Fall 1992

Occasional Papers: On Creativity in the Arts

Janice Rowan Poley  
Rowan University

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rowan college
of new jersey

occasional papers:
on creativity
in the arts
fall 1992

THE HOLLYBUSH SERIES
About the Cover

In 1849, Thomas and Samuel Whitney, glassmakers of Glassboro, New Jersey, built Hollybush, an eighteen-room mansion constructed from brown fieldstone. The mid-Victorian gingerbread house has sheltered such distinguished visitors as Colonel Theodore Roosevelt and President Taft.

In 1917, the State of New Jersey purchased Hollybush and twenty-five acres around it. Hollybush serves as the campus home of the presidents of Rowan College of New Jersey. Dr. Herman James and his family currently reside there.

On June 23, 1967, Hollybush was the site of the first summit conference between a President of the United States and a Premier of the Soviet Union, Lyndon B. Johnson and Alexei N. Kosygin.

About the Cover Artist

Dr. George Neff, Professor of Art at Rowan, created his first drawing of Hollybush, in pencil, several years before the summit. From this original work, two drawings were rendered in pen and ink during the conference.

George presented the first pen and ink drawing to President Johnson at the White House on July 12, 1967. In August, as a member of a delegation of Glassboro citizens touring Russia, George presented a second drawing to a representative of Premier Kosygin in Moscow.
Occasional Papers:
On Creativity in the Arts
To live in the world of creation—to get into it and stay in it—to frequent it and haunt it—to think intensely and fruitfully... this is the only thing.

— Henry James
Occasional Papers: 
On Creativity in the Arts 

A Collection of Essays and Art 
by Faculty of 
Rowan College of New Jersey 

Janice Rowan Poley 
General Editor 

Fall 1992 
Vol. 3
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Preface

It seems fitting that the third volume of *Occasional Papers* focuses on creativity. Creativity in the arts has long been a focus at Rowan College of New Jersey, and the Write to Learn Program has supported creativity in the use of writing in all disciplines. This commitment will be even more important in the dynamic period ahead.

The works in this volume illustrate creativity, show us some of the joy and pain of creativity, and discuss the environment necessary for it to flourish. Academia must provide for this coupling of freedom and discipline. The participation of the faculty in the wide range of Write to Learn workshops, panels, and publications tells us much about the devotion to the educational process here at Rowan.

I congratulate the talented contributors, the General Editor, Janice Rowan Poley, and the Editorial Board. They have shared with us their sense of creativity so we may all challenge and examine our own sense of the creative.

*Pearl W. Bartelt*

Acting Dean, Liberal Arts and Sciences
Introduction

This third issue of Occasional Papers, a publication of the Write to Learn Program, explores the complex, paradoxical, and fascinating concept of creativity in the arts. Thirteen members of our faculty, representing the fields of music, writing, painting, sculpture, and theater, have shared their thoughts on this difficult and controversial subject. Five of our faculty have enhanced this issue by contributing photographs of their art. The collective contributions of both our authors and artists prove that the creative spirit flourishes at Rowan College.

Part of the difficulty of discussing creativity is that there is an ongoing debate about the very nature of creativity, its origins and applications. Is creativity a potential in everyone or reserved only for the gifted few? How do we recognize, value, and assess creativity? If it is an inherited trait, what can we do to nurture and cultivate it?

Our authors take up several central issues, including the relationship among the artist, the art, and the audience; the connection between mastery of technique and originality; creativity as risk-taking and even subversion; and the means by which we as faculty members can best facilitate the creative process.
In our very troubled times, this focus on creativity has special appeal as we look to our artists—and emerging student artists—for nourishment, for models of beauty and truth, for a way, as Ezra Pound urged, to “make it new.”

Acknowledgements
A special thank you to those who made the publication of Occasional Papers possible: to our authors and artists, for their generosity as well as creativity in contributing to this issue; to Dean Pearl Bartelt, for her continued interest in and support of this publication and also of the Write to Learn Program; to Dr. Harley Flack, Vice President/Provost, and to Dr. Linda Ross, Acting Deputy Provost, for financial aid and encouragement; to our fine editorial board, Virginia Brown, Tom Kloskey, Mary Anne Palladino, and Tom Wade; and to Tom Kloskey again, for his creative efforts in editing and composing the pages of this third edition of Occasional Papers.

Also, thanks to our very capable Communications Department secretaries, Patricia Birmingham, Patricia Kemery, and Joanne Showers, who proofread the articles.

As before, we are indebted to George Neff for his superb cover sketch of Hollybush and to President Herman James for allowing us to use the Hollybush name.

Janice Rowan Poley
General Editor
About the Author

Joseph Robinette, Professor of Speech and Theatre at Rowan College, has a B.A. from Carson-Newman College, and an M.A. and Ph.D. from Southern Illinois University.

He is the author or co-author of twenty-four plays and musicals. In 1974, he received the Charlotte Chorpenning Cup from Children’s Theatre Association of America.

Robinette collaborated with E. B. White on the stage version of Charlotte’s Web and recently completed the musical version with composer Charles Strouse. Robinette has also dramatized The Paper Chase and Anne of Green Gables. His children’s plays have been presented by Lincoln Center, Goodman Theatre, and Honolulu Theatre for Youth.

Robinette is a founding member of Opera for Youth, and a member of ASCAP and the American Alliance for Theatre and Education. He has taught playwriting at the Cape Cod Writers’ Series and the Philadelphia Writers’ Workshop.
Some Thoughts on Creativity and Teaching

Joseph Robinette

The word “creativity” for me is not very different from words such as “cooking” or “fishing” or “whistling.” It is an activity that expands on a set of learned or acquired precepts. The cook uses the basic recipe, then adds a touch of this and that to improve the flavor. The fisherman puts a dab of peanut butter on the doughball in hopes of improving the chances of a catch. The whistler adds a little tremolo between the third and fourth measures to improve the tune, especially in the shower.

Creativity does not exist in a vacuum. The only true creativity that we know of came a few billion years ago when, we are told, a very large bang created a whole lot from very little. Since that very brilliant, incomprehensible moment, everything has come from something else. As King Lear says, “Nothing will come of nothing.” It seems to me, then, that the broader the base of knowledge, the greater the potential for the peak of creativity.

While bits and pieces of creativity may come spontaneously from lightning bolts of the gods or from some primordial goo that suddenly appears at our fingertips, the bulk of it emerges from learning math, reading poetry, memorizing
the elements, reciting the states and their capitals, listening to old people tell stories, watching a rodeo, going to Iowa and making love in the kitchen while the parents are watching television in the living room. In short, required academic—and life—experiences. That's the groundwork, anyway.

While I agree that we as educators may not be able to teach creativity per se, I think we can help students learn to be creative. Just as we can't teach people to write novels or compose operas or paint masterpieces, we'd better be doing something in that classroom other than merely assigning chapters and giving tests. It is my premise that creativity can be encouraged, developed and rewarded and that we can inspire or direct or prod or kick butt and send out a more creative student than came in. We can at least crack the door a little. The student will more often than not open it the rest of the way himself.

In many areas of classroom creativity, I find myself more the facilitator than the "teacher." And I prefer it that way. I find that students often learn from each other more than they do from the instructor. A simple exercise I use in a class is this: I hold up a pencil and announce, "This is a pencil." (My students are remarkably restrained in complimenting my brilliance.) I then ask, "But what else is it?" I proceed to hand the pencil to the first student, instructing him that he may respond or pass the pencil on and take a shot at it later. Often, the pencil goes through two or three hands before someone says, "It's a lever for prying open a paint can lid" (creative-practical) or "It's a toothpick for a giant" (creative-whimsical) or "It's a spear for a pygmy warrior" (creative-militant). Once the ice is broken, the glaciers descend, and the students who passed during the first go-around practically salivate to retrieve the pencil and pronounce it "a baton for Thumbelina" or "a thermometer for Pinocchio." They've seen the light—not from me but from their peers. If I begin the exercise by calling the pencil, say, a rolling-pin for Lilliputian pie crusts, the students would suddenly be in compe-
tition with me. And that would intimidate, rather than challenge, them. So I let them do the whole bit. I simply pass the pencil around and let them do the "thinking and suggesting" (the pencil is, after all, a State of New Jersey issue).

A footnote here is that I don’t feel educators must be super-creative individuals themselves in order to promote creativity. Just as the best ballplayers rarely make the best coaches or managers, the most successful creative artists are not necessarily the best teachers of that art. What the good managers and good teachers do, however, is to get the best out of their players and students respectively, and that, perhaps, requires a special kind of creativity, one of process as opposed to product. The coach/teacher gets the players/students in a position to let them get the job done.

The question arises, perhaps, as to whether—and how much—we should espouse creativity in the college classroom. Shouldn’t it have been dealt with in the early years? At home? In elementary school? At camp? At Bob’s Hobby Shop? Well, yes, of course. But creativity, like sex, is going to happen, so we should make it part of the educational process at all levels instead of letting it flourish behind the barn.

Underlining all this, of course, is the basic question: Why do we create? Why must we create? In an intriguing one-act play, Welcome to Andromeda, a quadriplegic, despairing of his condition and attempting to effect his own mercy killing at the hands of his nurse, says—as best as I can recall—“All the books, all the poems, all the words ever written can be reduced to a single syllable—’Help!’” I enjoyed the play, but I disagreed with the line. I think all the words ever written, all the music ever composed, all the paintings ever painted, all the performances ever performed, all the creative actions ever acted can be reduced to two syllables—“I’m here!”

Why does a Beethoven create a symphony? Why does a kid spray-paint the side of a church? I contend: For the same reasons—to assert, “I’m here.” And why must we say, “I’m here”? Perhaps because we’re not sure we should be here.
Perhaps we are like anxious children watching the searching eyes of the teacher. We have an answer—but we’re not sure it fits the question.

I’m here. I deserve to be here. I belong here. I will validate my existence. I will write a symphony. I will knit a sweater. I will play a tune. I will design a deck. I will start a fight. I will form a gang. I will paint a slogan on the side of a church. I will—in one way or another—leave my footprints, however briefly, on the sands of time. And how I do that is how I perceive my universe; how I do that is how I perceive myself.

Maybe the playwright was correct. But maybe I am, too. Perhaps it’s three syllables after all: “Help—I’m Here!” Would I be a better teacher if every student who walked through my classroom door uttered those words, “Help, I’m here”? Maybe we couldn’t have gotten the kid who painted the slogan on the church to write a symphony, but maybe we could have helped him validate his existence in a different way. Paraphrasing the Godfather: “We should have come to him sooner.”

My obligation is to all my students, but I feel particularly responsible for that non-major who has contact with me—and perhaps my department—only once in his college career. Whether the course be Public Speaking, Experiencing Acting, Voice and Articulation, or another General Education option, my job is to “sell” that student on the values of what I teach and let him know what my values are insofar as they fit the context of the subject at hand. And the value of creativity crosses the board. That’s why I push back the desks—literally and figuratively—as often as I can and explore old things in new ways. I like it when I overhear a student say to another, “Hey, guess what I did in class today?” Maybe what he did was not of major significance in the total scheme of things. But that’s okay. As Thomas Kinsella, past poet laureate of Ireland once wrote, “The desire of man to cry out to others is rarely accompanied by the gift to make that cry matter to others.” So while the student in
my Oral Interpretation class may not have made his cry matter to others, he made it matter to himself. And that's a start.

—Excerpts from remarks presented at the Fine and Performing Arts Faculty Forum Series, April 27, 1992, at Rowan College of New Jersey.
About the Author

Dr. Toni Libro is a member of the Communications Department at Rowan, where she co-coordinates the Creative Writing Concentration and teaches a variety of courses in creative writing, film, and women's studies. She helped develop the Introduction to the Humanities course and teaches both it and Honors Humanities.

Her poems have won prizes and appear regularly, most recently in American Writing: A Magazine, Frogpond, and The Paterson Literary Review. She is frequently invited to give poetry readings and conduct poetry workshops throughout the Delaware Valley.

She is author of several plays, including Out of Bounds, Out of the Cradle, and Do or Die, all produced and directed by Stageworks Touring Company and currently in repertory. Out of the Shadows and Watchfire for Freedom: The Legacy of Alice Paul are new plays Toni completed while on sabbatical in spring 1992. She is a Princeton Scholar for 1992–93.
Connections: On the Artist, the Work, and the Audience

Toni Libro

A fusion between the person and the world is often reported as an observable fact in creativeness, according to noted psychologist Abraham Maslow. I believe that a fusion between the audience and the artwork must occur as well; that is, we must find ways to connect with the works of art we value if we are to experience them as fully as possible. As teachers, we must help our students find ways to identify with the works to which we lead them, even when these works seem remote and inaccessible. This essay is about some of those attempts at fusion, and some of the questions raised by the work and its relationship to the audience.

Assessing Our Relationship to the Work

In an Introduction to the Humanities course, we were reading the poems of Emily Dickinson. I think it is fair to say that students were mystified by her poetry—puzzled by her language, her syntax, and her voice. Of course, this is to be expected; Emily Dickinson challenges everyone, and part of her enduring appeal is the depths she is able to plumb. Nevertheless, I wanted very much to move the students closer to Emily Dickinson's work so that they could be "touched"
by her. I will be using the metaphor of movement—moving “closer” to the work, being “touched” by the work—to illustrate the degree to which we experience a work of art. When the course began, students were quite distanced from her work. A graphic example of just how far was to be found in a little exercise similar to a semantic differential that I asked students to enter into their journals. This exercise consists of students drawing a figure, usually a stick figure, and positioning it at some point in relation to the work at hand, thus indicating how “close” or “far” they felt from the work. I suggested that seldom if ever does the figure actually superimpose upon the work, indicating we are “one” with it, but that we aspire to this “oneness” when we are truly enamored of a particular work of art. Needless to say, when we first started to read Emily Dickinson, students positioned their figures very far from the work at hand, some nearly off the page! What could we do to move the figures closer to the work, in this particular instance, closer to the poems of Emily Dickinson?

Moving toward the Work: Early Connections
First, we read her poems. Aloud, several times, in class. Poems must get up off the page before we can begin to hear them. Students were asked to read selected poems at home as well, to themselves and to others. Students were then asked to pick a poem “of their own.” This became “their poem.” They were to read this poem to the class, and lead a discussion of the poem, since they were “closer” to it than their classmates. This approach helped the students to take the initiative in appreciating a small part of Dickinson’s work. Still, there were many questions and not always a lot of answers, which is, perhaps, how a college classroom ought to be, and certainly how a classroom reading Emily Dickinson will be.

Slowly students began to tease out the themes Emily Dickinson wrote so much about: success and failure, domesticity and nature, grief and loss, life and death, time and eternity.
They began to see that these universal aspects of her work speak to us all. But there was more to do before the stick figures budged from their places in the students' journals.

**The Role of the Journal**

The journal was to serve as a sort of “extension” of class discussion. But there were times when I gave them a “focused entry,” meaning an entry on a particular question or subject. One of the focused entries after a few class periods with Dickinson’s work was to write a letter to the poet, speaking directly to her in their own voice, just as if they were writing to a friend or relative. My strategic hope with this assignment was to move them closer to the artist and her work, but even I was surprised by the degree of intimacy they brought to the assignment. Perhaps there is something about the “Dear Emily” approach that breaks down walls or barriers between people, even when the person is as formidable as Emily Dickinson, but whatever the reason, students were remarkably candid and felt free enough to open up and tell her what they liked and didn’t like, what they understood and didn’t understand, how angry they became when they couldn’t understand, and most especially, what they could identify with—similar experiences, feelings, memories. Here is where students found an outlet for emotions which might have otherwise remained buried, and here is where they began to see how these similar experiences could be transformed by poetic genius into works of art. They could begin to appreciate the power of language to express the truth of the human experience or, as poet Adrienne Rich says, “the power of our ultimate relationship to everything in the universe.”

**Dramatizations: Bringing Works “to Life”**

We went so far as to bring “Miss Emily” into class one day, taking advantage of a dramatic presentation by a local impersonator, who swept into the classroom in full Dickinson regalia, stopped in her tracks and exclaimed to the class,
“Why, what are you doing here in my house? Does Vinnie [Dickinson’s sister] know you’re here?” And so began about an hour’s dialogue with “Emily” herself, breaking down more barriers that distance us from the creator, and emphasizing the human nature of the artist, as she talked about her brothers and sisters, wishes and dreams, disappointments and successes. Of course, this kind of dramatic presentation is not always possible, but it helps to be alert to the fact that sometimes it is. Also, it is possible today to bring in performances on video tapes; the one-woman show about Emily Dickinson, *The Belle of Amherst*, for instance, in whole or part, can be effective in stimulating thought and discussion.

**The Value of Memorization**

Call me a traditionalist, but I also insist on memorization of at least a few lines, preferably a whole poem, as what I tend to call a “gift” to students from Dickinson. They may then “own” the poem for the rest of their lives, and will come to understand it as they grow and come to understand more about life. I tell them about a college professor of mine who had students in his Shakespeare class memorize a half dozen of Shakespeare’s best sonnets and write each out for the final exam, down to the last punctuation mark. As a result, I can, to this day, recite entire sonnets, but more than that, I can see how much closer to them I have moved over time. Students must understand that works of art, whether poems or paintings, endure with us over time, changing as we change, growing as we grow. We do not encounter these works like yesterday’s newspaper, something to read and discard (not that there aren’t items of value in newspapers; I am forever clipping and saving), but rather we return to the greatest works over a lifetime, to be nourished, refreshed and inspired by them.

**Imitation: Experiments in Style**

Students also can write their own poems, in the style of Emily Dickinson, to better appreciate what that elusive term
“style” means. Here they can apply what they have learned about prosody: line length, rhyme, and rhythms. Or, they can just write a poem “inspired” by Dickinson, one that, for whatever reason, evokes some aspect of her world, however tangentially. The important thing is the creation of a poem as an object of their own, a concrete expression of their own sensibility, a poem which could not have existed in quite the same way before this experience. Students may “surprise” themselves, not thinking they could ever “write a poem,” but finding that, given the opportunity, there was no reason why they couldn’t. For some, this will be the first poem ever written; imagine, all those years in school, reading the works of others, but never finding it possible to write oneself, naturally, the way one walks and talks each day—to recognize and acknowledge one’s own interior power. Wittgenstein’s “The limits of my language are the limits of my world” is all too true; students’ worlds remain entirely too small without the liberating effects of finding their voice on the page in the form of a poem.

The Question of Gender

Another mode of inquiry which may yield profitable results as well as bring students closer to the work at hand is the question of gender. For instance, in the study of Emily Dickinson, it is appropriate to acknowledge that Dickinson found it possible to write, though a woman, in repressive mid-nineteenth century New England. As Adrienne Rich says in her illuminating essay “Vesuvius at Home: The Power of Emily Dickinson”: “Emily Dickinson—struck me as a practical woman, exercising her gift as she had to, making choices. I have come to imagine her as somehow too strong for her environment, a figure of powerful will, not at all frail or breathless, someone whose personal dimensions would be felt in a household.” Rich’s perception dispels some of the stereotypes surrounding Emily Dickinson, distortions which threaten to dismiss Dickinson and her œuvre simply by not taking her seriously; I am speaking of that tendency to re-
duce the woman to a scribbling eccentric who dressed all in white and never left her home. Though she was indeed eccentric, and she wore white increasingly toward the end of her life, and seldom ventured far from home (this last not necessarily unusual), she was much more; her poems ranged far and wide, from the playful to the most profound ever written.

Tillie Olson tells us in *Silences*, a book about the relationship of circumstances to the creation of literature, including class, color, sex and the times or climate into which one is born: "for every one who writes, we must realize the invisible, the as- innately capable: the born to the wrong circumstances, diminished, excluded, foundered, silenced." She reminds us that every woman who writes is a survivor, and that "in our century, writers who are women are one out of twelve." One out of twelve! And even that one out of twelve is still in danger of being devalued, neglected, or omitted. Such are the politics of writing. That Emily Dickinson the writer exists at all is a triumph of creativity; her literary legacy won out over the odds of constricting circumstances and sexual oppression. It is her courage and complexity as a woman and her power as a writer that the question of gender in relation to her work helps to illuminate.

**Et Tu: The Instructor and the Assignment**

If the sensitivity to sex or circumstance helps students to appreciate a particular writer's voice, it may help them to appreciate the process involved as well. All too often students assume that works are somehow divine, that they spring fully and perfectly to life and effortlessly find their way to the page. The very process of writing is a mystery to them. They feel, perhaps, that if they have to "do it over" they did not "do it right" in the first place, and get discouraged. It is so important to make clear that writing is hard work, that writing is, in fact, rewriting.

One way to help students appreciate the value of revision is to let them know, when we are able, how writers they par-
particularly admire developed their works. Annie Dillard's book, *The Writing Life*, is full of such examples, including her own passionate processes: "Who will teach me to write?...The page, which you cover slowly with the crabbed thread of your gut; the page in the purity of its possibilities, the page of your death, against which you pit such flawed excellences as you can muster with all your life's strength: that page will teach you to write."

We can share our intellectual or artistic life more generously with our students. Let them in on our thinking. Let them know how many drafts it took to get the article just right or the poem finished. ("Poems are never finished; only abandoned in despair...." I remember the famous quote, chagrined, even as I write this.) A colleague once told me that she carted boxes of her manuscript to class so students could see the raw evidence—right there before them—the rough-and-tumble world of creation. The students were awed.

Finally, if students have to write, we should write with them! Chances are they will be fascinated to know that their instructor needed several drafts to get something to work well. And they will be in on the best-kept secret of all: how the writing process works—what Robert Frost once called, "the pleasure of taking pains."

*Full Circle: From One Work to Another*

My assignment for my students turned into a surprising project for myself: a series of poems inspired by or related to women writers. My intent was to write back ("This is my letter to the world/that never wrote to me..." Dickinson) to writers I felt close to, and Emily Dickinson was one of those writers. I began writing, allowing the connections to her work to surface as they might. I found a few central images that formed a poem which eventually settled itself into nine three-line stanzas.

The poem is called, simply, "For Emily Dickinson," and it goes like this:
Your circuitous success
survived the efforts of
the scholars, editors, et al—
to fix your fractured rhymes
your peculiar syntax
and your perverse punctuation.

Cryptic notes and puzzle
pieces to family and friends—
recurrent images of bee and bobolink
mountains, valleys
sea and sun—
lead you deeper
into that volcanic arsenal
where wild fires rage
and a loaded gun waits
and you fire
at time's jewels
morning, noon and night
recreating, like a refracting
telescope, luminous
moments
where
Hope is a song
Eden a sea
and Death
a carriage called
Eternity.

I had the feeling that I had moved very close to Emily Dickinson during the writing of this poem. I do not know
anything beyond that. But what I do know is that the sensation of writing is pleasurable; that if I can convey something of that pleasure to my students, they may be as eager as I am to take up the challenge, and in so doing, find their imaginations waiting for them.

I should also add that the stick figures did budge from their places in the students’ journals, some more than others. One student went so far as to move her figure quite close to Dickinson’s work, her stick figure’s outstretched forefinger reaching out, almost but not quite touching the work of Dickinson. Even a lowly stick figure in this particular pose had the power to remind me of Michelangelo’s celebrated ceiling fresco in the Sistine Chapel—the *Creation of Man*.

I thought how accurate the student’s graphic was, how symbolic of our relationship to the arts. After all, when we allow ourselves to move close enough to be touched by works of art, we do, indeed, create ourselves anew.
About the Author

Prior to coming to Rowan College twenty-five years ago, Rodney Gates taught Head Start and elementary and secondary art in Maryland public schools. At Rowan, he teaches courses in art education and criticism and supervises the experiences of student teachers.

Rodney has exhibited his collages throughout the East and in Michigan and New Mexico, and is the author of Excellence in Your Art Room.
The Possum, the Brick, and a Little Bit of Daring

Rodney Gates

... then there was the time I did an autopsy on a possum.

I had recently been discharged from six years in the Navy and was working as a shoe salesman for Woodward and Lothrop’s in Chevy Chase. This was a pleasant yet dull shift in my life after having been a hospital corpsman with the Marines in Korea. I welcomed the routine of slipping spectator pumps onto the feet of the wives of middle-level government officials. Still, it lacked the immediacy of holding a life in my hands.

Cruising home one summer evening, I saw the car ahead of me swerve to miss a furry mound in the road. It turned out to be a freshly killed possum. An urge was upon me. Without deliberation and in one even-flowing movement, I pulled up next to the dead animal, opened my door and swept it into the back seat. My excitement mounted as I raced to my parents’ house.

Poor Mom. She never really understood what drove her oldest son. Still, never having been the type of person to hold an opinion to herself, she let me know what she thought of my having a dead animal in the house. Retrieving the surgical kit I had collected over my years in the Navy, I set
up shop in the garage. Here I had most of the things I
needed: the workbench was the correct height, the lighting
was close and bright, and tools were available that I could
substitute for those instruments I lacked.

Over the next few days, after working in the shoe depart-
ment, I rushed home to unpack my iced and stiffened proj-
ect. The work moved along at a pleasant, relaxed pace and
often right through dinner. When at that workbench (which
Dad was reluctant to use for months afterwards), I was in my
own world. Time, people, and physical stress were some-
where else. There were only two things occupying my con-
centration: the possum's anatomy and my skill at uncovering
it. All else drifted away from my little island of fluorescent
light. I had achieved pure zen.

This moment of pure concentration and joy was what
shortstop Cal Ripkin Jr. would call the zone or what psy-
chologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi would identify as flow. I
was alone with the moment. The moment, my thoughts, the
materials, all were serving as one.

This same sort of intimacy of the moment engulfs me
today when I construct a collage, when I write, or occasion-
ally when I teach. It is a sense of curiosity, of discovery, of
pleasure and peace. It is a sense of skilled accomplishment
that shuts out all extraneous activity. It is also quite neces-
sary to the creative act. Curiosity is most important in devel-
oping a sense of creativity, as is the willingness to take risks.
I was curious to discover if the anatomy of the possum was
anything like that of humans (it was). To accomplish this, I
was willing to risk the displeasure of my family. Poor Mom.
She never did understand what drove her oldest son.

As we know, life will offer our students many contradic-
tions. The creative skills needed to resolve these are not
limited to those students in the arts. All of us—teacher,
sailor, businessman, chef—gain from our skills of creative
thinking. Curiosity, the willingness to take risks, and fluency
of thought are necessary to the development of creative skills.
Not only should we be aware of the contradictions to be
found in life, we should ask why. Why and how do nature, humankind, art, religion, industry, or whatever offer contradictions within themselves and in relation to one another? Why and how do they agree? We must set about to discover the answers. I can’t imagine not asking the questions or seeking the answers. To do less is to be ordinary at best or dull at worst and miss so much of life. The creative person not only sees the contradiction but seeks the solution. One effective method of seeking solutions is to train oneself in the skill of fluid thinking. This is sometimes called brainstorming, and the trick is to relax and let the possible solutions flow through one’s head without prejudice. Entertain all ideas, no matter how frivolous or impractical they may sound initially. Consider any idea a potential answer, no matter how silly or obscene or divergent it may appear at first. From such brainstorming may come the one answer that is needed to resolve the contradiction.

In many classes, I introduce students to Gilford’s brick test. (A brick, a paper clip, a football helmet, any object can be used in this exercise.) The brick test was set up as a method of measuring creativity, but I believe that it, and exercises like it, can be used to stretch creativity. In this exercise, I place a common red brick on the table at the front the room and ask each student to write a list of all the uses he or she can think of for a brick. After five minutes, I ask how many have listed ten uses? How many have more than ten? more than twenty? and so on.

But this is only half the exercise. It is not just the greater number of answers that measures creativity, but also the number of unusual or bizarre answers. Unusual or bizarre answers are those with no relationship to the traditional function of a brick. (Incidentally, the most bizarre and creative answer ever offered was in a class entitled Suicide and the Creative Mind. The answer was for an individual to throw the brick into the air and step under it. The brick would be an instrument of suicide, but the act would appear to be murder.)
Each student (and each teacher, for that matter) must find his or her own possum and feel comfortable enough to lay it open. We, however, can help by offering the curiosity and the pleasure, the freedom and the guidelines, the skills and the tools for each to make that first tentative incision.
Untitled Collage by Rodney Gates
About the Author

William C. Morris is in his fortieth year of college and university teaching, twenty-five at Rowan, where he has served as Senate President, professor, dean, Acting Vice-President, stage director, and lighting designer for the Hollybush Opera Theatre.

A certified F.O.O.F. (Friend of Old Films), he sometimes teaches Film History for the Communications Department.

Married to author and lecturer Patricia Morris, he has two sons, one a Ph.D. teaching English at the University of Texas, Arlington, the other an Equity Stage Manager.

Bill will go to the World Series anytime the Cubs play in it. Meanwhile, he works out his frustrations by gardening.
Diary of a Descanting Director

William C. Morris

On November 15, 1991, the Campus Players at Glassboro State began a six-performance run, under my direction, of Shakespeare’s *The Comedy of Errors*. What follows is a diary of that production, centering on contributions the stage director makes in preparing a play for performance, starting with script selection and continuing through opening night. Along the way, I note six creative phases in the director’s work.

January 12, 1991

Bart says the Production Planning Committee must make final its selections for next season. I’ve decided to do Shakespeare, and now I’ll have to pick a title. (I should do a contemporary play. Our current students think I only know Shakespeare, Lorca, and Pirandello. If I do a second show next season, I must try to bring our students, theatrically speaking, into the last quarter of the twentieth century.) [Note: My second production in 1991–92 was Lanford Wilson’s 1978 play *The Fifth of July*—just under my self-imposed “last quarter” time wire—staged in April 1992.]
Nothing in Shakespeare is simple, but there are varying degrees of complexity. As Bob Newhart might say, what’s Shakespeare got for two–three couples? Zero. Nada. The trick will be to find a play with mostly young characters, avoiding the plays with many middle-aged ones, (middle age is the student actor’s biggest stumbling block) and to find a play that can amuse or enthrall—or both. On this score, at least, Shakespeare is a winner.

It might also be nice if the play were about something that will interest our players and those who come to see them, “a play with resonance and meaning” (to put a pretentious spin on it) for our young actors and for our probable audience (three GSC faculty members who’d rather we did Marlowe, nine GSC students who hope “Shakespeare” is a rap group, and three unsuspecting couples from Washington Township, who heard that the show—whatever it turns out to be—is a musical: “Oh, you’re doing Shakespeare? How quaint! I love Kiss Me Kate!”). That Cole Porter, he sure could re-write.

Why do we do Shakespeare periodically? Well, first of all, he’s there, an Everest among the foothills. But some college theaters never do Shakespeare, thank you very much, and seem none the worse for it. Others seldom miss a season or even schedule festivals of the Bard, which can sometimes become too much of a good thing. Yet we’ve had some success with Shakespeare in the past, and there is no better way to get actors to work on projecting voices and ideas than to deal, now and again, with the greatest playwright in the language. So, it’ll be Shakespeare next year.

It should be a comedy, probably. I don’t feel we have the wherewithal right now to try one of the tragedies, and the histories don’t possess much relevance for us, I’m afraid (although there are historical and political parallels that could be drawn). So, comedy it will be.
Let's see: in '84 I did *Taming of the Shrew*, in '87 *Twelfth Night*, and in '89 *As You Like It* (*Twelfth Night* and *As You Like It* were repeats from earlier years). I've also done *The Tempest*, and Carolyn O. did *Midsummer Night's Dream*. Right now I don't think I have a Portia, much less a Shylock. Nor do I have a Beatrice and Benedick for *Much Ado. All's Well That Ends Well*? A possibility, although it's a darker play than I'd like to do. One of my colleagues has warned me off *Love's Labour's Lost*, and I can't seem to warm up to *Two Gentlemen of Verona*. What's left? *The Comedy of Errors*? Maybe.

*February 23, 1991*

*The Comedy of Errors* may work; it has some definite strengths for us. First, there is no stellar role to cast, no Rosalind, or Viola, or Malvolio, or Petruchio. Second, the cast is manageable, and, third, the physical production can be kept simple. A fourth plus is that there are several roles for women—Adriana, Luciana, the Abbess, the Courtesan, the serving wench—and a couple of others that can be played by women with only a few changes. So far so good.

The drawbacks are few, although they are substantial. There is no stellar character to hold interest, no Jacques, no Bottom, no Kate, no Ariel. The play has no great verse, although it has some that is serviceable enough. The story is simple, if not simplistic, but with lots of playable ingredients that work. Despite the drawbacks, I think we can cast this show. Although it calls for two sets of twins, the Antipholuses and the Dromios, makeup and costuming can take care of much of this. *C.O.E.* will give our people the experience we want for them, and the pitfalls for actors are considerably less than in other Shakespeare plays. *The Comedy of Errors* it will be.

*March 1, 1991*

Well, the Production Planning Committee didn't jump up and down with excitement over my choice of *The Comedy of*
Errors, but the group didn’t throw rocks either. So I have a play and can put it aside for a while and turn my attention to grading papers for Comp II.

Summer 1991
I’ve been reading here and there about recent productions of Comedy of Errors. Mike Kelly told me of a British one in which both Antipholuses were played by one man. I’ll have to track it down. A couple of seasons ago the flying Karamazovs did a hilarious version that played in Philly and New York and that I later saw on PBS. Very athletic, lots of juggling and magic. We’ll need to go for something less ambitious than that, but there are lots of angles. Keep reading—reviews, commentary, criticism—whatever can give you something you can use.

Summer 1991
I must decide on a text for the show. Shakespeare is Shakespeare, right? Wrong. There are numerous editions of The Comedy of Errors, some with changes that interest only the scholar, some with essays and interpretations useful to the actor. I need to find a text that is clear, readable, well glossed, but not painfully so. And one where the price is right so I can have uniform texts for all involved.

Summer 1991
I’ve looked at the Folger edition, the Signet, the Penguin, the Arden, the Papp, the Yale. I’m very partial to the Arden, but it has more information than the actors need in rehearsal. I’ll indicate to the people, once cast, that the Arden is a good source, but I’m going to get multiple copies of the Signet because it’s well set up and has useful page-end notes. And it’s cheap.

Summer 1991
Random notes on concept or style: For an older play, the director may create a concept that moves beyond the playwright’s intention—whatever that may be, or whatever we
think that may be—to give the play new meaning or to disarm the audience, to shake up its preconceptions about the work. Concept is a word often used in connection with new shows that have been given a special lift, a special emphasis, by a director or auteur. (Cf. Bob Fosse's handling of Pippin, an integrated-movement musical strongly reflecting Fosse's particular theatrical interests. The success of Pippin was thought to rest largely on Fosse's "conception." See also the collaborations of Elia Kazan with Williams or Miller.) But where proven scripts are concerned, the concept need not be as pervasive. It may only mean changing a time period or going for a certain look without substantially altering the original material to fit a director's notion.

Shakespeare gets reconstituted constantly by directors who sometimes want to send out new messages (Orson Welles' celebrated Mercury Theatre Julius Caesar done in the '30s in the style of Mussolini's Italy with J.C. as Il Duce), or who sometimes wish to underscore elements in the timeless that may give the play contemporaneity. (Troilus and Cressida, placed by Tyrone Guthrie in Edwardian England, opened endless possibilities for "shocks of recognition," e.g., Thersites as a battlefront photographer pimping for the officers, Helen as a slightly plump and rapidly aging bottle redhead, over whom it hardly seemed worth fighting a war.) But sometimes a "concept," however mildly imposed, can have disastrous results (Orlando with a Southern drawl, languishing under magnolia trees in the opening scene of an ante-bellum production of As You Like It at the Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis). Or sometimes the concept grows out of a desire to vivify that simply is not understood by the audience. In 1964 I directed Romeo and Juliet at Loyola U. in Chicago, and I was strongly influenced by the look of the then new film version of Giuseppe De Lampedusa's The Leopard: 19th century Italy, warring states, family quarrels. Perfect parallels! But then came the costume ball I staged with Napoleon and Josephine, Marie Antoinette, the Medicis, Michaelangelo, and, finally, Juliet in a hoop skirt. Both she and I nearly got
bood off the stage. In my mind, I equated certain things in Romeo and Juliet with what I'd seen in The Leopard, but not many in the audience understood me—my fault, not theirs.

Sometimes even a well meant "concept" changes the original so much that it's barely recognizable. My Romeo and Juliet was still about star-crossed lovers, who die in the end (there were 17th-century versions in which they didn't), but other "new" productions of Shakespeare have retained little but the name. About twenty years ago, the N.Y. Shakespeare Festival did an entertaining and successful version of Two Gentlemen of Verona that really should have been called The Kids from Italy. I guess, rather simplistically, my own feeling is that if you don't trust the play on its own terms, don't do it. Shakespeare himself rewrote earlier works, or at least borrowed freely. But he was a genius, so what the hell.

Having said that—

I don't have a new concept for The Comedy of Errors—it's still going to be about identical twins, separated as infants, who wind up, as young men, in the same port in Asia Minor, with all the expected mistaken identity confusions and consequences—but I want to change the time period to something more visually accessible.

Justification? In Shakespeare's time, most of his plays were simply done in Elizabethan dress. No need, then, to do Comedy "authentically." I think I can find a time period that will not appreciably alter the feel of The Comedy of Errors, yet will not use chitons, mantles, and garlanded waistbands.

I'm thinking of Post-World War II in the Greek Islands. Movie equivalents: Never on Sunday, Boy on a Dolphin. The hookers and the gangsters in the former seem right to me, while the peasants, the natives in the latter also seem right. Closer to production, I'll discuss this with our designers and get a reaction.

Mid-September, 1991

I've thoroughly discussed my change of time period with the set designer, the costumer, and the lighting designer.
Before auditions, Phil G. and Joan S. are going to show me some things that spin off the "Greek Islands: Late ’40s" notion. I suppose you could call this "End of Phase One of the Director's Creative Process: Choosing an Environment for the Show." (If I were both playwright and director, this would be Phase Two.)

Joan showed Never on Sunday to the costume class, but the images proved too specific, not light enough for the comedy we're doing. I guess I remembered that film imperfectly. I've shown Joan some stills from Boy on a Dolphin. That seems more like it, especially some of the fishermen and merchants depicted there.

Of course, the earthy spear chucker in Dolphin was played by Sophia Loren. Ah, well, you can't have everything.

October 4, 1991

The first play of the CP season, Whose Life Is It Anyway? is about ready to open. Time to set up auditions for The Comedy of Errors. I'll make available to auditioners some notes on the characters as I see them and then have actors prepare comic monologues.

At minimum, I think I need the following:

The Antipholuses should be tall, strong, dark. They should be intimidating to the Dromios, and sufficiently interesting as lovers to attract the attention of the women. Antipholus of Syracuse can have a little larceny in his soul. The Dromios should be small, quick, and capable of broad comic playing. Much physicality required. Since I'm going to have the Duke played as an island kingpin, the Greek equivalent of an Italian Don, he needs to be tall and tough looking. I'm going to give him a girlfriend, a gum-chewing, nail-filing, "dame" (no lines). Egeus and the Abbess are the only characters that need to be middle-aged, thank heavens. Size and look for them can go in several directions. I'm going to make the Abbess someone who operates a haven for travelers, where you can get a libation and perhaps have your palm read and your brow soothed. She won't operate a bawdy
house, though. Adriana needs to be aggressive—but young, attractive, and charming. Luciana must be lighter, bright, and very winning. The doctor will be the head of a cult that exorcises "witches" (I'm going to play up the sorcery angles in the original), and there'll be some opportunities for magic displays (little ones).

Sounds as if all I've been saying about "concept" has been thrown out here. Well, not really. I expect to make few changes in the script itself. We're still doing Shakespeare's Comedy of Errors and not The Saps from Syracuse.

October 8, 1991

Auditions proved a disaster. I like the people who tried out, but I'm not sure I like them in this play. And there aren't enough of them. We are critically short of men, and, although I can do some double-casting, that can only go so far. Yes, there are Shakespeare companies that use eight actors, six actors, to do all the roles in Antony and Cleopatra and both parts of Henry the Fourth—on the same day—and never bat an eye, but come on, give me a break. In my potential cast I have two actors who've each done one Shakespeare production. That's it.

Among other credits my actors possess are Grease, The Odd Couple, Pullman Car Hiawatha, and King Arthur and the Magic Sword. And that's the serious stuff. The only two actors who look remotely alike for the Dromios are two big men (220 and 240 respectively), talented and full of life, but not exactly what I had in mind. If my original idea is to hold, I need Michael Jordan and Charles Barkley as the Antipholuses. With Steve and John as the Dromios, nothing less than 6'6" is going to make it. I have a good prospect for the Duke, and an impressive, imposing lady for the Abbess. There are several possibilities for the two ingenues, but it will depend on whom I can cast as Antipholus. I don't have a Doctor, but I think I can double-cast the Duke here since he otherwise appears only at the beginning and end of the play.

The Antipholuses are the key, really. I am more than will-
ing to work with inexperienced actors; I joke some about it, but that, after all, is what I'm here to do. Still, I don't like to saddle an actor with something that is simply over his head. I have one strong choice for Antipholus (probably Antipholus of Syracuse, the more worldly of the two brothers), but I don't have anyone of similar experience for the other brother. But what if, as in that British production Mike told me about, my actor could play both brothers? How might that work? They are not on stage together until the final scene. Prior to that, is there anything impossible for one actor to accomplish (quick changes, re-entrances, et al.)? I'll have to consider it. That still leaves me with an Antipholus four inches shorter and 60 pounds lighter than his slave, but that's another matter. (What, me worry?)

October 9, 1991

So, that's it. Bill W. will play both Antipholuses. I'll have a silent stand-in for him dressed the same, and I'll try to fool the audience into believing there are two people. I'll worry about the last scene when I come to it. John and Steve, my big guys, will play the Dromios. I'll make something out of the fact that they are bigger than their masters: the Dromios will appear to be afraid of them, but clearly they won't be physically intimidated. They will suffer the beatings their masters give them because, in the long run, each Dromio will see it's better to be servant to a bright, resourceful boss, even if he beats you a little, than to have to try to make it alone. Problem not completely solved, but at least manageable.

As to the problem of not having enough men—the goldsmith, Angelo, will become Angela. (I remember this friend of Aunt Tess's who used to show up on occasion at family gatherings. Always nicely dressed, she carried a very large purse from which she extracted numerous pieces of jewelry, offering them for sale. When I was fifteen, I imagined the stuff was hot. She would also appraise jewelry, screwing in her jeweler's eye and carefully scrutinizing each piece before
naming a price. This fascinating person is my image for Angela, the goldsmith.) Similarly, since I have more women than men, a couple of messengers will be played by women, as will all the doctor's helpers.

October 10, 1991

The director and creativity, once again. Directing, if it's an art at all, is an interpretive one. The director, after all, hasn't written the play (although I have a successful playwright friend who always directs the first production of each of his new plays), unless he or she rewrites it, and doesn't usually design the scenery, costumes, or the lighting. So just what does the director do? And is what the director does creative?

Phase one was "Creating an Environment for the Play." Creative Phase Two? Casting. The director creates an ensemble, putting together a group of actors who will interpret what the playwright has written. But the very act of choosing actors for parts involves creating something from nothing. With knowledge of the play's requirements, infused with his or her own insights, the director puts together a cast that will of necessity be different from any other cast assembled, or contemplated, for a production of the same play. Solid casting can bring out the meaning in the script, or perhaps create new meanings; poor casting may make the interpretation falter, leaving the finished product hanging.

In the professional theatre, any vision the director has of a character can usually be satisfied. You want a young woman, 5'8", auburn hair to her waist, who can sing, and dance en pointe? Put out a call, and tomorrow fifty such will show up at your door. In the college or community theatre, it's not that easy; compromise is the name of the game. I've compromised some, but I think I've been able to put together a cast for Comedy that can satisfy the play's demands and that challenges me without crippling me. I'm prepared to move into rehearsals.
Having analyzed the language and ideas of the play, I’m on to Creative Phase Three: Pre-Planning the Action. This phase will go on for many days, in fact until the last dress rehearsal. The director creates the stage picture, *i.e.*, what it is the audience sees at any given moment. Each grouping of actors is a composition, not unlike a painter’s exercise in group portraiture. The composition requires unity, harmony, balance, proportion, focus, and rhythm. Color is important, light and shadow. The theatrical designers contribute here, but the director usually approves things, has the last word. But the stage picture, unlike that of the painter, is always moving, always changing. The director facilitates changes in the picture by moving (blocking) the actors into new relationships. Theoretically, whenever the composition is frozen, it should reflect what’s happening in the play at that moment. Not just pretty pictures, then, but meaningful ones. Controlling all of this is the director’s job, a significant aspect of his or her creative contribution. The job is a bit different from that of the film director, who may compose a shot, but who also may cut and edit for effect. The stage director manipulates within the “frame” only.

Also starting now, and also ongoing, is Creative Phase Four: Temporality. The director governs the speed at which lines are delivered, the flow of stage movement and pantomime, the number and length of pauses. If you like a play because it was “well paced,” credit the director. If you find that the play “dragged,” was slow, the director is probably the culprit. Of course, actors contribute to the temporal aspects of the production by the ways in which they play lines and execute actions. But the speed with which actors do things must constantly be monitored, governed, by an alert director. “Pick up your cues,” shouts the harried *régi- seur*, who sees the show’s tempo lagging, and who chooses the first remedy: keep the dialogue moving. There may be subtler approaches, graver problems, but, at minimum, picking up cues is a must.
But sometimes a director doesn’t want a cue picked up. You want a pause to allow the mood to change; you want the audience to experience something different. (Find the word *pause* in a Pinter script and look to see what’s significant in that silent moment.) Even though Shakespeare doesn’t call for it, I see the need for a pause for a kiss during the dialogue when Antipholus of Syracuse first meets Luciana. There’s a moment that simply seems right. In general, Shakespeare doesn’t tell you about things like this, nor about how fast or slow to read the verse. He doesn’t tell you where to pause for contemplation, for a kiss, or for much of anything else. Stage directions in Shakespeare are usually limited to things like “enter,” “exit” (or the all-purpose “*exeunt*”), “beats him,” “dies.”

When you get something like “They heave Antony aloft to Cleopatra,” scholars write books about it.

In Shakespeare, the lines tell us what the action needs to be; careful reading of the text supplies the answers to most questions. Still, there’s room for interpretation. At one point in *Comedy*, Dromio of Ephesus describes to Adriana the beating Antipholus has just given him. We’ve had a chance to see this happening in the previous scene. Can Dromio’s words to Adriana, taken literally, guide us in the playing of the prior scene? Or do we assume that with Adriana, Dromio embroiders for effect? The latter probably makes Dromio funnier, and so that is the thrust we’ll take. Exactly what the beating should look like, then, is up to the director. Once having decided, I’ll turn the details of it over to our local fight master, Charlie C.

*October 12–18, 1991*

We’re blocking the show, working on making the narrative clear, developing the characters, getting the language to be precise. Soon actors will be off book, and we’ll work on prop handling, comic timing, comic business. Some big things left to do: finding a way to make workable the opening scene between Egeus and the Duke, developing a series of cross-
overs to set the life of the seaport, working the final sequence, where both Antipholuses are seen at the same time and where both speak.

*October 20, 1991*

The opening scene isn't going to make it as it now stands (or sits). Egeus is saddled with a long series of speeches telling how he and his wife and the twins boarded a ship, how a storm came up, how the ship was broken in two, and how he went one way with one kid and an infant slave while Emilia (the Abbess) went another way with the other two children. Our Egeus is trying hard, but it's wearying stuff. I've decided that we'll cut this to its essentials and then have a pantomime upstage, with Egeus narrating, showing Emilia and Egeus (stand-ins for both) each with two "babies" (dolls wrapped up) and lots of *Sturm und Drang* (taped effects and music). I think this is the only way to play it: get it over with and on to the comedy.

I have tons of notes about how individuals are approaching their work, how they are meshing in this production. I have notes on my frustrations with actors, my frustrations with myself. I don't think I'll commit to paper my specific criticism of individuals. Much of it is temporary, anyway, and the rest will keep.

*October 30, 1991*

Halloween tomorrow, Mischief Night tonight. I'm beginning to block a pantomime sequence that will precede scene one and several other crossover scenes that will involve nearly all the cast as merchants, townspeople, sailors, courtesans. We'll have fish merchants, wine sellers, bakers, shoppers, pickpockets, and pickups. This will allow for some needed transitions, and the variety of occupations and types will add visual interest. The prop people don't like me.

My charts for the crossovers are done in several colors and look like diagrams for some very complicated plays from scrimmage: "OK, Lucy, you and Anti cover the Wig mer-
chant while the Abbess here tries the Colossus of Rhodes play right up the middle.” This kind of stuff reduces the director’s role to that of traffic controller (or traffic cop), but it all contributes, one hopes, to the audience’s enjoyment of the finished production. I’ve decided that in the opening sequence I’ll introduce the Dromios and, stealing a Marx Bros. bit from Animal Crackers, I’ll have them do a mirror-image panto, with each man thinking he sees his own reflection in a shop window. Or did he really see someone who looked like him? My Dromios work so well together that I think I can get value and fun out of this.

October 31-November 10, 1991

Things are moving very rapidly now. Rehearsals for integration. Putting all elements together: This is Creative Phase Five. I’ve got set pieces to deal with, levels, ramps. Soon there’ll be costumes, music, makeup, some trick props (two short soliloquies by A. of S. will be “illuminated” by conjurers, mountebanks, card sharks, et al.). There are lighting cues to worry about. The actors are getting ready; they’ll lose time as we adjust the physical production. I’m checking pace, mood, business. My stage manager records every change so that by opening night I can put it all in her capable hands; she’ll call the shots during performances.

November 11, 1991

Some worries still about the final “revelation.” I think that up until the final scene, Bill will either fool the audience into thinking he’s two different people, or will win admiration from people for how well he plays two different characters. Because I have his exact double make a couple of silent appearances at moments when Bill can’t possibly be in two places at once, we have a nice conceit going. However, there’s that last scene. I’m having the double and Bill mimic each other; they even say a line or two together. The double is blocked sometimes in three-quarter upstage to minimize the time the audience gets to contemplate him. But he does
have a couple of lines here, and, while the double does them well enough, we run the risk of blowing the illusion. Overall, things are carried off fairly well, and this is a presentational comedy, after all. (Excuses, rationalizations.)

November 15, 1991

If the show's been put together well, the director on opening night is superfluous. We opened The Comedy of Errors, and I'm pleased with what the actors have done. The show moves, it's frequently funny, and Shakespeare is done no disservice. Bill W., the young women, the Dromios, and many of the others are to be commended. I can't really decide about my own work. The elements are there, and I know I gave the production my time and best energy. Others will have to judge how well we've succeeded.

November 23, 1991

Turkey time next week. This is not a reference to The Comedy of Errors, which played to enthusiastic audiences, and about which I got very nice comments from my colleagues. If there's a Creative Phase Six to directing, it comes when the director rethinks all that's been done and decides how it could have been done differently. As I watched one of the last performances of Comedy of Errors, I suddenly knew what I should have done in the final scene. I should not have let Antipholus of Syracuse speak at all. Each time he needed to speak, Bill should have jumped in as though reading his twin's mind. Of course, the audience would assume, then, that Bill had played both roles, but there would be those moments earlier when he appeared to be in two places at once. Questions, lingering doubts: all I could really ask for. Now, next time....
Dr. Ken Kaleta, a member of the Communications Department, received his B.A. and M.A. degrees from Villanova University. His dissertation at NYU is a study of the work of F. Scott Fitzgerald in its translation to film.

In summer 1992, at the University Film and Video Association’s annual conference, he presented a paper, “Liquid Windows: The Filmmaking of Hanif Kureishi.” In November 1992, the Twayne Filmmaker Series will publish his critical analysis of the films of David Lynch. This is the first book-length study of the writer-director.

Ken and his wife, Jane, travel extensively. Their most recent trip was to Russia, Germany, Poland, and Scandinavia.
On Creativity & Film

Kenneth Kaleta

SECTION 33 The Columnned Corridors

33.14 Mirror-image: Medium shot.
A scribe with bloodied fingertips draws... in a book full of medical drawings—it is a book we shall see again later.

— Peter Greenaway, Prospero’s Books

Film has an availability unlike any other art in students’ everyday lives. Motion pictures are mass entertainment, but they are artistic creations as well. Students are well aware that the triptych, sestina, and aria are artistic creations to be studied in the classroom. They cautiously come to embrace or dismiss the works of Satie or Munch, Eudora Welty or Michael Clark. Students know they must study to appreciate the work of the creator. But there is no such reticence with film; students’ familiarity with film prompts them to dismiss all the films of Luis Buñuel or the œuvre of Billy Wilder or every single frame of James Ivory if they are bored watching any one of their films for more than twenty seconds.

Notice too how movie theater audiences rush out of a miniplex theater at the mall, pushing and maneuvering to
clear the parking lot. As soon as they leave the movie's virtual world, the audience is ready to move. Movie rentals have added to the problem. The domestic sport of fast-finger editing of videotape further isolates the film. Film credits are often the starting gun to signal leaving the movie's world. Time to hit the remote control rewind, the first step of tape rental return—time to find the car keys.

Whether at home or in the theater, few people consider film credits part of the film experience. That film is the creative product presented on the screen by a host of creative individuals is obscured. Film's enormous collaborative creativity further blurs understanding the creative process. In most cases, even viewed credits roll by too small or too fast. And one wonders how even the dedicated film-credit viewers are supposed to understand the jargon of film credits. Quick, what is a gaffer? How does the best boy become best?

As moviegoers, students certainly know their movies, but they rarely realize that film is an artistic process. A large part of that familiarity grows from film's ability to achieve a replication of reality that is singular in the history of artistic creation. No longer amazed by the motion in the world of the "flickers," students enter film's virtual reality. Films give students worlds as "real" as their everyday world: the street humor of House Party and the family meals in Avalon spark immediate audience recognition. Students all too readily accept film's power. What they need to develop in the classroom is an appreciation of film as creation.

On one hand, film replicates. On the other hand, film always creates its own reality. Film powerfully presents its own reality—albeit unreal—inviting students to invest their reality into "unreality." David Lynch's hemorrhaging poultry entree in Eraserhead is invitingly unreal.

Though less flamboyantly obvious, Mira Nair's Mississippi in Mississippi Masala is her creation—not replication, but representation. What moviegoers respond to is film's ability to depict the artist's imaginings as images so crea-
tively overpowering that they become a real part of collective experience.

In Kubrick's darkly prophetic *A Clockwork Orange*, Alex de Large only sees the real cruelty of his "ultra-violence" when he is relentlessly force-fed scenes of filmed assault. "It's funny how the colours of the real world only seem real when you viddy them on the screen," philosophizes Alex, eyes forced wide open. The movie character's misconception of film reality is as frightening as it is accurate.

How much reality is attributed to the movies? Fifty years ago Clark Gable devastated the underwear industry in *It Happened One Night*. Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* put an end to stressless showering for generations of women. As audiences see Oliver Stone's Viet Nam, Oliver Stone's psychedelic concerts, and Oliver Stone's John F. Kennedy in his films, they understand Stone's vision as sixties history. As movie-goers, students must recognize that their cinematic experience is a reality intertwined with the unreal.

Audiences are urged to look for models, statements, apologies, and rationales of our current world in a movie's virtual world. Therefore, the power of cinema does not need academic reinforcement. Classroom reinforcement of that power further rationalizes the student bias to accept illusions as reality. It reduces art in film study.

Because film images are so powerful, students come to the classroom entranced by the virtual life in films, carrying film images in their subconscious as part of their collective experience. Film is perceived with a sense of its permanence and reality rather than with a recognition, understanding, and interpretation of its artistic creation. Students understand the motion picture as real, somehow concrete, and static. We marvel at *Die Fledermaus* being given exciting new productions, but we balk at a "remake" of *Casablanca*.

The scope of film today warrants acknowledgment of elements of film's characterizations, plots, and themes in a classroom. But it also warrants the scholarly investigation of aesthetics and techniques. In the classroom, students may
consider the nuances of contemporary film acting, the brilliance of special effects, and the stylistic choices of the director. Surely, the aesthetic sophistication of the motion picture today is impressive. But as surely, film is artistic creation to be comprehended and criticized, not a constant of some nether reality to be entered and assimilated.

One of the marvels of creativity, of course, is universality; it is recognizable. But appreciation can move beyond recognition. The beauty of a painting is visible: the colors, the shadows, the mood of a canvas delight the observer. But more is studied in an analysis of David's *The Oath of the Horatii* than its call to violence. A different level of appreciation is reached by a student through an understanding of the composition, perspective, and style of the artist's brush strokes. So too with film. Enough pop analysis of film peppers TV talk shows. In the classroom, we must use students' involvement with film to generate study and appreciation of film as an art.

In the classroom, other arts never lose their ties to creativity. Music, the plastic arts, and literature too are rightly recognized for the universality of their themes, the reality of their subjects. Wordsworth's "To My Sister" is not reduced to a mere rationale for truancy. A poem is a creative entity. The meter, figurative language, and rhyme scheme that create the poem are scrutinized. Investigating the philosophy of the Romantic movement gives the student an artistic context for the poem. So too, an awareness of film as art galvanizes its study.

Art, created with identifiable humanity in theme and subject, must have universality. But art is a created form of expression, with a unique charge, and a style distinctive to its creator. Isn't this, in fact, the paradox of creativity we so admire that we find creativity a term difficult to define?

The film student must also recognize that choices have been made to create the film, that a filmmaker has a cinematic style. For example, film is capable of presenting military battles with enormous verisimilitude. Film students
shouldn’t merely view cinematic battles as history, but rather should investigate how and why creativity elevates Sergei Eisenstein’s classic, *Alexander Nevsky*, and, fifty years later, elevates Keith Gordon’s *A Midnight Clear* from military replication to two distinct works of art. Both films deal with war. Both films portray soldiers. Both films address power. But each film is produced, written, designed, acted, lighted, photographed, scored, edited, and directed as art. Myriad choices from casting to camera angles have been made by a collaboration of film artists. Choices have been made not only to create what the audience sees and hears, but to create how they will see and hear it. The selections of each artist constitute creativity in motion picture art.

Students need the classroom to distance themselves from film’s hypnotizing reality and to study it as creation and process. Film is not life. Film is creation. Historically, film deserves inquiry. Culturally, film deserves recognition. Technologically, film deserves understanding. Artistically—film demands awe.
About the Artist

William Daniel Travis graduated from Philadelphia University of the Arts with a B.F.A. in Sculpture and Art Education, and from Tyler School of Art, Temple University.

Bill has taught at Rowan since 1971 and was Director of the Art Gallery for six years. While on leave, he taught at Wellesley College and Harvard University from 1977-79.

Bill has exhibited his sculpture in Philadelphia and Boston and has juried numerous public commissions and grants. He says that his sculptures are about rhythms; intervals, phrasing, and continuity are most important to him. Words that describe music best describe his sculpture. His works are linear—a musical phrase, a section of a chain, a phrase of a sentence.

His sculpture is currently on exhibit in “First in the Heart Is the Dream” at the Philadelphia Art Alliance. He is represented by Sande Webster Gallery in Philadelphia.
Monk's Mood by William Daniel Travis
About the Author

Dr. E. Michael Desilets teaches film classes at Rowan College of New Jersey. His poetry has appeared in a number of journals, including The Chattahoochee Review, Potato Eyes, The Habersham Review, The Journal of New Jersey Poets, and The Vincent Brothers Review.

He has twice been the recipient of the John M. Corcoran Poetry Prize, sponsored by the Irish Edition of Philadelphia.
I have an idea: I have no idea what creativity is.

I'm tempted to say that creativity involves the engaging organization of scattered thoughts, feelings, and impulses. But I'm not tempted to say that very often.

I certainly wish I did have simple beliefs about creativity that I could state emphatically; a few handy commandments, perhaps. Creativity, however, can be messy, no matter how swell we regard the finished product.

Trying to expound on the topic makes me feel like Doc Boone, the lovable alcoholic played by Thomas Mitchell in John Ford's *Stagecoach*. When Dallas, the whore-with-a-heart-of-gold (played by Claire Trevor), asks him about the advisability of marrying the Ringo Kid (John Wayne), the old drunkard can't help but wonder why anyone would care about his opinion. Mitchell, it should be remembered, won the Academy Award for his performance. Still, I tend to identify more with the failures of his character than with his successes as an actor.

"The more you think," Raymond Chandler wrote, "the less you create." He also wrote *The Big Sleep*, *Farewell, My Lovely*, and other classic "hardboiled" detective novels, using
a formula appropriated from Dashiell Hammett. When I was in high school, Chandler was my favorite author.

Stephen King seems to be the author of choice among my students. He has perhaps penned many clever remarks about creativity, but if so, I haven’t read any of them. (I have read The Shining and Firestarter. That puts me very far behind my own students.) King does, however, have formula galore. The less he thinks, the more he creates, we might assume.

So, having a formula can help: the Elizabethan sonnet, for example. Even a mediocre student can assemble 140 syllables with the appropriate rhyme scheme that would be acceptable. I’ve read scores of them myself without even whimpering. But we all know that too much formula is a problem. Just read the denunciations of American television in today’s paper.

Creativity is slippery, worse than the slimiest eel, the greasiest pig, the smoothest silk.

Repression can actually stimulate it. Look at James Joyce. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. Andrea Dworkin. Artists denied funding by the National Endowment for the Arts. Student journalists threatened with annihilation by censorious faculty and administrators. There’s nothing more exhilarating than using your creative talents to offend all the right people: old goats, contented cows, fat asses with thin skins. Take your pick.

Otherwise, it’s the bland leading the bland.

Back in the ’60s (a regrettable but handy phrase) I was offered a bit of praise for my own budding (burgeoning? billowing?) creativity by Dr. Evelyn C. Dodge, an English professor at Framingham State College. “Michael,” she said to me one stunningly memorable day following our creative writing class, “sometimes you say the right thing.”

“‘The more you think,’” I had wanted to respond, “‘the less you create.’” But I hate explaining myself, so I accepted the compliment graciously and headed to my place of employment to juggle jars of jams and jellies. (The less you work, the less you make.)
This seems a fitting juncture at which to quote from Charles Bukowski’s latest collection, *The Last Night of the Earth Poems* (Santa Rosa: Black Sparrow, 1992). I have chosen a stanza from his “creative writing class”:

I sat alone in the back row with
my scowl
further noting that
the men didn’t look like men and
the women didn’t look like women.
again
no way to judge creativity.
but what they produced
looked like
what they were.

Of course, Bukowski is an old reprobate, a scurrilous chronicler of his own nasty peccadilloes. As a professor, I should hold his work at arm’s length and not be too alarmed at his portrayal of institutionalized creativity as practiced on the college level. After all, I do enjoy telling my students that they sometimes say the right thing—that they have, in other words, expressed themselves well; that they have distinguished themselves through the use of the written word. Creativity, after all, can have its rewards, even including the praise of alleged professionals.

All the same, even reading Pulitzer Prize-winning poets leaves me in a dither regarding this creativity thing. The following bit from Mary Oliver’s “The Notebook,” in *House of Light* (Boston: Beacon, 1990), is a perfect example of what I’m trying to say:

The turtle
doesn’t have a word for any of it—
the silky water
or the enormous blue morning,
or the curious affair of his own body.
On the shore
I'm so busy
scribbling and crossing out
I almost miss seeing him
paddle away
through the wet, black forest.
More and more the moments come to me:
how much can the right word do?

I can only hope I use a right word or two each time out. But who's to judge? Dr. Dodge retired long ago.
On Creativity

A film is never really good unless the camera is an eye in the head of a poet.

— Orson Welles

If you want to draw a bird, you must become a bird.

— Hokusai

That which is creative must create itself.

— John Keats

Artistic growth is, more than it is anything else, a refining of the sense of truthfulness.

— Willa Cather

Art is a lie that makes us realize the truth.

— Pablo Picasso

Art must take reality by surprise.

— Françoise Sagan
Dr. Donald Gephardt, when not serving as Dean of the School of Fine and Performing Arts, enjoys playing the clarinet as well as following the fortunes and foibles of the political world. The various hats he has worn over a thirty-year career include those of elementary-school music teacher, professional musician, band director, orchestra conductor, researcher, department chair, and dean.

He has taught music at all levels. For the past nine years, he has been engaged in academic administration and finds it to be a challenging, rewarding experience—an attempt to bring harmony to the School. For the past two years, he has conducted the Glassboro Youth Orchestra, an offering of the Community Arts Program.

A relative newcomer to Rowan, he is very impressed with the level of arts activity on campus and believes the College's arts offerings match any found in the region or the country.
Creativity as a Subversive Activity

Donald L. Gephardt

In all the arts, the most cherished act is that of creation. Yet in many ways, creativity remains the most elusive of all the aspects of the arts. It is often characterized as an almost mysterious activity—even regarded by some as a subversive one, attributed to genius and not of or for the "common" person. However, it seems evident that we are all creative—to a degree. The questions are, What elements foster creative ability? Can we as arts educators enhance the creative works of our students? Do we play a positive role in this process, or is it better to just stay out of the way and let the creative act unfold? Do we even know what the creative act is?

We who work in arts education are used to fighting for our place in the sun. In America, the arts have traditionally been seen as a stepchild of the educational hierarchy, and they are often regarded as an "extra" or a "frill." However, the arts more and more are being regarded as a legitimate discipline, equal to any other. Certainly they constitute a body of knowledge with a "literature," a history and several "languages" equal in importance and complexity to those in many other disciplines. However, in trying to teach the arts,
especially at the K-12 level, arts educators have fallen short in two major areas. First, in approaching the arts from the viewpoint of the audience, we have not done a very good job presenting the aesthetic domain. We dissect technique and define style ad infinitum but come up short when dealing with the appreciation of a work of art—the power felt in the non-verbal language used by the artist. Second, from the viewpoint of the practitioner, we do not quite know how to handle the hot potato of creativity. What causes a person to be creative—or to be more creative than another—we just don’t know. Perhaps if we could better talk about the aesthetic domain, this discussion might further the creative impulse. The experience of art, be it that of the creator or the audience, is a topic worth more attention.

However, there are many factors that help arts educators to further the appreciation of art. The arts have a remarkable dual power: they can introduce individuality and at the same time introduce universals, things that we all can share. In this respect, they constantly keep us alive and move us forward. Anyone who has taught in or observed an elementary classroom is impressed with the energy and vitality exhibited by the children. It is very easy to encourage them to be creative; they are creative naturally, without any serious urging. The question is, What happens to this wonderful creative energy as they mature? As their sense of self matures, as they become vulnerable, are they no longer willing to take the risk?

Clearly, creative artists are risk-takers; their personal reputation is always on the line. As the child approaches puberty and begins to sense the adult self, often that sense of unabandoned creativity is lost. As our defenses of our vulnerable self get stronger, often the risk of creativity proves too great to bear. Such “shades of the prison house” are also accompanied by an increased awareness on the part of the student that being creative is not rewarded. Rather, traditional schooling often points the student to the one “right” answer. Although lip service may be paid to wanting to turn out stu-
dents who can think for themselves and who can question using various modes of inquiry, in reality these actions often are not rewarded by the educational system. When these things occur, we must ask ourselves if the educational process fosters the goals we actually want to achieve.

We ought not to overlook the way in which the arts, as grade levels progress, are increasingly relegated to the sidelines, while at the same time they are viewed, music especially, as a vehicle for imbuing students with rudiments of socialization. Past the primary grades, the arts tend to serve either those students less able at academic subjects or the goals of group activity; bands and choruses teach us to "work and play well together." Wherein lies creativity? How are students encouraged to go beyond the bounds of received knowledge? Venture a new way of seeing? How are they taught to take chances in their growth and learning?

The risk, of course, is the risk of being subversive, of acting out one's unique powers and thereby creating something "new." The creative act is always an alteration of the present order of things. Each painting, poem, musical piece, or even idea at least attempts to present something of the world anew, to re-order, re-form or in-form for the very first time. And while we value such acts in young children—refrigerator magnets holding up art across society attest to the nurturing and valuing of creativity—recent moves by as well as attacks upon the NEA bear witness to a societal view of the arts as truly subversive. Are we as arts educators willing to teach about subversion, let alone foster and teach subversion itself?

It is ironic perhaps that recently the Japanese have focused on creativity within the American educational system. Although we may not feel that we are fostering creativity in our schools, apparently the Japanese feel otherwise. Asian cultures promote a very different aesthetic in art, which centers on copying. Asian children spend long hours copying the masterworks of their culture and are rewarded for the best copies. Not coincidentally, this ability to copy is what
has boosted the Japanese and Korean economies to soaring heights over the last twenty years. They have taken the products of the Western World, copied them, and made improvements on them until the copies out-perform the originals. Now, however, they realize that this ability to copy can take them only so far economically. Now they are seeking individuals who are truly creative—who can dream up products that no one has ever thought of—and they are turning to the American educational system to see how it is done, for they feel we do a better job in this area than they. Big business the world over is now in the same mode; creative individuals are prized and sought after. The world's new billionaires, Bill Gates and his colleagues at Microsoft, work by sitting around and creating all day. Surely, this is a powerful model for convincing students to be creative and inventive.

Some corporations are bringing in artists on a regular basis to talk to their employees about the creative process, saying, according to Toby Devan Lewis, art curator of the Progressive Corporation, "Interacting with art and artists challenges the natural inclination to remain inflexible." In the same September 8, 1991, article in The New York Times, author Claudia H. Deutsch states, "In nearly all cases, the goal is the same: to unleash latent creative activity so that employees can find fresh solutions to old problems." The question remains, Is this possible? What is the key that unlocks creativity, and who locked it up in the first place?

We professionals in the arts certainly are not of like mind on this issue. Richard Riddell, director of the Institute for Advanced Theatre Training at Harvard University, believes that the creative arts have little place in the American university. In The Chronicle of Higher Education, February 22, 1989, he says, "In the optimistic, bright-eyed days of the 1950s and early '60s, the university imagined it could do a great deal. It imagined it could develop artists. We now know it can't." He advocates that universities focus on Ph.D. programs in the history, criticism, and theory of the arts,
and abandon all doctoral programs in the creative arts. In this somewhat elitist view, the creative arts are the domain of only the “genuinely gifted” individual, clearly a small minority. A more optimistic view is provided by John F. Noonan, formerly the director of the Center for the Improvement of Teaching Effectiveness of Virginia Commonwealth University. He was brought to a look at creativity in his attempt to gauge the quality of teaching in the arts. Dr. Noonan concludes that when teaching in a creative mode, the “normal” terms don’t apply. In arts classes, he observed a mentoring relationship in which both teacher and student were intensely involved in their work. Both were also vulnerable—in an atmosphere in which intense criticism of both the mentor and mentee was ongoing. In this milieu, the teacher never ceased being a student as well; he or she was continually sticking his or her neck out. Also key to this process is learning by doing—modeling after the mentor—wherein the role model provided by the faculty mentor is crucial. Herein, it is essential that faculty remain active as practicing artists because the learning takes place by doing. Therefore, Noonan feels that the creative process definitely can be fostered—although not perhaps to the “genius” level—the only acceptable level for Riddell.

A related issue long debated in academia is how to evaluate the work of the creative artist as faculty member, whose work does not fit nicely into the “normal” modes of scholarship desired by the academy. How does one evaluate this subversive activity for purposes of tenure or promotion? Clark Kerr provides one answer. In a 1976 article, after referring to the creative arts as a fifth stream of intellectual endeavor—along with the professions, the humanities, the sciences, and the social sciences—he states:

The puzzle: why are the creative arts so different from so much of the rest of higher education? Why do they not fit better into the formulas? Why are they not so easily accepted as are so many other fields? I have come to this
conclusion tentatively: that the other fields operate more in a vertical way, they build more upon prior scholarship; and that this makes it easier to evaluate performance. Has the person read the literature and do his footnotes show that he has? Does he know the accepted methodology and can he use it? But you get to this fifth stream of thought—the creative arts—which move more laterally, move more horizontally; an area where people are trying to move away from the beaten paths, where they are seeking to have some kind of an individual inspiration which draws away from the past, where they even seek to repudiate the past.

So the traditional notions which tend to inhibit the creative impulse as early as the elementary school may also affect the possible tenure of the creative arts professor at the university.

Several questions remain. Are arts practitioners within the academy different from their colleagues in the "real" world? What makes up the artistic or creative temperament? To address these issues, psychologists also have studied the riddle of creativity.

In a recent New York Times article, Daniel Goleman reports on three major new theories of creativity which "nest inside one another like Russian dolls":

1. *The Thrill of the Moment*: here, the artist reports feeling a moment in which he or she is "super-alert"—it is a mark of what psychologists call the "flow" state, an altered awareness found in people performing at their peak. It is a "thrill" state, which motivates artists to keep at it year after year. It seems to have its own reward, that of spurring the artist on to even greater heights and challenges.

2. *Challenges over a Lifetime*: Howard Gardener of Harvard examined the lives of a handful of virtuosos, each of whose work transformed his or her field. One phenomenon evident at this exalted level was the ten-year rule—that great crea-
tive bursts come in ten-year cycles. Also, he found that “typically, high-level creators have come from geographical regions removed from the centers of power and from families that valued discipline and achievement.” Another pattern revealed in this study was that often the person’s work reflected “a kind of coming home” that places the person’s work in a broader frame, reconciling it with basic values.

3. **Awaiting the Renaissance**: Keith Simonton, examining creativity by looking at the big picture—over the last 2500 years—concludes that “greater wealth, geographic expansion, a centralized nation-state and waging wars have little or nothing to do with producing a creative society. Instead, political fragmentation emerged as the single best social predictor of grand escalations in creativity. Typically, a creative upsurge takes place about twenty years after a rebellion as the first generation of artists matures free of the paralyzing limitations of a restrictive, monolithic power.” This theory, therefore, debunks the view that art precedes or predicts the future.

As revealing as these theories are, they still do not reveal a secret method with which to unlock the muse. However, I believe that the following summarizes much of what is known about fostering creativity:

1. The young seem to create inherently and naturally without much urging. However, this urge seems to subside sometime in the late elementary grades, perhaps in direct correlation with an emerging sense of the educated self.

2. A good model helps—witnessing the creative instructor at work can also unlock creative desires in the student.

3. In some of the arts, especially music, the hurdle of learning the “language” (notation) can act as a deterrent to the creative impulse. Some methods, such as the Manhattanville project of the late 1960s, have been developed to overcome this hurdle—with mixed success.

4. Young creators should not be discouraged from copying
or imitating the style of others. Many great artists have begun in exactly this way—later to assimilate several styles into a voice of their own.

5. Creativity can often be approached through a limiting process. There is a wide world of choice which confronts the beginner. Initially limiting the form or limiting the content helps to focus on some known quantities. It is essential to know thoroughly the innermost structure of the materials being used to help foster the creative process.

6. Creativity is integral to both problem-solving and problem-finding. However, research studies reveal that problem-finding is the more creative activity.

Most importantly, we in arts education must believe that creative potential lies within all of our students. We can measure many things but fall short when trying to measure the most important thing of all—desire. To foster and support the desire to be creative within our students is the greatest achievement of all. Once that dream is realized, the educational community will look to arts education to lead young people to experience that vital combination at the very heart of our American democracy: a strong belief in the collective experience and a commitment to the worth of the individual, often best realized through valuing the creative act—the most individual act of all.
On Creativity

Imagination, not invention, is the supreme master of art as of life.

— Joseph Conrad

Only... when one has conceived a complete image in one’s heart can one start artistic composition.

— Feodor Dostoevsky

The writer who possesses the creative gift owns something of which he is not always master—something that, at times, strangely wills and works for itself.

— Charlotte Brontë

The basic fact was true, and remains true to this day, that the juxtaposition of two shots by splicing them together, resembles not so much a simple sum of one shot plus another shot as it does a creation.

— Sergei Eisenstein

Images are the language of the imagination; words are the language of our rational mind.

— Glenn F. Jackson
**About the Artist**

Joseph Tishler majored in art at Philadelphia's Central High School, studying with painter Fred Gill. At the School Art League, Joe took drawing and painting, and studied watercolor with Ben Eisenstadt.

Joe began concentrated studies at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, but his education was interrupted by Korea and a tour of duty with the Marines. With the help of the G.I. Bill, he began B.F.A. work at the University of Pennsylvania.

At the Academy, Joe was influenced by Hobson Pitman, Walter Steumpfig, Franklin Watkins, and Jacques Lipschitz. In 1955, Joe received a Cresson scholarship, which enabled him to study drawing at the Atelier Cassatti in Paris.

Joe received a Doctor of Arts degree as a Corporation Scholar at Carnegie-Mellon. He has taught in the Philadelphia public school system and at Carnegie-Mellon and now teaches at Rowan College of New Jersey.
About the Author

Bertram Greenspan did his undergraduate work at the American Conservatory of Music in Chicago and the Juilliard School in New York, where he worked with Ivan Galamian. He earned a master's degree and a doctorate from Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana.

During thirty-one years at Rowan, Bert has taught violin, viola, chamber music, Music History and Appreciation, counterpoint, orchestration, and courses in the humanities. He has also conducted the orchestra, band, and the Opera Company. For most of two decades, he was the violinist of the Pro Arte Trio, a faculty ensemble which performed throughout the Eastern states and in Europe. He has been a member of the Philadelphia Opera Company and Pennsylvania Ballet, and is presently concertmaster of the Reading Symphony.

Bert's wife, Sue, is a performer and private teacher of violin. Prior to the arrival of Jennifer, age three, Sue taught in the school systems of Haddonfield and Atlantic City.
Developing Creativity
in Performance and in Teaching

Bertram Greenspan

Some years ago I was in a group of educators who heard their CEO urge them to evaluate their creativity in teaching. This directive was received with an undercurrent of discomfort and derision. The assembly of artists, actors, directors, and musicians hardly needed an administrator to tell them to be creative. One brave soul whispered loudly enough for most to hear, "You either have it or you don’t.” Another muttered, “You can’t teach it.”

Therefore, it was with considerable apprehension that I consented to an invitation to submit an article about “creativity.” I wondered who would read this article. Don’t most people (particularly those with education) believe that they are creative? Can it be taught? And, what is it?

After much introspection, I realized that my life has been consumed with concerns about creativity. Consumed? Haunted or plagued might be a more accurate description of my experience. Is this hyperbole? No! My entire education has stressed the supposition that the greatest professional shortcoming is to bore other people.

Imagination must somehow be harnessed to skill and knowledge to engage and sustain other people’s interest. It follows
that creativity consists of doing something extraordinary, something beyond the usual. It can result in something tangible, such as a picture or a musical composition. It can be a method of working. It can result in a solution to a problem. Perhaps a combination of all these statements gives us a workable definition: Creativity is solving a problem (or problems) in an unusually special manner. This is fairly close to a dictionary definition: “Creativity is artistic or intellectual inventiveness.” (Webster’s, Simon and Schuster)

How does one go about “being creative”? The very thought can be intimidating! In fact, I have seen people who are asked to be creative become overwhelmed. They become inhibited and even more prosaic and ordinary. I have had to create workable methods of developing creativity in others as well as within myself. My plan for this paper will be first to discuss some problems in developing creativity in performance. This will be followed by a brief discussion of creativity in teaching.

As a performer, my first goal is to gain total control of my skills and to have complete knowledge and understanding of the musical score. The creative aspects of my work only materialize fully through learning to control my mind and physical motions. Philosophers have succinctly summarized the process: Discipline is necessary to attain freedom.

It follows that one of the main problems results when one becomes so preoccupied with discipline that creativity is totally stifled. But how does one learn to be creative with little or with limited discipline?

Before dealing with this question, I should state my belief that the creative goals for a performer are as follows:

1. to engage the listener’s attention, 2. to maintain the listener’s interest, and, 3. to achieve the above through accurately rendering the composer’s intentions as one understands them.

This includes rendering the music in the correct style for the historical period and creating something of beauty from the standpoint of tone, tempo, articulation, and dynamics.
The teacher’s concerns are the same as one and two above, while guiding the student to greater knowledge, thinking ability, and communication skills. Business people engaged in advertising and marketing have related goals, as do individuals in many other occupations.

Regarding the problem of being creative with limited discipline, I believe that an artist can and must be creative with one note, one line, one color, or one word. In music, the variables of intonation, timbre or quality, intensity or volume, attack and release, and vibrato or lack of it create a variety of possibilities. When we add together 10, 12, or 16 notes and create a phrase, the creative possibilities increase significantly. Which note is most important? Should the phrase increase in intensity or diminish? Which of the above variables shall we use to attain our goal? As each variable is a continuum of possibilities, the range of choices is immense.

If one were to diagram a series of possibilities for a note of two-counts’ duration in a slow tempo (whole note = 60), it might appear as follows:

![Diagram of musical possibilities]

(The vertical lines represent beats. Each bar represents a note. The height increases or diminishes with intensity of dynamics. Each of the variables mentioned above can be diagrammed similarly.)

An instrumental student of modest ability and confidence can be encouraged to experiment with one note. The ultimate choice the student makes will determine the shape of adjacent notes. With sufficient reinforcement and encour-
agement, the student will be able to take risks and discover his or her own creativity.

Regardless of a person’s level of development, an artistic or intellectual problem can be simplified. It can be reduced to its lowest common denominator. One can study the tree before studying the forest. If the tree is too complicated, a leaf or a root can be considered. Then, like a builder, the individual can assemble the pieces and build the concept.

In summary, I recommend that an individual simplify and isolate elements of the whole, develop creative expression in each element, combine elements gradually until unity is achieved, and develop creativity simultaneously with the development of skill.

Someone may comment that a lifetime is not long enough for all of that. Fortunately, knowledge is transferable. Patience in developing expressive qualities in one note will be rewarded by improvement in thousands of subsequent notes.

One of my most vivid memories of a learning experience is a violin lesson with Daniel Guilet, a virtuoso French artist. We spent close to one hour studying one phrase of music. The performance length of this phrase was approximately ten seconds. My execution was repeatedly of insufficient interest to him. We explored the variables. After I had improved the execution of the phrase, he began to shout, as I was performing, “Créez! Créez! Créez!” Each command to “create” became more intense and menacing. His subsequent comments gradually clarified his message: “Abandon your inhibitions! Take risks! Risk making mistakes! Risk exaggeration! Create something of beauty!”

The lesson learned from this experience was frightening.

Acquiring the requisite knowledge and discipline to perform the task is insufficient. One must have the courage to harness the discipline to the excitement of one’s imagination and creative spirit. One must risk unveiling the ruminations of the psyche.

The methodology revealed in the above anecdote is simple. Provide some information or choices and ask a question.
Each individual, presented with choices, has the ability to enlist his or her own imagination to make a creative decision.

Another important lesson learned from Guilet was that the high points must be chosen carefully. If everything is intense, no particular aspect is unique. Something must be unusual. The entire structure must prepare the special moments.

Regarding educational methodology, I will state my conviction that teaching a class is, in many respects, a performance. If the students are bored, concentration is lost, and the climate for learning is diminished.

My introduction to a music class often proceeds as follows. The students are asked to listen carefully to a brief presentation; in a few minutes, they will be required to write a paragraph for evaluation. The prospect of evaluation engages their attention. The material I present for five to ten minutes is often a summary of material recently assigned. I then provide a question to be answered in one paragraph. In some instances, I follow that by reading some answers to the class, without identifying the writers.

These answers engender class discussion and provide a transition to further lecture, question, and discussion. If someone provides an unusually creative answer, I praise the writer enthusiastically.

Frequently, my opening presentation consists of reading a paragraph from a recent newspaper or magazine. Occasionally, a television or radio program provides engaging material. The object is to maintain the students' interest by relating the subject matter to issues of current interest.

During the 1991–92 academic year, the Clarence Thomas and Anita Hill hearings provided ample material for a Humanities class discussion of the writings of Virginia Woolf and others. The question of sexual harassment was just one of the issues. The problem of how to determine truth, or whether it is possible to determine truth, consumed students' discussion.
The Gulf War provided a basis for comparing Saddam Hussein's actions to the recommendations of Machiavelli in *The Prince*. The class evaluated newspaper reports of President Bush's statements and actions in relation to ideas expressed in Machiavelli and in Sophocles' *Antigone*.

Antigone's agony over Creon's edict that her brother could not be buried was related to Imelda Marcos' attempts to have her husband buried in the Philippines. The location of Lenin's tomb near the Kremlin and reports that his body might be moved provided interesting questions about Nigerian rituals and beliefs of the Ibo tribe in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*.

In music classes, the opening three-to-five minute presentation is often the recorded performance of an assigned composition. The ensuing discussion reveals to the instructor—and most importantly to the students—a variety of perception levels. It is one thing for the instructor to say, "You should have heard this instrument or that motive." It is quite another matter when students realize that their peers are perceiving things that were missed entirely by themselves.

If the students are challenged for a response to an imaginative question, they might provide creative answers. For example, the standard question for listening analysis is, "Who wrote this? Substantiate your answer." A more imaginative approach might be to ask, "Why might this have been written by Schumann rather than Beethoven?" Or, "Which one of the following two works was written in the eighteenth century?" Or, "Why could this composition not have been written by Mozart?"

Occasionally a student will perceive a creative relationship between motives, a section of the structure, and so on. These special contributions of creative individuals must be strongly encouraged and praised in private as well as in class. The negative influence of philistine bullies and their whispered sarcasms must be diminished at every opportunity!

Seriously, the creative thinker often has social problems. To be creative means to risk being different from the group.
Being creative, the student might develop solutions or perceptions that even supersede those of the instructor! May we all have the insight and self-confidence to praise such individuals!

In conclusion, challenging the students’ perceptions and ability to think at the very outset of class engages their attention. Setting the stage for students to communicate through written or oral responses sustains their attention and can elicit creative responses. Breaking the class period into varied segments can help also to sustain interest. Hopefully, these activities will motivate students to prepare adequately for the challenges of the next class.
About the Author

Daniel Chard is a South Jersey native, spending most of his life in Gloucester and Salem Counties. His formal education included the University of South Dakota (B.F.A.) and Teacher’s College, Columbia University (Ed.D.). After teaching in the Pitman and Cherry Hill public schools, he joined the Rowan faculty in 1968.

Arts Language: Another Way of Thinking

Daniel Chard

"I don’t know much about art, but I know what I like.” Although overused, such a comment remains a handle for art talk. This statement also reveals much about how we approach art criticism. It is something of a confession that criticism is about likes and dislikes. But personal likes and dislikes, however real and strongly felt, get in the way of new experience and the development of aesthetic sensibilities. Aesthetic experience can be aided by knowing there is no relationship between our likes and quality in art. We can dislike a painting, for example, and decide that it is a good painting. Further, all of the following propositions are plausible (Ecker and Kaelin 258):

- It is a good painting and I like it.
- It is a bad painting and I like it.
- It is a good painting and I don’t like it.
- It is a bad painting and I don’t like it.

Thoughtful criticism can determine aesthetic merit independent of our likes and dislikes. Further, thoughtful criticism can increase the quality of our experience with art.
Rather than dwell on our established likes and dislikes, we should experience the art: encounter it, see new things, see things differently, and experience connections to other art forms and ideas. With art language, experience is the result of perceptual dynamics. These dynamics produce psychological energy (to the prepared spectator) through relationships of color, shape, line, and tone in space. These dynamics are explained largely by Gestalt psychology. Perceptual dynamics produce the phenomena that are avenues to the larger aesthetic meanings. Perceptual dynamics can tug, pull, and twist our sensibilities and bring art to life—much as it was experienced in another time.

Experiencing art requires an encounter with the phenomena in the art. We need to be as open to these phenomena as we are open to phenomena in nature. Further, we should understand that a perceptual language (as in the visual arts and music) is not a contrived language as is written language; with written language, there is no connection between the visual symbols (letters and words) and the things represented. In perceptual languages, our feelings are directly tapped by color, shapes, and sounds. To understand perceptual language, we may consider a fundamental difference that would appear in comparing an illustration of an apple with the word apple. The illustration is a visual analogy of an apple; the word apple has no connection in sound or shape to an apple. We have learned to connect the shape of the word and the sound of the word with an apple to the extent that we may have difficulty separating the word from the thing. This simple example doesn’t begin to reveal the complexity of the language of the perceptual arts. The language of the arts is based on our elaborate spatial skills, sensitivities, and the nature of media. Meaning is evoked through the use of perceptual dynamics. Knowledge still plays an important role, but the fundamentals of the language are presented as perceptual dynamics.

The spectator’s expectations for realism are often an obstacle to the perceptual language and the larger meanings.
We expect what we see in a painting to match our visual knowledge of the world around us. This knowledge is reinforced by our long and continuous exposure to photographic imagery. Realist imagery by itself is craft, technology, and science, but not art. Linear perspective and light and shadow as part of illusionism are only tools that may or may not lead to the aesthetic.

Written language has an enormous impact on our orientation to language. When the expectations for written language are transferred to an encounter with a painting, the expectation is literal realism. The well educated often have trouble getting beyond a literal interpretation of the visual arts. With this orientation, the fine arts are seen as mere illustration, and, as a result, twentieth century art is largely inaccessible. The kind of "left-brain learning" that has been valued in education encourages neither the experimental behavior, divergent thinking, or perceptual skills necessary to experience the phenomena of art. Further, the emphasis on "left-brain learning" produces little understanding or appreciation of the role spontaneous behavior can play in accessing our unconscious feelings and thoughts.

It is creative behavior that people outside the arts have difficulty understanding. Many people see art as something "thought up." Indeed, some art is thought up. But the rich and durable imagery that comes to stand for the most basic human feelings is the consequence of creative behavior. This imagery is unique because the perceptual arts are unique in their potential to tap the unconscious. Little understood is the manner in which people learn to behave or perform through these perceptual languages. Through facility with a medium, creative artists can access the deepest and most profound meanings in artistic expression. This is perhaps best demonstrated in jazz.

The imagery of the perceptual art forms is dynamic and comes to life for the prepared spectator, much as it was alive and dynamic for the artist. Dynamic art forms provide and sustain connectedness to our past and what we share with
other people in other times. Ideas are not merely described in the visual arts, but they are presented in perceptually dynamic phenomena, existing in their own form. They exist as cornerstones for civilization. Herein is the justification for a phenomenological approach to art experience. The meaning and the spirit of the past exist for us as phenomena in historic art forms. It is the appropriate starting point for the proper orientation and appreciation of a perceptual language. Moreover, this concern is at the core of arts education—another language and another way of thinking.

A Phenomenological Approach to Art Criticism

Art criticism can be thought of simply as talk about art. Just as writing can clarify thinking, so art criticism can clarify art experience. In each case, there is need for careful thought. Thoughtful application of art criticism to a painting can help us see the individual piece of art, as well as improve the quality of future art experience. The process of criticism can help us see more.

Anything can be given our aesthetic attention. What we see in art experience is determined by what we are ready to see. Do we open our eyes for the confirmation of what we know or the exploration of something new? Of course, we are somewhere in between. Aesthetic experience is in the mind; aesthetic forms are directed to perception and thought. Edward Bullough helped identify what we call aesthetic in his example of a fog at sea. The fog presents a very real danger and produces great anxiety as we watch and listen for “distance and unlocalized signals.” The ship movements and “her warning calls” take a toll on the passengers. For all the danger, however, the fog “can be a source of intense relish and enjoyment.” We may from moment to moment slip into a frame of mind where we consider the phenomena as a “veil surrounding you with an opaqueness as of transparent milk, blurring the outline of things and distorting their shapes into weird grotesqueness.” Bullough continues with his example: “the curious creamy smoothness of the water, hypo-
critically denying as it were any suggestion of danger; and above all, the strange solitude and remoteness from the world, as only can be found on the highest mountain tops.” These are the characteristics of the phenomena that lift us beyond the practical world into the world of the aesthetic. Bullough describes this transformation as a moment “when our practical interest snaps like a wire from sheer over-tension, and we watch the consummation of some impending catastrophe with the marveling unconcern of a mere spectator” (Vivas and Krieger 640–41).

Natural phenomena in the practical world seem to take us more easily into an aesthetic orientation. A breathtaking vista can easily lead us to consider and reflect on the world around us. Snow-capped mountains and starry nights have a scale about them that forces us to reconsider our very existence. Art forms, however, are more tangible and finite; they cannot compete—nor should they compete—with the scale and the forces of nature. Art language is a language that speaks to the mind through concept and myth; artists do not seek to replicate nature in art form. The artist uses imagery from the world around us to articulate larger meanings.

Art forms speak to us through the perceptual dynamics of the medium. These dynamics are complex. One example would appear in the dynamic of gravity as applied to a painting on a wall; placing the same painting flat on the floor will reveal a loss of gravity. We expect to see gravity at work when we look around us, but not when we look down:
Another example of perceptual dynamics is revealed in the tendency to read imagery from left to right. A diagonal line between bottom left and top right will appear to be ascending, while a diagonal line between top left and bottom right will appear to be descending:

This illustration proves that we read imagery from left to right. Further, a set of vertical lines leaning to the left will appear more dynamic than lines leaning to the right because they oppose the left-to-right tendency. The following illustrations show the influence of picture plane dynamics on imagery:

These are only slight examples of the broad and complex language that is fundamental to aesthetic experience in the visual arts. Rudolf Arnheim has written about the elements of this language in *Art and Visual Perception*. We need not be knowledgeable about the underlying theories to experience the dynamics in the art. The experience is more valuable than the theories.

The Criticism Pyramid (shown on the next page) makes the criticism process more concrete by dividing the process into five discrete levels. It emphasizes engaging with the phenomena.

In criticism we tend to move from the top down, beginning with our likes and dislikes (Personal Preference). We might say, for example, “I don’t like it (Personal Prefer-
ence); it isn’t a good painting (Judgment), because the use of color doesn’t work, and the medium is not under control (Theory),” etc. This top-down approach does not give the phenomena of the painting a chance. The early engagement with likes and judgment derailed the opportunity for a new experience. Rather than the top-down approach, the process of criticism should begin with what is seen, not with a reflection of the spectator’s predisposition. Our predisposition always directs our aesthetic experience; it is not easy for us to acknowledge and identify the way it directs and shapes what we see and how we see. Even the most prepared spectator has points of view that reflect past experience, knowledge, personality, and beliefs. But if the painting is to have half a chance, we must spend some time looking and exploring rather than simply recognizing and classifying. Once a painting is recognized for its style, its use of content and use of media, it can be too quickly pigeonholed rather than appreciated. Criticism should move bottom-up on the pyramid rather than top-down.

We may begin by opening our attitude to the experience as though we have followed a mountain trail, through a narrow passageway that opens into a breathtaking vista. Approaching a painting as we may approach nature can make art experience an adventure. Early in the encounter, we may take inventory of what we see. The shapes, the colors, the space, the patterns—we can take inventory of all the visual features. Counter to the previous top-down approach, we could begin our criticism by listing our observations. In this bottom-up approach we must emphasize the Qualitative
Description and the words used to characterize the phenomena. We will apply the Criticism Pyramid in considering "Fallen Tree," the painting which appears at the end of this article.

Quantitative Description (Taking inventory of the obvious features and characteristics) The painting is a horizontal landscape, 30" x 48", of water, rocks, logs, and some foliage. The medium is acrylic on canvas. The image is realistic but not photographic (this may not be apparent in the reproduction). The surface occasionally contains individual brush strokes. The image is mostly foreground to middleground. A background can be seen, but it has little contrast. Shadows and reflections are apparent. An obvious feature is a log that divides the painting horizontally.

Qualitative Description (Identifying the phenomena of the painting and its parts) The painting presents a strong illusion of space. The stream runs toward us from the top middle of the painting, under the log, and off the left side and bottom of the painting. At times the horizontal log would appear set in front of the canvas, available for us to pick out of the painting; but this log has the strength of architecture as it is secure and locked into its position to the frame. Moreover, the strength of this horizontal has a buoyancy, lifting the log slightly upward in the picture frame. This contrasts with the movement and flow of the stream through and off the bottom of the painting. The image appears tightly structured to the flat picture plane and then becomes instantly three-dimensional, moving toward us and tipping away from us.

Theory (Explaining the art) The painting is highly structured as the horizontal log follows the rectangle's middle. Covering the top half of the painting will reveal the flatness of the bottom half of the painting. The section of a log in the bottom right corner, while realistic, contributes to flat-
ness. The illusion of space is in part the result of the shadow and reflection of the major horizontal log, but, most important, the result of a square shape laid in perspective, defined by the two horizontal logs, a third log pointing toward us through the bottom of the bush, and the water's edge on the left. On the two-dimensional picture plane, this shape exists as a parallelogram. The illusion of volume becomes dramatic because it is clear yet equivocal as it flips back and forth between the two-dimensional parallelogram and the three-dimensional square in perspective (a and b below):

![Diagram A](image1.png)  ![Diagram B](image2.png)

The coexistence of such mutually exclusive phenomena is a major feature in aesthetic form. For no matter the explanation, the phenomena remain beyond our comprehension; they only exist in our experience.

**Judgment** (Considering the descriptions and theories to draw conclusions about the merit of the art) Readers may decide for themselves about this painting.

The explanation above is not the experience; it is a reconsideration of the experience. The phenomena may not appear that remarkable to the reader. Further, it takes time to develop one's sensitivity to this language. Working with others helps provide the opportunity to test our observations. The phenomena of the painting, as revealed in the qualitative description, can be a shared conclusion about the work. There is much room for creativity in finding the word or
phrase that best characterizes what is being experienced. Phenomenological criticism does not require the spectator to be knowledgeable about the work; the observations and criticism can begin at any level of sophistication. However, after a work of art is carefully considered, there are normally many questions about the work. These questions should be pursued before the next encounter. The observations and theories of other people can further shape and develop what we experience. There should be a give and take between our observations and our informed education. This activity will support our theoretical considerations and our ability to deal with our judgment.

The phenomenological approach to criticism makes art much more accessible. It doesn't mean we should like or feel comfortable with all art forms. It does mean that we will have a better chance to appreciate the established consensus on quality represented by museums and galleries. Further, a phenomenological approach to art criticism gives us a tool to appreciate and understand the visual forms of various cultures.

Works Cited
Don't Mind the Handwriting

Richard Ambacher

John Ciardi often said he did it because he couldn’t kick cats.

Ernest Hemingway often spoke of wanting to write one true sentence.

Rita Mae Brown says she doesn’t know why she does it but never imagined doing anything else.

The reasons for being a creative writer or exercising one’s imagination vary. But from a psychological point of view, the act of writing is similar for all. It imposes great demands upon writers to reach for essential truths. And when what has been written falls short, writers will often tear up their manuscripts in frustration. It’s almost as if a religious censor had camped on their shoulders during the creative act and threatened eternal damnation if they didn’t tell the truth about the humanity they discovered about people while writing.

When I was young, I once asked a writer with thirty years of writing experience if the act of writing got any easier the more you did it.

He thought for a moment, then replied with a sigh, “No, but I cross out faster.”
Why was he crossing out? Initially, we think of crossing out as a matter of editing, a kind of technical change. However, when we go past garden variety correction for spelling and grammar errors, what are we crossing out in the act of creativity? T. S. Eliot hinted at it when in the middle of The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock he states: ‘That is not it at all, / That is not what I meant at all.’

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How do you sculpt a horse? The apocryphal answer attributed to Michelangelo and every sculptor since is, “Take a block of wood (granite, marble, clay) and chisel away everything that isn’t a horse.” The answer suggests an eidetic imagery cauterized within the artist’s brain as a kind of template from which the sculpture is modeled.

The creative writer works in an opposite manner. The paper (now perhaps a metaphor for a video screen) starts blank. The writer’s task is to fill the page with words that will bring the reader to the same mental image the writer started with. Or if not that precise mental image, then one that creates the same kind of feeling and emotional context. Writers speak of the moment of discovery they hope their readers will make while reading their works. Writers, during their moments of creativity, frequently encounter that same kind of discovery. The act of discovering keeps the process of writing alive for both writer and reader.

Most of the discoveries writers make deal with aspects of being human or, more precisely, defining what it is that comprises humanity for them and their characters. One of the most moving stories I’ve read was written by Michael Stephens. It is about a bag lady who lives a kind of zombie existence for no apparent reason. As the author peels the onion that is a person’s character, his story shows how the death of the woman’s only son in the boxing ring sent her into the free fall that turned her into a bag lady. He was boxing to earn enough money to improve the quality of her life.
Stephens told me he wrote the story to find out why she was a bag lady in the first place. He felt compelled to know. Reading the story, we feel the same compulsion.

It seems the discovery of the humanity of each of us lies behind the act of creative writing. Whenever I've written well, I can point to a moment when my characters did something surprising to me, something I hadn't anticipated or planned. In breaking free from my control, the humanity of my characters asserted itself. From then on, my crossing out was focused only on the essential question of whether or not the characters were being true to their own humanity. Good writers do not censor at this point; they're too imbued with the discovery of human perspective to care what it reveals about themselves. Authors may delay their revelation until they have it right, but they rarely destroy their characters. It's only a dying Eugene O'Neill—who knows he will never get it right because he's running out of time—who will destroy manuscripts.

The stories about O'Neill's last days of writing are hauntingly similar. He would enter his office early each day, spend the morning writing, and emerge, his eyes filled with tears, around half past noon each day. What truths he was creating were obviously disturbing, but their insistence to be heard struck him in a particularly compelling way. *Long Day's Journey into Night* has proven equally compelling for audiences ever since. Other plays in O'Neill's planned sequence about the history of that Irish immigrant family he didn't get right and destroyed.

After a disastrous opening of one of Tennessee Williams' plays, he threatened to quit writing forever. "Forever" lasted a week because he too found compulsive reasons for returning to his typewriter to explore humanity. His explorations produced *The Glass Menagerie, A Streetcar Named Desire, Cat on a Hat Tin Roof*, and other great plays. Fortunately, the failure of *A Battle of Angels* didn't end his writing career.

...
When I was in third grade, I told my family I was going to write a novel about the German battleship *Bismarck* that had just been sunk off the coast of Argentina. When I showed them the first pages of this masterpiece, several family critics were encouraging. My grandmother, however, was disdainful about the quality of my handwriting and told me I would have to use better handwriting if I ever hoped to get published. Even then I looked at her askance. Didn’t she understand that handwriting has nothing to do with it? Thirty years later, I wrote a poem about her dying in which I discovered that she still didn’t understand what it takes to be a writer, but that her understanding wasn’t really essential.

On the other hand, I don’t want to suggest that creative writers are so special that they are to be revered simply because they write. If anything, writers would be more likely to say theirs is a compulsion they find unable to shake. If they don’t write, they feel guilty. If they don’t write well and honestly, they feel as if they’ve betrayed a trust. But nowhere will you discover a precise moment when a person is initiated into the role of writer. I don’t even know when it happened for me. I know it was before I wrote a novella in lieu of a book report my sophomore year in high school. But even then, I felt somewhat guilty if I didn’t work at writing on a daily basis.

... 

Perhaps the greatest purgatory for a writer is to be blocked. Writer’s block can lead to dire consequences, such as depression and even suicide; on a daily basis it eats at the writer, creating a tremendous sense of loss. A recent article in *The New York Times Book Review* suggested that Hemingway’s suicide was preordained when he was unable to complete successfully what was posthumously published as *The Garden of Eden*. In it, the young writer is unable to write that second sentence of the day. Hemingway’s description of writer’s block reads with frightening clarity because, Frederick Busch says, it tolls Hemingway’s own death as a writer.
And if one's death as a writer occurs, can life itself last very much longer? For Hemingway, the answer became no. He wrote one further work, *The Old Man and the Sea*, a story about coming to grips with death and old age, and realized that's all there was.

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What makes writers different from non-writers is that writers are more curious. When a hawk circles a field, we can get many messages from the circling. We can ignore some of them. We can focus on some. And writers will go from there to a protracted attempt to discover why they would notice that hawk in the first place. Or the screech of a taped voice on an answering machine can lead to other speculations beyond the message of the moment. From such speculations can come a short story, a novel, a play or a poem. Things have a way of working out in an unpredictable way.

In the act of writing, writers often reach a self-hypnotic state in which the reality they are creating looms more real than anything experienced before. The people and situations are more vivid, and the so-called real world recedes past the boundary of awareness. In this state, combinations of visions synthesize into new visions, new realities. At the end of the writing period, hours have passed without notice. But the meta-reality of the writing lingers.

The sensations of taste and touch and smell, the experience of sound and sight, the welling up of the psychological whole combine to produce an awareness writers are able to write about. They cross out when the writing falls short of the truth of that transcendence. They struggle until they get it right in the writing. They stop the struggle and the writing when the transcendence or the correct words continually elude them.

Ultimately, like compulsive gamblers who frequent the crooked game, writers know they're hooked on the need for action. Whether rigged against them or not, writing remains
the only game in town. If they can't get the action, they'd rather not settle for something else.

***

Writers aim at targets. I hit the following targets during some of my writing sessions. They weren't always the ones I was shooting at, but that's another story.

A New Pair of Glasses

The old woman, her legs quivering involuntarily, Sat, lost in the recesses of her chair. Her frail body had withered under the onslaught Of eroding time. Now there was only skin Stretched taut across her jutting bones Without the cushion of flesh.

She smiled. A series of creases criss-crossed Her gaunt face from the effort. Her lone tooth wobbled as she talked, Drifting between past and present As if there were no difference Between the two. Perhaps for her There wasn't. She faced only the wait For the ultimate blending of the two.

She was tied to a chair so she wouldn't fall again. She had fallen once (or was it twice?), victim to a stroke. But she had survived, if living tied to a chair Or to a bed can be a reasonable facsimile Of independence and mobility.

"Time," she said, "time is the hardest part. It goes so slowly." The shadows had lengthened Outside the synthetic sameness Of her air-conditioned hospital room, But she was unaware of the muted hints of night.
"If I could only read..." she mused. "But the print is bum. It
blurs.
I guess I need a new pair of glasses."

For eighty-five years she had been needing things...
For the rest of her life
She would continue to know want.

"A new pair of glasses..." She smiled across
The fading mist of a pleasant memory....
"Oh, we used to have such good times...
Such good times when we were together."
Her grandson, embarrassed by his inadequacy
To bridge the widening gap between generations,
Nodded his agreement, trying desperately
To recall one of those good times,
Grasping for one memory that held an emotion
That would elevate their relationship above
Perfunctory duty. His mind was as vacant as hers.

"Have you ever married?" "Oh, yes."
"I had forgotten. Have I ever met your wife?" "Yes, many
times."

She smiled again, embarrassed by her age
And all the failures that it presented
As she adjusted her hospital gown
Across her flabby legs.

"It's hard to be modest here."
He nodded to her, trying to reassure her
That modesty was not expected, but failed
To convey the essence of his message.

The nurse came and lifted her back to bed,
Tying her down to the rails at the side.

"Is there anything you need?" he asked.
"No. Only a new pair of glasses. 
If I could have a new pair of glasses, 
I could read. It'd help to pass the time. But the print is bum."

Later that night, during the nether time 
When night blends into dawn, 
She died, convinced a new pair of glasses 
Was the only thing she had to be concerned about.

**Hawk Sestina**

The hawk, sighting death and decay, circled 
Stealthily, high above the vacant field, 
As if tethered. Beneath its ominous 
Shadow animals paused in place, 
Contemplating their potential for life 
Beyond that afternoon of hungry hawk.

The dead deer no longer cared what hawk 
Or others did to his carcass circled 
By dying blood, the last effort of his life. 
The carrion appeal had brought the field 
To life. New scavengers raced to that place, 
Balancing the sky's sense of ominous.

We confuse foreboding and ominous, 
Anticipating evil from the hawk 
Whose instinct brings him soaring to this place. 
The hawk envisioned nothing, but circled 
A delicious meal lying in the field, 
Just knowing this cycle sustains its life.

We humans often mistake the body for life. 
We proscribe death and read an ominous 
Message in this desecration. The field 
Accepts its passive role, hosting the hawk
And the maggot equally. The circled Body knows nothing of this act or place.

In time we will revisit this same place And assign it no special part in life, Only recalling the hawk that circled The dead deer, forgetting the ominous Feeling it engendered today. The hawk Will fly freely and find another field.

But can we freely explore our new field, Ignoring the debasement that takes place In our lives? Will we imitate the hawk And accept the natural part of life? Or will we see shadows of ominous Proportions and find our lives are circled?

When in the field will we recoil from life And try to place the blame on ominous Thoughts of hawk eating the deer it circled?
About the Author

Harold Oliver is Professor of Music Theory and Composition at Rowan College. He has a B.M. from the Peabody Conservatory, an M.M. from the Yale School of Music, and a Ph.D. from Princeton University. He has studied music composition with Mel Powell, Donald Martino, Gunther Schuller, and Milton Babbitt.

He has received fellowships, commissions, and awards from Yale, Princeton, Tanglewood, the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, Meet The Composer, and the American Music Center.

His compositions number over thirty works and have been performed throughout Europe and in the United States. He is published by Margum Music, Carl Fischer, Inc., The ASUC Journal of Musical Scores, Perspectives of New Music, and the Association for the Promotion of New Music.
Some Thoughts on Creativity

Harold Oliver

Creativity can be viewed as an epiphany, an emergence into awareness or perception. Creativity is a subjective, private, personal experience: the conscious manifestation of something that was previously unconscious and thus effectively nonexistent. It cannot be taught. It can be encouraged or discouraged and, possibly, can even be induced.

Although creativity may in some cases result in a "product" that can be perceived and evaluated by others, this materialization in the form of a product is the exception rather than the rule. In any case, creativity should not be confused with productivity or originality. On those few occasions when a "product" that can be shared is the objective result of creativity, this product need not be entirely "original"; indeed, most "creative works" merely replicate other "creative works" in many respects. A truly original product, one that is substantially unique, is a maverick, which may either prove in time to be a monstrosity or, more rarely, be accepted culturally as an environmentally successful adaptation.

Culturally, and within the academic environment, when one speaks about creativity, one is probably referring instead
to productivity, originality, and craftsmanship, or skill. Usually, one is concerned with creativity only insofar as it can be channeled into demonstrable and conventional norms within some "discipline." However, this process of restricting creative thought to utilitarian purposes is inevitably constricting, inhibiting, and destructive to the creative process itself. Also, products that are for some reason preserved within the culture are valued not because of their intrinsic creativity (whatever that may mean) but for other values that relate to the power structure that prevails at any given time or place.

Creativity is a notion that is given superficial attention within our culture. It is frequently referred to and studied from a variety of perspectives as if it were highly valued. Nevertheless, creativity, by its very nature, is subversive and thus at odds with established cultural values. In fact, creativity is, understandably, discouraged, particularly when it occurs in an "unchanneled" or pure form. The encouragement of creativity actually disrupts productivity and can lead to results that are counterproductive or dangerous for the status quo. Thus, much of what is said about creativity is remote from the actual process itself and relates rather to productivity and performance. We are a performance-based and goal-directed society. Creativity obeys different laws: it does not "punch a clock" but is more timeless and universal; it is more involved with incorporating the uncomfortably divergent and unknown into the already known than it is in providing socially convenient results.

People are impressed, superficially, with new gadgets and events, and most of these things can be ingeniously traced to some person with an idea or a perception. However, the actual creative thought is by its very nature abstract; objects arise from the struggle between the original concept and the medium of its expression. There is an enormous distance between the idea and its physical manifestation. The object or product assumes a value for the creator through the interaction between ideas and the materials of the medium in which these ideas are "worked out." In this sense, the object
produced represents a historical record of an internal journey, of the lived experience of the struggle to know and possess something externally that is actually projected from the interior of the creative individual’s soul.

This “meaning” of the object can only partially be shared with others. At most, the others can attempt to project their own internal struggles onto the object and thus recreate it as if it were their own. There can be no objective measure of the degree of correspondence in meaning between that which is experienced initially by the creator and that of the recreators; these meanings are probably quite distinct. When one speaks about creativity and communication, there is reason to believe that what is communicated is entirely different from that in more normal objective discourse, as in, for example, when one says: “Please pass the salt.”
About the Artist

N. Jeane Hartman is an artist and educator committed to excellence in both professions. A dedicated professor of art at Rowan College for twenty-eight years, she holds the B.F.A., B.S. in Ed., M.F.A., and Ed.D. degrees. She is an active participant in several professional organizations, among them the New Jersey Designer Craftsmen, the National Museum of Women in the Arts, and the National Ceramics Educational Council of America.

Her art focuses on clay sculptures of endangered and extinct animals. The echidna (opposite), one of the world's most primitive mammals, is endangered because of human encroachment on its already limited habitat.

Jeane's sculptures have been shown in many regional and national exhibitions, in Texas, the Midwest, and the East. Most recently, her sculptures were included in "The Images of a Vanishing Nature," a juried international exhibit shown throughout the United States and Canada.
Echidna by N. Jeane Hartman
About the Author

Dr. Richard Grupenhoff has taught film production and film history at Rowan College for the past fifteen years. He has written and directed numerous screenplays, documentaries, and industrial films.

In addition, he is the author of the biography The Black Valentino: The Stage and Screen Career of Lorenzo Tucker, and is a nationally recognized historian of independent African-American filmmaking in the United States.

He has recently appeared in a series of poetry performances in San Francisco, sponsored by the Institute of Disemboweled Poetics, of which he is co-founder.
An Open Letter to Jesse Helms

Richard Grupenhoff

Dear Senator Helms:

I can't thank you enough for your attacks these past two years on the funding policies of the National Endowment for the Arts and, by extension, creativity. By making those attacks, you have exercised your right of freedom of expression under the protection of the First Amendment, and I am always pleased when I see people practicing their constitutional rights, even when I disagree with what they have to say.

So even those of us who disagree with your views can be thankful to you for opening up a discussion that has long been needed and is central to the health and vitality of our culture. Art and creativity are topics that have been marginalized for too long, yet you have helped to bring them center stage, so a discourse on them can command the attention it deserves. Our society can only benefit from your work.

The abolition of the NEA is certainly worth considering. I'm not sure myself anymore if the federal government should have anything to say about art, which is far too important to be controlled by politicians and obsequious bureaucrats. Yet
the NEA remains part of our government structure, and, until it is repealed by law, moneys will continue to be disbursed through it, hopefully to a wide variety of artists with a wide variety of themes.

Discussing the life of the NEA is one thing, but blocking the distribution of tax funds for artistic enterprises on moral grounds is quite another thing altogether, because what you are really attacking is the freedom to express creative ideas and thoughts, particularly those that are at odds with your beliefs and values. But free expression of creative moments is essential to the health of our society. The suppression of creativity, of feelings and desires that struggle to be voiced, leads to self-doubt, depression, anger, social discontent, and cultural schizophrenia.

Free artistic expression does not erode the values of our culture; censorship does. Feelings are as important as ideas, and emotions as important as reason. The truly healthy psyche is the one in which emotion and intellect are blended in a symbiotic relationship. Unfortunately, for a long time our culture has denied emotion in favor of reason, feelings in favor of logic—so much so that we continue to deny ourselves the full integration of individual personalities that could make our culture flower.

You might dismiss my ideas as idealistic or nonsensical. Yet I, like you, have the right to express them, if only to offer them as alternatives to the bleak and colorless world your position dooms us to.

But there's something more insidious here. What is at stake when you attack the merit of Mapplethorpe's photographs, or Serrano's "Piss Christ," or Holly Hughes' performance art is far more than a minor issue of taste and morality. What you really seem to want is a public trial and testimony of how it is our society is to view things, how we are—and are not—supposed to express ourselves and, ultimately, how we are supposed to think.

Freedom of expression in an open society implies the freedom to think and to express any thought that comes to
Thoughts and ideas are the essence of our humanity. Each person's thoughts are as important as any other person's thoughts. To impose one's thoughts on others or to deny the expression of thoughts is simply intellectual and self-righteous chauvinism.

Thoughts and ideas are the raw material of an individual's personality, and, as such, they are sacred. To deny a person the forum or occasion to express his or her own creative impulses, therefore, is to commit an obscenity far greater than any creative act could express. Until we understand this, we understand nothing.

Not that what you are attempting to do is anything new. History is replete with examples of censorship. At the college where I teach, there are annual attempts by those in power to stifle students' creative work, especially that which appears in student publications. Certainly some of that work is crude and unpolished, but the students, to their credit, most often resist pressure to conform to more "acceptable" standards of taste, and continue to practice their creative urges.

As I see it, my role as a teacher is to encourage and permit my students to explore and express the full range of their personalities in an open atmosphere where no ideas are censored, even if—or especially if—I don't agree with them. Only then will students have the opportunity to achieve their potential and lead full lives and be productive citizens.

I teach my filmmaking students that in the realm of the creative imagination there are no rules. Yet, while there are no rules, there is no chaos; rather, there is a kind of controlled anarchy where all is permissible, and where all is essential to the spirit of the creative act. I tell them also that art happens when what were once only vague feelings become the conscious expressions of choice and will. Dreams, hopes, desires, fears, frustrations, and emotions are the wellspring of creativity. The emotions engage the raw materials of experience on an unconscious level at first, and through the imagination they are combined and tested in a series of
unrestricted mental calculations governed by the cool logic of intuition. When the process is completed, the creative solution presents itself to the artist's consciousness and says, "Here I am." This vision is what is known as inspiration.

And this vision, this moment of inspiration, is as sacred as any other moment you can name. It springs from the private contemplation of the individual mind and therefore has an ethic all its own. The ethic is unassailable and unbending in the face of the "truth" of those who would seek to curtail it. All art is a testament to its strength.

So do what you will, Senator, but what we do with our creative thoughts is no business of yours, even though you might like to think so. You may be successful in dismantling the National Endowment for the Arts, but tomorrow there will be another Mapplethorpe, another Serrano to contest your pathology of emptiness, substituting instead vivid desires, creative willing, and decisive action.

Throughout America today there are people who are not practicing artists and do not submit grant proposals to the NEA. Nevertheless, they lead very creative lives—creative in the ways they build and furnish their homes, in the ways they prepare their food, in the ways they dress, in the ways they express themselves in conversation. In short, there are many out there who exercise daily creative options. Their urges to create manifest themselves in choices taken by individuals to construct meaning out of daily existence in a search for self-realization and self-fulfillment. Your position, Senator, works to erode their gains. We urge you to support all the creative people of our society. Anything less is un-American.

Best wishes,

Richard Grupenhoff
Associate Professor
On Creativity

Shooting a film is organizing a universe....

— Ingmar Bergman

Life is as the sea, art a ship in which man conquers life’s crushing formlessness, reducing it to a course, a series of swells, tides and wind currents inscribed on a chart.

— Ralph Ellison

The only technique worth having is the technique you invent yourself.

— Jean Cocteau

Works of art are indeed always products of having been in danger, of having gone to the very end in an experience, to where man can go no further.

— Rainer Maria Rilke

One Power alone makes a Poet: Imagination, the Divine Vision.

— William Blake

There is no royal path to good writing; and such paths as exist do not lead through neat critical gardens,... but through the jungles of self, the world, and of craft.

— Jessamyn West
Joseph Bierman received his B.A. in Communications from Rowan College of New Jersey and his M.F.A. in Film and Video from the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University.

He currently serves as the adviser to Cinema Workshop and has taught courses ranging from introductory film to Advanced Film Production. His research interests include Russian film theory and history, and theories of film narration.

His own films derive from interests in history and literature. Distant Drums, his Civil War drama, has aired on Public Television in Philadelphia. Currently, his adaptation of Edgar Allan Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart" is making the rounds at film festivals across the country.
The Education of a Student Filmmaker

Joseph Bierman

There are various approaches to designing a curriculum for would-be filmmakers. Technical institutes and some colleges train students to operate a camera, read a light meter, and splice film stock. But strictly technical training does not foster creativity in the art of filmmaking—or even mastery of technique. The kind of education we must aspire to provide for student filmmakers emphasizes the close connection between their study of film and of the liberal arts.

Many college film courses that emphasize technology risk having students develop a myopic view of course content. Much of the technical training with equipment and techniques is specific to the particular field, consequently encouraging students to view the course as vocation-oriented only. While many undergraduates may perceive their education as strictly career preparation, the teacher must provide a balance between such training and a broader liberal arts education. If the teacher’s goal is to ensure that an Advanced Film production course fits within the general context of a liberal arts education, he or she must first come to some understanding of what “liberal arts” means and how it will affect teaching, course design, and student creativity.
Students do not take a film production course with the intention of developing critical thinking skills; they come for many other reasons. For example, the students may perceive themselves as the next young filmmakers to appear on the cover of *Premiere* magazine. The average film student is very aware of the industry and views a production course as the first step towards working in the industry. However, the student’s steady intellectual diet of *Entertainment Tonight* and *American Film* gets in the way of the teacher’s attempts to present the material in a less vocational manner. Many students bring to class a wealth of naive questions, including such gems as, “How do I become a Hollywood director?”

The straightforward answer is that one becomes a Hollywood director by spending many years struggling at the margins of the industry. As preparation, most successful Hollywood directors have some sort of college degree, and many times it is in the liberal arts. Having corrected the students’ misinformed notions, the teacher can now renew their interest in film through a liberal arts perspective.

The first principle I establish in my Advanced Filmmaking class is the primacy of understanding the technological aspects of film production. Many are the critics and cinema studies writers whose theories have been ambushed by a lack of basic production knowledge. My students’ introduction to technology stresses the role machines play in film production. Students learn about a camera, not because they wish to become camera operators, but because it is the basic tool of filmmaking. But this is only the start of a filmmaker’s education.

The development of the motion picture camera can also be studied from a historical perspective. Students are introduced to new technologies based upon prior technologies. For example, my students learn that motion picture photography is based upon still photography and that still camera design can be traced back to the ideas of Leonardo Da Vinci. Introducing new equipment or techniques with short history lessons about their development presents students with a
historical perspective that illustrates the transmission of knowledge as an ongoing process.

And presenting knowledge as process leads to a discussion of science and the scientific method. Understanding cinematography requires a detailed knowledge of the basic principles of light and chemistry. The learning process here is similar to the basic methods used by scientists in many fields. For instance, just as students would in a science course, my students design an experiment to determine the limitations of a film stock under certain lighting conditions. They perform the experiment, analyze the data, and then draw conclusions. The students produce a two-page paper detailing the shoot, the data collected, and the conclusions supported by that data. In this instance, the students are adapting the scientific method in service of the art of filmmaking.

The link between science and art is further developed when students are presented with the essay "Some Thoughts on My Profession" by Nestor Almendros, the cinematographer of many well known films, such as Kramer vs. Kramer, Sophie's Choice, and Billy Bathgate. In the essay, Almendros presents a strong case for the tie between technical and artistic development. Just as the development of packaging paint in tubes allowed Impressionist painters greater mobility (they could take their paints into the field and were no longer tied to the studio), new developments in film technology offer filmmakers greater and more creative choices.

Almendros also worked on many of the films of the late French director François Truffaut. The students are shown The Wild Child, a film based on an eighteenth-century doctor's diary account of attempts to work with a child found living wild in rural France. Truffaut wished to present an accurate image of the world two hundred years ago; to duplicate the lighting of that time, the filmmakers limited their on-screen lighting sources to sunlight or candles. The minimal available light for the shoot presented a challenge, which Almendros solved by experimenting with available film stocks. After the screening, I ask my students to draw on their own
film stock experiments and the Almendros essay to discuss how the tools of production influenced *The Wild Child*.

Discussions of this type form the basis of writing assignments. Although Advanced Filmmaking is a production course, I strongly emphasize student writing. As a final project, students produce a short film and are asked to write a paper analyzing the production. This paper and the film are given equal weight in the final grade. The students learn that the ability to write about their film experience is equal to the filmmaking experience itself.

In stressing the connection between filmmaking and the liberal arts, the instructor has other important choices to make. For example, the selection of the textbook can set the tone for the class. For Advanced Filmmaking, Tom McDonough’s *Light Years: Confessions of a Cinematographer*, a collection of short essays, is my book of choice. The jacket blurb says, “*Light Years* is ‘about’ cinematography the way *The Old Man and the Sea* is ‘about’ fishing.” One essay in the collection concerns the personality traits of camera operators. Another essay is a piece of travel writing about the challenge of documentary production in India. There is a humorous piece on taking a union camera test. These essays include references to F. Scott Fitzgerald, Winslow Homer, and the Zapruder film. McDonough expects his readers to be familiar with *Moby Dick*, the Industrial Revolution, and John McCormack’s rendition of “Danny Boy.” The author presents filmmaking as an activity related to the larger world. This relationship is the subject of both McDonough’s book and Advanced Filmmaking.

Film is a twentieth-century art made possible by developments in science and machinery. Of course, any understanding of film must begin with the study of technology; however, technology does not develop in a vacuum, nor should it be taught in one. Advanced Filmmaking at Rowan College stresses the tools of production while encouraging students to explore film’s connection with the larger world of history, science, and art. By providing this broad perspective, Ad-
Advanced Filmmaking fits well within the context of a liberal arts education.
About This Book

We composed this book on a Macintosh II, A Mac LC, a PowerBook, and any number of Mac Classics, SEs, and Pluses.

We used Claris MacWrite, Microsoft Word, Adobe TypeAlign and TypeManager, and Aldus PageMaker. The text faces are Janson Text and Janson Text Italic. The cover face is ITC Garamond. The dingbats are Zapf Dingbats. All the faces are from Adobe.

We printed proofs and page-readies on an Apple Laserwriter IINT.

Joy Printing of Cherry Hill, New Jersey, printed and bound the finished copies.