

I. A writer's audience

I write for myself firstly, in part because it's therapeutic and in part because I'm driven to it. If you want to find out what makes you tick, start writing what comes up from your subconscious. It'll bowl you over. But when it comes to other people, I write for the reader who wants to think, and experience the thoughts and feelings of others, partly for entertainment—the inducement—and partly for benefit or mind/soul growth—the reward. Thoughtless or mindless readers are more than adequately catered for already by the commercial media and Hollywood. In accordance with Murstein's Law, the majority of catering is done for the least demanding and least deserving. (Murstein's Law states that the more important the information, the less likely it'll be published). The pragmatic approach by 'normal' publishers ignores the fact that thoughtfulness covers a wider spectrum of humanity than we imagine. I observed long ago that we'll all think if we're encouraged to or invited to.

It's natural to us if left to ourselves. It's our destiny to think, and that makes it a duty we ignore at our peril. Mostly we're not left to ourselves, of course. The get-rich crowd are always chasing our tails and tugging at our pockets. The pedagogue Paulo Freire put it well: "The

atmosphere of the home is prolonged in school, where students soon discover that (as in the home) in order to achieve some satisfaction they must adapt to the precepts which have been set from above. One of these precepts is not to think." That's why the truth of 9-11 or JFK's murder will never come out officially. Thinking was forbidden in my family and at the pretend-schools I was forced to attend. Had I been allowed to think, I would have rejected the fraudulent faith they were brainwashing me with. Had I been allowed to think, I would have turned my nose up at the patriotic mouthwash served up to me. The fact that most of us so willingly and ably submit to irrational fears doesn't make me want to switch to banking.

Most readers are street-wise enough to go beyond the sort of puritanical blandness so revered by media and publishing people. That's the sort of readership I'm writing for, not the bestseller blockbuster crowd where the material is forgotten ten minutes after the thrill has been had and profits have been banked, or where the people see literature as an equivalent to sedatives and anaesthetics. Artists are on about truth by anamnesis; commercial publishers and media people are on about making money by anaesthesia. The two aren't compatible in any way.

We shouldn't forget that, especially when it seems obvious that writers are prima donnas. In a writers collaborative like this, you never feel as though you're shit-kicker who provides the text in between cleaning the toilets and taking the garbage out.