

THE ART OF WRITING

II

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An elusive equilibrium links the faculties of creation and craftsmanship. Although each attribute arises from a different stream of our psyche their dynamic interaction dominates all our innovative urges. When these two forces are in harmonious balance, wondrous artwork and great writings are the result.

Human imagination, if undisciplined and untutored, can yield works of art or creative writing that can be grotesque, illogical, and at times boring. Guidelines are therefore necessary as are the rules of the road for vehicular traffic. Even though the world's best authors at times ignore conventions, the rules today are actually derived from their works.

From the moment of inception of our sensate being, the 'cyberspace' of our brain, the myriad neuronal networks, carry the record of our total life experiences. Nurtured by thought and reason, enriched by knowledge and emotions, our insight grows. Thus, our accumulated experiences, inspired by spirit and mysticism, give rise to creative expressions of art and music, science and literature.

It's a curious fact, in so far as is known, that throughout recorded history the works of child prodigies have occurred only in the fields of music and mathematics, and perhaps in art and chess. But none in literature.

No wonder. The subject that has occupied the attention of the world's great writers has been mankind's struggles. Thousands of volumes and innumerable plays have been devoted to the dilemmas and conflicts spawned by life's vicissitudes. Only a fool would attempt to write of life before experiencing it, before developing self-understanding. As Socrates said, "Know thyself."

In my case, I had no idea what serious writing demanded when I began my novel, *Ancient Stones*, six years ago. Discovering how to sort out jumbles of feelings, to make order out of a circus of events, select the proper words out of hundreds jostling at a mental toll-bridge to get to a kerfuffle of ideas waiting on the other side, is an endeavor that never let's up.

Besides the learning I gained from rewriting my book dozens of times, my most instructive teachers turn out to be my fellow writers.