**Coming to Terms With Creativity**

[Name of Writer]

[Name of Institution]

Analyzing texts and comparing their relative takes on creativity originates from the idea that it would assist in developing a better understanding of said texts. Therefore, in order to create a subjective viewpoint that does justice to the analyzed texts, we have to attempt some form of rewriting the idea that formed the written work we are trying to interpret. This idea that a rewriting is a means of subjective analysis has been borrowed from the works of Joseph Harris. His essay, ‘Coming to Terms’ brings the concept of understanding a text and reproducing its essence as you understand it. This is the most insightful and well-crafted idea on creativity that this essay presents.

The perspective of a reader defines what a certain passage will mean for them. Written word, as all art, cannot claim to be objective. There is bias to it leeching from the mind of its author and there is an altogether different partiality that initiates in the minds of its readers. In order to properly understand the subjective standpoint that our own minds might have occupied during reading a passage, we need to do a deeper analysis of said passage. Harris agrees that for clearly defining a stance on a text, it is impertinent that the reader writes it again. In writing about the text, the reader understands their own prejudices regarding the text. The reader also holds the creative powers during this process of re-writing and is hence capable of representing some of the inherent bias originally present in the writer’s viewpoint. There are, however, certain ways to rewriting texts that Harris approves. Academic writing must be treated as a ‘conversation that began long before we got there’ (Harris) and analyzing written work should be done keeping that in mind.

However, there is another side to the analysis of texts that needs to be considered. Although it is understandable that a reader adds their own uniquely tilted ideas to the understanding of a text, there are certain limits to how ‘generous’ a reader has to be with the original aims and objectives of the author. This essay makes the creativity of the reader subservient to that of the author. Starting with an example of how a man wanted to replicate Quixote from memory and linking it with how rewriting helps us understand text, Harris has inadvertently established that the meaning we obtain from a text has to be deferential. The reader’s understanding should serve the original concept behind the creation of the written work and must be submissive to its ‘aims’. This concept suppresses the creativity of the reader and suffocates the critical thinking that must be employed in order to appropriately analyze a text. (Cottrell)

Another text, however, gives plentiful advice on how to go about the process of igniting a creative spark in our minds which would inspire us to produce unique ideas of our own. ‘Where do Good Ideas Come From?’ by Steven Johnson is a study on where to look when we need prompts for good ideas. This text also had insightful suggestions regarding creativity. One of the most refreshing takes in this text is the juxtaposition of raw creativity with a simple reproduction of the author’s ideas that Joseph Harris praised. This text has several credible advices on how to carry out the process of searching for and locating motivation to eventually create a written piece of art. One of the most persuasive ideas in this text was the claim that ideas do not come from within but rather originate from and represent our surroundings and our experiences. A recombination of already existing ideas and practices is what potentially creates something new. (Mueller) Knowledge and content cannot be suddenly created out of thin air. The process that eventually leads to the innovation needed to be creative involves shaking up knowledge that already exists into new shapes and forms. Needs and demands of a certain era also define the innovation that happens in that certain era. Even a child creating art in the form of drawings confirms this hypothesis by taking motivation directly from their surroundings or past experiences. (Rose)

The only aspect of this text that creates confusion and unrest in the mind of the reader is how easily the whole text dismisses the innate talent for art and creativity which gives general ideas the unique touch of that artist. Although it is logical that ideas may originate from experiences, but a considerable chunk of that process depends on the innate ability of a person to comprehend the inspiration that their experiences might be giving them. Ideas can be external or learned but creativity is not. Art and a creative soul can be present in everyone yet the specific tinge of the same creativity that is innately present in one person cannot be found in someone else. (Helland) Two people are not likely to derive the same idea from the same surroundings. The text does not discuss this aspect of creativity at length.

The third text brings comparison with this shortcoming that the second text failed to address. This is in relation to the feedback that Pharrell Williams gave after listening to Maggie Rodgers’ song. The essence of his feedback was the authenticity of the song Rodgers played for him. Her own unique touch and her distinct creativity that was evident in the music she produced and the lyrics she wrote was what turned the song into a statement. Pharrell explained her music by claiming that most people adhered to a certain type of music and then went on to rely heavily on that certain type whereas Rodger’s music was her own. It hence creates a powerful statement of exclusive talent. The singularity of someone’s art is what differentiates it from the rest. It clarifies that the creative process is different for everyone. The origin of a range of ideas can therefore be unrelated with the outcome of said ideas since acting upon stimuli depends on unique and greatly specific biological or environmental factors. (Mula) Some have enough creative prowess to be uniquely expressive like Maggie Rodgers while others do not possess that ability.

The downside to this text also comes from the same idea by looking at it from a slightly different perspective. Pharrell, his praise of Rodgers’ music, identifies it as a class apart and a phenomenon that could not be criticized. He said that one could either agree with it or disagree with it. Williams also claimed that the song was unique since it did not adhere to the clear boundaries in creation of music. What this part of the feedback simply ignores is the fact that music has been divided into a myriad of categories to characterize art and not the other way around. Creativity that does not conform must not be placed on a pedestal higher than creativity that simply falls under a specific category of art. Creativity is unique and art is a gift in all its forms and shapes.

There are comparisons between these texts for obtaining creative ideas with the help of reproducing someone else’s ideas and obtaining motivation for creativity from one’s surroundings. Another comparison lies between being completely dependent on the surroundings for creativity with the innate creativity and proclivity for artistic talent.

# References

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