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Writing is a creative art — a product of one's imaginative power; not more of an imitation of the scientific art learned in schools of journalism or philosophy and letters. If so, all writers would be journalism graduates or English majors and none of those who has not formally studied the "real stuff." Indeed not all named writers or poets are looking down from scholastic heights. Writing is primarily thinking or deals on thinking at least. Of course all people can think and they think that they can but putting your thoughts down in black and white is reserved only for those who try how and do it.

Writers who are not bothered by rules write in their typical, simple, natural, spontaneous, and unsophisticated style because the "rules of the game" do not bother them unlike those who have formally studied the art and religiously adhere to the rules. To go to college may be helpful but not necessary. Writing is an art that one must do by one's self, sooner or later, of one's own initiative, mind, and energy. It could be said that college makes writers as well as un-makes them. Good college professors, for example, can blaze the trail — show the right way—but college train-

# You Too Can Write

By PATRICIO G. ALTURA

ing has the perils of standardized judgment, of affected admiration, of pedantry of learning.

Writing cannot be learned nor can it be achieved by learning what to avoid and what to leave out. There must be something written or put in before you cross or leave anything out. Writing, therefore, comes not from studying alone but from having something to say and writing them down in a manner that others will understand and appreciate.

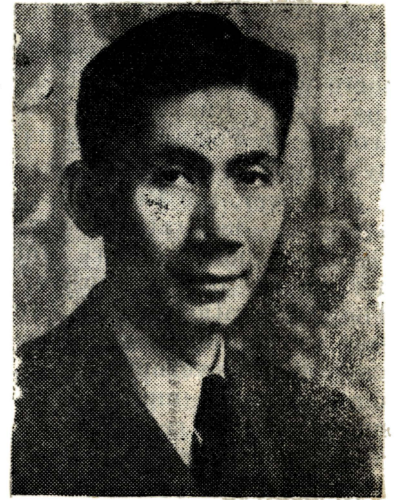
Regarding this art of the winged Pageans, it is needless to be a "good follower"—to be radical is all right. For example, your English teacher may surprise you if she judges your sentence construction as grammatically wrong or your piece as not clear-cut in plot, as not having a uniformity of thought and other what nots when in fact, such articles had been published in the Manila weeklies, or is the accepted style in present-day journalism. English books would say that we should use "very" instead of "really" as the latter is overused and abused. Right, but won't it grate your ears if someone asks "very?" instead of "really?" Oh, there are lots of "don't's" to make you think that everything you write is wrong!

And now comes good usage. English teachers would lecture on the topic as if a mistake in good usage is a disgrace to the English language, nay, the greatest blunder in one's scholastic life! Yet, one could not be a prolific writer unless he knows or uses, actively or passively, the dirtiest words in the English language. Some columnists could not even earn a damn cent to make both ends meet if they be so profane

and decent in their selection of words; if they be like living angels in the way they write. Remember Lacson, while referring to GI's past romantic role, "digging fox-holes with their kneeses?" This is just a mild and mellow example, not mentioning the trenchant strokes of del Fierro and his colleagues.

In classrooms, when teacher and student disagree on what is right and what is wrong, the former sometimes takes recourse to "I'm right because I'm a teacher." But it doesn't mean that if you go against or disagree with your teacher (literally that is, not personally), as in other cases, you are an idiot or you are bound to nowhere. Remember "The Song to Remember?" The young Chopin, when interrupted by his music teacher on his first attempt on composition, went on his own way as he calmly said, "Professor, I like it this way." Had Chopin blindly allowed all that his music teacher wanted of him to do, instead of doing things the way he liked it, the world probably would have missed a Chopin and you and I would have missed his immortal music that "takes away from the soul the dust of everyday life."

Others are afraid to write "simply because" (reason ala Blondie) they are bothered by so many things. One of this perhaps is misspellings. Just in case you are antagonistic to Mr. Webster, go ahead and write what you have in mind. Why let spelling bother you? Even Pres Jackson missed his spellings. And when once reminded of it, he answered, "It's a damn poor mind that does not know of more than one way to spell a word!" That's right, he's right. Therefore, when it



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comes to writing, don't ever let your EQ (English Quotient) bother you. Even if your English is not above average, jot down your thoughts to make them enduring and to let the world share them with you. Edgar Rice Burroughs of the "Tarzan" fame, in one of his books wrote, "If you want to be a good writer, don't study English." Strange, but he did it. So why can't you?

Never hesitate to write just because you can't come across the right words for your ideas. Don't be afraid to use a new word that you are in doubt of. For sure, you won't go to Bilibid or be haunted by the FBI if you do so. An English Prime Minister was once lambasted at all quarters by the London press when he used a new word that was not in good usage then. But as the years went by, the word he used became in popular use and a part of everyone's vocabulary. Won't it be your pride then, if you are the first writer to use a new word or coin a new phrase? That's a great help to humanity!

Not all named writers are good grammarians. In fact, most of them are poor grammarians. It is not strange in colleges for staff members and E-in-C's of college organs to receive the lowest grades in their English subjects. Yet, the rest who do not even contribute a single word to

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## WHAT DO . . .

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was asked by the then furious professor whose face already had become flush lobstered, apparently disappointed for the failure of the other students to give a correct answer, all managed to say was: "Sorry, Professor, but I did not finish reading all the books you have assigned us to read." But after breathing deeply to regain my composure, I added: "All I know is that women had always wanted to be superior to men."

The sneezing professor standing against his desk quickly interposed: "There you are class. Superiority of women over men, the man from the Philippines says, is what the former likes most in the latter. It's correct." After a moment, the professor asked me, "Mr. Cruz, are you married?"

I said no.

"Why?" he asked again.

"I like to be in circulation for a while, I replied meekly." The class chuckled.

If you think the way my professor did at that time the riddle for you about men-women relationship is already solved. If you don't, then, all I can say is that women do what they do because they figure that because they are more or less responsible for bringing us up, men, in this world the right to guide our lives — even our destinies — is also theirs. So, the eternal conflict!

Which brings us now to that famous question again, which came first: the egg or the hen? Or this: who is higher the crowned king or the man who crowned him?

But the truth of the matter is that men still refuse to give up their superiority complex idea over women either because there will be more war than we can handle or the (wome) are not quite ripe — or maybe have not enough spare time — to handle the affairs of the nation.

## YOU TOO . . .

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their college papers, receive A's.

Don't let your tenses worry you. Let it be just as you think it right. Damon Rymyon's tenses and style are quite unusual yet he makes millions and turns out best sellers. Who knows that you too might turn out a new literary style as DR did? Or you may be a part of that force who, by continually doing what is wrong, produces good.

Young man (the old's are not excluded), **YOU TOO CAN WRITE.** You can if you will, you can if you try. Anybody, who has patience and tries hard enough, can write. Anybody can learn how to write in a practical way, just as anybody can learn how to swim. Nor can anybody learn how to swim without trying how. Therefore, try. You may not be just "dashing things off" or your ideas may not come out "like a flash," so to say. You may not duplicate Rouget de L'Isle who composed "Marseilles" at one sitting with words and all, or Bret Harte with his marvellous story "Marvelous Blossom" at one single sitting too, or do what Beckford did. You may not be familiar with the Shakespearean classics, with the long rolling sentences of Gibbons and Macaulay that sweep along like the waves on the channel beaches, or the short sentences of Scripture that tick like the clock of time. Nevertheless, write down your thoughts and put aside that cloak of shyness. You cannot write if you do not and will not write. When you feel like it or you are in the mood (not for love or calypso this time).

For the present, however, men the world over are for allowing their womenfolk as their equals. But for women to be superior to men, that's different. It's no wonder, then, that women will forever nag and nag until the end of this world and long after we have crossed the Great Divide.

make a beeline for the nearest typewriter and keep the keys busy. Damn the literary rules! Just write in your usual way, in your natural style. Just write what you think as the ideas come up your head. You cannot copy somebody's style because yours is a part of your character. You cannot be what you are not. Who knows that what you have written which you think as trash would turn out later to be a masterpiece? Yes, who knows? Schubert never had the faintest idea that his "Moonlight Serenade" would be for eternity. He did not even attend the occasion for which he was supposed to personally play the original piece on the piano.

Go ahead, write. Even if it is not blood in your veins and air in your lungs. Write something about everything and about something. The world is strewn with all sorts of literary subjects from needle to anchor, from foot-wear to headgear, from new look to don't look, from bullet to atom bombs, from down-swept to up-swept hair-do's, from pin up to pin down girls, from pepsi-cola to apalachicola, from backpay to payback, and now that election is ensuing, from promises to compromises, etc. Never mind the rejection slips from the "hard-boiled" editors. That's a part of the game. A famous crime story writer had written more than enough crime stories to fill up the penitentiaries before he had a single story published. A Canadian writer had enough rejection slips to paper a room before he ever saw his by line. Just write down your thoughts minus the idea of being an author. At least, sooner or later, you will hit the mark, even you may call it luck or not. If it turns out that what you have written appears interesting, after enough practice, the selling comes as a matter of course. If you are a sentimentalist, perhaps, like Charles Dickens, your tears would roll down your cheeks the first moment in your

lifetime you can see your name in print. As Dickens wrote, "I walked down to Westminster Hall and turned into it for half an hour, because my eyes were so dimmed with joy and pride they could not bear the street." Don't give up your hopes. Joseph Conrad and RLS were sailors, Lincoln was not a college man, our Stevan Javelana did not specially study journalism. Yet, they were able to write of the immediate things around them.

Whatever your career is, you still can write. Go to it.

## THE KUOMINTANG . . .

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ment from the Presidency early this year, Madame Chiang's departure for the United States nearly ten months ago and finally Dr. T. V. Soong's exit from the Chinese political scene.

The Soongs are regarded as one of the most remarkable families in China. The oldest of the three Soong Sisters, Ai-ling, married H. H. Kung, Ching-ling married Sun Yat-sen the youngest and the best known internationally, Mei-ling, became the wife of Chiang Kai-shek.

The key posts in the Chinese Government from then on, except for brief periods, were in the hands of Chiang, T. V. Soong and Kung. The struggle within the Kuomintang is still on — this time between the "Kwangsi Clique," represented by Acting President Li Tsung-jen and General Fai Chung-hsi, and the rightwing faction headed by Chiang.

Many Chinese predict that the struggle will end in the Kwangsi Clique seeking compromise with Mao Tse-tung and that Chiang and his associates will take political refuge abroad.

The leftwing faction within the Kuomintang, represented by Madame Sun Yat-sen, has already gone over to the Communist cause, according to Communist announcements from Peiping.