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Manifesto: The Art of Creative Writing

My life as a creative writer is a life of exploration. When I put my fingers to work on the keyboard, or pen to paper, I endeavor to answer the questions I posed to myself forming a story idea. An idea appears in the mind, most often as a visual scene and follow up questions are posed. What happens to me when this story idea begins to take hold, the idea is embedded in the mind, and I take a time of rest. Rest, in the realm of neuroscience, happens when I begin to do or think about nothing with intention. The subconscious takes over. It’s similar to a computer software working in the background. Once the rest finishes its process, a new idea takes hold. It is the eureka moment, a moment of sudden insight happens. This moment follows the mind at rest and is revealed after awaking from a night’s sleep, driving, or my favorite, while in the shower. I find out better outcomes of what will happen next or how the character’s difficulties make the story better. Whatever the eureka moment reveals, it is beyond my conscious imagination.

People read for entertainment. They don’t always look much deeper into the art of storytelling. But it is profound; building a narrative is the work forming from the origin of the idea.

I must create, so I write.

I do this.

I write and my subconscious comes alive. It’s magical.

Creative writers see into the abstract.

The creative part of my mind isn’t linear. The abstract thoughts swimming in my head are difficult to convey accurately. I realized early on that I have an innate ability to write. When I was a child, I realized that my mind dances and swirls around words. But I was told that my stories were silly and my passion for reading and writing stories wasn’t talked about with me. But now, many years later, I know I am not a typical linear thinker.

There is a method to my weirdness.

There are things I see and understand about people, their motivations and habits that others do not have an interest in understanding. I see abstract patterns and focus on them: behavior, art, the weather, habits, speech, music, and so many others that provide story opportunities.

The characters in my stories do not always obey me, the author. The characters change the plot, or change their motives. They change whatever they want. This is annoying but I love it when it happens. And, not every character does this. One Native American character I wrote about recently, her name is She Throws the Red Stick, who lives and breathes in the Creek Indian War of 1813-14, went from a flat, minor love interest into a full secondary character with formidable purpose of leading an all-male war party all because she would not shut up and leave the scene. It’s a love-hate relationship sometimes. But it makes the story so much better when I allow my natural ability to run its course throughout the story.

My goal as a writer is to become the best I can be in this lifetime. I hope my stories make a difference in the world. Maybe not today, but someday. Until then, I will keep working and learning. And writing.