A Creative Education for the Day After Tomorrow

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Introduction

In this paper I consider the claims representatives of the “creativity movement” make in regards to change and the future. This will particularly focus on the role that the arts are supposed to play in responding to industrial imperatives for the 21st century. I argue that the compressed vision of the future (and past) offered by creativity experts succumbs to the nihilism so often described by Nietzsche. In the second part of the paper I draw on Stanley Cavell’s chapter ‘Philosophy the Day After Tomorrow’ (from a book with the same name) to consider a future oriented arts education that may not fall victim to nihilism.

Creativity and change

When the topic of “change” has come up in the various educational contexts I have inhabited over the past 14 years, conversations have tended to feature a number of claims or assumptions. There is the notion that, as a group, teachers are resistant to change (Humes, 2013, p. 35) and that this resistance is largely related to inflexibility and lack of imagination whereas a small number of teachers (usually young ones) are not so stuck in their ways. As part of this discourse “change” is seen as coterminous with progress and “why” the change in question should be perceived as progress is rarely, if ever, discussed. If it is discussed then this sometimes involves the invocation of a discourse that goes hand in hand with the aspirations of the “creativity” movement.

It is necessary to be a “bit” cautious when alluding to a “creativity movement” as some writers distinguish between different “rhetorics” of creativity (Banaji and Burn, 2006). Though there are tensions between some of these “rhetorics” a number of them are brought together in what some educationalists refer to as a “creativity movement”. Troman, Jeffrey and Ragi maintain that the origins of this movement derive from (1) progressive philosophies; (2) the influence and realisation of many parts of the new “knowledge industries” whereby “the creativity of the worker is new resource of labour power to be tapped for increased performance and prosperity in the 21st century” and (3) the rise in the part played by the arts in policy, partly legitimised by the forward–looking industrial imperatives” (Troman, Jeffrey and Ragi, 2008).

To give an example of what this trinity might look like, let me describe a session given by a creativity “expert” (or guru?) at a course I attended last year. This two day event involved bringing together artists and teachers from local schools to develop creative projects that would help children to become more resilient. The expert showed a video of a project he had been involved in. In the video children, working in groups, had gone to a station to record the noises they heard there. They worked in teams to generate poems using onomatopoeic renderings of those noises. I asked the expert what he felt the purpose of this project was. He maintained that its principle value lay in the students’ experience of working in teams, building self-esteem and the things they did with ICT to present their poems – “soft” and software skills. Artists and teachers would work together to produce projects that would help to boost such skills. I think it is fairly clear that the activities (in a rather shallow way) mirror those associated with “current” versions of progressive pedagogy – group work, project work etc. Such a pedagogy is taken to be coterminous with transferable skills
for the 21st century. Artists are therefore seen as co-facilitators in helping children to develop such skills as it will make them “resilient”.

Creativity and the future

As regards “change” it is interesting to see how creativity experts talk about the future. In Creativity and Education Futures learning in a digital age, Anna Craft distinguishes between “probable education futures”, preferred education futures and “possible education futures” (Craft 2011, 29-32). Detectable trends include: “...increases in uncertainty, change, cultural diversity, environmental challenge, digital engagement, population growth, economic challenge...” (29). In contrast a focus on: “...preferred education futures takes us into a less predictive and more emancipatory place of critical values which, together with informed critique-oriented ethical and political debate, leads to proposals for alternative education futures” (31). Craft has little to say about “preferred futures”. It would appear that affirming values about what the future should be like is inefficient and difficult, though what is desirable (emancipation of some sort) is taken for granted.

How might education systems prepare students for this constantly changing future where values are an unaffordable luxury? At a recent conference I was present at a session on creativity and divergent thinking. The speaker had conducted a piece of research with Primary school students in which they were given various foodstuffs to create a salad. Those students who put pineapple with lettuce were deemed to be more creative. When it was put to the speaker that this was disgusting rather than creative she said that it wasn’t creative enough and that “they should have put biscuits in the salad”. In a piece of research conducted last year with my colleague John I’Anson we interviewed teachers at a local school engaged in an interdisciplinary project on “wilderness”. When we asked students and staff to account for the purposes and appeal of various activities the only responses related to enjoyment and the fact that it wasn’t what was normally done in history, geography etc. – that it “diverged” from what is usually done.

Creativity and nihilism

This discourse of “newness” is inherently nihilistic in the sense discussed by Nietzsche. The lack of real goals and purposes lets nihilism in. This is due to: “the formulation of value as the opposite of its opposite that Nietzsche—again—saw as the core of nihilism. What do we stand for? We are no longer sure: only that it is not what others represent. We are the reds, which means that we are definitely not the blues” (Blake et al., xii). If there is no overriding aim intrinsic to what we do, “success and failure, efficiency or inefficiency, are the only imaginable goals. To succeed is not to fail and vice versa. This is nihilism” (ibid). If the only value in my interdisciplinary
creative project is that it is “not” like what I normally do in geography then this is nihilism. If being different is all there is then why not put biscuits in the salad?

Nihilism is also central to the creativity discourse which pictures ongoing situation from the past into the future where creativity was/is about nothing much than a growing intensification for the need to be flexible and different. Through our creativity and constant innovations, we reach out ahead of ourselves generating the panic that can only be quelled by our becoming flexible and relishing those therapeutic pleasures which creativity provides. It seems that creativity both poisons society and provides the antidote that allows for survival. A creative society is like a snake that bites its own tail and then kisses it better. The forces at work here are those of desperation, ressentiment, feeling turned back on itself.

When Nietzsche talks about “the man of tomorrow and the day after tomorrow”, that “man” finds himself “in contradiction to his today” (Nietzsche, 1966, section 212). Craft and other creativity experts such as Ken Robinson tend to present themselves as the representatives of the people of tomorrow. At a superficial level this can appear to be the case. After all, they demonstrate how moribund tendencies of school culture (with its emphasis on testing etc.) are when looked at through the lens of a social imaginary that requires creative productivity. However, both present visions of the future that picture education as an ongoing response to a perpetual “now”. This marries with a compressed understanding of history. In accordance with the “creative” zeitgeist, just as tomorrow will be mostly like today it appears to be the case that yesterday wasn’t all that different either. A few years ago, Cambridge University entered its 800th year. As I walked along Hills Road, a giant poster displayed the words “The University of Cambridge, 800 years of innovation”. We are transported back to a time when the founders of Cambridge University maximised their potential through engagement in all manner of creative synergies whilst operationalising creative collaborations and constructing innovative networking processes. Craft and Robinson seems to buy into this compressed understanding of history where people were always “innovating” and always will be. The only difference is that things have intensified due to increasingly rapid change.

The art of change

As mentioned earlier, the third focus of the creativity movement is “the rise in the part played by the arts in policy, partly legitimated by the forward-looking industrial imperatives” (Troman, Jeffrey and Ragi, 2008). What continues to perplex me as regards the current treatment of art in educational circles is why art and artists are seen as the practitioners/instruments for meeting the needs of the 21st century economy. Why are artists seen as a good “resource” for facilitating the emergence of innovative executives or entrepreneurs? It may be because many artists are themselves entrepreneurs living off their wits and responding to a continually shifting set of economic circumstances. However, any study of statistics pertaining to artists’ earnings will suggest that, on the whole, they are not particularly good entrepreneurs. We could speculate further and consider whether artists may contribute to the development of aforementioned progressive pedagogies. This seems pretty unlikely given that “the field of art is (perhaps together with that of sport and athletics) one of the few domains where teachers ‘of the old style’ are still allowed to impose harsh forms of discipline on their students” (Vlieghe, 2013, p. 1.). Perhaps then artists are
thought to be exemplary creative figures. This might make more sense if the current advocates of creativity in education were less quick to insist that people in all domains, academic or otherwise, are creative (though most people are apparently “small ‘c’ creatives”). Moreover, it is unclear (assuming one accepts such categories) whether artists are big “C” or small “c” creatives. Why would you get big “C”s to help children to become better small “c”s? None of these questions are answered or even broached in the literature I have encountered.

**Education for the day after tomorrow**

In this paper I want to consider the possibilities of teaching for creativity that cannot be captured in either small or big “C” terms. The “call” for such a project comes from Stanley Cavell’s chapter ‘Philosophy the day after tomorrow’ (Cavell, 2005) in a book by the same name. Interestingly, and significantly, Cavell does not begin the chapter with Nietzsche despite the fact that the latter’s “man of tomorrow and the day after tomorrow” is the inspiration for its title. Rather, it begins with Wittgenstein (before Nietzsche historically”) who “meets” Nietzsche and then Emerson a third of the way through. The twentieth century and Hollywood comedies of remarriage are then introduced to the conversation before they speak to their precursors at the beginning of the 19th century - Jane Austen’s heroines. This feeds through into a discussion of George Eliot who was more or less Nietzsche’s contemporary. Such a chronology of introductions is obviously “untimely” in the sense that it is not linear. As we shall see, it is untimely in another sense too.

**Wittgenstein**

Given that Cavell’s first untimely figure (as regards the sequence in the chapter) is Wittgenstein let us begin with his role in Cavell’s project. Cavell considers a fragment he takes to epitomise Wittgenstein’s views on teaching and learning: “If I have exhausted the justifications [for following the rules of mathematics or of ordinary language as I do] I have reached bedrock and my spade is turned. Then I am inclined to say, “This is simply what I do”” (Wittgenstein in Cavell, 2005, p. 112). Cavell maintains that the reading of this scene has achieved consensus in the United States (see Kripke, 1982) where the teacher’s gesture is taken to be a display of power. Reaching bedrock is a political gesture a “speaking for the community and its settlements, demanding agreement, threatening exclusion” (Cavell, 2005, p. 113). In direct contrast, Cavell views this scene as a display of weakness that may serve to enlighten the teacher. In other words, Cavell focuses on the affective, perhaps literary, aspects of this scene (which he calls a phantasm). He focuses on the fact that Wittgenstein rather than saying “This is simply what I do” is “inclined” to say it and this means that the words are never actually said. Instead we have a moment of silence (p. 112). For Cavell, this sort of impasse is integral to the Investigations where “philosophy comes to an end 693 times” and would presumably start up again infinitely (ibid).

For Cavell, good philosophers (and good teachers) know when to be silent and when to break that silence (p.114). Philosophy (and teaching) should therefore be about knowing when something is worth saying and when it is not. But how should what is worth saying be decided? It is decided in a kind of confrontation (which may or may not be fractious) between teacher and student. This way philosophy (and the same can
be said for teaching) will not speak into the void with an impersonal metaphysical voice. Rather philosophy/teaching will be oriented towards the other and what “interests” her. However, the notion of what “interests” us has quite an unusual inflection in Cavell’s outlook. “Interest” here is bound up with things mattering in ways that cannot be reduced to instrumental or abstract/metaphysical factors. So things do not “matter” in Cavell’s sense “just” because they are useful or true. Rather, they matter because we care about them. It is not as though truth was something we would want to dismiss, but rather that something being true should connect to our ordinary concerns. Those concerns cannot be with truth alone if it is abstracted from our immediate cares and desires. Consequently, “if it is part of teaching to undertake to validate these measures of interest, then it would be quite as if teaching must, as it were, undertake to show a reason for speaking at all” (Cavell, p. 2005, p. 115) In this sense, good teaching has a therapeutic aspect in that it shows itself as “a struggle against melancholy, against being overtaken by pointlessness” (p. 116).

Wittgenstein and Nietzsche

It is at this point that Cavell introduces Nietzsche to the discussion. Cavell feels that Nietzsche is haunted by the prospect of speaking pointlessly as the latter writes: “One should speak only where one must not be silent...Everything else is chatter”. Moreover, Cavell does not say as much but Nietzsche seems to be suggesting that speech (that is not “chatter”) comes about when we are addressed by a kind of “calling”, when we must not be silent. The voice that responds to this call will transfigure things. It will be futural and will not harmonise with a perpetual now. The words will be uttered and “heard” by the men “for tomorrow and the day after tomorrow”. To return to a quotation included earlier, in Beyond Good and Evil the man of tomorrow is linked to the philosopher for that “extraordinary furtherer of man...has always found himself, and had to find himself in contradiction to his today” (Nietzsche, 1966, section 212). Cavell italicises “had” to indicate the lack of choice here, a calling that cannot be refused.

Let us pause for a moment and consider what all this has to say to concerns pertaining to creativity, the arts and education. There is so much noise in the discussion surrounding creativity yet it can seem so meaningless. If you listen to one of Robinson’s talks on YouTube he spends at least half of it telling jokes or offers the sort of bland definitions of creativity that could mean everything and nothing. As mentioned above, any sort of well-conceived justification for including the arts in an education for the creative 21st century is missing. In an attack on the organisation Creative Scotland Don Patterson calls creativity the “c” word. For those not acquainted with the “c” word it is arguably the most offensive word in the English language. This is because, if taken literally, it is an insult where the target is being compared to female genitalia. It is one of those words that should never be said. For Patterson, creativity is just such a word: “I have yet to meet one single serious artist who does not privately hold the word “creative” in anything but contempt. While artists self-evidently are ‘creative’, they don’t regard themselves as such, because they know self-consciousness is the death of art; this is why Creative Scotland sounds like a country thoroughly uncertain if it is” (Paterson, 2012, p. 34). It is interesting that Paterson notes artists’ “private” disdain for the word “creativity” as this of course implies that, in the current climate, they cannot make this public. One might think here of
Nietzsche’s claim that he has been heard “most poorly in his own country”. Nietzsche could afford to speak up. Struggling artists, if they wish to survive, cannot – they must speak for their time when they dare not speak against it. Paterson’s point is Nietzschean on several levels. The kind of self-consciousness that threatens Nietzsche’s philosophy is clearly echoed by Paterson’s claims about art. Moreover, the desperate lack of self-confidence that he identifies in the seeming need to trumpet Scotland’s creativity sounds so like Nietzsche’s discussion of ressentiment.

On a more positive (though not necessarily cheery) note, the vision of the teacher presented by Cavell/Wittgenstein is interesting. So much of the literature on creative teaching or learning has the teacher play a facilitating role as children set about problem solving. In contrast Cavell’s (and Wittgenstein’s) teacher is constantly open to problems dissolving before reappearing transfigured after periods of silence. Here, objectives cannot be ticked off and just as things seem to move forward we are pulled back again as they are transfigured. Receptiveness to this happening allows for creative (assuming one can still use the word) “translations” (see Saito and Standish, 2009, for a fuller discussion of Cavell and translation).

For Nietzsche, Cavell and Wittgenstein, the creative (which is not a word used by any of them) way to address the vicissitudes of speech and silence discussed by Paterson is to populate their texts with characters who present provocations of one sort or another. Cavell demonstrates how the invention of imaginary others (or variants and phantasms of oneself) is central to what the Investigations is trying to achieve. He notes the “considerable set of stories” (Cavell, 2005, p. 115) where things are worked and reworked. Cavell turns to his own relationship with Wittgenstein to offer another parable of sorts where Wittgenstein goes for a stroll with him and proceeds “unobjectionably to stroll with us around the garden but soon turns around and walks backward, or perhaps starts twirling on point every other step, or begins taking a step only every two seconds, always insisting, in response to our questioning, that he is doing the same thing, namely, strolling with us”. I take Cavell’s move here to echo Nietzsche’s attention to “figurative language and thinking” (Hicks and Rosenberg 2003, p. 4). Nietzsche maintained that the Ancient Greeks revealed “the profound mysteries of their views…to those with insight, not admittedly via concepts, but through the penetratingly vivid figures of their gods”. What does this mean, and why is a kind of figurative thinking privileged over the conceptual? It is because: “we understand figures directly: all such [figurative forms] forms (Formen) speak to us [immediately, intuitively]” (ibid). Though the philosopher will always come along to interpret these figures and introduce a conceptual element into the picture, this will be outstripped by the figurative:

….the implication is that figurative thinking (Bilderdenken) is already “out there” ahead of what we can currently formulate conceptually and discursively in the prevailing philosophical language available to us. The poetic and literary figures outstrip, in some sense, what can be stated (at the present time) propositionally; and subsequent philosophical reflection on the figures and what they embody generates new concepts and propositions that, in turn, are outstripped by new and more innovative figures. (ibid)
Such figures are therefore “untimely” because they are ambiguous, disconcerting and are not dogmatic. They run ahead of us and “integrate comic art and knowledge into a form that will make life tolerable again” (ibid.). The persona adopted by the late comedian Bill Hicks (who died at the age of 33) might be an example of such an untimely figure. Hicks would appear on stage through a ring of fire, dressed all in black, to the sound of ‘Purple Haze’ by Jimi Hendrix. In one routine Hicks provides a “solution” to the “problem” of the terminally ill. He argues that they should be used as extras in action movies. Hicks is well aware that the notion of using the terminally ill as stuntmen will offend the audience’s sense of public decency but he is running ahead of them. His aim is to put them off guard, on the defensive, before hitting them with the powerful moment in the routine, the moment when they reflect on what actually happens to the terminally ill and how this seems so acceptable: “Oh God Bill, terminally ill stuntpeople? That’s terribly cruel.’ You know what I think cruel is? Leaving your loved ones to die in a sterile hospital room surrounded by strangers. Fuck that. Put ‘em in the movies” (Hicks 2005, 162). Hicks offer a way of reimagining the moral life by unsettling it in its timeliness. The primacy of expression here trumps any attempt at a formal argument. In this sense we are given an education into possibilities of thinking differently about the nature of our times.

The kind of figurative thinking championed by Nietzsche and exhibited by Cavell demonstrates a role for the arts, most specifically literature (and perhaps comedy), to the development of a creative moral education. This is because such figures can present the sort of encounters that “open up spaces for alternative human possibilities” (Hicks and Rosenberg 2003, p. 4). They do this for one another within texts and they do it for us when we encounter or rub up against them. Cavell often compares the force of such literary meetings with the somewhat arid or abstract moral problems that sometimes feature in moral philosophy and moral education. I think here of a lecture given by Michael Sandel that was televised on BBC 4. It involves quite a familiar story about a runaway train and a fat man on a bridge. Utilitarians would push him off. Kantians would not. Unless we are extremely unlucky, such situations are set at a remove from our usual moral dilemmas. It is this remove and sense of “language going on holiday” from our ordinary troubles, concerns, desires etc. that can seem so problematic. On the other hand, literature, (or at least good literature) “touches” our everyday concerns – there is a metonymic connection between the moral life there and our own.

Nietzsche, Austen and Eliot

Sadly there is no space in this paper to try and interpret or translate Cavell’s discussion of the Hollywood “comedies of remarriage”. It is perhaps enough to say that Cavell finds their precursor in the novels of Jane Austen. Cavell knows that bringing together Nietzsche’s “garish emotionality with, to take the plainer case, Jane Austen’s narrators’ renowned sense of containment” may seem somewhat shocking (Cavell, p.124). However, he feels that “the spiritual distress registered in Nietzsche, and characteristic of his writing, is not inaccurate to something to be felt in Jane Austen’s prose. You might say that her prose seeks incessantly to minimize (hence maintain) the expression of distress in everyday existence no less drastically than
Nietzsche seeks to maximise it” (ibid.). The first untimely figure (if one discounts Austen herself) is Emma. Here is Cavell/Austen:

When I read on the opening page of Jane Austen’s Emma that its heroine ‘seemed to unite some of the best blessings of existence” (she is said to be handsome, clever, rich, young), and that “it was on the wedding-day of [her]beloved friend [namely, her governess of sixteen years, said to be her friend and her sister as well as the replacement for the loss of her mother] that Emma first sat in mournful thought of any continuance,” I find that I am unsure whether this meditation means that she is vexed not to have her friend to continue their happy mode of existence; or whether it suggests that she is so grief-stricken that she cannot imagine wanting her existence to continue;… (ibid.)

Cavell finds this scene interesting because it demands a kind of moral imaginativeness on the part of the reader. To what extent should we take Emma seriously? Should we see her behaviour as the mark of immaturity or something darker? This may not be an either/or question. Why not take it, as Cavell does, as both? He goes on to imagine just what it is that is at stake in losing such a partner in a universe in which the kind of relationship that Emma has with her governess is so difficult to find and where the likelihood for living such a rich meaningful life is so slim. Instead Emma is left with her father “but he was no companion for her. He could not meet her in conversation, rational or playful”. Cavell notes that “the very capacity for rational and playful conversation proves to have its own form of isolation, or say alienation, and to produce its own aspiration for encounter and , let us say, for transcendence of the present state of things” (ibid). Worse still, “to have this capacity unmet bespeaks a danger of loneliness not unsuggestive of madness” (ibid). Such a situation for women in Jane Austen’s world was more a likelihood than a simple danger.

Though Jane Austen and her heroines are undoubtedly untimely figures for their own time can they still speak to us now? After all, “most” women in the “western” world are not subject to the kinds of deprivation that threatened Jane Austen and her contemporaries. Cavell addresses this issue in the final pages of the chapter asking: “So haven’t these historical everyday become impertinent to our modern, or postmodern, achievements? Or is their impertinence part of our achievements?” As, is so common with Cavell, there is so much to hear in this. The choice of impertinence is part of a sentence in which a “possible” lack of pertinence is conjoined with the sense of rudeness; the rude force, so subtle in Jane Austen’s novels, may no longer affect us. Yet who is the “us” in all this? We might wonder when we consider Cavell’s oblique answer to the question of impertinence. In a sense he does not answer it (as though his spade, for reasons related to impertinence, may be turned). At least “he” does not attempt to answer on his own. Instead the conch is passed through time to George Eliot. Cavell takes on Eliot’s “perception of her era (allowing it to be open how far it differs from ours) as already constituting, at least for women (allowing it to be open how far their fate differs from the rest of us), the scene of a great separation” (p. 130). Cavell points out that Eliot begins and ends Middlemarch with the penetratingly vivid figure of Saint Theresa whose epic life is contrasted with a modern world in which “many Theresas have been born who found for themselves no epic life…perhaps only a life of mistakes, the offspring of a certain spiritual
grandeur ill-matched with the meanness of opportunity”. Cavell then brings Eliot into conversation with Nietzsche, a conversation that presumably never happened (though perhaps could have happened given they were contemporaries) where Nietzsche writes “The best in us has perhaps been inherited from the feelings of former times, feelings which today can hardly be approached on direct paths; the sun has already set, but our life’s sky shines with it still, although we no longer see it” (Nietzsche, 1986, section 223). Cavell gives Eliot the last word announcing that her project was to become the heroine of everyday life in which “we insignificant people with our daily words and acts are preparing the lives of many Dorotheas [the heroine of Middlemarch], “whose unhistoric, hidden acts “the growing good of the world is partly dependent on” (ibid.)

Offering an interpretation of what I have just presented (standing back from it in a way Cavell does not) seems almost impertinent. Though he does not say as much, I think that the impertinence which Cavell is dealing with concerns speaking on behalf of women in regards to the impertinence/irrelevance of Jane Austen or George Eliot to a creative form of moral education for today. However, he is, it appears, taking a stand in regards to what both offer in relation to Nietzsche’s work. The idea seems to be that Nietzsche may be less the man of tomorrow than he thinks he is – talk of tomorrow is more about an imaginary yesterday and the “man” of tomorrow is presented as mythic. It seems that what Cavell (and we) can see that Nietzsche cannot, is that Austen and Eliot may provide something more substantial in regard to a creative future that is rooted in the ordinary. Nietzsche could not see that possibility, yet he shared the times of Eliot and followed those of Austen. He could not see that a better “man” for tomorrow might be a woman. Perhaps if he had seen that then the desperate predictions about the river of nihilism may not have been so absolute.

Returning again to the question of impertinence of Austen or Eliot as regards the greater freedom of (most western) women, are we to see that as something counter to nihilism? I think so. Cavell, by refusing to answer the question of impertinence, leaves open the idea that things have not changed enough. He does, however, point to something that he had failed to notice in his early readings of Austen, namely the “elation of her novel’s conclusions” where, for example, Emma finds a companion who can offer the sort of vital life that she craves. He had ignored such achievements as he had been distracted by the silliness and the stupidity that the heroines had to overcome in themselves (Cavell, 126). Such achievements mark what will be, at least, a temporary overcoming of nihilism.

Bringing Austen, Eliot and Nietzsche together in the way that Cavell does adds a political dimension to Cavell’s literary form of moral education. There is a sense in which the work of these two great novelists overcomes the man for the day after tomorrow (overman?). This is done through a refusal of a mythic past (and its relative purities) and the championing of ordinary grubby exchanges that offer the faint promise of perfection. In terms of schooling, the literary handling of ordinary lives presents itself as a more potent political force than, say attempting to produce “responsible citizens” through the normal channels of citizenship education. It does this because it comes from (and still touches) the ground. An educational turn from abstractions towards the arts may mean that the political and moral dimensions of our lives are bound to our everyday “improvisations in the disorders of desire”. This is not about trying to produce artists (though this may be one result) and it is nothing as timid and shrinking as
visions of small “c” creativity or as instrumental as “lifewide creativity” (which describes the application of creativity to the breadth of contexts in everyday life and sees it as a fundamental attribute to enable adaptation and response in a fast changing world (Craft 2005, 113-114). Rather it is epic and ordinary, heroic and brown.

Conclusion

In this paper I have tried to make a case for an approach to “creativity” and education that embraces “change” but has nothing whatsoever to do with the notion of change advanced by representatives of the creativity movement. Perhaps using the words “change” and “creativity” is inappropriate and brings the argument closer to nihilism than might be desirable. Perhaps “translation” (a word that Cavell sometimes uses) and “overcoming” would be better. However, as I have tried to show, we cannot but be close to nihilism and our words are always haunted by the possibility that they may become meaningless. Using the arts as a mechanism for untimely translations would, I think, tip over that edge and that is not what is being advocated here. Such translations or transformations are integral to good literature and good art. That said the school teacher’s (artists and philosophers have also been shown to be teachers) role is still important in an economy of speech and silence. If literature is to connect to passionate and expressive aspects of the moral life then the teacher has a role to play here too.

References

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