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Dr Mark Readman (mark@cemp.ac.uk)

ual: **CLTAD**
@ualcltad



Following

So excited that [@msreadman](#) will do keynote for [@UniArtsLondon](#) Learning and Teaching conference! bit.ly/1pQ9CHV #creativity



FAVORITE

1



6:45 AM - 8 Oct 2014



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Mark Readman

@msreadman

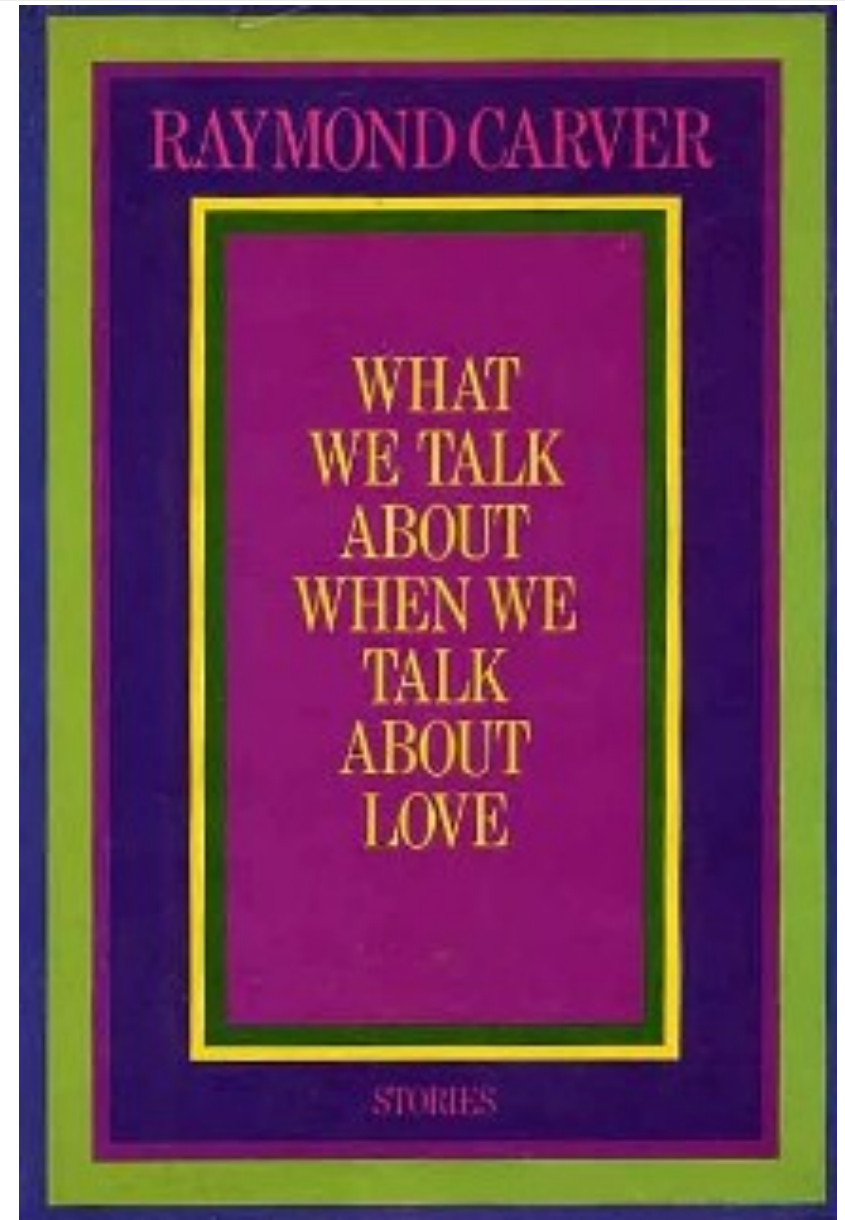
Just don't ask me what 'creativity' is...

📍 Bournemouth & Somerset

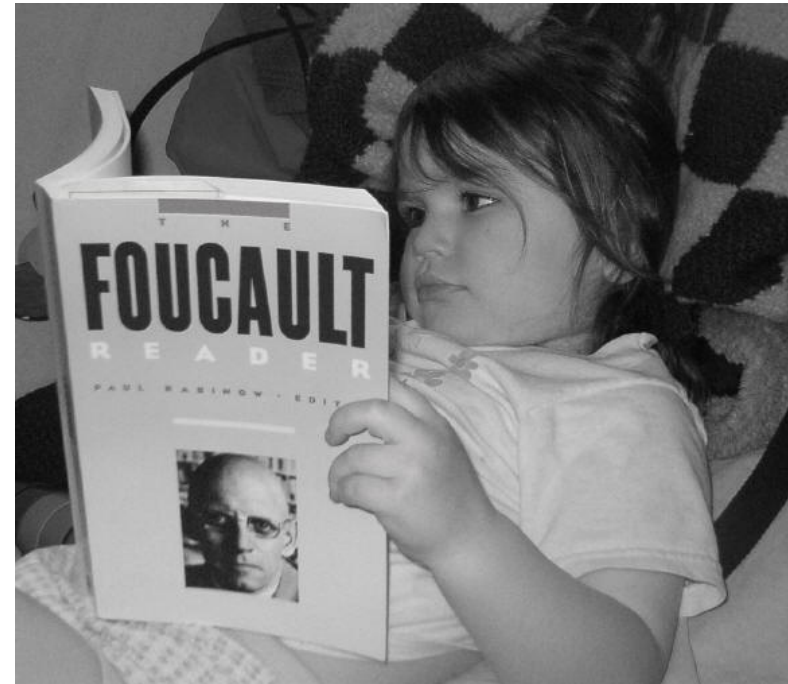
🔗 cemp.ac.uk/people/markrea...

🕒 Joined January 2011

What we talk about
when we talk about
creativity...



[The ‘author function’]...results from a complex operation whose purpose is to construct the rational entity we call an author. Undoubtedly this construction is assigned a “realistic” dimension as we speak of an individual’s “profundity” or “creative” power, his intentions or the original inspiration manifested in writing. (Foucault 1977, p.127)



‘Against the Fetishising of Creativity’

“Creativity is a beloved *non*-word, an almost messianic formulation; one of those public screens onto which everyone can project almost everything. It is a term coined to offer hope and positive expectation; a catchword to employers and a must in job application letters. Invoking it is *de rigueur* for ‘alternative minds’ rebelling against bourgeois ‘virtues’ .”

(Gottfried Wagner 2009. ‘Forum for Creative Europe’)



‘Creativity’ appears in many contexts, as a policy imperative, a curriculum driver, a research focus in arts and science, a trait in evolutionary history....



All begin with the idea that it is a ‘thing’ to be discovered, elicited, realised. But to approach it, instead as a concept mobilised in particular conditions may be a more useful project.

Some 'versions' of creativity:

*As a specialised form of human production;

*As any form of expressive activity;

As divergent thinking;

*As psychopathology;

*As attribution;

*As the antithesis of commercial activity (art vs craft?);

As an evolutionary trait;

*As a function of technology;

As a characteristic of 'enlightened' education.

A specialised form of human production vs. any form of expressive activity

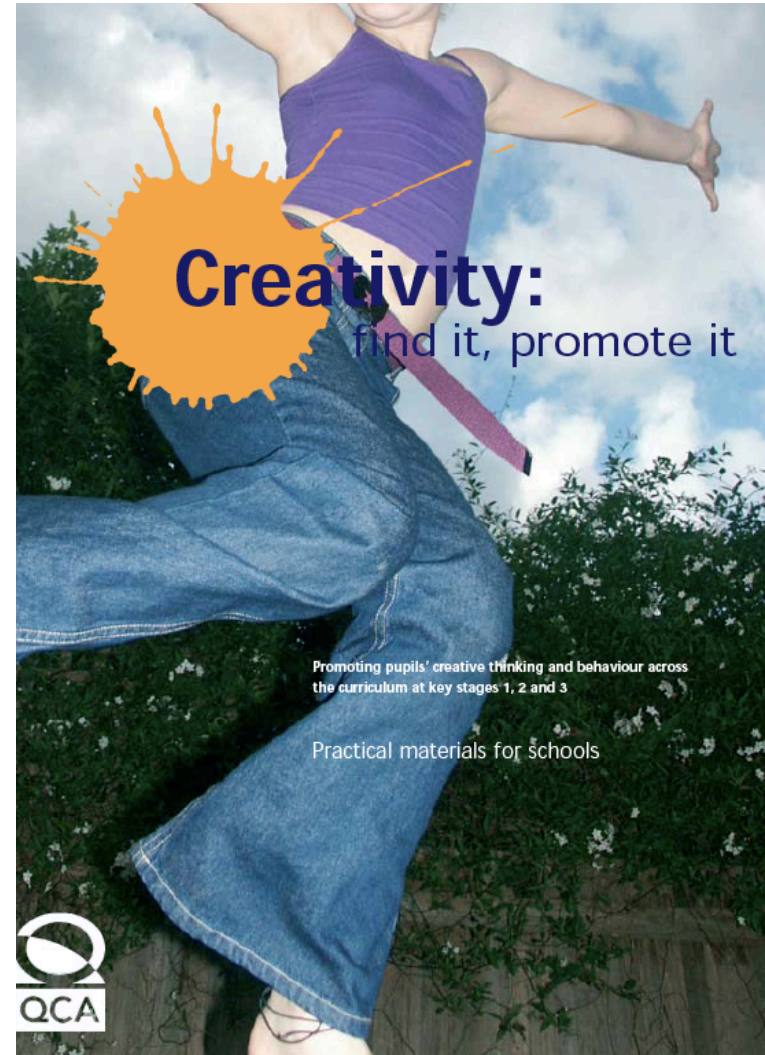
“...there are certainly some people who are gifted at drawing, or who have a particularly lively sense of colour, but who are not impelled to use these talents for anything more exciting than a holiday sketch book or the decoration of a house...in spite of their endowments, they do not express their day-dreams in creative fashion.” (Storr 1972, p.50)

Or...

“We all have creative abilities and we all have them differently. Creativity is not a single aspect of intelligence that only emerges in particular activities, in the arts for example. It is a systematic function of intelligence that can emerge whenever our intelligence is engaged.” (Robinson 2001, p.12)

By promoting creativity, teachers can give all pupils the opportunity to discover and pursue their particular interests and talents. We are all, or can be, creative to some degree. Creative pupils lead richer lives and, in the longer term, make a valuable contribution to society.

(QCA, 2003)

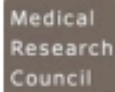


Reconciliations:

Craft (2001) – ‘Big C’ and ‘Little c’ creativity (‘domain changing’ vs ‘everyday’ creativity)

Boden (1992) – ‘P-creativity’ and ‘H-creativity’ (personal vs historical creativity)

Kaufman et al. (2014) – ‘ornamental/aesthetic creativity’; ‘applied/technological creativity’; ‘everyday/domestic creativity’



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“All good scientists are very creative.” Dame Nancy Rothwell on [@BBCRadio4](#) [#desertislanddiscs](#) mrc.io/1Bqv5jm



 **BBC**

Professor Dame Nancy Rothwell, Desert Island Discs - BBC Radio 4

By **BBC** @BBC

Kirsty Young interviews Prof Dame Nancy Rothwell.



[View on web](#)

RETWEETS

12

FAVORITES

6



8:15 AM - 5 Jan 2015

“The science is beginning to show us that creativity is a catch-all term for a variety of distinct thought processes.”

*(Start the Week, Radio 4
30/4/12)*




Creativity and psychopathology

“Creativity is one mode adopted by gifted people of coming to terms with, finding symbolic solutions for, the internal tensions and dissociations from which all human beings suffer in varying degree.” (Storr 1972, p.252)

“[Spike Milligan] was also having periods of manic depression, which fed his creativity and plunged him into terrible black moods.” (Lambert 2010, p.2)

“...we should remember that a hundred years ago those canvases were just the hallucinatory original works of a sociopathic recluse.” (Csikszentmihalyi 1999, p.321)

Tommy McHugh Features on TV, 26 May

Published on May 21, 2009 in Art Preview.  Closed

True Stories: Painting the Mind on **More 4**

Tuesday 26 May 2009, 22:00

Painting the Mind features five different artists, Local artist Tommy McHugh and an American artist Jon Sarkin, who both started painting compulsively following strokes, they produce quite abstract and expressionistic art.

There is an Italian artist who after a fever, which doctors think affected part of his brain, began to produce paintings of a village which he had not seen since leaving it at a very young age, which were photographically accurate, and two younger autistic savant artists who produce stunningly detailed representational paintings of places which they may have only briefly visited.



photograph by Gianni Bianchini

Painting the Mind is (director) Sarah Feltes's stunning exploration of creativity and the mechanisms of our brains which promote or suppress it. It is particularly powerful as it is entirely subject driven, the extraordinary experiences are told by the artists themselves, their family and friends.



Despite his thousands of creations Mr McHugh, of Birkenhead, Merseyside, refuses to think of himself as the next Damien Hirst. 'I'm not an artist,' he said. 'I'm just letting the creativity flow out of me'.



© Alyson Blanchard/Barcroft Media



© Alyson Blanchard/Barcroft Media

Vivid: The inside front door (left) and bathroom are more examples of Mr McHugh's creativity

“...only tentative conclusions can be drawn about how these artistic urges occur. But studies of patients such as McHugh could shed light on how our brains create art. ‘People like Tommy could reveal the key to artistic creativity’, says Mark Lythgoe, a neuroscientist at UCL.”

(Giles, July 2004)



Creativity and the affordances of technology



ADOBE® CREATIVE SUITE® 5



Open doors
to a lifetime
of creativity

Learn more

The advertisement features a large, 3D, purple number '5' that is open like a door. Inside the '5', there are various colorful, stylized figures and objects, including a yellow figure, a blue figure, and a red figure. The '5' is surrounded by a collection of colorful, abstract shapes and patterns. The background is a light, textured grey. The Adobe logo is in the top right corner, and the text 'Open doors to a lifetime of creativity' is in the middle right. A 'Learn more' button is in the bottom right.

Greg Satell



Greg Satell
Contributor

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TECH 1/27/2014 @ 11:46PM | 7,549 views

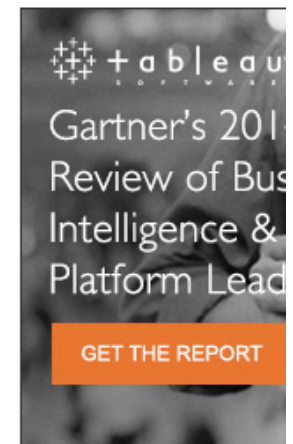
How Technology Enhances Creativity

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I recently [wrote a post](#) about how marketers will need to learn to rely less on judgment and intuition in the era of [big data](#). It's a controversial subject, especially since many marketers pride themselves, in fact have built their careers, on having a reputation for instinct.

So I expected a certain amount of pushback, but instead many people seemed to think that I was arguing that technology was diminishing the need for creativity in marketing. This is clearly not the case. So let me set the record straight.

Technology does not quell creativity, in fact, there's a great deal of evidence that suggests that technology enhances creativity. Certainly, we are expected to be more creative in our working lives than a generation ago. The truth is that by expanding possibilities and automating



Overview Story Info StoryGuide Players Casting Characteristics Story Engine Theme Browser Gist Manager Story Points Reports Progression Brainstorming Help

Project Overview

Title:

Author:

Total Players in Project: **8**

Total Scenes in Project: **122**

Storyforms Remaining: **1**

Logline:

A battle between the forces of Good and Evil set in a galaxy long, long ago, where the skills of one farm boy will determine the fate of the universe.

Synopsis:


The Emperor's new Empire has secured most of the galaxy, but a strong Rebel Alliance has arisen as well. To crush the rebellion and keep the Galaxy firmly under control, the Empire builds a planet destroying DEATH STAR. This battle station is powerful enough to end the rebellion.

Rebel leader PRINCESS LEIA (Anakin Skywalker's daughter) calls on the last known Jedi, Obi-Wan Kenobi to deliver stolen secret plans of the Death Star to the Rebellion leaders on the planet Alderaan. Shortly after sending this message, she is captured and taken to the Death Star.

Overall Story

Overall Story Title:

"Destroying the Death Star"



Synopsis:

Rebels have stolen the plans of The Empire's new planet killing weapon, the Death Star. The Empire will stop at nothing to recover the stolen plans, find the rebel base, and destroy it.

Plot Dynamics


- Outcome: Success
- Judgment: Good
- Limit: Optionlock
- Driver: Action

Structure

- Domain: Fighting Between the Em
- Concern: Attacking and Counter
- Issue: Having Uneven Fighting an
- Problem: Testing the Death Star
- Solution: Trusting One's Powers

Main Character

Name:



Gender:

Description:

A whiny farm boy, athletic, somewhat attractive, who dreams of excitement and glory. Now, if only he can get out of his familial responsibilities and join the Rebellion...

Dynamics


- Resolve: Change
- Growth: Stop
- Approach: Do-er
- Problem-Solving Style: Linear

Structure

- Domain: Being a farm boy stuck c
- Concern: How Little Progress He'
- Issue: Fantasizing about Joining t
- Problem: Constantly testing hims
- Solution: Trusting the Force

Influence Character

Name:



Gender:

Description:

Once a formidable Jedi Teacher, he is now old, eccentric, and reclusive. His non-Jedi name is Ben Kenobi.


Structure

- Domain: Believing in the Force an
- Concern: Letting the Force guide
- Issue: Understanding Something'
- Problem: Others Doubting the ex
- Solution: Proof of the Force's exis
- Symptom: Looking at reasons so
- Response: Having an effect on Lu
- Unique Ability: Being a Useful Jed
- Critical Flaw: Being Considered D
- Benchmark: Letting go of Conscic

Relationship Throughline

Relationship Title:

"Training a Young Jedi"



Synopsis:

A young man, named Luke Skywalker, has grown up on a remote desert planet completely unaware that his missing father was really a famous Jedi Knight. Luke's foster parents are afraid he has "too much of his father" in him and this fear has instilled a

Structure

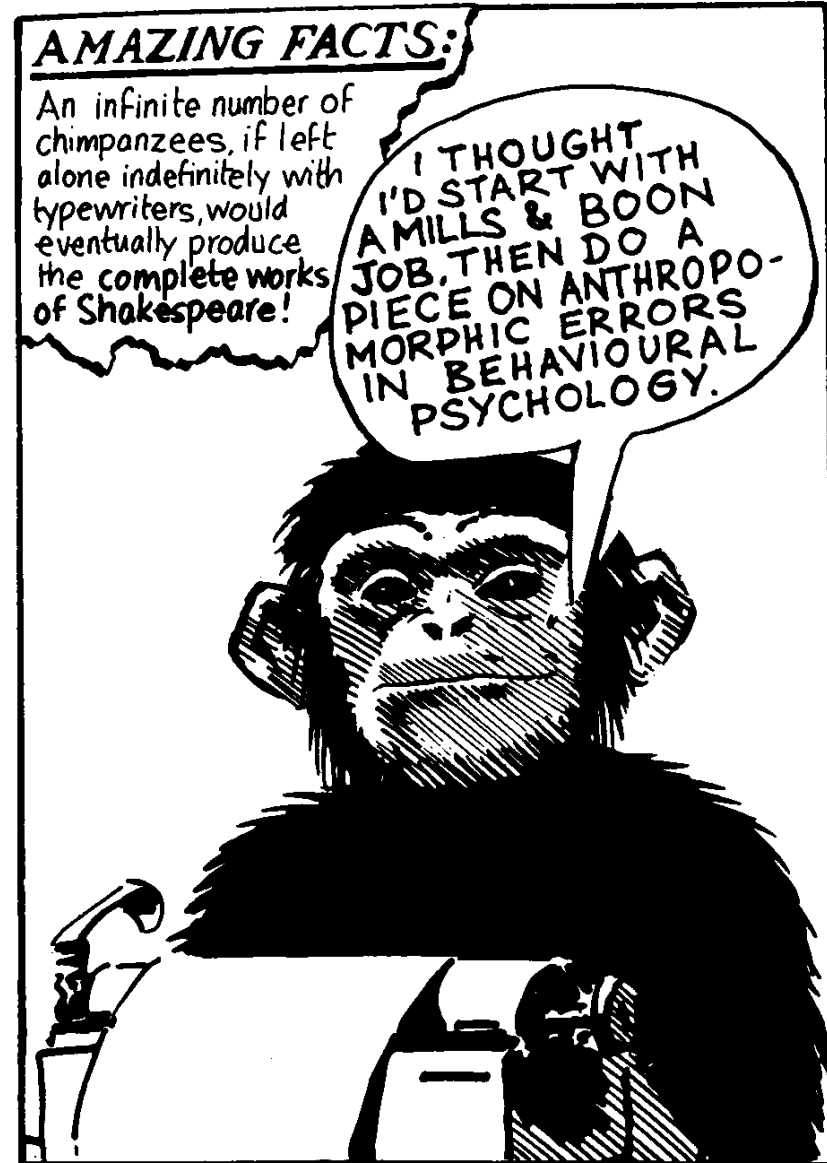
- Domain: Changing How One See'
- Concern: Being a Jedi
- Issue: Ability
- Problem: Providing Inadequate In
- Solution: Providing Sufficient Dire
- Symptom: Causing a Scene
- Response: Making Luke a Jedi
- Catalyst: Sharing Knowledge abo
- Inhibitor: Taking Time to gain Enl
- Benchmark: Getting the Idea of w



Meebox (Adam Buxton, 2008)

Tension between:

- Formula and invention;
- Freedom and constraint;
- The agency of the writer and the affordances of technology;
- Craft and creativity.





“In such a tough, profit-driven business, how does the act of creativity fit in? Is it possible to even be creative and what do we mean by being creative?”

Screenwriters create something from nothing – they fill paper with words. Is that in itself a creative act? In a form where so much is considered to be craft, how much space is left for creativity and, indeed, where do we draw the line between craft and creativity?”

(Nelmes 2007, p.109)

“I often call myself, mockingly, a conceptual artist masquerading as a craftsman.”

(Grayson Perry on *Thinking Allowed* 2008)





Niles: I thought you prided yourself on supporting the arts!
Frasier: The arts, Niles, not the crafts!

(Frasier 1997, 'Roz's Turn')

The ‘Creative Industries’ are those:

“...which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property.”

Including:

“advertising, architecture, the art and antiques market, crafts, design, designer fashion, film and video, interactive leisure software, music the performing arts, publishing, software and computer services, television and radio.” (DCMS 2001, pp.4-5)

Do it for Love

Billy Childish presents his manifesto for the advancement of the creed of the amateur and destruction of the professional

Hangman Communication 0003
18.6.98

Crimes of the professional against society and creativity and the artist's role as saviour and underdog

1. The true artist, by nature, is always an amateur and never a professional.
2. In a world populated by experts the artist must be a forever moving target.
3. The professional's violence against creativity and the rewards for his cowardice must be exposed and finally ridiculed.
4. The professional is weak because of his need to be respected, honoured and adored. The true artist, on the other hand, must have the courage to remain unimpressive, shallow and obvious.
5. The lie of originality, the ignorance of its champions and the intrinsic honesty of plagiarism.
6. The inherent provincialism of professionals and the intrinsic cosmopolitanism of the amateur.
7. It is the professional's obsession with good taste that obliterates all creativity. It is actually this fear of life itself that forces the professional to become a neurotic expert and crush the intrepid amateur.

SUMMARY OF COMMUNICATION 0003

We have allowed the right of expression to be hijacked by a suspect body of so-called professionals and experts. Humiliated in our artistic dreams as children, only a very select few of us go on to participate in the making of our culture.

In ignorance we have allowed ourselves to be bullied into becoming passive and admiring doormats to the good taste of these so-called professionals, who then spoon feed us a constant drip-feed of de-natured, un-nutritional pap! It seems that we have somehow been tricked into

believing that our own personal expression is inadequate when compared to the gaudy hype of these professionals. We, at Group Hangman however, believe that rather than being the poor brother of professionalism, amateurism is in fact the ultimate form of artistic expression, and is far more worthy of praise than the sheep-like professional's pathetic devotion to accolade and success.

Our proposals for the rejuvenation of society are threefold.

1. In all areas of life the violence of the professional must be questioned and where necessary smashed. It must be seen that amateurism is the only creed that invites participation, stimulation and ultimately personal growth.
2. Just as the professional footballer ruins football, so too does the professional musician destroy the joy of music. We, at Group Hangman, call for the immediate and total disbandment of all professional bodies and organisations and the installation of a purely amateur society, where people are encouraged at all levels to express themselves regardless of their ability or so-called lack of it. e.g. If a child wishes to sing in the school choir, that is reason enough for that child to do so.
3. We further demand the disbandment of the current school curriculum and the installation of a syllabus that places the advancement of creative thought and expression at the heart of its activities and objectives, and finally chucks society's heinous and odious obsession with professionalism on the dung heap of history.

Billy Childish 1998

A useless piece of art by Billy Childish



Creativity as the antithesis of commercial activity

Hangman Communication 0003
18.6.98

“Crimes of the professional against society and creativity and the artist's role as saviour and underdog”

‘The professional’s violence against creativity and the rewards for his cowardice must be exposed and finally ridiculed.’

‘It is the professional’s obsession with good taste that obliterates all creativity.’



‘The true artist, by nature, is always an amateur and never a professional.’

(Childish 1998, p.12)



“He may look like an accountant, but he is plainly a star. So why is he still living like a student?...I wonder if his reluctance to upgrade the fabric of his life stems from fear of losing his creativity...” (Aitkenhead 2009, p.9)

Moving towards attribution...

To have any effect, the idea must be couched in terms that are understandable to others, it must pass muster with the experts in the field, and finally it must be included in the cultural domain to which it belongs. So the first question I ask of creativity is not *what* is it but *where* is it? (Csikszentmihalyi 1996, p. 27; emphasis in the original)



'Creativity occurs when a person using the symbols of a given domain such as music, engineering, business or mathematics has a new idea or sees a new pattern[9], and when this novelty is selected by the appropriate field for inclusion into the relevant domain' (Csikszentmihalyi 1996: 28)



“Creativity is sexy, but are all creative behaviors equally sexy? We attempted to clarify the role of creativity in mate selection among an ethnically diverse sample of 815 undergraduates. First we assessed the sexual attractiveness of different forms of creativity: ornamental/aesthetic, applied/technological, and everyday/domestic creativity.”

(Kaufman et al. 2014, p.1)



Creativity as attribution



“This finding suggests that having a perceived handicap (such as being unpolished) sometimes leads catchers to judge a pitcher as more creative than individuals who appear more conventional. This phenomenon might be termed the "Woody Allen effect" after the famously neurotic but talented writer, director, and actor.”

(Elsbach and Kramer 2003, p.292)

Creativity is a problematic term because:

- It carries connotations of magic/mysticism/faith/desirable 'otherness';
- It is always dependent on human judgements, but treated as essential;
- Its existence is inferred from other evidence – technologies of assessment and institutional judgement produce and legitimise particular kinds of activities and outcomes;
- It is simultaneously rich and empty;
- It is a site of conflict, yet this is obscured through rhetoric.

Despite all of this we seek to 'nurture', 'unlock', 'unharness' particular forms of productive, assessable activity which are called 'creative'.

A group of students respond to the question “What is creativity?”

Everything you do could be classed as creative.

Creativity. Being spontaneous and expressive.

Creativity? Originality. Being individual.

Creativity is all from the imagination and can be anything you want it to be.

Creativity is an expression of your imagination.

Creativity is – expressing new ideas in an innovative way.

Creativity – is doing or creating something original and inventive. This could be art, or a piece of tech or a story.

Creativity? Expressive. Different. Risks?

(Readman 2010, pp.263–264)

‘Emerging themes and categories’...

Credo-like utterances

Exclusivity/inclusivity

Tautologies

Synonyms

‘Alliances’

Syntactical fragmentation

“Are you creative?”

Yes...I continuously think of new ideas and try to try new things whenever I can.

Yes! Isn't everyone?! Nothing is unimportant. I see ideas and novelty in things others would ignore – I think that counts for something.

Yes - Because I can be inventive.

Creative – I am creative because of my imagination and ability to transcribe it to words and stories.

I think I am because I see the potential for creativity in many things around me.

Am I creative? I don't know as creativity has so many meanings and I think that maybe nobody truly knows what it means to be creative.

Yes. I believe everyone is in their own way. I think I am because I regularly use my imagination to the best as I can to think of new, fresh ideas.

Yes, with the ability to imagine and transfer to word or image, I am creative.

Yes, because everyone is.

Yes but I can't prove it...interesting.

(Readman 2010, pp.261-262)

More 'emerging themes'...

The creative individual

Faith in creativity

Investment in a creative identity

Romanticism

Solipsism



Questions for ourselves in relation to 'creative practice':

What are our assumptions about 'creativity'?

What conceptual relationships are mobilised between 'creativity' and 'art' and 'craft'?

How is an ideological hierarchy of creative work/activity manifested/constructed through our own practices?

What's at stake in our answers to these questions?

How can we make this explicit to those we're working with?

The rhetorics of creativity are often characterised by:

“textual moves to make [it] concrete; [the] use of the language of faith and belief; a metaphorical system which contrasts organic growth with technological sterility; [...] the masking of logical inconsistencies with rhetorical urgency.” (Readman 2010, p.79)

Alternatives to asking “what is creativity?”:

- What tensions are evident in the formulation of statements about creativity?
- What kinds of things are drawn into the discursive ‘frame’?
- What kinds of things are neglected or rejected in this frame?
- What kinds of presuppositions are evident?
- How do descriptions of, and prescriptions for, practice generate ‘creativity’ conceptually?
- How, generally, is ‘creativity’ being modelled through rhetorical and ideological means?



This is not to diminish the the pleasure in and admiration of thrilling material, inventive thinking, and skillful practice, but, to establish a '*critical plurality*' and ask:

"what do we talk about when we talk about creativity?"

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