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Writer's Nature

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Literature is an ecosystem. Texts live from each other and influence each other – from near and far. Far in both time and place. Near in place, near in time, near in emotions, near in thoughts, near in genre, near in language. Longer food chains, on the other hand, are more difficult to perceive, not quite as obvious. Texts give rise to other texts which give rise to other texts, resulting in new thinking. The paths of art are as inscrutable as those of life itself. We do not always know why texts are born, not even where they come from. Any more than why they exist or have to exist.

Do you know why you exist, or why just you must exist?

Thus, neither is art measurable, it is hard to see from an utilitarian angle, as a function with a certain aim. Art, literature – they just are. They strive towards many things, but mainly they just are. And we are in them, and through them.

Just like nature. How are we supposed to measure nature, what is its utilitarian perspective? It does not exist to serve us – if mankind would die out, it would still be there without us.

When humans did not yet exist, nature was there already.

On the other hand, literature exists because mankind does. I personally sometimes think I continue to exist because literature does.

Literature is bigger than me. It's bigger than any human being, or any book. It is not good or bad, not even health enhancing. It's hard to say if it's socially productive if by productive you mean economical. It is hard to measure art with money.

And how does one measure life, what is life worth, which lives are worth more than others?

How does one measure love, is love useful? Sometimes it is quite the contrary: destructive.

Nature can also attack itself, strike back. Literature can give information about other points of view, give insights and open closed eyes – but it can also cause revolutions or break people, corrupt them or decimate hope. Or it can quite simply do nothing at all. Art, in fact, is questions, not answers.

Art creates ways which are not visible, it's like symbioses, photosyntheses or food chains, where something slowly rots away and dies, and something else starts to grow on it.

But the writer? Is the writer even important?

Until otherwise proven, we want to believe there is no literature without an author.

Is there something called a writer's nature, is there something we all share?

One thing, yes: we write. But that's about it.

Or no, there's something else, too, perhaps: we are all humans. There is something deeply human in being a writer, isn't there?

So, we are writing humans, Homo Scribens.

But most of the writing humankind are not authors.

It's just as well, too.

Maybe you start to write because there's something wrong with you, a feeling that you are unable to communicate with others, and book by book you diligently try to find a way to express yourself even if you don't know how to, and year after year you find yourself ever more tangled up instead of finding some kind of clarity, and you're sort of waiting for answers even if it's evident there really isn't anything you could call a recipient.

Writers are writing people out of whom grow all kinds of texts.

In a text grow trees. There is no manual for trees on how to grow, but trees grow anyway. Trees have a connection with each other, and together they are, make a forest. They can be planted, cultivated, or wild, but forests all the same.

In the beginning there was just something tiny, a sapling if even that, something you can hardly recognize a species in. It may grow into a forest, it may not grow into anything at all, it's hard to say. Everything has to try and start first to be able to continue later. In some other place this beginning would probably have grown into something different. Different kinds of soil create different kinds of forests which are different in different areas. The same goes for sun and rain and mushrooms and insects and bacteria and minerals and squirrels and blackbirds and humans and mosses and foxes and ants. Among others. Everything influences everything else.

Writers grow out of books, those written by other writers, texts and books the writer has included in his or her own little ecosystem even before becoming a writer. Such is writer's nature.

It is not natural, it is made of words, branches that spread themselves over paper and other surfaces.

Writers are written in books by other writers, are written forth, created through text.

Maybe the writer doesn't even really exist, maybe the writer is fiction.

Writers not only write forth themselves, they also erase themselves. They operate in the middle of a vast sea of letters, wipe out, change, whet, and all of a sudden they themselves no longer exist. There is a text instead.

One hopes the writer is somewhere else, then, a place we call reality.

I sometimes wonder how much I erase myself by writing. An not just from the text, but from reality as well.

The other night, I was at a party, and there I also felt myself to be maybe more text than a living person. I suddenly noticed that many people saw me as a writer at a party, not a person at a party. When dancing and drinking – yes, who knows, maybe especially dancing and drinking – I noticed that I was being seen through that role. I've also noted that I am being perceived through my texts as if texts had created me and not the other way round.

And this does not only happen in the eyes of others. Even in my own eyes, I'm turning more and more into what I do, and less what I am. I am my work, and it's hard to say when I do not work. The world I see and experience and everything that piles up into me is my potential working material. I'm receptive, I'm an amoeba covered with receptors, I register everything in detail and store it in myself. I am an observer, maybe not as quiet and withdrawn as I was when I was a child, maybe not a quietly serious tree hiding among others in the forest. I want to be in the middle of life and feel it in myself. The wolf, a predator with lusty eyes and greedy jaws, is also a part of the wood in its own way. So are mysterious fungi, strange beings about which we don't really know if they belong to flora or fauna.

Writing is being beside oneself just as much as it is being inside oneself.

Luckily, but also sorry to say.

By nature, writers are stupid or clever or teachable or sly or maybe just curious or maybe something else altogether. They are naïve and cynical, they are here and they are there, and they are not all men. They want to escape from the world or just to be part of it and see it crystal clear like it is – simultaneously both, at times. They are A or B or the lost C. They are

everything you want them to be. They are on the right side of left or vice versa and a mirror image. They are often outside of themselves. They have no personality at all, or maybe they have too much of it, or then they have it just like, you know, in the middle, conveniently.

You may wonder that they aren't there when you read.

By then, they are already somewhere else.

You may wonder that most of the time they are not quite where you think they are.

They are inside the text, and they don't really even exist.

They are there so that you would see them, but in fact they do not really want to be seen but hide between pages and letters, and write forth themselves from there. But sometimes it feels that even if they are invisible they have exposed their skins and hearts, and stand naked in front of you.

Or they have sent someone else to say what they want to say for them.

The text is what we see, nothing else is important.

Literature is an ecosystem, all its constituent parts are irreplaceable: wide epic oceans, the careful vegetation that renews language, everything in between them and behind them and under them and inside them. What is a writer? I don't know. Maybe some kind of a useful bacterial flora?

The only thing I know is that there is nothing else but diversity. We all write so differently, strive towards different things with our writings, and we have so different reasons to do it. But we all do write. In that respect, we live in the same world. Even if in different forests.

And just like in nature, that's what is most important: all the different constituent parts, diversity. Everything is built upon everything else. What is based on what has been, what is seen and grows big would not grow without everything else, without all the microscopically small things we hardly see or notice.

Everything is different, nothing is like anything else, but that's exactly why it's similar, too.

Now I have written forth this text, written myself into this context.

I am here: That's why I am also a part of you.