

Shawna Henderson

ENG-240

November 29, 2019

Robert Brandon

Writing for Professional Publications

The following articles are all from Writer's Digest in the winter of 2018. The three articles share different aspects of writing. The first article chosen is about screenwriting. The second is about living your dream and the third is about the importance of reading past material to learn about trends in writing. In conclusion the similarities of each article are presented.

The first article TAKE TWO: Lessons from the world of screenwriting to inform, inspire and incite action, written by Jeanne Veillette Bowerman (2018), describes how to make characters jump off the page when writing a screenplay. Screenplays are written differently than novels. A writer needs to carefully craft words to prompt action. They must write out what is to be seen visually on the screen. This particular article explains how to make your characters more interesting so they will attract Hollywood agents. "Agents are the true gatekeepers for talent. Before an actor lays eyes on a screenplay, their agent scans the PDF, searching for the page where their client's potential character enters the story. In doing so, they'll ask questions like: Does it convey an intriguing, multi-layered character? Is it the kind of role that could usher in nominations for major awards?" (Bowerman, 2018). This article is interesting because it offers examples of detailed character descriptions versus bland character descriptions.

The second article *Dream On* written by William Kenower (2018) is about the authors' personal experience as a struggling writer. It begins with him discussing dreams in a sleep study and how the subjects in the study were woken before they could enter the REM state. After a few days of not ever getting deep sleep they became irritable and had a hard time functioning. The author then goes on to explain how he was living in an awakened dream. His dream was to be an author, but for twenty years he worked as waiter. He worked odd hours to provide a comfortable life for himself and his family. During this time period he continued to write daily when he was not waiting tables. Even though the rejections piled up he continued writing because it was what he loved. Then one day he just stopped. He had hit a wall and he became discouraged. He decided it was time for him to stop telling people he was a writer because he didn't feel he was successful. "The difference between my dream and my reality couldn't have felt starker. I fantasized how as a successful author, I would finally be free from the shame of feeling like a failure when new acquaintances at parties asked me what I did for a living." (Kenower, 2018). He stopped talking about being a writer, until one day he had an epiphany. He was the only one who could make his dream a reality. It didn't matter what other people thought of his dream. He needed to continue to find the success he desired. "This is the truth every author must learn to accept: Writers write not just to tell stories, not just to entertain and enlighten and inspire, and certainly not just to earn a living—we write to learn who we are." (Kenower, 2018). What makes this article so great is that it really speaks to the uncertainty that many writers feel. It is exhausting to always be second guessing if one should give up on the dream to find a more stable profession.

The third article is *Paperback Writer* by Jeff Somers (2018). All writers should read, and this is a history lesson in the value of reading older novels. These dated books found in used

bookstores hold many lessons on writing. “If you want to learn how to pen a great story, you could do a lot worse than to study old paperbacks and see what the past masters were doing decades ago.” (Somers, 2018). In this article Somers explains the importance of familiarizing oneself with writing from the past because it is a fluid business and the bestsellers of today are on their way out. “But the books being published today are the tail end of trends that started two years ago; the past has a lot to teach you; and it’s all happening at the used bookstores”. (Somers, 2018). He gives the reader a rundown of ten novels and the lesson he learned from each. Some of the novels he includes are *Peyton Place* by Grace Metalious, a scandalous book during its time in the late fifties, *Mash* by Richard Hooker, which had great character development, and *The Floating Admiral* written as a compilation by many great authors including Agatha Christie. The lesson for *The Floating Admiral*, “Even the greats screw up.” (Somers, 2018). He explains that sometimes what seems like a good idea really isn’t, and you shouldn’t be so hard on yourself. One must be an avid reader to make an exceptional writer. How else can one know how to draw in an audience, unless they have been the audience themselves.

All of these articles are written with writers in mind. The word choices and meanings are clear, and the writing is easy to follow. Each article is written knowledgably and informative to educate the up and coming writer. What stood out to me was the encouragement the exudes from the page. These authors love what they do, and they want to share it with their readers. They want to help guide novice writers and show them that with a little perseverance they too can find their own niche and be successful.

References

- Bowerman, J. V., (2018, November-December). TAKE TWO: Lessons from the world of screenwriting to inform, inspire and incite action! *Writer's Digest*, 98(8), 64+. Retrieved: <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A554493615/PPCM?u=canyonuniv&sid=PPCM&xid=5a3aa6dc>
- Kenower, W. (2018, September). DREAM ON. *Writer's Digest*, 98(6), 24+. Retrieved from <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A544247054/PPCM?u=canyonuniv&sid=PPCM&xid=3108c02b>
- Somers, J. (2018, November-December). PAPERBACK WRITER. *Writer's Digest*, 98(8), 34+. Retrieved from: <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A554493606/PPCM?u=canyonuniv&sid=PPCM&xid=88414595>