Unleashing the power of the creative unconscious within organizations:
A case of craft, graft and disputed premises

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ABSTRACT
From 'the learning organization', through creating cultures of fun and play, to commissioning beautifully designed office spaces, many contemporary organizations are trying to tap into the aesthetic sensibilities of their employees by building an organizational 'experience' that is conducive to aesthetic expression in order to unleash the power of their collective, creative, artistic, unconscious. Drawing on psychoanalytical theory and primary, qualitative data, we offer a counter argument, highlighting the contested nature of the unconscious; therefore calling into question precisely what is being 'unleashed' during these processes of creativity. Additionally, we will postulate that the role of skill, ability and craft expertise is at least as important as aesthetic expression. Finally, adopting an object relations perspective, we will argue that the enactment of creative expression is frequently suffused with anxiety - either necessitating the existence of a facilitating environment which assists the individual or group to operate from the depressive position (often the location of creative, synergistic space).

Introduction: change is the new constant

The combination of technologically influenced change, globalisation and deregulation have all led to increased, fast-paced competition; setting an environmental context and challenge for organizations embedded in high wage economies. How do they respond with continuous creativity and innovation in order to survive (Henry, 2001)? Nadler and Tushman (1995) argue that the rate of change is similar to a quadratic curve, increasing in almost all industries with the time between discontinuous change decreasing, indicating that managers will be confronted with an ever-greater need to foster, manage and sustain creativity, entrepreneurship and innovation (Brown & Eisenhardt, 1997).

Over the past decade innovation and creativity have been portrayed as being an important means by which employers can overcome the challenges faced by such open-ended change and uncover methods of gaining competitive advantage within global as well as national markets. One response has seen companies seeking to discover methods of stimulating and exploring the (seemingly latent) creative skills of their employees, aiming to harness those innate abilities for the organization's ends. Through the adoption of concepts such as the learning organization through to a focus on office design, many companies utilise organizational 'experiences' and experiment with alterations to the physical workplace in order to unlock the power of their employees' collective, creative, artistic, unconscious and through this, facilitate and steer creative expression towards product and service innovation that yields enhanced competitive advantage.

This paper provides four critiques of the ways in which aesthetic interventions are being encouraged and utilised as a means of fostering creativity in the service of organisational performance. The initial focus concerns the responses made by organisations to the oft-cited demands for enhanced creativity and innovation with the need for key HRM practice preconditions needed to foster an appropriate workplace environment that supports creative endeavour. This segues into an elaboration of the various methods used within the UK and

North American markets to provoke creative expression and play; unleashing the seemingly latent and unconscious talents of employees and channelling these energies and skills towards utilisation by the organisation.

A dual critique is offered of this 'management tool' perspective, arguing that these practices represent responses to a wider cultural need for aesthetic experiences alongside one that challenges the presumed causal relationship implicit in much of the literature here between aesthetic/artistic interventions and inherent, unconscious 'creative power', postulating instead that technical skill is imperative in many arts. That from even the most cursory exploration of the components of creative performance, we would postulate that the basic roles of skill, ability and craft expertise are fundamental platforms that enable aesthetic expression. Thus, we see that aesthetic expression is often highly dependent on learned 'technical' craft skills that are frequently far from unconscious. This suggests that the management literature has chosen to take an overly romantic and distorted view of artistic endeavour, prizing the diffuse and intangible ideas of 'flow' and 'aesthetic experience' over the more mundane and time consuming activities of learning, practicing and the development of technical expertise in the act of innovating at work.

Finally, we challenge the overly romantic construction of the unconscious as inherently positive, arguing instead, that it is a more problematic terrain than is presented; one that is contested and therefore calls into question precisely what is being 'unleashed' during these processes of creativity. Through the adoption of an object relations perspective, we argue that the enactment of creative expression is frequently suffused with anxiety necessitating the existence of a facilitating or "containing" environment (Bion, 1961; Winnicott, 1971, 1972) to assist the individual to operate from the "depressive position" (Klein, 1988a, 1998b) that is often the location of creative, synergistic space.

Thus, illustrating some of the inherent difficulties contained within unconscious group processes when attempting to engage in creative (and other) tasks, and in doing so we offer a further challenge to the mainstream HRM approaches to developing workplace creativity as well as the creative methodologies used by organizations to stimulate it.

The paper is intended as a 'review' of a range of problematics that we have identified from a multi-disciplinary perspective, drawing on literatures surrounding creativity, human resource management, aesthetics and psychoanalysis. As such, it covers quite substantial ground and should be read as an overview of our ideas and an, indeed, as an invitation for others' analyses and critique of the themes we introduce here.

HRM practices and the facilitation of creative outcomes

Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995), and Senge (1991) demonstrate that post-industrial organisations are increasingly knowledge-based with their success dependent upon the attainment of dual imperatives. The first concerns the expression and channelling of the natural creativity and inventiveness expressed by employees. The second demands that these needs are matched with facilitating, innovative internal changes within the organisation. Both Nonaka and Takeuchi, and Senge note that typically, successful organizations respond by creating concomitant institutional frameworks in which creativity and innovation will be accepted as basic cultural and behavioural norms in the midst of technological and other changes (1999).

Given this scenario it is unsurprising that the past decade has seen a resurgence of interest in the concept of the learning organisation with a focus on team-based as well as individual learning processes to facilitate paradigm-breaking triple loop learning; combining the search for the most

appropriate environments to facilitate access with methodologies of sharing and further development (Argyris, 1992; Scarborough et al, 1999; Senge, 1991). It has been further argued that the development of unique institutional knowledge that cannot be replicated by other organisations creates a strategic advantage within the market (Prahalad & Hamel, 1990). Therefore, organisational learning can often underpin the explicit extension of the strategic position occupied by the company's internal resources as the primary source of strategic, competitive advantage (Barney, 1991, 1995; Boxall & Purcell, 2003; Penrose, 1959).

Interestingly, the similarity of agreement as to the sources and nature of organisational change over the past fifteen to twenty years is mirrored by an equally high degree of agreement as to the most effective methods of engendering, fostering and 'unleashing' employee creativity. Amabile (1998) categorises managerial practices that affect creativity in terms of challenge, freedom, resources, work-group features, supervisory encouragement and organisational support. These categories have an important intersection with comparative lists of HR best practices found within the SHRM literature (Becker & Gerhart, 1996 -- as adapted by Beardwell, Holden & Claydon, 2004, p. 58) that stress the importance of team working, hiring, and reward. HRM practices identified in the literature that facilitate, develop and enhance creativity are presented in table 1 along with descriptors of allied organisational activities that facilitate them.

Table 1: HRM preconditions for fostering organizational creativity

Organisational practice	Description of organisational activity
Goals: organisational Group	Clear mission and vision for the organisation "Chaos within guidelines"
Structure	Flat structure utilising autonomous/semi-autonomous work teams.
Staffing	Diversity of employees; the appointment of people with creativity characteristics, seeking diversity and individual talents which complement each other
Communications	Maximisation of communications by using IT & other systems that facilitate exchange of ideas.
Environmental Issues	Consider whole environment and sources of internally and externally driven stress. Develop open systems approach -- offering an holistic approach allowing investigation of the interdependence, interaction and interrelationship of different sub-systems and elements of organisational culture & structure in the organisation
Culture	Creation of a culture that allows employees to think creatively and experiment, question ideas and be open to new ones. Reward risk taking, creative actions, experimenting and generating ideas; development of increased autonomy and opportunities for growth; reward individuals as well as teams -- legitimisation of creativity. Develop a blame free culture that tolerates mistakes and learns from them. Builds support for change that looks for new and improved ways of working with continuous learning being supported
Work Groups/ Teams	Sets up and maintains autonomous/semi-autonomous work teams operating across functions. Instigates worker flexibility, freedom and co-operative team working. Involves people in (speedy) decision-making. Sets standards for work performance & instigates regular feedback Deals with in/out group issues: maintains group health through a focus on group norms and influences developing trust and respect between team members. Instigates and maintains the fair evaluation of ideas. Uses think tanks and brainstorming as instigators of creative ideas.

In addition to the organizational practices outlined in table 1, there is a growing interest in the mainstream professional/practitioner domain concerning the putative parallels existing between the progressive processes of management and organization and the aesthetically 'driven' processes of the artist as a means by which the latent power of the creative unconscious can become manifest and be aligned with organisational goals and needs.

As companies seek differentiation from rivals to create a competitive edge, both internally and externally, and address their corporate responsibilities, the arts provide creativity, inspiration and a fresh perspective…Creative training, unique

professional development opportunities and arts in the workplace can all improve an employee's quality of life and help to increase staff recruitment and retention.

(www.port.ac.uk/newsandevents/events/allevents/title,13343,en.html)

An exemplar for this trend can be found in the initiatives carried out in the UK by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, an increasingly powerful organization that seeks to represent the views of HR and HRD practitioners. Frequent use has been made by the CIPD of successful, well known musicians such as the conductor, Benjamin Zander and celebrated musical virtuosi. Their work and that of other such figures in professional sports has been featured within its in-house magazine and their work has also contributed to workshops and plenary sessions at the CIPD's national conferences. The rationale for their use frequently pertains to analogies that can be drawn between individual and collective musical activities and processes of creative engagement in more 'traditional' organizations often focusing on the crucial role played by teams and how such examples are created and managed. The particular focus is typically on the pivotal relationship between the leader/captain/conductor/manager in the process of creative action combined with explorations as to the attainment of collective flow states (Csikszentmihalyi, 2002). Implying that whilst the HRM preconditions might provide a facilitating environment for the expression of creativity, it requires *further* (arguably more personal and interactive) intervention to secure individual and collective engagement in internal processes of flow.

Art at work: Aesthetic/artistic management practices

Unsurprisingly, therefore, there appear to be quite a range of these aesthetic/ artistic interventions on offer to organizations

in popular 'self-help' management literature, and by consultants. We are defining 'aesthetic/ artistic', here, as any intervention involving techniques from the Arts eg. music, dance, visual and graphical arts, theatre and literature. The techniques themselves might include: acting, reciting poetry, creative writing, free association drawing or voice coaching among many other possibilities. In addition, our definition includes management techniques intended to 'hook' the aesthetic sensibilities of employees -- for example, artwork displayed in offices and factories, special commissions and installations, artists in residence and cultures of 'fun and play' to list but a few examples. In short, we are referring to a varied range of management practices intended to evoke aesthetic experiences among employees and/ or provide an environment conducive to aesthetic expression, for the good of the organization.

The 'art@work' programme run by *Arts and Business*, for example, can provide an artist in residence, advice on setting up "arts clubs", drama based training workshops and arrange for artwork to be commissioned, which are all hailed on their web-site as bringing real business benefits:

The arts engage our hearts and minds with unique immediacy. Using those engaging and transferable skills from the worlds of theatre, music and the visual arts, your workforce can be stimulated to think in new ways. Businesses have employed artist-trainers to unlock the creativity of their staff, help build effective teams, enhance leadership and personal impact skills, boost confidence, improve external and internal communication, develop future scenarios and instigate and maintain change programmes. (http://www.aandb.org.uk)

Likewise, *Creative Forum*, offer music and drama workshops to

…get training delegates to tap into hidden creativity, practice leadership skills and work on teambuilding within a

musical environment. (http://www.creativeroleplay.co.uk/musical.php)

In a similar vein, *Maynard Leigh Associates* (MLA) claim that:

Using ideas from the theatre in business, we dramatically improve company and individual performance. (www.maynardleigh.co.uk)

Offering a consultancy service and also a "self-help" book (Leigh & Maynard, 2004) MLA cite the following case study on their web-site which we consider exemplifies an aesthetic/ artistic management intervention. Entitled *Circus of Invention*, it describes how Norwich Union Direct, a UK financial services company, wanted to encourage their "naturally" risk-aversive actuarial staff to be more creative in their approach to developing new financial services products. To do this, the company commissioned MLA to stage a circus "theme park" and regional teams of staff, working as "theatre companies" were tasked with putting on a "show" in the Big Top -- physically acting out a "tale of riskiness" in front of an audience of 150 people. Each team received one hour's professional stage-craft advice before being expected to sing, act and even dance in front of their colleagues. According to MLA's web-site:

fanning out across the theme park to rehearse, the teams went into a creative frenzy. By cocktail hour when the theme park went quiet, every theatre company was ready. All through dinner there was a wonderful atmosphere of excitement and anticipation... there was clear evidence that the creativity sought after by the management of Norwich Union prevailed. The tears of laughter, the cries of applause and cheering, the atmosphere of real theatre confirmed for everyone that NU did indeed have a spirit of innovation. When the curtain fell on this involving and memorable event, the management's message was convincingly communicated and absorbed by all those present.

(www.maynardleigh.co.uk/cs_norwich_union.shtml)

Another example of an aesthetic/ artistic intervention is drawn from one of our own research projects to explore the 'aestheticization' of office space in a web-design department (Warren, 2002a, 2005b). In this case, the management of the department had commissioned the design of a brightly painted office, equipped with a range of toys, games and art installations. In addition, there was a 'futuristically' lit corridor as the centerpiece of the space and a meeting room filled with soft foam blocks, a bright red vinyl wipe-clean floor and padded walls in order to give the impression of a children's play room. The rationale behind this intervention was to offer employees an environment that Management perceived to be conducive to fostering their creativity. We briefly draw on data from this study below in our critique of the role of the unconscious in creative/ aesthetic/ artistic expression.

To summarise the present discussion, what unites these approaches -- and others like them -- is an assumption that by using aesthetic/ artistic methods, employees' creativity and innate talents can be 'freed' for the good of the organization. Regardless of individual ability, talent, education, training, aptitude, desire and knowledge, these initiatives assume that creativity is 'locked up' inside each and every one of us, just waiting for 'art' to set it free (often for a fee). We critique these fundamental assumptions later in the paper, but here, pause to raise some potential problems with these kinds of management directed activities themselves. As the above examples imply, these benefits are wide-ranging but intangible as *Arts and Business* claim on their web-site:

By bringing artists and their work into your business environment you have the opportunity to motivate, inspire and entertain your employees. Many businesses have found that these projects improve communication in teams and provide a new creative impetus. In a practical sense, they can

help create an environment where people will want to spend their time.

There is, of course the small matter that staff may not want to spend (all) their time in your organization, and may resent the fact that they are being 'encouraged' to be artistic at work, especially if their job is not an especially artistic one in the first place, as in the case of the Norwich Union example above. These arguments are a potentiality in all realms of 'aesthetic activities' encouraged by the organization. Some people may thoroughly enjoy these initiatives -- but equally, some may not. Clearly this carries ethical dilemmas, especially since people who are reluctant to take part are unlikely to be able to refuse, given the nature of organizations as political arenas riddled with power dynamics, and the fact that these initiatives are often arranged and paid for by management (Warren 2005a).

Second, we surmise that art and business are only happy bedfellows to the extent that their marriage contributes to organizational success. For sure businesses want art to stimulate the creativity of their employees, to get them thinking 'outside the box' and to come up with wonderful new ideas -- but they are unlikely to welcome ideas that are too new and radical, and certainly nothing that challenges the organizational status quo, or reduces profit margins. Thus, aesthetic/ artistic interventions might be seen as uni-directional in that their purpose, despite management and consultants' rhetoric, is primarily to benefit the organization and not the individual. This is problematic if one stops to reflect on whose aesthetic/artistic qualities are being used (exploited?) and on what grounds the organization lays claim to their appropriation (Burrell, 1992).

Furthermore, within these exultant discourses of the synergies of artistic endeavour and business activities there is also no mention of the subversive nature of art at work. The creative ways in which employees resist managerial ideologies

through art have been conveniently erased from the picture sketched out here -- whether that be a scribbled cartoon on a company poster or a more blatant sabotage of a specific 'art object', employees may wish to be 'artistic' at work in ways that run counter to organizational ideals, for instance, peppering their desks with personal effects and artistic displays in the face of an organizational 'clear desk' policy and hot-desking arrangement (Warren, 2002b). There is clearly no room for a blending of art and business from this perspective.

The argument also runs the other way. Viewing art in a public gallery surely generates a different set of understandings of it than viewing the same piece as the centrepiece of a corporation's headquarters. Is a moving piece of music composed for a television advert for mobile phones as "authentic" as Barber's adagio for strings, or even the latest ballad by Dido? In the same vein, is a drama-group run as part of a "creative training workshop" in "customer care", the same experience as attending one purely for fun in one's own time? We can see, here, the appropriation of art in order to make it commercially useful. Art in this context has a purpose other than its own existence -- aesthetics lose their emancipatory potential and so the adoption of aesthetic/artistic management practices may have consequences for the role and status of art more generally (Hancock, 2003).

As Jacobson (1996) points out, "orthodox 'not-for-profit' thinking in the arts casts a wary eye over hazardous conflict-of-interest potential when art and business come too close" (p. 243). We could easily see the installation of art in organizational spaces as a wonderful opportunity for the arts to gain vital funding and exposure, providing young, up and coming artists with 'big breaks' and generally making up for the erosion of state and public funding for the arts. This might all be true, but it is also possible to read these developments as a colonisation of the arts by capitalism and an instrumentalisation of artistic/aesthetic

experience through corporate involvement.

Art and the everyday: Aestheticization

We have seen how artistic endeavour is presumed to be beneficial for the organization through its capacity to evoke (and unleash) the creative powers of employees' aesthetic unconscious. We have also argued, so far, that the driving force behind aesthetic/ artistic management techniques is organizational, fuelled by intensely competitive business environments. Implicit within this discussion is a critical assumption that these techniques represent a form of managerial control and, moreover, one replete with moral and political concerns. However, here, we consider alternative possibilities for the genesis of aesthetic/ artistic management interventions that might lie outside the boundaries of the organization. Reading these phenomena through a lens that is less informed by a 'critical' perspective, we consider the influence of wider social and cultural contexts on organizational life.

As Strati (2000a) points out, organizations are, first and foremost, social contexts continuously enacted by individuals. Thus, organization (as a noun) is a misnomer. Once the unit of analysis shifts to the process of organizing (as a verb), then what lies inside and outside an organization's boundaries becomes harder to define and, we suggest, it becomes less important to make this distinction. 'The organization' is omnipresent in the lives of 'its' members whether they are 'at work' or 'at home', as Strati (2000a) reminds us:

> Organizational tasks pass beyond the walls of the organization to invade people's leisure time, both in terms of the work they do at home and of subjective reflection. An organization's workers may be preoccupied in their private lives with their jobs, with their career

prospects…. The organization is only apparently absent…. (p. 24)

Importantly for our purposes here, we argue that this process is osmotic, also working in reverse. Organizational members bring 'in' to work a whole host of psychological, corporeal and cultural issues that also have some bearing upon organizational life and it is often forgotten that these members also include managers. Fineman (2000) has noted the importance of cultural context in the diffusion of popular management practice -- or 'fads' -- of which these artistic HR interventions could be seen as an example, reminding us that we need to look beyond the organization itself to understand why certain ideas become adopted:

> A management idea that catches on does so because of psychological, cultural and rhetorical factors… [a management idea] therefore needs to be perceived by its potential managerial users as attractive, firmly connected to organizational success and in tune with wider social pressures. Rhetoric connects these various processes; that is, the way different consultants, business academics and the business press craft [the idea] to appear cogent and indispensable to organizations and management. (Fineman, 2000, p. 103)

Furthermore, he notes that fads are often embraced because they appeal to the emotional and aesthetic sensibilities of those involved, even to the extent that this becomes the primary reason for the attractiveness of a fashionable management idea rather than its claim to rational efficiency, i.e.: whether the idea actually 'works'. Consequently, it appears necessary to look outside the somewhat arbitrary boundaries of organizations as discrete entities and consider what wider social pressures and trends might be shaping individual managers' emotional and aesthetic sensibilities, leading them to legitimise aesthetic/ artistic interventions through their organizational

processes. The rest of this discussion puts forward one such possibility.

According to cultural commentators, we live (in the developed West at least) in a society defined by its capacity to consume (see for example Baudrillard, 1998; Bauman, 1998). A "consumer culture" is underpinned by aesthetics as opposed to ethics, effectively elevating the aesthetic appreciation of things -- their capacity to excite and arouse desire[1] in us – to the level of supreme experience. Thus the (pleasurable) experiences that things generate become more important than the things themselves. As Welsch (1997) puts it, "hedonism [is] a new cultural matrix" (p. 3).

We do not have space to elucidate these ideas in great depth, but the key point here is that through consumerism, we become acculturated into an aesthetic mode of being-in-the-world, living through our senses and seeking new experiences at an ever increasing rate. As aesthetics become increasingly important in consumer choices, so producers pay further attention to the aesthetics of products, services and the environments in which they are sold and so the cycle of "aestheticization" continues (Featherstone, 1991; Ritzer, 1999; Welsch, 1997). Importantly, this is not confined to the sphere of consumption, as Welsch (1997) points out:

> This animatory trend reaches far beyond the aesthetic enshroudment of individual everyday items – beyond the styling of objects and experience-loaded ambiances. It is increasingly determining the form of our culture a whole. Experience and entertainment have become the guidelines for culture in recent years. A society of leisure and experience is served by an expanding culture of festivals and fun. (p. 3)

In short, aesthetic experiences and 'artistic environments' become highly valued in all spheres of life -- from the provision of education and health care (Ritzer, 1999) to the experience of work (Bauman, 1998) we are living in a society where 'fun' is good, and aesthetic concerns reign, as Bauman (1998) thoughtfully notes:

> The world and all its fragments are judged by their capacity to occasion sensations and Erlebnisse _ the capacity to arouse desire, the most pleasurable phase of the consumer's life pursuits, more satisfying than the satisfaction itself. It is by varying volumes of that capacity that objects, events and people and plotted on the map; the world map in most frequent use is aesthetic, rather than cognitive or moral. The status occupied by work, or more precisely by the job performed, could not but be profoundly affected by the present ascendancy of aesthetic criteria…. (p. 32)

To return to the present case, we suggest that this 'ascendancy' of aesthetic criteria in wider society is legitimating the acceptance and diffusion of aesthetic/ artistic management practices in contemporary work organizations too. Rather than necessarily being tools of managerial control, seen in this light, they might also/ instead be seen as organizational responses to a 'demand' for aestheticized work among employees.

However, whether we position these management discourses as tools of control or organizational responses, we still leave, undisturbed, the assumed link between them and the 'power of the unconscious'. In the examples we set out above, 'practising' art at work is imagined to be (i) a well trodden path to the unconscious creative/aesthetic 'talents' of the individual and, (ii) inherently positive. The rest of the paper problematises these two assumptions by highlighting the role of learned craft skill in creativity and 'artistic genius' and, the contested nature of the unconscious.

Craft, graft and 'flow'

As we have pointed out, regardless of

the origins or ethical and political concerns surrounding aesthetic/ artistic management practices, the link between these 'techniques' and the unconscious they claim to 'unleash' is far from clear. Creativity in these cases, appears to be conceptualised as something inherent, individual and capable of being 'released' in certain ways as we have outlined above. This premise also underlies the idea that 'proper' art results from the expression of unconscious or pre-conscious emotion. Collingwood's (1938) influential theory of art rests on just theses principles.

He argued that any definition of 'art' must centre on the expression of unconscious emotions. Starting from only a vague notion of the finished project and following no strictly predetermined plan, the artist begins her/ his venture allowing their emotions to 'run free' over the canvas, or through their performance. He makes this point in order to distinguish 'art' from 'craft' _ the latter being skilled activities that can be learned. Craft, he argues, may indeed be art, but art is not a craft. In other words, you cannot learn to be an artist, you are born with capacity to 'release' your emotions through art, as Warburton (2003) summarises:

Collinwood's conclusion is that the 'technical theory' of art as a kind of craft is a non-starter. Although works of art may involve craft, art is not to be identified with craft. This is because art is not just a matter of technique; it is not something that can be taught as a skill can be taught: 'a technician is made, but an artist is born'. (p. 41)

We propose that this premise of the 'aesthetic unconscious' is disputable. Despite his insistence on the separation of art and craft, even Collingwood recognised that producing art requires at least some skill. He notes that great artists possess great skill in conjunction with being able to express their emotions through their chosen medium. This appears to have been overlooked or forgotten in discourses of organizational creativity as illustrated by the examples below _ as seen in our own research experiences _ using a range of examples of 'highly skilful' art to critique management 'prescriptions' for creativity (Aalten, 1997).

We suggest that the idea of the aesthetic unconscious is convenient to organizations. If art _ and all the associated creative benefits is affords _ cannot be taught, then it follows that you cannot train someone to be artistic and, ergo, cannot train someone to innovate and/ or think creatively, for example. If art is a creative expression of unconscious emotion then, one assumes, the only organizational structures that need to be put in place are those that facilitate that process, as in the examples we have given above. Creativity becomes the responsibility of the individual and the organization is effectively exonerated from investing in the training and development of individuals involved in creative tasks.

Furthermore, we argue that this contributes further to DuGay and Salaman's (1992) notion of the 'enterprising worker' whereby individuals tie their sense of the self to that of the organization, internalising organizational values as their own. In the present case, employees' creative potential is framed within and constructed by organizational discourses for the explicit purpose of improving organizational performance rather than enriching the lives of individuals. Indeed, 'over-stimulation' of people's 'aesthetic faculties' at work may lead to a kind of desensitizing or anaesthetizing effect outside work, as Hancock (2003) predicts:

Having colonized the cognitive and affective realm of both their employees and consumers, it would seem then, that the next assault is to be on the realm of the sensual…. (p. 190)

Indeed, this was something that was recognised by respondents in the study of the web-design department referred to earlier in this paper (Warren, 2002a, 2005b). When questioned what sorts of activities they enjoyed outside work, almost all reflected that their creativity was 'used up' at work and

they regretted not having the 'creative energy' for artistic pursuits purely for pleasure in the leisure time. Relatedly, several respondents also reported staying on at work after hours to take advantage of the toys and games in the office, rather than going home to their families and friends to 'play'.

With this is mind, we also draw parallels here with Meˇstrovic´'s (1997) "post-emotional society" in which the colonisation and commodification of private emotional (aesthetic) qualities leads to a trivialisation of emotional experience which impoverishes human existence and blocks cathartic channels:

> Reduced to yet another tool of the organizational technocrat, the neutralization of the aesthetic risks becoming absolute, rendering it indistinguishable in a world where aesthetic experience is reduced to a nothing more than the deadened apprehension of the sterile landscape of society, and the judgement of association of a contrived meaning with a fashionable corporate livery. (Hancock, 2003, p. 193)

This may, of course, be overly pessimistic and does not allow space for resistance to such totalitarian organizational actions, but it is, at least, one possible consequence of these aesthetic/ artistic interventions.

We now turn our attention to our final critique _ what we see as an overly romantic view of the artistic unconscious in the organizational discourses we have critiqued above.

The 'creative' unconscious?

According to Gabriel (1999), during the twentieth century, the concept of the unconscious has pervaded thinking about human behaviour. But whilst notions of the concept have become widely accepted, virtually all criticisms of psychoanalysis are derived from an inability to accept the unconscious and its implications (Mitchell, 1974, cited in Gabriel, 1999). But although it is a central concept within psychoanalytic theory, gaining a precise understanding of the unconscious is bedevilled by the fact that the same term was often used with different meanings at different times in the developing psychoanalytic literature (Bateman & Holmes, 1995, p. 29). Thus commentators tend to differentiate between the use of the word to denote a quality of experience (with the word being used in a descriptive sense) and a mental system the "dynamic unconscious" (Sandler et al., 1997, p. 3).

Where the latter is concerned, Freud (the first to systematically explore its role in normal and abnormal mental life) initially saw the unconscious as part of the "mental apparatus", an entity that could not be directly understood or apprehended but explained and accessed by irrational mental phenomena such as jokes, dreams, fantasies and slips of the tongue. He also postulated that unacceptable memories, phantasies, wishes thoughts and aspects of painful experience were pushed back into the unconscious by repression, along with their associated emotions (Bateman & Holmes, 1995). In the early topographical model of the mind, the unconscious features as a mental system that included representatives of the instincts (desires, wishes, phantasies) whose main purpose is to gain access to consciousness. In the second topography, the unconscious is no longer an agency because its agency-like properties are assimilated in the id[2]·. But in this final iteration of Freud's models of the mind, the two other agencies, the ego and the super ego also contain unconscious elements and pursue many of their functions in ways that also preclude direct access to consciousness.

As Freud realised, the existence of an unconscious part of our mind that is beyond our direct knowledge and control, is a highly threatening and disturbing one. This is exacerbated by further consideration that the ego does not have mastery here due to the powerful countervailing forces of the id and

the super-ego. Thus leading to the suggestion that we all harbour a stranger within ourselves: a highly disconcerting thought when further elaboration of the contents of those unconscious processes shows that they are unpredictable, destructive and self-destructive appetites seeking instant gratification. It therefore cuts across more romantic or benign conceptualisations of the unconscious by stating that the human psyche possesses a dark side _ with little about the unconscious (according to Freud) being noble. This therefore raises a pertinent question as to what precisely *is* being unleashed when the unconscious is supposedly being accessed for creative purposes and what the implications might be for individuals, teams and those that manage them.

The unconscious, work and creativity

It is creative apperception more than anything else that makes the individual feel that life is worth living. Contrasted with this is a relationship to external reality which is one of compliance, the world and its details being recognised but only as something to be fitted in with or demanding adaptation. (Winnicott, 1971, p. 65)

Freud distinguished between two types of work: that which is undertaken from a position of need in order to secure our livelihood and all that depends upon it, and that which is creative and life-enhancing and through which we express our desires and visions. For him, it is the latter formulation that enables psychological and emotional growth as well as an ability to formulate meaningful relationships with our environment. But whilst he approached work mainly as a creative activity as typified in the labours of the artist, he believed that the key to understanding the psychological significance of creative work is contained in the concept of sublimation whereby an individual can redirect his/her libido away from sexual aims towards spiritual, aesthetic or scientific ones. Those able to engage in sublimation may transcend the discontents of civilisation and produce work that survives them and enriches the lives of others.

However, Freud placed two important qualifications on the ability of work to supply consolations for life's sufferings. Firstly, the satisfactions such work affords, even for highly creative individuals, are relatively modest in comparison to the satisfactions offered by the sating of primary instinctual impulses. Secondly, the great majority of people frequently work out of necessity, therefore failing to strive after it as they do other means of satisfaction (Freud, 1930/1985).

The Freudian view of creative work as sublimation does not seem to suit the work that most people do in organisations especially well; it is possible that some individuals in managerial, artistic, creative or entrepreneurial positions may be able to sublimate their libido into their work, but for the majority this possibility is severely restricted. (Gabriel, 1999, p. 108)

What then are the implications for those who are not consistently engaged in inherently creative work? And does the spectre of the outcomes of failing to sublimate libidinous drives provide further (albeit unconscious) justification for the plethora of HR and management practices designed to assert and maintain employee control? Would it inadvertently provide a different rationale (with a more benign orientation) for the need to provide creative work? As noted by Winnicott, "many individuals have experienced just enough of creative living to recognise that for most of their time they are living uncreatively, as if caught up in the creativity of someone else, or of a machine" (Winnicott, 1971, p. 65) and that our compliance with ways of living that are not creative (with very clear implications for our experiences of work) provides "a sick basis

for life" (Winnicott, 1971, p. 65)[3].. Thus, it could be argued that there are powerful rationales behind the focus on creativity and aesthetic experiences: as both a means of control of libidinal drives seeking satisfaction and as a means of providing a space where such sublimation can occur through a movement away from the paradigm and actualisation of organizations/organizational life as mechanistic in order to secure an alternative emotional state more conducive to sublimation and creative work. What Winnicott explores is a link between creative living and living itself and how it can be lost -- along with the individual's feeling that life is real or meaningful. Key to this is the creation of a facilitating environment and transitional objects that are crucial to our experiences of creativity. However, both rely upon the existence of the "good enough mother" and her capacity for holding and for love -- which have profound implications when considering the role the organisation (and especially the manager) has to play here.

A facilitating environment

As stated, Winnicott sees the provision of a facilitating environment as being central in relation to the creation and maintenance of emotional development – and the ability to engage in play (a crucial facilitating act of creativity). Based on Kleinian "positions" experienced by the infant during the earliest stages of life, Winnicott developed the concept and the importance of a facilitating environment and transitional phenomena as crucial means by which the individual copes with the immense shock of the loss of omnipotence experienced during the earliest stages of life (Klein's "paranoid-schizoid position"). With their provision allowing the child to negotiate the emotions of splitting encountered here and move towards the fusion of destructive and erotic impulses seen as a sign of health (along with the concept of restitution and reparation).

We find that individuals live creatively and feel that life is worth living or else that they cannot live creatively and are doubtful about the value of living. *This variable in human beings is directly related to the quality and quantity of environmental provision at the beginning or in the early phases of each baby's living experience.* (Winnicott, 1971, p. 71, italics is added emphasis)

The facilitating environment which assists in the move towards synthesis of polarised objects described by Winnicott (1986) has "a human quality, not a mechanical perfection" (p. 144) and is accompanied by holding -- both physically (as seen in the way the mother actually holds the child) and psychically. Therefore, the ability of the "good-enough mother" to hold the child's emotions in all their extremes during the paranoid-schizoid position is of vital importance – as is her inherent capacity for love -- because it is this process of holding that is key to the facilitation of the movement of the infant from the paranoid-schizoid position to that of the depressive position (Klein, 1986b). If this facilitating environment exists, along with a fine judgement as to how far to gratify the child to provoke exploration of and relation to the environment, then it is more likely that it will be able to progress through the inherent difficulties of the anxiety it experiences and engage in play.

Transitional objects

Winnicott saw as significant the existence of an intermediate territory between the inner and the external world, noticing, for example, how a child would hug a blanket or doll. He suggested that the doll or blanket did not represent the thing as such but was an "as-if" object where the infant makes use of the illusion that, although this is not the breast, treating it as such will allow an appreciation of what is "me" and what is "not me" (Carr, 2003). Although these objects are referred to as "transitional objects", they are not transitional because it is the initial manifestation of a different positioning of the infant in the world, which connects to subjective experience, but is in the objective world. It is the first means by which the baby

moves from dependence on the mother to autonomy through the use of transitional objects to stand for the mother in her absence -- as part of the inevitable process of separation. Where healthy infant development occurs, the question of separation in separating does not arise, because:

> …in the potential space between baby and the mother there appears the creative playing that arises naturally out of the relaxed state; it is here that there develops a use of symbols that stand at one and the same time for external world phenomena and for the phenomena of the individual person who is being looked at. (Winnicott, 1971, p. 109)

Finally here, if the baby has confidence in the mother's reliability, and as a consequence will rely upon others, then this facilitates a separating out of the not-me from the me. At the same time, Winnicott states that separation is avoided by the filling out of the potential space with creative playing, with the use of symbols, as with all that eventually adds up to a creative life. As Carr rightly asserts, the use of transitional objects and potential space are not simply confined to the experience of infants but "constitute something that throughout life is retained in the intense experiencing that belongs to the arts and to religion and to imaginative living and to creative scientific work" (Winnicott, 1971, p. 24, cited in Carr, 2003, p. 202).

Organizational implications & conclusions

This discussion is of interest to organizations seeking to instigate and maintain creative thought and innovation -- because it sets down a requirement for a qualitatively different facilitating environment to that expressed within the HR literature as outlined in table 1. More importantly, it illustrates that further exploration is required -- in terms of theoretical development based on the experience -- of the role and qualities of those that manage. If a psychoanalytic perspective is adopted here, the implications

could be quite interesting, suggesting that the managerial behaviour required to develop a facilitating environment and operate as a container of the anxieties generated when engaging in creative play is more akin to that of the "good enough mother". But this conceptualisation is also fraught with difficulty should a group dominated by basic assumption behaviour and Kleinian processes of splitting, projection and projective identification. Should the group – through the facilitation of its manager -- face reality, it should (hopefully) recognise that it is facing itself, causing its terrors and anxieties to flee (De Board, 1987). But whilst complex and problematic, these ideas could offer a different lens through which to reconfigure the managerial role and consider what managers represent to those who are managed whilst exploring an area within the domain of emotion in organisations which is as yet unresearched.

Finally, this paper is not concerned with offering alternative or best practice exhortations as to aesthetic practices in the workplace and their utilisation for organisational ends. We would also assert that their use should not justify a reduction in the HRD budget or a replacement of focus on craft skills. Indeed, we would probably advocate the reverse -- arguing that Senge's focus on individual mastery is a life-long practice involving consistent refinement of skill and knowledge.

However, we cannot -- and probably would not want to offer an answer to a question at the heart of this paper as to whether the use of aesthetic practices by organizations involves an exploitation of worker creativity for organisational requirements for performance or offers the potential for expression in an arena most of us are forced to occupy in order to secure a livelihood. We are therefore cynical about organisational mind-sets that uses the facilitating HR factors and aesthetic experiences outlined in this paper in order to create a performance culture where 'failure' to attain organisational goals leaves those

concerned vulnerable to charges of ineffectiveness. That the advent of creative, aesthetic interventions means that responsibility for creative performance now lies with the individual/work group because all has been done to create an appropriate environment for its generation and maintenance. As we have indicated, our creative impulses require a profoundly different form of nurturing -- one that does not necessarily exclude the provision of aesthetic experiences at work -- but which needs a markedly different form of intervention; one which places additional 'responsibilities' upon those in managerial or facilitational roles within organisations; offering very different perspectives, from different disciplines, as to environmental requirements for initiating and maintaining creative practices at work.

Notes

1. Aesthetic experiences, of course, encompass a whole range of value judgements about what we perceive through our senses. Disgust, apathy, revulsion and melancholy, for example, are all valid aesthetic categories (see Strati, 2000b, pp. 19–25). In the present context, however, the aesthetic experiences that underpin consumerism as a cultural motif are those that generate *pleasure*.

2. The id can be regarded as the area containing primitive instinctual drives, with all their hereditary and constitutional elements. It is dominated by the pleasure principle and functions according to primary process. The pleasure principle is one of mental functioning that describes the tendencies of unconscious impulses and desires towards instant gratification before the mediation of the ego and the coming into effect of the reality principle. Primary process is the process governing the behaviour of unconscious ideas and desires in the id. There, ideas and desires enjoy great freedom and also demand instant gratification.

3. Whilst Winnicott states that it is unlikely that

a definition will ever be found for the creative impulse (or one wanted), he looks at it as a thing in itself "…something that is present when anyone…looks in a healthy way at anything or does anything deliberately…It is present as much in the moment-by-moment living of a backward child who is enjoying breathing as it is in the inspiration of an architect…"

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