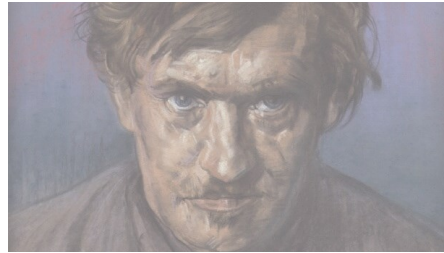


The only way to fully and entirely, without a stitch of hypocrisy accept reality in entirety is through the imagination. -Austin Osman Spare



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Writing: Becoming Oneself



What does it mean to be literate? The answer is quite simple: reading, writing, and arithmetic. At least the answer seems that easy. One glance into the current curriculums in our schools, across the country, throws a question-mark at the “simplicity” of becoming literate. Yet, with all things there is a conversation between belief and doubt, even in context of learning. I would like to take a moment to explore and chisel away some of the complexity with the intention of granting courage to those who read this, and return literacy to an earlier simpler time.

In the October issue of *Athenaeum* we explored and deconstructed reading and “what it is?” The conclusion was that reading teaches us how to listen and that listening teaches us how to be understanding of others. I thought next to explore writing. What is writing and what does it teach us? Often I return to a thought that I had when I first stepped into the role of literacy, had put my winged hat on and looked around at our schools, the students that came to literacy, and some of the frustrations I heard in the dark.

It wasn’t long ago I had a gentleman come over to my house. I was having trouble with my car. He popped the hood and asked me to try and crank it. It just clicked. “One more time he said... your alternators gone bad.” It was at that moment I realized that this gentleman was reading the mechanics of the car. Did it matter if he could read poetry? I guess if he wished to one day choose that vocation. Later, he returned and replaced the alternator with a set of tools. It dawned on me at that moment that he was writing with tools. Liberal arts education often focuses on the importance of certain disciplines more than others with the intention of “filling” certain vocations.

With this context, reading and writing, two-sides of one currency, has many applications. It would also be true that “writing” is extremely important to the development and mastery of any craft that one has chosen as their vocation. Just as reading teaches us how to be understanding of others, writing teaches us how to help others, in society, in our communities. Writing, though as defined earlier.

Many of the students that come through the doors of literacy, I have discovered, are intimidated and discouraged. I set to get them prepared for whatever is necessary to their development as humans and in the workforce, but first emphasis is placed upon “How do you read? How do you write? What do you read? What do you write?” It is from this foundation that we begin to explore creatively how to move forward with their self-becoming. You see, it’s just that, writing is a becoming of oneself. A learning how to write what one reads in themselves.

An Etymological Exploration of Math



The concept of mathematics has always been of extreme interest to me. What is mathematics. We use math, but again let us simplify, or explore math, and see what we find. A cursory Wikipedia search says this about mathematics, “(from Greek μάθημα, “knowledge, study, learning), later including the study of such topics as quantity, structure, space, and change. Mathematicians seek and use patterns to formulate new conjectures; they resolve the truth or falsity of conjectures by mathematical proof. When mathematical structures are good models of real phenomena, then mathematical reasoning can provide insight or predictions about the nature of things. Through the use of abstraction and logic, mathematics developed from counting, calculation, measurement, to the systematic study of the shapes then on to the motions of physical objects. Practical mathematics has been a human activity from as far back as written records exist. The research required to solve mathematical problems can take years or even centuries of sustained inquiry.”

With the context that math means “to study,” many questions arise. Most of these questions are a matter of whether there should be ethics set in place as to what we apply mathematics to: Psychology? Biology? Sociology? Art? Literature? Maybe, do we apply mathematics to mathematics. Even before we invoke mathematics, shouldn't we first ask why, or what, we are even looking for? What is the goal of mathematical analysis? How far should we dig? What means should we use? To what end are we applying math to accomplish the said goal? Is there a better method than math? Math amounts to finding a lowest common denominator. At times it seems that mathematizing reality has literally organized hell into time. I concluded, after many years of contemplation, that everything has an inherent beauty, beauty is the lowest common denominator. Math would then serve the purpose of meaning, rather than quantifying. Literacy is reading, writing, and arithmetic? Maybe in reality it is reading, writing, and something else. I'm uncertain what math is. Does it serve any purpose at all? Guess I answered one question, we should mathematize math.

me

us

you.