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GRT THE ART OF WRITING LITERARY ARTICLES



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Abstract: In an interview to media, Shekhar Kapoor, a film producer, made a general comment about the distance caused by technology between your work and you. He said, 'the more I use computer, the more I realize, I'm not writing poetry any more. There was something more emotional about using a pen and paper'. Certain emotional insipidity and dryness about the use of technology, turns writing 'cut and paste' phenomenon. The second half of the quotation brings in the foreground the experience of writing and the pleasure associated with it as displaced from each other. Recently, people have stopped enjoy the activity of writing as computer has replaced pen and cut writing experience from pleasure it had. The present article considers the writing activity in the context of academic circles and intends to dispel fear.

Keywords: Review of Literature : The present article is outcome of reading Ann Rand's book on writing an article.

Method :

Integration : The present article provides a good test of the theory and hypothesis or sufficient empirical grounds, for building new methodology.

INTRODUCTION

Recently, the importance of writing articles and publishing in renowned magazines has become one of the important activities. It has been related with the professional competency of the teacher of the university. It has got the survival value. Institutional pressure is to 'publish or perish' and this has created stir in the academic circles giving rise to a number of articles, publishing magazines which are devoted to help teachers publish themselves in these magazines even it has made available readymade method of producing articles by using internet and publishing by 'cut paste' method. This collage art technique has affected the quality of the research output in India, but this deconstructs the article and makes it pun.

Besides, sending quality down it has weakened moral of the people who intend to do 'some serious work'. Those who are serious about their writing see people producing articles like a machine and are forced to walk in their path to be a part of competition. The lack of practical solutions in writing articles and some understanding into the skill of writing, cause serious people to give up the effort of writing honestly.

From the other point of view, the present condition of the nature of writing and publication has seen steep rise in publishing such writings. However this has caused much compromise in the quality of articles. This is an honest effort to give practical solution by studying the psychological system involved in the process of writing and practical method in writing such a write up in the light of its nature. I humbly try doing away with some of the misgivings common among people. If I could be able to do away with the fear of

writing and article that would be a great pleasure to me.

The most important hurdle in the writing of an article is 'mystery' related to it. When you are asked to write something you are surprised as if suddenly an apparition has appeared in front of you. You sense sudden closure of thinking. This sudden black out is consequent upon the mystification of writing. You are taught that writing is something sacrosanct and it is difficult to come with one.

A thing, you should understand about the nature of article is, it is a 'rationally shaped write up'. It has its own structure and paraphrasable core. If you passively approach that core, you can do away with the misunderstanding about the article writing. One of my teachers explained the difference between speech and writing very nicely. This may be helpful in doing away the mystification about the art of article writing. He said that when you speak and you are suddenly blocked, you are short of resources and you gain time by digression. In speech you can take a tangential dive into other fields and when you can summon enough material, you come back to the point from where you have digressed. On the other hand, writing is addressed to the absent reader and it does not allow us to take liberty with him. The very absence entails upon us to follow the logic in the write-up. So, those whose can think logically can write an article. People, who walk normally on the earth, can think logically and can write it. This deductive conclusion is enough to demystify the writing activity.

Another important aspect of the writing came up to me in the book written by Ann Rand. She has thoroughly considered the nature of the article writing in her analysis of the write up. She says that 'clarity' is the basic quality of

writing.' The core of the tragedy, in the eyes of Aristotle is 'plot, plot, and plot'. In the movie 'Dirty Picture' Vidya Balan has a dialogue which explains the core of cinema is 'entertainment, entertainment, and entertainment'. Similarly, we can say that the core of an article is 'clarity, clarity, and clarity'. Clarity is most important aspect of writing and it depends upon the understanding objective nature of it. If you focus upon your insight and go on writing you are sure to fail in producing a good article. So you have to look outside to get information. It enables us to understand logic in the play of ideas. It focuses light upon the building blocks of writing and gives it objectivity. If you look inside your mind for recourses sooner or later, we learn that inside there is no material. And outside there is plenty of it. So only way to get contents is to see our subject from outside.

In the fiction writing skill and understanding of essence is necessary, but in article writing skill is the only thing which you need. Any person who has rational thinking ability and skill to organize ideas can write an article. Certain handicaps concerning article writing develop due to misconception. In face of singular blockage, one experiences at writing exercise, leads to immediate conclusion that 'I'm dumb'. Such and underestimation of one's own abilities affect you profoundly, and you never return to writing. The conclusion 'I am dumb and still I continue to write' is a naive conclusion. One must consider himself omnipotent, omniscient, an able enough to handle any problem that one may face. It does not indicate that you are perfect; the moment we think we are weak, makes us weaker. Besides we are benefited by certain degree of faith in our innate abilities. If you have faith in you the confidence is stuffed in you and it is confidence that we need more. However such a type of misconception about oneself is important. As a human being everybody has these problems and you can not let this thought affect writing.

There must be basic understanding of psychology involved in process of writing as it involves all type of writing. As in music fingers of an artist are automated to playing song, our mind must be automated to writing. Many of the habits such as eating, swimming etc. are learnt through practice and cease to be part of our conscious mind. When we become master of that activity if it is true about other activities, then how can it be different about writing? The confidence should spring from the fingers. The automation takes place we train brain and give it practice. In the initial stages there is much mental struggle as you expose more to it the more you become confident about it. This paves way for automation; that is privileging conscious over unconscious.

In solving the problems encountered while you write, you should adopt policy of professional. A professional person looks at his ability as an asset which will bring him monthly income and he attaches work survival value. Suppose you are appointed in the world famous Microsoft software company of Bill Gates and are supposed to work out a project you do not know. Then you do not give up immediately. But coolly apply brain to the project, make friends with those who you think are to be most competent. Though it takes long time, you gradually learn the skill of completing project assignment. Similarly, as the professional becomes expert in solving problems over the

years you also become expert in writing as time passes. 'The hard headedness and reality orientation is most valuable quality for this skill', says Ann Rand.

Most of the things which go in above discussion are by and large applicable to all type of writing. However, our concern here is with writing an article which we may publish in the magazine and hence understanding the nature of such article is crucial as it will do away with many of our misconceptions.

For categorization of articles we have two ends in front of us. Our reading experience has made us refer many articles which has gone in making of our worldview. On the other hand, we have such write-ups as published in the newspapers to meet deadlines. First type of article considers basic issues related in looking at reality and they give us their own way of looking at reality. We may consider the concepts of Derrida and the influences, which we find in his writings. In this consideration our own way of looking at reality is changed. Such articles are broader in its scope. They contribute in the development of the idea. Essential issues of life; materiality, spirituality are focused in it and work of passion and commitment.

would like to mark this phenomenon in the comparison of theory of Darwin and Marxist ideology. Before Darwin's publication of 'Evolution of Species' our world view was religious and god oriented. He shifted focus from spiritual to evolutionary. The offshoot of this concept was over turning of our ideas about the universe. The first view considered that we are created by the god in his own image and are transported into the degradation of animalism. This view tries to compare our present moral degradation with the past godliness. Marxist thought overturned by applying Hegelian concept of dialectic and concluded that Man was born like other animals in the race of survival of fittest he progressed from his basic conditions (base) through economic necessity to build good life.(superstructure) on the earth. In the above case you can see the basic change in the way of looking at the world. Those articles are broader articles. They are based on abstract ideas. They are complex in attitude and radical in nature. We can categorize them as complex articles.

On the other scale there are articles which are published in news papers. These articles are hastily written. These are not thoughts of an original thinker but a rational being that is ready to write anything if he is ordered to do it and sufficiently paid for it. Such write ups are descriptive in nature. They tell us 'how things look to the onlookers'. Such writing sparingly could be philosophical in nature. This writing is journalistic and it could be called journalistic article between these two poles of consideration all types of articles fall. In this effort, we are concerned neither with complex article nor with journalistic article. Our point is just somewhere between these ends and let us say that the articles published in the magazines have average potentiality of both of these types. They are little broader in scope compared to journalistic writing. It has features of both. It avoids complexity of complex article as well as the banalities of journalistic articles. It includes worldview and also the description of the object which we consider in the article. Though it includes worldview it avoids abstract

conceptualization accompanying such thinking. It adopts the objective reality and applies this worldview. Our purpose would be satisfied if we can form clear concepts of the nature of these types of write-ups.

In above discussion certain principles are implied I would like to summaries here those ideas and start over again with the further considerations about writings of article writing.

Mysteries related with article writing are to be cracked before you master the art. It is a skill and not an art. A commonplace person, having sensible view of life who can handle language in his daily manipulation of life can write an article. A man has to think him good enough to write. And before we could write we should understand the nature of the write-up. A driver who knows the nature of his vehicle knows better when to accelerate and when to slow down the speed. In the next section we will take further some of the issues related with it.

When you actually come to write an article the first problem to face is the choice of subject. When we take right decision on this question then rest of the things pass smoothly any mistake on this count is likely to lead one on the opposite way to the destination one has set to reach. Hence, understanding the matrix of choosing the subject is most important aspect of writing the article. Broadly speaking, some limitation on the part of the writer and the psychology involved is a source of difficulty we face in choosing the subject for writing. The bird who takes flight with all strength is likely to cover broader and longer geographical landscape.

One cannot present a complete view on the topic of choice as there are several point of views about the subject and yours is one possible way of looking at the subject you want to comment on. People who start with high ambition of presenting complete view of the topic may develop guilt conscious, when they are questioned from the different perspective of, find debility in thinking further. By the term guilt consciousness I mean to say is a feeling of shame which overpower you are blocked in writing. We must understand limitation of our own knowledge in the postmodern age where everything is under the flux of change. This is to mean that when Eisenstein devised his theory it was the last word on it; the concepts could not be changed. It is not so, even it can be challenged and certain different direction would lead science in altogether new way. To write an unquestionable write-up you need to be universal scholar. What else could be further away from the rationality of your expectation than this fact? There is also limitation on the way of thinking on your part. Presenting complete view on any subject is transportation of your views on the paper and only small amount of what your views on particular subject are is translated in the article.

Sometimes, we lead ourselves in the danger zone by being carried away by the emotions. There are some aspects of life for which we have strong affiliation and normally we go for it. Some people find advantage in it; however, for the novice this is a problem one has to do away with it. When you learn the skill of writing and adopt the strategies of using raw material you can choose the topic of your liking. These are the limitations which must be in the

background when you select the topic for write up.

When we are protected against the points raised in the above discussion, we can think of actually selecting the topic for your write up. I have used a vague term such as topic which has broader scope and will provide us a practical aspect to divide it and overcome the problems faced in the choice of subject. We would make this term into two more divisions such as subject and theme. The subject of our topic is an umbrella term and will provide the broader base for the development of article. The subject is broader and has many things besides those which you have on your mind. In literature such terms as existentialism, feminism, and etc. are broader in scope and could be used to write book on it. Such a subject should be limited so that our ideas find way and confidence when they are to come on the paper. Such an idea which helps you to limit your subject and helps in forming further strategy is called the theme.

In the above example, if we introduce such theme as existentialism in the plays of Samuel Becket. The name of the writer here limits the scope of the subjects and helps in our progress of writing. The subject such as Shakespeare could be interpreted in different perspectives and we can write number of articles on each of the perspective. You can extend this logic to understand the challenge involved in the choice of the 'subject and theme'. By applying above discussion in the context of subject, we can reach certain clarity in forming our ideas.

But this does not sort out our problem. There are some important issues involved in the choice of the subject-theme structure. We must know why do we write the article? Most of the subjects are approached by answering question why. Why do I write what I write? Answer to this question will provide contents and great help in forming outline.

Another problem in writing the article comes out of our view of us as a writer, if you think yourself as a doctor and, are out to eradicate all the maladies then you will face the problem. As a writer you have limited scope and your purpose is to present symptoms of the subject-theme. There are several issues involved in the explanation of the subject theme. We see from a perspective so it is better not to overlook our limitation.

In the choice of subject, another aspect is your view of the theme which we have selected. You are one of the latest persons who have taken to think about the subject. Moral implication of this position of thinking is that you must know how far others have explored the subject at your hand so far. The review of the literature on the theme is what will enable in you the confidence you need. If you write on the subject in a way which has been chewed by several other people before you then there is least chance that somebody would read your article. You must tell something new to the reader. It must come from our deep conviction. If the choice of the subject-theme is preceded by these premises then writing would not only be productive but also aesthetically satisfying subject. Otherwise, it would be a finger exercise and sheer wastage of time. To know how your idea applies to your subject is a new mental effort and it interests your reader.

The writing is a psychological process. Exact understanding of people who are to read our article will supply us with many ideas which can be used in it. Judging

our reader provides outline to the subject but very complex nature of reader discouraging effect. Almost all the readers have average qualities which can be depended upon. What does the listener like? If you ask this question to self whenever talking with others, then one can get understanding in the mind of reader. The understanding of the reader decides how much you have to explain and how much you need to know while writing the article. Even this helps in understanding the context in which you write and judge whether this will broaden reader's context. Asking that if my point of view will help the reader in any way in making certain ideas clear helps us a lot.

The idea that people who are reading you do question your point of view and are extra intelligent is wrong. We must realize that children are best readers. They mug up the whole thing first and then begin to analyze. However, I would like to suggest that you can assume that the person whom you address is yourself. This will solve many problems which you are likely to face in the actual process of writing. When you address something to yourself you are to come out of your psyche and may be posed to look at your subject objectively. This perspective is advantageous as it sets your objective mind which is a bonus point which you can cash on in your writing. Another advantage is that your reasoning keeps watch on the development of the line of thinking. Is there any other person who knows better than you about yourself?

When you think that your reader is weak in understanding you are likely to digress into an area where you are likely to include unnecessary things in the write-up. So thinking that your reader is a most rational being and have best of the understanding and potential to analyze is a helpful opinion about the reader. Any negative concept about your reader is a responsibility for you. So beware of starting on wrong premises and falling over the head.

In writing article, the actual experience is gradual unveiling of your personality. Generations of intellectuals have tried to find out the personality in the writings of fiction assuming that the individual goes beyond reality and becomes part of his writing. On similar premises you have to assume that your article also takes on the color of your personality. The basic part of personality is the way you think about the world. This world view is your philosophy of life. Philosophy is a way of looking at truth. There are several implications of this and need detailed consideration. However, it is sufficient that philosophy is our way of looking at the world. Every person is crusader of his way of looking at life. He is an activist, which turns him propagandist. We must understand that nobody likes propaganda and earns for us the title of narrow mindedness. Hence your way of looking at life is likely to interfere with the actual process of writing. It provides you ideas but those ideas are confined by your view of life. You must widen the base of your world view then your thought becomes an interesting thing for others. If you are conscious about the passage of your philosophy in the article it stops progression of writing. So the best way of using philosophy is to be unconscious about it. If you switch yourself to consciousness this creates problems of writing. Along with interference your wrong personality traits will also enter in writing. You

must learn the way to eliminate such interferences. It is always better to know how much your own ideas interfere with writing so that you can eliminate it. The life is in flux. It changes. Nothing remains same. These are common clichés but are very important for us. Reality is culture. As you think reality changes and so does reality. Any belief that any opinion is not influenced by speaker's personality is egoistical. What is helpful is that I can stand outside of the subject and look at the subject and would include point of views of other people.

We have come long way from where we have started. Our idea and actual writing experience must have been a little bit concretized by the point of argument we follow in here. However one should not discount the actual struggle involved in the process of writing. I compare it with the match of boxers, where both the competitors are pitched against each other; one has to suffer the pain and struggle which you undergo while the competition lasts. Writing is a boxing competition between you and the blank paper. Its blankness is the first blow which we have to survive first and ink the face of the paper with the constant blows of pen. The more you ink paper more, the more supple the paper becomes. And as there are rounds in the competition of the boxing, there are different sessions between you and the paper. And the first session is preparation of the borderline.

Actual drafting of the article is significant step in concretizing our idea into an expected form. What does play important role in the process of preparing first draft? Such simplistic answer as the mind plays important role does not take us any close to the writing. The importance of conscious and unconscious in the function of working of mind is one of the major themes for many thinkers in writing. All psychologists suggest that unconscious plays important role in the actual work of mind. Any mental activity is a stirring the black pool of unconscious and arousing the ghost of ideas lying deep buried in the unconscious. If we let the ideas flow uninterrupted on the paper major part of writing happens and remaining is merely a formality. The conscious is a blockage in the natural follow of ideas. Our conscious is rational land it interferes with everything that falls on our mind. This consideration of each and everything in the sentence hampers the work of writing. It will take long time in the process of writing.

Basically, everything we write is to be reconsidered in the process of editing. Before the article shapes towards final shape it has to pass through several readings. And if you think anything superfluous then we can always delete it. Many of the writers have revised their writing long after its first draft was prepared. Write-up is our property; we have to make certain changes in the formation of the ideas several times in the time we have to watch the drama of editing unfolded in the making of a write – up. If this is true then one should realize the political implication that whatever comes on the paper from unconscious let it flow without interruption. One forms the connection between oneself and the unknown word that shapes our work.

The unconscious can be compared with the computer. As computer processes, the data our mind also in the light of learnt knowledge, culture and many other things, orders the data and lets out words. And if you are concerned

about analyzing the ideas ahead of the time, it will suspend the progress of writing and paralyze it. Do not try to think and write at the same time. Either write or think. Your mind is capable of one not all things. In the process of writing it is not to take pause more than necessary. Our unconscious is able to handle certain level of pause. If we break that limit then writing is suspended for a long time and then it is very tough to get back to the right thread which is one in many suspended in our unconsciousness. The best idea is to run on the other idea before you pause. It will provide a new start when you come back to writing.

What I have tried here is not a complete blue print for writing an article. Here certain suggestions are scattered. After all writing cannot be taught on the line of machine.

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