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Good Writing

By Tushar Jain

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by: **Tushar Jain**

Good writing is like sex. Two people are involved - the writer and the reader. Bad sex usually satisfies only one person, most preferably, the writer - the person who leads. Good sex not only satisfies both people, it pleases them. So, like sex, writing must have all vital points that reach unto this pleasure - movement, foreplay, sensitivity, rhythm and climax. When a writer carefully and logically includes all these aspects, the reader is pleased, satiated and gratified, but when a writer ignores them, the reader feels that the writer is impotent and he abandons him after that one night. Good writing is about making a person desire to read.

It is essential to understand that those writers who write for themselves may possibly be never published. Sometimes, the writing that is hard-worked looks beautiful, mildly interesting but never exact. An ideal reader looks for few details in the entire 60,000 word novel or the 2000 word piece, and that is story and how well it is managed without afflicting it.

The most necessary detail to observe while writing is that you should never utterly confuse the reader. A reader's mind is fragile. He is quick as the words flow under his eyes and a picture is slowly being screened in his mind. But if a disturbance in the flow arises, the reader tries to wait for the turbulence to sustain and if it carries on even a while longer, he'll feel tired and he'll shut off that flow and go back to sleep. Your partner is bored. You were impotent.

Let's imagine a plausible sentence - "The apple is red." The same can be written in many a ways according to the writer's intellect and preferred style. For instance, a good writer might write just exactly that - "The apple is red." A writer who writes for himself might write - "The apple is brick-red, like hue in a twilight cloud." There is nothing grammatically wrong with the sentence or with the structure. It is perfectly germane. The 'wrong' thing here is that it is clarifying when it should be just stating. Clarification is needed when the situation isn't intelligible by the word only. Good writing should point out and not reach that terminal. Can't understand? Allow me.

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A man is hunting in the woods. He has his faithful Labrador by his side. They spot a winter-dyed rabbit. Instead of pointing at the bunny, Bruno scampers and takes a bite out of it. It defies the whole purpose of the dog. Instead of pointing (stating), it is eating it (clarifying it). I repeat: good writing should point out and not reach that terminal, because loss of exactness can destroy the rhythm, little by little.

Writing is a blend of time management (movement), bad prose (foreplay), good prose (rhythm), language (sensitivity) and story (climax).

Time Management:

Being realistic, I would say that time has nothing to do with writing in particular. You have to devote possibly all of what you can afford to spare. Every time you write and give it a hundred percent, you'll improve indefinitely because there is no labeled margin, as such, that mars the progress of a writer. There is a simple theorem to success in life: 'Hard work.' There is also a simple theorem to success in

writing: 'Unrelenting hard work.'

Bad Prose:

Bad prose is unidentifiable. It needs a very sincere, persevering eye to spot it. It's like finding tiny specks of blue ink on a black cloth. Bad prose is almost inconspicuous to the writer's eye; but they do the required damage to the story, all the same. It is the husk on the corn, the unnecessary stuff that can be done without. Observe this small para -

"The wind was leathery. It howled and screamed, drawing black. Darkness combed like poetry, little by little, mounting the sky and reeling before a star, like the million leaves that tend to sew in and out a bark's height. My eye skimmed the window across, washing it with sight. Time was unessential, old and religious, but still, I somewhat liked her to be punctual. And she stood there. Not a breath late."

There is nothing unethical about it. It doesn't flout any fence in writing. What it does is, is that it includes author intrusion, the husk. The author comes into the story and it skims away the tangibility of the story. The same para could have been deducted of author intrusion and still be written as -

"The wind howled into the dark, poetic night that spread open, like a pall. I watched in patience as she stood across in the window; sad curves on a silhouette."

This sentence touches the mind without confusing it beforehand. You remove the husk and you get the corn to eat. As simple as that.

Good Prose:

Good prose is about writing the truth, and then, exaggerating it a little. The complete truth is always deficient, the stereotypical truth is always too common - the exaggerated truth is beautiful and sufficient. There are only few writers, who can write the "exaggerated truth". Truth unleashes a more visible reality, and exaggeration grasps that reality and fills in the vacant spots. For instance -

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If you're writing about a scene set in the desert, the truth would be: hot, rasping sand... a harsh sun like melting glass... a cruel, scalding wind that raises soot-like clouds from the underneath. This is the utter and complete truth that would come to mind.

The exaggerated truth would be: a cawing vulture speckling the sky... deep screwed faces in the sand... a breeze hissing at the mounding dunes...

And so on. It feels right and complete, and it is prevented from being ideal. A scene can only be appealing if it isn't ideal. It needs to ripen; it needs to be a bit exaggerated.

Language:

The way a man dresses tells the contemplating neighbor where he's headed. It is a language in his clothes that the neighbor can identify. But he were to wear beach sandals and Bermudas and head off to the royal ball, it wouldn't be preconceived. It would come as a ridiculous and disgusting shock. That's exactly what bad language does. It shocks the reader's preconceiving notion. It takes away the coherency and the direction.

Good language is the tool that takes a lot of practice and compulsive diligence to acquire. Below, I have listed a few golden rules that an efficient author observes while writing. Observe -

1. Use "Hope", "seeming" and words that suggest a thing instead of conveying it, as little as possible. They confuse the tendency of a reader to understand.
2. Try not to be passive. Passive sentences lengthen and eventually, bore the reader.
3. Whenever words like "suddenly" or "immediately" come in a story, the reader gets ready and aware. The author gets deprived of shocking his partner. The element that was intended to be created loses its momentum. Use it scarcely.
4. Use almost all poetic devices, but strictly avoid rhythm and alliteration. They make a sentence look stupid and ludicrous.
5. Vocabulary has its own technique. Try not to infuse big, preposterous words in your writing when demonstrating feelings. For example, it is stupid to say - 'he was insipid and emotively ductile.' instead of 'he felt sad and morbid.'

Another thing most authors try to do is a play on words - a clutter of giggles, the singing and souging wind, etc. This can either make a sentence intensely pacifying or just inane. It should be replaced by the 'exaggerated truth' which can efficiently fit in here.

6. Every story should encompass any or even some kind of dialogue from the protagonist, at least; else that character would not be alive or real for the reader. Dialogue should always be dealt with a frank mind and not a hesitating hand. Writing demands a little liberality and all of it, is fiercely enjoyed in the dialogues.

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Story:

The most endemic question a person faces before he starts writing is: what should I write about? Unfortunately, this question has no definite answer.

Let me relieve you of a notion: creativity is not inborn. Neither is imagination. It is worked upon and implied in thought. It all concludes to writing... but cleverly.

Ideas are always there. There is an idea in everything we see around. It is important to remember how you can remember and construct a story from an idea.

Okay. Let's take three ingredients to make an idea for a story: a place, a genre and a protagonist. Let the place be my room, the genre be horror and the protagonist be an old lady. Now, let's move on to the next step - laying emphasis.

The old lady + my room. My room has walls, a fan, a cupboard, a chair, a ceiling. Let's take these elements and construct ideas. Do remember that the genre is horror.

Ideas:

Idea from wall - Maybe the old lady lives inside the wall all day and comes out at night through the wall, to haunt the house.

Idea from fan - Maybe the old lady is hanging on the fan for some thirteen years, in the derelict house.

Idea from cupboard - Maybe the talking head of the old lady is hidden somewhere in the cupboard. The head howls and screams every night.

Idea from ceiling - Maybe the old lady is buried in Hell and the ceiling is a gateway to hell.

Idea from chair - Maybe the old lady died rocking in her old armchair and now, nobody can move that chair, because even after her death, her weight is prevalent there.

This is logical and theoretical imagery. It helps to bring out the hidden depths of creativity and often, writers stumble through such a process onto very puissant subjects to write on.

One last thought: Good writing isn't something about the writer. It is anything and everything about the reader.

I hope that this article says all what it was meant to and it says it in that expected unruly way i wanted to put it. Thank you.

T.Jain

Have You Plotted Your Story Before Writing It?

By Nick Vernon

Creative Writing Tips -

The writer, who doesn't have the time to plot, always finds the time to rewrite.

Sound familiar?

I've been guilty of this too, back in the early days of my writing apprenticeship. I was so eager to get stuck into writing my story that I wouldn't bother with plotting.

Plotting gives you a sense of direction. It's your map, which will lead you to write your story. Leaping into the unknown rarely works. Without a plot several things can happen.... Our stories aren't focused

We lose our way Our characters don't come to life because we don't take the time to develop them

We get stuck The story strays from us

And all this happens when we haven't figured everything out first.

Your plot is the foundation of your story. It's the skeleton, which will hold your story together. Your plot is there to work everything out first - to see if it can be worked out, and then flesh out that skeleton with other elements that make a story.

Plotting is the difference between writing a story for yourself and writing one for an audience. Writing for ourselves doesn't require too much strain because we only have ourselves to please. It's when we have to please our readers that the hard work begins.

If you are aiming to sell your stories, plotting is a must.

Have you plotted your story before writing it?

Besides his passion for writing, Nick Vernon runs an online gift site where you will find gift information, articles and readers' funny stories. Visit

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