

THE COMPULSION TO WRITE

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What drives writers to write? From ancient times man has exhibited a spiritual need to communicate with other humans, both present and future. That's what we are doing, I think, with our writings.

Actually, it is more complex than that.

Serious artists such as novelists and poets have been known to devote untold numbers of hours to their tasks, laboring tirelessly. Many have suffered privations, endured weeks and months of depression, humiliating rejections, and, at times, black isolation.

A compulsion of this magnitude bespeaks of an irresistible impulse, as if their life depended on it.

Why would they do it?

In essence, I think, it is a deep seated urge we all possess to comprehend ourselves and each other; to make sense of our existence; and to justify our life-long efforts.

Writing is the means to reach such an understanding.

Just as in classical psychoanalysis, or in a good old fashion heart-to heart conversation, our writing enables us to dive into our private subliminal ocean and explore every corner, look under every rock, search in the reefs and kelp-forests for clues to our true self.

That facilitates us to re-assess our memories, seek out cryptic associations, study ambiguous assumptions, re-evaluate emotional ties, consider disappointments and pleasures, examine hopes and despairs, and ponder unrequited loves and broken promises. We bring order out of chaos and shine light on darkness.

By collating these associations of thought and memory, emotions and wishes, we relive our experiences, gain insight into our actions, and emerge with a coherent narration of who and what others are, and why we do what we do.

We learn by laying open our complex history, acquire thereby solace and joy in our own and others' existence, affirming, thus, the purpose of creation.