

ERNEST
HEMINGWAY



JOHN
STEINBECK



BOB DYLAN



HUNTER S.
THOMPSON



CORMAC
McCARTHY



GEORGE
ORWELL



J.R.R.
TOLKIEN



JACK KEROUAC



WOODY ALLEN



The Market for Creative Writing Guidebooks

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Don't romanticise your "vocation". You can either write good sentences or you can't. There is no "writer's lifestyle". All that matters is what you leave on the page.

ZADIE SMITH

Do back exercises. Pain is distracting.

MARGARET ATWOOD

Be regular and orderly in your life, so that you may be violent and original in your work.

GUSTAVE FLAUBERT

You can't wait for inspiration. You have to go after it with a club.

JACK LONDON

Write.

NEIL GAIMAN

Every character should want something, even if it is only a glass of water.

KURT VONNEGUT

The adverb is not your friend.

STEPHEN KING

Write without pay until somebody offers pay; if nobody offers within three years, sawing wood is what you were intended for.

MARK TWAIN

You are not Proust. Do not write long sentences.

UMBERTO ECO

Write drunk; edit sober.

ERNEST HEMINGWAY

There are three rules for writing the novel. Unfortunately, no one knows what they are.

WILLIAM SOMERSET MAUGHAM

Introduction¹

Creative writing guidebooks form an interesting and prospering sector of publishing worth closer investigation.² They are one of the most important parts of a flourishing creative writing industry.³ On the surface creative writing guidebooks aim to teach readers how to write. However, it will be argued here that in reality they take advantage of customer's desire to become a writer. This thesis aims to find out what tactics are used by publishers and authors to market creative writing manuals.

In the market-led industry it is essential for publishers to know their audience as based on this knowledge it is possible to recognise the factors which influence the purchase of books. In the case of creative writing guidebooks the charm of being a writer is irresistible for the target group. Basing their perception of it on popular misconceptions representatives of this group imagine that this profession is incredibly glamorous. Idealised perception of the writer's profession is caused by the fact that there is a lot of confusion about this profession. It is also connected to the fact that in reality aspiring writers do not have any direct contact with professional writers so they want to belong to the world about

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- 1 Sources of epigraphs: 'Ten Rules for Writing Fiction', *The Guardian*, 20 February 2010 <<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2010/feb/20/ten-rules-for-writing-fiction-part-one>> (M. Atwood, N. Gaiman); 'Ten Rules for Writing Fiction (Part Two)', *The Guardian*, 20 February 2010 <<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2010/feb/20/10-rules-for-writing-fiction-part-two>> (Z. Smith); 'The 9 Warning Signs of an Amateur Artist', *Skinny Artist* <<http://skinnyartist.com/9-warning-signs-of-an-amateur-artist/>> (G. Flaubert, J. London); M. Popova, 'Kurt Vonnegut's 8 Tips on How to Write a Great Story', *Brain Pickings* <<http://www.brainpickings.org/index.php/2012/04/03/kurt-vonnegut-on-writing-stories/>>; S. King, *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2012), p. 138; M. Popova, 'Advice on Writing from Modernity's Greatest Writers', *Brain Pickings* <<http://www.brainpickings.org/2011/12/29/advice-to-writers/>> (Mark Twain); Ead., 'Umberto Eco's Advice to Writers', *Brain Pickings* <<http://www.brainpickings.org/2015/07/16/umberto-eco-advice-to-writers/>>; B. Morrison, 'Why Do Writers Drink?', *The Guardian*, 20 July 2013 <<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2013/jul/20/why-do-writers-drink-alcohol>> (E. Hemingway); B. Camenson & M.J. Cook, 'The 5 Steps to Writing a Novel that Sells', *Writer's Digest*, 21 February 2012 <<http://www.writersdigest.com/writing-articles/by-writing-goal/get-published-sell-my-work/give-em-what-they-want-excerpt>> (W. Somerset Maugham); all sources accessed on 1 January 2016.; Picture on the cover: Zinio <<http://zinio.tumblr.com/post/24710518629/typewriters-from-the-smith-journal-a-magazine-for>> (8 April 2016).
 - 2 In this thesis terms: 'creative writing guidebooks', 'manuals', 'handbooks', and 'how-to books' will be used as synonyms of books discussed here containing writing instruction.
 - 3 Learning creative writing remarkably increases in popularity inside and outside of academia and many different kinds of instruction are available for laymen who dream to be a writer: 'In 2003 the Higher Education Authority's Good Practice Guide stated that Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) were offering 64 creative writing programmes. A decade later, its Beyond and Benchmark report revealed that 141 HEIs offered 504 degree programmes in which creative writing was a major significant element.', in: L. Campbell et al., 'Creative Writing Courses Spreading "Like a Viral Contagion"', *The Bookseller*, 6 May 2014 <<http://www.thebookseller.com/news/creative-writing-courses-spreading-viral-contagion>> (1 January 2016).

which they merely fantasise. What is their motivation? For some of them it can be money or fame, because many of contemporary writers have become famous and rich. There are however some intangible benefits which seem to be more important than money and fame. Writer Dubravka Ugresic rightly points out that money cannot be the only reason as 'even financially secure movie stars rush to try their hand at a children's books or novel (...)'⁴ It can be thus argued that for many people being a writer is a highly regarded social position. They desire to can call themselves authors, to see themselves in print.

The desire to gain the sense of belonging to the world of writers motivates many aspiring writers to buy creative writing how-to books as owning such books is a way to construct a self-image of being a writer. They use creative writing books as accessories allowing them to embody the writer's role. Because of this strong - however unrealistic - desire to belong to the writer's world, aspiring writers are an easy target for publishers and authors of creative writing manuals. Persuading amateurs that it is possible to become a part of this world is the main marketing strategy of authors and publishers of creative writing guidebooks being aware of the motivation of their target audience. One could argue that there is a difference between aspiring writers who desire to be authors for the glamour of this profession and the more serious candidates for authorship who care about actual writing rather than the writer's lifestyle. However, this thesis aims to show that even books which seem to be more serious are largely aimed at the first type of person.

From the publishing perspective the most important finding of this thesis is showing how the self-image and aspirations of the readers can influence the purchase of books. The research conducted here highlights the importance for publishers to know and understand audience in order to successfully target books.

The thesis is divided into three chapters. The first chapter will present the size and the diversity of the market for creative writing guidebooks along with the explanation of the selection of books made for this thesis. The motivation of the intended audience of creative writing how-to books will be examined in Chapter Two. This chapter will aim to show that the unrealistic perception of the writer's profession is crucial for the market of creative writing guidebooks. In the third and final chapter the marketing tactics used in those books will be discussed. That chapter is divided into two parts, of which the first will

4 D. Ugresic, *Thank You For Not Reading: Essays on Literary Trivia* (Victoria: Dalkey Archive Press, 2003), p. 51.

be an overview of marketing basics important in the case of creative writing how-to books. The second part will provide concrete examples of marketing tactics used by authors and publishers found both in the content of those books as well as in the marketing information on their covers.⁵

5 The additional reason for research conducted here is a fact that academic research on creative writing manuals is scarce and authors look mostly at the single aspects of those guidebooks, but there is not enough coherent analysis of them as a whole and as a separate field of publishing. According to Dirk de Geest and An Goris who analysed manuals on romance writing, 'handbooks for creative writing, [are] a very successful genre which nevertheless has been largely neglected in the field of literary studies.', in: D. de Geest and A. Goris, 'Constrained Writing, Creative Writing: The Case of Handbooks for Writing Romances', *Poetics Today*, 31:1 (Spring 2010), p. 85.

Chapter One

The Market of Creative Writing Handbooks and Its Diversity

This chapter will give an overview of the market for creative writing how-to books to show how enormous and diverse this market is. The differences between creative writing guidebooks will be shown on the basis of factors such as for example their design and then the choice of books for this thesis will be motivated.

The market for creative writing guidebooks is immense. In her essay *You Know a Craftsman by His Tools* Dubravka Ugresic accurately notices that there are handbooks on virtually every topic connected to writing and publishing. She states with irony that the only things she misses are books about how to write such handbooks.⁶ On *Amazon* there are 54 810 results for creative writing books.⁷ They are a vital part of a bigger phenomenon which can be called the creative writing industry. All kind of writing workshops, magazines, festivals, websites, even holidays are extremely popular as many people aim to be a writer. One of the authors of early creative writing manuals, recalled by short story researcher Andrew Levy, already in 1931 warned against 'the twentieth-century writing hysteria' and he surely did not expect how relevant those words would be by the end of the century.⁸ As the publishing sector of creative writing guides is flourishing they 'have become a multi-million dollar boon for the publishing industry.'⁹ Bill Goldstein from *Publishers Weekly* writes that '[p]ublishers who worry that no one reads books anymore can take solace in the fact that just about everyone wants to write one.'¹⁰

This market is not only immense, but also very diverse. Reviewing *Reading Like a Writer* of American author Francine Prose, Louise Doughty writes about 'a Babel tower of creative writing manuals available to new writers.'¹¹ She divides them into three categories:

6 D. Ugresic, op. cit., pp. 29-32.

7 Amazon <amazon.com> (1 January 2016).

8 A. Levy, *The Culture and Commerce of the American Short Story* (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 77-78.

9 R.L. Lively, 'Rhetoric's Stepchildren: Ancient Rhetoric and Modern Creative Writing', *New Writing: The International Journal for the Practice and Theory of Creative Writing*, 7:1 (2010), p. 42.

10 B. Goldstein, 'So You Think You Can Write', *Publishers Weekly*, 253:37 (18 September 2006), p. 21.

11 L. Doughty, 'Reading Like a Writer by Francine Prose - Review', *The Guardian*, 27 May 2012 <<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2012/may/27/reading-like-a-writer-francine-prose-review>> (1 January 2016).

books by academics, books about how to write a bestseller, and practical books of exercises. According to her, Prose's book fills a (surprising) gap in the crowded market as it shows aspiring writers how essential reading is to the writing profession.¹² In another review of *Reading Like a Writer* Emily Barton claims that there is a shortage of serious manuals because they are either dated (like John Gardner's *Art of Fiction*), too concentrated on grammar (for example William Zinsser's *On Writing Well*), or too autobiographical (like Stephen King's *On Writing*).¹³ Therefore, Barton accentuates the necessity of books such as Prose's. As we can see, the popularity of a creative writing book can result from the fact that the book is different from a plethora of other how-to books. From the marketing perspective it is very important to show the reader that the book he or she holds in their hands is 'the book'. As in praise on the cover of a very popular *How to Write a Damn Good Novel* where we read: 'I told myself that I didn't need to read one more book on writing, and most probably neither did the world. Then I read Jim Frey's.'¹⁴ For publishers who judge hundreds of manuscripts of creative writing guidebooks it is crucial that the book they decide to put on the crowded market stands out, as Australian publisher Michael Bollen told Steve Evans and Jeri Kroll from the Flinders University.¹⁵

Researchers too underline the variety of creative writing books. American researcher and teacher Zita Ingham distinguishes three types of them: books about 'being a writer', i.e. inspirational books where writers talk about their profession, books about 'doing of writing' containing actual writing instruction, and books combining these two elements.¹⁶ Ingham also notices two characteristics of creative writing guidebooks which will be addressed later in this thesis, but are worth mentioning now. She recognises that writers of such guidebooks imply that being a writer has a certain allure and therefore this profession is extremely attractive. She also highlights the common belief expounded in

12 Ibid.

13 E. Barton, 'Brush Up Your Chekhov', *The New York Times*, 27 August 2006 <<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/27/books/review/Barton.t.html>> (1 January 2016).

14 J.N. Frey, *How to Write a Damn Good Novel: A Step-by-Step No Nonsense Guide to Dramatic Storytelling* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), back cover.; Scott Cherry from the Loughborough University also notices the marketing strategy of showing book's uniqueness analysing blurbs of self-help books, in: S. Cherry, 'The Ontology of a Self-Help Book: A Paradox of Its Own Existence', *Social Semiotics*, 18:3 (September 2008), pp. 340-341.

15 S. Evans & J. Kroll, 'How to Write a "How to Write" Book: The Writer as Entrepreneur', *TEXT*, 9:1 (April 2005) <<http://dSPACE2.flinders.edu.au/xmlui/bitstream/handle/2328/14070/2005100555.pdf?sequence=1>>, p. 4 (1 January 2016).

16 Z. Ingham, 'Rhetoric of Writing Instruction: Learning from Creative Writing "How-To" Books' [Paper presented at the Wyoming Conference on English] (25 June 1993), p. 4.

such publications that all people have creative potential which is blocked early in their lives as for example in *Writing Down the Bones: Freeing the Writer Within* of which the author 'assumes that there is a *writer within* and that this writer will happily risk at least \$9.95 on the chance of getting free.'¹⁷

Creative writing books also vary regarding their 'seriousness' about the topic. In *The Cambridge Introduction to Creative Writing* David Morley points out that because of this variety, so different than in case of for example scientific textbooks, many teachers avoid using those books during their creative writing workshops.¹⁸ When instructor Joan Fry asked several creative writing teachers if they were using manuals in the classroom many of them criticised those books for showing the writing process as 'too easy, too simplistically approachable through gimmick'.¹⁹ However, they pointed out that there were some essential texts on the topic which they were using during the classes, such as John Gardner's *The Art of Fiction: Notes on Craft for Young Writers* and Janet Burroway's *Writing Fiction: A Guide to Narrative Craft*. These highly regarded books of fiction writers and creative writing tutors differ from popular creative writing manuals written by 'people with dubious credential', as Fry names them.²⁰

American scholar Hans Ostrom too accentuates differences between creative writing manuals. He recognises the abundance of 'fraudulent "how-to" books on writing' resulting in criticism of this genre (and creative writing instruction in general), but he points out several serious books which are useful for students, teachers, and writers.²¹ Merely by browsing the Amazon website those 'fraudulent' books can be recognised as they promise overnight success, easy money, and writing the next *Harry Potter*. Their titles intend to attract the audience by use of words and phrases as: 'write better', 'write faster', 'write bestseller', 'publish', 'make money', 'get rich', 'all you need to know', 'success', 'write in x days'.²²

Moreover, publishers and writers want to get the audience's attention not only with catchy titles but also by use of a cover. Angus Phillips notices that the look of a cover is a

17 Ibid., p. 5.

18 D. Morley, *The Cambridge Introduction to Creative Writing* (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 6.

19 J. Fry, 'How-To Books for Writers: Who Needs 'em?', *Poets & Writers Magazine* (March-April 1995), pp. 45, 47-48.

20 Ibid., p. 41.

21 H. Ostrom, 'Bones, Triggers, Continuous Dreams: Books about Creative Writing', *AWP CHRONICLE*, 22:6 (1990), p. 10.

22 Amazon <amazon.com> (1 January 2016).

result of marketing strategies applied by publishers to target the book to the intended audience and that these techniques reveal a publishers' view of their customers as well.²³ Such strategies are called 'market positioning' which can be defined as '[a]rranging for a product to occupy a clear, distinctive and desirable place (...) in the minds of target consumers.'²⁴ Steve Evans and Jeri Kroll at the beginning of their analysis of creative writing manuals describe the way they purchased these books in order to recognise what attracted them as customers.²⁵ Previous knowledge of the author was essential for them, however they also accentuate that the first impression of a cover design and typography was an important factor during purchase. They point out that it is possible to state an author's intentions as well as the envisaged audience on the basis of the front matter and the first chapter of the book. As a result of marketing positioning the differences between the 'seriousness' of creative writing books are visible already on the covers.

Books chosen for the analysis

The books were initially chosen on basis of factors different that the book design. All chosen books are of American and British authors and they are recognised in the field of (academic) creative writing industry as they are serious enough to be recommended by other authors. And this 'seriousness' was the most important factor. After the selection it became clear however that also their cover design differs from this of 'fraudulent' creative writing guidebooks. To show those differences two groups of covers are compared here.

In group A (see FIG. 1-4) there are covers of 'fraudulent' books which will not be analysed in this thesis. Their authors and publishers try to get the audience's attention by use of bold colours, a huge font, and powerful titles. There are also a few exclamation marks used here to increase a persuasive aspect of those books. As it is important from a marketing perspective to connect to stereotypes that the general audience has about the writing profession (which will be analysed later on), items associated with this profession are often seen on the covers (such as extremely popular image of an old typewriter).²⁶ In

23 A. Phillips, 'Cover Story: Cover Design in the Marketing of Fiction', *LOGOS*, 18:1 (2007), p. 15.

24 P. Kotler et al., *Principles of Marketing* (Harlow: FT Prentice Hall, 2005), p. 31.

25 S. Evans & J. Kroll, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

26 According to typewriter historian Richard Polt, the image of a typewriter 'embodies the romantic persona of the 20th century novelist.' He calls the typewriter 'a badge of authorship', in: R. Polt, 'On Turing Tests, Robowriters, and Typewriters as Symbol and Reality', *Writing Ball*, 8 March 2015 <<http://writingball.blogspot.nl/2015/03/on-turing-tests-robowriters-and.html>> (12 April 2016); Adriaan van der Weel, new media researcher, notices that a typewriter is an authorial instrument par

those persuasive, bold, and direct books instant gratification is promised to readers by showing them already on the covers that they can become a writer overnight. This way authors and publishers take advantage of readers dreaming to be a writer but lacking actual knowledge of this profession, therefore susceptible to marketing tricks, persuasion, and promises.

Group B (see FIG. 5-8) is comprised of covers of books selected for this thesis. They are more modest and in a crowded market they stand out precisely because they are simple. Not only the simplicity of covers is used to give those books a more serious appearance, but also their layout is plain to avoid connotations with the flashy layout of popular how-to manuals.²⁷ Merely on basis of the choice of cover design and the title it is easy to notice that books from group B connect to their intended audience in less obvious way than books from group A. It can be argued then that audiences of those two group of books vary and have different expectations. It looks like the intended audience of books from group B knows more about writing process and is aware that books guaranteeing instant success are deceptive. For this reason they avoid publications which promise writing a novel in 30 days and they choose something that looks more serious to them (later we will see that this seriousness is achieved by one of the marketing tactics - imitating the form of a workshop or a textbook).

The marketing tactics used in popular books which were shown in group A are easy to recognise, merely looking at their covers it is clear what message they bring and how they persuade the reader. In books initially chosen for this thesis (represented here by group B) marketing tactics are not directly visible therefore less obvious. It seems that those books are aimed to readers who are serious about their writing career. However, as we will see later they also use many marketing tactics to address and persuade the reader. It will be argued in this thesis (on basis of the outcome of the analysis of those books) that also more serious books selected here largely aim at people who fantasise about being a writer because of the appeal of this profession. TABLE 1 gives an overview of the differences between the books chosen for this thesis and the less serious books which were omitted.

27 excellence. A typewriter is associated purely with the writer's profession, unlike for example a laptop which is used for different activities than merely writing (private conversation from 6 April 2016). This is also a tactic that we encounter in their introductions (which will be discussed later), as many authors of these manuals distance themselves from the idea of a how-to book, since those books can have a bad reputation among some readers.

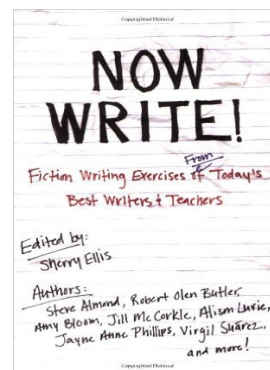
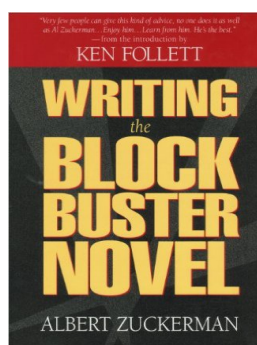
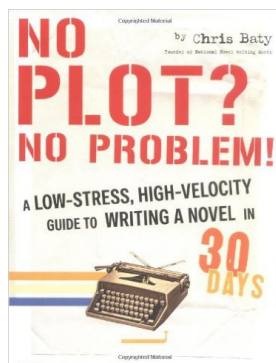
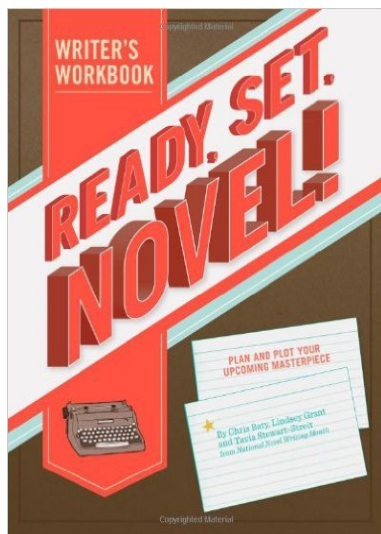


Fig. 1-4 (from left to right): Examples of covers (group A).²⁸

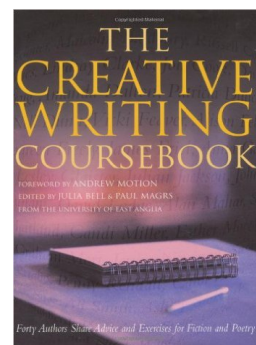
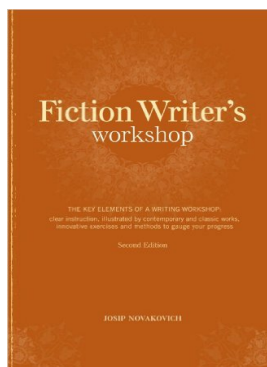
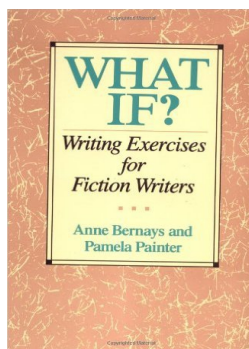
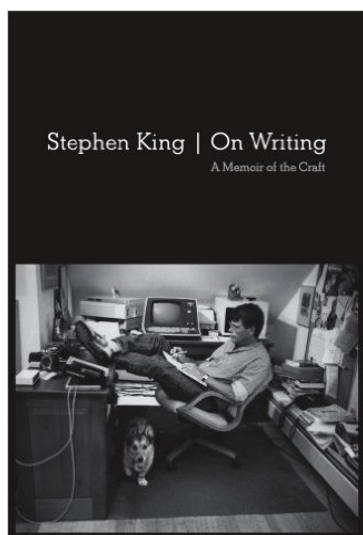


Fig. 5-8 (from left to right): Examples of covers (group B).²⁹

28 Sources of pictures from left to right: <http://www.amazon.com/Ready-Set-Novel-Lindsey-Grant/dp/1452101728/ref=sr_1_60?ie=UTF8&qid=1449518875&sr=8-60&keywords=writing+novel>, <<http://www.amazon.com/No-Plot-Problem-Low-Stress-High-Velocity/dp/0811845052>>, <http://www.amazon.com/Writing-Blockbuster-Novel-Albert-Zuckerman-ebook/dp/B005VSXLGQ/ref=sr_1_119?ie=UTF8&qid=1449518937&sr=8119&keywords=writing+novel>, <http://www.amazon.com/Now-Write-Fiction-Exercises-Teachers/dp/1585425222/ref=sr_1_61?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1449520636&sr=1-61&keywords=fiction+writing&refinements=p_n_feature_browse-bin%3A2656022011> (1 January 2016).

29 Sources of pictures from left to right: <http://www.amazon.com/Writing-10th-Anniversary-Memoir-Craft/dp/1439156816/ref=sr_1_83?ie=UTF8&qid=1449518713&sr=8-83&keywords=creative+writing>, <http://www.amazon.com/What-Writing-Exercises-Fiction-Writers/dp/0062720066/ref=sr_1_5?ie=UTF8&qid=1449525152&sr=8-5&keywords=what+if>, <http://www.amazon.com/Fiction-Writers-Workshop-Josip-Novakovich/dp/1582975361/ref=sr_1_32ie=UTF8&qid=1449518971&sr=832&keywords=fiction+writing>, <http://www.amazon.com/Creative-Writing-Coursebook-Authors-Exercises/dp/0333782259/ref=sr_1_58?ie=UTF8&qid=1449518676&sr=8-58&keywords=creative+writing> (1 January 2016).

TABLE 1: The criteria for the choice of books in this thesis.

Books omitted in this thesis (group A)	Books chosen for this thesis (group B)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ author not recognised ✓ book not well known or not recommended ✓ very persuasive title ✓ bold and persuasive design ✓ reader often addressed directly (you) in the title ✓ promise to complete a piece, publish it or succeed ✓ + in a certain time span (for example <i>How to write a bestseller in 30 Days</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ author often well established ✓ book often recommended by others (authors, researchers, or readers) ✓ no or moderate persuasion in the title ✓ modest design ✓ no direct addressing the reader in the title ✓ no promise to publish or succeed ✓ no time span

The books were not categorised beforehand. It turned out during research that they form different categories. Therefore they are roughly separated to show their diversity. Emphasis in the research was put on handbooks about writing fiction, however not all of them are books simply about how to write a novel. Ostrom calls creative writing books 'more than books on writing: They are *apologiae*, reading lists, survival manuals, autobiographies.'³⁰ Books analysed in this thesis differ as they contain the elements mentioned by Ostrom in different proportions. For example, some of them combine writing instruction with the author's memories of their own writing career (as in a famous Stephen King's book *On Writing*).³¹

Creative writing books about writing fiction

The biggest group of books selected for this thesis comprises fiction creative writing books (mostly with exercises added or in a form of a books of exercises only). *What If? Writing Exercises for Fiction Writers* is a renowned book of exercises which has already had several editions as had novelist James Scott Bell's *Plot & Structure: Techniques and Exercises for Crafting a Plot That Grips Readers from Start to Finish* (Writer's Digest Books). The latter is a part of the well-known series 'Write Great Fiction'. James N. Frey's (also a fiction author) *How to Write a Damn Good Novel: A Step-by-Step No Nonsense Guide to Dramatic Storytelling* and its sequel *How to Write a Damn Good Novel, II: Advanced Techniques for Dramatic Storytelling* (both St. Martin's Press, part of Macmillan) contain down-to-earth advice and

30 H. Ostrom, op. cit., p. 1.

31 S. King, op. cit.

although the title does not sound particularly serious this book is recognised in the book industry, therefore it is a part of this thesis. Carole Blake, experienced literary agent and the author of important *From Pitch to Publication*, calls Frey's *How to Write a Damn Good Novel* 'one of the most practical and accessible books on the subject [she has] ever read.'³² Like Frey, short stories author Josip Novakovich wrote the sequel of his book *Fiction Writer's Workshop* (2nd revised edition by Writer's Digest Books) called *Writing Fiction Step by Step* based on exercises. However, despite what Frey and Novakovich state in the introductions to their sequels, those books are quite repetitive and written probably for marketing reasons.³³

Combination of an autobiography and advice on writing

The already mentioned group of books combining authors' memories of their own career with writing instruction is represented by Stephen King's *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft* and Anne Lamott's: *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life* both written by novelists and very popular (the latter is published by Anchor Books, a part of Random House).³⁴ The popularity of King's book, described by David Morley as 'honest, clear and practical' is to a large extent a result of his well established author brand which can be defined as a wide recognition of an author.³⁵ However, Steve Evans and Jeri Kroll see King more as celebrity and compare this type of literature with culinary shows where famous chefs give their recipe for success.³⁶ Also included in this group are semi-biographical books about creativity for writers like bestselling Natalie Goldberg's *Writing Down the Bones: Freeing the Writer Within* and Julia Cameron's *The Artist's Way: A Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity* both sold in millions of copies.³⁷ The latter was initially published by an imprint

32 C. Blake, *From Pitch to Publication: Everything You Need to Know to Get Your Novel Published* (London: Macmillan, 1999), p. 358.

33 A. Bernays & P. Painter, *What If? Writing Exercises for Fiction Writers* (New York: Collins Reference, 2005); J.S. Bell *Plot & Structure: Techniques and Exercises for Crafting a Plot That Grips Readers from Start to Finish* (Cincinnati: Writer's Digest Books, 2004); J.N. Frey, op. cit.; Id., *How to Write a Damn Good Novel, II: Advanced Techniques for Dramatic Storytelling* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994); J. Novakovich, *Fiction Writer's Workshop* (Cincinnati & Ohio: Story Press, 1998); Id., *Writing Fiction Step by Step* (Cincinnati & Ohio: Story Press, 1998).

34 S. King, op. cit.; A. Lamott, *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life* (New York: Anchor Books, 1995).

35 D. Morley, op. cit., p. 175; G. Clark & A. Phillips, *Inside Book Publishing* (London & New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 50-51.

36 S. Evans & J. Kroll, op. cit., p. 8.

37 J. Cameron, *The Artist's Way: A Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity* (New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam, 2002); N. Goldberg, *Writing Down the Bones: Freeing the Writer Within* (Boston & London: Shambhala, 1986).

of Penguin, later by Pan Macmillan. These extremely popular publications had many continuations as writing those kind of books became a speciality of Cameron (artist and teacher) and Goldberg (Zen coach).³⁸

Anthologies

More general books about creative writing (mostly with academic roots) are often anthologies of texts written by scholars and artists connected to a particular educational institution and are meant to promote it along with creative writing instruction in general. Some examples of those books are *The Creative Writing Coursebook: Forty Writers Share Advice and Exercises for Poetry and Prose* published by Macmillan and *The Creative Writing Handbook: Techniques for New Writers* (2nd ed.) with accompanying *The Creative Writing Workbook* (Palgrave).³⁹ Creative writing professor David Morley is the author of *The Cambridge Introduction to Creative Writing* (and also co-editor of an anthology *The Cambridge Companion to Creative Writing*) which is an academic approach to creative writing in the form of a series of lectures on different aspects of the discipline.⁴⁰

Creative writing books accentuating the importance of reading

This group consists of creative writing guidebooks based on the belief (present also in many others creative writing books) that it is possible to learn how to write through reading and aspiring writers will be taught it. *Creative Writing: A Workbook with Readings* (Routledge) has an academic approach and it contains actual writing instructions as well, while *Reading Like a Writer: A Guide for People Who Love Books and for Those Who Want to Write Them* by Francine Prose is intended for the general public.⁴¹ The latter, published by Harper Perennial, is already in the second edition and there was a lot of media attention given to it, as for example in reviews published in important newspapers mentioned in the beginning of this chapter.

38 Julia Cameron Live <<http://juliacameronlive.com/>>; The Official Natalie Goldberg Site <<http://nataliegoldberg.com/>> (1 January 2016).

39 J. Bell & P. Magrs (eds.), *The Creative Writing Coursebook: Forty Writers Share Advice and Exercises for Poetry and Prose* (London: Macmillan, 2001); M. Luckhurst & J. Singleton (eds.), *The Creative Writing Handbook: Techniques for New Writers* (Hampshire & New York: Palgrave, 2000); J. Singleton, *The Creative Writing Workbook* (Hampshire & New York: Palgrave, 2001).

40 D. Morley, op. cit.; D. Morley & P. Neilsen, op. cit.

41 L. Anderson (ed.), *Creative Writing: A Workbook with Readings* (Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2006); F. Prose, *Reading Like a Writer: A Guide for People Who Love Books and for Those Who Want to Write Them* (New York & London: Harper Perennial, 2006).

Books on masterplots

The last group of books are those about 'masterplots' - Stephen Booker's *The Seven Basic Plots: Why We Tell Stories* and Christopher Vogler's *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Writers*.⁴² Booker and Vogler claim that there are universal plots recognisable by all people (often unconsciously) and storytelling is based on them. The importance of stories in people's life is accentuated by those authors as well by other researchers and novelists.⁴³ Although books about masterplots are more often associated with screenwriting manuals, they can also be used in fiction writing and are indeed recommended by other creative writing guidebooks' authors.⁴⁴ *The Writer's Journey* has already seen several editions and thousand copies of it have been sold. According to Carole Blake this book '[a]lthough aimed at scriptwriters, (...) is an invaluable guide to powerful narrative, by a story executive with 20th Century Fox'.⁴⁵ Vogler's book is published by Los Angeles based Michael Wiese Productions specialised in books for screenwriters and filmmakers. Some examples of those publications are: *Cinematic Storytelling: The 100 Most Powerful Film Conventions Every Filmmaker Must Know*, *The Power of Film*, or bestselling *Save the Cat! The Last Book on Screenwriting You'll Ever Need*.⁴⁶

The groups of books listed above were the basis of research conducted in this thesis in order to recognise the methods of addressing the intended audience by both publishers (the paratext) as well as authors (in the content).

42 C. Booker, *The Seven Basic Plots: Why We Tell Stories* (London & New York: Continuum, 2011); C. Vogler, *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Writers* (Los Angeles: Michael Wiese Productions, 2007); Narratologist H. Porter Abott uses the term 'masterplot' which he considers the best suitable term to describe universal, archetypical narrations (for example the story of Cinderella categorised by Booker as a popular 'Rags to Riches' group of plots), in: H.P. Abbott, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative* (Cambridge & New York, Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 46-47.

43 According to novelist Paul Auster, '[h]uman beings need stories and we're looking for them in all kinds of places (...)' Therefore he does not agree with the statement that novel will soon cease to exist because of the digital developements, in: P. Auster, 'Why Roth Is Wrong About the Novel', *Big Think* <<http://bigthink.com/videos/why-roth-is-wrong-about-the-novel>> (1 January 2016); Researcher Jonathan Gottschall discusses the importance of storytelling to the human race at length using scientific theories and many remarkable examples in his book *The Storytelling Animal. How Stories Make Us Human* (Boston & New York: Mariner Books, 2013).

44 A. Bernays & P. Painter, op. cit., p. 94; J. Bell & P. Magrs (eds.), op. cit., pp. 204-206, 214; D. Morley, op. cit., pp. 164-165; More about screenwriting manuals, their authors, and publishers is to find in: B. Conor, 'Gurus and Oscar Winners: How-To Screenwriting Manuals in the New Cultural Economy', *Television & New Media*, 15:2 (2014), pp. 121-138.

45 C. Blake, op. cit., p. 359.

46 Source of the titles: promotional material at the end of Vogler's book.

Chapter Two

The Appeal of Being a Writer

This chapter aims to establish the motivation of the intended audience for creative writing guidebooks. Why do people participate in creative writing workshops, go on writing holidays, check the numerous sites with tips about writing, and - most of all - why they buy creative writing manuals? How do they envisage the writer's profession and how much do they really know about the reality of this profession?

The definition of writer's profession itself is already very confusing. There are many different views on being a writer and a lot of misconceptions about it. Giulia Furegato writing about the fate of authorship in the digital age states that it is difficult to define this profession according to a standard definition, where '[a] professional (...) has to be educated and trained, (socialized) as member of an occupational domain, supervised by his/her peers and held accountable.'⁴⁷ Based on this definition it is impossible to be a doctor without a degree and training.⁴⁸ However, professional writers certainly do not need a certificate to write.

Discussion if writing can be learned reveals different views on the writer's profession and contributes to even more confusion around this profession. Is writing just a craft which can be learned by anybody or is writing a gift which only some people possess? The creative writing industry is based on the statement that everybody can be a writer.⁴⁹ Many authors of creative writing guidebooks try to debunk the myth of writing being 'something esoteric, unpindownable, something inspired by muses and shaped by genius.'⁵⁰ The idea that everyone has the ability to become an author - present in many creative writing guidebooks and being one of the marketing tactics discussed later- influences the motivation of the target audience of creative writing books as they are told that everyone can be a writer.

By contrast, many writers themselves and even some creative writing teachers (!),

47 Quote from: M. Noordegraaf & W. Schinkel, 'Professionalism as Symbolic Capital: Materials for a Bourdieusian Theory of Professionalism', *Comparative Sociology*, 10 (2011), p. 69, cited by G. Furegato, 'I Write, Therefore I Am (a Writer). Online Self-publishing and the Future of Authorship', *Yapp Reader* (Book and Digital Media Studies publication, the Leiden University), 2013, p. 103.

48 M. Noordegraaf & W. Schinkel, loc. cit.

49 D. Ugresic, op. cit., p. 29.

50 J. Bell & P. Magrs (eds.), op. cit., p. XI.

claim that not everybody has the talent or other qualities needed to be a writer.⁵¹ They cast doubt on the idea that writing is merely a craft which it is possible to learn. The notion of genius or vocation is widely shared. A good example is the work of American novelist and poet Charles Bukowski which is based on this idea. He strongly believes that it is impossible to 'become' a writer. He also harshly criticises people who aspire to be an author yet claiming that they have obstacles and therefore they cannot start:

if you're going to create
you're going to create whether you work
16 hours a day in a coal mine
or
you're going to create in a small room with 3 children
while you're on
welfare,
(...) air and light and time and space
have nothing to do with it
and don't create anything
except maybe a longer life to find
new excuses
for.⁵²

It seems that to many people being a writers is clerely merely a role, an attractive lifestyle they want to share, but they do not have qualities needed. Canadian author Margaret Atwood tells with laughter about how she is surprised by many people asking her how to begin (which she considers should come naturally though) and claiming that they want to write (or rather 'be authors'), but when asked what they want to write about, they say they have no idea...⁵³ Authors and publishers of creative writing guidebooks are aware that the

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- 51 There are creative writing instructors who admit that they cannot make a living as a writer and that is the reason why they teach, although they think that talent is given and that it is impossible to teach somebody how to write. Some of them even have moral doubts, as they feel that they promise the impossible and take money for it. Such confessions can be found for example in: R. Boudinot, 'Things I Can Say about MFA Writing Programs Now That I No Longer Teach in One', *The Stranger*, 27 February <<http://www.thestranger.com/books/features/2015/02/27/21792750/things-i-can-say-about-mfa-writing-programs-now-that-i-no-longer-teach-in-one>> (1 January 2016); L. Freed, 'Doing Time: My Years in the Creative-Writing Gulag', *Harper's Magazine*, July 2005, pp. 65-72; F. Kupfer, 'The Dream, and the Reality, of Writing Fiction', *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 49:20 (24 January 2003), p. B5 (1p.); According to Francine Prose, neither 'the love of language' nor 'a gift of storytelling' can be taught. Despite this, as a teacher of creative writing she cannot simply say that it is impossible to teach writing at all, because 'what would it say about [her], [her] students, and the hours [they'd] spent in the classroom' (F. Prose, op. cit., p. 1). To compensate she recalls that as a student she took a creative writing class which was very useful, because it taught her to edit her work. During the workshop she also had an audience for the first time. Yet, she claims that reading, not workshops, taught her how to write (F. Prose, loc. cit.).
- 52 M. Popova, 'Charles Bukowski on the Ideal Conditions and Myths of Creativity, Illustrated', *Brain Pickings* <<http://www.brainpickings.org/2013/10/04/charles-bukowski-air-and-light-and-time-and-space/>> (1 January 2016).
- 53 M. Atwood, 'Margaret Atwood's Creative Process', *Big Think* <<http://bigthink.com/videos/margaret->

motivation of many buyers of their books is the desire to be part of a writer's world. The buyers do not know what to write about, they lack imagination and they seem to be too preoccupied with the conditions of writing to actually create. There are many creative writing books addressed to such people, some examples are *642 Things to Write About* or *1,000 Awesome Writing Prompts*.⁵⁴

Not only do aspiring authors admit that they do not have writing topics, but they also claim that they do not have time to write. There are plenty of guidebooks on the market aimed at aspiring authors deluding themselves that lack of time prevent them from writing, for instance *How to Find Time to Write. Overcome Writer's Block, Start Writing and Write Faster!* or *Anti-Procrastination For Writers: The Writers Guide to Stop Procrastinating, Start Writing and Create a Daily Writing Ritual*.⁵⁵ Writer's block mentioned in one of those titles is a serious psychological condition and many writers - one of the most famous examples is American poet and novelist Sylvia Plath - suffered from it (for example when they were unable to create something as good as their successful debut). However many aspiring authors claim that they have a writer's block while they have not started to write yet. Jason Rekulak addresses his book *The Writer's Block. 786 Ideas to Jump-start Your Imagination* among other to people who 'claim to live in a perpetual state of writer's block'.⁵⁶ It is very likely that buyers of books promising to help with overcoming obstacles will never start to write. Those buyers use creative writing guidebooks as remedy against imaginary problems they have which prevent them from becoming a real writer. It seems that such people desperately want to belong to the appealing world of writers even when they lack imagination or when they procrastinate justifying it by writer's block or lack of time. They buy creative writing manuals to gain a sense of belonging to the glamorous, compelling writer's world they imagine.

Results of a 2015 *YouGov* survey in UK confirm that the public considers being an author as very prestigious; as a result, it is a desired job for 60% of respondents (see Fig. 9).⁵⁷

atwoods-creative-process> (1 January 2016).

54 Source of titles: Amazon <amazon.com> (1 January 2016).

55 Ibid.

56 J. Rekulak, *The Writer's Block. 786 Ideas to Jump-Start Your Imagination* (Philadelphia & London: Running Press, 2001), n. pag.

57 W. Dahlgreen, 'Bookish Britain: Literary Jobs Are the Most Desirable', *YouGov.uk*, 15 February 2015 <<https://yougov.co.uk/news/2015/02/15/bookish-britain-academic-jobs-are-most-desired/>> (1 January 2016).

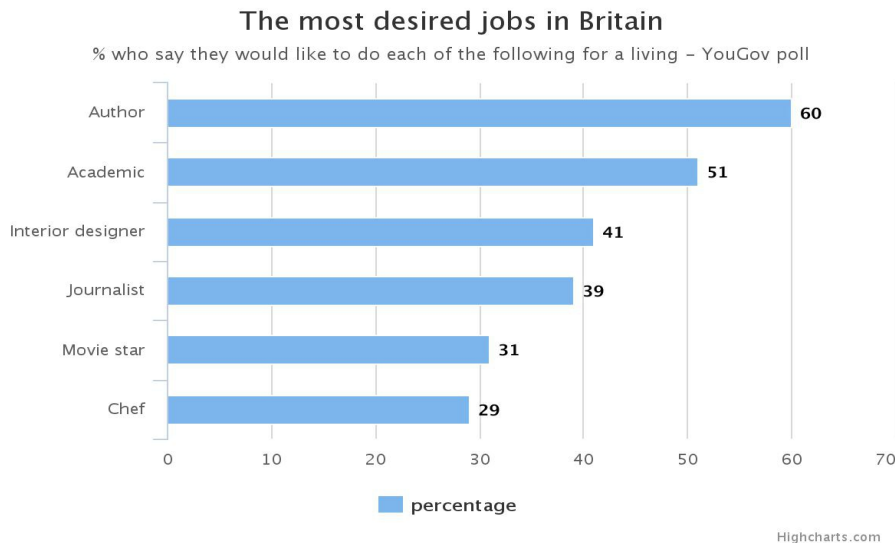


Fig. 9: The most desired jobs in Britain.⁵⁸

After releasing the poll results there were many reactions to it. Many critics pointed out that there is a clash between idealised opinion about the writer's profession which aspiring writers have and the reality of it. Journalist Tim Lott writes in *The Guardian* that '[t]he fact that people fantasise about being an author only proves how little they know about the reality of the job'.⁵⁹ He enumerates challenges and problems that writers have to deal with (such as rejections) to show the general audience that its perception of this profession is to a large extent wrong. Also author and journalist Chas Newkey-Burden argues in *The Telegraph* with the most common misconceptions about a writer profession. He begins with the stereotype about writers' incomes, which are on average 'below (...) the minimum required for a socially acceptable standard of living', while according to a general opinion professional writers earn millions of dollars.⁶⁰ There are indeed wealthy bestselling authors, such as for example Stephen King or J.K. Rowling, however, a general audience assumes that they represent the profession. *Forbes'* annual rapport 'The World's Top-Earning Authors' definitely does not help the audience to be more realistic about how much writers earn. The report says that the richest author in 2015 was the creator of the popular

58 Ibid.

59 T. Lott, 'You Think Writing's a Dream Job? It's More Like a Horror Film', *The Guardian*, 20 February 2015 <<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/feb/20/tim-lott-life-as-an-author>> (1 January 2016).

60 C. Newkey-Burden, '14 Reasons Why You Shouldn't Dream of Being a Full-Time Author', *The Telegraph*, 20 February 2015 <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/men/the-filter/11422473/14-reasons-why-you-shouldnt-dream-of-being-a-full-time-author.html>> (1 January 2016).

Alex Cross series James Patterson who earned 89 million dollars and this spectacular amount of money surely contributes to creating the false image of writers' salaries.⁶¹ Many other professional writers advise aspiring authors to be more realistic about the writing profession. Margaret Atwood warns them:

You most likely need (...) a grip on reality. This latter means: there's no free lunch. Writing is work. It's also gambling. You don't get a pension plan. Other people can help you a bit, but essentially you're on your own. Nobody is making you do this: you chose it, so don't whine.⁶²

It seems that despite these articles and numerous pieces of advice available to aspiring authors many people want to be a writer even knowing how difficult this profession is. Stephen Brown and Anthony Patterson in their article about bestselling authors say with sarcasm that despite a writer's profession being tough 'there is no shortage of contenders ready to try (...) spurred on by the allure of celebrity, monetary reward and the prospect of having their words consecrated, immortalised'.⁶³ They rightly point out that financial benefits are not the only one motivation of amateurs who dream about the writing profession.

Many other critics observe that the desire of amateurs to become writers is often not motivated by money at all, but that there are intangible benefits associated with this profession. Why is being an author considered to be more attractive for the general audience than being a film star? What is it that makes the profession of a writer so alluring if it is not money? In her book about writing based on her lectures at Cambridge University Margaret Atwood asks the same questions. She notices that: '*Being a writer* (...) seems to be a socially acknowledged role, and one that carries some sort of weight or impressive significance - we hear a capital W on *Writer*.'⁶⁴ Also Dubravka Ugresic in her essay called *The Aura of Glamour* wonders why so many people want to be authors and states that in the public eye 'the aura of exclusivity' is assigned to this profession.⁶⁵ Ugresic notices a

61 'The World's Top-Earning Authors 2015' [Gallery], *Forbes*, 16 October 2015 <<http://www.forbes.com/pictures/emjl45edjek/the-worlds-top-earning-a/>> (1 January 2016).

62 M. Atwood, 'Margaret Atwood's Rules for Writers', *The Guardian*, 22 February 2010 <<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2010/feb/22/margaret-atwood-rules-for-writers>> (28 February 2016).

63 S. Brown & A. Patterson, 'A Step-by-Step Guide to *Bridget Jones's Diary*, *Fight Club* and the *How to Industry*', in: S. Brown (ed.), *Consuming Books: The Marketing and Consumption of Literature* (London & New York: Routledge 2006), p. 183.

64 M. Atwood, *Negotiating with the Dead: A Writer on Writing* (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 4.

65 D. Ugresic, op. cit., p. 52.

paradoxical situation: everybody today can be an author (so it is not an elite profession any more); however, in people's opinion being a writer is still exclusive. She calls the glamour that people dream of 'a populist longing, a sign of absence.'⁶⁶

Bill Keller from *The New York Times* does not consider money as motivation to write either.⁶⁷ Writing about the increased number of authors flooding the market with books on different topics, he complains that he lost his staff because everybody is currently writing a book and there is nobody to work for him. Trying to answer the question what the motivation of his employees is, he states that people who want to become writers do not even want to get rich, but they rather wish to belong to the world of writers and their books would be for them 'a credential, a trophy, a pathway'.⁶⁸ They want the glamour which they associate with this profession, the prestige of being a published author, and the fame.

Even some teachers of creative writing at academic level observe that many of their students do not care about writing and reading which is essential for writing they just want the allure of being a writer. Lynn Freed says about an aspiring writer from her class, that '[w]hat she is really after (...) is glamour. If I told her that the life of a writer is not glamorous, she would laugh.'⁶⁹ Fern Kupfer writes ironically about his students who 'find the prospect - or the fantasy - of the writer's life so compelling that they want to be writers when they grow up.'⁷⁰ Also novelist Richard Bausch notices that such 'fantasy' motivates many aspiring writers.⁷¹ He begins his critique of the market of creative writing books with the memory of a visit at a small publishing press specialised in those books where he was shocked by their number. The owner, claiming that the world is unbelievably full of aspiring writers even offered him a substantial amount of money for writing a guidebook and she was sure that he would 'knock one of these off in a few days.'⁷² However he refused as for him those books promise that it is possible to become an author simply by reading them. Many people believe in such promises and buy dozens of how-to publications, as they want

66 Ibid., p. 53.

67 B. Keller, 'Let's Ban Books, Or at Least Stop Writing Them', *The New York Times Magazine*, 13 July 2011 <<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/17/magazine/bill-keller-wants-to-ban-books.html>> (1 January 2016).

68 Ibid.

69 L. Freed, op. cit., p. 70.

70 F. Kupfer, op. cit., p. B5 (1p.).

71 R. Bausch, 'How to Write in 700 Easy Lessons: The Case Against Writing Manuals', *The Atlantic: Fiction 2010 Issue* <<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2010/08/how-to-write-in-700-easy-lessons/308043/>> (1 January 2016).

72 Ibid.

to take a shortcut to the writing career about which they do not know much (otherwise they would know that there is no shortcut). Bausch met many amateurs collecting creative writing manuals which are for them an entrance ticket to the profession they consider so attractive. Bausch recalls one of those meetings with somebody for whom '[b]eing a writer is a stance he wants to take. (...) He came to it from deciding it might be cool to walk around in that role.'⁷³ His conclusion is that the flourishing market of these books takes advantage of this type of person based on 'their hope of finding the way to *be* a writer, rather than doing the work'.⁷⁴ This hope makes those people a perfect target to marketers of creative writing guidebooks.

This chapter has sought to find the motivation of the audience of creative writing guidebooks. It aimed to show that this audience's opinion about writer's profession is based on misconceptions. Moreover, the reasons behind the desire of amateurs to become an author were investigated along with the issue that the creative writing industry, in particular the creative writing guidebooks industry, takes advantage of this desire. These findings will be used in Chapter Three to describe how creative writing guidebooks are marketed to their intended audience. The next chapter will also show how authors of those books envisage their intended audience and how they address it using the desire to be a part of something glamorous and special, as the writer's profession is imagined to be.

73 *Ibid.*

74 *Ibid.*

Chapter Three

Marketing of Creative Writing Guidebooks

Part I

Targeting the Intended Audience

As we already know both the market of creative writing books described in Chapter One as well as the motivation of their intended audience (Chapter Two) the following chapter of this thesis (divided into two parts) will look at the ways these books are marketed to this intended audience. It will begin with some essential marketing principles of market segmentation (in case of creative writing books: the important 'psychographic segment') and targeting the product to the right audience, with accentuating the importance of 'aspirational groups' (all terms will be explained below).

As all consumers differ there is no such thing as 'a general audience'. Angus Phillips describes the ways books are marketed in order to reach the part of audience they are intended for.⁷⁵ Targeting the right audience is especially important in contemporary publishing as it has changed from a 'product-led' to 'market-led' industry.⁷⁶ In her book about the marketing of English literature Claire Squire defines this change as a 'switch of publishing power from editorial to sales and marketing.'⁷⁷ In a market-led publishing industry the need to understand consumers is crucial.

Phillips uses a marketing theory of consumer segmentation in order to show differences between audiences based among others on customers' age, gender, as well as on their geographical and cultural diversity. In addition, there is one more type of consumer segmentation particularly interesting in the case of creative writing guidebooks: 'psychographic segmentation' based on customer's view of themselves, on 'their interests, aspirations and feelings.'⁷⁸ Phillips states that this important type of audience segmentation is not yet used sufficiently by marketers who should understand that people have an image of themselves (called 'self-image' or 'self-concept') which influences their consumer behaviour. That is to say, the things they buy 'contribute to and reflect their identities: (...)

75 A. Phillips, op. cit., passim.

76 Ibid., p. 15.

77 C. Squires, *Marketing Literature: The Making of Contemporary Writing in Britain* (Hampshire & New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 1.

78 A. Phillips, op. cit., p. 16.

"we are what we have".⁷⁹ The purchase is thus often influenced by a self-image which consumers have and not only follows this self-image, but also supports it.

Phillips recalls the case of novels based on the popular series *Sex and the City*. The phenomenon of these novels was analysed by romance literature researcher Danuta Kean, who calls them 'a fashion statement' and 'an accessory' and compares their role to the role of glamour magazines.⁸⁰ Creative writing manuals also may serve their buyers as accessories.⁸¹ In Chapter Two where the motivation of creative guidebooks' buyers was analysed it was argued that these people desire to be an author, even when they do not care about actual writing. Creative writing guidebooks are meant for them to construct their imaginary self-image of being a writer as they admire what they regard as this glamorous profession. Beside books aspiring authors also use other accessories associated with the writer's profession such as fancy notebooks. The Internet merchandising of such accessories (including books) is flourishing (see FIG. 10).



FIG. 10: Writer's accessories.⁸²

Phillips mentions Barnes & Noble's founder, Leonard Riggio, who has a deep understanding of the importance of the self-concept to consumer motivation and that understanding is the

79 P. Kotler et al., op. cit., p. 268.

80 D. Kean, 'The Sassy New Romantics', *Bookseller*, 4 April 2005, pp. 22-23.

81 Accessory is 'an object or device not essential in itself but adding to the beauty, convenience, or effectiveness of something else', in: 'Accessory' [lemma], *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* <<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/accessory>> (28 February 2016).

82 Better with a Pen <<http://betterwithapenblog.com/christmas-gifts-for-writers/>> (22 January 2016).

key to the success of his company. Although Riggio is a bookseller and not a publisher, in a market-led publishing industry it is important for publishers to use booksellers' knowledge about their customers. According to Riggio, people often do not buy books to read them, but they use these books to gain the sense of belonging to the group they admire:

People buy books for what the purchase says about them - their taste, their cultivation, their trendiness. Their aim (...) is to connect themselves (...) with all the other refined owners of Edgar Allan Poe collections or sensitive owners of Virginia Woolf collections.⁸³

Riggio - an excellent marketer - is aware of the fact that groups to which consumers belong or aspire to belong (called in marketing 'reference groups', see FIG. 11) have a strong influence on consumers' self-image. Their desire to be like the other members of those groups influences the choices they make during purchasing.⁸⁴

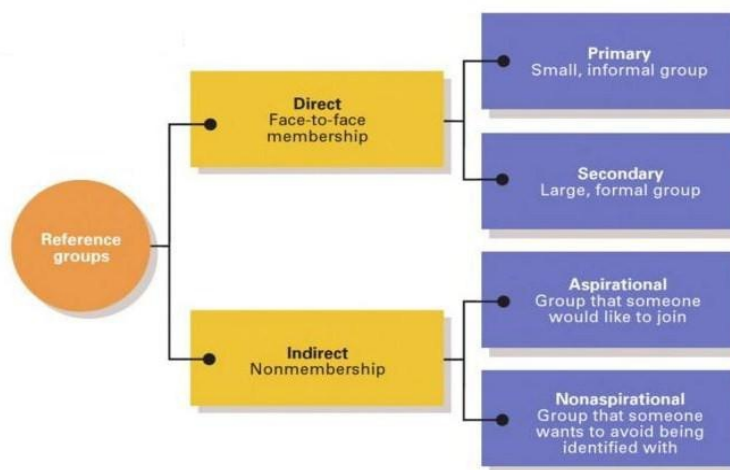


Fig. 11: Types of reference groups.⁸⁵

For the marketing of creative writing guidebooks the most important reference group is 'the aspirational group':

An aspirational group is a reference group that an individual wishes to associate with. It is often the reference group of another individual whom one finds admirable or inspiring. In aspirational groups, there is a significant amount of prestige or notability that an outside individual desires to attribute to his or her identity.⁸⁶

83 M. Magnet, 'Let's Go for Growth', *Fortune*, 7 March 1994 <http://archive.fortune.com/magazines/fortune/fortune_archive/1994/03/07/79048/index.htm> (3 March 2016).

84 P. Kotler et al., op. cit., p. 260.

85 C.W. Lamb et al., *Essentials of Marketing* (Mason: South-Western Cengage Learning, 2009), p. 157.

86 D.N. Salmon, 'Reference Groups: Aspirational and Non-Aspirational Groups in Consumer Behavior', *XULAnexUS: Xavier University of Louisiana's Undergraduate Research Journal*, 5:1 (April 2008), p. 3

Aspirational groups can have a strong influence even when customers will never meet the actual members of those groups (such as football players or singers).⁸⁷ In the case of creative writing guidebooks the purchasers wish to belong to the aspirational group of writers, however this wish is unrealistic. For these purchasers being a writer is merely an attractive lifestyle and owning creative writing guidebooks symbolises the writer's role they wish to embody. Lifestyle can be defined as 'a person's pattern of living as expressed in his or her activities, interests and opinions. (...) It profiles a person's whole pattern of acting and interacting in the world.'⁸⁸ Many marketers use the strategy of showing consumers the lifestyle that is attractive to them, such as, for example, the lifestyle of British high society depicted in an ad by fashion house Dunhill (see Fig. 12). Very often consumers' knowledge of a certain lifestyle is based on idealisation as was argued in Chapter Two to show that buyers of creative writing guidebooks do not know much about the writer's profession. Their lack of knowledge along with their unrealistic desire to belong to this aspirational group of writers is used for marketing by publishers of creative writing guidebooks. It can be argued that the whole creative writing industry is geared towards giving amateurs hope that they can become part of the writers' world.



*Fig. 12: Example of a lifestyle advertisement.*⁸⁹

[emphasis added].

87 P. Kotler et al., op. cit., p. 260.

88 Ibid., p. 265.

89 Por Homme <<http://porhomme.com/2014/07/dunhill-fallwinter-2014-campaign/>> (22 January 2016).

According to Phillips, publishers should more widely use the marketing principles described above (as for example in the case of successful novels based on *Sex and the City*). Some publishers are gradually becoming more aware of the connection between customers' lifestyle and their decision to buy a certain book. For instance publishers have discovered the retail potential in channels different than (online) bookshops.⁹⁰ Various shops connected to a certain lifestyle - like fashion boutiques or garden centres - are places which have selling potential to publishers. Customers are very likely to purchase a book reflecting the theme of the shop, as the book connects to their lifestyle: real or desired. Publishers who recognise the link between a lifestyle and the purchase of books are able to reach their audience through unconventional channels: from selling culinary books at the butcher's to 'boutiques where high-end literary titles are used to amplify the elegant lifestyle they are attempting to project.'⁹¹

This part of the thesis aimed to show the marketing potential of understanding the connection between desired lifestyle of the customers and the book purchase. Understanding of the marketing principles described above is crucial to publishers of creative writing manuals in order to successfully market their books. They have to be aware of the self-image of those readers who desire to be writers. In the case of the creative writing how-to books their authors also use marketing tactics, as they know their audience and its aspirations along with its view on the writer's profession. By the use of marketing tactics publishers and authors give their readers hope that it is reachable for them to gain the alluring lifestyle of writers. Specific tactics which authors and publishers use to target creative writing guidebooks to their intended audience will be analysed in the second part of this chapter.

90 J. Bosman, 'Selling Literature to Go with Your Style', *The New York Times*, 2 November 2006
<<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/11/02/books/02books.html?ref=arts&r=0>> (28 February 2016).

91 Ibid.

Part II

Marketing in the Paratext and in the Content

Before the analysis it is useful to ask if readers of creative writing manuals are aware of marketing tactics used in creative writing books. As customers are exposed to different forms of marketing they have become 'marketing literate' as Stephen Brown calls them.⁹² Dirk de Geest and An Goris suspect that some readers of creative writing manuals can indeed recognise the marketing methods used to give a false picture of the creative writing process. These scholars argue that readers' desire to become an author overpowers their awareness of marketing persuasion: 'Of course, buyers of handbooks may be well aware of this tendentious and misleading presentation of creative writing, but why should they be denied their dreams?'⁹³

This part will analyse marketing tactics used by publishers and authors of creative writing manuals in their paratext as well as in their content. The term 'paratext' coined by French philosopher Gerard Genette describes the part of a book which is additional to the actual content.⁹⁴ The paratext, by use of which the text is presented to the readers, affects readers' reception of the text. Genette distinguishes further between 'a peritext' ('the title or the preface, (...) the titles of chapters or certain notes') and 'an epitext' (promotional materials outside the book).⁹⁵ According to researcher Graham Allen, epitext comprises 'interviews, publicity announcements, reviews by and addresses to critics, private letters and other authorial and editorial discussions – "outside" of the text in question.'⁹⁶ Although several reviews were already mentioned in Chapter One, marketing strategies involving in the epitext of the books analysed here will be out of scope of this thesis.

Martyn Lyons analysing readers' behaviour, notices that the peritext, which he calls 'physical aspects of the book', contains information about the intended audience and its motivation.⁹⁷ According to him, the intended audience might be visible in the actual content, but 'stronger clues are usually found in the commercial or editing strategies

92 S. Brown, 'O Customer, Where Art Thou?', *Business Horizons*, 47:4 (July-August 2004), p. 64.

93 D. de Geest & A. Goris, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

94 G. Genette, 'Introduction to Paratext', *New Literary History*, 22:2 (Spring 1991), *passim*.

95 *Ibid.*, pp. 263-264.

96 G. Allen, *Intertextuality* (London & New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 103.

97 M. Lyons, *A History of Reading and Writing in the Western World* (Hampshire & New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 3.

chosen by the publisher to reach the desired market.¹⁹⁸ However, in the case of creative writing guidebooks this desired market is clearly visible in their content; therefore, it is important to thoroughly investigate the in-text marketing strategies used in these books.

Paratextual tactics (cover, blurb, praise, introduction, table of contents):

Showing authority and presenting the book as useful

When the readers take the book in their hands they focus their attention on the cover and on the paratextual information either on the cover or inside the book (for example the table of contents). Therefore, it makes sense to start this analysis with an overview of marketing strategies used in the paratext of creative writing guidebooks. The cover design of books analysed here was already discussed in Chapter One. It was noticed there that simple design is used to make the books look more serious and differentiate them from the popular how-to books.

'Workshops in print'⁹⁹

Many creative writing guidebooks imitate the workshop form (alternatively the form of a textbook needed during creative writing workshop) which is associated by readers with a practical approach. This imitation is already visible in their titles such as: *Creative Writing: A Workbook with Readings*, *The Creative Writing Coursebook*, *The Creative Writing Handbook*, *Fiction Writer's Workshop*. We encounter it also in the blurbs. In one of them we read that '[t]his book exemplifies the best of a writing workshop: thought provoking instruction, a charismatic teacher and illuminating examples from (...) literary masters.'¹⁰⁰ Imitating the workshop gives readers a feeling to be in classroom with actual teachers and co-students. This tactic is also used in the actual content. For example, authors of *What if?* show plenty of examples of pieces written by their students as during traditional creative writing classes people read and criticise each other's work.¹⁰¹

Predictable structure

Creative writing guidebooks tend to have predictable structure which readers will notice

98 Ibid., p. 9.

99 S. Evans & J. Kroll, op. cit., p. 12; Evans and Kroll analysed Australian creative writing guidebooks in the article 'How to Write a "How to Write" Book: The Writer as Entrepreneur'. As some elements of creative writing manuals in general are very repetitive, several findings in this thesis overlap with those of Australian researchers, which will be indicated.

100 J. Novakovich, J., *Fiction Writer's Workshop* 1st ed., back cover.

101 A. Bernays & P. Painter, op. cit., passim.

already by looking at the table of contents. Most fiction writing guidebooks are structured in the same way, as readers of those books are used to the predictable structure and have expectations that the book will reflect it (see TABLE 2).¹⁰² It is noticeable that the structure of creative writing guidebooks consists of the parts which were recognised in Andrew Levy's description of creative writing guidebooks from the beginning of the 20th century.¹⁰³ In those early books there is an equivalent of the part 'Getting Started' where the reader is told how to collect the writing material (for example from his or her experience). Then the important fiction elements like plot, setting, or dialogue are presented in an order similar to that in TABLE 2. Attention in early manuals is also devoted to editing and publishing the final work. Books analysed here continue this tradition which can explain the repetitiveness of their form. What is also remarkable, early creative writing guidebooks use some tactics which will be analysed later in this chapter. The books begin with showing the reader that the author is an expert in the field, then they praise creative writing instruction, and claim that creative writing is possible to learn.¹⁰⁴

TABLE 2: The structure of a typical creative writing guidebook.¹⁰⁵

J. Novakovich		<i>The Creative Writing Coursebook</i>	<i>What If?</i>	<i>Creative Writing. A Workbook with Readings</i>
<i>Fiction Writer's Workshop</i>	<i>Writing Fiction Step by Step</i>			
Sources of Fiction	Ideas for Fiction	Getting Started	Beginnings	
Rob the Cradle	Experience	Keeping Your Eyes Open		
		Autobiography	Who Are You?	Using Memory
		Notebooks, On Keeping a Diary	Notebooks and Journals, and Memory	Keeping a Writer's Notebook
Rob from Books			Learning from the	Readings

102 There are books in which more than one genre are discussed as Luckhurst's and Singleton's *The Creative Writing Handbook* (op. cit.) with chapters like: 'The Short Story', 'Innovative Fiction and the Novel', 'Writing Verse', 'Native Fictions for Film and Television', 'Drama: Writing for Stage and Radio', 'Journalism'. This group of creative writing guides tends to be more superficial as they cannot discuss all the genres thoroughly. The aim of such books is clearly to reach a broader audience.

103 A. Levy, op. cit., pp. 90-92.

104 Ibid., pp. 88-89.

105 For the sake of comparison some chapters were omitted or their order was slightly changed.

Character	Character	Characterization	Characterization	Character Creation
Setting	Setting I, II	Setting	Place, Setting, and Milieu	Setting
Point of View	Point of View	Point of View	Perspective and Point of View	Point of View I, II
Plot	Plot	Plotting and Shaping	Plot	Structure
Dialogue and Scene	Dialogue		Dialogue	
Beginnings and Endings	Beginning and Developing		Beginnings, How to Develop and Finish Stories	Finding a Form: Writing a Narrative
Revision	Putting it All Together ¹⁰⁶	Revising		Editing I, II

The author is a professional

The fact that authors of creative writing books are professionals gives them the authority. As they are successful themselves they then have the right to teach others how to succeed. To market creative writing guidebooks it is thus essential to show the readers the professionalism of authors by highlighting authors' experience on the cover (sometimes additionally in the introduction). Also showing that authors are teachers as well helps to create the academic climate and adds prestige to the book, for example: '*Creative Writing: A Workbook with Readings* has been written by five published authors who are also experienced writing tutors.'¹⁰⁷

Other professionals recommend the book

Praise for creative writing guidebooks is written mostly by other tutors or authors to further justify the publication. An instructor from the Portland State University writes about Josip Novakovich's *Fiction Writer's Workshop* that it 'is one of the best books [she has]

106 It is noticeable that the content of the two Novakovich's books is almost identical.

107 L. Anderson (ed.), op. cit., p. 12; Also Evans and Kroll recognises that these books put emphasis on author's professionalism, in: S. Evans & J. Kroll, op. cit., p. 18.

seen on the teaching and learning of writing.¹⁰⁸ Poet Blake Morrison calls *Creative Writing: A Workbook with Readings* 'an invaluable guide, full of useful tips, mind-freeing exercises, and inspiring wisdom from established authors.'¹⁰⁹ Bestselling books, like for example Francine Prose's *Reading Like a Writer* or Stephen King's *On Writing* contain testimonials from newspapers and magazines which show the reader that these books are already famous and widely discussed. One of the quoted authors says about Prose's book that '[h]er guide to reading and writing belongs on every writer's bookshelf alongside E.M. Forster's *Aspects of the Novel*.'¹¹⁰ This is particularly interesting praise. Its author tries to make a canonical text out of *Reading Like a Writer* by comparing it with 1927 Foster's book.¹¹¹

Whoever you are, this book is for you

Publishers often aim their books at an audience broader than merely aspiring writers, as they claim that their advice is also useful for experienced writers, teachers, and for everybody interested in the topic: 'from kitchen-table enthusiasts and armchair addicts dreaming of writing steaming romances to purposeful and ambitious students (...)'¹¹² This is another marketing tactic intended to reach a broad audience. It is visible in the blurb or in the introduction.

This is not a how-to book

Many authors of guidebooks also try to distance themselves (mostly in the introduction) from the idea of creative writing how-to book, as those types of books can not be perceived as serious and also to simplify the complicated process of writing. This strategy was already mentioned in the first chapter during the analysis of creative writing books' design. It is connected to the fact that from the beginning this genre was (and still is) criticised by those who do not believe that writing could be learned.¹¹³ Critics of creative writing manuals argue that these books mislead readers about the difficulty of writing, because they show writing as an easy to learn skill. By doing that creative writing guidebooks lead readers to believe that 'literature is a trade, like plumbing, or tailoring...'¹¹⁴ Some of these books even

108 J. Novakovich, J., *Fiction Writer's Workshop*, back cover.

109 L. Anderson (ed.), op. cit., p. 1.

110 F. Prose, op. cit., p. II.

111 *Aspects of the Novel* [lemma], *Encyclopedia.com*, <<http://www.encyclopedia.com/article-1G2-3424200013/aspects-novel.html>> (22 January 2016).

112 J. Singleton, op. cit., p. IX.

113 A. Levy, op. cit., p. 89.

114 Loc. cit.

act as a useful toolbox containing all the tools which are needed to construct literary pieces.¹¹⁵ Stephen King uses the analogy with his uncle's massive toolbox in order to show aspiring writers that they also have to possess many different kinds of tools to write great fiction.¹¹⁶

Many authors of creative writing guidebooks claim that their books are not instructional at all to avoid negative associations with this 'do-it-yourself' view of writing. Authors often accentuate the fact that their book is a workshop, coursebook, set of exercises, list of reflections or suggestions, rather than a how-to instruction. In the introduction to *The Creative Writing Handbook* we read that '[i]t is not (...) a "How To" book. It doesn't tell you what to do. We don't believe in prefabricated writing assembled from step-by-step instructions.'¹¹⁷ Despite this, merely by looking at its long persuasive blurb we can notice that this book promises everything that a how-to book would promise. In this blurb many marketing tactics discussed in this thesis are used:

Written by **professional writers and tutors**, it covers **all** aspects of the writing process, from drafting first thoughts to shaping them into polished and **publishable** work. In a series of **lively** and **stimulating** chapters, **all** major areas of writing are explored (...). *The Handbook* offers **new and experienced** writers a **whole range** of creative ideas (...) and open-ended tasks for exploring experience, **mastering** technique and thereby releasing the **full** potential of the imagination. (...) **Packed** with activities and **practical** advice, *The Handbook* is an ideal **coursebook** and reference guide for **student and independent writers, tutors and workshop leaders**.¹¹⁸

It is easy to notice that some elements are repetitive in the blurbs of these types of books. The author is renowned, the book essential, but also - in order not to scare reader - comprehensive and entertaining. The promise of writing better is common in the blurbs, sometimes followed by the promise to publish even if this promise is not stated in the book.¹¹⁹ According to the blurb the book contains everything the readers have to know about all aspects of writing.

After recognising some important marketing tactics used in the paratext in order to

115 D. de Geest & A. Goris, op. cit., p. 93.

116 S. King, op. cit., p. 125.

117 M. Luckhurst & J. Singleton, (eds.), op. cit., p VII.

118 Ibid., back cover [emphasis added].

119 The guarantee to publish is common in less serious books which were not analysed in this thesis. Many guidebooks analysed here contain short final chapters advising how to edit the text which is a result of exercises presented in those books. Last chapters also contain tips how to prepare the manuscripts to the publication, write a book proposal, and approach the publisher. Books analysed here do not promise that the final manuscript will be published, however some of them have a commercial approach in their advice how to write (as the books of James Scott Bell and James N. Frey).

attract the readers' attention and to show them the seriousness of the book we will move on to analyse common in-text tactics.

In-text tactics: Gaining the reader's trust, addressing the stereotypes and fulfilling the expectations of the readers

The book is useful

Showing the readers how practical the particular book is (and often also creative writing books in general) is not only a vital part of the blurb, but also a part of the actual content. In one of the books we read: 'This book is really a gift. It is a unique and generous pool of information, one that contains the condensed experience and expertise (...)'¹²⁰ James Scott Bell in *Plot & Structure* contradicts himself when he writes about the usefulness of creative writing books. First, he claims that it is impossible to improve writing merely thanks to tips from creative writing books. A few sentences further on he praises these books extensively as he tells how many of them he possesses and how he studies them several times, marking the most important things he learns.¹²¹ It seems that he acts here not only on behalf of himself as a writer of how-to books, but also on behalf of the publishing house representing him, *Writer's Digest Books*, which is focused on creative writing guidebooks. Also in the article 'The 5 Steps to Writing a Novel that Sells' from *Writer's Digest* magazine how-to books are promoted as a way to learn the writing craft and succeed.¹²² Praising creative writing books is thus a valuable marketing tactic for publishers of how-to creative writing guidebooks.

You can learn how to write

The reader has already been told that creative writing how-to books are useful, however he or she can still have some doubts if writing can be learned. Therefore, this issue is often discussed at the beginning to assure the reader that it is possible to learn how to write. One of the authors of *What If?* writes in the *Introduction* that she is often asked if writing can be taught by people who imply that real writers possess 'a divine gift' as she calls it.¹²³ Some

120 J. Bell & P. Magrs (eds.), op. cit., p. XIII.

121 J.S. Bell, op. cit., p. 4.

122 'Hundreds of how-to books are available on every aspect of writing the novel. (...) Want more insight into plot, dialogue, characterization, voice, style, viewpoint, action, or conflict? There's a book that covers it', in: B. Camenson & M.J. Cook, 'The 5 Steps to Writing a Novel that Sells', *Writer's Digest*, 21 February 2012 <<http://www.writersdigest.com/writing-articles/by-writing-goal/get-published-sell-my-work/give-em-what-they-want-excerpt>> (1 January 2016).

123 A. Bernays & P. Painter, op. cit., p. XVI.

authors of creative writing guidebooks even describe how they themselves were misled into thinking that learning how to write is impossible. James Scott Bell says that because of this thinking he almost 'gave up the dream of becoming a writer'.¹²⁴ In this way the reader is warned against giving up his or her dream and assured that learning how to write is possible.

Julia Cameron in *The Artist's Way* claims that everyone is creative and has a potential to be a writer. According to her, it is important to liberate oneself from doubts brought on by criticism and the lack of belief from parents or teachers.¹²⁵ Those, who 'give up their sunny dreams of artistic career, settling into twilight world of could-have-beens and regrets' Cameron calls 'shadow artists'.¹²⁶ She claims that they often choose 'shadow careers' (somehow connected to the things they really want to do, as for example when the shadow writer works in publishing). She also promises her readers that their inner artists will come out of the shadow after they read her book. Researcher Alexandria Pearly shows that the same tactic is used in the books *Bird by Bird* and *Writing Down the Bones*.¹²⁷ Readers of these books are first taught to recognise their problems, enabling them to create, and then they're assured that they have the ability to write. Essentially, authors of guidebooks try to gain the reader's trust from the very beginning.¹²⁸ In a few steps readers are assured that writing is not as complicated as they may think.

Everybody has something to write about

Authors of creative writing handbooks accentuate readers' own experience to show them that they already have writing material. Many of authors claim that 'everything we need in order to tell our stories in a reasonable and exciting way already exist in each of us. Everything you need is in your head and memories (...).'¹²⁹ It is thus possible to start writing immediately without fear that one might have nothing to write about. Readers then are encouraged that the writing process is easier that they assume.

You should read

Regularly reading is often mentioned as a perfect tool to becoming an author, mostly by

124 J.S. Bell, op. cit., p. 1.

125 J. Cameron, op. cit., passim.

126 Ibid., p. 25.

127 A. Peary, 'Taking Self-help Books Seriously: The Informal Aesthetic Education of Writers', *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 48:2 (Summer 2014), pp. 90-93.

128 The issue of gaining the trust of readers at the beginning is also addressed in: S. Evans & J. Kroll, op. cit., p. 2.

129 A. Lamott, op. cit., p. 181; The importance of experience is also repetitive in books analysed by Evans and Kroll, in: S. Evans & J. Kroll, op. cit., p. 13.

appreciation and imitation. According to Neil McCaw from the University of Winchester, 'it has become almost doxic that, as Routledge's *Creative Writing: A Workbook with Readings* puts it: "reading is one of the chief ways to train yourself as a writer."¹³⁰ At first sight it seems curious that authors of creative writing books have to advise their audience to read a lot. One can argue that reading should be a natural activity of everyone who wants to pursue the writer's career. Francine Prose wonders: 'I can't figure out why people would want to write unless they like to read. I mean, what would be the point? For the incredibly glamorous fast track lifestyle?'¹³¹ The main argument in this thesis is that creative writing books are addressed to readers for whom being a writer is just a role. Advice to read, omnipresent in creative writing manuals, supports this argument.

Buy a notebook

Another omnipresent advice is to keep a notebook. Many authors indeed keep a diary and also regularly make notes, although it can be argued that that should also come naturally.¹³² For aspiring writers a notebook is something more than merely a way to gather material. As they have to feel the sense of belonging, they need to surround themselves with writer's accessories which allow them to visualise themselves in the aspirational group that they want to belong to. One of the authors advises: 'Only buy a beautiful hardback notebook if that would inspire you.'¹³³ James Scott Bell recalls the beginning of his writing career:

I remember the exact date I decided I was going to be a writer. I jotted this in my journal: "Today I resolve to take writing seriously, to keep going and never stop, to learn everything I can and make it as a writer." (...) Write a statement of purpose, one that gets you excited, and print it. Put it on your wall where you can see it every day.

The next thing I did was buy a black coffee mug with *Writer* written in gold across it. I would look at that cup every day to remind me of my commitment.¹³⁴

Visualisation - promoted here by Bell - is one of the common methods known from self improvement guidebooks. Readers in order to achieve their aim have to first imagine themselves as the person they want to be. Bell also presents the motivational method of writing down the aim.¹³⁵ Julia Cameron uses both methods in *The Artist's Way* written in the

130 N. McCaw, 'Close Reading, Writing and Culture', *New Writing: The International Journal for the Practice and Theory of Creative Writing*, 8:1 (2011), p. 26.

131 F. Prose, op. cit., pp. 6-7 of the appendix *P.S.*

132 M. Popova, M., 'Famous Writers on the Creative Benefits of Keeping a Diary', *Brain Pickings* <<http://www.brainpickings.org/2014/09/04/famous-writers-on-keeping-a-diary/>> (1 January 2016).

133 L. Anderson (ed.), op. cit., pp. 33-34.

134 J.S. Bell, op. cit., p. 3.

135 A. Feinstein, 'Why You Should Be Writing Down Your Goals', *Forbes*, 8 April 2014 <<http://www.forbes.com>>

form of a 12-week course aiming to find the (lost) creativity.¹³⁶

Additionally, authors of creative writing books address readers' stereotypes about being a writer. In one of the analysed books, the image of the writer in a café is repeatedly depicted. Authors advise the reader: 'Buy a notebook and a few good-quality pens and take yourself out for the day. Go and sit in a café, get an extra-large cup of coffee and write for a few hours.'¹³⁷

At this point readers are motivated by authors showing readers that they practically already are writers. They have writing material (life experience) and their accessories so now they have to learn some rules of writing, thus authors begin to give them a lecture about the elements of fiction.

Simple language

Some authors already at the beginning of their books - in order not to scare amateurs with technicalities - advise the readers not to 'overthink' the process of writing which is shown as automatic and possible to everyone, because it does not require any preparing or planning: 'Don't think. Don't get logical... You just do it. (...) Write.'¹³⁸ In general authors are very careful not to frighten readers and to use their language wisely.¹³⁹ Therefore, they try to use simple phrases to explain complex narratological concepts lightly and with use of illustrative metaphors which the reader will understand, for example: 'Characters are to a novelist what lumber is to a carpenter and what bricks are to a bricklayer.'¹⁴⁰ Steve Evans and Jeri Kroll rightly point out that the use of simple language is a part of 'user-friendliness' of creative writing guidebooks. They mention also 'logical structure, simple layout, conversational tone' as parts of it.¹⁴¹

In this chapter common peritextual and in-text methods of addressing the aspiring authors in creative writing guidebooks were analysed (see TABLE 3 for an overview of these methods). The marketing tactics described here are more sophisticated than simply

com/sites/ellevate/2014/04/08/why-you-should-be-writing-down-your-goals/#2715e4857a0b7f5571012f14> (14 January 2016).

136 J. Cameron, op. cit.

137 J. Bell & P. Magrs (eds.), op. cit., p. 6.

138 N. Goldberg, op. cit., p. 8, 34 and 114, quoted by: S. Westbrook, op. cit., p. 143; Evans and Kroll recognise this strategy in books they analyse, suggesting that freewriting and brainstorming are characteristic of the workshop form which these books imitate, in: S. Evans & J. Kroll, op. cit., pp. 13-14.

139 Evans and Kroll notice that authors of books analysed by them avoid theory from the same reason, in: S. Evans & J. Kroll, op. cit., p. 18.

140 J.N. Frey, *How to Write a Damn Good Novel*, p. 1.

141 S. Evans & J. Kroll, op. cit., p. 18.

promising the aspiring author money and fame. In order to validate the book the emphasis is put on the author's experience and the form is often that of a workshop, to show the book as practical. Authors cleverly dissociate themselves from the idea of the how-to book as this can discourage readers. They also assure readers that writing can be learned. Furthermore, there are some psychological tactics used by the authors, as for example when readers are told that they have creative potential and that they already have writing material because of life experience. The important tactic is showing the reader the necessity of owning a notebook (or other writing accessories). The notebook serves readers of creative writing guidebooks as a writer's accessory and its role is to help readers visualise themselves as writers.

Noticeably, many of those tactics show that the books are largely geared to audience different than serious candidates for writers. The books often offer advice obvious for somebody really interested in the process of writing, such as: 'you have to read' or 'you should buy a notebook'. Also the use of simple language confirms the fact that the audience is not particularly knowledgeable about the writing process.

TABLE 3: The common marketing tactics from creative writing guidebooks.

<i>Fiction Writer's Workshop</i>	<i>The Creative Writing Coursebook</i>	<i>Creative Writing. A Workbook with Readings</i>	<i>Plot & Structure</i>	<i>Bird by Bird</i>	<i>What If?</i>	<i>The Artist's Way</i>
Paratextual tactics						
'Workshops in print'						
✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
Predictable structure						
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
The author is a professional						
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Other professionals recommend the book						
✓	✓	✓		✓		
Whoever you are, this book is for you						
	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
This is not a how-to book						

✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
In-text tactics						
The book is useful						
✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
You can learn how to write						
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Everybody has something to write about						
✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
You should read						
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Buy a notebook						
	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Simple language						
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

Conclusion

Creative Writing Guidebooks as Accessories

In contemporary market-led publishing it is crucial for publishers to understand consumer behaviour. In order to market books in the right way and to the right audience publishers should be aware how many different factors influence this behaviour. Customers have a certain perception of themselves and choose products which suit their self-image. Not only do customers belong to different groups and have different lifestyles, but there are also certain groups to which they *wish* to belong. Often customers' knowledge of other groups or lifestyles is poor, as their view of these lifestyles is based on misconceptions. This is caused by the fact that they do not have direct contact with representatives of the aspirational group they wish to belong to. Book marketers should be aware of how customers' desire to belong to group can affect the sale, as people who consider a certain lifestyle to be attractive buy accessories associated with this lifestyle.

This thesis aimed to recognise how marketing tactics based on understanding of the audience are used in the case of creative writing guidebooks. The overview of marketing tactics was preceded by an analysis of the intended audience for creative writing guidebooks. It was argued here that being a writer is for many representatives of the general audience an attractive glamorous role which they want to embody. Amateur writers use books as accessories which help them to embody the role of writer and to build the imaginary self-image of being an actual writer. To support the argument that creative writing guidebooks can serve as lifestyle accessories for aspiring authors an analysis of common marketing tactics was conducted.

Final conclusion is that the market of creative writing manuals is based on the unrealistic desire of aspiring authors to embody the writer's role and that these manuals serve as accessories symbolising the writer's lifestyle. The desire to belong to the aspirational group of writers makes aspiring writers a perfect target to authors and publishers of creative writing guidebooks. Both authors and publishers use marketing tactics to address these aspiring authors as they know this audience well and are aware of what motivates it.

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