

THE FOUNDRY WORKER AND THE GARDENER

Parents, Teachers and Educators

What Are You???

*Excerpts from the book of P. Ribes, s.j. "Foundry Workers or Gardeners"
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Intent of these jottings

- ✓ To describe two opposite philistines and styles of education
- ✓ To bring to light their strong and weak points.
- ✓ To criticize our educational system.
- ✓ To encourage all educators to be "person-centered" - "pupil-centered"

The Story

Once upon a time, a Foundry Worker and a Gardener with great enthusiasm were sharing about their profession and the beauty of their work.

The Foundry Worker said: "You know I am an artist. First, I draw a beautiful drawing of a child or of a young man or a young woman. Then, painstakingly, I shape a graceful and charming figure of it in stone, in wood or in any other material. After that, I make a mould of the same. Then, using any metal like iron, bronze, silver and even gold, I melt it and then, pouring the melted substance into the mould, I reproduce that beautiful figure hundred times over. My statues are so beautiful, so artistic, so lasting! All of them are equally good. I am really proud of my job.

Of course, I have to follow the rules of the trade; exact measurements, symmetry and proportions. Adherence to the canons of my art is a must. I have to stick to the norms laid down by the best master artists of the past. My job is painstaking and very demanding. Everything has to be foreseen; no improvisations, no mistakes permitted. . No flaws. When my statues conform to the expectations of the art experts, they fetch a high price and are in great demand all over the world.

If you visit the gardens, promenades and boulevards of the most famous cities in the world, you will see there my statues in their splendor. They are so grand. "Ditto" replicas of my master creations! If you see them, you will easily discover in each of them my personal style.

The gardener replied: "My profession is quite different. I am crazy after flowers and seeds; all sorts of flowers. With great care and deep respect I hold the seeds in my hands and with great expectations; I plant them in my garden. I take personal interest to see that each seed grows in its own way, in its own time and to its full potential.

My delight is to see myriads of flowers, all beautiful, charming, exotic and yet each of them unique! Each flower has not, and it has no to have an equal! No, no duplicates wanted! I do not force the seeds into moulds. For the cultivation of the flowers, I do not have to follow to same rules and norms for all. Each flower has to be its own norm. One, I prune; another not; to one, I offer extra manure, to another less; to one I give plenty of water, to another little. I deal with them according to their needs and nature.

In fact, when I plant a seed, I can't tell exactly how it will look or how it will grow. I just help them grow and be themselves! Each seed springs a surprise to me. They are so unpredictable, beautiful, charming and without par. My goal as a gardener is just to let seeds and flowers grow and be what they are to be. No force, no compulsion, no thwarting, no expectations. I give them only love, care, concern, help, support and encouragement. My motto is: "Bloom to the full where are you planted". My aim is: "Each Flower has to be unique, a master piece on its own right, and not a replica of any other flower, however beautiful that flower may be! Each flower has to keep to its own style. I am a gardener; I must let each flower be its own.

REFLECTIONS ONE

Two opposing attitudes.

In the parable of THE FOUNDRY WORKER AND THE GARDENER, we can discover two different attitudes or views in those engaged in any creative occupation and ministry, each assuming a different perspective

Attitude one: The Foundry Worker He is "product centered".

The Foundry Worker is mainly interested - in the product - the final outcome of his work: To produce many beautiful statues, ditto, like the model he has in mind.

Attitude two: The Gardener's Mind. He is "person centered"

The Gardener's attitude. on the contrary, is interested - in- each 'individual flower'" His aim is to grow and cultivate different and unique colored and scented flowers.

REFLECTIONS TWO

Parents, Teachers, Formators, Educators what are you?

The attitudes of the Foundry Worker's and the Gardener can be very well, applied to those engaged in the education, formation and teaching of others, namely Parents at home, Teachers in school, Professors in their colleges, Novice Masters and Mistresses

in their novitiates, Spiritual Fathers and Superiors in the seminaries, Parish Priests in their parishes and so on.

Though, in real life, we may not find pure chemical specimens of those extreme views, - The Foundry worker's and the Gardner's - yet, by the content, and even more, by the methods, followed in their educational efforts educators betray their leanings towards one or the other of those two different views or attitudes.

Keeping this in mind there are two questions staring at us:

Question One: In your Education efforts, dear Parents, Teachers, Formators are you rather "Foundry Workers" or "Gardeners"?

Question Two: What sort of educators do you wish to be?

REFLECTIONS THREE

To help you to decide what sort of educator you want to be – Product Centered or Person Centered – we beg you to consider carefully the three tables below. You may find in them inspiration and motivation for the sort of educator you wish to be!

TABLE ONE

VISUALIZATION OF THE EDUCATIOAL ELEMENTS IN THE TWO DIFFERENT VIEWS ON EDUCATION.

EDUCATIONAL ELEMENTS	FIRST VIEW	SECOND VIEW .
Educator is seen as	A Foundry Worker	A Gardener.
Subjects of Education seen as	Inert Mater.	Alive , Delicate Seeds
Methods of Education seen as	Molding techniques	Loving Cultivation.
Final outcome:	Exact copies of the original	Unique Individuals

TABLE TWO;

METHODS THE FOUNDRY WORKER AND THE GARDENER WILL FOLLOW IN THEIR EDUCATIONAL EFFORTS

FOUNDRY WORKER

GARDENER

<i>Gives lots of</i>	Information.	<i>Imparts</i>	Formation
States	Facts	<i>Searches for</i>	Meaning
<i>Fosters</i>	Memory	<i>Develops</i>	Understanding

<i>Values</i>	Receptivity	<i>Encourages</i>	Invention.
<i>Stands on</i>	Tradition	<i>Encourages</i>	Originality
<i>Breeds</i>	Inflexibility	<i>Stimulates</i>	Flexibility
<i>Encourages</i>	Passivity	<i>Urges</i>	Activity
<i>Demands</i>	Submissiveness	<i>Rewards</i>	Assertiveness
<i>Fosters</i>	Mediocrity	<i>Spurs</i>	Excellence
<i>Encourages</i>	Dullness	<i>Excites</i>	Curiosity
<i>Expects</i>	Blind Acceptance	<i>Expects</i>	Questioning
<i>Thrives on</i>	Conventionalism	<i>Fosters</i>	Creativity
<i>Fosters</i>	Fear to Change.	<i>Loves</i>	Novelty
<i>Breeds</i>	Lack of reflection	<i>Demands</i>	Reflection
<i>Wants</i>	Mute Acquiescence	<i>Thrives on</i>	Criticism
<i>Causes</i>	Boredom	<i>Creates</i>	Enthusiasm
<i>Is satisfied with</i>	Indifference	<i>Sparks</i>	Wonder
	Abides by the “status quo”		Challenges the :”status quo”

TABLE THREE

WHAT SORT OF PERSONS THE FOUNDRY WORKER AND THE GARDENER EDUCATOR ARE LIKELY TO TURN OUT
(In a caricature style)

FOUNDRY WORKER

GARDENER

Blinker Wearing Persons	Clear Vision People
Walking Computers	Rational Thinking Persons.
Two Dimensional Beings	Three Dimensional Beings
Faceless & Anonymous Persons.	Persons with a Face and & a Name
Carbon Copies	Originals
Sheep	Shepherds
One of the Crowd	Individuals
Conformists	Reformers
Door Mats	Assertive Persons
Dull & Uninteresting People	Enthusiasts

Brainwashed people	Independent Thinkers
Never Doubting	Self-assured
Walking Corpses	Fully Human & Fully Alive
Stunted Personalities.	Ever Growing
Yes Persons	Questioning Individuals
Oppressed and Oppressors	Liberated & Liberators
Remote Controlled Puppets	Self-controlled
Motionless People.	Self-propelled People
Bundles of Biases & Prejudices	Persons of Clear, Uncluttered Vision
Prisoners of Unexamined Assumptions.	People of Realistic Goals
Scripted Robots.	Freed From Crippling Scripts.
One Tract People	Multi-tract Persons.