Paradoxes, double binds, and the construction of 'creative' managerial selves in art-based leadership development

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Summary Over the last two decades, a managerial discourse has emerged that calls for introducing the logics of art and esthetics into the field of management. In this article, we seek to shed light on the 'creative' managerial subjectivity that is sanctioned by this discourse. For this purpose, we examine leadership development workshops that invite managers to conduct a choir, and thus embody the manager-as-artist analogy. We find that these workshops present managers with a variety of contradictory demands, and that the capacity to tolerate contradictions and paradoxes is itself construed as an essential virtue of the 'creative' managerial self. We conclude by calling for more research into the paradoxes and double binds encapsulated in the art-and-management discourse, and argue that these double binds may be paralyzing in some contexts and inspiring in others.
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Introduction

Creativity and innovation are perhaps the most conspicuous managerial buzzwords of our time. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that art, as the quintessential sphere of creativity, attracts growing attention among management academics and practitioners. Since the 1990s, a managerial discourse has emerged that calls for introducing artistic and esthetic logics into the fields of business and management, and that promotes several interrelated analogies: between work processes and artistic creation processes; between management and art; and between managers and artists or artistic directors (e.g., Austin & Devin, 2003; Barry & Meisiek, 2010a; Bilton, 2007; Darsø, 2004; Dégot, 2007; du Gay & Pryke, 2002; Florida, 2002; Gagliardi, 1996; Guillet de Monthoux, 2004; Koivunen & Rehn, 2009; Ladkin & Taylor, 2010; Linstead & Hopfl, 2000; Strati, 1999; Warren & Rehn, 2006; Woodward & Funk, 2010). Concomitantly, there has been growing use of art-based methods in leadership development, management education and organizational development. These methods introduce managers and other organization members to diverse forms of art, including visual arts, music, dance, drama and literature; arrange for them to meet with artists and artistic directors; and invite them to engage in artistic activities (e.g., Adler, 2008; Barry & Meisiek, 2010b; Clark & Mangham, 2004; Kerr & Darsø, 2008; Meisiek & Barry, 2007; Meisiek & Hatch, 2008; Nissley, 2002; Springborg, 2012; Styhre & Eriksson, 2008; Taylor & Ladkin, 2009; Thrift, 2000).

Although the art-and-management discourse is not a dominant discourse in the managerial field, it does seem to have growing and cumulative effects on contemporary notions of what a good manager — especially one who promotes creativity and innovation — should look like. It constructs a particular managerial subject position, a particular image of the appropriate managerial self (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Knights & Willmott, 1989), that is conveyed to managers through various channels of communication such as the business media, art-based management consulting, and art-based leadership development programs. What are the contours of this managerial subject position? What characterizes the 'creative' and 'artistic' manager sanctioned by the art-and-management discourse? While much has been said on the managerial subject positions constructed by other managerial discourses, such as the 1990s' discourse of quality and excellence (e.g., du Gay, 1994) and the 2000s' discourses of flexibility (e.g., Swan & Fox, 2009) and entrepreneurship (e.g., Jones & Spicer, 2005), the managerial self nurtured by contemporary discourses of creativity and innovation has received little consideration to date. In particular, there has been little empirical research on how these discourses are mobilized 'on the ground', in practices such as art-based management training, to shape managerial subjectivities. Our primary goal in this article is to shed light on the 'creative' managerial self sanctioned by the art-and-management discourse by examining the use of this is discourse in art-based leadership development workshops.

More specifically, we base our analysis on a qualitative case study of leadership development workshops that are designed and facilitated by professional choir conductor Peter Hanke, and are delivered as part of executive education programs in European business schools. Hanke is one of several conductors worldwide — including American conductor Benjamin Zander and Israeli conductor Itay Talgam — who run seminars and workshops for managers. However, his workshops are unique in their experiential emphasis: rather than lecturing on conducting or demonstrating it, he invites managers to conduct a professional choir as a performative method of self-exploration and self-improvement. Put differently, he encourages managers to actually embody the persona of the 'creative' and 'artistic' manager. The cultural and psychological richness of his workshops have already won them scholarly attention (Meisiek & Hatch, 2008:415—416; Sutherland, 2012), and make them especially apt for our own exploration.

The article begins with some theoretical background on the discursive construction of managerial subjectivities and on art-based leadership development programs. This is followed by ''Data and Methods'' section, after which we turn to an empirical analysis of Peter Hanke's conducting workshops. We show that an essential capacity of the creative managerial self cultivated in these workshops is the ability to contain paradoxes and balance contradictions. We present a variety of paradoxes, tensions and contradictory demands that are evoked in the workshops, and that a good manager is expected to handle successfully. Finally, in the concluding section we place our observations within a broader context, and contend that the ubiquity of paradox in the studied workshops reflects the centrality of paradox in the art-and-management discourse at large. We also call for more empirical research into managers' responses to the paradoxes, tensions and contradictory demands encapsulated in the art-and-management discourse.

Managerial subjectivities and their discursive construction

Like many sociological studies of identity and subjectivity in organizations, our study embraces a decidedly non-essentialist conception of these notions. Rather than viewing identity and subjectivity as fixed entities, we view them as ongoing processes of becoming (e.g., Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Knights & Willmott, 1989; Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003; Watson, 2008). We concur with Alvesson and Willmott (2002) that people — in organizations and elsewhere — are engaged in on-going processes of 'identity work' whereby they form, repair and maintain their self-identity, striving to provide this precarious construct with some coherence and distinctiveness. And yet, although identity work is creative and emergent, it draws on pre-given discourses that sanction particular social identities and subject positions (Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003:1168—69; Watson, 2008:126—132). People creatively maneuver among these discursively given subjectivities and may identify with them, reject them, re-combine them and reconstruct them.

In work organizations, discourses of identity may be more or less regulated by organizational management. However, managers are not only agents of managerial discourses; they are also subjected to them. Different — and changing — managerial discourses construct different managerial subject positions (e.g., du Gay, 1994; Fletcher, 2004; Fondas, 1997; Hatcher, 2003; Jones & Spicer, 2005; Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003; Swan & Fox, 2009; Thrift, 2000; Watson, 2008). In this article, we focus on the currently emerging discourse of art-and-management, and seek to illuminate some of the features of the 'creative' or 'artistic' managerial subjectivity that it constructs. Note, however, that we do not focus on managers' active processes of 'identity work' as they engage with this discourse, but rather on the discursively given subject position that is encapsulated in it. Managers' identity work in relation to this discourse is beyond the scope of this article. Indeed, we call for more research into it in the future.

According to some researchers of managerial models and identities, one of the most conspicuous developments in the recent years has been the increasing prevalence of so-called 'post-heroic' discourses of management (for a review see Fletcher, 2004). Unlike 'heroic' discourses of management, post-heroic discourses portray management as an interactive process of influence and collaboration, in which power is shared and distributed among participants. The successful manager, according to these discourses, should display 'relational skills and emotional intelligence such as self-awareness, empathy, vulnerability, an openness to learning from others regardless of their positional authority, and the ability to operate within more fluid power dynamics, reenvisioning the very notion of power from ''power over'' to ''power within''' (Fletcher, 2004:650). As argued by several authors, post-heroic discourses of management feminize management by associating it with traits and behaviors that are culturally construed as 'feminine' (e.g., Alvesson & Willmott, 2002:623; Fletcher, 2004; Fondas, 1997; Hatcher, 2003;

Swan, 2008). Many of these authors have also observed, however, that post-heroic and feminizing discourses of management have not replaced heroic and masculine ones, but rather continue to operate alongside them (e.g., Fletcher, 2004; Hatcher, 2003; Sinclair, 2009; Swan, 2008). The result of this dualism, according to Fletcher (2004), is an impossible search for a 'post-heroic hero'. Against this background, the question arises where does the 'creative' managerial self stand — does it stand on the heroic side or on the post-heroic side? We will return to this question below.

Art-based leadership development programs and their distinctive features

Leadership development programs are among the most important sites where managers are introduced to contemporary discourses of management, encouraged to adopt socially sanctioned managerial subjectivities, and instructed as to what it means to 'do manager' (Thrift, 2000:265). Art-based leadership development programs constitute a major channel of dissemination of the art-and-management discourse to managerial audiences, and have several distinctive characteristics. Their defining characteristic is the use of methods, performances and/or artifacts borrowed from the arts for the declared purpose of improving managers' performance. In addition, art-based leadership development workshops are typically experiential, with a special focus on esthetic and emotional experiences. Many of them are also embodied and performative, as managers are often invited to engage actively in art-like design, creation and performance.

Meisiek and Barry (2007; see also Barry, 1994; Barry & Meisiek, 2010b) highlighted another significant feature of art-based interventions — their heavy reliance on analogical reasoning and experience. Art-based interventions, according to Meisiek and Barry, are a particular form of 'analogically-mediated inquiry': they engage organization members with objects and/or performances that are analogically related to their day-to-day life, and thus destabilize their habitual understandings and foster playful inquiry and reflection that is nevertheless relevant to participants' daily preoccupations. In analogically mediated interventions that draw on the arts, as opposed to those that do not draw on them, states of mindfulness and reflection are produced not only by inducing analogical reasoning, but also by harnessing the distinctive attributes of art — such as originality, subversion, quotation and parody — to the analogical inquiry process (Barry & Meisiek, 2010b:1505). Both the esthetic and the analogical character of art-based leadership development programs are nicely illustrated in Peter Hanke's conducting workshops, as we will now elaborate.

Data and methods

Peter Hanke's conducting workshops are one-time group events of about two to two and a half hours, which usually take place as part of broader executive education programs in business schools. For this study, we conducted participant observations in nine of Hanke's workshops. Four of them were part of the Oxford Strategic Leadership Programme at Saïd Business School, University of Oxford — a six- to nine-day program for senior executives that combines academic lectures with experiential sessions, many of which apply artistic methods. Two other workshops were organized by Oxford Executive Education as part of customized programs for managers from two large financial firms. Three other workshops we observed were less typical of Hanke's work, and hence provided us with a comparative perspective on his usual workshops. These workshops were similar to the usual ones in their structure, but targeted different kinds of participants. One was organized independently by Hanke and a colleague of his, and was delivered in London to a group of managers and professionals from the fields of media, communication and management consulting. Two other leadership development sessions were offered to Oxford university conducting students, and were in a sense a mirror image of Hanke's usual workshops, since they brought managerial discourses to musicians rather than vice versa.

In addition to these participant observations, we conducted semi-structured interviews by Skype or telephone with five managers who participated in Hanke's workshops, in which we asked them to share with us their experiences, thoughts and feelings during the workshops. We also conducted three interviews with Peter Hanke himself to discuss his ideas on art-based leadership training and his own experiences during the sessions we had observed. Hanke's writings (2005, 2008), as well as his website and web posts (http://peterhanke.com/; http://performingleadership.blogspot.com), provided an additional perspective on his views. Finally, we had recourse to the official feedback questionnaires on Hanke's workshops that Saïd Business School had collected for the years 2008—2012. This material includes not only quantitative rankings — in which the workshops are consistently rated very high — but also short verbal comments provided anonymously by workshop participants, on which we focused.

We perused these data through several rounds of reading, coding, and comparison between the different sessions we had observed. This interpretive process combined inductive and deductive elements: after the first round of data analysis, we iteratively moved between our data and the literature to refine our questions and observations (Strauss, 1987). Since our data consisted not only of verbal discourse but also of embodied performances that we had observed, we were careful to include these embodied performances, too, in our thematic analysis.

Conducting workshops as a method of working on the managerial self

Let us begin with a brief description of the studied conducting workshops. Like other art-based interventions — and perhaps more than most — these workshops have a profound esthetic dimension. Most of them take place in beautiful, ancient Oxford chapels in the dim light of the afternoon-evening hours. The choir is professional, and the talented choristers sing classic pieces — mostly from the English choral repertoire — that resonate in the fine acoustics. This setting creates a liminal, other-worldly space, distant from managers' everyday life, and helps produce 'a sense of privilege, awe and fun', in the words of one participant (feedback questionnaires, June 2008).

The workshops are delivered to groups of 20—25 managers at a time and proceed in a very structured manner, led by Peter Hanke as a facilitator and master of ceremonies. Hanke begins with a few general sentences of introduction, which generally refer to the value of the centuries-old traditions of the performing arts as a source of learning and inspiration for contemporary management and organizations. He then quickly moves on to a series of physical warm-up exercises — true to the experiential and performative character of the workshops. He asks the participants and the choristers to intermingle, and instructs them through several exercises that require them to communicate with each other non-verbally, by means of conducting-like gestures alone. Following this, he instructs everyone to sit down — again with the choristers spread among the managers — and asks for a first volunteer to conduct the choir. Initially, people seem quite hesitant, but eventually — as the temptation to conduct overcomes apprehension, and as it becomes clearer what the task is — nearly all of them volunteer one after the other. Each participant conducts one piece, after which Hanke inquires how he/she had felt during the exercise. He then makes a series of observations concerning the participant's leadership style and dilemmas as a leader. Afterwards, the participant gets one or more opportunities to conduct and improve herself/himself in light of Hanke's comments. Occasionally, Hanke takes the participant's hand and helps her conduct for a few seconds, and then withdraws and lets her continue on her own.

The workshops also include a somewhat different exercise, which is usually performed with just one of the participants. At some point, Hanke chooses a participant and asks him/her to try and inspire the choristers by his/her conducting. He then instructs the choristers to stand up whenever they feel inspired by the conductor, but sit down whenever they cease to feel inspired. After the exercise, Hanke asks the choristers to explain their responses, and a group discussion develops on the participant's conducting performance and its inspirational qualities. After some more 'conducting' performances, the workshop ends with Hanke assuming the conductor's role and conducting one final piece.

Before we proceed to a more detailed analysis in the next section, we would like to comment on the distinctive features of these interventions as methods for working on the managerial self, features which they share with other art-based leadership development programs. First, as noted above, the workshops draw heavily on esthetic experience. The acoustic beauty of the music and the visual beauty of the chapels contribute to the creation of an out-of-the-ordinary, liminal and potentially transformational space, which lures managers inside it. Furthermore, not only do the workshops expose managers to esthetic experiences, they also require them to reflect on their selves and bodies as esthetic objects and improve their own esthetics and style. The esthetic dimension of the workshops thus prepares the ground for transformative work on the self.

Sutherland's (2012) study of Peter Hanke's workshops provides a more focused analysis of this esthetic dimension. According to his analysis, Hanke's workshops — and art-based leadership development more generally — generate 'esthetic workspaces' where managers can engage in a unique kind of 'esthetic reflexivity'. Moreover, the esthetic experience turns the conducting performance into an especially memorable event, and thus increases the likelihood that it will inform managers' future leadership practice. Our own data support Sutherland's analysis: many interviewees and questionnaire respondents commented on the esthetic pleasure they derived from the workshops and the memorability of this experience (e.g., 'Will no doubt remain as one of the most powerful and memorable experiences of the week. Location and choir — fantastic' [feedback, June 2008]; 'A fantastic and enjoyable experience that will stay in the memory a long time' [November 2009]; 'A real experience that few will forget' [May 2011]).

Two other features that the studied workshops share with other art-based interventions are analogically mediated inquiry (Barry & Meisiek, 2010b; Meisiek & Barry, 2007) and embodiment. Rather than engaging managers with their day-to-day tasks and expertise, the workshops require them to perform the analogical task of musical conducting, and use this analogical performance for purposes of diagnosis, self-diagnosis and self-improvement. In many respects, the two analogical practices joined by the workshops — organizational management and musical conducting — are very different. While management is typically perceived as a rational, cerebral, verbal and disembodied activity (Sinclair, 2005), musical conducting is a primarily non-verbal, embodied activity that builds on emotional and esthetic modalities; while management practices and interactions are typically dispersed in time and space, conducting involves immediate interaction within a single time—space unit. However, it is precisely these differences between the two domains that make the analogically mediated inquiry effective. It is against this background of seeming difference that the similarities become more striking. Or in Barry and Meisiek's (2010b) terms, it is through difference and de-familiarization that art-based interventions produce mindfulness and insight. Furthermore, it is the distance between choir conducting and participants' real-life managerial tasks that allows for more playfulness and experimentation in the workshops.

However, while the difference between typical managerial roles and musical conducting is conducive for the analogically mediated inquiry, the danger is that it would seem too great, to the extent that there would be no way of learning from one practice (namely, conducting) to the other (namely, management). In fact, the success of the workshops depends on the persuasiveness of this analogy, that is, on the extent to which participants are persuaded that their performance as conductors is indeed relevant to their performance and identity as managers. The feedback materials indicate that while some participants are convinced by this analogy (e.g., 'Peter has a unique ability to use the musical analogy to leadership' [May 2012]; 'A huge experience — the metaphor was very strong for me' [June 2008]; 'Surprisingly relevant' [November 2011]), others are more skeptic (e.g., 'Enjoyed this. Good fun. The links made from conducting to leadership seemed a bit artificial at times, but I get the point!' [November 2008], 'Very interesting and unexpected session but I struggle with relevance for real world leadership for me' [June 2008], 'An [sic.] insight into inner self, most powerful session, but not how to apply experience in workplace' [November 2011]).

Since the success of the analogy cannot be taken for granted, Hanke actively cultivates it by constantly

highlighting the similarities between the two fields. His own performance in the workshops consists of a masterful translation between music-making and management, and between embodied performance and spoken managerial discourse. But what managerial discourse does he present to participants, and what managerial subjectivity does this discourse sanction?

The paradoxical make-up of the 'creative' managerial self

Peter Hanke's comments and instructions, as well as the very analogy between organizational management and musical conducting, convey specific messages with regard to the nature of good management and good managers. We found that the workshops evoke two models of the good manager simultaneously: an egalitarian, sharing, empowering, and unassuming model on the one hand and an authoritative, centralistic, heroic, and romantic model on the other hand. The former, post-heroic model is more dominant in the workshops; the latter, heroic model is more implicit, but nevertheless present. As a consequence, the 'creative' managerial self that the workshops uphold has a profoundly paradoxical make-up. Managers are expected to lead but also be led, be in control but also relinquish control, be calculative but also playful, plan but also surrender to the flow of events, broadcast but also listen, see the 'big picture' but also the 'small details', etc. In fact, the very capacity to hold these contradictions emerges as a predominant characteristic of the managerial persona constructed in the workshops. Table 1 presents a variety of tensions and contradictory demands that we identified in the workshops and that managers are expected to balance between. Whereas the left column represents a heroic managerial subjectivity, the right column represents a post-heroic one.

The heroic managerial subjectivity is promoted in the workshops by means of the very analogy between manager and musical conductor. The conductor is a single leader who stands at the center of the stage both literally and metaphorically, and who is typically perceived as an emblem of autocratic, charismatic, and romantic leadership. Furthermore, the conductor's cultural persona is strongly gendered and the vast majority of celebrity conductors are male. When the managers in the studied workshops are invited to identify with the conductor, they are therefore encouraged to re-imagine themselves as powerful, centralistic, authoritative and 'masculine' leaders. The seductiveness of the invitation to identify with the powerful image of the conductor is captured by Adorno in his essay *Conductor and Orchestra* (1976:104), where he observes that the conductor is 'an imago, the imago of power, visibly embodied in his prominent figure and striking gestures. [...] In identifying with him, fantasies of power are acted out impunity because they cannot be nailed down as such'. And indeed, our conversations with participants confirmed that they experience the invitation to conduct as very tempting. It is indicative that nearly all the managers in Hanke's workshops — even the most shy, skeptical or hostile — are eventually tempted to volunteer and conduct, and for some this proves to be an exhilarating experience:

> I wanted to do it but my stomach was turning, I felt absolutely scared stiff, because we were on show in front of everybody. And I worried in case I got it wrong, because I don't like doing that. So I was really nervous, really-really nervous.
> [...]
> **Question: And then how did you feel when you did the conducting itself?**
> Oh, I absolutely adored it. I really loved it. I felt... I just felt exhilarated. And I felt it was great.
> **Question: Why do you think ... why do you think it was so pleasurable?**
> Oh... their singing was exquisite, and the acoustics in the chapel were amazing, and I enjoyed it because I have done something I had never done before, and I felt as if I had achieved something. So success breeds... successful happiness [...] One time I sort of put my hand up, and sort of did that [makes a gesture], and they all did it! You know, it

Table 1   Tensions and contradictory demands faced by conductors/managers in the studied workshops.

'Heroic' managerial subjectivity	'Post-heroic' managerial subjectivity
Authoritative, decisive, centralistic	Empowering, sharing, 'inviting' the ensemble, 'offering a gift' to the ensemble
Taking control, being in control	Surrendering control
Keeping distance from the ensemble, detached, protected	Standing close to the ensemble, open, vulnerable
Confident, knowledgeable	Uncomfortable, humble, acknowledging choristers'/subordinates' expertise
Focusing on expressing, broadcasting	Focusing on perceiving, sensing
Focusing on communication with the entire ensemble	Focusing on dyadic communication with individuals in the ensemble
Rational	Emotional, passionate, intuitive
Cerebral, intellectual, verbal	Embodied, non-verbal
Focusing on details, analytical	Seeing the big picture
Thinking, planning, reflecting	Doing, being 'in the moment'
Working according to the rules	Creatively improvising, playfully experimenting
Slow	Fast
Heavy, steady, muscular, laborious	Light, flowing, flexible

was just lovely, it was wonderful. It was one of the best experiences I ever had. It will live with me forever (Anne, senior manager in a public sector institution).

The heroic and romantic managerial model is also evoked in the inspiration exercise, which implicitly portrays the conductor/manager as the true source of energy, will and inspiration in the creative ensemble. This model is further reinforced when Hanke instructs participants who appear insecure and indecisive to assume a more authoritative and decisive posture and gain more control over the situation. Robert, one of our interviewees, is one example:

He made two comments. First, that I had no problem in engaging people. The other comment he made was that you need to make more decisions. I need to be, because the choir is looking to me for guidance and decisions. He just picked up that I need to make more decisions. So I just refer to his other comment, which is to be more decisive, which I thought: well, that rings a bell. I thought that was quite spot on.
Question: Was that something you had been aware of before? Or was it a surprise?
No, not a surprise, it was just the way he picked it up from my motions. He said my head motion is not decisive enough. It was a bit, how do you do that? [laughing] (Robert, senior executive in a financial corporation).

And yet parallel to the evocation of the heroic model, many other elements in the workshops sanction an egalitarian, open and sharing managerial subjectivity. At the experiential level, the temptation to undertake the potent role of the conductor is accompanied, for many of the managers in the workshops, by a sense of apprehension, embarrassment and even humility. Since most of them have no musical background, do not know the musical pieces, and are unaccustomed to expressing themselves by bodily gestures alone, they feel exposed and vulnerable. Many questionnaire respondents and interviewees describe the conducting experience as being 'way—way' out of their comfort zone, pleasurable but also unnerving.

Furthermore, many of Hanke's verbal comments strongly encourage post-heroic leadership ideals. He frequently reminds participants that it is the choristers who are the 'true experts', not them, and thus sanctions a more humble and reciprocal form of leadership. He also often encourages participants to cede some of their control over the situation and hand it to the ensemble, to negotiate with the choristers, and to 'invite' them to the music-making as if they were offering them a gift. These and similar comments cultivate a managerial self that is open, transparent, accessible and sharing, a self that humbly acknowledges the creativity and expertise of its subordinates. Take, for example, Hanke's suggestions in the next case, as described in our field notes:

A middle-aged, healthy looking guy volunteers to conduct. His 'conducting' style is very decisive, very commanding, also very fast — which passes as quite inconsiderate, since the singers find it difficult to follow him. After he finishes, Hanke asks him: 'Are you in control?' The man hesitates. Hanke then asks the audience: 'Is he in control?' Then he continues, smiling: 'Very much in control!' [people laugh]. 'He makes too many decisions!' Then Hanke turns to the

man again: 'Do you work hard?' The man answers that he does. Hanke then comments about the prevalent tendency to work too hard, to make too many efforts, to micromanage the details and consequently lose sight of the big picture.
At a later stage, Hanke asks the man if he can try to conduct again, but this time *invite* the singers. The man performs another musical piece, after which Hanke says: 'Very interesting change. This is *invitation*. You invite them to be with you'. The man responds: 'Yes, letting go a bit of the cerebral cortex over there' [pointing to the back of his head]. And Hanke comments: 'This *invitation* is for me the virtuous base of music'.

Our general impression was that while Hanke instructs male and female participants who appear insecure to assume a more assertive and authoritative posture, he frequently instructs male participants with too 'militant' a style to soften their masculine bodily performance, as in the above excerpt. Take also the following example from our interviews:

Question: What did Peter comment on your performance?
Eh, that I should be more relaxed. I was very rigid, and maybe, let's say militant style. That I should be more relaxed and more open, and to express myself. Like if you get to know me, I'm a very relaxed person, but in this situation I was very stressed, fearful and more strict (David, senior director in a government institution).

The tension between the heroic and post-heroic models has to do not only with control over the ensemble, but also with control over one's own self and body. The following description from our field notes demonstrates this:

After the 'conductor' completes his performance, Hanke asks him: 'How was it? How did you feel?' The man answers: 'It took me some time until I really listened to the music'. Hanke responds: 'The question is: can you forget yourself? Can you forget yourself and think about *the organization*, think about *them*? Of course, we should also monitor ourselves to some extent. But when we monitor ourselves, we can so easily become self-absorbed and inattentive to the group'.

In this case, Hanke highlights the need for the conductor/manager to 'forget himself' and be 'in the moment' together with the ensemble. At the same time, he acknowledges the need for him to control himself, monitor himself, and reflect upon himself. On another case we witnessed, Hanke made an opposite suggestion to a woman who was apparently too much 'in the moment'. This woman 'conducted' with her eyes closed, and Hanke suggested that she open her eyes and be more decisive, more in control. When she did so in her second round of conducting he praised her, but commented that the price for her assuming more self-control and self-awareness was that this time she was 'less there' and 'less present'. The following case demonstrates a similar tension:

A middle-aged man stands up and steps down the aisle in the middle of the chapel. He raises his hands and starts 'conducting' at a very slow pace. He completes his piece. Peter asks him:

- How was it?
- Good. Strange.
- Why? What did you feel?
- I don't know. They know the music and I don't.
- Are you in Power?
- No.
- It's an extreme version of 'the experts know it, the leader doesn't'. They're the experts.

The man then has another try, this time at an even slower pace. Peter comments: 'This is another interesting paradox of leadership: when you reflect on things, when you become conscious, you have to slow down and then you're no longer in the business'. Peter then stands behind the man's back, takes his hand, and 'conducts' with it. As usual, after a few seconds he withdraws and lets the man continue by himself. Immediately the pace becomes slower. After this last try, Peter thanks the man and sends him back to his place, while shaking his hands. 'Thank you. You solved this paradox quite elegantly!'

Another paradoxical demand that emerges in the workshops has to do with emotionality and rationality. This is another excerpt from our field notes, in which this paradoxical injunction is embodied in a striking manner:

Peter observes that this man uses one of his hands for showing the beat and the other for expressing emotion, inspiration and interpretation. He adds: 'This is a well-known conducting technique, but I don't ascribe to it. I think the two are in fact one. They should be combined together'. He then instructs the participant to use only one hand, and try to do both things with this single hand. The man has another try. Then Peter takes his hand and conducts with it. After a while he withdraws, leaving the man to conduct on his own.

In this case, the paradoxical tension is charged into the single hand, which has to embody both the technical-rational and the emotional.

Tensions having to do with style, timing and speed also loom large in the workshops. Hanke directs much attention to the distinction between slow/scarce conducting gestures and fast/frequent ones, which he compares to slow and fast decision making. Similarly, he highlights the need to balance between 'seeing the small details' and 'seeing the big picture'. As to style, he sometimes warns the participants of 'working too hard' and making too many efforts in directing the ensemble, which he deems counterproductive. Instead he suggests a lighter, more flowing style. As he once told one of the male participants: 'You are too loud, you make too much noise, so to speak. You work too hard'. Following this he demonstrated to the man how to conduct by moving his wrist alone, rather than the entire arm. 'This way', Hanke explained evoking yet another paradox, 'one can do more by doing less'.

We would like to conclude this analysis by noting one more trait of the 'creative' managerial self that looms large in the studied workshops: her/his ability and willingness to perform in front of an audience. This feature of the managerial self sanctioned in the workshops emerges directly from the analogy between managers and conductors, the latter being performing artists who are expected to exhibit not only musical and communicative talents but also histrionic ones. Of course, the challenges and risks of performance are also experienced firsthand by workshop participants, who are required to perform in front of a highly attentive and responsive audience consisting of the choir, Peter Hanke, their peers and academic researchers like ourselves. As mentioned above, many find this experience embarrassing and unsettling, and some of our interviewees recounted that they were hesitant to volunteer and perform and considered avoiding the task altogether. They viewed their decision to take the risk and perform as an achievement in itself, indicative of their capabilities as managers:

[...] if I had been on my own in there, with the choir, I would have felt more comfortable doing it. But doing it *in public*, learning like that, or testing your boundaries *in public*, I was really reluctant to do it. So I was one of the last ones to do it, because I wanted to see how everybody else did it.

[...] But I did learn that... the fact that I was reluctant to go up and do it... I *really* should have just at the outset said, 'Yeah, I'll give that a go', I should have been a bit more assertive. And maybe as a leader I need to be a bit more assertive and say, 'Yeah, I'll do that' (Julia, senior executive in a financial corporation).

I think it gave you a bit... well... not confidence, but it made you feel... positive about the fact that, you know, this was a completely alien situation, I've never done this before in my whole life, and just by, you know, thinking and watching and quite quickly adapting to various inputs that you get, I sort of... did something that sort of worked. It might not be the best conducting in the world, but... So you know, that positive reinforcement of our ability to adapt (Jeremy, senior executive in a chemical corporation).

Hanke's comments and observations add to this construal of the managerial self as a performing self. From time to time, he acknowledges the courage required for volunteering to conduct and thanks the volunteers for their courage. He sometimes notes that a leader should always 'have something at stake', always maintain tension and alertness in her performance, always 'be there' and never 'avoid the leadership situation'. In other words, he portrays conducting — and management by implication — as a precarious performance that requires permanent risk-taking and permanent tension. While one may have an urge to escape the performative predicament, one must never surrender to this urge. The stamina necessary for engaging in an on-going risky, tension-ridden performance emerges, therefore, as an essential aptitude of the 'creative' managerial self.

If we combine the two dispositions we have identified — the capacity to hold contradictory demands and the capacity to engage in risky public performance — it appears that the managerial persona cultivated in the studied workshops can be likened not only to that of the conductor, but also to that of a tightrope artist. Like a tightrope artist, the manager is required to balance various tensions in front of a watchful audience and under the constant, petrifying risk of a fall. Moreover, this risky performance is construed not only as a means to an end, but also as a bearer of esthetic and ethical values.

Both these sources of creative and esthetic tension — paradox and risky performance — are captured in the next short text, which Peter Hanke posted on a website (http://performingleadership.blogspot.com) following one of his workshops:

Uncomfortable, yet confident

A part of the inspirational mindset is to dare stay uncomfortable, as the role of the conductor with lesser knowledge than the singers, clearly marks.
— and at the same time raise the confidence in this situation. You become a true spokesperson for inspiration by constantly having something at stake and never really lean[ing] back and relax[ing].
From a first impression this appears like a completely stressed out situation, but the clue is to find where to include the singers — the organization — and make the vulnerability become an exploratory and honest place to be for all.
The conductor becomes a living role-model for daring experiments and courageous steps into the unknown.

Discussion and conclusions

The Zen Master attempts to bring about enlightenment in his pupil in various ways. One of the things he does is to hold a stick over the pupil's head and say fiercely, 'If you say this stick is real, I will strike you with it. If you say this stick is not real, I will strike you with it. If you don't say anything, I will strike you with it' (Gregory Bateson and others, *Toward a Theory of Schizophrenia*)

Not all paradoxes have to be paralyzing (David Foster Wallace, *The Nature of the Fun*)

Our analysis of Peter Hanke's conducting workshops has identified two general characteristics of the 'artistic' and 'creative' managerial subjectivity that is nurtured in them. First, this subjectivity is expected to be robust and supple enough to balance a host of paradoxical and contradictory demands. In particular, it is expected to display both heroic, hierarchical and 'masculine' leadership traits and post-heroic, egalitarian and 'feminine' ones. Second, this subjectivity is expected to have the will and stamina to hold itself in a state of performance that involves permanent risk, trial and tension under the gaze of an observing audience.

We believe that the ubiquity of paradox and contradiction in the studied workshops and in the managerial subjectivity they cultivate is not coincidental, but rather is representative of a broader tendency within the art-and-management discourse. Indeed, all managerial discourses incorporate paradoxes and contradictions, and of course, different managerial discourses may contradict one another (e.g., Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2003; Fletcher, 2004; Jones & Spicer, 2005; Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003; see also Smith & Lewis, 2011). Nevertheless, different discourses encapsulate different paradoxes, and moreover, they treat paradox differently. It appears that unlike many other managerial discourses, the art-and-management discourse does not deny paradox or hide it, but rather upholds it and presents it as a positive source of creative tension. In this respect it is different, for example,

from the discourse of entrepreneurship. As shown by Jones and Spicer (2005:236), the entrepreneurship discourse is 'not a coherent and stable discourse, held together around a stable center. Rather, it is a paradoxical, incomplete and worm-ridden symbolic structure that posits an impossible and indeed incomprehensible object at its center' (Jones & Spicer, 2005:236). However, rather than acknowledging its inherent tensions and contradictions, the discourse of entrepreneurship tends to deny them by portraying the failure to identify a coherent set of 'entrepreneurial traits' as a 'correctable failure', which will be overcome in the future, with more effort and research (Jones & Spicer, 2005:234—235). The art-and-management discourse seems handle paradoxes differently.

When we re-read the literature on art-and-management in light of our findings, we found that it is indeed abundant with references to paradox and contradiction. To take just a few examples, Ladkin and Taylor (2010), in their introduction to a special issue of *Leadership* on *Leadership as Art*, observe that 'holding contradictions' and 'containing and working with paradoxes' is one of the recurrent motifs in this field. Lampel, Land, and Shamsie (2000) and DeFillippi, Grabher, and Jones (2007) build their analyses of the creative and cultural industries on the thesis that managers and other participants in these industries 'face paradoxical challenges and dilemmas, whose resolutions require a balancing act between seemingly contradictory practices' (DeFillippi et al., 2007:515; see also Koivunen, 2003:91). Bilton's (2007) monograph *Management and Creativity* shows a similar penchant to paradox and contradiction. However, the ubiquity of paradox in the art-and-management discourse, and the sources and consequences of this ubiquity, have not yet received concentrated and systematic attention.

It would be interesting, therefore, to see future research dealing with the centrality of paradox in the art-and-management field: what are its sources? What are its manifestations? And what are its psychological and organizational ramifications? At this point, we can only suggest some directions for future thought with regard to these questions. As to the *sources* of the art-and-management discourse's preoccupation with paradox, we would point to the general tendency within this discourse to rethink the 'traditional logico-rational paradigm' in management (Nissley, 2002:27; see also Ladkin & Taylor, 2010:235) and to transcend its binary categories. We would also point to the affinity between the paradoxical and the poetic, and to art's unique capacity to convey paradox. Our study indicates, in addition, that many of the tensions in the art-and-management discourse have to do with its simultaneous embracement of individualistic, romantic, and heroic notions of both leadership and creativity on the one hand, and collectivist, distributed, and non-heroic notions of both leadership and creativity on the other hand. As observed by Peters (2009), contemporary discourses of the 'creative economy' — which include the art-and-management discourse — seem to promote two contrasting accounts of creativity. The first account is individualistic and 'emerges in the psychological literature from sources in the Romantic Movement emphasizing the creative genius and the way in which creativity emerges from deep subconscious processes, involves the imagination, is anchored in the passions, cannot be directed and is beyond the rational control of the individual' (Peters, 2009:40). The second account focuses on commons-based peer production, and presents

creativity as 'a product of social and networked environments — rich semiotic and intelligent environments in which everything speaks' (Peters, 2009:40). This duality finds expression in the conducting workshops we have examined, and is a source of tensions and contradictions.

As to the *manifestations* of paradox in the art-and-management field, it would be particularly interesting to explore managerial techniques developed in this field and see whether — and how — they evoke pragmatic and interactional paradoxes. For example, what is the role of pragmatic paradoxes in art-based techniques for promoting creativity in workgroups and organizations? And what is their role in art-based training and education for managers and other organization members? Our research has only started to explore these questions.

Finally, the *effects* of the contradictory demands encapsulated in the art-and-management discourse on managers, subordinates, teams and organizations deserve more consideration. Such research could draw on the broader literature on paradox in organizations (e.g., Smith & Lewis, 2011), as well as on psychological theories dealing with the effects of paradox, such as Bateson's classic theory of the 'double bind' (e.g., Bateson, Jackson, Haley, & Weakland, 1956) and the literature that builds on it. A double bind situation occurs when an individual or group is presented with two or more injunctions that conflict with one another, so that compliance with one injunction entails failure to comply with the other and vice versa. According to Bateson, double binds can be confusing, anxiety-provoking and debilitating, and chronic double bind communication in early childhood might lead to psychosis. At the same time, double binds may be therapeutic and enlightening and may inspire creativity. Their use in Zen Buddhism, for example, is therapeutic and enlightening. The difference between double binds that have positive effects and those that have negative ones has to do with many factors, including the individual's/group's capacity to sort out the contradictory demands and explicitly express the contradiction to themselves, and the nature of the relationship between those who experience the double bind and the source of authority that imposes it. This line of thinking may be very helpful for studying the effects of the double binds and contradictory demands set by the art-and-management discourse, and by creative economy discourses more generally. In what situations do these double binds and contradictions surface, and with what effects? When do they induce individual and collective creativity, and when do they induce confusion, stress, and paralysis? We believe that pursuing these questions could prove worthwhile.

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