

Editorial

Creativity and Education

Fittingly, this Spring issue deals with Creativity and does so in diverse ways. We offer philosophical ruminations, empirical studies, and personal statements *about* creativity as well as works which are examples *of* creativity. Our authors are renowned educators and emerging artists.

It has been a particularly fascinating issue to prepare and some of the correspondence involved has been as much fun as the manuscripts themselves, deserving better things than the editor's dead file. For example, J. D. O'Hara was invited to contribute "a story, essay or think piece" which would demonstrate creativity in education. After some polite preliminaries, Professor O'Hara wrote:

As for Creativity & Education: my off-and-on thoughts went at it from the blurred viewpoint of writer-teacher, but your Teacher As Writer series has pre-empted all my poses, platitudes, and mild profundities on that subject, surely. There remains Creative Teaching, I suppose, but as one man my students rise to remark that I'm not the one to speak about that. There remains Educated Creativity, too, but in face of Eliot and Pound, who am I to mutter about that? There remains Created Educativity, too, no doubt, but what is it?

Possible essay beginnings:

1. To ask for creativity in the literary classroom is like asking for fertile copulation during a sex education class; it's unlikely that luck, desire, the muse, and considerable sang froid are jointly conjurable.

2. I once taught creativity. Once. Having gotten a class to agree with Thoreau that clothes do not make the man, I gave my next class lecture in a combination of pajamas and sports equipment . . . and gave a quiz at the end of it. The whole class failed; they could answer only the questions on my clothing.

3. *A valid non-definition of art says that in the work of art the means are as important as the ends; the way a poem says something is as valuable as the something said. When the something is more important than the saying, we have religion or philosophy or mathematics; when materiam superabat opus, we have preciousity, filigree-work, pretentiousness. A satisfactory union of means and ends, whether in "Hamlet" or in*

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can give us the neural quiver that results from art. But education is not the adventure of this quivering nerve among masterpieces... not in the classroom, anyhow. Nor is map-reading travel, nor calisthenics sport. Because art is artificial, the experience of art is necessarily a learned thing, an acquired taste, a taught quiver. (Try listening to Arabic music without education, or watching a Noh play.) Education prepares us for creativity, then. But "creative" education is a grim aping of creativity, mere plastic.

I enclose 3 pieces that refer to education and that may possibly demonstrate creativity; I strongly suspect that this is not what you have in mind. Feel free to say so.

As readers will see, we liked the verse and included it in this issue on pages 50-2. We also liked Professor O'Hara's letter and asked permission to publish it sometime. To which he replied:

Glad you could use the verses. Yes, of course you can use all or part of any of my letters for any moral purposes, including the wrapping of fish.

We hope our readers will find more productive ways to use this *Journal* than the wrapping of fish — but perhaps that would be a creative approach to educational journals.

M. G.