

Finding a voice

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As children our writing sets fourth an entirely honest depiction of our voice, as that is all we know how to do. We are not trying to morph our language into that of someone else or trying to prove the depth and complexity of our thoughts. We are simply speaking words onto a page, organically portraying honest, unadorned versions of who we are. Yet as we grow up, just being a simple, coherent storyteller begins to lose its appeal. Now to be considered linguistically talented, there is this pressure to write ambiguous, esoteric passages with complex metaphors and profound insights. There is this expectation that even a simple anecdote needs to be predominantly laced with some sort of existential commentary.

And there is this taboo understanding that our inherent voice, the understated voice we began writing with, essentially will never be heard unless we turn it into something beautifully convoluted. And, quite simply, I find this strange. As adolescents we are trained to write clearly and articulate our ideas in a way that allows an audience to effortlessly take part in the journey we have carefully constructed. Why, then, do we feel the need to fill the journey with a superfluity of intricacy and obscurity as we grow? There are certainly plenty of famous authors whose works are written simplistically and beautifully, and yet when I write something simple or literal, I feel like it's not good enough. But then when I try to approach my writing in the way that I feel will receive a greater sense of approbation, I just feel pretentious and disingenuous. After all, I would never feel an inclination to say something like " the rustling of the leaves spoke to me, whispering the ephemeral nature of life and my immutable mortality." So then why would I write it? Flowery writing is beautiful, as it makes us

envision things in a way that we may have never thought to do before. But it is also not the only mark of good writing. And I think many teens, including myself, sometimes forget that. As we gain exposure to the famous voices that are responsible for the highly regarded novels we read in school, we begin to doubt the significance of our own voice. And, in turn, we create this immense pressure for ourselves that doesn't exist in actuality by trying to contort our works into what we think defines "beautiful" writing. Beautiful writing should not be, and is not defined by any particular style or approach. The beauty of writing lies in its voice. And, like a fingerprint, a voice is one of the few things in the world that is completely its own.