of consequences – a plausible explanation for any other so-called neutral account – or in order to keep up appearances, working closely with them and being, himself, a high ranking executive.[26]

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[26] Nicolas Brown left the BBC in November 2012, six months after our interview, to join indie company Neal Street Productions, best known for externally producing BBC1's *Call the Midwife*.

Collectivist View – We

The second manner to present themselves, through a very peculiar aspect of the discourses of several of the executives interviewed, is via the 'we' angle. Obviously being at the centre of that kind of decisions, certain interviewees belonging to this category choose to refer to decision makers in a collective – or rather, collectivist – manner (see Hofstede's (1980) dimensions of individualism versus collectivism). ABC's vice president, for instance, who deems himself part of 'the executives', attempts to give an account of the commissioning process which lessens his position in favour of his various co-workers:

> all of the executives, from our various businesses, get together, for
> two weeks, and we just watch all of our pilots. And then we grade
> them, and then we compare [...] how the focus groups grade them
> [to] how we felt, as executives, about that show.

While the use of test screenings is widely recognised (Butler, 2007: 380; Turrow, J., 2011: 468) and while the personal input of executives has – albeit rarely – also been academically documented (Hill, 2010: xv), the process described by Hedges has not really been discussed before. Besides, regarding the terming of the said process, in addition to the apparent pre-eminence of first person plural pronoun 'we' and the feeling of belonging displayed throughout this statement, the most striking element is the use of the verb 'felt'. Indeed, despite being repeatedly portrayed in the previous sections as cold, inconsiderate robots relying uniquely on formulas and data and whose only interests revolve around making money, one of these executives actually talks about feelings. Hedges does not mention ratings or money; just him and his peers, watching the pilots: not calculating, not deciding, but discussing *how they felt* about those. His presentation of himself and of his peers could not be farther from the portrayal made by the rest of the television industry practitioners interviewed, a

result which could have been impacted – as with every other interviewee – by 'the participant's dramaturgical problems of presenting the activity before others' (Goffman, 1959: 26). Indeed, as will be demonstrated in the next chapter, feelings and thoughts are far from the very tangible measurements utilised in the various entities comprising the Anglophone transatlantic television industry. Given the difference between this content and, not only the other accounts given, but the actual executives' accounts to be discussed in Chapter III in relation to industrial measures of success, this emphasis on feelings (while shedding light on a different, perhaps unexpected aspect of the executives) may very well be a representation of this idealised version discussed by Goffman (1959: 44) in relation to people's accounts and behaviour during interviews or conversations.

Regardless of the possible (if not likely) embellishment portrayed here, Hedges appears quite generous in his presentation of the situation, through giving the impression that all executives are similarly involved and have just as much impact as him, the channel's vice president. But not all executives decide to use such a collectivist approach and to reduce their involvement in order to boost that of their colleagues. Some, on the contrary, would take this opportunity to foreground their own work and responsibilities.

Individualist View – I

The third and final non-defensive way for executives to present themselves and their activity is through the first person: 'I'. While giving a somewhat similar account with regard to the 'collegiate' aspect of the 'green-light process' (which he insists on), Howe primarily uses the first person to explain the process, before concluding that despite rarely going against his colleagues' opinion, the decision remains his:

I will listen to input from the head of marketing, the head of PR, the

head of scheduling, the head of development, the head of research;

we will have a debate, and a discussion about everything we've

developed; we would have tested heavily. Ultimately, it's gonna be

my decision, but it's very rare that I would ever overrule the

consensus of the group.

Despite this obvious collegiate aspect, noticeable through the thrice-occurring 'we', the account differs from the previous in its lack of 'togetherness', so to speak: while Hedges' account presented a certain level of cohesion and time spent together between the various people involved 'all of the executives [...] get together, for two weeks, and we just watch [...]', the overall impression here feels much more like successive individual inputs from each of the persons listed. Furthermore, the Syfy president repeatedly uses the term 'head (of)' – to show the level of importance of the people involved – and the first person singular pronoun 'I' at the beginning and end of his account, as a way to place himself in control in the eyes of the interviewer; a position of power further imprinted through the use of a lexical field related to power, finality and inalterability, with words such as 'ultimately', 'decision' and 'overrule', coupled with possessive determiner 'my' and aforementioned pronoun 'I'.

This situation of control, however, was undeniable, as Howe *is* the president of the channel. Why then, should such a discourse anchor and echo this notion again and again? This could be seen either as mere honesty – and could contrast with Hedges, perhaps artificially trying to undermine his role – or as the cable channel head trying to shine, or more precisely, expressing himself in a manner to have his interlocutor '*impressed* in some way by him' (Ichheiser, 1949: 6-7). After discussing these three ways of presenting things for an executive, I will examine a radically different strategy,

resulting from a defensive standpoint, which replaces the afore-discussed presentational approaches as soon as executives believe that they might be perceived in a negative light.

b. Protecting Their Activity and Themselves:

Reverse Footing – You

The last way to talk about the commissioning process for those who are at its heart is by taking themselves out of the equation and using the second person. In putting their interlocutor at the centre of the process by making *them* the subject, the latter would, supposedly, feel more closely concerned by the existing difficulty and stakes (see Goffman, 1981 and Clark, 1987 on conversational roles). Footing if what Goffman calls the 'projected self' (1981: 128). The sociologist explains that footing is 'the alignment we take up to ourselves and the others present as expressed in the way we manage the production or perception of an utterance' (Ibid.). A change in our footing, he continues, 'is another way of talking about a change in our frame for events' (Ibid.). Kevin Lygo, for instance, would often avoid using pronouns such as I or we, but would express himself through 'you'. For example, when discussing success goals, the Managing Director at ITV Studios head explains: 'if it costs you a million pounds, and then you make 1.1 million pounds [...]'. Similarly, upon discussing how the success forecasts and assumptions are made, Lygo explains that it depends 'largely on who are the people that are making it. So... do you trust them?' By asking rhetorical questions in addition to more straightforward statements, the British studio head yet goes one step further into changing the 'footing' (Ibid.), which consists in placing the interlocutor at the centre of the action, hereby appealing to them and forcing them to consider what has just been said, rather than merely listening to it until posterior analysis. While being the only one to foreground *reverse footing* in his accounts to that extent, Lygo was clearly not the only executive to make use of this discursive tool. Dave Howe, as quoted in Chapter III, discusses certain economic reasons to continue a programme in the following manner:

sometimes, you will let a show continue because, from an ad sales

perspective, there's a product placement in a show that's been very

lucrative for you, or there's a sponsor who's really stepped up, [with]

quite a lot of money to support the show.

Like with an earlier statement of his, where he stated that: 'you can't monetise that audience as effectively as you can with' another method, Howe – using an ever more financially-focused lexical field – once again changes the footing (Goffman, 1981: 128), using second pronoun 'you'. As stated earlier, however, this is not a just sporadic occurrence in some statements, but a recurring theme in executive accounts.

As Angrosino explains, a qualitative and ethnographic research such as this one 'ultimately comes to a point of recognizing or inferring meaningful patterns' (2007: 42). After the brief presentation of this occurrence, the rest of this section will analyse other instances where executives have employed this reverse footing, which will allow this thesis to demonstrate that executives often use this seemingly simple technique in a more complicated manner, turning it into an actual defence mechanism whenever they feel that what they are saying may be perceived negatively by their interlocutor. In such cases, the interviewed executives are not *presenting* anymore, but explaining while *defending* themselves, and thus they attempt not just to describe, but also to justify their actions. I will, finally, analyse what the use of this particular discursive form may tell us about the way power holders apprehend themselves and their actions.

Apprehending Money and the Self: Discursive Defence Mechanism

Kevin Lygo illustrates his statement on ITV looking for 'bulk' ratings in the following manner: 'so, you don't want... we would make less money if we were, if we lost a lot of bulk because, *mainly*, advertisers are... white bread and toilet paper... so, everybody needs it.' Here, Lygo corrects himself by cutting his own sentence, changing it from 'you' to 'we', but also switching it from negative 'you don't want' to positive 'we would'. Rather than being merely *positive*, however, the studio head is trying to explain their money-related success measurements while seemingly attempting to justify themselves. While the executive's point about ratings as linked to advertising revenue (see Haupert, 2006: 185) will be discussed in the chapter that follows, the formulation used by Howe is of particular interest for this chapter as it truly reveals some of the practitioners' frame of mind. Another instance of the use of the discursive device is offered by Hedge's statement on digital ratings, the essence of which goes like this:

> what we're trying to do is to increase the number of episodes the fan actually gets to consume and to convert that view [...]. So, if you make 10 cents when somebody watches on a linear platform, you wanna make 10 cents when they watch it on a digital platform.

Here as well, the then ABC VP attempts to change the footing by placing the interviewer (me) at the centre of the action, and telling him what *he* wants: 'if you make [...], you wanna make'. This is a clear example of what I would call a *defensive you*, where the interlocutor becomes the substituted protagonist as soon as the interviewee believes that the content of their discourse might be perceived as *shocking* by the interviewer, due to its 'ruthless' or financial nature. In this – or any other – occurrence, it does not appear to be done in Goffman's 'thoroughly calculating manner' (1959: 17), but rather seems to be part of a defence mechanism. Indeed, while this does not mean that the

interviewees may not consciously use such a technique to present their action in a calculated manner, the concept of defence mechanism involves less scheming or manipulation than the rather derogatively-termed '*thoroughly* calculating manner'[27] (Ibid.) would suggest.

Other participants, such as Lygo, have gone even further in rendering the interlocutor the subject of the action, the executive going as far turning this around my own recording device, placed right in front of him, on the coffee table: 'if you fancy little recording devices... you'd rather have an audience of... of half a million, but... all men, all aged... between 20 and 30, it is certain.' By making me the actor rather than the observer, and my research tool the subject of the account, Lygo is not only changing the footing, but is literally turning tables; if I am the one with my own agenda, making the decisions to try to sell my product, I should better understand the decisions executives make and what interests the advertisers. As such, I should be less prompt to judge executives when their success assessment methods – and decisions in general – heavily feature ruthless or financial elements. This appears to be the basic premise behind this device, which I have labelled the *explicative-defensive* form. Examples such as this one, however, seem to be particularly well 'targeted', and therefore, probably more prepared, or consciously made, than some of the other uses discussed throughout this section.

As suggested earlier, a more complete version of this consists in using collective pronoun 'we' whenever the action is relatively positive, 'what *we're* trying to do is to increase the number of episodes that the fan actually gets [...]' and switching to second person 'you' whenever the action becomes either negative or overly monetised: 'if you make 10 cents [...] you wanna make 10 cents'. Another such illustration of this 'we-positive; you-negative / financial' element of executive discourse is offered by Dave Howe:

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[27] Italicised here to emphasise the extent suggested by the word 'thoroughly'.

we may, if we feel there's still something there [...], do a season 2 [...] [but] You have to, you really do need to be ruthless about cancelling the shows if you really don't think they're gonna be a success.

The most revealing aspect of this account, of course, lies in the footing of this drastically contrasted rhetoric used by Howe, most illustrative of this *explicative-defensive* form deriving from 'the participant's dramaturgical problems of presenting the activity before others' (Goffman, 1959: 26). In this instance, Howe moves in a split second from 'we may [...] do a season two' to 'you [...] need to be ruthless', the purpose of the change of footing being particularly obvious, here. Trying yet further to alleviate the negative connotation of the actions outlined, the executive goes as far as moving from 'you have to' to 'you really do need'. In so correcting himself, Howe does not portray the act of cancelling unsuccessful programmes as an obligation imposed by somebody else, but as an intrinsic requirement coming from 'you', the protagonist.[28]

Howe's use of collective pronoun 'we' simply in relation to *positive* things, such as giving another chance to a show, but second person 'you' in reference to *negative* things, such as being 'ruthless' and 'cancelling' programmes, is all but a coincidence or a random construction. On the contrary, it does follow a pattern, as shown by Lygo's negative 'you don't want' to positive 'we would', or by Hedges' 'we're trying' to 'you wanna make'; as well as by earlier examples of the 'we'-form of the 'collegiate' decision making and the 'you'-form with the more business-financially oriented aspects (such as when 'you can't monetise that audience as effectively'). In so attempting to explain and

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[28] Alike the *'likely' / slow-passive positive versus 'gotta' / quick-active negative* that appeared in Chapter III, the change from the singular form for doing a second season if 'it' becomes more popular to the plural form about cancelling the 'shows' is but an indicator of the crude statistics regarding the number of programmes re-commissioned compared to those cancelled.

defend their position, executives appear to be far from trying to present an idealised version of themselves or their work (as suspected by Goffman, 1959: 44 or Caldwell, 2008: 14). Instead, this case permits this research to further position the *explicative-defensive* form as an alternative to Goffman's (1959: 56), where interviewees appear (albeit probably consciously) to use the discursive device as a defence mechanism when they feel that their – non creatively played up – accounts would seem too cold or business-minded, while still presenting them, rather than avoiding certain aspects. As Mumby and Clair were saying, 'discourse is the principal means by which' practitioners shape a 'social reality' structuring 'their sense of who they are' (1997: 181) and, I would add, of what they do. The mere existence of this *explicative-defensive* mechanism in the executive discourse, finally, demonstrates that executives are aware – to a degree – of the negative way in which they and their activities may be perceived by others, and are consciously trying – not to enhance the recollected situation, as some have suggested, but – to achieve some kind of damage control, obviously being on the defensive when utilising the discursive device presented here.

Conclusion:

This chapter, like the rest of my thesis, has 'paid particular attention to any available evidence of the social group's own entrenched interpretative frameworks and self-analysis', to quote Caldwell (2008: 2). While much has been written on the working conditions or industrial mechanisms within creative industries (Caldwell, Mayer & Banks, 2009; Hartley, 2005; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2011), – which are also at the heart of this thesis – less academic work has really focused on how the various practitioners saw and apprehended each other, especially so, here, the decision makers. To quote Williams, 'the contradictions between different players with distinct views [...] were as illuminating as the consistencies' (2008: 132). This chapter has offered yet a new way to categorise TV practitioners with regard to their distance, approach and relationship to the powerbase: it consists of

non-managerial personnel, managers-producers and executives. This classification, however, is not meant to replace nor erase the task-based cataloguing brought forth in Chapter I and used throughout this thesis, but instead to offer the most effective way to classify the participants' discourses and positioning with regard to that specific topic.

The first part of the chapter looked at the discourses of non-managerial personnel. By demonstrating that there are two positions identifiable within non-managerial personnel's discourses, one related to alienation and the other to admiration, I positioned this first part in relation to current creativity / control tensions debates and demonstrated that both systematic, romantic positions and refuting ones must be nuanced, the new data brought forth in this study calling for a more balanced approach. It was then demonstrated that this antagonism was not automatic and that even praiseful accounts could occasionally be found, before discussing how the very existence of the latter affected current debates. I, finally, argued that another kind of alienation was identifiable within these accounts, namely a hierarchical-functional one. Using various concepts, this part has proposed several reasons behind this antagonism on the side of non-managerial personnel. The second part focused on the intermediaries, the managers-producers. I have illustrated how the managerial personnel, who serve as liaison between the two (having access to both), perceive and position themselves with regard to executives and their decisions. This part demonstrated that members from this worker category were not any more amicable to power holders than the non-managerial personnel. Even less so, as the one aspect missing compared to the previous groups is that of appreciation and admiration. Furthermore, both contradictions outlined in the previous part could also be found in the managers-producers' discourses. I have explained how this could be so when the said practitioners were not part of what is generally considered as 'cultural workers' (that is, non-managerial personnel), but belong to the intermediary, 'producer' category, by studying the conflicts featured within their accounts. In so doing, I have articulated a bipolar vision of managerial personnel, where creativity was the arbiter.

This reiterated the distinction presented in Chapter I between super creative personnel and producers, while discussing the implications in terms of practitioner discourses and power apprehension. The third part, finally, focused the particular case of the executives themselves. Rather than being discourses about other people, these accounts took the form of a self-reflection on the part of the 'protagonists'. In addition to presenting a very different image from that given in the rest of the chapter, this part demonstrated that there are two main ways for executives to talk about their activity and themselves: either merely presenting the situation (in a collectivist, individualist, or neutral manner), or 'defending' themselves and some of their activities in front of the interviewer. As such, this demonstrated that a range of approaches (and, here, practitioner motivation) was possible, including one based on damage control rather than on self-promotion.

After having presented practitioner discourses related to the power holders, who assess, or 'decide' what is successful or not, what gets commissioned or not, renewed or cancelled, this thesis will move on to the industrial discourses of success per se. As such, Chapter III, similarly divided into three parts, will present and reflect on the three types of industrial success discourses identified within executive accounts.

III. How Does the Executive Discourse Prioritise Measurements and Apprehend 'Success'?

Introduction:

In *Production Studies*, Mayer, Banks & Caldwell mention, with regard to media industries, the conflicts and subsequent collaboration 'leading ultimately to creativity and commercial success' (2009: 2). What is entailed, however, by 'commercial success'? Moreover, commercial success is far from being the only type of success, as this thesis demonstrates (especially so in this chapter and in the following one). Seeing the latter as the goal of TV industry institutions, let alone media industries in general, would have the effect of normalising a certain perspective of the television industry, a specific part of it, and so having commercial channels stand for the industry as a whole. As previously mentioned, one of the purposes of this thesis, and of this chapter in particular, is to show the plurality of the entities, discourses and priorities that one can encounter throughout the Anglophone transatlantic television industry, while demonstrating the degree to which a common element remains throughout. This chapter, furthermore, will illustrate how executives shape the roles, or importance, of certain measurements, but also the issues that they have with (re)presenting their activities and themselves, whichever industrial entity they may come from. Different types of discourses were identified through the analysis of the practitioner interviews undertaken for this thesis: the commercial discourse, the financial discourse, and the public discourse; each representing a major, and distinct, industry entity. Note that, as will be the case with all three parts, I am using on purpose the singular form, here, in relation to 'executive success discourse', to denote the high level of consistency present across the accounts of the various decision makers interviewed.

After discussing the manner in which members from the seven job categories existing in the TV industry perceived 'power', that is, executives and their decisions, I will turn to the latter. Indeed, while the evolution of television with regard to digital technology has been the topic of entire books

(see, for instance, Bennett & Strange, 2011), the way in which practitioners apprehend such evolutions has been given little focus in academia. Talking to executives (and, elsewhere, to other practitioners) as well as studying their discourse will bring new knowledge, both on industry standards and processes, and on industrial discourses of success, along with the representational issues of the participants' roles and selves within them. From there, several questions arise. Do all executives, for instance, use the same 'success' measurements? If not, where do differences lie and on what basis? Besides, who is really in charge and who are these results and measurements for? Finally, how do executives apprehend these measurements, their decisions and their own role within that success assessment system?

In order to begin answering these interrogations, this chapter will start by looking at the first type of discourse identified and most widely known one, the *commercial* executive success discourse. I will show that audience measurements are presented as the primary success factor in the commercial executive discourse, but that certain distinctions must be made with regard to what is measured, and between the different goals set by different channels. Furthermore, this first section will argue that advertisers are the ones in control of the success measurements used by the power holders in the TV industry, rather than the executives themselves. I will then demonstrate in the second part the extent to which technology has changed the 'nature of value' in the television industry (as recently stated by Buzzard, 2012), thereby map out currents of thought within the executive commercial discourse, and show how personal sensibilities could emerge out of the industrial discourse. I will then discuss the possible repercussions to the industry. The third part, finally, will establish a clear link between audience measurements and subsequent revenues for commercial channels, and illustrate how executives apprehend these audiences in their discourse, as well as their own image. As such, I will also reflect on the representational conflicts of interviewees while discussing their activity and themselves. Two special cases will finally be addressed: the case of other channels deciding to

occasionally air things for the critical acclaim, which will illustrate that the creative / executive distinction could similarly appear in executive discourse, and the case of premium channels, that will demonstrate that success is not only determined retrospectively in television channels.

While the 'complexities of US television finance' had already been addressed by Ellis (2004: 283-4) and others, the studio perspective – especially on both sides of the industry – was given less focus in media and TV studies, even less so with regard to discourses. The second part of this chapter will specifically focus on that. There, I will first demonstrate that the executive financial discourse links success to the overall revenue, reducing the former to an equation of production cost versus audience (and other sources of) revenue. This section will thus illustrate that audience – or advertising – goals are not fixed like those of commercial channels, but vary according to a programme's the production cost. I will then look at the way interviewees apprehend the use of such a highly financially-grounded discourse, again through the *explicative-defensive* form, and will reflect on the value of qualitative interviewing (as opposed to non-verbal forms of information gathering), which provides the additional insight that human interaction can provide rich additional data. In the last section of part II, finally, I will focus on the other sources of revenue for TV studios and on the presence of industry myths in relation to them, while discussing the differences of success measurements between commercial channels and television studios. After further illustrating that critical acclaim appeared to matter little to executives compared to the usual success measures, I will analyse how executives also use the *explicative-defensive* form as a way to indirectly credit themselves for bringing such profits, and hence, 'success' to their company. As such, I will demonstrate that the interviewed executives' discourse follows the self-serving bias (Heider, 1958) and the attribution theory as developed by Weiner (1974) with regard to the ways in which the participants discuss these earnings.

Lastly, part III will focus on public service broadcasters and public channels, and demonstrate that their discourses, constructed very differently from those previously studied, feature a very benevolent discourse focusing on measurements such as audience appreciation, interest and reach, financial aspects and goals being totally absent. I will then further analyse both internal and external accounts relating to BBC practices and compare them to documents released by the public broadcaster, and consequently demonstrate that this notion of 'reach' could in fact be linked to a demographic-minded interest. I will then show that this benevolent aspect appears to be closer to a discursive theme than to an actual emphasis, and that it is used with the *explicative-defensive* form whenever ratings are mentioned. This will, therefore, demonstrate that the executive public discourse is as much mindful of the image it gives one as one would expect the commercial or financial discourse to be. Furthermore, I will address the reason behind the importance of high ratings for public channels like BBC One, and link it to international sales, (foreign) advertising and, ultimately, leading to more revenue for the BBC. Lastly, I will present into more detail the particular case of the British broadcaster and its intricate relationship with the BBC Trust, so as to better contextualise the situation.

I. Success Discourse Centred on Audience Sales – The Commercial Discourse:

A few decades ago, Todd Gitlin interviewed Arnold Becker, the vice-president for television research at the CBS Network, who stated: 'I'm not interested in culture [...] I'm not interested in pro-social values. I have only one interest. That's whether people watch the program. That's my definition of good, that's my definition of bad' (Gitlin 1994: 31). This first part of Chapter III will focus on organisations that have a downstream revenue highly linked to the 'result' of the product, or programme (see Mirrlees, 2013: 216); measured in advertising sales, here (the revenue coming from

the sale of advertising space (airtime) to advertisers, the price of which being linked to audience figures). This is what is commonly referred to as 'commercial television' – commercial-based, that is. This includes commercial broadcasters (known as networks in the US), cable and satellite channels. As stated by Berkeley (2003: 107), a programme's success 'is determined retrospectively, i.e. after it has been produced and transmitted, by the audience ratings it has achieved'. This is because, as recounted by Ellis (2007: 182), 'for almost all its existence, TV has understood its audience in terms derived from advertising.' Consequently, networks and cable channels are operating under what Nienhaus would call 'second-order commodity relations', that is, where 'symbolic objects or flows producing aggregate individual time for sale to third parties' (1993: 309), this third party being those paying for airtime for their advertisements.[29] While in the US 'television was from the start a medium that relied on advertising', such 'advertising-oriented audience surveys soon followed' elsewhere, such as in 'the Great Britain of 1955' and the later creation of the BARB, the British Audience Research Bureau, in 1981 (Ibid.). This part will first assess the extent to which new elements can be brought by this research's interviewing data with regard to the author's assumption that 'ratings' per se are the determinant factor, and demonstrate that different focuses within these broader 'audience' goals can be identified. I will subsequently move on to present *who* and *what* these measurements are for, and will discuss the manner in which they are apprehended by the executives.

a. Industrial and Discursive Apprehension of the Audience:

It's All About the Audience, but It's for Somebody Else

The discourses of various executives with current or past work experience in relation to 'commercial' television channels will shed light on how executives tackle the first of the subjects of interest aforementioned. Cable executive Dave Howe, for instance, initially explains that 'the criteria for

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[29] Even though cable and satellite channels, as explained in the introduction, also operate within Nienhaus' concept of 'first-order commodity relations', with 'symbolic objects or flows actually exchanged for money or having prices attached' (Ibid.), thus getting additional revenue from the multichannel package subscription fee.

success, whatever you do, on every network, is different.' The executive, nevertheless, soon expresses his belief that ratings are paramount to success and to a re-commission: 'I think (…) the audience is the primary driver, in almost every circumstance'. With the use of the adjective 'primary' and the expression 'almost every circumstance', Howe in fact leaves little space for other major elements. As in the executive success discourse shared by every other participating 'commercial' executive, the audience is portrayed as *the* key-success-factor in the television industry. This situation is not specific to the American industry, however. Indeed, 'as in the US, the relaxation of media ownership rules in the UK over the 1990s also enabled consolidation as broadcasters faced up to increasing commercial competition from cable and satellite for both audiences and advertising revenue' (Johnson, 2013). ITV's Kevin Lygo answers in a very similar manner to US cable head Howe: 'depends on the broadcaster. I think the bottom line is always... where it's ratings, in whatever the broadcaster wishes to... value those ratings'. While adding later on that the BBC, Channel Four and ITV would have different ways to 'value those ratings', the executive clearly insists that ratings are the main factor.

While the interviewed decision makers occasionally attempt to discuss a number of success factors proper to the television industry, they systematically end up explaining that no matter what, the number of viewers – or, to quote a show-runner's cynical remark, of 'eye balls' – is what really matters. This time, however, ratings are presented differently, in a more considerate manner, to the point of being 'value[d]'. In the case of commercial channels, nevertheless, this 'value' is a literal, monetary one, as will be demonstrated later on. The ITV Studios director, finally, goes as far as to give the precise figures that his current and former employers are looking for: 'on ITV1, 10 million viewers, on the Channel Four, you want 3 million viewers, on the BBC... ratings is still, I would say... the ultimate sort of test of "did your show work?"' In addition to showing how precise measurements are and how tight the control by the power is, the figures given here illustrate the vast

range of variation in terms of quantified goals from one channel to another, based on the position of the said channel in the market, and what can be expected of it: the bigger the market share, the higher the expectations and related objectives. This, therefore, reflects the different ratings results that one can expect to find (on Nielsen's ratings for the U.S. or the BARB in the UK) for a programme seemed 'successful' on a given channel. With this last, quoted interrogation, finally, Lygo gives another insight into the power and social relations at play within the industry, by mimicking the kind of questions that TV industry practitioners, executives included, would be asked by those around them. According to the executive's discourse, the quality of one's work would be reduced within the industry to whether their programme 'work[ed]', hereby positioning results at the height of success considerations, for programmes and practitioners alike. The content of such statements yet further demonstrates that 'the audience is considered the final arbiter in the ratings battle and most decisions are taken in its name' (Berkeley, 2003: 109). This particular formulation could be seen as problematic, however, as it seems to empower the audience, calling it an 'arbiter' and featuring it as one general entity, while the real decision maker is in fact somebody else, and overall ratings are not necessarily the only area of interest. Kevin Lygo, for instance, illustrates so by subsequently discussing ITV's interests and the actual people behind them:

> ITV essentially wants bulk. But, but it *does* want... 16-44s, because we don't get enough of those [...]. So, you can do a little less work in bulk, if it's skewing younger [...]. But, it doesn't drive the whole ship [...] *mainly*, advertisers are... white bread and toilet paper... so, everybody needs it.

The focus of Lygo's channel, here, differs from the simple (ratings) 'bulk' perspective, in the sense that certain (younger) demos are allegedly sought for, even though the executive states that these

younger demographics are not always enough to compensate for slightly lower (overall) ratings because their main clients advertise for cross-demographics everyday products. This both highlights the limits of a perspective that would restrict measurements to 'audience ratings' without considering demographic measures whatsoever, and provides a contemporary illustration of Butler's argument that 'the size of the audience is not the only determining economic factor' (2012: 154), given the stated existence of a scope between overall ratings and (smaller) desired demos. Furthermore, the practitioner provides a clear link between the audience-related success goals and the advertisers' demand, a topic further developed in the next point. Finally, Lygo concludes: 'ITV is just a big blunt instrument, but Channel Four, Sky, will be more tentative, more niche.' Going back to his cruder assessment of his channel, deemed a 'blunt instrument', the executive gives a braver image of his former employer Channel Four, along with Sky, deemed more 'tentative', willing to go for 'niche' audiences. In passing these unflattering judgements on his own employer, the executive provides an image much different from certain assumptions of self-promoting discourses.[30]

The executive's account and those of other practitioners cited below demonstrate that different channels can give different weights to the results of demographics within a programme's global rating. It then becomes possible to link these industrial testimonies to scholarly discussions on the topic, such as Hesmondhalgh's remark on the cultural industries' growing concern towards '"niche" audiences' (2013: 2), a marketing term which entered TV jargon and refers to targeting smaller, more specific segments of the population. Such a case, in fact, allows to develop Hesmondhalgh's statement (Ibid.), and to make a link with Butler's, who, moving away from niche audiences specifically, argues that 'many advertisers are looking for (…) a particular demographic group' (2007: 392). One may indeed argue, based both on practitioner accounts and on industrial practices evidence (see Barrell & Nash, 2003; Douglas, 2005; Turow, 2008) that there *is* a growing interest in

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[30] As argued further on in this chapter and throughout the thesis, a number of the accounts provided by this research illustrate that room for more nuanced takes is called for when it comes to analysing the behaviour of groups and individuals.

the 'cultural industries' from the advertisers' on specific demographics. These, of course, would also include targets other than the main '18-49' demo (see Shimpach, 2010: 100; Johnson, 2010: 139), since an advertiser's target audience would vary from one product to another (cf. Smit, 1999). Other practitioners, therefore, such as James Hedges (the only participant working at the head of a US network), have similarly discussed the importance of ratings before rapidly linking them to demographics and to those really seeking them:

> When we're selling advertising, we sell a particular demo... but we sell over 40 different demos. The primary demo that we sell, and the most valuable to us is adults 18-49, but there are many, many... demos that advertisers are looking [for]: adults 25-54, women 18-49, women 25-54, adults 18-34; it really matters what kind of product they're trying to launch, or get people to buy.

Here, the VP and CFO displays mastery of the topic, and appears to be very familiar with what he is talking about. The lexical field is very much business-oriented, outlining what they are 'selling', that is, 'advertising' and which 'demos' are 'the most valuable'. Still in line with the 'we' type of discourse outlined in the previous chapter, Hedges keeps using a collectivist approach with regard to 'success', while giving a clear explanation on the relationship between demographics, advertising and revenues: the presence of certain desired demographic groups among the audience is sold to advertisers, which brings revenue to the channel.

Finally, while the demographic groups resulting from these statistical studies are employed in the cultural industries, this interest in some of these groups is not due to the cultural or TV industry per se, but solely reflects the marketers and advertisers' interest in selling ads to certain demos, since

'commercial broadcasting is based, not on the sale of programs to audiences, but on the sale of audiences to advertisers' (Curran & Seaton, 1997: 313; see also Butler, 2007: 392). From this, one must conclude that the issue lies not with the cultural industries but with marketers and advertisers, who use these industries as an advertising platform. It thus becomes clear that, at least in commercial broadcasting, 'power' controls measurements of success only insofar as it transposes those of its customers, the advertisers, and positions them as the key 'success' criteria. In other words, executive power very much resides in the liberty to make decisions based on externally-established criteria by assessing whether programmes score sufficiently high in these to make a profit and, according to communication theorists Mumby and Clair, also resides in executives' own discourses, in the way that 'discourse is the principal means by which organization members create a coherent social reality that frames their sense of who they are' (1997: 181).

b. The Impact of Technology on Industrial Practices and the Success Discourse:

As mentioned in the Introduction of this thesis, because of the impact that technology has had on television in thus current TVIII era, 'the economics of television are no longer aggregated around the channel, as new sites of distribution and consumption have become increasingly important' (see Johnson, 2012: 38). Resultantly, the channel is not the only way to access and consume television programmes with video-on-demand (VOD) services, Internet websites (including those of the channels themselves) and digital devices (smart phones, tablets, etc.) offering viewers additional access points to TV content, and hereby freeing them from any formatted schedule to access the said content. Digital technology also provides a threat in the sense that it allows illegal streaming or downloading, which lets the audience consume the content (freely). This, resultantly, purges any pecuniary benefits from the content viewing for channels, since no money is exchanged between them and the consumers, and since such audiences cannot be 'sold' to advertisers in exchange for their viewing of the programmes. For Gomery, however, the impact of digital technology on

television was initially definitely not negative for the US networks, since according to him ABC, NBC, CBS and Fox managed to 'reap disproportionate advertising price increases relative to other media, not to mention outgrowing the overall growth in the industry' (2006: 27). It appears, nonetheless, that digital technology stills divided industry members several years later, some seeing it under a negative light, and others under a more positive one; the main reason being, of course (in commercial discourses, as is the case here), the impact of digital technology on ratings.

Indeed, even though ratings have been criticised 'both for errors in their calculation and on the grounds that they are not accurate indicators of how audiences actually [...] watch television', as Moran (2004: 262) argues, 'the function of ratings is more important than their accuracy' (Ibid.). As explained by Ang (1991): the concept of ratings does not 'work' because they are reliable indicators of what viewers do while watching TV, but because they can be sold to advertisers as market figures. The recent technological developments discussed above, precisely, have further impacted on audience behaviour (see also Bennett & Strange, 2011; Manovich, 2001) and on the reliability of ratings as audience assessment figures, and have called for a slight distinction between two kinds of ratings (or rating measurements). In studying the way executives approach such changes, this section will first outline the impact that technology has had on success measurement, before addressing the way these new technologies were discussed by executives, and so reflecting on normalisation practices.

Representation of Technology and Change in the Executive Discourse

The change in ratings evaluation and consideration by the industry caused by technological advances, and the change in audience behaviour resulting from those advances, which had a clear impact on measures and valuation of audience members (see Buzzard, 2012), were addressed by several of the interviewed executives. Hedges, for instance, giving the example of ABC's *Lost*, presents a case where different types of ratings appear to matter from a success perspective:

> Lost was a successful show in terms of ratings, but it wasn't a
> massive rating, it wasn't an American Idol level of rating... but if you
> looked at the other ways it was consumed, primarily on digital; it
> was just *massive*.

With this account, one realises that linear ratings, of *n* millions of people watching a programme on their TV set, are not the only way to evaluate the audience of that programme. Consequently, this is not a different type of rating per se, but a different type of measurement. With regard to the use of these measurements, different academic opinions existed at the time of these interviews. Balnaves, O'Regan and Goldsmith, for instance, wrote in 2011[31] that 'we are in an evolutionary stages [*sic*] where alternative criteria for monetization of audience has emerged' (2011: 219). This contrasts with Napoli's assessment that 'as audiences for any individual piece of content migrate into newer delivery platforms, the ability of content providers to monetize them has been diminishing' (2011: 74). This same disparity in outlook was perceivable in practitioners' accounts, evidencing the personal opinions and differences that may reside within the executive industrial discourse. After citing various video-on-demand (VOD) / digital platforms with which they have 'deals' (namely Hulu, Netflix and Amazon) in order to distribute their content online, Hedges gives a glimpse into the executives' interests and aims with regard to viewers on these platforms, as well on how these are – literally so – valued:

> what *we're* trying to do is to increase the number of episodes that the
> fan actually gets to consume, and to convert that view at the
> monetary level, the same value per viewer. So, if you make 10 cents
> when somebody watches on a linear platform, you wanna make 10
> cents when they watch it on a digital platform.

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[31] Before Nielsen's ratings announced that they would take online viewing into consideration; see Pantazi, 2013.

In a particularly obvious way, here, Hedges uses a monetary-related lexical field: 'consume', 'convert', 'monetary', 'value per viewer', as is to be expected in such discourses. Besides, with this account, the executive provides an industrial discourse which rejoins academic discussions stating that 'alternative criteria for monetization of audience has emerged' (Balnaves, O'Regan & Goldsmith, 2011: 219)', and those discussing the extent to which 'digital technology [...] profoundly changed the nature of value in the industry' (Buzzard, 2012); this 'value' referred to, here, being the one of audience members, to both channel executives and advertisers, as established in the previous section.

Going even further than that, Napoli, makes reference to what he calls a 'new success criteria being established in this post-exposure media environment' (2011: 18), which he links to audience engagement (Ibid. 114). He then prognosticates a 'future of the audience marketplace, in which multiple approaches to conceptualizing, valuing and purchasing media audiences operate simultaneously' (Ibid. 114-15), which slightly contrasts with the discourses that I have heard when I was undertaking my interviews, when Hedges explained, for instance, that 'you' (the ABC executive) wanted to give the *same* value, precisely, to the different types of ratings; here, the digital ones and the linear one (cf. "10 cents" quote). But this might be because they are not exactly talking about the same thing. Indeed, when Napoli and others address this topic of ratings analysis – like Shields (2008) who theorises a drive in the future to develop metrics capable of assessing the extent to which advertisements may be affecting audience members who do not demonstrate a specific (behavioural) response (that is, the act of purchase), or like Morrissey (2009) who states that certain stakeholders are in favour of adopting a 'cost-per-engagement' online pricing model – they talk about specific situations which appear to relate more to the effectiveness or performance of the ads themselves than to television as a medium or to programme's results in terms of ratings. Nevertheless, Napoli also

argues (while not focusing on TV in particular but looking at media ratings analysis in general) that the current situation is 'migrating toward a post-exposure audience marketing', and warns that such a media environment 'may have dramatic implication for the process of cultural production', as success goals for 'media products' 'are likely to fundamentally change in step with the evolution of the institutionalized audience' (2011: 15). By talking about 'media products', here, the author is not talking about the performance of ads (or even the use of ratings) anymore, but about what others, like Keat (2000) or Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2011: 186), would call 'cultural goods'. The way television programmes, specifically, would change in such a situation, however, is yet difficult to predict; the main noticeable item so far on that level being the way industry professionals (such as my interviewees) perceive these changes and address their own way of assessing the effects of these changes on both linear and non-linear ratings, within their discourses. Here, by attempting to value – and so sell to advertisers – online viewers at the same rate as linear TV ones, Hedges and the other executives included in the ABC VP's collectivist portrayal come out of this discourse as displaying a level of both greediness and innovativeness, while appearing as able to adapt to anything through business deals or joint ventures with other corporations.

Not all participating executives appear to agree with Hedges, however. Discussing the same topic from the perspective of different channels (in this case, premium ones), Dave Howe states:

> They do look at ratings, clearly, but increasingly [...], these ratings
> are irrelevant, because... the majority of audiences, these days, are
> watching [...] on V.O.D., on HBO GO [...]. It's a kind of "TV
> everywhere" experience.

With the term 'increasingly', Howe portrays this phenomenon as an ongoing process, while the said phenomenon was presented as already quite established in the account of his peer. Despite adding, soon after, that linear ratings are, nevertheless, 'clearly' thought after, the Syfy president would insist once more on how irrelevant these were becoming. Howe thus appears to share the view of Todreas, who foretold that digital television threatens to change how the television industry operates (1999),[32] as well as Caldwell's somewhat negative inclination towards what he evokes as the 'broader developments and threats' resulting, among other things, from the 'digital technologies' (2008: 7)[33].

A third perspective on digital ratings, finally, is provided by BBC's Nicolas Brown who very closely links the latter to (regular) ratings:

> we make sure we look at... [a programme's] performance over... a 7-day period, now, [...] what we call Live+7, because [...] you add at least 25%, sometimes more [...]. [The] iPlayer... catch-up service... that makes a big difference in figures to a show that my overnight of 5... millions ends up at 7.

By stating so, Brown not only asserts that online ratings were not considered before, but also that it is such a crucial aspect that they 'make sure' to take them into consideration. In so doing, the executive introduces us-academics to another, less widely known industry term: 'Live+7', a professional term only heard within the British executive's account, here, referring to the accumulated audience results

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[32] Todreas prophesied that 'there will be two winners in the Digital Era': 'content creators' and a 'handful of digital brands [that] will emerge as the principal means to organize content for the information weary consumer' (Ibid.: 99). Todreas takes a conglomerate-focused approach when saying that, however, seemingly putting networks and cable or future digital channels (rather than mere online platforms, since he is talking about digital brands as entities on their own, instead of new representations of an existing brand) in the same basket, so to speak, as suggested when he concludes that 'the firms that have an opportunity to create the best digital brands are television networks' (Ibid.) While digital brands or online channels like Netflix or Amazon Prime have arisen in the meantime, there are hardly key digital brands made by commercial channels just yet.

[33] An opinion towards the relation between production and digital activities that hardly became more positive in later writings, cf. Caldwell, 2011.

of the live – and – the online viewing during the week following the initial TV airing. Showing elements of cohesion and belonging, the *no-nonsense* executive of Chapter II – who is not involved in the re-commissioning process – here starts speaking as 'we'. Soon after, however, Brown empowers himself by positioning the programmes and their ratings as *his*, terming them 'my overnight [ratings]' rather than shared 'our', or even general 'the'. Since the Drama Director had clearly stated at the start of our interview that he did not have a say in the commissioning process but was 'only' developing new programmes, vanity does not appear to be a valid reason in this instance. Resultantly, this may have either been a figure of speech where this time *he* – rather than the interviewer – would step into the commissioner's shoes, or the expression of a sentiment of continued ownership of the programmes that he has helped created. Brown, finally, by appearing to 'embrace' digital ratings (and their current relevance), presents a stance opposite to that of more reticent executives such as Howe.

Apprehending Novelty and Normalising the Familiar

Just as trade journals tend to normalise commercial channels practices as those of the TV industry as a whole, discursive statements excluding digital ratings from what is simply termed 'ratings', in the likes of Hedge's and Howe's, tend to normalise certain kinds of measurements; here, traditional – or linear – ratings over the newer digital ones, brought forward by technological advances. Hedges explains how the notion of viewership is evolving, and how the press has problems keeping up with it: 'the definitions of it are absolutely changing; the press continues to talk about linear ratings only, partly because we don't have a better way of talking about it, yet.' With this remark, the executive actively denounces, while partly excusing, discourses which tend to normalise certain audience measurements over others. He, in fact, had done so in his own discourse, when stating that *Lost* 'wasn't an American Idol level of rating... but if you looked at the other ways it was consumed, primarily on digital; it was just *massive*.' By contrasting 'rating' with 'digital', the executive clearly

lets transpire this innate normalisation of linear ratings as 'rating', digital being relegated to 'other'. This follows the same model, although in a less stringent manner, as Howe's when he stated that 'these ratings are irrelevant, because... the majority of audiences, these days, are watching [...] on V.O.D.', a portrayal of the situation that excludes online viewing from 'ratings'.[34]

As suggested earlier, in so normalising linear ratings as the only representation of 'ratings', however, the executive discourse reveals one aspect of the 'power' that still resides in executives, within the limits of the wider context in which they operate (as well as trade press organisations): the ability to portray existing measurements in the desired manner, and to foreground some over others as the 'normal' ones. This very much relates to Paltridge's explanation of the 'reality' around people being shaped by discourses (2012: 7-8); this 'reality', here, being one where the term 'ratings' relates to the linear ones only, while any other kind of ratings has to be distinguished by an adjective ('ratings' versus 'digital ratings', for instance). Moreover, such discourses result in normalising – not only measurements, but also – certain audiences over others; such as the people watching programmes on TV sets inside their homes over those more prompt to use digital items like computers, tablets or smart phones. Rather than signalling a volunteer prioritising of linear ratings (and audiences) over the rest, however, such statements reflect a conceptual unreadiness on the part of a number of TV practitioners to realise the importance of digital measurements.[35]

With regard to the personal sensibilities revealed within this commercial executive discourse, however, the differences between these two accounts lie in the way the two afore-quoted practitioners approach this 'new' digital viewership and online platforms. For instance, while Hedges appears open to the digital ratings approach, describing it as a new, yet attainable challenge to obtain

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[34] Although the expression 'these ratings' might have been an attempted distinction between linear and digital ratings, here.
[35] This can be easily explained by the relative novelty of this type of ratings, compared to the eighty-year-old television industry. One must, therefore, not see more into it than the expression of the habitual delay before people accept or even acknowledge change (see Chinn, 1998: 107-8).

the 'same value per viewer', Howe sees it as an obstacle and a threat to linear ratings. Indeed, the channel president – apparently unaware at the time that Nielsen was about to take digital ratings into account (cf. Pantazi, 2013) – merely sees online viewing as dissolving the relevance of regular ratings. Of course, such discourses discrediting the significance of such ratings (especially when generalised to the industry as a whole) could be disputed by the enduring impact of the BARB and Nielsen-collected linear ratings in the general press and trade publications alike when it comes to assessing how well a programme has done. This account, nevertheless, further illustrates how digital technology has very much changed the valuation process of audience members in the TV industries, as suggested by Buzzard (2012) not long after I had these interviews with the aforecited executives and demonstrated in this section.

The noticeable presence of the technological changes in the executive commercial discourse presented in this section clearly demonstrates the impact of digital technology on the way ratings are collected, considered and assessed, or valued; digital ratings now having to be taken into account when assessing a programmes' result, at the same rate as regular ones. As a result, even if linear ratings remain the normalised form for the time being, I expect that this situation will change in the coming years, given the exponential progression of the use of alternative viewing methods (see Einav & Carey, 2009: 115-6). Moreover, digital viewing and ratings have visibly caused a change in ratings valuation within the TV industry, going from being seen as a hindrance reducing the properly calculated linear ratings to a complementary method, integrated by rating measurement systems such as Nielsen and BARB, and with an equal assessed value per viewer. This digital ratings case also maps out professional currents of thought within the executive commercial success discourse, as well as demonstrates how, within the industrial discourse, personal sensibilities can reveal themselves, something that had not yet appeared in such a clear manner. More than just a discursive or perspectival difference, however, these differences in opinions can also have repercussions to the

industry. Such a reluctance to accept change, for instance, or a lack of awareness of it, can result in a dissonance between the frame of mind of, say, certain channel executives who may treat digital ratings as an obstacle to (linear) 'ratings', and that of advertisers and audience measurement companies, increasingly considering these measurements, which could result in negative monetary consequences for the channel – because, in the end, commercial TV channels are businesses and, as such, are there to make money.

<u>c. Success, Audience and Revenue in the Industry and the Executive Discourse:</u>

Turning People into Money

As shown above, audience is synonymous with money in the executive success discourse, which has a tendency to monetise audience members. This first part of the section will look at how these links are made within executive discourse, and will thus reflect on the discursive and representational conflicts which interviewees may face while trying to balance the intention to give a somewhat representative image of their microcosm with the wish to slightly improve or defend their own image and that of their job. At a later point during our interview, for instance, Howe clearly makes the link between success, ratings and money:

> success has two prompts to it: there's the ratings success, which is
>
> your primary driver, and that will translate into revenue success from
>
> ad sales, or programme sales (…), but any greenlight on any series,
>
> or any greenlight on a season 2 of a series is based on a, on success
>
> criteria, which is pre-established.

Here, the executive clearly embraces the term and notion of 'success'. Not even slightly attempting to play up creativity, the Syfy president explains 'success' in a very straightforward, even *obvious*

manner. According to Howe, 'ratings', the 'primary driver', will 'translate' into 'revenue success'. In this account, 'revenue success' appears to be portrayed as the real goal, while 'ratings' are seen as a mere rough element or foreign language, only waiting to be translated into what it truly ought to be: money. Discussing the 'ad sales estimates' set for a given show before it starts airing, which denotes a target-driven perspective, Howe explains how reaching (or not) these estimates will be crucial for a programme's fate:

> if the show hits or exceeds that estimate and remains within that ballpark, [it] is likely to succeed and is likely to come back. If it misses these estimates, or declines from a big launch, it's gotta be cancelled quite quickly.

The Syfy president is the only interviewee to actually talk about how a show can 'succeed', by using the verb form, hereby personifying the programmes instead of treating them as a mere product, as is the case most of the time (including in Howe's own discourse). A change in intensity is also visible here, between mildly positive 'likely to come back' and strongly negative 'gotta be cancelled', as well as in the speed of the action, with the rapid negative 'quite quickly'. This implies a prioritising of decision making: first, one cancels the programmes that 'gotta be', and only then may one consider which programmes will 'come back'. Furthermore, the difference in tense between the *successful* show which is 'likely to come back' (passive voice; as if, on its own) and the *failure*, which has got to 'be cancelled' (active voice; by someone: the executive) further illustrates how the executives positions the job of executives: according to Howe, they do not either renew or cancel, they either cancel or not cancel / let run. This rather grim outlook at executive responsibilities, finally, testifies to the lack of intention of the executive to somehow enhance the image of his job. This is not to say that Howe does not attempt to control the impression that he 'gives off' (Goffman,

148

1959: 14). Indeed, in this account, the Syfy president does not present *himself* (the first person being entirely absent from the last few accounts), but the job in general (and, admittedly, those performing those tasks) as being focused and results driven. As argued in the previous chapter, the vast majority of cases where a 'ploy' to alter discourse content or presentation was identified, it was from a defensive perspective, rather than a self-promoting one. Here again, while a self-promoting dimension is not foregrounded, a defensive one is, through the presentation of a situation of risk; according to Howe, one does not choose to cancel a show, one 'gotta', suggesting both urgency and pressure, if not an obligation, to do so.

Using an active voice, the cable channel head moves on to discretely tackle networks, upon comparing them to cable channels: 'having said that, I think, in cable, we're more likely to let something run, we don't pull stuff off air, unlike the broadcast networks, we'd let it run, or move it around in the schedule'. Here again, renewing a programme is presented in a passive manner: power holders do not renew nor re-commission it, they 'let it run', as opposed to the active act of cancelling: 'pull [...] off air'. Such a repetitive pattern in Howe's discourse shows that the executive sees re-commissioning of another series as a passive act, and therefore portrays himself as having two main acts or functions: selecting and commissioning a new programme, and cancelling that same show when it stops performing well enough. And even though Howe collectively states that cable channels ('we') do not 'pull stuff off air', they do, of course (only, reportedly, less rapidly). By expressing the position that cable networks will cancel shows less rapidly than networks, Howe demonstrates a concept of belonging – with the cable industry in particular, as opposed to commercial-based channels in general – and offers a point highly antagonistic with his previous one, where he stressed how crucial it was to cancel programmes 'quite quickly' when ad sales estimates are not met. This illustrates a discursive and representational conflict, where interviewees want to give a representative image of the world around them to the academic interviewer, while trying at the

same time to slightly enhance – or protect – the image that they give of themselves and their work when they believe it might be perceived as somewhat shocking. This is what Goffman (1959: 44) was referring to in his statement about people wishing to give, not a self-promoting (cf. Caldwell, 2008: 14), but an 'idealized version' of their work and themselves.

Aside from different discursive presentations and possible variety in personal opinions, certain channels may indeed have different approaches, based on their own target estimates and relationship to audience figures and advertisers. For instance, contrary to Lygo's statement that demographics do not 'drive the whole ship', at least for his channel (ITV) which 'wants bulk', Howe explains that in his channel (Syfy), demographics matter so much that they can even make up for a lack of global ratings:

> We would look at total viewers, but the target estimates, from an Ad
>
> sales perspective, a ratings perspective, are in the demo, so 18-49 or
>
> 25-54s, so, it doesn't matter how well a show's doing from the total
>
> viewer perspective, if we're not hitting the estimates in the demos,
>
> we're more likely to not renew those shows.

Here again, the discourse is very business-centred: 'target', 'estimates', 'sales', 'demo'. Furthermore, by continually paralleling the 'ad sales perspective' with the 'ratings' one (describing one as 'translat[ing] into' the other at an earlier point), the executive success discourse has rendered the two notions synonymous. Upon concluding, the practitioner discusses the fact that the range of population included in the global audience tends not to be what the advertisers are looking for, thus rendering them of little monetary value for the channel: 'total viewers just tend to be... people [who] are younger or older than what ad sales are selling, so, you can't monetise that audience as

effectively as you can with these other two demos.' In this very cold assessment, which expectedly used the explicative-defensive form due to its particularly monetary-minded or calculating content, the participant goes as far treating audience members as something one can 'monetise', 'effectively' or not. In doing so, the executive commercial discourse not only keeps evading the idea that audiences find pleasure in television, but is actually reducing countless individuals to some monetisable commodity (while demonstrating an utter lack of care on the executive's part about modifying his account in order to give a better image of himself).

Other Sources of Revenue?

Audience ratings, however, are not the only revenue foundation for commercial channels. Indeed, the 'paid inclusion of branded products (…) through audio and / or video means, within mass media programming' discussed by Karrh (1998: 11) can provide other sources of revenue for the producing channels. This relates to Hesmondhalgh's suggestion that texts 'have undergone radical transformation', most notably through what the scholar deems 'an increasing penetration of promotional and advertising material into previously protected realms' (2002: 2). In other words, advertisers are no longer paying just for their products to appear between breaks of the programme, but also for them to appear *in* the programme. A concrete example of this situation is provided by executive Howe, in the following account:

> sometimes, you will let a show continue because, from an ad sales
>
> perspective, there's a product placement in a show that's been very
>
> lucrative for you, or there's a sponsor who's really stepped up, [with]
>
> quite a lot of money to support the show.

Here again, the lexical field in the participant's discourse is very much business and commercially-

minded, and expectedly features the defensive-explicative form. The revenue discussed by Howe starts with the selling of advertising space, but rapidly deviates to sponsors and product placement. Yet one step further from the emphasis on commercial breaks discussed earlier, the content of Howe's account not only illustrates this change in advertising practices discussed by Karrh (1998: 11) and Hesmondhalgh (2002: 2), but also its acceptance – and even representation – within the commercial executive discourse. Rather than attempting to illustrate this connection between academic and practitioner discourses, this account allows Howe to assert that if certain programmes are 'lucrative' enough, or 'good earners' (Ursell, 2000: 817), then they could be renewed, solely on that basis (even in spite of lower ratings). The Syfy president seems to take every precaution, however, to minimise this 'let [...] continue' possibility; specifying that the programme would not only have to be lucrative, but 'very lucrative', and adding a certain amount of doubt, using the verb 'could', rather than *would* or *will*. In order to further stress this, finally, the executive concludes: 'those are factors, but at the end of the day, the biggest, and the most important criteria is gonna be ratings.' This concluding statement and its resemblance to Lygo's 'the bottom line is always [...] ratings' further emphasises the supremacy of audience numbers in 'success' discourses, positioning them as *the* 'success' measurement criteria in the commercial part of the industry.

Other Measures of Success?

Despite their overwhelming presence in executive discourses, ratings and demographics were not the only success measures encountered in the participants' accounts who, occasionally, addressed the notion of creative acclaim.[36] At some point, ABC's Hedges discusses what 'other people', such as competitor network NBC, may at times opt for, before explaining why his channel would not do it:

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[36] A notion much more discussed as a personal success measure by the practitioners interviewed, as shown in the chapter that follows.

Things like the Olympics, for us, are difficult to get our hands

around, to end up losing hundreds of millions of dollars (laughs),

right? [...] But, other people define success differently, so, they do go

ahead and spend that kind of money.

Like Bartlett's joke in chapter II about 'Being employed next year!', humour seems to be used here, in order to both avoid spending too much time discussing 'losing [...] millions'[37] and play down the consequences. Here again, after joking about the financial loss, Hedges 'modifies' the rest of the sentence; not by changing the footing (cf. Goffman, 1981: 128) this time, but by rhetorically asking the interviewer if he is right; albeit without truly seeking reassurance. This statement therefore (along with a second one later on), is one of the rare occasions where interviewees have, in fact, directly addressed, acknowledged, and asked confirmation (even if only rhetorically so) from the interviewer on the content of their statement, as demonstrated by affirmative single-word 'tag question' (Allerton, 2009: 307): 'right?' Besides, the presence of this question, as it were, 'cuts' the robotic and financial discursive and contextual environment by reinstating the social interaction, and by making it go both ways, this time. With regard to the content of his account, while the executive argues that airing such programmes is an utter waste of money 'losing hundreds of millions of dollars', he does acknowledge that the notion of 'success' may be defined differently, even amongst network executives. Hedges, subsequently, thus goes on to describe what he jokingly refers to as 'creative acclaim', illustrating what Newman and Levine mean while discussing the 'value' which can be added by certain well-known super creative personnel (or 'show-runners'), for instance; stating that this value 'is not merely economic, but a also a form of cultural cachet' (2012: 57):

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[37] Although Hedges happens to be one of the only interviewees to address the notion of failure, as discussed further on.

That's what we call "creative acclaim" (laughs). Creatively significant, it's *acclaimed* by the creative community, which means it doesn't necessarily make a return. I say that to the creative guys all the time: "it's called show-business, not show-art!" (laughs) It implies you have to still... focus on being a business at the end of the day.

By using the expression 'creative community', Hedges willingly *excludes* himself from the latter. Despite this essentially descriptive account, the executive's laughter at the expression 'creative acclaim' does illustrate, this time, not a defence mechanism but a level of derision on his part regarding the matter. The ABC VP and CFO, quite affable and joking throughout the interview and who willingly recognises that he is not part of Everton's 'creative end', once again underlines this same alienation, from the other side of the industry, through the use of the expression 'creative guys'. This instance, therefore, offers what one could call a 'reverse view' of the creative-versus-executives issues discussed in the previous chapter: after seeing how non-managerial personnel saw executives, this account offers a peek at how executives see the 'creative guys'. This is particularly interesting as it demonstrates that the so-called 'supposed contradiction between creativity and control', described by Murdock (2003: 32) as a mere 'central theme in cultural workers' accounts of their situation' (Ibid.) may not only be more than just a 'theme', as had already been argued based on the evidence provided by these interviews, but goes *both ways*, being here acknowledged by the *other side* of the creativity/control pair: the executives. With his wordplay in this *explicative-defensive* statement, 'it's called show-business, not show-art!', finally, echoing what Frith calls 'the ongoing battle between art and commerce' (2000: 45), Hedges perfectly illustrates the general goal of the film and television (or any other kind of) industry: it *is* a business, and appears to leave little room for creativity from the commissioning executives' point-of-view.

This outsider, or outlier, type of discourse will be followed by one of a different kind, from a slightly different entity: the premium channels. It will demonstrate that audience figures are not systematically for somebody else (read: advertisers), as well as why this particular entity was, nevertheless, categorised along with commercial channels.

Prospective Audience... It's Not Always for Somebody Else

Premium channels, unlike commercial channels such as networks and cable, do not rely on audience sales to advertisers, as they are financed upstream. As explained in the introduction of this thesis, they can be seen as operating under Nienhaus' concept of *first-order commodity relations*, that is, where 'symbolic objects or flows [are] actually exchanged for money or hav[e] prices attached' (1993: 309), which distinguishes them from commercial-based broadcasters like networks and cable channels (financed – partially for cable, along with the subscription fee, and entirely for networks – by audience sales to advertisers). As a result, audience measurements are not sought after by or for somebody else. These entities, nevertheless, are clearly interested in having many viewers.

Exceptionally in this chapter centred on *executive* discourse,[38] will be reported an enlightening sentence from a *super creative personnel* who has worked on premium channels. This will allow this chapter to justify why premium channels were fitted into 'ratings' success measurements, along with networks and cable, and to assess to which extent Berkeley's claim that a programme's success 'is determined retrospectively (…), by the audience ratings it has achieved' (2003: 107) can be applied to premium channels.

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[38] Because no premium channel executives were interviewed during this research, a great deal of thought was given as to whether this part should be included here. But through the study of executive discourses, I also looked at the industrial reality behind them, and not having premium executive accounts to analyse does not prevent one from looking at the success measurements utilised within such channels. Since this thesis is interested in both the discourses and the industrial processes at play, and would provide incomplete information by classifying every type of Television business entity (VOD platforms excluded) but premium channels in this chapter, I decided that this last subsection from Part I would be dedicated to this section of the industry.

Firstly, cable executive Dave Howe presents premium channels as extremely wealthy and concerned with making sure that their numerous subscribers are watching their programmes:

> HBO, I think, has around 30 odd million subscribers; it's a very, very
>
> rich business! [...] they have to be convinced that they're serving as
>
> many of their subscribers as they possibly can, that they're watching
>
> at least one of those shows.

By juxtaposing the '30 odd million subscribers' to being 'very, very rich', Howe clearly seems to suggest a relationship between subscribers and money. This account, nevertheless, does not really show why premium channels such as HBO or Showtime would be interested in ratings. This is revealed by a comment made by executive producer Michael Hirst, upon recalling his experience with Showtime's expectation for the pilot of *The Tudors*:

> for... Showtime [...], for the first episode, they had to have over a
>
> million people... voluntarily watching it, which meant that they
>
> bought (…) cable access, so... They would only have like two
>
> hundred thousand people who'd turn up, so if you got a million, just
>
> literally on a Sunday night, sitting down, that was fantastic!

Hirst, here, makes the critical link between two initially seemingly contradictory elements: a ratings drive and the unique business model of premium channels. Indeed, Showtime is presented as deliberately seeking high audiences, to the point of terming it an actual obligation: 'had to have'. The show-runner's account of Showtime's position may be better understood in light of the 5% increase

in the costs of cable and satellite services, which resulted in a decrease in the number of people paying for television (cf. Derhy Kurtz, 2013). The fact that premium channels are sold as add-ons, in addition to the cable price (Ibid.: 191), makes them even more subject to this decreasing trend. It therefore becomes clear why premium channel executives would allegedly consider that they 'had to have' a certain amount of people specifically brought in by a given programme, in order to remain financially stable, subscribers being the source of revenue of such channels.

This strategy proved quite effective, in fact, as the number of HBO subscribers, for instance, remained constant – at about 29-30 millions – for the past few years, in spite of the overall decrease in U.S. cable subscribers (Ibid.). The fact that premium channels such as HBO can retain a solid number of subscribers in spite of an overall decreasing trend is also linked, of course, to what Bourdieu refers to as the concept of 'distinction' (1979). According to this concept, first developed by Goblot in 1925, cultural tastes become what distinguishes different social classes. As such, watching premium channels such as Showtime and HBO would allow the social elite ('élite sociale') to stress this difference and so differentiate themselves from the masses with their supposedly heightened taste for quality and innovation (see Bourdieu, 1979). As such, despite the decreasing tendency in cable subscription, the aforementioned audience members are still willing to pay the add-on premium channel, in order to retain this supposed 'quality' of being among the lucky few who can afford, and want, to get such programmes. But this does not mean that they would not need to be satisfied, at least, by some of the content offered by the said channels; hence the need for at least one programme to attract new – or retain current – customers (subscribers).

Making a direct link – as proposed by Hirst – between the programmes, the audience and the financial revenue would offer a distinct and revealing perspective on success and finance in premium channels. In fact, this global, tripartite vision allows this section to bring back ratings – or a variation of it – at the heart of the equation, the only difference being the timing. Where networks and cable

channels receive money from the people *watching* the show (out of advertising sales), premium channels receive it upfront, from people who *want* to watch the show. The principle is the same, only the application is different. In both cases, the channels will try to bring people to watch the programme. While it is true that, for premium channels, the actual number of viewers of a given programme does not matter at all in terms of revenue, the total number of people who want to watch one or more of the channel's content – and have, therefore, subscribed to it – is, in effect, the only determinant of revenue. As such, what is evaluated in a programme, here, is not so much the ability of each episode to garner viewers (for commercial breaks), but the show's global attractiveness to both existing subscribers (so that they stay) and to potential ones, who would thus have to pay the subscription fee in order to access the programme legally. As a result, even in the case of premium channels, the audience ends up being the key factor in assessing a given programme's success; ratings providing reliable data on the number of people interested in that programme, and therefore bringing money to the channel.

After having looked at the commercial executive discourse, the rest of this chapter will focus on the other discourses that can be encountered within the Anglophone transatlantic television industry, as well as on their goals and" the manner in which they are presented. To this end, I will move on to a very different type of business model, that of television studios.

II. Success Discourse Centred on Revenues – The Financial Discourse:

By outlining, in an earlier sentence, that *LOST* was successful 'in terms of ratings', channel and studio executive Jim Hedges suggests that there are different ways in which a programme can be successful. While this assumption was rather disproven in relation to the commercial discourse,[39] it becomes meaningful with regard to what I have labelled, here, the 'financial discourse'; financial

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[39] Apart from the odd occasion, such as the Olympics.

with regard to the multiple sources from which studios gather revenue in order to make profit and invest part of this money into the production of programmes within their facilities. As explained by Hesmondhalgh, the various entities comprising the television industry, 'like all businesses, have an interest in making [...] big profits' (2002: 3). This is especially obvious in relation to TV studios, even though the magnitude of these profits must sometimes be nuanced: Hesmondhalgh's statement can also be contrasted with that of Banks, when he argues that companies (here, studios) within the cultural industries can act as profit-satisfiers rather than as profit-maximisers (2007: 120), a position rather reflected by this research's participants. This second part will also consist of three sections. I will first demonstrate that the financial discourse simplifies the notion of success to a simple equation of production cost *versus* revenue, and that audience figures (and thus ad sales goals) are not fixed, but vary depending on the production cost of a programme. I will then look at how the participating executives apprehend such a finance-minded discourse, which will lead to a reflexion on the value of qualitative interviewing for this type of research, as opposed to data gathering methods lacking such human interaction. I will then look at the other sources of revenue as presented by studios executives and the industry myths that go with them, and reflect on the differences of success measurements between commercial channels and television studios. I will finally demonstrate that the discourses of studio participants follow the *attribution theory* (cf. Weiner, 1974), the latter using the *explicative-defensive* form as a way of indirectly crediting themselves with regard to success.

a. Inbound and Outbound Money flows... Just a Simple Equation:

Hesmondhalgh and Baker, in their research, refer to 'the production of success' (2008: 107), but without expounding on the notion. The coming accounts, deriving from the data obtained during this research, will give some insight into what is intended by this concept, and how it is addressed in the executive discourse. While studying the discourses, it rapidly became clear that, as stated by Moran:

'financial considerations have also to be reckoned against ratings success'; a type of success that the author contrasts with 'popular success' (2004: 262-3). As is the case with various other channels and studios within the Anglophone transatlantic television industry, such as NBC, CBS, ITV, the BBC and so on, ABC Television (the channel) and ABC Studios are part of the same entity.[40]

After addressing the case of the ABC channel, Jim Hedges, VP and Chief Financial Officer of both ABC Studios and ABC Television, discussed the case of the studios with me. According to him, the production cost is crucial when it comes to deeming a programme successful. Tackling directly the notion of 'production of success', the executive declares: 'it's very, very much driven around development, how much you spend to produce.' Here, Hedges appears to be trying to balance a clearly financial discourse with some elements relating to creativity. Therefore, in the aim of explaining what *drives* the studios, the executive first cites the creative notion of 'development' before, nevertheless, making his point clearer by using a definitely money-related vocabulary, explaining what this entails at the executive level. Here again, one can clearly discern the *explicative-defensive* form switched on as soon as the money issue arises: 'it's [...] driven around development', 'how much you spend'. Furthermore, by saying 'very' twice, Hedges only accentuates the importance of the programme's cost, testifying to the place of production costs in the financial executive success discourse. It is important to explain, finally, that this cost can only possibly matter as a success measurement if compared to the revenue, whichever its origin, as it is only then that it becomes possible to measure whether, overall, the show has incurred an earning or a loss, as presented in the rest of the accounts.

Lygo, head of ITV Studios (as opposed to ITV, the channel), for instance, makes a much cruder, even 'brutal' representation of his employer and of ratings in the latter's eyes: 'with ITV, it's the most

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[40] ABC Television and ABC Studios being owned by larger conglomerate The Walt Disney Company.

brutal of... digit sort of facing money, essentially, which means it's a very simple, sort of *binary* equation of viewers against cost.' The language used in Lygo's account is particularly interesting in the sense that one may not have expected to hear such harsh words from an interviewee, particularly from an executive, with regard to their own company. Here, ITV is represented as particularly devilish, or 'most brutal'. The straightforwardness of the participant's discourse is striking, without the slightest appearance of a wish to play up creativity or any other element that may enhance his image or that of his company. As such, this defies again certain 'idealisation' agenda theories by demonstrating that interviewees can remain detached enough not to give a sugar-coated account of their employer or of business imperatives, even if they may use a change of footing in order to make that reality more presentable in their eyes. Being straightforward, however, can also be a tactic. In such a case, it would not be a form of detachment, but one of performance. As a result, even though putting oneself forward does not seem to be the case at all here[41], Lygo is still attempting to control the impression that he gives off (Goffman, 1959: 14). Alike Brown's description of the decision-making process, Lygo's is clear and direct, his lexical field is very mathematical and financial, namely a 'binary equation' of one variable 'against' another. Going on to illustrate his account, Lygo develops his point by stating:

so, if it was a very expensive drama, you need a lot of viewers. If it's a cheap, cheaper drama, you... it can be a success with fewer viewers, but there still is a... sort of tipping point of ratings against cost to the broadcaster.

This participant's account makes the clearest link, so far, between production costs and ratings goals, the latter giving a practitioner-based illustration of the 'central role of ratings in the organisation of

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[41] This is visible, notably, through the use of reverse footing, which suggests that the participant is not comfortable with presenting the overtly financial aspects of his job.

content on television.' (Hesmondhalhg & Baker, 2011: 215). Furthermore, according to this account from Lygo, ratings requirements are not necessarily fixed for a given channel, unlike what he and others had implied, but there would be some limits, a 'tipping point', not to be crossed. While the executive is talking about ratings, here, the emphasis is placed on the ratings / cost ratio, and how ratings must compensate for the cost, rather than the contrary. The difference in perspective between the commercial-channel discourse and the financial-studio one becomes clear, here, as ratings are no longer seen as a fixed goal, contrary to what happens within TV channels, but become a relative factor, linked to the cost of the given programme.

Even though executive-search firm Korn-Ferry International is quoted by Caldwell as stating that 'failure has been no boundary for anyone in the entertainment industry. It's a prerequisite' (2008: 271), the latter was very little discussed by participants; the two studio executives Jim Hedges and Dave Howe being the only participants (along with producer Gerardis) to even mention the notion of *failure* in the industry, out of the combined ten hours of recorded conversations. In one rare such account, Hedges illustrates the fact that the elements compensating for production costs are not limited to just ratings:

> it's fairly expensive to produce a show that fails, because [...] the ad
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> revenue you earn from it, in its initial broadcast, does not cover the
>
> cost of production, so, you're looking to make it up in syndication or
>
> selling it internationally, or so forth.

In this explanation, Hedges argues that, from a studio perspective, ratings alone and the advertising sales going with them are not enough to 'cover' production costs. Resultantly, 'you' are looking for other ways to do so, such as foreign sales (further detailed by Lygo in section c.), and syndication, a

network practice not specific to the U.S, but primarily used in relation to U.S. television, which has to do with airing a programme on an 'off-network station', often repeatedly, depending on the 'repeat capacity' (McDowell, 2006: 38-40) of the said show. As usual in executive discourse, and even more so in the financial discourse of studio executives, the *defensive-you* is prominently used. Finally, through the repeated mentions of how much the 'cost of production' matters and the double emphasis on the fact that it must be compensated for: 'to make it up', the discourse of the CFO indirectly reflects the 'drive to decrease the costs in drama production' acknowledged by Berkeley (2003: 103; citing Brown, 1998), albeit without directly addressing the issue .

b. ROI, Profits, Break-Even; Apprehending and Justifying Finance in the Industry:

This section will focus on some of the reasons behind the explicative-defensive form by placing the discourses within the contemporary global economical context, and will look at how interviewees apprehend the fact of using such a highly financially-grounded discourse in this post-2008 world financial and economic crisis world that we live in. In order to summarise what constitutes the ultimate success measure in the financial executive success discourse, I have selected the following statement, given by Hedges on 'positive return': 'the studios are typically evaluated on... how successful they are in developing content that creates a positive on that investment, right?' As per usual, the account is very business-minded: 'evaluated', 'content', 'positive' return on 'investment'. What is unexpected here, rather than the form, is the content of Hedges' statement, according to which studios are not so much evaluated on how much money they have brought, but on their *aptitude* for 'developing content' that will generate money. Although subtle, the difference is meaningful. Indeed, according to the CFO, the emphasis is on the ability to produce, and *reproduce* results rather than on the said results themselves, hereby giving a far-sighted, long-term oriented approach (cf. Hofstede, 1980) to the studio evaluation process, which can contrast with the current, show-by-show rating success approach of commercial television and the commercial executive

discourse. This statement, finally, is the second such occasion where an interviewee (here, again Hedges) has effectively returned a question to the interviewer (rhetorically) with regard to their own statement, through the 'tag question' (Allerton, 2009: 307): 'right?'. Furthermore, this use of the tag question is utilised once again in order to 'cut' the financial discourse and context, so as to express that humanity, doubt and social relations still exist, regardless of circumstances and stakes. This serves us as a reminder, finally, that, no matter how industrial or financial the setting may be, the whole *modus operandi* – and purpose – of an empirical qualitative research revolves around human interaction rather than around the study of numbers or past academic research alone. The supplementary, discursive information provided by these interviews is precisely where the richness and value of qualitative interviewing lies.

After this, the studio head chooses to reaffirm the need for a positive return on investment (ROI), by linking it to the said prior investment:

> and you want that level of investment, from buying scripts to
> producing pilots, to development deals with talent, all that stuff, to
> net a positive return on investment; so that's kinda how the studios
> evaluate it.

Hedges establishes a direct link between the original investment and the final return on that investment; rather than necessarily a causal relationship, however, this one appears to be expressed in terms of *worth*. According to the executive, all the effort made into this 'level of investment', from buying the scripts, paying the actors, 'all that stuff', must bring a 'positive return' – thereby implying that, otherwise, all this investment would not have been worth it.[42] Resultantly, as was to be expected from the industrial executive discourse, and alike the monetary 'value' ascribed to audience members

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[42] From an accounting / financial perspective, the word 'net' (albeit used as a verb, here) expresses the focus / interest of the studios in net profit, after all costs, taxes and other expenses and fees have been deducted.

in the commercial executive success discourse, this account clearly illustrates that the 'worth' discussed in relation to the evaluation of success in the financial executive success discourse is a literal, financial one. While attempting to justify executive decisions, the CFO once again uses the explicative-defensive form to change the footing (Goffman, 1981: 128) and put the interviewer and subsequent readers at the centre of the action, explaining what 'you want'. This further illustrates the reluctance to talk too much about financial matters, or link themselves too directly to these, on the part of executives, in spite of a no-less financially-minded discourse: 'investment', 'buying', 'development deals', 'positive return', and even 'to net'.

Finally, upon being asked about the importance of critical acclaim in his line of work, Kevin Lygo appears not to give much appeal or significance to what the critics say, in the following statement:

> critical success is not so important anymore to anyone, what the critics say. The programme makers care, cause they read it in the newspaper, but... it doesn't really have much effect, and there's no evidence [that] you hav[ing] that good or bad criticism makes a difference to ratings. It's not like Theatre (…) critics don't have such an aura.

By juxtaposing the statement that 'programme makers' do 'care', with the one asserting that critics do not matter to 'anyone anymore', the *executive* does not seem to give much consideration to the *primary* and *super-creative personnel*, here. Then, by employing such terms as 'evidence', Lygo adopts a practically scientific approach, one that would deride 'critical success' as useless due to its lack of proven effect on what *actually matters*: 'ratings'. The British studio head, finally, would discuss awards this way:

Awards, awards in this country are quite important; if you win

Baftas, and *Emmys* and *Oscars*, that is, obviously, a sort of badge

[...] but... really and truly, it's about, whatever channel you're on, it's

getting a higher-rating show on that channel.

As Hedges did with regard to 'creative acclaim' in the commercial discourse, there is a visible lack of involvement on Lygo's part on the matter. The executive is talking 'externally', in a detached manner; rather than speaking for himself or his channels (past and present, as he has before), he explains that 'other people define success differently' and adds, as if stating a generality, that 'awards in this country are quite important'. While citing American awards such as *Emmys* and *Oscars* with regard to the UK television industry (which does not necessarily get a great deal of such awards), Lygo gives a very uneven answer: on the one hand, he seems to be supporting the importance of awards and critical reception, and on the other appears to be shutting that door right after opening it, crudely concluding, in a manner self-presented as very revealing and truthful 'really and truly', that it's all about ratings (and thus, subsequent ad sales and revenues).

c. Crediting these Earnings; Trade Stories and the Self-Serving Bias:

This section will look at the way the financial executive discourse presents the different revenue streams, as well as the ones managing these money flows. Caldwell states that Brian Lowry (1999) 'claims [...] new executives get no credit for the shows / deals of their predecessors' (Caldwell, 2008: 271). This suggests, therefore, that executives do expect credit for successful programmes. After expounding on the various revenue sources available detailed by the executives, I will focus on those whom executives see as responsible for the 'success', and will thereby demonstrate that the financial discourse of the participants follows Weiner's (1974) form of the attribution theory (initially started by Heider, 1958; and also developed by Kelley, 1967) in its relation to the self-serving bias (also first

discussed by Heider, Ibid.), which together argue that individuals are inclined to primarily attribute success to internal factors and blame failures on external ones, as well as giving themselves more credit for a given achievement than to their various co-workers, for instance.

While success measures for studios were addressed, not all sources of revenue were listed. One of the few factors proper to the studio part of the TV industry appeared to be 'foreign sales'. These, referring to any kind of sale on an international basis (such as DVDs, merchandising and so on), are part of the broader expression 'ancillary market', further discussed in the following paragraph (see Hilmes, 2013: 390). Here again, personal sensibilities can be noticed within the broader executive discourse. For instance, unlike Hedges, who merely mentioned 'revenues from all around the world', Lygo deems these returns so important that they may even have an impact on the programme's price. Centring his account on the sales, the executive declares:

> so, you can... maybe, maybe even *lose* a bit of money in your...
> parent company, but if you're doing really well selling it abroad,
> then that can really make up for it and sometimes, you can give it to
> your host broadcaster... at a discount, knowing that you can get
> foreign sales.

In this account, the UK studio executive uses the same lexical field – and, occasionally, the very same words – as his US counterpart had in the first section: 'make up for' / 'make it up', 'foreign sales' / 'selling it internationally'. Additionally, the participant similarly makes use of the reverse footing (Goffman, 1981: 128) upon discussing the monetary aspect. While not going as far as Hedges in discussing failure, Lygo does mention *losing* money, even suggesting that it may be acceptable. Despite sounding slightly hesitant, reluctant even, to talk about money loss – as outlined through the

repetition of 'maybe', the presence of downplaying expressions such as 'a bit' and 'sometimes', and the intentional stress of '*lose*' as if to insist on how unnatural this is – the executive does present an unexpected feature within the TV industry executive discourse. In addition, by phrasing international sales success as 'you are doing really well selling it abroad', Lygo seems to be suggesting that 'you' are the ones deserving credit for such good sales. Even though it is unclear whether the pronoun 'you', in fact, refers to the studio itself or to the executives, the latter being the ones making the decisions, it seems likely that this statement was intended to refer to (the executives) themselves. As such, it presents an instance where Caldwell's approach on self-promoting intentions (2008: 14) can be applied (albeit on a case by case basis, rather than as a generality). Indeed, should the 'you' in question stand for executives rather than for the studio, here, this would rather be an occasion for self-promotion (Ibid.) than one for a mere 'idealized version' (Goffman, 1959: 56), as has been more often seen in this research.

These discourses can also reveal other elements: 'industry myth' or, as Caldwell puts it, 'the trade stories that practitioners tell among themselves within the work worlds that produce films and series' (2008: 37). In his book, Caldwell provides a rare intervention on the topic since, as he deplores, 'little to no attention has been paid to' it (Ibid.). While he lists three types of 'trade genres' and 'contexts' (Ibid.: 38), however – one related to technical craft workers, one to 'directors, writers, producers', and one to what he describes as 'unregulated and nonsignatory sectors' (like 'agents, reps, clerical',[43] Ibid.) Caldwell leaves out executives. One case in particular, however, provides a clear example of trade stories among the executives interviewed for this research. This case took place when Lygo made a distinct discursive link between 'success' and revenue sources such as international sales, illustrating his account with the case of *24*:

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[43] Which were not included within industry workers categories for this thesis, as justified in Chapter I.

Apparently, *24* [...] was not [...] really wanted in America... but internationally, it was an *enormous* success, and the international division of FOX said [to the network] "Listen, [...] we know we can make so much money selling this abroad, that we can help you with its cost". And then, it went on to be a success in America, and everybody was happy.

As was shown in other accounts related to the financial executive discourse, 'success' is presented not as necessarily resulting from ratings, but from any kind of revenue stream, whether domestic (i.e. advertising sales) or international (selling the show to foreign channels), further showing the difference in success goals between commercial channels and TV studios. Indeed, in the case of television channels, the only revenue of interest is the national one, deriving from advertising and thus rating figures, while studios are interested in any type of revenue, wherever it may come from. What is most unique, however, is the 'industry myth' feeling that comes out of this quote from a British executive about an American programme; starting with 'apparently', evidencing hearsay, and ending on a truly *happy ending* note: 'and everybody was happy'. This was, therefore, a rare yet obvious case, provided by the practitioners interviewed for this thesis, of an account so visibly entrenched into industry myth, or trade stories (Caldwell, 2008: 37). While not quite fitting any of the three genres listed by Caldwell (Ibid.: 38) (namely, war stories: against-all-odds, genesis: paths-not-taken parables and making-it 'sagas': cautionary tales), such an example illustrates how trade stories occur throughout the industry, including within executive discourses. As for the process itself, discussed by Lygo, this cooperation between different entities pertaining to the same conglomerate is somewhat reminiscent of the example given by Johnson, in which she stated that 'the networks also used repurposing to support their [cable] channels, for example, by licensing a hit network show to

run on a new cable channel owned by the same corporation in order to increase the audience's knowledge of the channel brand' (2012: 44); only, here, the one licensing the programme is the studio, and the channel airing it is actually the main entity: the network.

With regard to financial revenue, finally, Hedges discusses several other sources of revenue along with foreign sales, lengthily discussed by Lygo:

> your ability to produce content that... can drive multiple revenue streams for you, including the initial use on the broadcast networks, and then *all* of the syndication and ancillary mark of revenues from all around the world.

This relates to the ancillary revenues discussed by Hilmes (2013: 390) in relation to the economy of television, as well as to what Kompare describes as conceiving television programmes as 'long-term projects, ripe for continuous recirculation and re-packaging' (2005: 157), when talking about the views that channel-studio conglomerates have of TV programmes, a position well illustrated by Hedges, who worked within the ABC Television-ABC Studios conglomerate (part of the wider Disney-ABC Television Group, itself part of the Walt Disney company) at the time, acting as CFO and VP of both ABC Television and ABC Studios. Like in the rest of the executive success discourse, the lexical field utilised is extremely business-focused: 'produce', 'revenue streams', 'ancillary [...] revenues'. Hedges, while not mentioning the product placement mentioned by Howe, explains that 'multiple revenue streams' come into play in what appears to be the *bigger picture* and shows that, in addition to the afore-stated ratings – ad sales ('initial use') and revenues from selling to other channels (either domestic or foreign), one must also consider 'ancillary mark of revenues from all around the world'. These, deemed 'disproportionately large returns' providers by Vogel (2011: 526),

would include goods such as DVDs and merchandising. The way the executive presents these success goals, finally, is consistent with whom the other interviewee credits for this financial success: the executives themselves. Indeed, just as Lygo credits the executives, 'you', with making good foreign sales in a previous paragraph, Hedges discusses 'your ability', to make shows that will bring a lot of money from various 'revenue streams'. Again, even if the second person singular pronoun does not permit one to ascertain whether the executive means the studio in general or the executives themselves, it gives a sufficiently precise idea as to who is seen as responsible by the studio head in the case of success (in the unlikely case of the former, using second pronoun 'you' to compare the interviewer to a business entity would represent a personification of that entity to the extreme; and in the case of the latter, self-promotion would be once more involved). It is therefore possible to conclude that, in the eyes of the studio executives interviewed, credit for important revenues around the world is not given to chance, to the buyer, to the marketer nor to the distributor, but to 'you'; that is, the executives themselves. Thus this fits the common schema presented in the attribution theory (Weiner, 1974), most particularly the self-serving bias (cf. Heider, 1958) that demonstrates how individuals (here, studio executives) are inclined to primarily attribute success to internal factors (i.e. themselves) and blame failures on external factors out of their control (the environment), and tend to give themselves more credit for a given achievement than to their various co-workers, such as producers or creative workers.

The financial has shown a facet quite different from that of commercial channels equations and profit are at the heart of the considerations, but also where some industry myths, or tales, subside; where, finally, the *defensive you* appears to gain another facet – not simply used as a defence mechanism when talking about money anymore, but also seemingly as an indirect manner to credit 'success' to oneself. The commercial and the financial discourse are not the only types of executive success discourses within the Anglophone transatlantic television industry, however.

After addressing the financial executive success discourse, where audiences were not the key success factor anymore, replaced by mathematics and finance, I will devote the rest of this chapter to the third and last type of TV entity and operating model, that of public channels and their specific type of discourse, as well as to the manner in which they radically differ from the two types discussed so far.

III. Success Discourse Centred on People – The Public Discourse:

Unlike commercial channels, which are financed by the advertising sales of their programmes (Lugmayr, 2008: 67), public service broadcasters are generally state-funded, and the amount that they receive is not linked to the ratings obtained. In the case of the UK, for example, almost the entire UK population pays the licence fee, regardless of whether or not they watch BBC content. As such, 'The BBC is heavily, but not entirely, dependent on the Licence Fee' (Tunstall, 2015: 8). This part of the research will thus focus on (the discourses of) public service broadcasters, which still play a major role in UK television. Indeed, as explained in the introduction, the public service aspect of the UK TV industry did survive the monopoly of the BBC, with the broadcaster's main competitor, commercial channel ITV (introduced in 1955), using a public service policy very similar to the BBC's (Johnson & Turnock, 2005: 2-3; 24), and with a strong presence of public (service) channels such as BBC One, Two, Free, or Channel Four. In this section, therefore, I will search for the success criteria used by that public entity, on the degree to which these would differ from those of commercial channels, and on whether the public discourse (which does not have to compensate for financial imperatives) would be altered in some way. This will allow this thesis to shed new light on the discourses of the most singular business entity within the industry – both in terms of business model and in terms of image – and thus will help to further map out the wide range of executive success discourses present within the Anglophone transatlantic television industry.

a. Appreciation and Reach; the Altruistic Discourse:

As could be expected, no financial facet was to be found in the discourses of this particular, state-funded category. Instead, a factor specifically and uniquely linked to the public channel entity appeared: the Appreciation Index (*AI* Index), or audience satisfaction (see Kent, 1994). While Ellis does mention the Appreciation Index among a list of elements proposed by the BBC as 'alternative measures of audience satisfaction' related 'to the public role of broadcast programmes' (2007: 185), he does not give any more detail as to what it entails. Interviewing practitioners from different sides of the industry offers new information as to how those they address and apprehend this notion. British executive Kevin Lygo, for instance, thus reflects on the public success discourse: 'if you're making a drama for the BBC, they wouldn't be talking about money... They'd be saying "it needs to satisfy the audience"'. As shown by the terms chosen by the participant, referring to a carefully worded discourse 'they wouldn't be talking' / 'they'd be saying', as well as the inside quote, Lygo appears to be talking not so much about facts than about appearances, and what the BBC executives would want them to be. To quote Goffman, Lygo is effectively referring to the impression the BBC allegedly wants to give off (1959: 14). As a result, the ITV executive, who rapidly alienates himself from the public channel entity – swiftly moving from 'you' to 'they' – is clearly tackling the *discourse*, here, rather than the industrial reality behind it. In so clearly discussing how the public discourse *represents* the situation, the participant illustrates an obvious case of 'industrial reflexity' (Caldwell, 2008) and the ability of practitioners to see through words, and distinguishes industrial practices from discursive representations. Furthermore, this distinction demonstrates some awareness on the part of executives of the roles 'played' (Park, 1950: 249; Goffman, 1959: 26) in front of the interviewer and of the function of discourses. Because it is impossible to read the mind of interviewees, however, it remains difficult to establish whether this awareness extends to the self – where participants would think, for instance, "I'm gonna avoid talking about that" or "I'll say 'you'

instead of 'we' whenever things get too crude or too financial" (cf. Chapter II), or if such elements would occur in a primarily subconscious manner. For this reason, one wonders to what extent it is possible to assert or imply, for instance, that interviewees are consciously trying 'to control' the impression that they 'give off'. As a result, I would make this my final argument in favour of a more nuanced view which, while allowing for the possibility of a conscious or even calculated decision to alter one's discourse, would also allow for the possibility of a non-consciously altered rendition of the perceived situation.

The House of Commons' report states that the BBC's mission is to 'To enrich people's lives with programmes and services that inform, educate and entertain' (2010: 18), with the broadcaster adding on its website that 'audiences are at the heart of everything we do' (BBC, 2015). It is this altruistic discourse that Lygo appeared to criticise or, at least point, to. Giving the impression to discuss facts rather than appearances, however, BBC executive Nick Brown swiftly mentions the ratings from the BARB's website – which, according to him, render 'easy to see, in ratings terms' the success of programmes – before introducing alternative success factors:

> there's also other measures of success, are to do with... what we call
>
> the *AI*, which is the Audience... Index. So, it's appreciation,
>
> basically; how *much* the people who watched it like the show. So, we
>
> look at that... we also look at... [...] whether people thought that the
>
> shows were... fresh and new, or original, or different.

The lexical field is decidedly different from any other encountered in this chapter so far: 'appreciation', 'like', 'thought': the public service channel is positioned as *caring*, as is the case on the BBC (2015) website. Brown, who used pronoun 'they' to discuss deciding executives (of which

he is not) and the commission process, now includes himself in this account on the concerned and benevolent success assessment criterion, by using collective 'we' to discuss the relevance of what he calls the 'audience index'. This attention to whether people think of BBC One's programmes as 'fresh and new, or original, or different' links to the academic discussion around *value*, with Koboldt, Hogg and Robison, for instance, stating that the 'value of programming is defined by viewers', by 'what they like' (1999: 60). Also, the concept of Audience Appreciation is very remindful of Napoli's notion of metrics going 'beyond the basic question of how many people watched' a given TV programme, but which 'can also look at how much the audience enjoyed the program' (2011: 9). While Napoli, and others (see also Russell & Puto, 1999; Vasquez, 2008) discuss this point from a profit-centred perspective, adding that one can even 'determine the level of anticipation' for a given product (Napoli, 2011: 9), although giving this impression is evidently not the intention of the BBC executive. Indeed, the audience-appreciation index discussed by Brown, here, relates to the long-displayed wish of non-commercial / public service broadcasting (not just in the UK) to measure, and maximise audience satisfaction (see Silvey, 1944, 1974; Emmetts, 1968; Keegan, 1980). The approach discussed here, therefore, can be related to that of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), for instance, and its 'enjoyment index' asking viewers to rate various aspects of programmes and their enjoyment of it (cf. Eaman, 1994; Jeffrey, 1994), in a similar manner to the Pilot testing method used by commercial channels in the US, in fact.

Frith makes a distinctions between 'valuable television (in economic terms)' and 'valuable television (in regulatory terms)' (2000: 42), that is, 'quality television' resulting from what he calls 'the concatenation of two strands of British regulatory history: high cultural disdain for the mass media; and the defence of public service broadcasting against various forms of commercialization' (Ibid.: 40). Brown goes on to illustrate this discourse by adding another priority to the BBC: 'it's a big BBC thing... the audiences to feel that BBC is offering something that other people aren't. So, that's

important that we score... well on that.' With this sentence, Brown outlines how 'important' it is to his employer, going as far as calling it a 'big BBC thing', as if it belonged or was inherently linked to the BBC, specifically. In Brown's statement, the state-funded broadcaster is portrayed as particularly empathic towards the audience: instead of seeing them as statistics or revenue (as is the case in the other executive discourses studied here), the BBC executive expresses the broadcaster's alleged wish for the 'audiences' to 'feel' the channel is 'offering' something unique, an account that resonates with that of Reith (the first general manager, and then Director-General of the BBC), who discussed the intention to 'build up in the public mind a sense of the BBC's collective personality' (quoted in Briggs, 1965). This results from the fact that public channels – which are collectively funded – have to aim at (or at least present themselves as) providing a collective outcome, or content redistribution. The terminological contrast between Brown's account and the rest of the discourses studied here is so obvious, however, that it prompts the researcher to wonder whether the executive may not have been purposely and consciously, this time, altering his discourse in order to convey a highly idealised version of his employer (cf. Goffman, 1959: 44). The plural form of 'audiences', finally, is indicative of a demographic-minded perspective. It remains unclear at this point, however, why a channel that is not financed by advertising sales would care about these measurements and specific audience groups, nor whether such an interest could actually be reconciled with the alleged benevolence of the BBC towards viewers.

A later part of Brown's account directly tackles these points. This time, rather than focusing on the audience in general, the executive discusses a different kind of subgroups-based relevance in the following abstract of a longer, slightly convoluted quotation:

> one thing that is very important for the BBC is what they call their
>
> *reach figures*; so it's about [...] what percentage of the [...] UK

population consumes something of the BBC [...]. Their success criteria is... a lot based on [...] making sure that the reach... and the appreciation is consistent across the whole... country, and across different age groups (…). They're quite different (…) measurements [from what] I imagine a commercial broadcaster will... use.

With this description of the measurement, Brown – who resorts back to using the third plural pronoun 'they' rather than 'we' – makes it clear that the number of people, and the groups they belong to, highly matter to the public broadcaster and to its various channels. Furthermore, the terms 'reach' and 'groups' are coupled with the qualitative notion of 'appreciation', discussed in the previous paragraph. Finally, making the first seemingly subjective remark of his account, as shown through the use of expression 'I imagine', the BBC executive euphemistically suggests that these measurements are 'quite different' from those of 'commercial' channels. Here, Brown implies that these measurements differ in the sense that what matters to the public service channel is not only how many people are *watching* within these demographic categories, but also how much a given programme is *appreciated* across the country, hereby asserting a somewhat altruistic or caring dimension, still.

The BBC Drama Director is not the only executive interviewed for this research, however, to discuss the 'reach' in relation to public channels, the other one being ITV Studios head Kevin Lygo. After stating that BBC One has a number of ways through which 'they assess whether [a programme] has been a success or not', the ITV executive gives a sentence quite similar to his public broadcasting peer's:

> Not just size of audience, but type of audience, reaching people that
> [...] it can't attract in its other programmes [...] that they can't *get*
> people in a certain region of the country, people of a certain... age, or
> demographic... split.

After using the BBC notion of 'reaching people', Lygo features public service channels as searching to '*get* people' a more pro-active or calculating terming than Brown's concept of 'reach'. This slight difference highlights the main distinction in executive discourses between public channels and the rest of the entities discussed: the way audiences are apprehended by the broadcasters; both of them talking about similar concepts and goals, but in a different manner. Indeed, this notion of *reach* does appear, at times, to be only another way to talk about demographic-minded ratings. Indeed, despite mentioning that the BBC 'aimed to reach those groups who would not have been reached had it been left to the market' (House of Commons, 2010: 19), the BBC Licence Fee Settlement and Annual Report addresses *reach* in a very different manner, apart from that one instance. It displays, for example, the 'average weekly reach [...] of each BBC TV service and the BBC TV portfolio overall among the 16-34 year-olds' and uses the average ratings provided by the BARB for each BBC channel for this key demographic, before mentioning 'target audiences' on the same page (Ibid.: Ev 51). While it does discuss other demos, such as 'teenagers (13-19 year-olds)' (Ibid.: Ev 52), this reach, calculated in millions, makes no mention of the small, remote groups discussed by Brown. This public discourse concept of 'reach', therefore, is highly reminiscent of the emphasis often placed upon demographics in the commercial discourse.

b. Ratings, Demographics, Goals; Not so Different After All:

According to Ofcom, 'the BBC's total broadcasting expenditure in 2003-04 was £2,994m including overheads, transmission costs and licence fee collection costs' (2004: 22). Nevertheless, according to

Taussing, who discusses the theory versus the reality of public service broadcasting (PSB), 'the relationship between "money in" and PSB-delivered outcomes [...] is less easy to determine for the BBC than for Channel 4', for instance, which is described as having 'a less widely-spread more focused public service brief' (2006: 86). In fact, the British Broadcasting Corporation, but Channel Four as well, have a history of 'expanding their commercial entreprises', as Johnson (2012: 76) puts it. The BBC has participated in a number of joint business ventures in the past few decades (with Brown Castle and BSkyB for Freeview, with Thames Television for UK Gold, or its commercial subsidiary BBC Worldwide with Flextech for UKTV; cf. Ibid.: 75-6).[44]

From an internal perspective, therefore, with regard to success goals and measures in particular, are this public service broadcaster's discourse and outlook on success that different from those of commercial channels, for instance? This section will first illustrate that this benevolent aspect appears to be closer to a discursive theme than to an actual emphasis, and will look at its use of the *explicative-defensive* form. I will also put forward the reason behind the importance of high ratings for public service channels like BBC One, before finally discussing in more detail the specific case of the BBC, and its relationship with the BBC Trust.

Ratings Matter

Upon discussing the 'public value assessment' process (PVT), the BBC Trust states that: 'reach was only one component of public value considered in this PVT' and that, even though '*maintaining reach* [emphasis in text] was seen to be particularly important as an aspect of the value of these particular proposals[,] [r]each will not necessarily be as important a consideration in other PVTs nor will maintaining or increasing reach necessarily ensure approval of future proposals' (2007: 19). This was similarly reflected in the discourse of the interviewed executive. Indeed, upon finishing his

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[44] Nevertheless, by using different names for the new channels created, not reminiscent of the BBC's, the British broadcaster appeared to separate its commercial activities from its public service ones (Ibid.), with the notable exception of BBC Worldwide.

account on figures, Brown does reveal that this *reach*, which he had just presented as being very important, is but an additional 'tick' rather than an actual goal. Presenting the case of the broadcaster's most important channel, BBC One, the executive exposes the following figure-based facts:

> on BBC One, you want your dramas to make 5, 6 million people. [...] If you're trying to improve your reach, in terms of a particular demographic, or a particular area of the country... then, [...] if within that 5 or 6 million, the show is doing that as well, that's a really another tick for the show.

With this follow-up explanation, the executive drastically reduces the level of importance he had previously attributed to this goodwill, or caring attitude through the notion of 'reach'; the latter going from being presented as 'very important for the BBC' to being 'really another tick' after what really counts, what (explicative-defensive) 'you' actually 'want': 'that 5 or 6 million' viewers. This further suggests the purposeful inclusion of benevolent language elements with regard to the public channels, to further strengthen the caring image transmitted in the public discourse and thus 'idealize' the image that is given off (Goffman, 1959: 56; 14). According to this discourse, therefore, public service channels, given their reported main focus on rating figures, do not seem to be any less interested in numbers than commercial channels or studios, even if this does not appear to be for the same reasons, due to the apparent lack of causality between ratings and revenue. As stated earlier, however, while the BBC is 'heavily [...] dependent on the Licence Fee' (Tunstall, 2015: 8), it is not entirely so. Indeed, as the scholar continues:

the BBC in practice has additional sources of income. Its foreign arm, BBC Worldwide, however, spends nine tenths of its £1.5 billion additional revenue on the additional expenditure of running its [...] marketing operation; Worldwide also remakes BBC series into local American and other versions (Ibid.).

But why would the BBC Worldwide (BBCW) spend so much on marketing and why would ratings target matter in this regard? Tunstall partially answers this question further on, when stating that: 'most BBC1 and BBC2 output has aimed to be quality / popular - superior entertainment, or popular programming, delivered by top-of-the-range talent' (Ibid.: 18) and that '[BBC] Worldwide's most financially successful BBC export efforts have been Quality-Popular entertainment series' (Ibid.: 17). This combination of terms made by Tunstall is very unexpected, and somewhat perplexing, however, when one looks at debates surrounding 'quality' programmes and legitimacy; cf. McCabe & Akass, 2007; Newman & Levine, 2 012), which precisely tend to separate – and even confront – notions such as 'quality' and 'popular'. While one must note the difficulty of putting those two terms, or concepts, together, and even more so to link them with a hyphen, it is nevertheless possible to understand Tunstall's point, who was trying to represent the BBC's intention to make programmes which would both be considered 'quality' (an issue addressed in this chapter and pursued in the next) and 'popular', in the sense, one assumes, of being watched by many people, as opposed to a niche, minority-focused output, for instance, in order to get both ratings and sales, since what the channels' international commercial arm sells the most internationally is precisely that. This is why the BBCW company spends so much money on the promotion of the latter, those being very big sellers and thus financially rewarding. And whence lies the importance of high ratings: aside from showing that a certain amount of the license-fee paying UK population is *satisfied* with the public broadcaster's output, it also quantitatively demonstrates to overseas channels (and, their prospective advertisers) – when presented with the products (programmes) by BBCW – that the programme appeals to a wide

audience. Hence, the higher the ratings, the more convincing that it is a worthwhile investment for the interested parties, the larger the number of territories that will buy them, and for a higher price... thus, the higher the revenue for BBCW and, ultimately, for the BBC itself.

The commercial endeavours of the BBC, of course, must be considered in relation to the specific context of public service broadcasting in the United Kingdom. They should therefore be understood in relation to the neo-liberal politics put into place in the 1980s and 1990s. Indeed, as explained in the first half of the Introduction chapter (in relation to British TV history), the 1990 Broadcasting Act (cf. O'Malley, 1994; Williams, 1996); and the 1996 Broadcasting Act caused a shift in the perception of television in the UK, which stopped being seen as necessarily and fundamentally a public service (O'Malley, 2009: 4). Moreover, a number of these policies, and certain recommendations (such as some made in the Peacock Report, 1986), which put 'an idealistic stress on the value of consumer sovereignty, which assumes that it is both the guarantor of freedom and the best way of organising the economics of a future communications system' (O'Malley, 2009: 9), discussed pushing advertising (sales) in public service broadcasting, and threatened the licence fee at the time (which later on would be, factually, reduced). As explained by Goodwin (1998) and Collins (2009), the influence of the Peacock Report (and, I would add, the 1990 and 1996 Broadcasting Acts) caused the UK policy to move 'from public service itself as the underlying principle of broadcasting to a notion that broadcasting should be organized as a marketplace for independent voices' (Goodwin, 1998: 92). This, in turn, has caused the BBC and its TV channels to become 'more competitive and more commercially-sufficient' (Johnson, 2012: 85-6). This interest in business ventures (as addressed earlier), commercial profit and self-sufficiency, therefore, does not seem to come from a change of internal philosophy which would somewhat betray its lifelong public service remit so much as it stems from an implicit need to survive, or feel 'safer', in this new TVII, then TVIII configuration.

Bennett and al. (2012)'s report, finally, which looks both at the use of digital technology and at the place of independent productions in public service broadcasting,[45] can bring an interesting and complementary piece of information by looking at another side of public broadcasting 'success'. Indeed, looking at the success goals of public service broadcasters as an overall entity going beyond the channel itself, such as the British Broadcasting Corporation (which encompasses domestic TV channels BBC One, BBC Two, BBC Four, etc., but also news channels or regional channels, as well as international cable and satellite channels like BBC America and BBC Entertainment), and at other entities like BBC Studios and the BBC's commercial arm, BBC Worldwide (discussed by Bennett and al.; 2012: 22) allows for a slightly different perspective. Indeed, since it is not the goals of individual channels (such as those of BBC One)[46] that are in question here, but the success goals of the wider public service broadcasting entity (such as the BBC), which include international sales (cf. Ibid.), these goals are more comparable to those of other – commercial – conglomerates, described by Kompare as conceiving television programmes as 'long-term projects, ripe for continuous recirculation and re-packaging' (2005: 157), and also addressed by participant James Hedges in relation to the ABC TV / ABC Studios conglomerate, when discussing 'your ability to produce content that... can drive multiple revenue streams for you, including the initial use on the broadcast networks, and then all of the syndication and ancillary mark of revenues from all around the world'. It can be concluded, therefore, that the success measures of public service broadcasters as an overall entity or conglomerate, like the British Broadcasting Corporation, as opposed to a given channel as such like BBC One, can very much be linked to those of other channel-studio conglomerates, and can therefore be linked to the financial discourse linked to them. This, of course, is due to the functioning of these conglomerates, as well as, again, to the political and economical changes that have affected the British TV industry (the public service in particular) in the 1980s and 1990s (cf. Goodwin, 1998; Collins, 2009; O'Malley, 2009), and have caused PSBs to seek self-sufficiency so as

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[45] The involvement of independent production companies being ever growing, as attested by the recently announced plans of BBC Studios to 'cut 300 staff as hit shows move to private sector'; Conlan, 2016.
[46] Linked to satisfaction and reach, and therefore ratings and demographics, as demonstrated earlier.

not to be entirely reliant, nor overly reliant still, on public funding (such as through the licence fee), that could have ceased, and perhaps still could, in the future.

Who Is Behind All This?

After these explanations and having re-contextualised the situation, I will now go back to the interviewee's discourse and focus on the people who are, in fact, those interested in these goals and figures. Indeed, the identity of those on top of this, and caring about these '5 or 6 millions' viewers, remains unclear at this point: they are not for advertisers, since there are no paid-for commercials, and they are not for shareholders, since it is a public broadcaster. The remainder of this section, therefore, will focus on establishing who the ones setting these goals are. Upon being asked where the 'pressure' comes from, Brown answers, in an initially very confused manner:

> Well, there's... the BBC... there's... the BBC Trust are the people who... it's the... who are there... they're not, they're not part of the BBC, but they... they agree, on behalf of the audiences, to insure the BBC is delivering what it says it's gonna do. So [...] their role, it's to protect, to look at, to look after audiences' interests, and to challenge the BBC, but also to support the BBC [...] and they set objectives for the BBC to deliver.

The entity known as the 'BBC Trust', brought up by the interviewee in the context of pressure, is first described in a very confused (and confusing) manner, as attested by the first two lines of the quote.[47] Once the account becomes clearer, the overseeing institution is presented both with regard to its relation to the audience and to its relation with the channel. First, the BBC Trust is portrayed as a defender of the public, which it reportedly represents. The entity's relation to the broadcaster is then

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[47] This was the only instance occurring to such an extent, in this or any other interview.

tackled, and presented in a rather ambiguous way: on the one hand, it is depicted as challenging the BBC, and on the other, as supporting it; testifying to how complicated the relationship with the Trust may be at times, not the least due to the difficulty in balancing the interests of the public and those of the channel.

A year prior to my interview with Brown, Sir Michael Lyons, the first BBC Trust 'permanent chairman' described the Trust as 'not really a regulator at all, but with significant powers and resources to challenge BBC management and shape the BBC on behalf of the public who own it', before admitting that, even then, there were some members of the BBC who did not entirely understand its 'parental powers and responsibilities' (Ellis, 2014: 217). Lyons moves on to list key attributes of the Trust, including that it is a 'supervisory board with some regulatory functions' and that it is 'markedly more separate from the Executive than was the case with the Governors', the former governing body of the BBC (Ibid.). To quote Ellis' summary, this distance means that the BBC Trust 'could function as auditor and defender without becoming a cheerleader for the corporation' (Ibid.: 218). As such, the Trust 'has twin roles as regulator and authoriser, plus it must [...] preserve its separation from the day-to-day operations of the BBC' (Ibid.: 220), a description of the situation quite similar to the one made by Brown. After citing a list of recent events, however, Ellis (Ibid.: 218) argues that the latter 'have raised questions over whether the distance is too great for effective control'. On the other hand, scholars such as Bennett have denounced the fact that 'given the continuing role of Parliament in appointing the board of governors and setting the license fee, such independence was never absolute' (2015: 75). This complicated relationship between the BBC and the Trust, therefore, which was already observable both in the content and form of Nicolas Brown's presentation of it, does not merely result from a discursive representation as such, but from the intricacies of the global situation and unique place of the BBC, with regard to the Trust, the licence fee and the British Parliament.

The last noteworthy element in the executive's discourse is the amount of times the name 'BBC' was pronounced in a single answer: seven times in this edited quotation, a total of eleven occurrences in the unabridged version. This also, is distinct from the discourses of the other television industry entities analysed in this thesis, the other participating executives having no such insistence on their channel's name as is the case in this part as well as in other parts of Brown's interview. In addition to having a discourse that seems to be slightly more 'altered' in Goffman's (1959) sense in order to give a more positive presentation of the channel and of its interests, Brown, in his discourse, also appears to be much more careful about insisting on the identity of the brand, repeating its name distinctively more often than the participants working in commercial channels or in studios. While it could be seen as pride, the executive left only a few months after our interview, which seemingly gives less ground to this assumption. This case further suggests that the public discourse is, at least, no less mindful of the impression left upon the interviewer than one would expect the discourses of practitioners from commercial or financially-minded institutions to be. In a wish not to over-generalise (a tendency criticised in this thesis when done by other academics), finally, it must be specified that since Brown was the only public service channel executive interviewed, it cannot be ascertained whether this insistence on repeatedly pronouncing the BBC's name would be a pattern common to public channel executives in general, or whether this would be restricted to Brown (or a few others) specifically.

Conclusion:

This research project in general and this chapter in particular seek to reaffirm the place of the various forms of television. I have identified and studied three types of executive success discourses – commercial, financial and public – reflecting the three main types of entities / business models

present within the Anglophone transatlantic television industry. This has also allowed this part of the chapter to consider the links between industrial practices and imperatives and the way they were represented in success discourses, but also to reflect on the actual decision-making power of executives and on the way they talk about their work and themselves. By showing how executives were shaping the roles of certain measurements and chose to represent themselves and their actions, this section provided an inside look into professional discourses of success, and demonstrated that, amongst the plurality in entities and discourses, a common element – audience results – subsisted throughout.

With regard to commercial channels, funded by advertising sales, I have shown that audience measurements do appear to be the primary success factor in commercial executive discourse, even though a distinction must be made between overall ratings and demographic-minded results, for instance. This part has then demonstrated the extent to which technology has 'profoundly changed the nature of value in the industry' (Buzzard, 2012), permitting different currents of thoughts to emerge within the executive commercial discourse. The third part established a clear link between audience measurements and revenues in commercial broadcasting, and illustrated how executives apprehended their own image, through the explicative-defensive form. Finally, bringing back ratings at the heart of the equation in a case study focused on premium channels proved that, even with the latter, the audience remained the key factor in assessing the success of programmes. To the extent that television studios have a business model distinct from that of any TV channel, they also have a specific way to discuss success, unique to them (when compared with the other entities studied). Indeed, the *only* success measure, here, appeared to be financial revenue and, thus, profitability. The accounts positioned themselves between Hesmondhalgh's statement that 'like all businesses', the entities comprising the cultural 'have an interest in making big profits' (2002: 3) and Banks', that companies (here, studios) within the cultural industries can act as profit-satisfiers rather than as profit-maximisers (2007: 120). I have also showed that the financial discourse presented success

measures in TV studios as amounting to a simple equation of production cost versus revenue. I have then illustrated the little importance critical acclaim had for the participants compared to quantifiable data and its subsequent financial result, and revisited the concept of the *explicative-defensive* form by looking at how interviewees apprehended the fact of using this highly financially-grounded discourse, as well as how they used the concept for another purpose; the discursive form moving from being a defence mechanism to an indirect manner to credit 'success' to oneself. The last part, focusing on public channels, revealed that their discourses displayed a very benevolent aspect, where very different measurements – namely, audience appreciation, interest and reach – are paramount. I have then expressed that this benevolent aspect seemed to be rather a discursive theme than an actual emphasis, used in conjunction with the *explicative-defensive* form whenever the key success factor that is ratings was mentioned. This also further illustrated that the executive public discourse does not appear to be any less mindful of the image given off than one would expect the commercial or financial discourse to be. Furthermore, by re-contextualising historically and policy-wise the particular case of the BBC, I have demonstrated that the reason behind the use of its economic arm, BBC Worldwide, was, ultimately, to ensure the broadcaster's viability.

This whole chapter, revolving around self-reflexivity, and the data presented here also offered further material which would contrast with more idealistic assumptions such as those of Davis and Scase, that 'performance criteria are linked to evaluation by peers, critics and audiences rather than purely quantitative indicators' (2000: 53-4). Furthermore, apart from a brief mention of critical acclaim by Hedges and a discussion of audience appreciation by Brown, one must note the absence of the concept of value, or quality, in any of the executive success-centred discourses presented here. This challenges the extent to which industrial discourses of success, public ones included, are concerned with notions such as *value* or *quality* discussed by Frith (2000) in this TVIII era; thereby reflecting Frith's conclusion about a television industry 'less and less organized around "quality"' (2000: 49).

After studying the executive discourses of success within the Anglophone, transatlantic television industry, I will move on to discuss the personal definitions of success participants from all industry practitioner categories, and will segment the chapter in relation to the different currents of thought encountered within these discourses, rather than with respect to industry section or job specification.

IV. How Do Industry Workers' Approaches of Success Differ From the Industry's?

Introduction:

The television industry, just as any other industry, is composed of people, and so cannot be looked at through an industrial perspective alone (as was demonstrated in Chapter II, for instance, by studying the perceptions of the industry members with regard to power and to decision makers). Regarding success discourses, therefore, even though industrial measures do exist, the industry as a whole – and those constituting it – must not be reduced to these business criteria either. As will be shown throughout this chapter, a second set of measures – 'parallel' to the goals featured in Chapter III – exists; industry members, with their hopes and dreams, values and opinions, having their own set of success measures that may or may not coincide with the institutional one. Even though the latter set of measures has a more important weight professionally, the former is also present in practitioner discourses[48] and clearly appears to matter to them. This fourth and final chapter will thus analyse the success goals and measurements of the practitioners themselves, rather than that of the industry, in order to determine to which extent industrial practices impact on the various types of *personal* success discourse encountered in this research within the Anglophone transatlantic television industry. By providing insight into whether there exists congruence between industrial and personal success measures for the different type of workers, as well as the interactions between success discourse and industrial practices, this chapter looks behind the mask, in order to learn more about practitioners' own definitions of success.

The accounts discussed here were collected in response to the following question, asked at the very end of each interview: 'Finally, what would be *your* definition of success?' This question was

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[48] Without being prompted, as explained further on.

intentionally left open,[49] as opposed to focusing on specific aspects because I did not want to assume nor suggest any links in particular (especially not to my interviewees), but was interested to see how they would even understand the question, and whether they would link it to industrial standards of success for TV programmes, or to success at work, at home, in their lives and so on, according to their own standards. Unlike Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2011: 182), who looked at the 'satisfactions of making good cultural products' and specifically asked their interviewees about work 'of which they were proud', I brought up no such issue during conversations with my participants. Instead, those who did bring up the topic spontaneously talked about work and the pieces they were proud of, when asked about their definition of success. While Hesmondhalgh and Baker did so as a 'way of eliciting reflection on the emotions involved when a mix of conditions, talents and luck mean that creative workers are involved in what they feel to be good products' (Ibid.), I wanted the participating practitioners to make that link (or not) on their own, without being prompted.

Throughout its analysis, this chapter will demonstrate that this coexistence of several definitions of success can be encountered throughout the industry, up to the highest levels, and will outline the fact that certain currents of thought are sometimes more common among (if not specific to) certain job categories than others. The concept of self-realisation, discussed for instance by Hesmondhalgh and Baker in relation to what they call 'good work' (2011: 819), is defined by the Oxford Dictionaries as the 'fulfilment of one's own potential' (2016b). This relates to Maslow's concept of 'self-actualization' (1954), at the top of his hierarchy of needs,[50] perceptible and reachable once the more primary, or 'basic', needs have been achieved. Hesmondhalgh and Baker argue in their book that 'the term need not be linked to competitive individualism or narcissistic fantasies about individual triumph' (2011: 34). Instead, they argue, 'it makes it possible for us to discuss how work, and other key elements, might contribute to a (pluralist) notion of successful development of the self over time'

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[49] In fact, in the rare cases where interviewees asked for more precision, I answered that it was up to them to interpret it.
[50] Already addressed in Ch. II.

(Ibid.). According to them, therefore, this concept of self-realisation plays a key role in people's own success measures, with Murphy seeing self-realisation as a key element to the Aristotelian concept of 'human flourishing' (1993: 225). Focusing on television practitioners specifically, Ursell states that the willingness of people to work in TV production is 'partly to be explained by the tantalizing possibilities thereby for securing social recognition and acclaim, that is self-affirmation and public esteem, and partly by the possibilities for self-actualization and creativity (be it aesthetic or commercially entrepreneurial)' (2000: 819). In other words, on the one hand, there are external rewards, such as esteem of others, and on the other hand, there are internal ones, such as self-actualisation or self-realisation: the fulfilment of one's potential. I will argue and illustrate that there is one main element when it comes to personal success within the TV industry: pride, itself divided between internal factors and external ones. I have chosen the term/category 'internal', here, because the items therein lie within the control of the individual, in the sense that they depend on their own opinion: whether they consider they did a good job, enjoyed the experience, or feel satisfied with the end result. Reciprocally, I have selected the term 'external' for the other category because this satisfaction cannot come from the person itself, but is dependent on others and on what they have thought of it; it is thus de facto external. Finally, I will demonstrate that, even though the majority of the success goals and definitions of the participating practitioners are linked to job satisfaction, all of them converge towards one thing: *happiness*.

This chapter will first analyse success discourses in which pride results from internal rewards, and so from the effort originally put into one's own work, before turning to accounts featuring a form of pride primarily linked to external rewards (that is the reception of the output by others), which incidentally bring a certain level of prestige or status in a more obvious manner than self-appreciation would. It will also demonstrate that internal and external rewards are not mutually exclusive, and that practitioners may not be solely interested in one or the other. As will be argued,

furthermore, this order of categorising also follows a scale according to increasing levels of ambition and, at the same time, reflects decreasing levels of independence. The extent to which industrial practices affect, or have an impact on the personal success measures and discourses of practitioners will also be assessed. I will also look at what was not said, and demonstrate that regardless of one's discursive focal point, all practitioners aim at satisfaction or happiness in their personal success goals. Finally, through the analysis of management and psychology studies, and by adding and analysing the two final accounts that had not been discussed up to that point, this chapter will highlight the fact that all these internal and external rewards-centred accounts revolve around job satisfaction and, more generally, that the accounts of all the practitioners interviewed for this research revolve around the notion of happiness.

I. Internal Rewards, Relating to One's Work:

By demonstrating that two main forms of discourses, or personal success goals (as opposed to industrial ones), can be identified in relation to pride relating to the specific tasks that practitioners do within the industry: pride with regard to the input (or the effort put in), and pride with regard to the output (or the perceived result of the work done), this chapter will illustrate that Williams' (1961: 44) argument that the 'excitement and pain of the effort are followed by the delight and rest of completion' is reflected in the participants' discourses. The American society, as portrayed by Bella et al. (1985) three decades ago, was one which overlooked the social value of their work, focusing instead on the personal gratification and the financial solace brought by their jobs. While Muirhead (2004: 111) stated that modern work ethics were now based on 'a combination of blind habit, a steely will to survive amid heartless competition, and the promise of status and physical comfort', scholars such as Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi and Damon (2001) and Bellah et al. (1985: 289) have pre-emptively proposed an exit route from this situation by advocating a transformation of work

conception and meaning from 'private aggrandizement to public contribution'. Muirhead (2004: 151) further explained, however, that this social contribution may not be enough as good work incentive for everyone. Indeed, a number of people will not want, or care, about dedicating time and effort to the community. It is, therefore, necessary, to also consider the intrinsic, self-satisfying value of work well done (Ibid.). As such, he refers to MacIntyre's (1984: 187) philosophy of cooperative work and people's desire to 'achieve excellence'.

Acknowledging this desire, however, is not the same as adopting a Cartesian vision of things, with achievement desires on the one hand and 'altruistic and egoistic motivations' on the other (see Keat, 2000: 23). Besides, as argued by Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2011: 38), reaching success linked to internal rewards is 'at least partly nonexclusive – the achievement of excellence can be a good thing for the whole community who participate in the practice because it enriches them'. This type of success goal, and self-enrichment, incidentally, outlines an ability to derive satisfaction from oneself and a certain level of autonomy on the practitioners' part, as these rely not on somebody else's opinion, but on theirs alone. As the two scholars advocate with regard to these debates, finally, 'it is worth defending the intrinsic value of work done well, separately from the question of social contribution' (Ibid.: 37).

Proud of the Input:

Doing One's Best

The first type of success discourse related to internal-related rewards found in practitioner accounts discussed here will be one linked to input, or the effort put into one's work: one's dedication to it. This section of the chapter will first portray two practitioners' discourses linking notions of hard work and improvement to success (according to their own definitions of it), before moving on to

another variant. In this first account, Michael Goto, who has been technical medical advisor on a number of medical shows, most notably *ER*, discusses his performance and effort at work:

> it would just be me doing what I do best, and be good at it and, enjoy watching other people... see my work and enjoy it. I guess that would be success for me. Just, knowing that I did great, or well... on a constant basis. So... (…) I think I usually put more into my work than a lot of other people do.

Here, even without saying the word, the technical craft worker demonstrates a high level of pride, and ego, with regard to his performance at work. While 'other people' are mentioned as seeing his work, the focus is not so much on the output (unlike the more numerous accounts from this later section), as it is on the input, as shown by the presence and repetition of references to it: 'what I do best', 'be good at it' 'my work', 'knowing I did great', 'put more into my work'. As the practitioner declares, himself, it's about him 'knowing that [he] did great'. Furthermore, his level of performance, Goto explains, is justified by the fact that he is reportedly more dedicated to his work 'than a lot of other people'. In doing so, while still focusing on his work, the interviewee positions himself in two ways with regard to others: on the one hand, those watching his work, whom he wants to 'enjoy it', and on the other, his colleagues, compared to whom he usually 'put[s] more into [his] work'. Goto appeared very proud of his work and performance at it throughout the interview, presenting himself as dedicated to doing his best on programmes and as being disappointed when other shows did not let him do it as much as he wanted to, or had lower standards in terms of realism. For Goto, therefore, success is not about the ratings, or awards and so on, but about doing his utmost at work. 'Work itself', in fact, appears third in Herzberg's (2003) list of most important factors in

relation to job satisfaction; it is not surprising, therefore, to see it listed among the interviewees' success measures. Of course, this success goal/measurement goes beyond mere pride or satisfaction, and has further reaching consequences. As explained by Hudson (2005: 123), for instance, this 'sense of satisfaction from a job well done is also an important attribute of craftwork, helping confer and create person identity' This is because work provides 'the opportunity to "work" on oneself; to grow; to learn [...]; to become more effective as a person', as argued by duGay (1996) in his work on cultural economy. Quoting economist duGay on this, sociologist Heelas (2002: 82-3), in fact, has embedded these notions of satisfaction and improvement, or development at work within the concept of 'soft capitalism', which he defines as being 'about culture, knowledge and creativity; about identity, about values, beliefs and assumptions'.

Several other such cases have been found while undertaking the interviews. Performer Sara Pascoe, for instance, despite having a much different role and exposure, offers an answer very similar to Goto's, after giving a first success goal linked to the historical importance of the programme (as developed in a later part):

> And then, (…) just on the personal level, just personal improvement,
>
> like what we do is a craft, and... and everything you do you get better
>
> at, and then you're embarrassed of what you did five years ago and
>
> so (…) still really working hard at this, and learning how to do it
>
> better, and that's, really... kind of, intoxicating.

Here, the actor makes it clear that she is talking about success 'just on the personal level'. Similarly focusing on dedication and 'working hard', but with a slight twist: rather than implying that she is already at her best, as does Goto, Pascoe tackles the subject from the angle of improvement:

'personal improvement', 'get better at', 'learning how to do it better'. Therefore, what Pascoe defines as being 'intoxicating', here, is not so much about doing good than it is about doing – and getting – better. Unlike Goto's conception of success, then, this connects more to duGay's (1996) concept of continuous improvement: 'to grow; to learn [...]; to become more effective as a person' than to Hudson's (2005: 123) 'sense of satisfaction from a job well done', which implies a different perception of the 'self' and of one's expectations and assessment of oneself. One thing common to both accounts, however, is their lack of link to industry practices in their definitions of success, as they could have had the same type of performance-based or improvement-based discourse in any field of work.

According to Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2011: 38), in relation to Muirhead (1984: 190), the 'effort to achieve excellence' detracts us 'from other aspects of our lives'. Such an assumption can be linked with Hazan and Shaver's (2003: 362-3) work, in which they argue that there are two kinds of individuals, those who 'would choose work success over relationship success' and those who would prioritise the opposite. While the majority of the accounts presented in this chapter appear to belong to that first work-success focussed category, other elements must be taken into consideration. This overall focus on work in success practitioner discourses may be due, for instance, to the topic of the interview, set around industrial success throughout, as this must have framed the participants' mind around work-related elements (the TV industry), until this final question. This accrued statistical presence of work success discourses, therefore, is not sufficient to argue within the context of this research that television practitioners, as individuals or as a group, have a tendency to focus on work success rather than on relationship success. Even if this is clearly possible, it cannot be inferred based on this research context and would require further research, not so embedded in an industrial context, so as to gather more information on this particular topic.

Achieving Against the Odds

Such an example of discourse, very much linked to the pride of doing good work but somewhat pushing it to the 'next level', has to do with achievement and overcoming the odds. The term 'achievement' is a synonym of the word 'success' in the English language (Merriam Webster, 2015a). Two accounts illustrating this case – where professional achievement equates personal (definition of) success – will be presented here, those of executives Dave Howe and Nicholas Brown. While their accounts appear similar to those of Hesmondhalgh and Baker's (2011: 127) participants, who 'found substantial rewards in the complexity and challenge of their work' they are not so much about enjoying the recurring challenges themselves as they are about surmounting any possible obstacle in order to achieve the goals set in the first place: Syfy President Dave Howe, for instance, so defines success:

> That's a whole loads of things! (laughs) Personal success, basically, for me, is, sometimes overcoming the odds, and breaking down barriers that are presented to you. (…) Nothing gives *me* greater pleasure than achieving something that somebody, somewhere along the line, said "well, you're not gonna be able to do that, it's too expensive, it's too difficult, it's too complicated"… Success is about overcoming those barriers. And bringing other people with you.

Insisting, as the previous interviewee, that this is not about the industry, but 'personal success', 'for me' (even stressing the pronoun: 'gives *me*'), Howe defines success as 'overcoming those barriers'. This quotation, alike Goto's, is also about ego, and about proving people (who thought it would not be feasible) wrong. In addition to that, the 'I' executive, who presented a rather individualist vision

in Chapter II, provides a much more collectivist position, linking 'overcoming those barriers' to 'bringing other people with you' in his concluding statement. In saying so, Howe portrays success, not only as something personal and individual, but also as something collective; as such, the executive appears as a team player more than any other practitioner answering this question, which surely gives a much different image of him and other executives than the one usually attributed to them. Howe, nevertheless, knew that he was being interviewed for a research project, and may have attempted to give a better representation of himself, as a person, to the interviewer (see Goffman, 1959: 44).[51] Another such example of success through achievement and overcoming the odds is given by fellow executive Nicholas Brown, who offers a rather similar answer, apart from its lack of need to challenge external opinion, and of collectivist ending:

> It's... achieving what you set out to achieve. So, knowing what you're trying to do, and then doing it. (…) it may or may not *work*, in terms of other success measures, like audiences, or popularity, or whatever else. But, if you're clear about what you want to do, and then you've... done that, that; I think, it's... a good definition of... success. (…) So, yeah. Delivering what you want... to make (…) because, that, that in itself is a very hard thing to do; from the, initially where you start, here, to where you want to end up... there's lots of ways it can all go wrong, so…

Here again, success criteria, while being set within the television industry, do not appear to be linked to particular practices nor measurements in the participants' discourses, This wish to achieve, or overcome the odds, therefore, could be applied to any job, in any field of work, just as any of the

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[51] This applies, of course, to every other participant.

other elements relating to job satisfaction cited by Herzberg (2003). One could, nevertheless, attempt to make a case that an impact of industry practices on personal success measures can be visible in the second account because of the presence of the very industrially-related mention of 'audiences, or popularity'. Indeed, the mention of ratings indicates that industrial practices were not far from the mind of the interviewee during this overall very industry-minded interviewee. Ratings, however, are here relegated to 'other success measures' and thus contrasted with personal success measures, rather than incorporated into them. The participant's personal success measures relating to achieving against the odds, therefore, does appear to be as independent from industry success measures as his colleague's. The executive accounts presented here, therefore, despite having a slightly different focus than those of the non-managerial personnel cited above, feature the same overall outlook: in both cases, 'success' is not being presented as a specific goal in relation to the final results and its form or appearance, but just as doing one's best, or as finishing whatever what originally set to achieve. As such, all of the accounts presented here illustrate the 'high degree of personal investment that many in the cultural and media industries put into what they do', as pointed out by Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2011: 46). At the same time, they contrast with the other type of success discourse identified in relation to internal rewards, which focuses on the output.

b. Proud of the Output:

Success discourses based on the pride yielded from the output put an emphasis not on the effort itself, but on the satisfaction derived from the actual result, and one's opinion of it; the notion of achievement being listed as the most important element for job satisfaction by Herzberg (2003). As explained by Carbaugh (1996: 77-8) about TV industry workers, 'the workers' collective image and sense of pride is dependent upon its quality'. This evaluation of the end result, however, is personal and comes from the practitioners themselves, regardless of its reception by others. Their assessment standards, therefore, are their own, and may be very different from those of the industry (discussed in

Chapter II) or from the critics' (discussed in the following section): 'it must meet employees' standards for first-class production' (Ibid.: 78). This pride in the output, of course, could be linked to the concept of achievement, and only differs from it in this framework because of the particular focus used by my interviewees: their input on the one hand, and the end result: the finished programme, on the other. Here again, several accounts will be provided and analysed to illustrate this other type of success discourse. As such, this section will first discuss the accounts of Lygo, Way and Blake, before moving on to a subtheme within output-related pride discourses, which features a supporting – rather than central – implication, and illustrated through the accounts of Everton and Bunch; an orientation linked to the form of involvement specific to their respective job categories.

Ownership and Impact

The first account discussed here is provided by Kevin Lygo, who does not hesitate to position personal success measures against industry ones, and so demonstrates that he does not care about the ratings, as far as his personal goals go:

> a very important one to me (…) is just, genuinely, when I close the door, like the programme, or think it's a good... a good thing, I wouldn't mind bearing on my... tombstone when I'm buried. (…) we made programmes – I won't name them – that were incredibly successful, that I think were *dreadful*! We've made shows, I've made shows, over the years that, I think were really really good and I'm very proud of, but didn't really work. But I think, in the end, you continue getting the good jobs if you have made what is generally accepted as a success, ie. a ratings-success.

Here, Lygo patently exaggerates his answer through the hyperbole of the tombstone bearing the names of the programmes he had worked on/overseen. The executive also goes on record (literally), saying that some programmes on which he and others had worked – and which were 'incredibly successful' as per industry standards – were in fact '*dreadful*', and vice-versa. In doing so, the studio head actually contrasts personal quality standards and pride with the industrial 'ratings-success'. Along with those of Howe and Brown, this answer gives a much different image of executives, one in which they have their own goals and may disagree with the standard measures of success (their personal goals even appearing to be quite similar to those of the creative personnel, or *non-managerial personnel*). This again, is an image much removed from the usual, robotic and greedy one that other practitioners have of them. Furthermore, Lygo, the '*you* executive' from Chapter II who so readily made use of the *explicative-defensive* form, now goes so far as correcting from 'we' to 'I': 'We've made shows, I've made shows', in relation to programmes deemed 'really really good' in his eyes, but which 'didn't work'. Weiner's (1974) model of the attribution theory and Heider's (1958) self-serving bias, therefore, which consider that people give themselves more credit for a given achievement than to their various co-workers, for instance, are also relevant here. It is not clear, however, whether this correction from a collective form to an individual one had the purpose of taking responsibility for these ratings failure, despite thinking that they were 'really really good', or that of taking (full) credit for their purported quality. Indeed, instead of doing so in order to accredit himself with 'what is generally accepted as a success', Lygo does it to link personal success to the output and to his own assessment of what is 'good' (a highly subjective judgement, as he acknowledges: 'I think were *dreadful*', 'I think were really really good'), regardless of the actual 'ratings-success'. In so doing, the executive displays yet another unexpected side, where even those who are the most remote from, not the decision making this time but, the creative process, can actually feel ownership towards a programme, in addition to pride.

Member of super-creative personnel Roy Huggins (who created programmes such as *The Fugitive*, *Maverick* or *Hunter*), declares, quoted by Green (2014: 101): 'I have yet to meet a man who could prove a show was bad if its rating was high'. This all depends on one's standards, of course, and on the definition of 'bad', which is itself very subjective. Unlike industry measures, which rely on tangible statistics, the value that one may attribute to a programme is based on personal standards, and may vary from person to person; it is, as stated by Lygo, an opinion: 'that I think were dreadful!' Here, of course, Lygo and Huggins are not talking about the same thing: while the former was addressing his personal opinion, or 'judgement' of programmes towards which he felt a sense of ownership, the latter discusses what Frith refers to as 'valuable television (in economic terms)' (2000: 42), stating that a show enjoying ratings (thus economic) success could not be seen as 'bad'. Such a case also provides, I believe, helpful and compelling material against certain clichés, such as those which would see super-creative personnel (here, Huggins) focused on quality and inherent value, with a particular concern for 'originality, authenticity and innovation' (see Frith, 2000: 46), and executives (here, Lygo), obsessed by ratings figures, and caring for little else.

As Lygo concludes at the end of this detailed answer, however, the cold reality within the industry – with which the executive contrasts his personal success measures – is that the success measures and goals that matter are not the personal ones of the various practitioners, but the quantified and ratings-related ones of the industry, to the point that only highly rated / watched shows can get 'you' the 'good jobs'.[52] This clearly proves, finally, what this chapter illustrates: that is, the double – or parallel – success measure system of programmes in the television industry, where different sets of measures coexist. While one undoubtedly has the priority on the professional level, however, the other remains no less important for, nor talked about by the practitioners. The level of impact, or

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[52] Lygo states this while wrapping up his detailed answer, using once again the explicative-defensive device, switching from first person 'I' to second person 'you'; the latter being used eight times in this account, as soon as more pragmatic and business issues are raised, as opposed to his personal values. This further demonstrates the extent to which such a device can be encountered in the executive success discourse.

relationship, between industry practices and personal success measures is comparable to the one discussed in relation to Brown's account: here again, while industrial measures are presented as contrasting with Lygo's own standards, their presence throughout the account does testify to the degree of influence of industrial practices on the personal success discourses of practitioners.

Frith argues that viewers assess quality based on 'the technical (good acting, sets, camera work), the believable, the interesting, the spectacular, the satisfying – terms that echo but do not exactly match the professional concern for originality, authenticity and innovation' (2000: 46). This assumption, nevertheless, does not reflect the concerns of some of the professionals interviewed here, who precisely mention elements listed by Frith under the 'technical' category, and attributed to viewers. For instance, an emphasis on the pride felt from an end result deemed satisfactory, analogous to that featured in Lygo's discourse, was also made by members of primary creative personnel Ashley Way and Peter Blake. Way, for instance, gives an even longer and detailed account of his definition of success:

> *My* definition of success would be... on the *personal* level, it'd be a piece of work I was proud of, that *I* thought was... true to its original concept, something that... tells a story well; and [...] where... I don't think anything is necessarily flawless, but something where you don't see the acting, or you don't see, necessarily see or feel the storytelling, something that *absorbs* you, something that pulls you in.

Before concluding:

Me, on the *personal* level, it's something that... I feel where I've had

a significant hand in the successful storytelling [...] or you might do

something heavily compromising and you visit it a few years later,

and you look back and think "well, *actually*, that was really good!" I

think one's concept of success might change with time, as well...

with hindsight.

Matching the vocally stressed possessive '*your* definition of success' from my question, the director distinctly emphasises elements showing that it is his personal definition of success: '*My* definition', 'on the *personal* level', 'that *I* thought was'. This allows the interviewer (in this case, me) to distinguish the personal accounts and success measures from the industrial discourses of success (studied in the previous chapter in particular). In the first part of his account, Way states that what matters to him is to feel proud about the end result of the programme he has directed. More than a good result, though, Way makes use of the creative rhetoric relating to the absorbing qualities of the programme, wanting it to be so immersive that one does not 'see the acting' or 'feel the storytelling'; in other words, elements precisely relating to 'technical (good acting, sets, camera work), the believable, the interesting, the spectacular, the satisfying' (Frith, 2000: 46). The director eventually concludes that success can be attributed (or taken away) in retrospect, as one may change their opinions or standards through time. This further illustrates the earlier point on the subjectivity of success and quality criteria, the opinion or judgement of a piece being revisable through time, and in some cases even truly assessable only retrospectively, with regard to the mark potentially left on the genre (as discussed in relation to Pascoe's account later on).

Even though industrial success measures are not discussed here, industrial practices are at the very heart of this account; literally everything Way is talking about is linked to programme production.

This account, therefore, clearly shows the extent to which production practices are linked to personal success measures in the interviewee's case. Writer Peter Blake, finally, gives a rather similar answer, albeit much more concise: 'to write a show that I'm really proud of, that I think is really... of a good quality and that the audience does also wanna watch.' Here also, the primary creative personnel member discusses the pride felt with regard to the output, and links his personal goals to elements relating to his job description and to production practices. While audience interest is mentioned, this account was classified here, rather than in the following section, which focuses strictly on a programme's reception, as the emphasis here is placed on the pride derived from the end result of the work put in, 'to write a show', rather than on this additional 'also' point. While, as explained earlier, Koboldt, Hogg and Robison state that the 'value of programming is defined by viewers' (on 'what they like') (1999: 60), Frith argues that the transformations in the 1980s and 1990s (discussed in the introduction) have caused the 'new economy of exchange' not to 'just involve viewers' (2000: 41-2). Discourses such as Way's, and even Lygo's, albeit not necessarily providing evidence that their opinion on the programme's quality has any sort of impact on it or on the programme's critical acclaim, do illustrate the importance of 'quality' – notwithstanding how the latter is defined – in the eyes of various practitioners in relation to their own success goals, be they primary creative workers or executives.

These and the following accounts illustrate that the relationship of practitioners to the programme, or end result, differs depending on their role / job description within the industry. This element of distinction, however, does not relate to the usual *creative versus non-creative* debates. These three discourses, given by a studio executive, a director and a writer, respectively, all outline a feeling of ownership of the programme, and 'a sense that the success' of the programme, according to their own quality standards, was 'dependent on their input' (Cianci, 2012: 253): with Lygo, who says that he has made really good shows, Way, who wants his directing to absorbs the viewers so they do not

notice the acting or the storytelling, and Blake, who wants to write shows of good quality (all of whom pair this success measure with being 'proud'). This, of course, is linked to the position of these industry members: while one is the head of the studio making the shows, the others – who do belong to the creative side, unlike the former – are primary creative personnel, whose work has a direct, primary impact on the finished piece. As will be demonstrated in the remainder of this section, however, things become slightly different when it comes to another type of (creative) workers, whose work does not have such a direct impact; this situation becoming obvious in their personal success discourse.

Supporting Influence on the End Result

Unlike most discourses, where participants mostly focus on what they bring to the production in a principal manner, as if *they* were making the show 'good', another type of personal success discourse – still based on pride in the output – offers a very distinct perspective in which interviewees talk about what they can do to 'help' the programme's end result, and therefore feature their own work in a *supportive* manner. Costume designer Deborah Everton, for instance, presents a rather selfless attitude towards her work and what success means for her, linking it to her (work's) ability to help the actor, the director or the writer:

> Oh, that's a simple one. I feel successful [...] when I help that actor
> realise the character, when I help the director with... with the
> emotional tempo of the scene, when I help the writers express what
> they were trying to say. To me, that's successful.

This last question, compared to the more technical, industry-related ones, surprised Everton in its simplicity, whose definition of being and feeling 'successful' revolves around the notion of

'help[ing]' – a word which she repeats three times – the performers and the primary creative personnel. In other words, the interviewee does not derive success from awards, compliments on her work or her own appreciation of her efforts, but by helping the above-cited creative workers and the performers in their respective tasks. In so doing, Everton presents the work of secondary creative personnel (the notion of which was brought up earlier in this thesis due to the need for recognising and distinguishing the latter), as complementary to that of primary creative personnel and performers rather than as a more stand-alone job, as most other participants had. Music composer Velton Ray Bunch also shares a vision linked to *contribution*, but with a stronger emphasis on his own work and its impact on the final result than on its help to other practitioners per se:

> Well, my definition of success is... when I know that the music I
> have written has enhanced the picture, has helped it... Or, for
> instance, if I've written a theme song that I think really helps make
> the show more exciting, makes you want to watch the show, then I
> can, you know, I can look back and say "that was successful". (…)
> For me, it's an elusive goal, as I've said; if the picture looks good,
> and it enhances the acting, and stuff, then I consider it a success.

This account, nevertheless, is not related to making the show good, unlike the accounts of several interviewees quoted earlier, as if their work was the main component in that regard, but about 'help[ing]' the 'picture' – a term that he used several times as well – or making it 'more exciting'; in other words, 'enhanc[ing]' it. It is about adding that little touch that enhances the whole thing, the icing on the cake, from a supporting perspective. The fact that this help is not linked to other practitioners lies in that, unlike Everton's work, which takes place before the shooting, the composer's occurs after, so his work cannot technically help others during the filming, as they do not

know the music of the scene (it is not played while they do it). Bunch's contribution, therefore, cannot interact with actors and directors as Everton's work does, it can simply sublime the result, the acting included, when added in post-production. Such a measure, according to Herzberg (2003), would be linked, to a degree, to both task identity (cf. Piers, 2012: 49; Hackman & Oldham, 1980) – making costumes / composing music – and achievement – the end result. This contributing and supportive attitude, furthermore, was only present in the discourses of the two secondary creative personnel interviewed. The unique feature of these accounts is undoubtedly linked to the specificity of their jobs, and clearly reflects the supportive attribute of the activities entitled to secondary creative personnel, as opposed to those of the primary creative personnel such as writers or directors, or even performers, whose work has a more direct impact on the programme. As such, it only further justifies the need for this additional sub-division within industry workers that was made in Chapter I; the difference in terms of impact on the results and subsequent, interrelated practitioner outlooks demonstrating that primary and secondary workers do belong to two distinct categories. These two accounts, finally, illustrate the central place that industrial practices can have on practitioners' success measures (an impact less visible earlier on), the latter being intrinsically linked to their respective activities within the industry.

The personal success measures discussed in this first section all follow Williams' (1961: 44) theory about the 'delight and rest of completion' following the 'pain of the effort'. The success goals outlined here are therefore principally linked to personal satisfaction (obtained from the work or result accomplished), rather than to the programme's reception by such or such party. Nevertheless, unlike those discussed in the next following section, which primarily have to do with external rewards, the majority of the definitions of success featured here were indirectly linked to a mix of internal and external rewards. Indeed, while the wish and pride to work hard and obtain a satisfactory output is very much linked to one's personal opinion and thus strictly internal, aiming for excellence

and for an enhanced result would bring a sort of prestige, which constitutes an external reward. This wish to achieve and provide the best possible output, finally, appears to be linked to a pressure internalised 'as part of the commitment necessary to devote emotional energy and time to making cultural goods' (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2011: 186); a commitment that was clearly perceptible in the discourses of the practitioners interviewed.

While internal rewards, directly linked to one's work, were shown as a recurring and important success goal in relation to pride for a number of interviewers, it was demonstrated that some practitioners focused on the very effort put into the job, almost regardless of outcome, while others mainly focused on the end result. This section has also started to shed a different light on certain practitioners and job categories. It illustrated, for instance, that the reportedly cold and ratings / money-obsessed executives had very similar goals to other practitioners, particularly so to the 'creative workers', belonging to the non-managerial personnel, and that these goals very much contrasted with the industrial ones they professionally have to uphold. This reveals a more complex relationship between executives and industrial success than the purely linear one usually expected. Furthermore, while the discourses of some participants featured a sense of ownership of the finished product (the programme) due to their relation to the project (as commissioning executive or primary creative personnel), or featured their actions as a 'standalone' one, which people would see and appreciate in itself (as was the case with a technical craft member), the secondary creative personnel saw their work in a contributing and collaborative manner, and centred their success measures on the amount of help provided to their co-workers and to the overall result. In addition to demonstrating that primary and secondary workers do belong to two different categories, therefore, this illustrates that the relationship of practitioners to the end result differs depending both on an individual basis and one's role within the industry.

While all the accounts presented here featured a discourse focusing on 'work success over relationship success' (Hazan & Shaver, 2003: 362-3), this may simply result from the industrial context and topic of the interview in general, and thus does not allow this chapter to make conclusions on the actual frame of mind or priorities of practitioners on the matter. The manner in which the discourses were categorised also 'ranked' the amount of ambitions reflected in the participants' personal success goals; starting with those satisfied with their own work, and moving on to their impact on the final result. This but continues in the next section, when the interviewees' own opinion does not suffice, and needs to be completed (or replaced, for those who had not listed any internal goals) by the opinion of others. This also relates to the level of independence of the interviewees, of which the participants whose accounts were featured in this first section illustrated a higher amount, as their own opinion would suffice. This first section, finally, proved that the accounts presented therein featured personal success discourses and measures that had little to do – when they were not directly antagonistic – with the industrial standards of success discussed in the previous chapter. This confirms the theory developed in the introduction and later on, stating that different, parallel sets of success measures can co-exist within the TV industry among practitioners. Even if these measures were distinct from the industrial ones, industrial practices in general nevertheless had an impact on a number – though not all – of personal success discourses to varying degrees; ranging from the input-related objectives of doing one's best, which left industrial issues aside and could be applied to any sort of job, to very industrially-anchored accounts linked to one's job specificities and interactions with other practitioners. As personal success goals become external, however, a number of them tend to bear resemblance with industrial standards and measures, as the following section demonstrates.

Following this first part, which analysed accounts linked to internal rewards, based on one's own opinion, the next part will look at discourses focusing external rewards, requiring the opinions of others.

II. External Rewards, Relating to the Programme's Reception:

Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2011: 186) argue that 'the notion of satisfying, pleasing, rewarding and purposeful work – good work – as involving the creation of good products is mingled here with the importance of communicating with an audience'. This section, which seeks to complete and add some nuance to this reflexion, will argue that there are two different ways for practitioners to conceive *reception* with regard to personal success goals: on the one hand, reception from the general audience, where a sense of worth is principally derived from the overall popularity of the programme, and on the other hand, the recognition coming from certain people or bodies in particular. Both elements, of course, are forms of recognition, which is second in Herzberg's (2003) list of job satisfiers, but attach importance to different voices, or referees.

a. Popularity of the Programme:

According to Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2011: 215), 'the number of people who watch a programme is an important aspect of the value that creative workers find in their work.' The evidence provided by the data obtained during the interviews, however, suggests otherwise. Indeed, not only have a number of these 'creative workers' already discussed success goals which were primarily related to internal rewards, derived from their own work, rather than ones related to reception, but those who did give audience-related goals all belonged to a specific work category: that of managers-producers. This section will thus feature and analyse the accounts of British and American managers-producers

Bartlett, Hirst and Bellisario. John Bartlett, for instance, gives a long and detailed account (abridged, here) of what he considers to be 'success':

> I think, because of the area in which I operate, it has to be that it... it
> is very well received by a large number of people, in the audience, I
> mean, I'm not talking about critics now. If you look at my track
> record... [...] [these shows] never got the critical applaud [...]. That
> didn't bother me! I mean, I'd rather have eight million viewers than
> four good writers [critics].' [...] 'that means far more to me [...] to
> hear a proper viewer saying that, than to get a writer... a television
> critic. Cause that's what we aim for, that's the perfect... response to
> *My Family*. [...] that they really enjoy it, that they look forward to it,
> and... "oh, gosh, it's back, yes, lovely". I mean, that's... that's success
> for me.

The non-creative producer, who would later mention awards, very much focuses on ratings here, justifying this decision with 'the area in which' he operates. After unapologetically discussing the lack of critically appraised shows in his track record, Bartlett contrasts a few positive critical reviews with millions of viewers, before patently choosing the latter by paralleling 'a writer' with 'a proper viewer', giving the same numerical weight to each, this time, in a seemingly demagogical move. As he continues, however, the producer intertwines ratings figures with appreciation from the public, going as far as making the public talk. From this, one understands that ratings figures in cases of personal success goals within the industry are not simply a cold statistic linked to the channel's revenue (especially not here, in the case of a BBC programme), but also display a representation of the public's appreciation of that programme. This preference for ratings over critical acclaim,

however, can also be linked to the channel's business model; as explained in Chapter III, BBC One for instance, unlike more 'niche' BBC channels and despite being public, has largely the same goal as U.S. networks in the sense that it wants a high number of people to watch its programmes (albeit for slightly different reasons). Last but not least, of course, certain genres or types of programmes are more likely to get critical appraise than others. With regard to comedy, for instance, apart from certain cases of 'aesthetically and narratively complex' sitcoms (Knox & Derhy Kurtz, 2017: 49) using, for example, the 'single-camera style as a model for newly legitimated "classy" TV comedy' (Newman & Levine, 2012: 74), the majority of sitcoms (amongst other types of programmes, such as reality shows) are in a culturally delegitimised position (cf. Ibid.), which explains why Bartlett stated that in his professional experience, 'track record', as producer of these sitcoms, he 'never got' 'critical applaud'.

Executive producer Michael Hirst, in addition to a success goal linked to the critical appraisal of one industry person in particular (discussed further below), offers an answer very similar to Bartlett's, exclusive of the quantified, ratings perspective:

> And, secondly, I think, because ordinary people – 'ordinary' in inverted commas – talk to me about *The Tudors*, that's cab drivers, or... just people from all walks of life, that... I rate that much more, I've come to rate it much more than... critical acclaim or awards, or... anything. I just, that it's populist, that it's popular, that... people love it.

Hirst, alike his non-creative counterpart, contrasts critical acclaim with audience appreciation, and opts for the latter as well. Through the correction of his sentence, from 'I rate' to 'I've come to rate',

the creative producer appears not to have initially valued the opinion of 'ordinary people' over that of critics, and suggests that his success goals evolved through time. The presence of the term 'populist', before adjoining to it 'popular', shows the extent to which Hirst similarly likes to reach the general population and gain their appreciation. By using expressions such as 'ordinary people' and explaining how much having them 'love' his programme matters to him, the show-runner portrays himself as a man of the people, a rhetoric commonly used by other creative people to this end. This wish shared with Bartlett, for their shows to be watched (and 'enjoy[ed]', even 'love[d]') by millions of people, does illustrate the difference in terms of ambition with the success goals from the previous one. Being satisfied with their own work or the end result does not suffice: the two practitioners want millions of people to be fond of it too. This, reversely, outlines a smaller amount of independence than those citing goals linked to internal rewards, since their opinions are not enough anymore, and they must rely on others'.

One discourse, however, provides the example closest to the 'public contribution' conception of work, notably discussed by Bellah et al. (1985: 289) and Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi and Damon (2001). This account is provided by executive producer Donald P. Bellisario, who goes further than setting the mere appreciation from audiences as his personal success goal, stating that he is interested in touching them: 'My definition of success... I guess... creating a show that... I like, that *moves* people... that moves me... *That*, for me, would be a success.' While originally focusing his answer on his input and his own reaction to it (which would, at first glance, suggest categorising it in the first part of the chapter), the retired show-runner immediately moves on to a lengthy example: the mother of a cancer patient who first wrote to him after watching – along with other parents and sick children – an episode of *Magnum P.I.*, where the moral was to 'never give up' and in which the main character manages to survive. The show-runner then continues:

And she said, "when we were done, we were all hugging our children and vowing never to give up". And she kept writing to me every year, telling me that her daughter was still alive [...] "we're still not giving up"... I remember that, all the time. And that used to bring *tears* to my eyes when I read that letter. And... *moving* people and *touching* people like that, that to me makes a successful TV show. It doesn't matter... if it's a success to an audience, although *Magnum* was... But, what matters is: does it move people? Does it *change* their life? Does it bring them something that they didn't have? does it... *inspire* them? Does it *lift* their life, make it better? *That*'s a success to me.

At the end of this recounted anecdote, Bellisario goes even further than Bartlett and Hirst in their comparison, when asserting that being watched by a large number of people does not matter to him, but that it is '*moving* people and *touching*' those who do that matters to him. As such, the show-runner goes as far as using a life-changing lexical field with regard to the changes he wants to bring to viewers, and stressing such words in every one of his successive rhetorical questions: '*change* their life?' '*inspire* them? '*lift* their life'? With regard to Goffman's (1959) issues of performance and impression given, while one could hear that the executive producer was moved during this account, one may also wonder to what extent this plea on the social value of TV was not somewhat 'polished', and this wish to change people's lives with a programme, somewhat exaggerated. The degree to which the show creator declares wishing to have impact on the lives of those who watch the shows he has written and produced illustrates an even higher ambition than that stated by his aforecited peers; it is a clear impact on some audience members, rather than the overall number of people who watch them, that is presented as mattering to him.

Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2011: 219) state that 'the marketised media environment makes media workers more conscious than ever of audiences, and the need to please and attract them', arguing that 'audiences are the means by which creative workers hope to resolve their anxieties about the quality of their work.' Nevertheless, only one creative worker has expressed an interest in reaching many people: executive producer Hirst (Bellisario mentioning ratings only to state a lack of interest in the many compared to touching the few). As such, along with non-creative producer Bartlett, who shared the same wish as Hirst and Bellisaro for his programmes to be liked by wide audiences, Hirst belongs to the managers-producers category (thus not simply to the creative one). There is little evidence, therefore, based on the data provided by this research, that 'creative workers' in general look for ratings to reassure themselves about their abilities. On the contrary, the quasi totality of primary and secondary creative personnel, as well as the technical craft workers, listed internal rewards of pride and achievement as personal success measures, while ratings were only referred to by managers-producers. As such, I would suggest re-contextualising the situation and shifting Hesmondhalgh and Baker's (Ibid.) claim, in order to link it to the afore-cited workers category. Indeed, since managers-producers, who all serve as cultural intermediaries between creative workers and executives (see Miège and Garnham, 1979)[53] are the ones to whom results are demanded by the executives, they happen to be the ones primarily interested in audience reception; appreciation from the latter (and, in one case, impact on them) serving as a confidence booster with regard to their ability to deliver what is professionally expected of them within the television industry: ratings. Such a drive towards programme popularity / external rewards, finally, demonstrates a much higher impact of industrial practices on personal success goals. Ratings were not the only element relating to external rewards cited by practitioners as a personal success measure, however, the other factor shifting the focus to the opinion and appreciation of specific people instead.

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[53] Whether they belong to the creative or the non-creative side of the category (see Chapter II).

<u>b. Recognition from Certain People in Particular:</u>

The main difference between positive reception from a general audience and recognition from particular individuals or groups of individuals, whose opinion 'matters' for one reason or another, is that a certain level of standing or reputation is derived from the latter, as getting positive critical reviews or any kind of recompense, be it a prize, an award, a medal and so forth, does bring prestige. An 'award' is defined by the Merriam Webster Dictionary (2015b) as: 'something (such as a prize) that is given to someone or something for being excellent or for doing something that is admired'. As a result, and as explained in the previous section, even if it is categorised here as being on the 'reception' side of things (being an external reward rather than an internal one), awards are still very much linked to achievement and are, therefore, a by-product, so-to-speak, of the good work and realisations listed as success measurements in the previous section. As this section demonstrates, because of the frequent public consequences of such recognition through printed critics or awards attribution (except when the referent is a person whose opinion matters on a personal level to the participant), such recognition-related goals reveal a higher threshold used by the practitioners interviewed to set their success goals. These aspirations, furthermore, because of their frequent association with industry players (awards, critics, etc.), are also very much connected to industry practices. Such goals, finally, specifically related to the opinions of particular people, link to Bourdieu's (1979) concept of cultural and critical *distinction*, where a social elite ('élite sociale') would differentiate itself from the masses through a reportedly heightened taste for 'quality' or 'innovation'. This section will feature the accounts of five practitioners, coming from a variety of positions within the television industry; all of whom, nevertheless, having a writing background, except for Bartlett; these are: producer John Bartlett, writer Peter Blake, show-runner Michael Hirst, producer Vince Gerardis and actor Sara Pascoe. I will analyse the degree of importance of different

forms of recognition to a number of practitioners, and illustrate that they are, for the most part, complementary to other – primarily internal – success measures.

John Bartlett, who had positioned audience enjoyment as his main success measure, goes on to address the importance of awards in return for the 'hard work' put in:

> But it's... there's a lot of hard work that goes to it, so it's lovely when it gets the... public... And that's why, in a way, the TV Quick Awards, the two TV Quick Awards that we won, are so highly valued, because they were voted by the public. There wasn't a committee, in a dark room, somewhere... I mean, yeah, I'm not denying it would be lovely to get a BAFTA, and that would certainly be *a* measure of success, but it's not half as a measure of success as... having that audience, so big for so long... it's great.

Here again, however, Bartlett concentrates on public appreciation and contrasts the TV Quick Awards, 'voted by the public' and deemed 'highly valued', with the BAFTAs, described (along with similar such prizes) as being attributed by 'a committee, in a dark room, somewhere'. *My Family* as a programme did get other awards, actually, such as a Golden Rose at the Rose d'Or Light Entertainment Festival (in Canada), a National Television Award, and was in fact nominated for a BAFTA (without winning) in 2003 (IMDb, 2017),[54] even though the producer chose to focus on the TV Quick Awards in particular. In so doing, Bartlett continues with his 'proper viewer'-centred account, and appears to use a discursive strategy similar to the 'man of the people' one employed by Hirst, where the public's voice (and vote) is (re)presented as mattering more than the one of critics.

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[54] Certain actors from the programmes also won or were nominated for various awards (Ibid.).

Using first plural pronoun 'we', the producer gives a collective attribution and appreciation of the awards 'we won'; including himself in this victory, but without taking the credit for himself either. Then, in a manner reminding of Goffman's (1959: 40-44) discussion about interviewees attempting to promote themselves and the activities with which they are involved, Bartlett once again concludes by claiming that this critical recognition has very little meaning to him and to his aforementioned colleagues ('we'): 'it's not half as a measure of success' compared to the continued audience figures, 'so big for so long' which they've enjoyed. By linking these success measures to the industrial signs of recognition (TV awards, ratings), Bartlett's discourse – heavily impacted by 'populist' rhetoric (as was Hirst's) – further shows how entrenched in industrial practices it is.

Other genres, of course, such as dramas, have a much higher probability of being considered as part of 'quality television', and of being seen as more original, more complex, more aesthetic or more socially relevant than most of what is being offered on television (cf. Nelson, 1997; Newman & Levine, 2012; Ouellette, 2016). By being more likely to be deemed 'quality TV' and to be part of legitimating discourses around television (see Newman & Levine, 2012: 153-54), they also are more likely to get awards. Unlike John Bartlett, who produces programmes that are not usually praised by the critics (as explained earlier, cf. Knox & Derhy Kurtz, 2017: 49; Newman & Levine, 2012: 74, on the type of comedy programmes which *are*, writer (and executive producer) Peter Blake, had been working on Emmy and Golden Globe winning drama *House* (IMDb, 2016) for several years, and offered a quite distinct opinion. While the writer had focused on the pride felt from the end result, which would also be of interest to the public, he also mentioned another list of goals linked to personal success. Indeed, during a side point in our conversation (before the '*your* definition of success' question was asked), where the participant was 'daydreaming' about what would be nice to get if he created his own programme, Blake directly addressed personal success goals, although these were very different from those of the afore-discussed answer:

if I created a show, I'd, I'd like it to get good reviews, I'd love it to get to last for a few seasons, it would be nice if smart people liked it... and it would be great if it won awards, you know, if it got nominated for an Emmy. But that's, that's a lot! Not that I would ever expect all that stuff ... it would be a lot to... it would be great if something like that could happen.

Discussing what his goals would be if he actually created a programme, rather than writing for an existing one, Blake appears much more concerned with others' opinions than it seemed from his previously-analysed answer, and provides a discourse anchored in industrial context and values. Albeit mentioning a lot of elements, including the number of seasons, Blake would wish for critical acclaim: 'get good reviews', top TV awards: 'an Emmy', as well as appreciation from audience members, but not from all of them in general, some in particular: 'smart people'. This expression, however, is rather vague and it is unclear whether it refers to critics, to awards committees (awards and especially Emmys being cited right afterwards), to peers or to a specific fringe of the audience. In any case, this interest in 'smart people' further links to the discourses of 'cultural legitimation' of television, and of intellectualisation of the form (see Frith, 2000; Newman and Levine, 2012) addressed earlier; the people in question being most certainly those whom Bourdieu (1979) would call the social elite, differentiating itself from the masses through the phenomenon of cultural 'distinction' and high cultural capital measures by their supposedly better or more refined taste for elements such as quality. This very much contrasts with the opinions and success goals expressed by Bartlett, therefore, or those by self-declared 'populist' Hirst.

After discussing success goals centred on critics and awards, this section will tackle a success discourse and goal related to the opinion of a particular person. Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2011:

183), for instance, present the account of Simon, a camera operator whom they interviewed. In it, the practitioner says that one of the things that were satisfying or made him proud on a particular occasion (where he was filming 'these amazing things called vortices' on the tarmac of JFK's airport) was that 'even the air traffic control people said those shots were really amazing'. While the authors relate these air traffic people to a possible 'proxy for the audience that might eventually see the film' (Ibid.), I believe that the point Simon was trying to make was that, 'even the air traffic' controllers, who are used to seeing such things as vortices, found that the shots 'were really amazing'. In other words, Simon was not happy that someone, whoever, found these shots amazing, as the general public may, but that *these people* in particular did. In this research, a relatable example is offered by Michael Hirst. The show-runner, who had already been quoted earlier as saying that appreciation from the public, 'that's it's populist, that it's popular', was much more important to him 'than... critical acclaim or awards', had first listed the opinion of the person who 'got [him] into the business' as his measure of 'personal success':

> I... was very pleased that I... the guy who got me into this business in the first place, and who I admire above all other filmmakers, was a guy called Nicolas Roeg [...]. So, I've known [him] for a long, long time, he got me into this business, and... he... loved *Elizabeth* and he loves *The Tudors*, and for me, that's... hugely important and significant, so that's my measure of, of... personal success... Because he's a very demanding critic and thinker.

This interest in someone in particular relates to Hirst's and Blake's, who specifically value the opinion of certain people in particular, be they industry mentors (Roeg), critics (good reviews), or television awards juries (Emmy), and so relates to Simon's case (cf. Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2011:

183), as opposed to Bartlett and Bellisario, whose stated interests lie with the public. The difference with Simon's account, however, resides in the fact that Roeg, unlike the air traffic controllers, is an industry member[55]; even more so, he is the person who got Hirst into working there. As a result, even if the latter's referent is not a critic or an award jury, the show-runner's personal success goals remain noticeably influenced by industry practices.

In the last account analysed in this part, finally, producer Vince Gerardis praises a couple of programmes and states his pride of being associated with them:

> for me, a very sticky concept, like *FlashForward*, or a very sticky storytelling like *Game of Thrones* is great, and I'm proud to be associated with these shows. *FlashForward*, as an example, provided an opportunity to allow viewers to think and talk about life in a different way. *Game of Thrones* allows storytellers to take greater risks. (…) And, because these shows are unique, I consider them a success. Actually, unique and well-received, I consider them a success.

The non-creative producer, who merely talks about being 'associated' with these programmes, does not exhibit a sense of ownership or responsibility with regard to the shows. Once more with regard to external rewards-based goals, the practitioner's account is entrenched in an industrial context and values. Gerardis addresses several different chances, here, such as the 'opportunity' for the writers 'to allow viewers to think' differently – a discourse once again promoting the social value of television, alike that of fellow managers-producers Hirst and Bellisario – or programmes allowing

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[55] Or, at least, still was one at the time, a film that he had just directed having been released the same year as *The Tudors*' first series.

'storytellers to take great risks'. It is the conclusion of Gerardis' account, however, that made its inclusion in this section appear relevant. Indeed, by correcting himself, 'actually, unique and well-received', the producer clearly shows that the positive critical reception of the programmes does matter to him (as *FlashForward*, for instance, enjoyed neither long nor wide reception from the audiences, being cancelled after one season due to low ratings), and implies that, without it, he might not – or would not – have considered them a success. As was the case with Blake and Hirst, finally, focusing on the 'unique[ness]' and positive reception of the programmes again demonstrates the role of Bourdieu's (1979) notion of distinction – through 'quality' or uniqueness and the opinion of the social elite – in the interviewee's own success measures.

As shown throughout this section, the level of ambition in success goals varied from interviewee to interviewee. The highest ambition featured by the participants of this research – further still than Gerardis' uniqueness and positive reception and that of Blake's duration, critics and awards – was given by performer Pascoe, in the first part of her answer (the other part of which had to do with pride in the effort put in and self-improvement):

> I'm a *creative* person, so mine would be, kind of... (…) like
> something I said earlier, (…) so if you're part of something which...
> is *defining* or *lasting* as in, you could watch it in 20-years-time and
> still find it funny, (…) I would be really proud to be involved in
> something like that.

Here, Pascoe, who once more defines herself as a creative person (cf. Ch. III), goes as far as wishing to leave a mark in the history of television, or of comedy, at least. It is important, at this point, to specify that Pascoe had mentioned during our interview that she had done some writing as well. As a

result, upon discussing these goals and defining herself as a '*creative* person', Pascoe may be speaking not only as a performer, but also in line with her writing, and thus according to her primary creative personnel ambitions. Additionally, categorising this account is quite a challenge, as the goal of being recognised as *defining* is a grand concept that would better fit the notion of recognition, that is, critical recognition, while *lasting* could be more easily linked to the general who would still be watching it after all these years. Due to the overall scheme of things, however, these legacy goals seemed closer to the former: defining. Finally, although being perhaps the least related to the industry, this account retains an emphasis towards making impactful programmes, and demonstrates how high certain success goals can go.

The personal success discourses of the practitioners presented here, which had to do with external rewards, linked to a programme's reception rather than to the programme itself, appeared to fall into two different categories. On the one hand, there were the accounts of those concerned with the general public, who were only the managers-producers; on the other, those primarily interested in critical reviews or awards, who mostly were practitioners with a writing background and needed feedback on their creation. Awards or recognition from certain people hardly appear to be a goal in themselves, however, since, apart from Gerardis, all the practitioners mentioning those had also discussed internal-related goals, often listed as primary success measurements.

Conclusion:

This chapter illustrated the double – or parallel – success measure system for programmes in the TV industry, where different sets of measures (co)exist; one undoubtedly having the priority on the professional level, but the other remaining no less important in the practitioners' mind. It has considered the human element of the television industry: the practitioners, and analysed the elements

that motivated them. I divided it into two main parts, both revolving around pride, but made a distinction between what I call *internal rewards*, related to one's work (either the actual input, or the result thereof) and *external rewards*, based on some external opinion, and thus relying on the output's reception (whether by the general audience or by specific people or groups of people).

The first part tackled success goals related to internal rewards and demonstrated that the personal success measures of executives, alike those of primary and secondary creative personnel, were primarily related to this type of reward. This showed both incongruence between executive personal success discourses and industrial ones, and congruence between their own success measures and those of creative workers, thereby displaying an image much different from the one of the cold, money hungry executives given to them by other practitioners. A link between a practitioners' role and their personal success goals was also foregrounded. The second part focused on external success rewards, and looked at appreciation from the audience in general and at critical acclaim of certain people in particular. It has provided a clear alternative to Hesmondhalgh and Baker's theory on the key relevance of a programme's popularity to 'creative workers' (2011: 219), suggesting a shift from non-managerial personnel to managers-producers, professionally accountable to executives for rating figures. An interest in the programme's recognition by specific people was also found in a number of discourses, but primarily as a secondary goal. The content and analyses from this chapter also linked to the questions of quality and value developed by Frith (2000) and Newman and Levine (2012), for instance, demonstrating the importance of one's own concept of 'quality' (of the end result), but also the wish of certain for further cultural legitimacy or critical appraise. It has revealed, finally, that internal and external rewards are not mutually exclusive in the mind of practitioners.

I have also argued for the existence of a relationship between the preference for internal or external rewards and the amount of 'ambition' of the interviewees, or how high one raises the bar; from one's

satisfaction of their own work to the need of being proud of the overall result, up to the wish to leave a mark in TV history. Whether internally or externally-focused, all the success discourses presented here were linked to the industry, and would thus fit those of individuals who would prioritise success measures relating to work over relationships (cf. Hazan & Shaver, 2003: 362-3). These discourses and goals thus testify to what McRobbie explains about work in creative industries coming to mean 'much more than just earning a living' and taking 'over everyday life' (2002b: 99). I would not go so far as talking about 'self-exploitation' in the cultural industries, however, which sees workers loving their job so much that 'they push themselves to the limits of their physical and emotional endurance' (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2011: 6): while interest and involvement were clearly visible, no sign of reaching the limits of one's physical or emotional endurance was perceivable in my participants' discourses. What was also interesting, furthermore, is what was *not* said: as the quotes revealed, no interviewee mentioned money, rank or responsibility, for instance. While this may appear surprising, it follows current theories on job satisfaction (see Robbins S.P. & Judge T.A., 2014), like the Motivating Potential Score (Piers, 2012: 49) or Hackman and Oldham's (1980) Job Characteristics Model. What these scholars explain, in essence, is that elements linked to the task itself, such as the task identity, or significance, play a key role in motivation, performance and satisfaction (Ibid.). Perfectly in line with the data provided by these interviews, in fact, are the specific elements listed by Herzberg (2003) as the three most important to job satisfaction: achievement, recognition and the work itself (which basically constitutes, albeit in a different order, the subdivisions present within this part). The distinction between this research and that of Herzberg (2003) and others, however, lies in the fact that the latter were looking for elements of job satisfaction in particular, which was not the case, here.

The success goal which was the most remote from the industry quantified standards presented by my interviewees (and thus did not fit any of the categories presented here) was one linked to *happiness*

and well-being, rather than to *pride,* discussed throughout this chapter. The account of actor James Callis differed from all the other ones due to its particular focus: targeting happiness in general and disregarding work-related notions altogether (thus belonging to the other category of people discussed by Hazan & Shaver, 2003: 362-3). While it is possible that all but one interviewee consider success in one's life to be highly related to one's work,[56] it is also very plausible that, because of its 'open' nature, the practitioner would have interpreted this question as referring to success in life in general, while all the others would have understood it as oriented towards professional success, due to the industrial focus of the interviews. What primarily distinguishes this discourse centred on the notion of happiness is the source from which the interviewee derives this enjoyment or happiness; that is auto-satisfaction and social relationships: 'to be happy, one with oneself and with others'. This distinction, in addition to giving insight into Callis conception of happiness, similarly reveals his relationship to the industry, within this type of personal success discourses. The performer does not bring any industry-related element into his answer, and so gives the impression that his personal success definition and measures are rather independent from the TV industry. Once put into perspective with the analysis provided in this chapter, which concluded that the success goal of practitioners was to be happy at work, this account does not, in fact, differ so much from the others, Callis focusing on satisfaction / being happy as well, albeit without mentioning work. This completes this chapter's analysis and reasoning, therefore: according to this research, while for the majority of the practitioners interviewed, success is being happy at work, for all of them, success is being happy, period; notwithstanding whence this happiness comes.

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[56] What distinguishes Callis from all other participants, however, aside from his answer, is the fact that he was the only one to ask for the questions in advance (something perhaps common in certain forms of press interviews, less so in academic research). While answers to other questions were not significantly different from the rest and while I took the opportunity to ask other questions which were not already prepared, it felt important to mention again this peculiarity, as one may argue that Callis could have answered this question differently if he had not been aware of it in advance and had not had time to prepare it (nothing allows to verify such an assumption, however, and the actor's answer is relatively short and 'simple' compared to longer, more elaborate answers he had given throughout the interview).

Conclusion

Introduction:

This research endeavoured to explore and analyse the discourses of *success* within the Anglophone transatlantic television industry, through sixteen semi-structured interviews of practitioners associated with TV shows. I have looked at the different types of success discourses and at how practitioners from all the worker categories established apprehended power, as well as industrial and personal success measures, in the aim of providing a first way to talk about the notion of *success* in, at least, this part of the TV industry. This work engages with and contributes to debates within production, media and television studies, and very much revolves around social sciences in its approach and analysis, through fields such as discourse analysis and industrial sociology, while also using other disciplines, like management psychology, in order to make sense of its data.

Throughout this thesis, which attempted to re-focus the area of interest on all industry entities and worker categories, I have looked for new information that had not been researched before, while advocating for more nuance and less generalisation on the part of people-based theories, proposing a number of alternatives in various cases and at various points.

This conclusion will go back to the main interventions of this work in its first half, before moving on to express some general reflections on this thesis as whole, with regard to issues such as practitioner interviewing and data analysis, as well as the possible future developments of this type of research.

I. Main Interventions of this Research:

As explained in the introduction, in spite of a profusion of mentoring books for the general-public focusing on how to achieve 'success', there is an undeniable lack of academic research on success in general – with the exception of a number of works in psychology (Hazan & Shaver, 2003; Lyubomirsky, King & Diener, 2005; or Jacobs Bao & Lyubomirsky, 2012) – and on industrial success in particular – apart from the notable case of marketing and management, which do have a tendency to produce scholarly output on the subject (Ryans et Al., 2000; Frey & Osterloh, 2002; Smith and Raspins, 2008; Aghazadeh, 2016). As such, the absence of works on *success* is certainly critical with respect to the cultural industry, let alone the television industry. The first contribution of this thesis, therefore, lies in its very focus on 'success' with regard to industrial and personal success goals of TV practitioners, as presented and analysed through the discourses of the participating industry members. It thus provides a new, empirical and absolute first look at success in (at least, part of) the Anglophone transatlantic television industry, which seeks to act as a basis and motivation for more work on this fascinating and under-researched topic. Furthermore, among its main contributions to knowledge and to current academic debates, this thesis comes forth with new analyses and terminology: either by addressing topics through a particular prism or by presenting a new approach and the findings that pertain to it. This is the case with the categories of *non-managerial personnel* or of *primary*, *secondary* and *super-creative personnel*, as well as the *hierarchical-functional* alienation, the *explicative-defensive* form and the *defensive-you*, along with *individualist-I* and *collective-we* forms, the *commercial*, *financial* and *public discourse*, or the concepts of *internal* and *external rewards*, to name a few.

The aforementioned content of the analysis from this research was presented in a 'logical' sense within the thesis development; starting with the methodology and a new way to categorise industry workers, moving on to the way practitioners apprehended in their discourses the people deciding

what is a success and what is not, before studying the executive industrial success discourses themselves, and finally analysing the personal success discourses of the participants. Because one discovery, or intervention, is linked to the next, the part reviewing the main interventions of the research in television, production and, if I may be so bold, success studies (even though the field does not quite exist as such, yet) will thus follow the order of the chapters.

a. The Seven-Fold and the Three-Fold TV Practitioners Categorisations:

The beginning of this thesis, while engaging with and discussing different methods, illustrated the need for a new industry workers categorisation, and proposed a typology encompassing seven task-based groups. By reviewing several of the main ways to segment industry workers (such as the categories made by Barnatt & Starskey, 1994; Gomery, 2006; Hesmondhalgh, 2002; 2007; 2012; Miège & Garnham, 1979; Negus, 2002; Ryan, 1992; Tunstall, 2001), I demonstrated that there was no scholarly consensus on how to do so. Furthermore, after explaining that Hesmondhalgh's (2002; 2007; 2012) approach appeared to be the most pertinent one for this type of research, I argued in favour of the establishment of a new categorisation: one that would not consider workers in relation to their level of responsibility per se (cf. Tunstall, 2001) and that would not be too vague to address the various types of workers (unlike the two or three-fold segmentations of Negus, 2002; Miège & Garnharm, 1979 and Gomery, 2006; respectively, or to a degree the segmentation of Barnatt & Starskey, 1994; with a *Specialist Freelancers* section encompassing many jobs for just one category). Also, a categorisation that would neither be too wide (some going as far as including DVD factory workers, such as Hesmondhalgh's, 2007: 65), nor too narrow; —none of the aforementioned ones giving a specific place to some intermediary professions like costume designer, who belong neither to the primary creative worker category nor to the technical craft worker one. I have thus proposed two new whole classifications, depending on the point of reference. With the first classification from Chapter I, I redesigned (that is, segmented) the TV industry workers into seven

sections, based on work specificities, which were used throughout this thesis. These were: *primary creative personnel* (such as writers or directors); *secondary creative personnel* (a category that never existed before, and includes costume designers and music composers), *performers* (actors, singers), *technical craft workers* (like technical advisors and crew members), *super creative personnel* (writers or directors who also are show-runners of the programme), *producers* (associate producers, producers) and *executives* (either from the studios or the channels).

The second classification, introduced in the first chapter and developed in the subsequent one, made of a three-fold category, divides practitioners into three groups, based on their distance to power. It allows one to better understand and apprehend the positioning of practitioners with regard to success decision-making and decision-makers, and consists of: the *non-managerial personnel* (regrouping the first four categories mentioned above, namely the practitioners who are often linked to the creative process and lack managerial responsibilities), the *managers-producers* (including both the super creative personnel, who have creative responsibilities, and the producers, devoid of such creative attributes) and the *executives* (standing for the eponymous category). These new ways of apprehending TV industry workers as groups – in relation to the tasks involved in their job – allowed this chapter not only to better demonstrate their link to and outlook on the (success) decision-making process, but also to give consideration to some overseen categories, such as the secondary creative personnel or the super creative personnel.

b. The Creative-Based Alienation and the Hierarchical-Functional One:

My research has 'paid particular attention to any available evidence of the social group's own entrenched interpretative frameworks and self-analysis' (to quote Caldwell, 2008: 2). While much had been written on the working conditions or on the industrial mechanisms within the creative industries (Caldwell, Mayer & Banks, 2009; Hartley, 2005; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2011) – which,

obviously, are also at the heart of this thesis – fewer academic works truly focused on the manner in which the various practitioners apprehended each other; especially so, here, those deciding what is successful (and gets re-commissioned) and what is not (and gets cancelled). To quote Williams, 'the contradictions between different players with distinct views [...] were as illuminating as the consistencies' (2008: 132). The following part of my research has developed this new way of classifying TV practitioners with regard to their distance, approach and relationship to the powerbase (non-managerial personnel, managers-producers and executives). By looking at the discourses from each of these three types of practitioners with regard to their distance to power, I identified two types of alienation common to both non-managerial personnel and managers-producers. Using concepts borrowed from the romantic creative theory (Adorno, 1991; Faulkner et al., 2008) and the notions of dual economy (Fiske, 1987), of production forces and social relations of production (Marx and Engels, 1902; Enzensberger, 1974), as well from discussions on job precariousness (Neilson & Rossiter, 2005; Ursell, 2000), power distance and uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 1980), this part has looked for – and proposed – several reasons behind these antagonisms. The first of these two conflicts is what could be referred to as *creative-based* alienation. Two sets of theories could be found on the matter:on the one hand, those deeming these conflicts a 'supposed contradiction' and seeing them as a somewhat systematic discursive feature, a 'central theme in cultural workers' accounts of their situation' (Murdock, 2003: 32), and on the other hand, the romantic positions such as Adorno's, which see creativity and industry control as inherently antagonistic and constantly opposed to one another (1991). While the former doubts the veracity of the grounds behind such conflicts and the latter ascertains them, both claim a form of systematicness in these disagreements. The data gathered within this research and its subsequent analysis, however, permitted me to argue that such alienation was not simply a discursive theme but was based on factual elements (as romanticism suggests) such as past experience, based on creative issues and the frustration related to the perceived lack of consideration towards non-managerial personnel on the part of executives.

Furthermore, the analysis has showed that neutral and even laudatory accounts could be encountered in practitioner discourses – thereby demonstrating that such an antagonism was *not* automatic.

Besides, while these theories saw the conflicts between 'creative personnel' and 'control' as solely being linked to creative issues, I demonstrated that not one, but two types of issues were behind these conflicts, or alienation from the decision makers. Indeed, most academics addressing the tensions discussed there only focused on those related to creativity and control (or capital): for instance, between art and capital (Ryan, 1992), culture and commodity (Frow, 1996), culture and economy (Ray & Sayer, 1999), culture and commerce (Slater & Tonkiss, 2001), creativity and commerce (Negus & Pickering, 2004), or art and commerce (Banks, 2007). As a result, they were leaving out of the equation another important type of tension, or alienation, which I have labelled the *hierarchical-functional* one, and which was expressed by practitioners coming from within – and beyond – the non-managerial personnel category. After so addressing *creative-based* alienation (or conflicts), therefore, I looked at what I have deemed the *hierarchical-functional-based* conflicts; resulting, notably, from the frustration linked to the level of job uncertainty in the industry, and the financial consequences for the people involved when obscure success criteria would cause a programme to get cancelled, or not selected by the decision-makers. The term 'functional' was adjoined because this conflict is not solely hierarchical: indeed, it is not against all executives in general, such as those without commissioning power, but against those who do. As such, this alienation is inherently linked to the function giving them authority to commission or cancel programmes, hence the dual wording. Furthermore, as aforementioned, the same two types of conflicts were found among the intermediaries: the managers-producers (the only missing element, in fact, being praiseful accounts). I explained how such an element could be transposed to practitioner discourses when the practitioners in question were not part of what is generally considered as 'creative workers' (that is, non-managerial personnel, along with super creative personnel), but belonged to this managerial-

based category, by studying the conflicts featured within their accounts. This allowed the chapter to articulate a bipolar vision of managerial personnel, where creativity was the arbiter, and thus to further strengthen the distinction presented above between the super creative personnel and the producers. In addition to doing so, this part of the research allowed me to categorise – and distinguish from one another – the types of conflicts existing between non-executives and executives, as well as to study and elaborate on the reasons behind them.

c. The Explicative-Defensive Discursive Form:

The analysis subsequently moved on to the case of the executives themselves, who, unlike the two previous groups, were not talking about other people, but about themselves (their accounts taking the form of self-reflection). Aside from presenting a very different image from the one given to then, it demonstrated that there were two main ways for executives to talk about their activity and themselves: one merely presenting the situation (through three possible angles: collectivist, individualist, or neutral) and one where executives patently tried to protect or defend themselves and some of their activities before the interviewer. When making use of it, executives appeared to be far from attempting to present an idealised version of themselves or their work, which makes room for a key variation from Goffman (1959: 44) and Caldwell (2008: 14), who see interviewees as nearly always self-serving in their accounts. The analysis of this defence mechanism common to all the executives interviewed, which had never been discussed in media, production or television studies, builds on the key work of sociologist Goffman (1981) on *footing* (occasionally combining it to the work of psychologists Weiner, 1974 and Heider, 1958), and in so doing provides concrete applications and specific uses of the verbal defence mechanism in the particular case of the TV industry; but, obviously, applicable elsewhere. This primarily-defensive discursive form, which I have termed the *explicative-defensive* form (or *defensive-you*), consists in placing the interlocutor at the heart of the action through reversing the footing (see Goffman, 1981: 128) and in using pronoun

'you' whenever the executive believes that the content of their account about their activities or themselves is either too negative or too financially-minded. This form was not only used in reference to finance, there, but to anything which could be seen as negative; a public channel executive, for instance, reversed the footing as soon as elements such as ratings were addressed, until more benevolent aspects (closer to their channel's discourse and mission statement) were discussed. As such, this defence mechanism allows executives to continue discussing various topics, including those which could be perceived as 'negative' by their interlocutor, by placing the latter ('you') rather than themselves, at the centre of the action, before usually switching back to the previous presentational way (we, I, they) as soon as it becomes positive again.

Presenting the three descriptive ways available for executives to talk about themselves and addressing the discursive defence mechanism utilised by executives with its forms and purposes offered an alternative to the academic approaches seeing individuals as attempting to offer an idealised version (such as the positions of Goffman, 1959: 44 and Caldwell, 2008: 14), by illustrating a different attitude. This demonstrated, therefore, that a range of approaches (and, for interviewees, motivations) was possible, including one more related to damage control than to self-promotion. This is not to say that self-promotion could not be found among such discourses, however. This was demonstrated in Chapter III, where the aforementioned *defensive you* appeared to gain another facet: not simply used as a defence mechanism when talking about money anymore, it was also seemingly utilised by a participant towards a more self-serving purpose, thus illustrating that it could also be used as an indirect manner for executives to credit 'success' to themselves. There, using reverse footing *you*, rather than naming a given person in relation to those responsible for the success of a programme followed Weiner's (1974) version of the attribution theory in relation to the self-serving bias discussed by Heider (1958), theories which consider that individuals are inclined to primarily attribute success to internal factors and to blame failures on external ones, as well as to giving

themselves more credit for a given achievement than granting it to their various co-workers. As such, this cross-chapter analysis allowed the discovery and analysis of a discursive device which has been shown to be 'switched on' by the participating executives whenever they thought that the content of their discourse might shock, for one reason or another (and, on one occasion, to imply that credit for a successful result was due to them).

d. The Three Types of Discourses and Domination of Ratings in Success Goals:

I have moved on to demonstrate that three types of industrial executive success discourses could be found: the commercial, the financial and the public discourse, reflecting the three main types of entities, or business models, existing within the Anglophone transatlantic television industry. This has permitted this part of the thesis to consider the links between industrial practices and imperatives, and the way these were (re) presented in success discourses. This part thus provides TV and production studies scholars insight into how executives were shaping the roles of certain measurements as well as the way they chose to represent themselves and their actions and responsibilities. This inside look into professional discourses of success also demonstrates that, in spite of one common element subsisting throughout, there is diversity in terms of entities, discourses and priorities, each of the three groups identified having one way, proper to them, to talk about success.

The commercial channels, funded by advertising sales, displayed what I termed 'the commercial discourse'. I explained that audience measurements appeared to be the primary success factor in this discourse. This was done, nevertheless, while making the distinction between linear ratings and digital ratings, which allowed the analysis to establish the extent to which the nature of audience (monetary) 'value' had changed in the TV industry due to technological advances (cf. Buzzard, 2012) that have caused 'the economics of television' to no longer be 'aggregated around the channel' (Johnson, 2012: 38). As such, it foregrounded the plurality of opinions within the executive

industrial discourse, some of the interviewees normalising linear ratings over digital ones and seeing online access to content as a threat, others trying to equate them and seeing technological advances as an opportunity. This analysis also insisted on making a distinction between overall ratings and demographic-minded results, and on the fact that audience goals varied from channel to channel. The TV studio executive discourse featured only one success measure: financial revenue; the accounts analysed thus allowed the research both to concretely illustrate and to add nuance (see Banks, 2007: 120) to Hesmondhalgh's viewpoint that 'like all businesses', the entities comprising the cultural industries the TV industries 'have an interest in making big profits' (2002: 3). It was also demonstrated that the financial discourse presented success measures through a mathematical reasoning, amounting to a mere production-cost-versus revenue equation. This showed, therefore, that the goals set for ratings, and thus ad sales (as well as other types of revenues in general) were not fixed, but depended on the production cost of each show (unlike for commercial channels). I then showed that public channels accounts, very different from the previous ones, offered a very benevolent discourse, featuring new measurements. The financial aspects were entirely absent from it, replaced by notions giving an altruistic dimension to the public sector, before it was nevertheless confirmed in these accounts that ratings were the main success criteria (and also helped selling the programmes abroad better). This showed that this benevolent discursive theme, relatable to the long-time intent of public service to measure and maximise audience satisfaction (cf. Silvey, 1944, 1974; Emmett, 1968; Keegan, 1980), was overshadowed by an actual emphasis on ratings, and that the executive public discourse, therefore, did not appear to be any less mindful of the image given off than one would expect the commercial or financial discourse to be. At this point, I explained that such a commercial focus, nevertheless, had to be understood within specific context of public service broadcasting in the UK, thus the neo-liberal politics put into place in the 1980s and 1990s (see O'Malley, 1994; Williams, 1996), that caused British television to stop being seen necessarily and fundamentally as a public service (O'Malley, 2009: 4). I hence argued that these commercial

endeavours were caused by public broadcaster's need to ensure its survival in case of a change in policy. At the same time, I demonstrated that this previously established importance of high ratings for a public service broadcaster like the BBC (the special case of which was presented through various institutional reports: BBC, 2005; BBC Trust, 2007; House of Commons, 2010) resided in the fact that – aside from showing that numerous license-fee payers were satisfied with the content – it suggested to overseas customers that the shows being offered were a worthwhile investment This, of course, would lead to higher sales and revenue for BBCW, and therefore for the British Broadcasting Corporation, thus further securing its financial independence. When discussing premium channels at an earlier point, finally, it was similarly established that the audience remained the key factor to assess the success of programmes for them as well.

Resultantly, in addition to reaffirming the place of various other forms of television other than the (often normalised) commercial-based channels, this part of my research proposed a new way of cataloguing industry constituents and executive success discourses alike. Furthermore, the lack of reference to notions related to quality or value on the part of executives in spite of the prominence of these debates in academic discourses has illustrated Frith's argument that the industry 'is less and less organized around "quality"' (2000: 49) is still relevant and applicable to this day. At the same time, this part of the research and the new data it presented have also offered further material which contrast with more idealistic assumptions such as Davis and Scase's, stating that 'performance criteria are linked to evaluation by peers, critics and audiences rather than purely quantitative indicators' (2000: 53-4). This chapter, finally, was the first such work to look at success discourses and measures across all TV channels types and, thus, was the first to so demonstrate the superiority of audience figures, whether ratings or demographics, as *the* success assessment method for any type of channels, premium and public ones included, while acknowledging that a range of variation in terms of industrial – and – personal perspectives also existed.

e. The Domination of Job Satisfaction and Happiness in Personal Goals:

The last part of the thesis focused on the practitioners' *own* definitions of success, rather than the industry's, thereby giving a first insight into the interactions between industrial practices and personal success discourses. Alike the analysis and discussion of the *explicative-defensive* discursive form, this part – in addition to engaging with and contributing to the fields of production and television studies – also engages with the field of discourse analysis as well as with psychology. While the former type of analysis intervened in the part of sociology that had to do with the footing and the representation of the self, this one sought to add to management psychology and to psychology debates on success and happiness. The reflexion from this final chapter, which made use of works from various disciplines also considered the human element of the TV industry, namely the practitioners, by analysing what moved them and motivated them. After reviewing the current sets of debates, I argued for a more measured standpoint and supported positions linked to the intrinsic value of work well done for its own sake, alike Muirhead's (2004: 151) and Hesmondhalgh and Baker's (2011: 37), while incorporating concepts such as Maslow's *self-actualisation* (1945) or Hackman and Oldham's (1980) *Job Characteristics Model*, which allowed the research to identify certain discursive patterns among workers categories. I sustained that most of the interviewees' personal success goals focused on pride, and made a distinction between what I call internal rewards, linked to the pride derived from one's own work (either the actual input, or the result thereof) and external ones, based on external opinion and thus relying on the output's reception (whether by the general audience or by specific people or groups of people). The analysis of these discourses also foregrounded issues linked to the notion of *quality* and *value* (cf. Frith, 2000, Newman & Levin, 2012), and hence demonstrated the importance of one's own concept of 'quality' (of the end result); not just for the audience members (cf. Koboldt, Hogg & Robison, 1999: 60), but for the practitioners themselves as well, together with a wish for further cultural legitimacy, or critical appraise, for some

of the participating practitioners. The difference in focus between internal and external rewards (that were not necessarily mutually exclusive in the mind of practitioners) could also be related to the interviewees' amount of independence and 'ambition'. Ranging from getting satisfaction from their own work to requiring global approval from the public or awards committees (up to, in the last case, the wish to leave a mark in TV history), they were occasionally clearly linked, I argued, to the practitioners' position. Looking at one's position within the industry also allowed this section to illustrate, for instance, that the secondary creative workers interviewed linked their success goals to supporting the work of others (primary creative personnel or performers), or that managers-producers, who serve as intermediaries between non-managerial personnel and executives (Miège and Garnham, 1979), were not only primarily concerned with the audience's opinion, but were the only ones to present it as a (personal) success measure. This evidence provided a clear alternative to Hesmondhalgh and Baker's theory on the key relevance of a programme's popularity to 'creative workers' (2011: 219), suggesting a shift from non-managerial personnel to managers-producers, who are professionally accountable to executives for bringing ratings.

It was also demonstrated that most success discourses within this chapter, whether internally or externally-focused, were linked to the industry. Indeed, being based on pride brought by work, all were impacted by industrial practices to a certain degree (apart perhaps from the discourses that focused on good work or self-improvement, which did not address the industrial context at all and could be transferred to any line of work, teaching and research included). Furthermore, a close parallel was made between the interviewees' answers and the current theories of management psychology and job satisfaction (see Robbins S.P. & Judge T.A., 2014) relating to the Motivating Potential Score (Piers, 2012: 49) or to Hackman & Oldham's (1980) Job Characteristics Model, which explain that elements linked to the task itself – such as the task identity or its significance – play a key role in motivation, performance and satisfaction (Ibid.). A clear correlation could be established, for instance, between the data provided by these interviews and the elements listed by

Herzberg (2003) as the most important to job satisfaction, the three first ones being achievement, recognition and *the work itself*. This perfect parallelism resulting from the data resulting from this research allowed me to formulate the theory that a number of industry practitioners tend to link their own success goals to measures of job satisfaction. In other words, according to almost all of my participants, 'success' is being happy at work.

This notion of success derived from work can be linked to Hazan and Shaver's theory about the attitudes and priorities of people with regard to success (2003: 362-3). Their theory outlines two types of people with regard to success measures and priorities: those for whom 'work has a greater overall effect on their happiness than do relationships', and those for whom 'relationship success' has a greater effect on happiness than 'work success' (Ibid.). By putting the two accounts linking success to happiness and well-being (rather than to work-related pride) in perspective with the afore-discussed analysis, finally, this first look into TV practitioners' success measures revealed that for the majority of the practitioners interviewed, success meant being happy at work, while for all of them, success signified being happy, period; regardless of where that happiness came from. Resultantly, the second half of this thesis illustrated the double success measure system in the television industry, where different sets co-exist; one clearly having the priority on the professional level, the other remaining important in the practitioners' mind, nonetheless.

f. The Lack of Dissimilarity between the US and the UK TV Industry:

Finally, with regards to the presence of distinctive elements in terms of entities, discourses or success goal between the British and the American television industry, very few geographically-based differences were encountered in the course of this research. Indeed, aside from the respective place and weight of public versus commercial television within each of these two industries (already explained and historically-contextualised in the Introduction), the only divergence that could be

encountered would be the utilisation of audience feedback, in terms of its 'chronological place' within the chain of production, and of the entity using it. I am referring, here, to the way audience members are asked for their opinions on a given programme or episode, after it has aired, by public channels in the UK (with the Appreciation Index, discussed in the last part of Chapter III), and before the pilot episode airs, as a testing process, by channel using a commercial model (networks, cable/satellite) in the US (through the pilot screenings mentioned in the second and third parts of Chapter II). This particular case, however, is still very much linked to the already-established emphasis of each model in their respective industry.

Based on research findings, therefore, this thesis cannot claim to have encountered a wealth of evidence, or examples, in terms of notable differences between the two geographically distant industries. But this lack of proof of national differences is also, in effect, a proof of lack of national differences, at least insofar as the practitioners interviewed are concerned. While these results were not the ones originally expected by myself and, I assume, by others, they are just as interesting, if not more. Another point of this thesis' contribution, therefore, was the fact that it has shown the US and UK TV industries, through its practices, discourses and practitioners, to be much less different or entrenched in national specificity or culture, that academics might have thought, basing ourselves on the respective history and development of these two industries.

To summarise it in two sentences, therefore, this thesis engages with and intervenes in the fields of production studies and television studies, as well as in sociology and psychology, and demonstrates a very a high level of similarity between the US and the UK industry; it has argued that practitioners should be divided into seven task-based categories, demonstrated that the non-managerial personnel and the managers-producers felt both creative-based and hierarchical-functional-based alienation towards the decision makers, and that the executives made use of a defence mechanism when

(re)presenting themselves before others. With regard to 'success' discourses per se, my research demonstrated that three industrial discourses could be found, each related to an industry constituent: the commercial, the financial and the public discourse, even though all focused on audience figures; while the personal success goals of the interviewed practitioners mostly focused on pride, either derived from internal or external rewards, whilst all revolved around satisfaction and happiness.

II. General Reflections on the Research:

a. On This Research:

Interviewing Practitioners

As I was explaining in the methodology chapter, qualitative interviews, perhaps unlike quantitative ones (let alone some forms in particular, such as surveys), are a two-way street. Of course, I was the one asking most of the questions and my participants were the ones answering, but they also did not hesitate to share queries of their own, either requesting more precision about a question when they felt it was needed, sometimes pointing to a particular subject, or even asking me what other participants had answered about a particular point. Furthermore, as assumed, based on Mills' research, my interviewees often asked for a confirmation (2008: 150) – at least at the end of the interview – that what they had said was 'all right' and that they had been helpful.

Aside from a possible shyness or hesitation, the setting of an interview, linked to the investigation in itself, may have direct implications on the interviewees' disposition and willingness to talk. While the researcher, of course, has a responsibility to create a climate of trust during the interview (cf. Boeije, 2010; Morse & Field, 1996), no matter how comfortable the participant may have been, the presence of a PR representative in the room would, surely, have a censorial or repressing impact on the conversation. By that, I do not only mean that the PR person may have prevented an interviewee

from discussing certain topics, but also that their mere presence would have caused the participant to feel less at ease with tackling particular topics, even if these may not have been problematic for the PR department as such. This issue was, fortunately, avoided by insisting on the academic framework of this research when contacting my interviewees or their assistants.

Analysing the Data

With regard to analysing and discussing the data gathered, I have been advocating, throughout this thesis, for more nuance in certain approaches (like romanticism, for example). A similar stand was taken with regard to generalisations and systematisation (see for example my comments in this conclusion and within the thesis on the standpoints of Murdock, 2003; Goffman, 1959 and Caldwell, 2008), where what may be discrete, or occasional utterances are seemingly turned into rules of thumb. For instance, different cases also suggested that Goffman's concept of 'idealized version' (1959: 56) and Caldwell's concept of self-promotion (2008: 14) are distinct, may not both apply to the same cases, and cannot be used in a generalised manner either. I believe that is in such case-by-case occasions that one may retrospectively follow Goffman (1959) and suggest a calculating attribute in an account, for example, rather than systematically pre-applying it to everything any interviewee might say and do.

Furthermore, based on my education background, which includes business studies, I argued in favour of a certain balance between social theory and the study of industrial practice. Indeed, I believe that research projects involving industries should always be undertaken within a financial and / or marketing framework and not just a social one, since approaching a subject from only one perspective simply causes one to stray from the basic facts. I would, therefore, stand in favour of both Sayer's realist social ontology, which sees social reality as made of both abstract social structures and concrete events (2000), and with Fairclough's approach, that states that 'in order to

avoid an idealistic construction that is overly reliant on verbal argumentation, people's claims have to be confronted with the real world' (2013: 261); albeit not in a doubting sense that would imply that the person is perhaps not being truthful, but from a position (as far as I was concerned) that would seek relevance and precision by adding context to discourses. Linking both perspectives, therefore, I would go so far as to argue that this should also be done with academic theorisations, which is also what this thesis attempted to do. It would thus be a positive step: firstly, to follow in the steps of Mayer (2008), Mills (2008) or Christmann (2009) in interviewing professionals ourselves as part of our empirical research, so as to facilitate making a connection between academic and practitioner expertise (Derhy Kurtz, 2014: 2). And secondly, to contextualise, contrast or compare – rather than to confront, as Fairclough (2013) suggests – discursive constructions (academic ones included) with reality in a way that would fit Sayer's (2000) realist social ontology (as was done, for instance, when re-contextualising the commercially-minded (or reminiscent) actions and discourses of the BBC within the history of public service broadcasting in the UK and the past threat to the license fee which caused the BBC to seek self-sufficiency, by considering the application of Goffman or Caldwell's theory on a case-by-case basis, and more generally by comparing or linking practitioner discourses to academic theories (and vice-versa) and / or to the wider industrial, economical or historical context). I believe, therefore, that applying this philosophy not only to practitioner discourses, in relevant cases, but also to scholarly theorisations would enrich the academic debate and further ground it into 'the real world', as Fairclough (2013: 261) would say; that is the wider actual, practical context.

b. On the Future Possibilities:

I stated in the Introduction of the thesis that I wished to 'help bridge the gap between academic expertise and industrial expertise, and move beyond the status quo resulting from it' (paraphrasing Cornea, 2008: 118). As I went on, I explained that by doing so and by making sense of an 'industrial

idea of *success*', I hoped to develop a new framework for the latter, and therefore offer the academics interested in this type of research a first way of approaching the notion of *success* within the television industry. I do hope that this will be the case, and that this thesis has served its purpose, but I am also well aware of the fact that, even though the data and their analysis allowed several wider hypotheses to be made, wide-ranging conclusions on the industry in general could not be made (as is always the case with qualitative research projects involving a limited number of interviewees to study an entire industry, or even several ones).

As such, this work invites further projects to be undertaken. Related research projects could include, therefore, conducting research on 'success' on a greater scale, using a representative sample, in order to confront the results obtained and assess whether generalisations would apply to the five main findings outlined in this thesis and in its conclusion. Furthermore, undertaking the same type of research but on different scales through two distinct research techniques would, in turn, allow a productive discussion on the differences in methods and results between qualitative and quantitative approaches. Also, because drawing conclusions on personal 'success' may be limited due to the very industrially-focused character of the interviews that may have impacted on the participants' frame of mind when this question was eventually asked, it would be interesting to undertake further research focusing on success in general rather than on the industry in particular, in order either to make or refute the proposed (and plausible) connection to job satisfaction and happiness in general.

Studying further certain worker categories, such as the *super creative personnel* category brought forth in this thesis, would also bring valuable information: not on success or discourses, this time, but on the particularities and positioning of that group in relation to others (for instance, in relation to the *primary creative personnel* and the *producers*, two groups with which the *super creative personnel* share job specificities). In addition to allowing to learn more about the relationships between

different worker categories, it would permit to gain knowledge on the powerful author status attributed to show-runners (Mann, 2009: 102; Kompare, 2011: 98) and on the impact this status can have on the production of the programme. Similarly, focusing on the case of secondary creative personnel – also singled out as a specific category in this study – would allow researchers to further examine the supportive attitudes of this specific type of practitioners with regard to the primary creative personnel and to performers in particular, both in terms of actual tasks and in terms of personal success measures, thereby fostering reflection on the links existing between their occupational category and their relationships with other practitioner groups, as well as how this impacts their own success objectives. The same principle and research interest could be applied, of course, to any of the task-based *or* power-distance-based categories established in this thesis.

From an academic perspective, discourses of 'failure' were no more studied than those of 'success', neither was the notion in general (with respect to the television industry). As mentioned in the introduction, for instance, Hesmondhalgh and Baker, who conducted a number of qualitative practitioner interviews, mentioned 'the production of success and failure' (2008: 107) in three cultural industries (Television, Music and Journalism), but without developing either concept. I believe, nevertheless, that the study of failure in the industry is no less relevant than that of success. Since only one out of the sixteen practitioners interviewed for this research had really tackled the notion of 'failure' in the industry, there appears to be an apprehension on the practitioners' part when it comes to addressing the topic, which suggests that it may even be 'taboo' to talk about certain subjects. Consequently, in order to find out the reasons behind this overall silence on the matter and to obtain a more comprehensive overview of success – and lack of – in the industry, it would be interesting to study the discourses of 'failure', which would similarly allow researchers to make use of – and contribute to – various interrelated academic disciplines, while offering valuable insight on

the practitioners' frame of mind and on the affective and psychological issues related to the semantic

fields and mental representations of both failure and success.

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Success and the TV Industry:

How Practitioners Apprehend the Notion(s) of Success in their Discourses within the Anglophone Transatlantic Television Industry

Appendix

Benjamin William Lloyd DERHY KURTZ

Submitted for the degree of PhD in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities,

School of Art, Media and American Studies, (FTM), University of East Anglia 2018

I. Interview Request Template:

Benjamin Derhy Kurtz
Faculty of Arts and Humanities
University of East Anglia
b.derhy-kurtz@uea.ac.uk

<div align="center">Dear name,</div>

I am writing to request assistance from you in an academic research project I am pursuing. I am a doctoral researcher in Film and Television studies, whose research centres on the Television industry. My current manuscript project, namely, my Ph.D. thesis, explores the discourses of success within the transatlantic, anglophone Television industry, and takes interest in the different perspectives of the industry members. Also, by offering an industry-based definition, this research aims at acquiring a better understanding of television institutions while attempting to uncover how such a subjective notion as 'success' can actually be delineated and even 'quantified' (for instance, how assumptions are made on which shows should be 'successful' before commissioning a series).

The research is thus primarily based on a few 'expert interviews'. The different answers collected are then analysed and contrasted in a qualitative manner. Since there is no scholarly agreed definition for 'success' in the industry, my research intends to discover a new framework of the latter, and thus to offer future academics a new way to talk about the notion of success for television programmes. It will also have an important educational value, as it will be able to both explain to current students the television industry processes and values when it comes to success, and, for future generations, to present a 'snapshot' of the situation as it was then, through the eyes of those interviewed.

My request is the following: I seek the opportunity to set up a telephone interview with you, due to your successful background and considerable knowledge and experience in the industry. Also, your involvement in international successes such as ... and ... is, in my opinion, particularly interesting for this project. Add personalised complimentary comment.

I stress the professional and academic nature of my work, carefully following the rules and ethics of my university. I am currently doing my thesis research at the University of East Anglia, where my supervisors are Senior Lecturer Dr. Brett Mills, Head of school (Film and Television Studies), and Reader Dr. Su Holmes, Director of Postgraduate research for Film & Television Studies at UEA.

Thanking you for your consideration of my request, I remain at your entire disposal.

<div align="center">Very sincerely,</div>

<div align="center">Benjamin Derhy Kurtz</div>

II. Interviews Timetable:

(the work and private contact information were deleted; only the workplace address were left)

<u>**Telephone:**</u>

<u>Peter Blake</u>: co-Executive Producer / Writer of *House* - also Writer for The *Practice*. *email address* 12/05/11 at 21:00 (12pm PST). Home: *phone number*; Cell: *phone number*.

<u>Stephan Pehrsson</u>: Cinematographer on *Doctor Who* and *Hustle*. 12/05/11 at 22:00 (9pm BST). Home: *phone number*; Cell: *phone number*.

<u>Velton Ray Bunch</u>: Music Composer on *Quantum Leap* and *The Pretender*. *email address* 09/06/11 at 18:00 (9am PST). Home: *phone number*.

<u>Dave Howe</u>: Syfy President. *email address*. 17/06/11 at 18:00 (12pm EST). NBC Conference call (paid by NBC): *phone number* (password code: *code*).

<u>Mike Goto</u>: Medical technical adviser on *ER* and *Torchwood*. *email address* 19/06/11 at 21:00 (12pm PST). Home: *phone number*; Cell: *phone number*.

<u>Deborah Everton</u>: Costume designer on *Battlestar Galactica*. *email address* 23/06/11 at 21:00 (12pm PST). No landline. Cell: *phone number*.

<u>James Callis</u>: Actor *Battlestar Galactica, Eureka*. (Agent, Louise: *email address*). 28/07/11 at 12:00 (11am BST). Called me.

<u>Vince Gerardis</u>: Producer *Game of Thrones*, *FlashForward*. 11/09/11 at 20:00 (11am PST). No landline. Office number routes to cell: *phone number*.

<u>Donald P. Bellisario</u>: Creator/Writer/Producer/Director. 28/03/12 at 20:00 (11am PDT). (Assist.: *email address*). *phone number*.

<u>James Hedges</u>: CFO and Executive VP of *ABC Television Network* & *ABC Television Studio*. 07/06/12 at 17:00 (8am PDT). (*email address* - assist.: *email address*).

<u>Ashley Way</u>: Director on *Doctor Who*, *Torchwood*, *Merlin*. *email address* 17/07/12 at 11:30 (10.30am BST) *phone number*.

<u>Sarah Pascoe</u>: Actress on *Twenty Twelve*, *Being Human*. (agent, Nicola: *email address*) 17/08/12 at 14:00 (1pm BST) *phone number*.

Face-to-face:

John Bartlett: Producer of *My Family*. *email address*, *phone number*
19/05/11 at 10:30 (BST) - DLT 10 Bedford Square WC1B 3RA.

Michael Hirst: Creator / Writer / Executive Producer of *The Tudors email address*
19/05/11 at 14:30 (BST) – *address* (his club) – met on the steps of the English National Opera, 33 St. Martin's Lane WC2N 4ES.

Kevin Lygo: Managing Director at ITV Studios. *email address* (Assistant: *email address*, *phone number*) 21/02/12 at 12:00 (BST) - 'London Studios' ITV plc, Southbank London SE1 9LT (12th floor). Tube: Circle (yellow) line to 'Temple', then (right) Waterloo Bridge..road, then right: studios.

Nicolas Brown: Director of Drama at BBC. (Assistant *email address*, *phone number*) 10/05/12 at 11:30 (BST). 'White City' BBC Media Village (Lighthouse Building, 1st floor) London 12 7TQ. Tube: Circle (yellow) line to 'Notting Hill Gate' (towards west) then Central (red) line to 'White City' (dir. Ealing Broadway or West Ruislip).

III. Interview Questionnaire:

Questionnaire: Nicholas Brown

- Before starting the interview as such, I am required by my institution to ask you a series of questions: **And, by the way, you can withdraw from the research at any stage.**
  - Do you consent to be involved in this research?
  - Do you consent to be recorded?
  - Do you consent for what you say to be distributed (in printed form: in academic works, for instance, but also in general (including trade papers and such), and orally, by presenting papers and teaching)?
  - Do you consent to be named in this study?

- You've been working as Director of Drama Production at the *BBC* since 2006, which is why your perspective is so valuable for this research.

- Do you think of success, or result as such when commissioning, or recommissioning, shows such as *Doctor Who* and *Upstairs Downstairs,* or others, such as *Merlin* or *The Shadow Line*? Is it a pressure on you?

- Why do you think these shows, which are quite different from one another, in particular *Doctor Who* and *Upstairs Downstairs*, are so successful?

- *Doctor Who* is probably the most successful British programme of these past seven years, worldwide. That said, which other TV series do you currently consider to be successful?

- In your opinion, what makes a television series successful in the UK nowadays?

- How about internationally? What more do you think it needs to reach the world?

- Does the notion of success, in general, in the TV industry, consider the international factor? If so, to which extent?

- Is there a certain list of goals that are set for a given show, before it starts? If so, which ones?

- Talking about early expectations... Could you explain me how assumptions are made on which programmes will be successful and which won't before they even air?

- Once it's on the air, still from an industrial perspective, so to speak, what are the criteria coming into the equation when it comes to deeming a show successful or not? In other words, how is success measured/quantified?

- Finally, what would *your* definition of success be?

Nicholas Brown – Transcript (10/05/12 –in person- 45 minutes)

BDK: So, before starting the interview, as I said, I'm required to ask you a few consent questions.. by UEA actually...

NB: Okay.

BDK: ... and by the way, you can withdraw from the research at any time. Do you consent to be involved in this research?

NB: Yes.

BDK: Do you consent to be recorded?

NB: Yes.

BDK: Do you consent for what you say to be distributed; in printed form: in academic works for instance, or in general, in trade papers and such, and orally, by presenting papers and teaching?

NB: Yes!

BDK: Thank you. And, do you consent to be named in this study?

NB: Yes!

BDK: Brilliant, thank you. You've been working as Director of Drama at the BBC since 2006, I believe...

NB: That's right.

BDK: ... which is why your perspective is so valuable for this research. So, do you think of success, or result as such when you, personally, or the BBC in general, commissions, or recommissions, shows such as, for example, Doctor Who and Upstairs Downstairs – or cancels it, in that precise case – or others, such as Merlin or The Shadow Line? Is it a pressure on you?

NB: Yeah, I don't actually commission.. there's a, there's.. The way it works with the *BBC* is that commissioning and production are separate. So, the departments I run, we develop ideas, we pitch them to the commissioner, the commissioner commissions, then we, then we make them and deliver them. So, so I don't have that *commissioning* pressure, but.. you know, I can't speak for them, but obviously, they.. you know, *that*'s.. you know, these decisions are the big things that they do; it's picking shows, that's what they do. Somebody has to, somebody, somewhere, has to make decisions about what shows get made and what don't. And the way it works at the *BBC* is there is, in every genre, so in drama, factual, entertainment and comedy, there's a commissioner, and they will pick, make that decision with the relevant channel controller.. that's how, that's how it works. So, we have

a different kind of pressure, which is to.. develop ideas and get commissions, so it's like winning, winning business, basically...

BDK: Yes...

NB: ... and then.. to try and ensure that those shows work, and perform well. It's, it's not science,

BDK: (laughs)

NB: ... it's much more of an art.. and, you know, nobody knows. There is no magic formula for making something work.. so every show is a risk. Even shows that, looking back on it, have been successful, that may, with hindsight, seem.. very obvious, you know, obvious successes, or 'that must have been an easy commission', that's *never* true. When., when shows get commissioned and when they get *made*, nobody knows whether they're going to really work or not. And some shows that are really good shows don't work, and some other shows, that aren't particularly.. great shows do. Yeah, it's slightly a matter of subjective opinion, but...

BDK: (laughs) Yes...

NB: ... so there's always, there's always that pressure, and we do.. when shows go out, we.. you know, we already look at.. the overnight ratings, and we look at other measures as well, to.. to, you know, figure out whether we should be happy...

BDK: (laughs)

NB: ... or.. worried.

BDK: (laughs!) And so you do some amount of pre-selection when people pitch ideas to you, and you say 'we're gonna develop those and propose them to the commissioner'?

NB: Yes, that's right, we have a development, big development team, here, who spend most of their time.. working with writers, because.. the drama is.. it's not, it's not so much about the idea, it's about the writer. And.. an idea without a writer is nothing, and also, just an idea itself is not a drama, it's not...

BDK: (laughs) Of course!

NB: ... it has to be written, somebody has to author it, somebody has to own it. And.. feel *passionate*.. enough about to want to spend.. you know, months and months of their life, committing to.. to writing it, creating it, really. So.. so the developing that we have.. development state where lots of different projects are.. all different sorts of shapes and sizes, and.. the development team bring those on slowly, cause it always takes, you know, a fair amount of time, a gestation period for most shows.. most shows that are on air, now.. you know, would have been in development for, minimum, 2 to 3 years, and often longer.

BDK: (laughs)

NB: So, it's, it's a long process, but that's what a development team does here.

BDK: And, from what I believe, pilots are almost never made in the UK, it's like the whole series or nothing?

NB: Yes! There.. that happens occasionally. There was a pilot for.. *Sherlock...*

BDK: Hmm hmm...

NB: ... which was never shown, and then, they remade the show.. massively successfully. We made a pilot for a series called *The Fades*, on *BBC3,* which was a *series*, they did a series of pilots, about 4, 5 of them and then picked the show based on that, so it does happen occasionally, but.. what we don't have have is a.. a system like the US, where.. you have a regular pilot season, where lots of pilots get made, that's how they.. pick series, we don't, we don't do that, that's a matter of course(?).

BDK: Hmm hmm... Thank you. Why do you think these shows, because, as you said, once it's a success, sometimes it seems obvious, but it wasn't at the beginning.. Why do you think these shows, the few we mentioned, that.. many of those were successful and.. but they're very different, why do you think.. how would you explain their success?

NB: .. that's a really difficult question, but I think the point is they don't have.. most shows that are successful are, you know, well made, well written, well made shows, with good characters and good stories, you know, and that's which makes, what makes good drama. They're all very different.. and it can also depend on.. when shows go out, and what the expectations of audience is, so.. you know, a show that's.. that goes out on a Sunday and inherits a really good audience from the previous programme, that really.. that can help it, that can.. another show could be against something very.. tough...

BDK: (laughs)

NB: ... that can hurt its chances of being successful. Sometimes there are shows.. that.. you know, are scheduled, maybe are shot as a serial, so it's a single story, but in 3 or 4 parts, and sometimes that may be scheduled of 4 *weeks* and.. with hindsight, it may have been better show it in a week, you know, every night, to give it a sense of scale and importance, so.. it's.. There will be *lots* of different.. lots of different.. I mean, for every show has its own things, like *Downton Abbey*, or *Call the Midwife*, both of which have been big successes on *ITV* and *BBC*, respectively.. recently, I don't think anybody.. expected that to happen.. They both seem to tap into.. you know, a need, a mood, a kind of.. you know, as I said, it can depend on.. where the country is, what audiences are looking for, what's on other channels.. but the basic is, the basic requirement is that, you know, there are good stories, well told; that's what we try to do all the time. And.. a lot of drama, you know, most, I think most of the drama that gets made in the UK.. is, is of really high standard. Not everything is successful, and.. in a way, it's, it's.. it's *easier* in some ways to look at, you know, why they're *not* successful...

BDK: (laughs)

NB: ... you can identify that. Saying exactly what they are is what is really, *really* hard. But, it's.. it's that magic thing of.. what makes people turn on in the first place.. they like the sound of something, they like somebody in it, or for whatever reason, or there's nothing else to, you know, there's nothing else, so we're good to go(?).

BDK: (laughs)

NB: And then what is it that keeps them, keeps them watching? And, as I said, I think it's a.. good story, well told, with characters that people care about. That's what you're try aiming for every time, and *that* will give you the best chance of success, but, it's not guaranteed.

BDK: (laughs) Talking about when something does not work.. Can you explain me why Upstairs Downstairs was cancelled?

NB: Well, I think that they.. there was a feeling that, you know, it didn't do *as well* as.. I think it did pretty well with the ratings, but.. everybody would have liked it to have done a bit better. I think it's.. Personally, I think it's a.. I think it's obviously a shame when a show.. gets cancelled, I *think* that.. the thing about the *BBC* is that.. even those shows, you know, it did pretty *Upstairs Downstairs*, but.. because the *BBC* is *not* just about shows doing well, what the *BBC* is trying to do is to *constantly refresh* the dramas it offers; and.. so, there's a strong.. imperative to.. to make space for new things. Not to.. not to run shows on the long until they run out of seam.

BDK: Hmm hmm...

NB: And even when the show does.. quite respectfully, like *Upstairs Downstairs* did, it is that, actually.. .. by *not* doing any more, it makes space for.. for something new. So, it's a kind of, you know, there are, there are a few shows that stayed around the *BBC* for a while, but.. there's a lot that don't.. there's a lot of new things that come through all the time, and *that*'s part of the *BBC*'s job and makes it different from other broadcasters. I think it's, it's being able to try new stuff, and in order to try new stuff, you have to let other things go, so.. however hard that is.

BDK: So, yes, Call the Midwife, is very successful...

NB: Yes.

BDK: ... and Sherlock as well, and Doctor Who is probably one of the biggest...

NB: Yes...

BDK: ... hits worldwide. Which other TV series do you currently consider to be successful?

NB: .. Well, I think.. there's a whole.. there's whole mixture of things; I mean, certainly, all those shows have done very well, recently, *Luther* did very well last year, in the summer, but it was a, you know, four-part, you know, shorter series.. So, that did extremely well. I mean, recently, there are shows like.. the *Syndicator*(?)'s done, done.. very well.. on *BBC1*.. I think, *those* shows.. and there's a

difference between shows.. Shows that have really proved themselves over a long time.. so, you know.. certainly *Doctor Who*.. and, you know, *Eastenders*, which is a different sort of show cause it's year-round, obviously, that's, you know.. hugely popular. *Sherlock* is new but feels like it's a very established show, somehow.. And.. a show like *Silent Witness*.. is also done very well the last few years and has been around a long time.. So, but I think there.. I mean, it's easy to see, in ratings terms, you can look at the ratings on *BBC1*...

BDK: Yeah...

NB: ... you can see the shows that have the biggest ratings, and now on *BBC* to be the biggest successes.. *Great Expectations* at Christmas did very well. There's also.. I mean, other measures of success, are to do with.. what we call the *AI*, which is the Audience.. Index. So, it's appreciation, basically; how *much*, the people who watched it, like the show. So, we look at that.. we also look at.. whether, whether people thought shows were.. fresh and new, or original, or different. And so that's, again, it's a big *BBC*'s thing, it's for people to feel, the audiences to feel that *BBC* is offering something that other people aren't or.. something fresh and new. So, that's important that we score.. we score well on that. And, and also.. you know, there's industry, there is a sense of industry recognition, whether it's awards, or.. that kind of thing. So there's a whole lot of things that are mixed to going to decide whether something is a success or not, and.. even though, as its *heart* it's still about how well it performed.. but we.. but we try to look at other things as well, and look at the show and around(?), and we also try and to make sure we look at.. its performance over.. a 7-day period now, because.. what we call *Live+7*, because, certainly in drama, there's.. usually, at least, you add least 25%, sometimes more, to the overnight figures over the following 7 days, for people who.. either watched on *iPlayer*, or recorded it and watched in on some kind of catch-up service, so it's a big.. it's a.. that makes a big, big difference in figures to a show that my overnight of 5 or 5 and a half millions ends up at 7, or 7 and half, you know, it's a big change, so.. So we look at those as well.

BDK: And for.. for example, shows from other channels? Or even other other countries?

NB: Yeah.

BDK: Would you have some in mind that you would say are successful in the UK right now?

NB: .. In drama terms.. I mean, the biggest.. success recently has been *Homeland*.. which was just on *Channel 4*.. which was getting, you know, 2 and half, 3 million people, which is *a lot* for an imported show. Obviously the.. there's been a lot of talk about the Scandinavian dramas that have been on the *BBC*.. *4*(for?).. it started with *The Killing*, and *Morgen*(?), and now *The Bridge*(?).. I think that.. but that, they're watched by relatively small numbers of people, more like half a million people, but they generate a *lot* of press...

BDK: Yeah...

NB: ... because, they're the kind of shows that journalists like to watch, and like to write about. So, *Homeland*'s probably been the biggest success. I mean, what you *don't* have know, is.. you don't have any imported shows.. in primetime..

BDK: Hmm hmm...

NB: ... on the main channels. Which, you know, a while ago, I mean things like.. this is going back a long way, but things like *Dallas* and stuff like that...

BDK: (laughs)

NB: ... were shown on *BBC1* primetime...

BDK: Hmm hmm...

NB: ...and it's... difficult to conceive that that would ever happen again, so.. the imported tend be shown on *BBC2*, *BBC..* for dramas, anyway, *BBC3* shows lots of imported comedies, but.. *BBC..2* and *BBC4* and they'd go on late at night. *BBC2* had lots of successes with shows like.. *Rome* and *Tudors*.

BDK: Hmm hmm...

NB: ... And.. and so *BBC4* has certainly found a niche with.. they had *MadMan* originally, before it got.. bought by *Sky*. And.. and now with.. with the Scandinavian dramas.. (??) for it's been, it's been *Homeland*.. so.. we know, we were lucky I think, we got the best, you know, of the world.. of a drama. There's a lot of other stuff that's not very good, but we tend to get the best, sometimes it gives people.. an idea that actually *all* non-UK drama is like this, but

BDK: (laughs)

NB: ... obviously.

BDK: So, yes, we've already covered what in your opinion, what makes a television series successful in the UK, how about internationally? What 'more' do you think it needs to reach the world?

NB: Well.. I think it's, it's *hard*, we always have this conversation with *BBCWorldwide*, and our distributors, but...

BDK: (laughs!)

NB: ... (??) they still have to be, you know, they would admit that in the end, it's got to be a good show; it's got to be a good, you know, well made, well written, it's gotta have a lot of the same qualities that you'd expect the shows to be successful here to have. I think, in addition to that, there's no.. doubt that, there's more.. specific things, like.. internationally it helps it helps if people don't have strong accents, it helps if the cast is.. relatively good looking, it helps that.. the shows are very fast paced.

BDK: Hmm hmm...

NB: Generally, you know, there are some *broad*.. you know, things.. But, lot of them are.. as you

said, *Doctor Who* is.. is a huge hit internationally, and a huge hit here. So, you *can* find there are absolutely shows that work.. work in the UK and overseas. I'm thinking, if a show is a really big success here, it generally sells abroad, so.. I believe *Call the Midwife* is doing well.. in terms of sales, simply because it was a huge hit here.

BDK: (laughs!)

NB: So people will buy it on that basis.

BDK: Hmm hmm...

NB: Even though it's a period show, that is not that fast-paced you know, it's an odd thing to.. to be working internationally, but it does. So, it is hard.. I think it is easy to imagine that we have to make something different to appeal to an international audience, well I don't think it's true. I think you have to make, you have to make the same thing, in terms of making something of high quality and well written and well produced, but we have to be mindful of *not* doing certain things that might slightly put people off. So, we have to think about it when we cast, we have to think about it, you know, in terms of how we pace shows.. and.. you know.. a sense of scale, that sort of thing is important internationally. But again, they're important here too, so.. they're not different, they're not as different as they might seem.

BDK: Would you say the UK industry, considers the international aspect, when they're making a show, and if so, to which extent?

NB: Yes, I think, more.. increasingly, I think people do. I think it's especially true for.. the independent sector, for whom, you know, international sales.. or reformats, all of those kinda things are very important, so.. I think they do more than they used, but, again, I think that.. where people have tried to.. make shows that.. or have tried to make a show that will work internationally, that has often.. failed, and there's still staff(??) trying to make a really good show that's gonna work on British television, and then.. as I said, ensure that, you know, if, if a show is very parochial, if a show is set.. somewhere.. that has no, is difficult to have a lot of resonance outside of that place, then it will, it *will* struggle to sale, but lots of our show *don't* have that, and lots of our shows have.. a sense of scale.. and.. you know, I think we're.. a show like *Spooks* has always sold very very well, which is, for an independent obviously.. even though it's about British.. you know.. MI6, it's still.. you know.. not wholly(?), but generally, it has a sense of scale, of pace, and it has, you know, it appeals.. both here and abroad. So, I think it's.. I think people are much more mindful of it, they think much more, and it's partly because the budgets here are shrinking, or the money available to make sure it's here is going down, so the people are looking otherwise and are trying to add money to it, add money to the budget; but...

BDK: By making international co-productions?

NB: Yeah, by doing co-productions, or being able to have something that.. *pre-sales*.. even if that's not a proper co-production. Cause, you know, that can be, can be difficult, and you can end up with something that doesn't work for.. for either. So you have to pick your projects really carefully.. but.. yeah, people are certainly.. It has become a much more global industry in the last 5 or 10 years, certainly.

BDK: I must admit I wasn't very familiar with the concept of international pre-sales.. How, how do you convince someone to buy a show they haven't seen yet?

NB: Well, there's a short of, it's a sort of 3 stages. Obviously, there's co-production, when people are putting a lot of, you know, significant amounts of money and then they'll have.. they'll, they'll.. you know, have.. approval over casting, you might have somebody, you know, you're doing a co-production with France, you'll have some french actors in there, what, how ever, so, you know, there's that sort of model...

BDK: Hmm hmm...

NB: ... and pre-sales.. If you've got something.. that.. is a, potentially, a very attractive.. property, an attractive show, even though people haven't.. I mean, people will need to read scripts.. so even before you shot it, what, what's *BBCWorldwide*, or any other distributor *can* do is to.. they've got more than one person interested in it...

BDK: Hmm hmm...

NB: ... in the territory, they can say, obviously, say to them 'if you want to buy it now, and then pay', you know, 'and pay more' you know, 'it's yours'. Once it's been made, and they'll.. they won't guarantee themselves getting it. That's, that's what a pre-sale is; and, it can, it can come attached with.. some more influence over.. not quite like a co-production, but they can have some.. people can feel they *own* it a little bit more, they can give, you know, give some notes on scripts, they can, you know, be a little bit involved in *casting*, there's a way of making it feel more like their show. You know, and obviously, there's the, after that, there's the.. just selling it to people once it's been made. So there's a lot of scaling scale of involvement and money and things, so.. And the pre-sales do, do happen, you know, reasonably, reasonably regularly, but you're right, it's, it's.. yeah, people have to be convinced that's something that they *really* really want, and they want to make sure that they have it.

BDK: Thank you. So, you've mentioned this, quite a bit earlier, but, how exactly would you say the BBC model differs from.. basically, any other channels, especially with regards to its approach towards success?

NB: .. Well, the *BBC*, obviously, you know, it's.. it's a public service broadcaster, so.. it's.. it's not a commercial broadcaster, so.. Commercial broadcasters are.. there to make money for their

shareholders, and they do that by.. commissioning and making programmes and trying to attach advertising and so on. So the *BBC* has a slightly different criteria; the *BBC* is.. as much broad, I'm talking about the *BBC* generally, I *think*, this is personal...

BDK: Hmm hmm...

NB: ... but I think the *BBC* is about.. delivering.. *back* to the people who pay for it, which is all the people that pay their licence fee, across all the the UK, delivering something that everybody will.. benefit from, or something that.. So.. you know, one thing that is very important for the *BBC* is their, what they call their *reach figures*; so it's about how many people.. what percentage of the population, of the UK population consumes something of the *BBC* over a 7-day period. And you can get all that stuff is, you know, published.. there's load, you know, as I'm sure you know, there's loads and loads of information about the *BBC* and performance, and everything else.. But aiming their reach, you know, how.. and the thing is, it's really hard to get(??) 97% of the population will use the *BBC* or consume things from the *BBC*, whether it's TV, radio, or online...

BDK: Hmm hmm...

NB: ... or orchestras, or.. there's a lot, you know, so many different things, so, given that everybody pays for it, everybody should feel they get something.. back from it. So I think it has, you know, *that* is a very important thing for the *BBC*, and to feel that they.. the *BBC* is doing things that are.. innovative, and risk taking, and.. offering, not all the time, because, you know, *BBC1* is very.. is a *big* mainstream, popular channel, and needs to remain in that, it attracts big audience, and to do that, you need to do things that appeal to big audiences.. very simple, but, across the portfolio.. certainly in Television, the *BBC* can offer, again, can offer a real range.. and different services that are.. slanted at.. different groups.. as, and will offer, hopefully, something for everybody, at some the point, so it.. so their success, again, their success criteria is.. a lot based on, on reach, on.. appreciation, the *BBC*, how much is valued.. making sure that the reach.. and the appreciation is consistent across the whole.. country, and across different age groups and things like that they're quite different sorts of.. what measurements.. I imagine a commercial broadcaster will.. will use.

BDK: Thank you. And so, where does the pressure come from? Is it from the top executives at the BBC, or some people in the government, or.. to make sure that people, you know, the audience is satisfied and so on?

NB: Well, there's.. the *BBC*.. there's.. the *BBC trust* are the people who.. you know, it's the.. who are there, they're not, they're not part of the *BBC*, but they.. they agree, on behalf of the audiences, to insure the *BBC* is delivering what it says it's gonna do. So the *BBC trust*.. which has got a new chairman called.. Chris Patton who joined quite recently.. that's their, that's their role, it's to protect, you know, to look at, to look after audiences' interests, and to challenge the *BBC*, but also to *support*

the *BBC*...

BDK: Hmm hmm...

NB: ... in terms of what they're trying to deliver, cause there's lots of.. you know, there's lots of people who think the *BBC* should be doing different things, or should *change*, or should.. you know, the license fee should be abolished.. or *all* sorts of things like that, so the trust is there to.. you know, to support the *BBC* in that as well.. So, but, I mean I think the.. the.. so, they set, they set target, and they set objectives for the *BBC* to deliver.. but, you know, pressure comes.. I wouldn't necessarily describe it as 'pressure', but obviously you get feedback from audiences, you get.. there's a lot of, you know, you try to have as much interaction as possible to.. get a sense of how.. you are doing.. what's being well received, and what's not, and what you might need to do to change, so.. And within the *BBC*, there's lots of people, who.. you know, whose ambition is to.. everybody wants to make.. great television people love, so.. you know, there's a, there's a very high bar and high expectation, so there's a certain amount of pressure that you just have.. within the organisation as well, which is.. quite right. So, it comes from different places.

BDK: And so, most, mostly to measure the.. the appreciation of the people who use the Appreciation Index...

NB: Yes.

BDK: So, is that your main method of measurement for success at the BBC?

NB: Well, there's the.. I mean, there's the actual.. the numbers of people who watch it, there's.. *how much* the programme is appreciated.. we also.. as I said, the other, the other things were.. whether people felt that the shows were fresh and new, *that's* really important too. So, those are the sort of three main things, and they do that by.. you know, but, the overnight, that's measured.. it comes from *BARB* and things, but they.. the audience research people will do.. all of those, all of those measures are all.. they're all formally done.. and it's formal processes as well, but, we also do.. we do research on lots of individual shows.. and.. what(??) with audience research, we do.. focus groups, I mean, listen to people's feedback and try to get a sense of how individual shows are received, what worked about them, what didn't work so well, what we can improve and all that kind of thing. But the main sorts of public metrics are all.. much more formally measured.

BDK: And people are just invited to give their opinion, or is it...?

NB: About?

BDK: About the shows, or is it something...

NB: No, they have a, they have.. Audience research have a.. have panels of people they can go to, you know, spread around the country, whom we can use to.. to do questionnaires with and to ask them to, you know, tick boxes, to, basically, if you want to find out how the show.. how have people

felt about the show, we can look at, you know, characters in the shows, all the story lines.. there are ways.. there are ways of doing that kind of.. research as well.

BDK: Thank you. We're almost done (laughs...

NB: Okay (laughs)...

BDK: So, yes, we have already talked about that a bit, but, is there a certain list of goals that are set for a given show, before it starts? If so, which ones?

NB: That's a really interesting question, actually, because we don't tend to.. be really specific about it, but.. it's, it's clear that.. you know, if you're going out at 9 o'clock on *BBC1*, then.. you know.. you want those shows to.. overnight to be, currently, you know, this changes, but at the moment you want those shows to be getting.. over 5 million, and, ideally, more than that, ie. 6, so, you know, you have a sense of that, you have a.. but there are certain shows that are.. perhaps riskier in terms of audience.. numbers on *BBC1*, obviously other channels will have different, different sense of how well drama should, should do, but, again, on each channel, there'll be shows, there'll be a range of shows, some of which.. feel like they.. really need to do those kind of numbers, and other shows which are, perhaps more reputational, or more risky, but *may* still do very well.. but if they *don't* do as well.. that's okay.. because there's other reasons, you know, there are other reasons for doing.. shows, but, on *BBC1*, that's you know, broadly, because it's a big, it's a very popular mainstream.. channel, that needs to.. it needs to deliver.. good numbers, *and* other stuff, *and* reputational, *and* feeling innovative and fresh and new. But, you know, delivering good numbers is, is.. is really.. important.. for almost every show.. it's quite rare that a show would come a long way and you'd say 'well, this is more of a reputational...

BDK: Hmm hmm...

NB: ... piece', but.. but that's true with.. you know, all the channels will want.. shows to do well, to be loved by the audience, to get as *many* people as possible to come to them; that's what everybody.. everybody would like. And as I said that, those kind of numbers would vary from channel to channel, because.. they all have different, you know, average audiences, and they.. you know, work in different ways, *but..* yeah, *all*, certainly I think, all people who run channels want their channels to be.. their shows to be really popular, to do really well.

BDK: And they don't care so much about demographics, it's just people in general watching?

NB: Well, again, that's, that's to do with the *first* thing.. is that, beyond that, you know, you want, on *BBC1*, you want your dramas to make 5, 6 million people.. then, it's really good if, if.. within that, you know, when you're, if you're trying to improve your reach, in terms of a particular demographic, or a particular area of the country.. then, *if* a show.. if within that 5 or 6 million, the show is doing that as well, that's a really another tick for the show...

BDK: Hmm hmm...

NB: ... it's good. So.. there's sort of.. I think there's a sort of base line of what you need shows to do, and then there's other things that you hope for shows to do, and aspire for shows to do.. and, so that's being taken into consideration as well. But the basic level is that it has to.. to, you know, on the whole, it needs to hit a certain overall numbers... but yes, you always try to improve.. improve on all the things that you do in terms of.. how, how much people loved it. And also, you, you know, if very few people watch it, it tends to get very high appreciation scores, so you have to.. you know, balance all those things out.

BDK: And talking about early expectations... as what you were taking about with the commissioners earlier, could you explain me how assumptions are made on which shows will be successful or not before they're commissioned?

NB: Well, as I said, it's nobody knows, it's *really* impossible.. you know, what you have is you have a script...

BDK: Yeah, but how do they make the choice?

NB: Because, they will.. *pick* shows that they.. where they really like, things that have really good piece of writing, they will like the idea, and they think it's really, it's a great script; I mean it's very very.. it's very very writing focused, because there's nothing else to go on, and.. you know, if it's a good idea, with a really well written script, that's when we'll get something commissioned. And, obviously, it has to be.. you know, it can't be *too* like something else that's already on, that's important, it has to feel like it *fits*.. and also it has to feel like it's.. .. it fits for.. the channel. There are some, some ideas and some scripts that will feel.. quite niche, and could be very very good but might appeal to smaller.. number of people.. so, maybe those are shows that.. would go towards *BBC2*.. But.. so it has to be, feel like it's a *mainstream* show, with the potential to attract.. a large audience.. And.. but, beyond that, it's really about.. you know, the commissioner reading a script and the controller reading the script, and really loving.. really loving the script, and loving the idea, loving the project. So, it's really.. good writing is still at the heart of.. at the heart of it, you know, just the idea or the concept itself is not.. is not enough, people need to read.. read something that excites them.

BDK: Hmm hmm... Second to last question, where does your involvement.. start and end in a project? Is it, so, the whole development, and do you have an input afterwards, or how.. how does it work, once it's on the air, for example?

NB: Yeah, at the department, were are having.. once it's on the air, I mean, we, we just, we develop.. ideas here, and they get commissioned, and then we.. we make and we deliver them. We, well, people here, will do things.. they will look at.. and sign on off on trials(?), you know, so the trailers

for shows that are gonna air.. and on things like pictures, images, and things that would get you publicity.. *but*, that would be done hand in hand with.. the channels who make the trailers and the publicity people who are doing all of that stuff. So.. so, so the people who're making shows here, the exec producers and so on will be involved in all of that, because they have an input.. and something useful to add it. *But*.. we don't have anything to do with scheduling, that's obviously down to the channel.. and.. so, yeah, well, certainly once it's on air.. it's out of.. out of everybody's, out of our hands, really.

BDK: (laughs)

NB: Yeah, so, so, people are involved, they are part of looking at trails, and looking at.. the press activity, and going back to the stuff in preparation for the shows to launch, and if there's.. several episodes going, they'll keep across the trails for later seri.. later episodes, and for other publicity that might be coming, other interviews that might be dropped in during the series, all that kind of thing. No, we're aware of all of that, but.. so.. yeah, there's; a vocal does remain, but, not.. but, obviously, it's.. ...

BDK: Hmm hmm...

NB: ... working *with* channels and publicity, and marketing, all those kind of people; so you're no longer just making something where you as the producers are the.. the main drivers of it.

BDK: Hmm hmm... The marketing with, for selling afterwards, or do you mean marketing research in advance, to.. target an audience, or to see what they would like to see?

NB: Well, *that*.. if we do that on shows, that, that's much more a production thing, although we will talk to the channels and the commissioners about that as well, and we're trying.. especially with big shows, we're trying to think hard about what the show is that we're trying to make, and what we're gonna try and *not* make and how it might get wrong, and what we need to try to avoid; so we'll do that with marketing.. and audience research. And that's way up front, and then.. if it gets made, then.. then, there would be involvement with marketing in terms of how we're going to sell the show, what are the images gonna be.. and all of that kinda thing. And even, you know, sometimes, there's conversations about the title gets changed...

BDK: (laughs)

NB: ... what it's gonna be called, all of that kinda thing (laughs) and then there'll be conversations with the channels, and commissioning.. so everybody works quite.. pretty closely together.

BDK: Okay, thank you. And, the last question would be, finally, what would be your definition of success?

NB: .. For.. shows?

BDK: It's up to you to interpret the question; it's your definition of success.

NB: Well, I think it's.. it's.. achieving what you set out to achieve. So, knowing what you're trying to do, and then doing it. And that may.. it may or may not *work*, in terms of other success measures, like, you know, audiences, or popularity, or whatever else. But, if you're clear about what you want to do, and then you've.. done that, that; I think, its.. a good definition of.. success. Cause, otherwise, it gets incredibly complicated! (laughs!).

BDK: (laughs!)

NB: So, yeah. Delivering what you want.. to make, to do. And delivering what you want to make is, because, that, that in itself is a very hard thing to do...

BDK: (laughs)

NB: ... from the, you know, initially where you start, here, to where you want to end up.. there's lots of ways it can all go wrong, so... (laughs)

BDK: (laughs). Well, thank you very much...

NB: It's okay, pleasure!

BDK: ... for your time.

NB: No at all, no, hope I was helpful.

BDK: Yes!

[End of recording]