

ADULT EXPERIENCE OF LEARNING FROM NOVELS

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ABSTRACT

The Adult Experience Of Learning From Novels

Novel readers may not necessarily read with the primary intention of learning from their novels, but it is known that learning is frequently an outcome. Literature on novels describe their content as both factual and philosophical opportunities to learn but do not describe them in terms of adult learning theory. A study by Radway (1984) found that readers of formula romance have complex learning outcomes from their reading but this was related to literature on novels rather than adult learning theory.

Conversely, although learning is a known outcome of novel reading, literature on adult learning theories and research have taken little notice of novel reading as an opportunity to learn. Yet reading novels is an activity in which millions engage. The nature of reading as a highly personal, self-directed activity, suggested a literature review of theory pertaining to self-directed learning, informal learning and how adults make meaning.

The purpose of the research was to explore the experience of learning novels; how reading contributes to knowledge, understanding of environment, and social and self-understanding in the context of adult learning theory. The research problem asked what evidence novel readers provide for making meaning as a result of their reading and what they do with that learning outcome.

Research was conducted with individual interviews of five regular novel readers which served as case studies. Analysis was done by coding each interview paying particular attention to relationships to personal history, types of learning suggested and their effects. Case studies were then cross coded to discover trends and patterns.

Findings showed that respondents used novels to be entertained and escape from their daily responsibilities, but along the way they also experienced a variety of types of learning. They collected new information they found personally interesting or added to an existing knowledge base, challenged their perspectives to think about themselves and others in new ways. There was also a variety of uses for what they had learned. Respondents reported believing they have a broader knowledge base, could more effectively interact with others, arrive at greater self-awareness, and in a few instances change behavior.

The experience of learning from novels is a remarkable combination of self-motivation and self-direction undertaken for pleasure, yet incidentally can result in a range of learning outcomes including building a more complex knowledge base, constructivist organization and interpretation of information, critical reflection about self and others, and transformation of understanding to result in change.

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This project is submitted particularly in memory of my father, Richard Breward Purdy, who did not live to see it finished. My parents set the example for me of reading, valuing education, working hard, and persevering to reach goals. At great sacrifice to themselves, they gave me a college education that would help me make my own way. Through their special qualities of character, they gave me the wherewithal to continue on to enjoy a gratifying level of success and contentment. Completion of this project is a testimony to their teachings.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

People are being effected overtly or subtly by experienced events, large and small, happening around them all the time. They do not need to be in the midst of events, situations experienced though television or video or described in print can be just as vivid. The framework for why readers should be affected by reading experience is discussed from the perspective of selected branches of adult learning theory and the variety of learning outcomes that may be available from fiction novels.

Theories of how adults make meaning of and interpret their experiences may be gathered from several different areas of research. Although they are not necessarily treated in literature on adult learning in a hierarchical fashion, they may be understood as potentially influencing readers in a cumulative way. There is literature specifically investigating how adults make meaning (Mezirow, 1990, 1991; Candy, 1991; Brookfield, 1986). Serving as something of a tripod for these are related theories characterizing adult learning activity (Knowles, 1990; Kidd, 1973), self-directed learning (Mezirow, 1990; Candy 1991; Tough, 1979; Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991) and informal learning (Rossing, 1991; Rossing & Russell; 1987, Marsick & Watkins, 1990; Reischmann, 1987; Stokes & Pankowski, 1988).

How adults make meaning is described by Candy (1991) as constructivism by which knowledge is constructed by the learner rather than purely imparted by a teacher. Construction is a continuous activity by which people respond to change but also interpret according to social pressures. An individual must sort out the chaotic stimuli of the world and put it into some order that is meaningful, usually in a way that conforms with the way the larger society makes meaning.

Resting on constructivist assumptions is transformative learning defined by Mezirow (1981, 1990, 1991) as "the process of learning through critical self-reflection, which results in the reformulation of a meaning perspective to allow a more conclusive, discriminating, and integrative understanding" (1990, p. xvii). While 'uncritical' interpretation of information typically conforms to societal norms, individuals may break away from those accepted patterns. Transformative learning is an outcome of critical reflection which challenges previously accepted perspectives to reevaluate their source and validity.

Underpinning both constructivism and transformative learning are theories which characterize adult learning based on the observation that adults like to learn and are free to direct their energy to learning in whatever way seems appropriate to their own needs (Knowles, 1990; Kidd, 1973). They may enter into specific self-planned learning projects with specific learning goals in mind in which reading often plays a leading role (Tough, 1979). Self-planned learning is one piece of the larger field of literature on self-directed learning with the overall theme of placement of control for learning. Adults will, to varying degrees, take responsibility for their learning and how they choose to interact with their world.

The still developing area of research in informal learning recognizes that people are learning all the time without any special intent but simply as a consequence of living in a changing, interesting world through their daily activities. Informal incidental learning is defined as learning which occurs unintentionally as a function of engaging in an activity not intended to

have that particular learning outcome (Rossing, 1991; Rossing & Russell, 1987; Marsick & Watkins, 1990; Reischmann, 1987). Such learning occurs by chance while the person is engaged in another activity (Stokes & Pankowski, 1988). In the context of intentionality as discussed by philosopher Anscombe (1966), "a single action can have many different descriptions ... it is important to notice that a man may know that he is doing a thing under one description, and not another" (p. 12).

Contributing to the way reality is constructed or transformed are: (a) informal learning occurring by chance, (b) more systematic learning occurring deliberately depending on a learner's desire to pursue some particular learning direction, (c) the degree to which an adult accepts responsibility for learning, and (d) all the baggage of previous experience an adult carries. Pleasure reading may potentially facilitate learning with some effect on the reader at any of these levels as novels offer a variety of learning opportunities.

The novel is a subset of literature with one foot in the real and the other in the ideal (Lodge, 1971). In the simplest sense, the grounding in the real provides a factual background upon which a story is created which will be meaningful to its readers. The novel can be a significant source of learning both because it may introduce readers to a factual background with which they are unfamiliar and because it challenges readers to make personal meaning from the story. Works of fiction from the great classics, to modern literature, to the lightest formula novel are read and loved by millions as a leisure activity. In a 1990 study of who is reading what, Zill & Winglee (1990) found that there were more than 2 billion books sold in America each year during the mid 1980's, or about nine books for every person over five years of age. About 500 million of these were relatively inexpensive "mass market" paperbacks.

Critics of popular fiction contend that it is not weighty enough to stand over time as great literature (Pollitt, 1991) and is discarded by those who believe only the 'canons' can serve as sources of learning. Popular fiction, however, is what most readers are reading (Zill & Winglee, 1990). Ashley (1989) challenges the critics busy with their engagement in the canon wars to be more careful in their off-hand treatment of popular fiction because it may be the only fictional reading by the majority of the population. According to Ashley, dismissing popular fiction is a mistake because it is widely assumed to influence lives profoundly; and is "surely of major significance in the understanding of those lives, particularly the processes by which meanings are constructed and exchanged" (Ashley, 1989, p. 3).

Radway (1984) conducted a study of women who are constant readers of formula romances to discover why they read romances and what they perceive these books do for them. Radway discovered that formula romances meet a variety of needs for these readers including escape, relaxation, an opportunity to do something just for themselves and to learn. In light of this research, the argument that only the canons can be considered for their educational value must be abandoned as readers of popular fiction have reported clear learning outcomes from all kinds of fiction books. That argument is particularly indefensible in the face of reader reported transformative learning from books that have never been considered for the literature canons list. As long as a reader becomes actively involved in participating in a book so that critical reflection is aroused, (Greene, 1990) any book can serve.

Looking more closely at how novels may be a source of learning, there are several reasons why they offer a learning potential both from the perspective of informal learning, how adults make meaning, and transformative learning. Novels may be classified as fiction, but they

are not necessarily untrue. There is truth both in the details and in challenging the sensibilities. Reading may result in a superficial learning of unrelated facts or may prompt a profound change in people's lives.

First, although novels are largely read for entertainment, there are requirements made on readers if they are to have a full appreciation of the story. Readers must to some extent make an effort to absorb the context in which the story is being written; otherwise, it would not make sense. Without intending to, they possibly experience informal learning of things that might otherwise have held little interest in other forms of education delivery. History is a good example. The same readers who enjoy the novel *Trinity* by Leon Uris (1976) may be highly unlikely to pick up a book that advertises itself as a history of Ireland. Yet, if they are to become involved in the story, they must understand a sequence of real events and develop an appreciation for the customs, lifestyle, economics, and politics of the times. In the writing on historical novels there is frequent reference to its potential as a learning resource (Iser, 1974; Cowert, 1989; Fischer, 1976; Flemming, 1985; Smith, 1987). In fact, it is considered a good alternative source of learning for average readers who are unlikely to gain much from history texts or who would never read history texts. Flemming (1985) says, "fiction makes history live with an intensity and reality usually lacking in the analytical prose of the modern historian" (p. 12).

Second, novels are often based on thorough research of some time, place, or thing, or are written by people who are expert in some field in which they base the story. Novels based on documented history are exemplified by such writers as James Michener (1959, 1965, 1982, 1983, 1991) and Leon Uris (1959, 1965, 1976, 1984, 1988) but include even some of the historical romance writers. Certainly not all, but many writers attempt to bring a high degree of accuracy into their description of people, places and things. The places are real, events actually happened as they are presented, and facts are checked (Achenbach, 1992). Books have been written as a deliberate attempt to teach in the guise of fiction (Mann, 1992) by incorporating rich detail such as the *Gears* 10-novel series to help us understand what happened to prehistoric North Americans and Jean Auel's (1980, 1982, 1985, 1990) series on the development of prehistoric man based on the latest research in archaeology but fictionalized to make a readable story.

Third, novels are a source of information about broad issues and an avenue of insight on character, society, and morality (Nell, 1988; Radway, 1984; Carlsen & Sherrill, 1988; Shortridge, 1991; Stafford, 1991; Iser, 1974; Flemming, 1985; Parrinder, 1980; Sagan, 1980; Downie, 1976; Cawelti, 1976; Rogers, 1991). They can vividly portray a slice of life, cutting to the chase to highlight individual or societal thought or behavior which is ordinarily taken for granted but which can be challenged by introducing a different perspective. Cawelti (1976) states that formula books are important for their role in reinforcing societal standards and may arguably even be precursors of evolving standards by revealing flaws of current standards through the development of a story. Cawelti argues that *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was an important force in bringing about the Civil War because it humanized the issue of slavery and subjugation in a way that prompted many to think about it as they had not done before.

Fourth, serious fiction is typically referred to in discussions on learning from books as a source of philosophical learning and addressing broader enduring truths (Cawelti, 1976). By philosophical learning, it is meant that books provoke thought about the nature of individuals and society and help readers to probe their own ideas about themselves and their relationship to others.

Novels are written against highly diverse backgrounds. While historical novels are social commentaries and introduce readers to factual information about the past, spy (Stafford, 1991) and mystery (Lehman, 1989) novels may be thought of as commentaries and sources of information about the present. Science fiction, it is argued (Parrinder, 1980; Sagan, 1980), does the same for the future.

Shortridge (1991) proposes that novels may be so influential that they color societal images of whole regions. Stereotypes, particularly of the south and west, accurate or not, have developed as a consequence of readership of novels set in these regions (Shortridge, 1991).

There is a fair amount of commentary on the novel as a source of information falling strictly in the trivia category of information which is added to make the story interesting and credible (Rogers, 1991; Cawelti, 1976; Radway, 1984; Orwing, 1983). In addition to trivia, novels may also develop themes about ourselves, our society, how we came to be as we are, and where we are headed that challenge thought on values, beliefs and ethics.

The contemporary world is an interesting and challenging place that requires people to keep learning over their lifetimes just to keep up, to make the transitions that occur over a lifetime, to remain active in mainstream affairs (Knowles, 1950, 1990; Kidd, 1973), to continuously examine our perspectives (Brookfield, 1986; Mezirow, 1981) and to learn to use time wisely for richer lives (Lindeman, 1926). Books can serve to make our lives richer (Schutt, 1946; Edge, 1938) and have influenced people into serious research and career choices (Carlsen & Sherrill, 1988).

On the basis of the forgoing discussion on the range of potential learning available from novels, and the lack of research in adult education on how adults might use this opportunity, it suggests that the experience of learning from fiction must be investigated.

Statement of the Problem

Reading novels offers opportunities to learn which may be simple incidental gathering of unrelated facts or may be a profound transformation of beliefs and values. Adult learning theories and research have taken little notice of fiction reading as an opportunity to learn yet it is an activity in which millions engage. Fiction readers may not necessarily read with the primary intention of learning from novels, but it is known that learning is frequently an outcome. How adults experience learning from novels remains undescribed.

Purpose of the Research

This research initiated an exploration of the individual experience of learning about a person's environment and social and self-awareness as a result of reading fiction. It is apparent that learning may occur from reading fiction as suggested by research on fiction as a genre of literature. While literature on fiction discusses learning as a fiction reading outcome, it does not explore how readers take learning from reading to make it a part of themselves. This research focused on learning from reading novels of any type to investigate how adults experience learning from novel reading.

Guiding Questions

The following questions guided the collection of data:

1. When readers report learning from reading novels, what types of learning are described?
2. When readers report learning from reading novels, are they reinforcing what they already know and strengthening their acceptance of popular stereotypes or do they describe re-evaluation consistent with Mezirow's theory of transformative learning?
3. When readers report learning from reading novels, how do they describe the effect of this learning on their lives?

Significance

Novel reading is a tremendously widespread leisure activity from which adults may draw a range of learning results but has been largely overlooked in adult learning research. This investigation ties together a few key adult learning theories with the activity of reading novels. It shows that reading as an activity is consistent with Tough's seminal research on self-planned adult learning projects, the characteristics of adult learners described by Knowles and is highly relevant to incidental learning described by Rossing and Reischmann. Novel selection, allotment of time and place to read, reasons for reading, and content absorbed are all highly personal and highly individual. Learning clearly results but is unplanned, with outcomes entirely up to the reader's willingness and ability to learn.

Popular novels need to be taken seriously as a learning source in adult learning research. Learning that results from reading novels may be simple gathering and organizing of facts or complex self-awareness, self-evaluation, and even change of thought. Readers are testing what they know, adding to and modifying their store of knowledge, and have opportunities to reaffirm or reconsider what they understand of themselves and their relationship to others. The highly private activity of reading may be translated into a more sophisticated understanding of self and society to arrive at new behavior. While not all leisure readers learn from novels, the pervasiveness of popular fiction reading needs to be acknowledged as an exceptional learning source.

Organization

The text is organized into five chapters. Chapter One is a summary of the purpose of the study and background for establishing the research question.

Chapter Two is a comprehensive review of relevant research with expanded discussions of self-directed adult learning, informal learning, theories of how adults make meaning and many varieties of fiction with the types of learning outcomes which they may promote.

Chapter Three describes the method used to probe for adult readers' experience of learning and making meaning from fiction.

Chapter Four is a detailed description of study results and Chapter Five provides conclusions supported by results with recommendations for further research into this exciting and wide open avenue of inquiry.

Millions of adults are regular fiction readers, making time in their lives to enter into the world of imaginative literature. Pleasure reading is a hugely complex cognitive act drawing on a

variety of skills and processes in many different domains including attention, comprehension, absorption, reading skill, book readability, and reader preference (Nell, 1988). It may be considered a "self-motivated play activity, a visibly unproductive free activity standing outside routine life and involving the reader completely in a past time engaged in for its own sake" (Nell, 1988, p. 2). It is also a potentially rich source of learning, ranging widely from collection of random facts to engagement of sensibilities.

Adult learning theories have had very limited application to fiction reading perhaps because it is so personal, hidden as a learning activity inside readers' intent to be entertained. Yet probing the experience of learning from reading fiction may offer an opportunity to discover more about how adults continuously adapt to their complex social and personal world through learning from fiction which novels provide.

Reading fiction is an intensely personal activity demanding time, planning, and an internal motivation for some personally desired outcome. Fiction reading has been widely investigated but mostly from the perspectives of the process of reading itself (Nell, 1988; Rogers, 1991), what people are reading (Zill & Winglee, 1990), what makes reading pleasurable (Cawelti, 1976; Radway, 1984), or how the subject of a particular book has influenced a reader (Carlsen & Sherrill, 1988; Shortridge, 1991). Only one population of fiction readers, readers exclusively of formula romances, have been studied to learn about their planning, motivation, desired outcome of reading, and what their reading experience means to them (Radway, 1984).

It is widely reported by readers that, aside from being entertained, they are also learning (Radway, 1984; Schierloh, 1992; Wolf, 1980; Mathney, 1986). Radway's research with women readers of formula romances (1984) has shown that they have a wide variety of uses for the information they learn from fiction. For this population, the motivation to read was primarily one of entertainment and escape. Radway (1984) reported that formula romance readers also needed to have a means of getting away from their daily routines of children and household chores and feel as though they were learning something at the same time. It made them feel a moment of importance to be able to relate little known facts. It also helped them come to an understanding about themselves that they would never have in reality the things they found in books and that books were their only chance to vicariously experience a wider world.

This research explores the experience of reading. We know that learning is available from books and we know that readers report learning. We do not know how readers, other than those who read exclusively formula fiction, interpret their reading and what they do with what they have learned.

CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature review covers three general sections. The first section describes a 1984 study by Janice Radway on women devoted to formula romance novels. Radway investigated the value of formula romances for their readers and describes a complex outcome which suggests that novel reading may serve as a basis for investigation of how adults make meaning. Radway concludes a variety of outcomes from formula romance reading which relate to different types of learning described in literature on adult education. Her study results suggest that interviews with novel readers of any sort may illustrate how learning occurs from fiction reading to lead adults to make meaning of what they read. Relevant adult education literature will be reviewed in the second section. This includes: (a) characteristics of adult learning, (b) self-directed learning, (c) informal learning, and (d) how adults make meaning.

Radway's (1984) research, while informative to this investigation, was limited to formula romance only. This investigation will be more broadly based on novels other than formula romance; therefore, the third section of the literature review will describe works relevant to reading as an activity and how different types of novels may lend themselves to a learning experience.

Radway's Study

Radway (1984) conducted a study of women who are constant readers of formula romances to discover why they read romances and what they perceive these books do for them. This is the only study found which provides empirical data about why readers value their reading and why learning, which readers claim they gain from their books, contributes to their lives.

Radway found an opportunity to go to women readers of formula romance through one woman who had become an unofficial reviewer of new books. The unofficial reviewer wrote a newsletter for a group of friends recommending or discouraging reading of the latest romances published by the leading publishers of formula romance novels. Through her, Radway met a group of 16 women who were devoted readers of romances and were willing to participate in research.

The data collection was conducted through two focused group interviews of several hours each. Anonymous questionnaires were also distributed to 50 other readers. Radway (1984) discovered that formula romances meet a variety of needs for these readers including escape, relaxation, an opportunity to do something just for themselves and to learn.

Radway (1984) reports that women who are voracious readers of formula romances are subjected to a great deal of criticism about their reading. Radway argues that it may be that sophisticated critics are reading differently than the average romance reader in the way the work is interpreted and the resulting feelings that it promotes. She reports that romance readers are acutely aware that their preference for romantic fiction is often ridiculed. "As a result, they have defensively elaborated a coherent explanation for why they find them so satisfying. Their explanation is especially useful because it inadvertently reveals some of their emotional needs that are met by their romance reading and thus provides an important clue to the way the activity fits into the context of their daily lives" (Radway, 1984, p. 14).

Romance readers frankly acknowledge that they read to escape the routine of their lives and see reading as an opportunity to declare their independence to engage in an activity just for

themselves (Radway, 1984). These readers reported in interviews that their top four reasons for why they read such books are:

1. for simple relaxation
2. because reading is just for me, it's my time
3. to learn about faraway places and times
4. to escape my daily problems (Radway, 1984, p. 61).

There is little argument from the women themselves that romance fiction compensates for the lack of real life opportunity to travel much if ever, and feel like a participant in many cultures. The novels help the women interviewed fill a mental world, at least, with the varied details of simulated travel and permits them temporarily to feel a part of what is perceived to be a more glamorous society set.

The instructional functions of romances provide the woman who believes in the value of individual achievement with the opportunity to feel that education has not ceased for her, nor has the capacity to succeed in culturally approved terms been erased by her acceptance of the less-valued domestic roles. Because romance reading is coded as an instructional activity, a women can indulge herself by engaging in an activity that makes her feel good and simultaneously congratulate herself for acting to improve her awareness of the world by learning through books. Romance reading compensates, then, for a certain kind of emotional deprivation just as it creates the illusion of movement or change achieved through informal acquisition of factual 'knowledge' (Radway, 1984, p. 113).

Women reported in interviews that the facts and truths were an important part of why they read but responses to anonymous questionnaires were not consistent with this. Questionnaire results showed that reading was decidedly for the purpose of entertainment and escape with learning as a less important outcome. Radway explains that the discrepancy between what was said during interviews and what was reported on anonymous surveys may be because romance readers consider the "reading for instruction" as a secondary justification used to convince critics that the books are not mindless entertainment but have an educational value. Therefore, the value of the romance novel is a function of the information it is thought to contain.

Mainstream society values information and whatever information may be gleaned from reading transforms it into a worthwhile use of time and money. "When the reader can demonstrate to her husband or to an interviewer that an exchange has taken place, that she has acquired something in the process of reading, then her activity is defined retroactively as goal-directed work, as labor with a purpose, which is itself desirable in cultural terms" (Radway, 1984, p. 107).

We may also guess that the focused group interviews put some pressure on the participants to publicly voice a loftier reason for reading than mere entertainment, although they were quite candid in describing the entertainment and escapist qualities of their reading. It may also be that the limitations of a questionnaire simply does not prompt an opportunity for respondents to describe their experience of learning from reading not included on the questionnaire form.

Radway made what may seem like startling conclusions about her readers and the result of their reading. Readers of formula romances are learning and remembering random facts. But they are also realizing something about themselves, their role as housewives and mothers and the value placed by society on those roles, and engaging in a frank evaluation of their likely futures compared to what they desire. There was no indication that interview participants were discovering the truth about themselves and their circumstances for the first time as a result of the interviews and Radway's prompting. These outcomes may be attributed to reading books, which by most popular standards, are silly trash. Imagine the learning outcomes which may result from reading other types of books.

Several points have been presented in this section which inform this investigation. In Radway's study, supported by that of others who describe the types of learning which may be taken from novels (Cowert, 1989; Fischer, 1976; Flemming, 1985; Iser, 1974; Lovelace, 1979; Mann, 1992; Parrinder 1980; Sagen, 1980; Schierloh, 1992; Smith, 1987; Wolf 1980), it is evident that learning from novels has a variety of characters from acquisition of specific facts, to pondering of personal experience as compared with fictional stories, to critical self-evaluation and evaluation of the larger society. Examining the learning that occurred was not the central purpose of the research but was found to be raised repeatedly as an outcome of reading.

Radway's (1984) study also suggests data gathering strategy. She found focused interviews to be an effective means to allow subjects to relate a rich range of information. She also used a questionnaire to collect more individualized data but found the questionnaire results to be somewhat at variance with interview results. While a questionnaire can be useful for validating interview data, questionnaires are inherently limiting and, at this point, will not be a useful method for the purpose of this study for collecting data without confining responses to preconceived ideas.

Adults As Learners

Characteristics of Adult Learning

The belief that "adults want to learn" (Knowles, 1950, p. 3) is the foundation of Knowles' writing regarding the educational characteristics of adults. Knowles owes much of his thought to Lindeman and before him Dewey in declaring the dignity and individuality of adults who seek to better and enrich their lives. The lives of adults are a complex mix of needs, requirements and changes seen in the various roles they fill, each with different demands at different times (Kidd, 1973). Education which recognizes and honors the individuality and history of adults while providing avenues for self-improvement as a lifelong adventure is now the strongest theme in the theory and practice of adult education.

Newton (1980) summarized the theories of Knowles and Kidd about the characteristics of the adult learner. Key themes are that: (a) independence and self-direction are the core of adult education - an adult learning situation requiring a student role of passivity and unquestioning compliance will result in deep resistance and resentment, (b) adults are rich with experiences which define their identity and relating to this experience is more productive, (c) adults' readiness for learning is inherent in societal roles as a worker, parent, spouse, organizational member, etc., the requirements of the individuals according to current life demands dominates all other considerations in determining need, and (d) adults' orientation to learning is here and now and problem centered, immediate application of new learning motivates continued learning.

Knowles' characteristics of adult learning are described here as they appear so consistent with the activity of leisure reading. Knowles, however, was mostly concerned with creating a hospitable environment for learning in structured education situations. While Knowles' characteristics of adult education serve as a starting point, literature on self-directed learning captures those characteristics in the realm of unstructured self-directed learning.

Self-directed Learning

The role of self-direction as a core theme in theory of adult education has been widely treated. There appears to be two ways of specifically treating self-direction – self-motivated, self-planned learning projects and the concept of self-direction emerging from the ability to be critically reflective.

The key work in self-planned learning projects was by Tough (1979), who describes the overtly observable adult practice entering into internally motivated, self-planned learning projects. Tough found that about two thirds of all major learning projects are self-planned. "Sometimes the person sets out to gain certain knowledge and skill because it will be highly useful in the very near future. At other times he or she simply wants to possess the knowledge and skill for its own sake, perhaps to have a broad understanding of the world around" (Tough, 1979, p. 94). Most self-learning projects are for some specific purpose with an immediate goal in mind but they are not restricted in their definition this way.

Some efforts to learn are triggered by curiosity. People seeking on their own start with a question and start reading or talking to others, gaining some insight prompting new questions. "The resulting path is perhaps very circuitous but is rewarding and fun to follow" (Tough, 1979, p. 95).

In almost half of all self-planned projects, a major reason for self-planning was the desire to selectively individualize subject matter so that it can be applied to a particular interest or facet of personality. People may want to prove to themselves that they can do things, feel independent, self-reliant and autonomous (Tough, 1979). Tough's and Knowles' work is relevant to this research as they theorize that adults may actively seek opportunities to learn but desire to do it in their own way and for their own purposes. Pleasure reading neatly fits this learning profile as reading is an entirely self-planned, self-paced activity, with books selected for entirely personal reasons.

Another important theorist is Philip Candy. According to Candy (1991), "since the 1960's, but particularly in recent years, self-direction in learning has become a major object of scholarly study and inquiry. Yet, as Long (1988) points out, 'despite the favorable conditions suggested by the popularity of the topic, adult self-directed learning remains weakly conceptualized, ill-defined, inadequately studied and tentatively comprehended' (Long, 1988, p. 1)" (Candy, 1991, p. 2). Candy suggests that the term "self-direction" has been applied to a range of phenomena that, although they may be related, are not interchangeable. He believes that drawing distinctions between the various uses will lead to greater precision in studying self-directed learning.

Candy (1991) divides self-direction into goal and process to clarify use of the term. He cites, that for many authors, self-direction is seen only as a method of organizing instruction, where others intend self-direction to mean a characteristic of learners themselves. The confusion begins when the two senses of the term are used interchangeably or there is an implication that

one necessarily is connected to the other. "In other words, many people seem to believe that participation in 'self-directed learning' will inevitably lead to development of 'self-directedness' in some wider sense" (Candy, 1991, p. 8). Candy is critical of Knowles who describes self-direction as a naturally occurring characteristic of adults who think of themselves as adult, pointing out that the terms 'adult' and 'self-direction' are used to define each other (p. 60).

Candy (1991) believes that self-education and lifelong learning are reciprocal. Self-directed learning is a vehicle to extend learning throughout life and augment formal education, and lifelong learning enables people to be more self-directing (Candy, 1991).

Candy (1991) subdivides self-direction into learner control and autodidaxy. Learner control concerns the extent to which the learner is in charge of the learning experience in relationship to outside resources. The autodidactic domain is an extension of learner control in which, at the extreme end, people are frequently not aware that they are learning. The key differentiation as described by Candy is ownership. In autodidaxy, both ownership and control are in the hands of the learner. Candy further describes the difference by borrowing the terms of Bagnall (1987) who uses self-management and self-determination. Self-management is seen as the "quality of being self-directing within one's field of constraints to free actions and self-determination is the quality of being self-directing to extent that one is in control of one's own destiny" (Bagnall, 1987, p. 91).

Candy (1991) summarizes by saying that "the term self-direction actually embraces dimensions of process and product, and that it refers to four distinct (but related) phenomena: 'self-direction' as a personal attribute (personal autonomy); 'self-direction' as the willingness and capacity to conduct one's own education (self-management); 'self-direction' as a mode of organizing instruction in formal settings (learner control); and 'self-direction' as the individual, non-institutional pursuit of learning opportunities in the 'natural societal setting' (autodidaxy)" (Candy, 1991, p. 23).

Informal Learning

Informal learning is included here as it speaks to the potential for readers to gather learning from reading without having learning as the original intention. It encompasses a branch of adult learning literature which suggests how readers may commence a learning activity. When reading, it is possible that there may be nothing learned at all, or the reader may forget every word read when the book is finished. However, through informal learning, the reader may remember and later use isolated facts, or the reader may be prompted to reflect on what was read and come to new conclusions about self or society.

Candy (1991) states that lifelong education includes, in addition to formal education, learning which occurs in a wide variety of contexts and settings such as friends, family, libraries, work, clubs, societies, churches, radio, television, and so on which he defined as horizontal education (p. 77). Informal learning, particularly its subset of incidental learning (what Candy referred to as horizontal learning), is in its earliest stages of systematic examination and has yet to develop widely accepted theory as its basis. Informal learning is defined as learning that takes place as people interact with their environment in normal social, occupational and community activities and, in the course of everyday life, accounting for a far greater proportion of total learning than derived from formal instruction (Rossing and Russell, 1987; Marsick & Watkins, 1990; Rossing, 1991).

According to Reischmann (1986), in every day personal, professional, and leisure activity, knowledge is gathered without any formal, organized education. There is another type of permanent, lifelong learning which he calls 'learning en passant' outside of academic settings and self-directed learning projects. It includes short learning situations where less than half of a person's total motivation is on learning and the contents are not clear in the sense that the learner knows in advance what and how to use it or whether it will produce some lasting changes. Reischmann further points out that this type of learning is often forgotten in theory and in practice because it is hidden between other activities, unintentional, without clear objectives and settings. Along with intentional, directed learning should be included in theory the unintentional, hidden, small scale, incidental learning. This type of unintentional learning he labels Mosaic Stone Learning because numberless learning events from all manner of sources are conglomerated to form a continuing pattern which results in the whole image (Reischmann, 1986).

How Adults Make Meaning

Three key theorists on how adults make meaning are described here. They are: (a) Philip Candy, (b) Stephen Brookfield, and (c) Jack Mezirow.

Candy (1991) described the concept of constructivism as the process by which "individuals try to give meaning to, or construe, the perplexing maelstrom of events and ideas in which they find themselves caught up" (p. 254). According to constructivism, people are not passive observers, but active in organizing change and novelty within the context that influences them. Part of the context is commonly held beliefs which are commonly constructed as a social process and are not based on any empirical proof. People are in charge of, and have choices about, their own behavior. They can interpret new experiences according to an existing pattern of thought or they may find alternatives. "People are viewed as 'self-constructing' because what they become is the product largely of their own activity (Candy, 1991, p. 259).

Brookfield (1986) is a key theorist of the concept of critical reflection. He finds that self-direction in the emergence of critical reflection is a subtle but powerful outcome of all types of learning. Brookfield defines critical reflection as the ability to step back from one's own paradigms and consider alternatives, appreciate different perspectives and be willing to break away from norms established by indoctrination. True self-directed learning grows as a function of being able to engage in critical reflection.

Brookfield's description of critical reflection goes a step further than Tough or Knowles. They describe learning which may be rote in nature or a simple discovery of previously unknown facts. Brookfield describes self-evaluation of what is learned so that the learner develops a richer context for learning. Learning can also go beyond assembly of facts to discovery of new ways of thinking about society and values. This begins to show the foundation for research on how adults make meaning.

Mezirow (1981) coined the term transformative learning as a concept in adult education. His philosophy of adult education is principally based on the work of philosopher Habermas who described the process of making meaning, understanding, and developing a framework against which new experiences are evaluated. Frameworks, Mezirow described (1990), are developed from instrumental learning, which is task-oriented problem solving, and communicative learning by which we "understand the meaning of what others communicate concerning values, ideals, feelings, moral decisions" (p. 8) and abstract social concepts. Transformative learning is an

awareness of those frameworks, where they came from, why they emerged, and how our behavior is derived from them and then to be able to critically reflect on their validity.

Mezirow (1990) defined critical reflection as "assessment of the way one has posed problems and of one's own meaning perspectives" (p. xvi). It is an assessment or reassessment of assumptions and transformative learning as the discovery that an assumption was distorted and is then reconstructed with new knowledge. Assumptions come from our perspectives, beliefs, and values as the outgrowth of our unchallenged indoctrination as children further confined by our ability to use language, unable or not mature enough to break out of patterns we believe to be inalienable truths, but which are in fact simply cultural constructs. We will consistently interpret anything new within the confines of how we presently interpret our world unless we can emancipate ourselves and break the pattern by entertaining alternatives and different perspectives as a basis for taking action. It is the highest of three domains of education, and according to Mezirow, is the only domain which may be classified as adult education.

"Meaning is making sense of or giving coherence to our experience. Meaning is an interpretation" (Mezirow, 1991, p. 11). Mezirow (1991) describes making meaning as central to adult learning. When adults learn, they seek to validate either a new or previous experience when, in the process of interpretation, they find reason to question its truth. "Normally, when we learn something, we attribute old meaning to a new experience...In transformative learning, however, we reinterpret an old experience (or a new one) from a new set of expectations, thus giving a new meaning and perspective to the old experience" (Mezirow, 1991, p. 11).

Transformative learning is the "process of learning through critical self-reflection, which results in the reformulation of meaning perspectives to allow a more inclusive, discriminating, and integrative understanding of one's experience." (Mezirow, 1990, p. xvi).

Mezirow advances a step, again, beyond Brookfield. Brookfield introduces self-evaluation as a part of self-directed learning. Mezirow implies an evaluation of the process of self-evaluation. Learners develop a richer context for learning but also engage in self-discovery by considering where their evaluating systems have come from and how those systems have influenced the way in which they have organized their world to make meaning of it.

The theories of Candy (1991), Brookfield (1986) and Mezirow (1981, 1990, 1991) particularly inform this research since they account for popular, social pressure to conform with commonly held, learned stereotypes. They explain that we will continue to use stereotypes for interpretation of new information as the most comfortable, least threatening direction for incorporating learning gained either formally or informally. They also account, however, for adults' prerogative to question stereotypes and arrive at new conclusions about the meaning of the information they gather.

Adults make meaning of their world, and may develop new understanding of their world, by being challenged with new perspectives which are incorporated into existing personal systems of thought through constructivism (Candy, 1991), result in critical evaluation of existing systems (Brookfield, 1986), or transform existing systems (Mezirow, 1981, 1990, 1991).

The collection of information which adults may use to broaden their understanding of the world can derive from all manner of activities as suggested by informal learning theories (Rossing and Russell, 1987; Marsick & Watkins, 1990; Rossing, 1991; Candy, 1991;

Reischmann, 1986). As adults, they are in control of how they will spend much of their time and direct their energy (Knowles, 1990; Tough, 1979).

Making meaning is a highly individualized process drawing on personal history, current circumstances, and a host of necessities, desires, interests and the planned and unplanned events that occur throughout daily existence. A study of how adults make meaning must accept individualized ways of approaching the world. Reading fiction, by its nature, is just such a highly individualized activity through which we may begin to see how persons engage in individual learning described by theories of how adults make meaning.

For adults who choose to spend a good deal of their leisure time reading novels, there is ample opportunity for them to direct their attention as they please, and while doing so, as will be described in the next section, be exposed to worlds of information and imagination. How they respond to these information filled and imaginative worlds to learn, is the focus of this investigation.

Novels As Genre

Since this research investigates learning from novels, it is important to explore why novels have such a wide appeal and what learning potential they may offer.

People read fiction of their own volition because they enjoy it. A novel creates a mood, a feeling, perhaps a challenge or sheer pleasure for its readers. Those outcomes derive from the book's form, style, subject, and author's pure skill at weaving a story that rivets our attention so that we would rather be sleepy at work tomorrow in favor of finding out what happens in the story tonight. The novel in this way may be thought of as substance and as form; substance referring to the purpose, the feeling, or the nature of the work and the form referring to the writing style, the subject, or structure.

The emergence of the novel as a genre is placed in the 18th century. Iser (1974) describes the history of the novel with an emphasis on substance by describing it as a time when people could become more preoccupied with their own everyday lives. Life was becoming more complicated, more diverse, and with more choices. The novel appealed to a wide audience because it was "concerned directly with social and historical norms that applied to a particular environment and so it established an immediate link with the empirical reality familiar to its readers. The novel confronted him with problems arising from his own surroundings, at the same time holding out various potential solutions which the reader himself had, at least partially, to formulate" (Iser, 1974, p. xi). The novel drew people inside of its world and so helped people understand it but because the world of the novel was similar to the reader's world, it helped to understand the real world as well.

The history of the form of the novel is considered by Lodge (1971) to be derived from two main opposing types of narrative: the empirical, whose primary realm is the real, and the fictional, whose primary realm is the ideal. "Empirical subdivides into history, which is true to fact, and what authors call mimesis (realistic imitation) which is true to experience. Fictional narratives subdivide into romance which cultivates beauty and aims to delight and allegory which cultivates goodness and aims to instruct" (Lodge, 1971, p. 1).

There have been phases in which these forms were combined and others in which they were treated entirely separately. The novel is proposed to be a synthesis of both empirical and fictional modes emerging from the 18th century. The novel then is seen, not as a unique way

of writing so much, as a unique way of combining perspectives on the purpose of writing. The result is both delightful and instructive, romantic and true to real life. Combining the descriptions of Iser and Lodge, the novel is a new breed of literature meaningful now for the common reader.

Cawelti (1976) categorizes current literature as mimetic or formulaic. The mimetic element in literature confronts the reader with the real world, while the formulaic element constructs an ideal world without disorder, ambiguity, uncertainty and the limitations of the world of ordinary experience. The mimetic and formulaic represent two extremes that most literature lies in between.

Novels have developed into different genres, each with its own specialized territory. Extreme formula novels follow a careful pattern to ensure that they contain no surprises. Readers of formula novels are typically not looking for surprises or unhappy endings.

The world of formula can be described as an archetypal story pattern embodied in the images, symbols, themes, and myths of a particular culture. As shaped by the imperatives of the experience of escape, these formulaic worlds are constructions that can be described as moral fantasies constituting an imaginary world in which the audience can encounter maximum excitement without being confronted with an overpowering sense of the insecurity and danger that accompany such forms of excitement in reality. Much of the artistry in formulaic literature involves the creator's ability to plunge us into a believable kind of excitement while, at the same time, confirming our confidence that in the formulaic world things always work out as we want them to (Cawelti, 1976, p. 16).

A typical fiction best-seller is a social melodrama which does not follow the same predictable pattern of the formula detective or romance or western novel. Instead of a particular formula, social melodrama is distinguished by a combination of melodramatic story and character development taking place within a realistically described social or historical setting. This combination appeals to the wish for escape along with the perceived redeeming value that the reader thinks that there is really something important being learned about reality. Cawelti (1976) says, "by way of insisting on the reality of stories, the social melodramatist tends to take advantage of anything that can give his tale the appearance of deep social significance and truth. If the novel's setting is historical, there is usually a parade of important and well known personalities, issues and events" (p. 261).

The Extent of Fiction Reading

A 1990 study of who is reading what (Zill & Winglee, 1990) found that more than 2 billion books were sold in America each year during the mid 1980's, or about nine books for every person over five years of age. About 500 million of these were relatively inexpensive "mass market" paperbacks. Many of the paperbacks contained works of fiction, even if most of the titles might not qualify as what literature critics would call literature. About 400 million of the books sold were classified as "popular" fiction while contemporary and classic literature sales together constituted only around 1% of bookstore sales.

A study conducted over 1983-1984 by the University of Maryland Survey Research Center, called the Arts-Related Trend Study, found that about 40% of adults nationwide reported reading one or more novels over the past year although only about 30% could cite a specific author or title (Zill & Winglee, 1990).

A 1983 study conducted for the Book Industry Study Group called the 1983 Consumer Research Study on Reading and Book Purchasing investigated the type of books being read by those over 16 years old. The top five types were action/adventure, mystery/detective, historical, modern dramatic and romance (traditional).

Borrowing of fiction accounts for over three quarters of public library loans (Nell, 1988, p. 19). The complication lies in discovering who reads what and how much of it. Nell reported that the relationship between book readers and newspaper and magazine readers is probably a function of education level. This statement is based on a 1976 US readership survey which found that book readers are better educated than newspaper and magazine readers who did not read books. Nell (1988) notes, "unlike book readers who were prepared to read at odd moments and under time pressure, non-book readers need to feel that they have a long period available before embarking on a book - an attitude not unexpected of those to whom reading a book is an unfamiliar and therefore daunting prospect" (p. 23).

Why People Read

Pleasure reading is a hugely complex cognitive act drawing on a variety of skills and processes in many different domains including attention, comprehension, absorption, reading skill, book readability, and reader preference (Nell, 1988). Fiction readers most often describe their reason for taking the time to read as pleasure, entertainment, escape, fulfillment missed opportunities, or the possibility of learning from reading.

Readers who finish reading at least one book per week are termed ludic readers. For them reading is a "self-motivated play activity, a visibly unproductive free activity standing outside routine life and involving the reader completely in a past time engaged in for its own sake" (Nell, 1988, p. 2). Referring to Cawelti's categorization of fiction, this applies to both mimetic and formula fiction.

It is not necessarily the case that readers either love or hate formula fiction, but certainly for readers who are not fans of formula novels, it seems as though the formula must quickly become too pat to continue to be entertaining. Readers who are loyal to formula claim they are motivated to read for the same reasons as other readers. What makes one formula style novel better than another is difficult to characterize. The qualities that result in rating a formula style novel as good depends on the invention of some new twist while still operating within the conventional structure (Cawelti, 1976).

Cawelti (1976) explored why formula fiction can seem endlessly entertaining to its fans despite the inherent repetition of a formula. He finds that each formula has its own set of limits that determine what kind of new and unique elements are possible without pushing the formula beyond its breaking point. He describes two special skills all good formula novel writers seem to use to some degree: "the ability to give new vitality to stereotypes and the capacity to invent new touches of plot or setting that are still within formulaic limits. The power to employ stereotypical characters and situations in such a way as to breathe new life and interest into them is particularly crucial to formulaic art of high quality since the creator of a western or detective story cannot risk departing very far from the typical characters or situations his audience has come to expect" (Cawelti, 1976, p. 12).

Cawelti (1976) discusses two techniques which seem particularly effective in breathing new life into stereotypes. The first is the stereotyped character who also demonstrates qualities

that seem to contradict the stereotype. The example cited is Sherlock Holmes who is logical and shrewd yet is also a dreamy poet, violin player and drug user. The second type is the addition of significant touches of human complexity or frailty to a stereotypical figure without undermining the dominant stereotypical role. The classic example here is the cowboy who becomes bashful and clumsy when introduced to the new lady in town or the hard boiled detective with a soft spot for children.

Radway's (1984) subjects read to escape from daily routine and to engage in an activity just for themselves. This is quite consistent with the earlier motivation of reading for compulsive readers as being an entirely self-motivated activity for the purpose of pleasure and outside of routine life. She also concluded that her subjects read out of acknowledgment that they were unlikely ever to have opportunities for travel and excitement and to compensate for the probable lack of continued formal instruction. The romance novel was valued for the information it contained because it could help readers feel as though they could still be part of moving, learning, progressing society. A genuine craving for knowledge of the world beyond the acknowledged limitations of child care and suburban homemaking is an important motivating factor in the decision to read (Radway, 1984).

Reading is an extremely complicated activity requiring both a certain amount of skill and certainly time (Nell, 1988). Why people read fiction has mostly to do with entertainment. How entertainment is defined by readers determines what kind of books they will want to spend time with. Readers are motivated by taking time for themselves to relax or escape into imaginative literature and spend time on their own in an activity of their own choice. They are also motivated by a recognized opportunity to learn and to compensate for perceived losses of real opportunities that may be realized instead through reading and imagination.

Effects of Reading

The literature describes other effects of reading which grow out of enjoyment and learning from a book. Carlsen (Carlsen & Sherrill, 1988), a teacher of secondary school English teachers, asked her classes over a period of years to write about their experience of learning to read, how reading made them feel and how it affected them. When she compiled those remarks, she found the common theme that books triggered new interests. Students reported having been so spellbound by some book that it drove them to seek further research on the subject and enter into related careers. One student reported,

...my reading tastes had changed to mysteries and war. Strangely enough the war novels were usually documentary. I would spend hours following the blow by blow account of the fall of the Remagen Bridge. I mapped out troop movements of the Battle of the Bulge and of Rommel's Africa corps. ... Largely through my reading I decided to major in history in college (Carlsen & Sherrill, 1988, p. 81).

Another student similarly writes, "I read Frank Slaughter's Daybreak, and after reading it, I became interested in conditions in mental hospitals. I read some more about them including information on New York's Bellvue Hospital" (Carlsen & Sherrill, 1988, p. 81).

Reading prompts some to want to write themselves. Radway interviewed several readers of formula romances who were seriously pursuing writing their own books with an aim toward publishing. Some reported that their reading was sheer inspiration to try their own hand at

writing. Others reported that they were frustrated at not finding exactly what they wanted from a book and were therefore going to write the perfect book for their own taste.

Another teacher (Hubert, 1976) discussed using popular fiction to stimulate beginning writers. Popular fiction is used as a model because it is pointless to encourage writers with classic works and set the classics as examples. That standard of writing is unreachable by the average writer. Popular fiction is familiar enough to everyone to serve as a kick off point to get people started on writing their own stories. This approach is used for students who have little practice at writing or are intimidated by writing assignments.

Shortridge (1991) proposed that novels have provided powerful images about the region in which the story unfolds so that readers develop a view of what the character of that place is like to the point of thinking about it in stereotypical ways that may not be accurate. Shortridge (1991) says, "Americans apparently hold clear, well defined images for the South, for the Midwest, and for similar regional labels. Novels may have been a major source and crystallizing agent for these images, especially between 1800 and 1950" (p. 280). After 1950 the influence of film and now video is much more prevalent and so Shortridge terminated his time period here. He proposed, in fact, that some novels have been so influential as to define the image of the regions they have adopted. He cites Wister's (1929) *The Virginian* in the creation of Western frontier imagery with its sweeping plains, brooding mountains and noble cowboys with their simple but free lives, and Jackson's *Ramona* to be "the force that transformed the image of southern California from a rough Anglo frontier into a romanticized, sunny Arcadia filled with peaceful haciendas and orchard blossoms" (Shortridge, 1991, p. 281). He proposed three conditions which he believes necessary to predict whether a newly published novel would become place defining: wide circulation so that the novel reaches the general public; a strong representation of a regional characterization; and a "public receptivity that makes the author's image take root in the collective consciousness of their nation so as to supplant or to supplement earlier regional conceptions. The quality of the literary effort, the accuracy of the description, and the keenness of the insights are irrelevant issues here" (Shortridge, 1991, p. 282).

Novels may go beyond entertainment for some readers who find fiction to be a springboard to systematic research projects (Carlsen & Sherrill, 1988) or to try their hand at writing themselves (Hubert, 1976). Novels may also be considered to have moved past entertainment and into the realm of sources of information when they influence masses of people into accepting stereotypes as truth even if not accurate (Shortridge, 1991).

Why Popular Fiction May be Considered as Learning Resources

The issue of quality has yet to be introduced. The purpose of this research was not bound by quality; nevertheless, a discussion of quality is relevant as it is invariably raised in the literature on fiction. It is instructive to consider quality at this point to further define the types of books which will be used as the basis for this research and to establish why popular fiction will be tested to see how they serve to stimulate learning.

Literary critics seem to classify literature as either a classic work, which is therefore good, and all other work which is therefore bad. It is often noted that the works judged by critics to be good are all authored by dead, white men and that there is always found to be something lacking by authors who are a variation on that theme (Ashley, 1989). The consistency of the "dead, white man" canonization is attacked by criticizing the critics as being themselves white men, who if not dead yet, appear to be nearly so. The argument in the ongoing tussle over how to

judge literature is mostly limited to which other writers should be allowed into the canon club such as the Brontes or Mary Shelley.

Popular fiction is, quite rightly, never considered and does not pretend to writing of that caliber. As a result however, popular fiction is simply ignored and very definitely relegated by literary critics from either side of the canon debates to the ranks of worthless trash (Ashley, 1989). When given any thought, popular fiction is generally defined by critics through its connection with a "mass, indiscriminating readership" (Ashley, 1989, 3). The implication is clear that it is somehow unclean and not to be handled by anyone wishing to be above the poor, undiscerning lumpen. Ashley (1989) states, "popular fiction is regarded as second rate fiction (or worse), a kind of cultural detritus, left over after literature of permanent value has been identified. Thus 'good' literature is identified, 'canonized', and takes its place within high culture as serious art. What is left is part of harmless entertainment (many commentators have disputed 'harmless')" (p. 3).

Ashley (1989) challenges the critics busy with their engagement in the canon wars to be more careful in their off-hand treatment of popular fiction. The difficulty with simply discarding for consideration all popular fiction is that it may be the only fictional reading by the majority of the population. According to Ashley, this is a mistake because popular fiction is widely assumed to influence lives profoundly; and is "surely of major significance in the understanding of those lives, particularly the processes by which meanings are constructed and exchanged" (Ashley, 1989, p. 3).

Rogers (1991) warned that literary critics who criticize readers of formula novels may be blaming the victim. Her perspective is that critics are extensively schooled readers whose reading often advances their careers and it is unreasonable for them to attack less educated individuals whose fiction reading is largely recreational, whose practical circumstances do not allow for the concentration required for heavier reading, or whose schooling left them unprepared to handle any more than formula books. Her point is that it's a bit like the professional athlete laughing at a chubby jogger. At least the jogger is working at it and trying rather than snoozing on the couch in front of the television. "When we read fiction for relaxation, not for career advancement or status enhancement, we all seek roughly the same experience - the pleasures of a good read that catapults us out of our everyday lives" (Rogers, 1991, p. 82). No one should be criticized for the choice of book, if anything, due credit should be given for selecting an activity which requires at least some attention and thought and can potentially be developed further. As stated by Lindeman (1926), "nothing so effectively dampens the ardors of appreciation as to be told by some formalist that the object being appreciated is unworthy, in bad taste. The proper retort is, of course, Whose taste? To this the conventionalist can only reply, Mine - which obviously answers nothing" (p. 97).

Rogers' thoughts are based heavily on Nell (1988) who said that critics traditionally held the view that readers are either highbrow or lowbrow and, as a result, that schooled and unschooled minds have different tastes. According to Nell (1988), "the two classes of reader as defined by elitist critics do not exist; the view that they do contains a fundamental error so common that it deserves to be labeled 'the elitist fallacy'" (p. 4). Although sophisticated readers have the ability to enjoy classic literature, they continue, on occasion, to also enjoy a good read of a favorite formula style book. The elitist position is, however, true in that unschooled readers will probably never pick up anything other than a formula story, "but as even a fleeting examination of culture consumption in the world around us shows, the doors from high to low

culture remain open and earlier tastes do not wither and die as more refined appetites develop" (Nell, 1988, p. 5).

Cawelti's (1976) thesis is that formula books have an important role that is neglected by research and should be considered an art form in their own right. They are also important for their role in reinforcing our societal standards and may even be arguably precursors of evolving standards by revealing flaws of current standards through the development of a story. He explains that because of the formula novel's association with entertainment and escape, it has been largely ignored by literary scholars and historians or "left to the mercy of sociologists, psychologists and analysts of popular culture" (Nell, 1988, p. 2).

The Book of the Month Club falls in the middle of the debates. In discussing the Book of the Month Club, Radway (1988) said that it has as its declared mission the selection and presentation of literature for all readers but it persists in being considered decidedly 'middlebrow' by a literary world who represent literature critics and academic scholars. Books offered are deemed neither the best of literature nor the worst 'trash'. Radway claims that such judgments serve only to protect the territory of the intellectuals making the distinction among highbrow literature and all other books and is not fair because they only serve to confirm a sort of hierarchy of literature in a way that establishes anything not rated as literature as a failure, allows only one standard by which books are created and read, and to legitimize the role of the intellectuals who dictate that distinction to others. Radway argues that for those whose lives are not wrapped up in the production and criticism of literature, books serve a variety of different purposes and it is wrong to dismiss those purposes as irrelevant. Books are selected for the Book of the Month Club partly by commercial concern but also because the editors believe their readers will like them and consciously make an eclectic offering with the understanding that different tastes and needs must be met without demanding that readers conform to some standard of highbrow literature. The Club has an interesting position of being staffed with readers who are themselves distinctly intellectual but also are in the role of catering to those who are not but wish to feel as though they are reading good books. The Club must balance commercial concerns of selecting books that members will buy and enjoy while also providing a selection that may be rated as 'good' (Radway, 1988).

According to Radway's study of the Book of the Month Club, the editors have never formalized their definition of 'serious' fiction but seem consistent in the way they make selections and describe why they like a book for the club. The term 'serious' is specifically avoided by some who believe it implies 'boring' or 'dour' but used frequently by others who insist that 'serious' fiction can still be pleasurable reading. It emphasizes the conflict of the club. Its purpose is to act as an agent of cultural authority and artistic excellence for its members but the selection must be enjoyable reading for a wide audience. Radway (1988) says, "on the one hand, the editors seem to share the assumption of the high-culture aesthetic that fiction should be technically complex and self-consciously about significant issues. On the other hand, they demand that such fiction be pleasurable to read, a stipulation that differs little from that made regularly by readers of best-sellers and genre fiction who desire always to be entertained" (p. 166).

The ideal books have characteristics of intelligence and will also provide some challenge for their readers. The challenge for the editors is to find work that makes sophisticated use of language, and also tells a recognizable story that will appeal to members. Radway claims that readers must be able to "map the insights gained from the experience of reading into the terrain

of their own lives... because they are seeking a model for contemporary living and even practical advice about appropriate behavior in a changing world" (Radway, 1988, p. 177).

The canons do not need to be the only fiction books which may be considered for their potential to promote learning. Popular fiction, and even the formula novels, are argued to have learning potential. There does not, therefore, need to be any discrimination against selecting subjects who are avid readers of only popular fiction.

Incorporation of Research into Fiction

Given that most readers are not engrossed in serious fiction, it is important to turn to what can be found in popular genre fiction from the perspective of accuracy of facts which may be learned and how it may stimulate thought on broad societal issues. According to Michener (1991) "That is the job of fiction. To put down on paper a chain of words, words that anyone could find in an ordinary dictionary, which will bring to life real human beings in real settings ... Which ones shall we use to describe that old house fronting this rather smelly canal to make someone who reads them in Zambia not only see the setting but also catch its psychological importance" (p. 212).

Rogers (1991) describes reading as a relationship between the reader and the author. There are a variety of writing techniques which the author uses to teach the reader so that they can go together forward through the story. Depending on the expected audience for a book, the author has expectations about what readers will already know and will make side trips, short stops, or diversions to present explanations of things the author cannot reasonably expect the reader to know. Too much unfamiliarity for a reader renders a book frustrating and meaningless (Rogers, 1991).

Solid research is incorporated into fiction to add some element of realism to the story. The author wants to create a scene that the reader can experience. To do that the details must be right. Research is a constant theme in discussions of writing and how-to books on getting a story published. Accuracy, accuracy, accuracy becomes a sort of mantra in getting published (Widdmer, 1953; Lowery, 1983; Browning, 1990). Spencer (1992) observes, "Only through research can you paint accurate pictures of believable people performing their daily work amid the sights, sounds, smells, touches, and tastes that are indigenous to their surroundings" (p. 13).

This is research in the real tedious sense of checking and double checking. How-to books on publishing advise checking a detail with at least two sources before including it as realistic background information (Widdemer, 1953; Lowery, 1983) and it means more than just checking dates. Widdemer (1953) says,

what should be checked include area geography, quirks of language, dress appropriate to a period, manners appropriate to a class, furniture, architecture, city or town plans, and any other specialized background required such as politics, religion, diplomacy, or gardening or business practices.... The writer doesn't want to become obsessed with the details but must have the background right or the story becomes unbelievable (p. 210).

The prevalence of factual information seems to be considered an important part of all major genres of popular fiction. The following is a review of writing about a few of them in regard to the presence of factual information a reader can be expected to encounter. Specific types of books will be discussed: romance, spy stories, mysteries, historical fiction, science fiction, and new journalism.

Romances. A great deal is written about writing and successful publishing of romance novels. Enough people are reading them that they are moved to try their hands at producing a novel of their own. While there is lengthy discussion of elements of writing, such as style and creating feelings of suspense or eroticism or tension between characters, authors of how-to books on romance novels cannot seem to say enough about the importance of research and accuracy of detail to create realism and interest. As an example, Lowery (1983) states that "many historical-romance novelists start each chapter with a page or two of historical facts, thereby setting the scene and keeping the reader up to date. Actually, the more the [historical] material can be woven into the chapter as a whole, the more strength the story will possess. You will find that true facts add a richness of detail that makes events fascinating and credible" (Lowery, 1983, p. 131). The tedious truth for the beginning novelist is captured by Browning (1990) who states that writing a romance novel takes more than having read a lot of them and using your imagination to make up a story. It is important to get the details right.

There seems to be in romance novels an obsessive requirement for facts to add color and believability. Beginners are warned that they can plan on becoming library regulars and should also consult travel films, newspapers, chambers of commerce and tourist departments, consulates, museums, antique stores and art galleries, book stores and specialty libraries (Lowery, 1983) or whatever it takes to get it right so that it cannot be said that sloppy research was used.

Spy stories. Spy stories are a bit different in their treatment of facts and very little has been written about the spy story as a genre compared to others. Stafford (1991), however, has completed an entire book on the subject and reported that spy novels seldom tell much about the realities of espionage. He says (Stafford, 1991, p. 3), "The plots paint a romanticized picture of espionage. A novel depicting the true life of a secret agent would probably bore the reader to death" but they must seem plausible in order to carry conviction. The most successful spy novelists have been spies, or at least have worked in professions closely involved with intelligence. Stafford (1991) notes "The boundaries of fact and fiction in the world of espionage have often been blurred. If we are to believe one source, Soviet military intelligence was so impressed by the details of Somerset Maugham's secret service work during the Bolshevik Revolution provided in Ashenden in the 1930s that they advised that a special study be made of British spy fiction" (p. 4).

Stafford (1991) claims that spy stories have experienced an evolution of style that changes both the reporting of details and the mood of the writing. Early spy stories played heavily on the romantic hero image of the spy resulting in James Bond-like characters fighting against rather bizarre and unlikely villains. Modern spy novelists like le Carre, Allbeury, and Deighton are known for bringing realism into spy novels both in their use of spy craft and in the portrayal of intelligence agencies. They are commentaries on the dehumanizing of agents, the ponderousness and pettiness of agencies run by the upper-class all white male club, and the delicacy of the international balance of diplomacy (Stafford, 1991).

Stafford believes that what makes some spy novels seem so real is that the authors are keen observers of changing political and economic climates to be able to anticipate what may happen in the same way that political leaders do. When the author speculates about what may happen as an international situation develops, the author may relate a story that in fact is actually happening. As a result, it seems uncertain whether fiction is imitating fact or the other way around (Stafford, 1991). Spy stories then, particularly the more recent, are a social commentary

as well as a story. Yet they remain on the fiction shelves of the library since "the main object of spy writers has always been to entertain and amuse. But they are always more than entertainers. Spy writers present us with unique orientations about nations and their place in a complex and dangerous world. If we care to look, these commentators of the silent game can inform as well as amuse" (Stafford, 1991, p. 231).

Mystery. As with the spy story, little has been written about the mystery story as a genre, and as a mystery subset, the detective novel. In one full book on the subject, Lehman (1989) reaffirmed the requirement to have thorough research as the basis for credibility similar to the romance writer. Micky Spillane, Lehman (1989) says, is considered a master of detail on the workings of the underworld. He also describes, though, a practice similar to that found in recent spy novels to create realism in that they are grounded in hard news (Lehman, 1989). While the spy novel is grounded in international news, the mystery or detective story is based on a smaller scene of local news. A participant in the annual Raymond Chandler festival in California said Chandler, creator of private eye Philip Marlowe, "is often passed off as escapist literature - but what he's really talking about is the society of his time, that whole implicit critique of life in a boom town, like L.A. was in the '30s" ("Professor Wins," 1993).

Historical. A great deal has been written about historical fiction and learning from the perspective of how-to to the influence-of. While other types of fiction are concerned with inserting detail to provide realism, historical fiction is concerned with finding the proper balance between fact and fiction to create a novel. In the how-to realm, it is advised that the emphasis on historical fact be tempered so that the reader remembers that the story is a novel and not a history book. Iser (1974) and Cowert (1989) take the view that too heavy a hand with the historical review is considered the mark of an amateur. As Cowert (1989, p. 20) notes, "even the popular historical novel instructs as it delights. Popular writers, as a matter of fact, sometimes instruct too much. One recognizes second-rate historical fiction not by its devotion to mindless pleasure but by the failure of its author to transmute mere facts into something of ideational consequence and to achieve the proper balance between historiographic and artistic considerations. The inferior novel is positively gravid with information; the inferior historical novelist fails to subordinate raw history to art."

Iser (1974) believes that what makes for a successful historical novel is to translate the facts into the perspective of a character so that the reader can understand what it was like to be a part of the times and still be relevant to a modern reader. What the historical novel can do, that a dry recitation of the chain of events cannot do, is relate what might have been the motivation and mood of the times so that they become human events rather than historical events. Iser (1974, p. 83) says, "introduction of historical details are then important for the reader to understand what drove the motives to see the development of the continuously interweaving situation and reaction that results in the development of events. In this way the reader gets a double dose of learning. On one hand, the reader gets a feeling for the chain of events as they unfolded in history as well as information about the times in general and also learns about human behavior." The historical novel is, in this way, thought of as a social commentary of earlier times similar to that seen in the spy and mystery novels as commentaries on modern times.

In the writing on historical novels, several writers refer to its potential as a learning resource (Iser, 1974; Cowert, 1989; Fischer, 1976; Fleming, 1985; Smith, 1987). In fact, it is considered a good alternative source of learning to work produced as history texts for average readers who are unlikely to gain much from history texts and who would never read history texts.

Cowert (1989, p. 20) says, "where one sometimes, as a secondary reward, takes pleasure in history, one always learns from literature. ... The reader, then, who wants to know what really happened at the Battle of Waterloo may learn more from Hugo, Stendahl, or Thackeray than from Michelet, or John Keegan, for the novelist routinely transcends imagined material to speak with great authority about the past." Similarly, Flemming (1985) notes, "fiction makes history live with an intensity and reality usually lacking in the analytical prose of the modern historian" (p. 12).

While historical novels are social commentaries and introduce readers to factual information about the past, and spy and mystery novels may be thought of as commentaries and sources of information about the present, science fiction, Parrinder (1980) argues, does the same for the future.

Science fiction. Like historical novels, science fiction novels are referred to specifically as opportunities to learn. Parrinder (1980) observes, "the seriousness with which science fiction fans regard their chosen pursuit suggests that they see it not merely as a diversion but as a mode of knowledge. In many cases the knowledge offered by science fiction takes the intangible form of ideas; the genre has been widely regarded as a 'literature of ideas', especially political and scientific ones" (p. 43). Defenders of science fiction refer to its ability to stimulate thought through presentation of ideas and it is also considered an avenue for learning about specific scientific concepts that a reader might not otherwise pursue. Sagan (1980) says, "one of the great benefits of science fiction is that it can convey bits and pieces, hints and phrases, of knowledge unknown or inaccessible to the reader" (p. 4). Authors use terms with which the reader may be unfamiliar but which actually exist in science. The reader may still not understand what they mean but for the first time has now heard of the term.

Sometimes explanations are provided so that the reader gets a mini lesson in science (Sagan, 1980). The danger in learning from science fiction novels is that sometimes the transition is made from scientific fact to science fiction so skillful that the reader may be led to believe that things exist that are purely invented for the sake of the story. Nevertheless, science fiction by the leading writers and scientists like Asimov and Clarke often provide extremely well presented summaries in non-fictional forms of many aspects of science (Sagan, 1980). Schmitdt (1980) notes, "in well-done extrapolative fiction, much sound science is incorporated, made vivid, and explained lucidly. For example, one can learn a good deal about astrophysics and general planetology by reading an Anderson novel" (p. 111).

New journalism. A new permutation of the novel has been appearing more recently that has been labeled the non-fiction novel. The term non-fiction novel was first used to describe *In Cold Blood* by Truman Capote in which exhaustive research was conducted to recreate to the last accurate detail the account of a multiple murder in 1959. In new journalism, Lodge (1971) claims, "every detail is true yet it also reads like a novel" (p. 9). It is the term "reads like a novel" that is important here.

Clay Felker who published the *New York* magazine and the *Village Voice* newspaper is credited with coining the phrase "new journalism" to describe detailed reporting presented with the techniques of fiction (Downie, 1976). New journalists argue that such writing comes nearest to presenting the reader the truth about a person or event than conventional who-what-where-when reporting. This perspective is particularly complimentary of the idea that the news can be just as riveting as any fiction. Readers are in fact being told a story disguised as

news. Or perhaps its the other way around. New journalism has been criticized, however, when concern for the style and sales appears to take precedence over the facts and there is inaccuracy in specific detail (Downie, 1976, p. 232).

The advantage of new journalism style is that it does get people reading about issues that might otherwise not attract much attention. An example cited is the asbestos industry which was eventually called to account as a result of investigative journalism and wide readership of the results (Downie, 1976, p. 226).

Learning from books - philosophy/propaganda

Learning from books has been presented here from a variety of perspectives but these perspectives may be broken down into the philosophical and the purely factual.

Serious fiction is typically referred to in discussion of learning from books as a source of philosophical learning. Philosophical learning means that books provoke thought about the nature of individuals and society and help readers probe their own ideas about themselves and their relationship to others. Cawelti's (1976) statement that serious fiction addresses broader enduring truths is apropos in this context.

One use of fiction in classrooms is as a learning resource alternative to works in sociology or psychology or anthropology and are more likely to be read by a larger readership. Rogers (1991) observes that the method of novelists and the method of sociologists provide different perspectives toward social worlds. He says (Rogers, 1991) that sociologists describe a "reduced, emasculated, and `docile' subject matter" by stabilizing the subject and "abstracting from people's experiences only the elements deemed pertinent to their investigation" while "novelists do much less abstracting. In their fictions, experiences retain their integrity. Not surprisingly, many individuals look to novelists for what sociologists fail to give them" (p. 180).

Novels tell us about places and slices of society we may be curious about but unlikely to ever see. Epstein (1989) states, "one reads novels in large part for information about the world... to fill one in on a world from which [one] is far removed and which seems to be otherwise undescribed outside fiction" (p. 38). Price's *Clockers*, for example, tells a story within the environment of city public housing development rampant with poverty, and drugs and corruption, but also with hard working families trying to get ahead against almost impossible odds. The story is compelling in itself, but also provides the outsider an inside look so that life in the projects becomes real. Newspaper stories about violence and drugs in the city streets take on a new meaning with some insight about what is happening to human beings to create an environment where such things happen as a matter of routine. *Clockers* is an excellent example of Epstein's (1989) statement that "the novelist deals in individual cases and leaves the generalizations to the literary critics, sociologists, psychologists, journalists" (p. 38).

Another use of fiction in the philosophical vein is to use fiction as case studies. Parr (1982) believes that today's younger generation is remarkably unable to understand that they have choices or alternatives and that the standards of the majority do not make them the highest standards. She proposes using fictional stories in classrooms as case studies so that students can evaluate how they might have behaved, what they think of the way the main characters behaved and how situations come to develop as they do and how it might have come out differently.

Another use of fiction is as a subtle means of promoting a point of view which Cranny-Francis (1990) discusses in application to feminist issues. She states that feminist writers

are breaking into the popular fiction market in all genres and converting them to a feminist perspective by telling the same style of stories but telling them from a feminist point of view. The central characters behave like right-minded feminists rather than woman imitating men. Popular fiction is used this way as a means of widely spreading feminist propaganda. Such a practice is defended by Cranney-Francis (1990) who says, "the feminist use of genre fiction seems very appropriate. It potentially enables feminist writers to reach markets which might otherwise be closed, even antagonistic to them. The feminist discourse, which many readers might be totally unfamiliar with, is presented with a familiar and much loved format" (p. 3).

Learning from Books - Factual Information

As is clearly implicit in the section on types of learning which may be found in various genres of fiction, the information included in fiction is frequently exhaustively researched. The information provided is generally not immediately relevant but helps readers to imagine what is happening in the story as well as provide realism and interest. As Rogers (1991) said, "literature has often instructed its readers ... Tess of the D'Urbervilles, for instance, acquainted many with the turnip slicing machine and the bright red thresher. Until the late nineteenth century, novelists were often willing authorities on such matters" (p. 11).

Facts learned may not, in themselves, have particular value to the reader, but demonstrating that learning can occur from reading was concluded to be important in Radway's (1984) study. Radway explained that her subjects justified the time spent reading by being able to recite facts no matter what the subject. She notes that "one reader stated that the addition of factual details 'keep it from being a completely stupid fictional story'" (p. 111).

Radway (1984) explains that learning facts from reading helped her subjects absolve themselves from ridicule for reading formula romances and make their reading a worthy activity. She says "romances, then, connote change and progress for the women who read them because they believe the books expand their horizons and add to their knowledge about the world. They also provide these readers with an opportunity to 'teach' skeptical family members and thus to assume temporarily a position of relative power" (Radway, 1984, p. 112).

And obscure the facts may be. Romance writer Sarah Orwing (1983) describes just such obscure trivia by these examples:

In one of my romances the hero used coconut oil as insect repellent. The editor wanted to know how the hero extracted the oil, so I added a scene where the hero splits open the coconut, places it in the hot sun, and lets the oil drip out. This was easy to include because I had researched jungle survival and kept records about it (Orwing, 1983, p. 38).

Fiction is crammed with factual information which may result in learning. A reader may or may not remember the information included, but the opportunity is there.

There are several points made regarding the activity of reading and the opportunities for learning available in a variety of fiction genres.

Fiction reading is an enormously popular leisure activity. It is entirely self-motivated and engaged in for a variety of reasons. Primary among those reasons are for entertainment, to escape, learn, and to fulfill needs not met in the reader's real life. Reading may also be highly influential in shaping attitudes towards something not experienced first hand.

The literature suggests that it may not be necessary to consider only classic literature to investigate an experience of learning from reading. An examination of different types of popular fiction genres shows that there is a variety of learning potential available including providing factual information, promoting issues on the social agenda, and social commentary.

Summary

The three sections of the literature review each contribute to understanding the nature of the current investigation. A summary of each section follows with a final discussion of how they inform this study.

Radway (1984) showed that complex outcomes may result from reading through her investigation of how reading, specifically formula romances, is interpreted and valued by their devoted readers. Radway found clear evidence of collection of random facts. She also found what may be considered more sophisticated levels of learning wherein readers come to terms with their real life prospects as compared to their imaginary lives in novels. Her data gathering methods and results suggest that individual interviews will be an effective method for conducting this investigation.

Tough (1979) pioneered investigation of self-planned adult learning projects resulting in recognition that adults may regularly undertake consciously self-planned, self-directed individual learning which meets their personal needs. Self-directed learning is relevant to theories of making meaning, particular Candy's (1991) description of constructivism, Brookfield's (1986) description of critical reflection, and Mezirow's (1981, 1990, 1991) description of transformative learning. Adults typically respond to their environment in ways consistent with societal norms recognized as popular stereotypes but may reevaluate the information they gather to arrive at alternatives. Alternatives may form the basis for developing new patterns of thought, provoke questioning the accuracy of learned stereotypes, or may cause consideration of how stereotypes derived to assess their source.

Literature on novels show that adults are reading fiction on a massive scale. While the primary motivation for fiction reading is entertainment, it is known that learning is also frequently occurring. This is noted as a secondary outcome by studies of reading and learning conducted for other purposes. Different genres of novels may contribute to varied types of learning and learning on varied subjects. All genres are based on some research so that they provide accurate information to enable gathering facts. Beyond simple gathering of facts, novels can stretch readers' imagination into unfamiliar worlds and perspectives and may provoke readers to evaluate their own attitudes and stereotypes. While serious literature is most likely to accomplish this result, the same outcome is reported to be found in popular novels that are the clear choice of mass readership.

Putting the three sections together suggests that, in a sense, novel reading may be thought of as self-directed but unplanned learning that may result in gathering of random facts to discovery of opportunities for critical evaluation and reassessment of existing thought constructs. Novel reading is entirely individual, self-motivated, and self-directed. It is a source of learning which is generally not the primary purpose of the activity but which, nevertheless, may result in learning of various types.

Radway (1984) found a pattern in why her subjects found formula romances so rewarding and how they interpreted their reading. Discussions on why her subjects found their

reading important to them and how they interpreted their books, appear to have direct correlation to adult learning theories on self-directed learning, informal learning, and making meaning. Her subjects did not read primarily for the purpose of learning, but clearly did gain knowledge from their reading.

The three sections of literature review suggest that investigation of how adults experience learning from novels may indicate a new direction for research on adult self-directed learning enabling personal growth and ability to broaden perspectives beyond currently held popular patterns of thought.

CHAPTER 3 METHOD

The purpose of this study is to investigate the adult experience of learning from fiction by seeking the relationship between learning and effects of reading reported by readers to theories of adult learning. Respondents cannot be asked directly to make this relationship; such a question would be meaningless unless they were well versed in learning theory themselves. The method of gathering data therefore must be one that allows respondents to fully discuss how they relate to their novels in a way that will suggest an association with adult learning theory. To that end, selection of respondents, research design, instrumentation, data collection and data analysis is described here.

Selection of Respondents

The criteria for individuals who participated as respondents were that they be over 21 years old, read at least one novel per week as a leisure activity, not limit their selections to formula romances, and be willing to have an interview recorded. They had neither professional connection to literature nor were they engaged in any organized scholarly reading or analysis of literature. Other variables in connection with respondents such as background, education, employment, income, race or sex were not of interest here. It was the general nature of the experience of reading rather than the experience of a specifically defined adult group that was sought. This is not to imply that results may be generalizable to the population at large, only that it may suggest patterns or commonalities as a basis for further investigation.

Finding candidate respondents posed no difficulty. They all came from large U. S. Navy organizations because they were accessible to this researcher. Having government service as an attempt at commonality among respondents was not the purpose. They were simply easy to find in this environment and willing to participate. Readers made themselves known by keeping novels near them, clear evidence that they want to have books close at hand. By observing employees around an office building, it was apparent who kept novels within reach. Candidates would typically have a novel or two on their desk or could be observed reading a novel during a break. Candidates were asked if they read often. Those who confirmed did so with enthusiasm. When asked if they would be willing to talk about their experience of reading, they were happy to do so.

Of special importance was whether respondents enter into a relationship with novels in which they go beyond temporary entertainment to learn and reflect. Some readers may not. They read purely for temporary entertainment and either do not remember anything about books they have read or decline to make any use of the learning opportunity which may be available to them. Whether a candidate would meet this criterion could not be determined in advance. As will be further described, five respondents were to be interviewed in two sessions. The first session served to determine if a candidate should be interviewed a second time. Only one candidate was rejected on the basis that he claimed to have no memory of novels that he had read.

It was not necessary that all respondents read the same or similar books. Likewise, a candidate was not rejected for having similar tastes in fiction to another one. It also was not necessary that individual respondents read a wide variety of fiction genres so long as there was not a concentration on formula romance. Respondents were asked about their preference in novels initially only to rule out those who limited themselves to formula romance.

The five candidates who participated in two full interviews were three women and two men ranging in age from 27 to 54, one of the women and both men were married and had children. One man and one woman were from very large families, one man was an only child, and two women and one man were from single parent households. All were white, all employed full time in government service, and all but one of the woman had above a high school education.

Design

A case study method was particularly well suited to this investigation as it gave full rein to individual reading experience while allowing for patterns or commonalities to emerge. The properties of a case study, as described in Merriam and Simpson (1984), contribute to understanding a particular phenomenon by providing a rich description which "illuminate[s]...understanding of the phenomenon under study (p.97). A rich description of individuals and their reading experience were necessary to provide adequate opportunity for data to emerge to cover the range of interest in this investigation.

Instrumentation

Interviews were used with the aim of soliciting information on how adult readers respond to opportunities to learn from novels. It was important to elicit, at length, four categories of information suggested by the literature review. They include; (1) data on personal background and reading habits, (2) use of facts presented in novels as an opportunity for incidental learning, (3) reflection on what was read that might cause re-evaluation of understanding of relationships and society, and (4) reflection on what was read that might prompt re-evaluation of personal behaviors, values, or perception. A description of each category follows:

(1) Information on personal background provided a framework for reading. This category sought specific information on age, gender, formal schooling, and work. It also sought information that might suggest something about special influences for an individual such as family life, other interests, and significant events. Further, this category sought specific information about the extent of reading both novels and other types of literature, what types of books and authors are favored, and how reading emerged as a regular activity.

(2) The second category sought to discover how a reader used factual information presented in a novel. Did readers remember facts or even notice them, did readers deliberately accept or reject facts or compare them with what they already know, or make use of factual information presented in contexts other than for the immediate purpose of the novel? The reason for this direction of discussion was to explore the role of incidental learning and what readers did with factual information beyond its story purpose.

(3) The third category investigated whether readers reflected on the circumstances or characters described in novels and compared with them with what they understand about society at large or their personal relationship to others. This direction of discussion sought to discover if readers broaden or reinterpret their understanding norms, stereotypes, or behavior. The purpose was to listen for what role constructivist or reflective learning might have had in novel reading.

(4) The final category sought evidence of transformative learning. This direction of inquiry asked whether readers were prompted by the circumstances or characters in a novel to consider their understanding of themselves, why their personal beliefs, behavior or values are shaped as they are, and if they should consider change.

These categories suggested interview guides seeking specific information on personal history and reading habits, and more general questions to prompt discussion on incidental, constructivist, reflective, and transformative learning which may have occurred as a result of reading. The interview guide at Appendix A lists questions used for information on personal background and reading habits to cover data desired in the first information category. Some, such as age, gender, and schooling were direct in nature. Others, such as those on work and family life and reading history, invited respondents to answer in broader terms and set the stage for discussion on how reading was made a part of their lives. Additional suggested general questions were included to initiate a free form discussion about learning outcomes from reading which might have lead to data within information categories two through four.

While it was possible in one interview for a respondent to talk exhaustively about the whole range of learning outcomes, it was considered unlikely. Two opportunities to describe personal history and learning from novels allowed respondents to consider the first interview and reflect further on the topic on their own. A guide for a second interview, at Appendix B, was used. Here the purpose was to invite elaboration on remarks made in the first interview that suggested respondents might have more in-depth information to reveal. It also served to help respondents direct their attention to data they might be able to reveal in information categories not raised in the first interview.

Each interview required flexibility to probe for responses. Guides served to help focus an interview but were not intended to limit discussion or serve as a questionnaire-style instrument.

Data Collection

Data were collected by in-depth individual interviews with five respondents. Five was selected as a target number with the expectation that trends would be evident with that many. If five proved insufficient, an option remained to continue with more. For this study, more than five was not needed. Interviews were conducted in a location that was reasonably quiet and free from interruption. Respondents with a private office preferred to stay there and make themselves available at the end of the day when it could be expected that it would be fairly quiet. For respondents without a private office, a quiet conference room could be used. Interviews with all respondents were recorded with their permission.

Two interviews were conducted with all five respondents; the first interview guided largely by the respondent, the second guided by the interviewer to follow-up emerging themes from the first interview, and to probe for further insight into how respondents related to their reading. Each respondent was interviewed once, the interview transcribed, and the transcription used as a starting point for the second interview a few days later. The second interview was transcribed and both interview transcriptions were then coded. A full analysis of data was prepared before proceeding to the next respondent. Then the next respondent was interviewed, the interview transcribed to prepare for the second interview, and so on.

Conducting two interviews instead of one long interview served two purposes. First, it allowed an opportunity to review a transcription of the first interview to serve as a guide for the follow-on interview. Second, it allowed time for respondents to think about the first interview to clarify their thoughts. It was common for respondents to begin the second interview with remarks about what they meant to say or information they had overlooked in the first. Once they had time to gather their thoughts, they were typically more thorough and articulate in describing their experience.

Data Analysis

Transcribed interviews were analyzed to uncover themes in the way respondents experience learning from reading both within each interview as individual case studies and across cases. Patterns were developed from interview transcripts and interviewer notes by methods described by Miles and Huberman (1994) and Strauss and Corbin (1990). Strauss and Corbin describe a qualitative method in which a transcribed interview is broken down into individual words, sentences or paragraphs to ask, "what does this mean," or "what is being described." Miles and Huberman (1994) identify the selected words, sentences or paragraphs as 'data chunks.' Discrete codes are used to label data chunks. When all 'data chunks' are assigned a label, labels are compiled for further refinement into categories of similarity. Categories could then be examined to discover the themes they convey.

Some phrases sentences or paragraphs had more than one code assigned which related to different emphasis as directed in the guiding questions. Coding for types of learning used predetermined codes to note evidence of learning which was incidental gathering of random facts, active incorporation of new information into existing knowledge (constructivist), reflective examination of conflicts between current beliefs, values or behaviors and those presented by a novel, and transformative self-assessment of personal growth.

For descriptions of novel reading's role in the lives of the first three respondents, coding did not use a predetermined code list. Rather, the initial coding step used transcriptions of the interviews to develop codes. A close reading of the transcripts, phrase by phrase or line by line and asking the question, "what does this mean?" or "what does this represent?" resulted in a list of potential codes. This list was then examined for commonalties which could be used as the basis for a developing a coding list. First order coding was then done by recoding using the code list. Recoding also allowed verification of the codes developed against the original words. Since consistency of coding developed in the first three interviews, later interviews used the code list already developed allowing for addition of new codes if required.

Second order coding was accomplished by examining the code list seeking overarching categories allowing codes to be grouped. Categories were then broken back down to discover the themes they suggested.

A third round of coding was also used to note incidents where there was an apparent connection between learning from novels and personal history. For example, incidents may have taken the form of a continued interest in, or specific rejection of, certain novel subjects because of past experience, associations made between feelings about a novel's subject, or character, and events from personal history, or judgments made about a novel's situation or characters based on personal standards.

By the third case analysis, it was apparent that there was considerable repetition of codes. The fourth case confirmed that a reasonable coding list had been developed for reuse while still allowing for new codes to be introduced. Commonality of categories and themes also emerged. The fifth case reconfirmed a reusable coding and confirmed many categories and themes.

Once each respondent's set of interviews was coded as an independent case, a final cross case analysis was applied to develop general observations and conclusions.

CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS

The findings are the outcome of interviews with respondents asking them describe their relationship with novels and how novels have affected them. The purpose of the interviews was to seek data on; (1) personal background and reading habits, (2) use of facts presented in novels as an opportunity for incidental learning, (3) reflection on what was read that might cause re-evaluation of understanding of relationships and society, and (4) reflection on what was read that might prompt re-evaluation of personal behaviors, values, or perception. A brief description of each of the respondents shows family background, education, interests, and current situation. Following this introduction of the respondents, cross case analysis of case studies reveals reading history, current reading practices, and effects of reading as broad areas to be discussed.

The Respondents

Five respondents completed two interviews for a total of about 135 minutes each. All respondents met the criteria of being over 21, reading at least one novel per week, selecting novels other than formula romance, and showing evidence that, when reading, they entered into a relationship with novels that were influential. The five respondents were two women and two men between the ages of 27 to 54. Respondents showed no particular commonality in their backgrounds. They come from small, medium and large families, three from single parent households, and differing economic circumstances although none could be considered especially well off. Their education ranges from high school only to master's degrees, two of the women were excellent students, the others average to poor in school performance. The two men and one of the women are married with children, the two men's children are grown and gone. One of the women is active duty U. S. Navy. No attempt was made to select respondents to generate any specific consistency in personal history. They simply needed to love reading novels of any kind other than formula romance.

Respondents all came from large U.S. Navy organizations, therefore, there is similarity in that they are successfully working for the government. Selecting government employees was not a deliberate attempt to find consistency in background or employment, they simply were accessible to this researcher and willing to participate.

Each respondent talked freely about the personal experience of reading and shared reading practices, feelings and thoughts about novels with great animation. Undoubtedly, private information was withheld in descriptions of personal history, but it is unlikely it seriously detracted from the overall interview outcomes. Each of the interviews was highly personal, reflecting the very individual nature of reading experience. The special personality of each with their own humor, observations, philosophy, recall of the past and opinions about the present make each a fascinating piece on its own. Collectively, there was considerable consistency in remarks made by the five respondents. There are no conflicts; rather what emerges are variations in respondents' experiences of reading, what they find compelling about reading and what they report they do with what they have read.

Respondents' names have been changed for reporting in this study. Full analyses of their cases are provided as Appendixes C through G. The following is a brief description of each of the respondents individually.

Alice

Alice is a single, 27 year old white woman. She lives on her own and works as an office assistant. She also holds a second job as a salesperson in a clothing store for additional income.

Alice's father was a Navy enlisted man and often moved the family to different areas along the U.S. East Coast up until her parents' divorce when she was in her early teens. Since her father was often away on cruise, she grew up mostly in the company of her mother, two brothers and one sister. She is the oldest child. Her parents' divorce was a significant event signaling the end of a comfortable family life and the beginning of a diminished standard of living. She does not relay any bitterness about this, she respects her father's professional accomplishments and admires her mother's fortitude in carrying on as a single parent until the children were on their own as responsible adults.

High school graduation is Alice's highest formal scholastic achievement. She is interested in further education but has not made the commitment to return to school. Aside from reading, her other interests include crafts of various kinds. Alice reports that she has always been a reader and cannot remember a time when she wasn't.

Ben

Ben is a white male, 54 years old. He is married and has adult children, one son and one daughter, and is a doting grandfather to a 5 year old girl. He is candid and lively in discussion.

Ben is the only son of blue-collar parents, his father was a warehouse foreman and his mother a hair stylist. He spent all his growing up years in the same town in rural New York.

Ben had difficulties growing up which he did not describe in detail. It was as a teenager that he started reading novels. After finishing high school, he tried college but was not a good student. He joined the Marine Corps and had a tour in Vietnam. He later went back to school to study extensively in psychology and management. He has earned enough total credits to achieve a master's degree but has never actually graduated from an institution of higher learning.

Ben now holds a highly responsible, upper management position as a government employee. He enjoys many active sports but his greatest pleasure derives from his family and family events.

Cathy

Cathy is a white woman, 54 years old. She is single and has never been married. She was raised with two brothers on a working farm in a small Kansas town. She reports that she started reading before she can remember. Elementary and high school teachers had a significant influence on forming values and interests and she went on immediately after high school to college from which she graduated with honors, started adult working life as teacher, and later earned a master's degree.

Other aspects of Cathy's life that have been important include a two year period of service in the Navy, a decision influenced by her father's and aunt's Navy service. While active duty in the Navy did not become her career, it was her introduction to civil service with Navy organizations. Today she is a mid-level government servant whose special interests include politics, history, and philosophy.

Don

Don is a married 47 year old white man. He is a big man with a kind, bearded face. He seems candid in discussing his background and his thoughts. He likes to talk and seems never to be uncertain about what he intends to say and what he means.

Don is the second child in a family of nine children. His father was a career Air Force officer who moved the family many times to new duty stations mostly in the western United States. Don reports that he can't remember when he started reading but does remember reading adult novels starting when he was seven or eight years old. When Don's father retired from the Air Force, the family returned to his mother's home town of Pensacola. Don's father moved away from Pensacola to find work when Don was 13 and never returned. Don's mother and siblings all remained in Pensacola as a single parent family. Don expresses absolutely no resentment about this and speaks of his father with warmth and fondness.

After graduating from high school, Don joined the Marine Corps, was ordered to a four month tour in Vietnam, and except for a brief period when he left service, stayed in the Marines for nine years. He was involuntarily discharged from service due to an injury thus ending his intent to remain for a full service career.

After his discharge from the Marines, Don undertook a bachelor's degree starting first as a business student but finishing nine years later with a degree in communications with an emphasis in video production.

He is now a mid-level government servant with expertise in audiovisual production and developing interactive computer courseware. His job often calls for travel to other parts of the country, which he generally enjoys. He is the father of two grown sons and grandfather to two girls.

Ellen

Ellen is a 37 year old white woman, married with two daughters. She was recently promoted Chief Petty Officer, a Navy enlisted rank of considerable achievement and prestige. She is in charge of administrative support for a large Navy command. She is a tiny person but easily holds her own through her manner of confidence and sure direction. She has a conspicuous limp but it has never prevented her from performing her duties with the Navy including tours at sea and she never mentions what that infirmity is.

Ellen is a middle child in single parent family of ten children and grew up in a blue-collar town near Detroit. She remembers taking books out of the library by herself by the time she was eight or nine years old. She earned a high school diploma from a local Catholic school and has completed a few college courses. She wants to continue her education but has not decided whether to pursue a second career after the Navy in teaching or nutrition.

Ellen reads voraciously. Whenever she takes a break from her workspace, it's certain that she is reading a novel. She also enjoys reading several magazines. In addition to reading, she enjoys swimming, bicycling, playing cards and occasionally her family will go camping.

In each of the broad areas repeated throughout the five interviews, reading history, current reading practices and effects of reading, there are recurring themes. Appendix H provides a matrix of findings and serves as a simplified reference for how findings were distributed among respondents.

Reading History

Recurring themes in how the respondents became readers are; (1) adult example, (2) source of novels, (3) novel selection as children, and (4) escape as a motive for reading.

Theme 1. Adult example.

The story of how the five respondents became readers is consistent except for Ben. Alice, Cathy, Don and Ellen all report reading for as long as they can remember and had mother or father set an example of reading novels for pleasure. Don's description of how a parent influenced reading is the most vivid and he is sure that his love for reading came directly from his father who read voraciously. Don says that his father read all the time even while milking a cow by holding a book between his forehead and the cow while he milked, by sitting in a rocking chair so that he could rock back and forth and saw wood and read, and while riding to school on his horse. "Anything that he could do while reading a book, he'd read a book."

For Ben, becoming a novel reader was different. Ben discovered reading novels on his own. He recalls that his father read the paper every day and his mother read some magazines, but there was no example of reading books as leisure set by his parents.

Theme 2. Source of novels.

When the respondents were young readers, the source of books was the school or local library. In the cases of Alice and Ellen, going to the library was something of an event. Alice's mother made it a family activity to go to the library. Alice explains that "Mom made a big event out of going to the library with the kids and we would all pick out books to bring home." Ellen describes her early trips as her mother's courier to the public library when she would pick up a selection of new novels for her mother and return the novels that had been finished. Ellen says she was the "only child in the entire city who was allowed to check out adult books" since no one under 14 years of age was permitted to check out a book from the adult section. Ellen was allowed to do it on her mother's behalf. While collecting novels for her mother, Ellen also picked up a collection of children's books for herself.

Don also was reading his father's collection of novels from the Book of the Month Club. Don says his father "would get all these books and he'd read them and when he was done I would get them and I would read them . . . so I started reading other things that he had. He was an Erle Stanley Gardner fan, Perry Mason, and I've read every one of Gardner's books and I would read them after he read them. I started reading those in third, fourth or fifth grade."

When young, respondents obtained their novels from the same source as their parents used to select leisure reading. This applies to all except Ben whose parents did not have many books at home and did not set an example of reading for pleasure. Typically the library was the source of choice although Don also had a wide selection of novels available from his father's Book of the Month Club collection.

Theme 3. Selection of novels.

Generally, when the respondents were young, they chose novels stereotypical of boys and girls. The boys read about physical sports and adventure, the girls read about romance and romantic places. Don's early exposure to, and enjoyment of, adult fiction is unusual but he was also reading juvenile fiction about sports, the Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew mysteries. Nancy Drew would not be an expected stereotypical choice for a boy, but Don would read what ever he

could get. His sister had a collection of Nancy Drew and they would both read and laugh together over them. When he had exhausted his school library supply of sports stories, he latched onto a series about a doctor who routinely saved lives. Don wished to be a ball player hero, then a neurosurgeon hero. Don's taste was eclectic since he would read anything he could find including novels not expected of a boy. His desire to read a variety of genres appears in his adult selections later.

Alice, Ben, Cathy and Ellen all enjoyed children's books and started as regular readers with more traditional selections.

Alice says she started out with "books with pictures and little stories about animals and fairy tales with castles and princes." As she became a better reader, she enjoyed longer, richer plots and description without pictures so that she could begin applying her imagination to see pictures in her own mind. Use of her imagination would become increasingly important to enjoyment of novels later.

Cathy liked "horse stories and books about sports" although she also read biographies and novels with other themes. While books about sports are not stereotypical of girls, Cathy enjoyed sports in school and carried that interest into her reading choices. Carrying her interests into her later reading choices is one of her characteristics.

Ellen recalls the Encyclopedia Brown series of short stories as a favorite when she was eight or nine years old. Encyclopedia Brown was a boy detective. At a story's end "it would say something like, 'I knew Fred had taken the ball. How did I know that?' You had to figure out how Fred took the ball and then you could check your answer was in the back." The novel Ellen read in her early teens that she especially remembers and perhaps captured her forever as a fiction reader was Love's Tender Fury, a historical romance, a genre she would enjoy later as well as mysteries.

Ben liked action and adventure in his selection of Walter Farley Black Stallion books, Hardy Boys novels, Robert Highland science fiction, and Edgar Burrows' Tarzan books. His early choice of action and heroics is also a theme found in his later selections. Ben says, "once I found an author who wrote something that I liked, then I would go back and read every one of his books. Sometimes to the detriment of my studies, mind you." Ben's report of reading everything he could find by one author is similar to reports of others. Ellen and Don were also consumers of everything they could find by a favored author.

Alice and Cathy were faithful to preferred themes but do not describe systematically reading everything available by one author before being forced to find a new one.

All the respondents set their habits quickly for the type of novels they knew they would enjoy. The desires were remarkably stereotypical. The young girls found the romance and exotic places they dreamed of typically in historical and romance novels. The boys found the sports figures and adventurers they wished to be. The boys never wished to be swept off their feet by love; they wanted to be heroes and conquerors, Tarzan, space travelers, the hero who saves the game or a life.

Theme 4. Escape as motive.

There is considerable variation in the stated reasons for early reading, but they are all generally related to a desire to escape from circumstances to a place of imagination. Reading could be exciting and different and would take them to fantasies far away in a way that was

private. All the respondents except Don have stories of wanting something different or something more than they had in their daily lives. Ben is explicit about this in explaining that he had a difficult youth, "always had a problem with authority," and was often in trouble. It was his discovery of how reading could be fun and interesting combined with his personal troubles that led him to fiction. Ben explains that he started reading novels while he was immature and not behaving responsibly. He says, "It was a good escape to read a lot and I started reading before I got out of high school."

Ellen has vivid memories of reading to escape a cramped, noisy household. She says that at dark, all ten children were expected to be in her mother's small house. In Detroit, the winter nights are long. Ellen explains, "you're stuck in the house from five o'clock at night until the time you go to bed, there's nine other kids in that house, one little TV in a little tiny room that's got a sofa and two chairs. There's eleven people and seats for five at the most. It was just much nicer to go upstairs and lie in bed and read a book."

Don does not articulate a specific reason for why he became an early reader. He recalls being fascinated by Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*, and "read it from cover to cover and couldn't put it down." Once hooked by the experience of "fascination" from reading a novel, Don became a constant reader.

Despite stated differences in what motivated reading, for Alice, Ben, Cathy and Ellen, unhappiness, isolation or yearning for something other than what they had was a primary motive. Only Don seems to have been a busy, happy, popular boy. Novels supplied the opportunity to escape from what was ordinary or what they had, to what was desired but unobtainable.

Summary.

Typically, when young, the respondents when young followed a parent's example of reading for pleasure, took books from the library as their parents did, quickly found the type of novels they liked and stayed with them. The choices were stereotypical of girls and boys and allowed them to escape from the reality of their daily lives to places where they could do, have, and feel what they wished for but were unlikely, certainly as children to go. It also set a pattern that each would carry into adult reading habits.

Current Reading Practices

The reading practices of the five respondents as adults fall into four categories: (1) current motive, (2) time spent reading, (3) current preferences, and (4) novel selection.

Theme 1. Current Motive.

Reasons for reading novels are pleasure and escape derived for a variety of reasons. There were also many remarks about enjoying learning from reading that will be treated separately. There is a consistent theme of escape from the pressures of work and adult responsibilities and especially from job stress. All the respondents except Don specifically cite escape from work as a motive for reading novels.

Reading also supplies a refreshing break from the daily grind and enjoyment from entering imaginatively into worlds different from their own. In novels, respondents find excitement and adventure missing in their own lives. Ellen also reads novels to make her feel good or satisfied and will only read them if she can expect that they will. She wants to know that she will find a happy ending to a novel and often reads the end of a novel first. "If I don't like the

ending,” she says, “I won’t read the book.” Knowing the ending doesn’t deny her pleasure in the novel, she simply now feels that it is worth her time to read the novel through because she will be satisfied with how it turns out.

The respondents are consistent in reporting that they read as a stress reliever and for excitement. They become so involved in what they are reading that they can remove themselves from their immediate surroundings and enter into an imaginative world that makes them feel happy or stimulated.

Theme 2. Reading as a Part of Daily Routine.

Respondents report reading from perhaps two hours per day to upward of four hours or more per day. Ben is on the low end reading during his lunch break and some during the evening if he is not doing something else. Although he reports reading for the least amount of time, he also says that he reads quickly and finishes five or six novels a month. Ellen is on the high end reading at every opportunity during breaks at work and for several hours every evening. Ellen devours novels and they fill a great deal of her time. She says she gets through twenty to thirty novels per month.

Alice, Cathy and Don fall in the middle averaging perhaps three to four hours reading time per day and finishing 10 novels per month.

All the respondents have a pattern in their days with time set aside to withdraw from other activities to read. Since all are employed full time, have routine chores to perform to maintain households, and some have families demanding time, the amount of remaining leisure time spent reading is significant. It can be estimated that most choose to use almost all their leisure with a novel. Work breaks and evenings are preferred although Don and Cathy also read over breakfast.

Despite the amount of time devoted to books, some respondents choose to use leisure time on some other activities as well. Alice enjoys craft work and uses her time alternatively for that. Cathy watches a bit of TV and Don, Ellen and Ben have family oriented activities that also takes up some of their leisure time. Ben additionally enjoys sports such as skiing and boating and likes to go to action movies. Even though some respondents have activities other than reading that they enjoy, reading novels is still a dominant choice for leisure.

Theme 3. Current Preferences.

The gender differences seen in novels selected by the respondents during their childhood were fairly stereotypical with the boys choosing mostly stories with males heroes in action settings, the girls choosing romance with female characters in exotic places. The preferences of the respondents as children are still seen in the preferences of the respondents as adults. The girls as women still like far off places and romance, the boys as men still like heroes and adventure.

Tastes have also widened according to exposure to experiences and development of special topics of interest or study. Don and Cathy in school read a good deal of classic literature in addition to popular fiction. Don still occasionally enjoys classics. All of the respondents have developed unique sets of parameters in selecting a novel they expect to enjoy according to the development of their interests. This may be seen in how each now makes choices compared with choices made as children. Alice's fairy tales and animal stories have become romance novels set in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when kings ruled the land from their castles, and westerns with a special interest in horses. The interest is expanded in that she now finds her

attention turned less to the fairy tale aspect and more to history and the British Isles. She also likes modern mysteries and drama and current stories set in different parts of the world.

Cathy's current eclectic assortment of selected books indicates that her interests have similarly developed. She is still reading stories with horses and sports and romance, and likes mysteries, but she is interested as well in political-military affairs and history. Cathy says that she has also been interested in classic literature, citing Faulkner's As I Lay Dying and Emerson as examples.

Ellen has graduated from the mysteries of Encyclopedia Brown to adult mysteries, such as novels by Cornwell and Grafton but she still loves the romance and potboiler dramas that captured her imagination as a child and young teen. Ellen also subscribes to several magazines, Reader's Digest, National Geographic, People, Redbook and Ladies Home Journal, as well. She says she also likes "some biographies depending on who they are. I have a soft spot for Eleanor Roosevelt for some reason" and "travel brochures, the little books that tell you about the country, culture, that kind of thing." By far her most consistent reading is novels and her favorites are "historical romances, mysteries, contemporary fiction" and humorous writing such as Erma Bombeck and Joan Rivers. Her all time favorite is Sydney Sheldon's contemporary drama.

Ben's boy hero-adventurers are now men hero-adventurers. His clear preference in novels is for action and adventure. His favorites include Tom Clancey, Eric Von Lusbadder, and Louis L'Amour. In addition to the action, he is also interested in the commentary on modern society and sees parallels in novels set in military-political situations to current events and trends. His education and professional interest in organizations suggests that he is an observer of developing, complex interaction among people and events. Ben's attention is turned to seeing how fiction in novels may be instructive of real world events.

The boy in Don is similarly still alive in Don the adult. His juvenile heroes have become adult heroes with themes that are typically murder mysteries, or novels with a military theme, or with continuation of characters from one book to the next. He cites Louis L'Amour westerns, Clancey politico-military novels, and Lawrence Sanders detective mystery novels as favorites. He has also read classics, Beowolfe, Dante's Inferno, Plato and keeps Shakespeare handy in case he feels like reading him.

The preference in novels for the respondents when young is similar to their preferences now. The women prefer romance, the men prefer action. The stereotyping now, however, is less strict. The men still have nothing to do with romance but the women are inclined to enjoy action and mystery as well as romance. The reasons for their enjoyment of these novels are also less related to the stereotypical preferences of boys and girls, and more to their adult interests and broader perspectives on history, society and culture.

Theme 4. Novel selection.

How do these five readers find their novels? All them of them prefer to find novels on their own. They do not belong to reading groups or use suggested reading or best seller lists. One is a member of a book club for the convenience of obtaining novels, not as a method to find suggested reading. Recommendations from others are accepted but are regarded somewhat dubiously by respondents if they are not already familiar with the author or theme.

None of the respondents actively look for new authors and only Alice is not terribly interested in who the author is. Alice remembers some authors she has enjoyed and will refer to

them when looking for a new novel, but she is most interested in the themes she has enjoyed in the past. When asked how she selects a novel, she relates her favorite themes. "I used to read a lot of romance but now I like mysteries, murder mysteries I especially like, and I also like stories about the old West. I still read romances but they're historical romance."

All the others are enthusiastic fans of particular authors and to varying degrees read all they can get until the supply is exhausted. Cathy's statement, "I have some favorite authors that I look for. . . Some authors I'll read what ever they write," is typical. All the respondents except Alice can recite their personal list of favorites. Several authors are current best sellers and their names appear on more than one respondent's list such as Tom Clancey, W.E.B. Griffin, Louis L'Amour and Pat Cornwell.

All the respondents related the same story about what happens when they can't find a book they want by an author they know. That's when they will try something new. In some cases its because a book has been recommended or given as a gift. When desperate, Ben says, "I know what I enjoy and typically I can look at the overleaf or the back in the store and in just a couple of seconds figure out if its something that I would enjoy. I'm one of those people who judges a book by its cover. I absolutely do." When searching for something new, all the respondents judge a candidate novel in moments. Not one, however, can articulate what it is that catches the attention so quickly. Cathy says, "whatever sounds intriguing. I just look at the titles and something piques my interest." Ellen says, "I'll look at the titles and if it sounds amusing I'll read what it's about and if it sounds interesting, I'll take it." Don doesn't really know what gets his attention, he just picks something that sounds as though it is similar to what he likes.

The respondents generally are absolutely loyal to their favored authors and themes. When they can't find a novel they haven't read by a favorite author, they will read a new author using favorite themes as a guide. If a new author turns out to be one they enjoy, they will consume everything by the new author until that supply is exhausted.

Summary.

The respondents report their reason for reading now as being similar to their reasons for reading as children: escape, stimulation, and relief from a daily routine. The amount of time specifically carved out of their days to read, despite the limited amount of discretionary time they have available outside responsibilities of work and home, is significant. Just as reasons for reading have not substantially changed, novel selection has also not substantially changed. Novel themes chosen now are consistent with those respondents chose as children although there is a broader spectrum of adult interests. They remain fairly stereotypical with the men enjoying action and adventure dominated by male characters, and the women enjoying romance, historical settings and adventure dominated by female characters. They know what they like and that's all they want to read. With reluctance, an unknown author is selected, but rigidity to preferred themes remains constant.

Effects of Reading

Reading novels has value for the respondents. There is a recurring pattern of the effects of reading for all the respondents falling into four broad categories: (1) feelings of pleasure, (2) learning (3) reinforcing personal beliefs or values, and (4) stimulating thought and ideas. Interwoven throughout is use of imagination and reflection.

Theme 1. Feelings of Pleasure.

All the respondents read novels primarily because, one way or another, it gives them pleasure. This was previously described as their greatest motivation for reading. For all of them, there are feelings of pleasure in getting away from daily pressures to be stimulated by something different or be “lost” in words.

The power of words to create images is a consistent theme. The importance of using imagination and the delight resulting from “seeing” imagined people and places is described repeatedly. Respondents are enchanted by what they can imagine. Ellen’s remark, “It is so stunning to sit back and look at it,” is indicative of how strongly absorbed respondents become when engaged in visualizing from the descriptions they read in novels.

There is pleasure in the act of reading itself. The texture and richness of words especially enchant Cathy, Don and Ellen. Cathy illustrates this feeling in her statement, “I listened to an audio book, and that’s OK but it’s not the same as being able to read it I don’t think. There’s something about reading the words.”

The same enchantment with use of language is caught in what Don calls “turning a word.” He loves the way an author can use dialogue to express a sentiment that Don wishes he had thought of. He is enormously pleased to find a passage that perfectly states what he thinks or feels but has been unable to articulate as effectively as the author has done.

There is a strong element of wanting to read novels beyond an effect of pleasure, there is a real sense of need for reading or dependence on reading as an activity. There is expressed a clear dependence on novels and being able to read by the three women. While the men say they like to read, the women are incapable of considering life without novels. Ellen also relates this to her desire to use her imagination by explaining that “imagination is what makes life interesting. If you can’t imagine and pretend and act things out, your life would be pretty boring. I have never understood how anyone can go through life without reading.” Alice and Cathy have similar remarks. Alice says, “I can’t think what it would be like without novels. If a person doesn’t read, what do they do with themselves, what do they think about?” There is a sense of panic at the thought of being without reading novels as an activity that Cathy has consciously considered in saying, “The idea of growing older and losing my sight really scares me.”

Even though it is the women who say they cannot conceive of their lives without novels, only Ellen hoards novels the way both men do. They go beyond reading as a personal experience to making the physical book a personal possession. Don is a novel hoarder extreme. He is only comfortable reading novels he owns, and once he’s read it, he will not part with it. Don says, “when I read a book, it’s mine and I want to keep it. It would be hard for me to borrow a book, read it and give it back. I’d have to go out and buy it.”

All the respondents find pleasure in reading for escape but go beyond that to finding pleasure as well in the richness of words for their texture and the imagines they bring. That pleasure and the need for it is so great, that respondents are unable to think of how they would get along without novels and keep novels around as treasured possessions.

Theme 2. Learning.

There are repeating themes in learning that include: a. collecting random facts and building knowledge, b. interacting with and learning about others, and c. learning about self.

Collecting random facts and building knowledge. There is a clear opportunity for collecting information. All the respondents cite instances when they have learned about things with which they were previously unfamiliar, or knew about but could learn more. Collecting information is not the primary motive for reading, and retention of details is not necessarily an outcome, but some learning is evident in what respondents say. The information used to create novel background is frequently cited as the source of bits and pieces that respondents remember.

Novels are cited as a source of information about a topic that a respondent would otherwise not have found of interest, or certainly would not have selected as a subject for investigation, but turns out to be something a respondent finds interesting and fun to learn about.

Respondents have also found novels to be a source of information that they can build upon. Since respondents are typically reading novels with consistent themes, there is an opportunity to add to a knowledge base with each new book covering similar ground. History in particular emerges as a topic in which respondents will use material from several novels to form a more complex understanding of a period or place. This is illustrated by Ben's statement, "I actually feel like I'm getting to know a lot about an area if I read several books with the same theme. Almost as though I'm getting to be regular expert because I have read so much about it."

Interacting with and learning about others. All the respondents use information presented in novels to learn about other people. Novels can serve as a source of education about fitting into society and understanding about how people behave. Ben provides an explanation that is a good summary of respondents' sentiments. He believes novels give him a better understanding of others as products of influences he has never experienced. He is therefore able to reserve judgment or change his judgment. He says, "I have absorbed enough knowledge of people from very different backgrounds, social classes, and incomes, that I can understand people will act differently from me and that there is probably a reason for the way they act."

There is one perspective of learning about others that is unique in Don. Novels give Don a guide for difficult relationships. He is inspired, motivated, or soothed by the words of authors who help him put things into perspective. He extracts from novels "slogans and quotes to help me through daily life." Sometimes a simple phrase catches his attention that captures a perspective he wishes to remember. He explains, "when I read things like that I write them down. I usually keep a list of them hanging on the wall and they serve as reminders of how to get along, how to cope, how to deal with people and it's good just to read those things once in a while. Everyone gets in situations where they're not particularly happy or are under stress; those types of things help."

Respondents frequently make reference to using what they have read to help them in social conversations. Having a broad spectrum of things they can talk about from having read about them, they can be more effective conversationalists or feel more confident that they will have something to contribute.

Novels can also be a basis for contact with others. Some of the respondents trade books or recommendations. As an example, Ben saves his favorite novels specifically to be able to lend them when he thinks they might give someone else pleasure.

Respondents use novels to help them relate to other people. They find in reading an education about how others come to be as they are and live, use the information they have

collected from novels to help them carry on social conversations, and may use the exchange of books as a basis for contact and sharing with other people.

Learning about self. Respondents describe their observations about themselves and ways in which they have learned something about their own behavior and attitudes. As they learn through novels that behavior of others is the result of complex influences, so too do respondents learn about themselves. This perspective leads to understanding their own abilities and frailties, and can even help them change behavior or attitudes. Ellen explains that “fiction has taught me that there are no black and white, there are gray areas. . . I’ve learned that you can’t automatically shut out people. . . Fiction opens your eyes, opens up your world a little bit so you’re not so narrow minded.” Similar comments from the other respondents reveal that novels may be used as a means of self-evaluation ranging from simple physical abilities to overcoming stereotypes.

Respondents say they learn from novels. They collect information as they read. It may be a simple collection of facts. Something catches their attention because they find it interesting and had never been exposed to it before, or it may be information that they add to what they already know. The result is that they feel they know a little bit about a lot of different things or that they have a better understanding of areas in which they have read a great deal or were otherwise in possession of existing knowledge. Information collected from reading may also give respondents a better way to relate to others. They frequently report using the facts they have picked up to be better conversationalists. The information they collect may also inform them about other people. Respondents feel they have a better understanding about people who are different from themselves. They can be more effective at relating to a larger variety of backgrounds, culture and perspectives. What respondents learn can also challenge to them to think about themselves in new ways. They have a better understanding about their own limitations and may even undertake personal change.

Theme 3. Reinforcing Personal Beliefs or Values.

There is evidence of a connection between values learned from admired adults and the fictional characters respondents admire and wish to read about now. Ben provides an illustration of this in describing the relationship he had with a role model who influenced Ben’s values. Ben says his role model was “a very, very forthright and very honest, up front kind of guy and I had some very difficult times when I was in high school and he was very influential in helping me work through those times.” The role model demonstrated the values and behavior of strength of character, honesty, loyalty, and intelligence that Ben admires most. These are the same characteristics seen in the larger than life, heroic main characters depicted in the novels that Ben typically selects. Don’s description is similar. Novels whose lead character fails to demonstrate these values, do not appeal to the respondents and they probably won’t read them.

There is some suggestion of a gender difference. The women also describe enjoying only novels with characters whom they can admire. The admirable qualities are the same as the men, but typically female characters are demonstrating them. There is a strong emphasis on being smart and independent rather than heroic. Cathy’s description of her favored fictional characters illustrates. She likes protagonists who are “smart, willing to be risk takers, and usually relate well to people who are independent and have a sense of humor and accomplish something with their lives.” She says she reads novels with “more women because I guess I identify more with women. I don’t think I consciously do that, that just seems to be the way it works out.”

All the respondents relate and enjoy best what they personally believe. Because they already believe it, reading about it serves to reinforce it even more. Even though they have a better understanding of others different from themselves as a result of reading, they value characters with the qualities they themselves believe important. Those qualities are consistent with mainstream values such as integrity, honesty and intelligence with some possible difference in emphasis according to gender.

Theme 4. Stimulating Thought and Ideas.

All the respondents insist that the novels they read have at least a little substance. How they define that is individual but it can be generalized as requiring some plot complexity and good use of language.

Cathy and Don describe novels specifically as an opportunity for intellectual stimulation. They have both been exposed to classic literature and value that experience, finding challenging reading good intellectual exercise. They both also believe that reading is important to clear thinking. Cathy says, "I really think reading and writing are what being able to think is about. I don't know how you learn to think if you don't read somehow. There seems to be a connection to me, language, the development of language skills, is important from reading too. They expose you to ideas you probably wouldn't have come across on your own and challenge you."

Respondents also enjoy coming across a presentation of a situation that makes them think, "Gee, I hadn't thought of it that way." It stimulates their thinking to be able to understand something from a new perspective. It may not change their minds, but it serves to enrich their scope of knowledge and appreciation of the complexity of the world around them.

Respondents like novels to be clever, with intricacies of plot that keep them on their toes and interested to find out how the author will put it all together. Plots that are trite or language that is unsophisticated will bore them. They are pleased by new ways of seeing things. While not seen in all respondents, there is also an opportunity to use novels as mental exercise to stretch abilities of comprehension and to think clearly and creatively.

Summary.

Novels have a variety of effects on all the respondents. The first is feelings of pleasure, the dominant reason for reading at all. Pleasure comes from the fun of escaping responsibilities and being absorbed into a place of their imagination where there is excitement and unfamiliar places and situations. Feelings of pleasure may also be derived from the rhythm of words and the texture of language itself. They enjoy being caught up in a story well told.

Novels cause respondents to learn. They collect facts, some for which they have no immediate use but find interesting and some which they add to what they already know. Respondents use what they have learned to improve their relationships with other people. They may simply use the facts they have gathered to be better conversationalists or they may learn more about people different from themselves to be more effective at relating to them. Sometimes, respondents may even learn something to cause them to evaluate themselves so that they can either come to terms with themselves or undertake personal change.

Despite an opportunity for personal change as a result of reading, respondents use novels to reaffirm their most strongly held standards of behavior learned in childhood from adults they admired. The behavior they value is consistent with mainstream, modern models of ideals. They do not want to read about a central character who lies, cheats or steals. Sub-characters who do,

are expected to be outdone by a central character who is honest, works hard, and has the intelligence to figure out how to win in the end.

Novels cause respondents to feel intellectually stimulated. They want sophisticated, complex writing and they like to be challenged with perspectives that make them think in new ways. Although not practiced by all respondents, two of them use of classic literature to challenge comprehension and application of reading to try to improve personal writing ability.

Findings Conclusion

As children, the respondents followed the example of a parent of choosing to read as a leisure activity. As boys and girls they chose novels fairly consistent with male and female stereotypes: adventure and action, romance and romantic places. The respondents as children found in novels pleasure and an escape from their real circumstances and the experiences yearned for that they did not have for themselves. Their pleasure from reading and choices of novels as children set a pattern that each would carry into adult reading habits.

As adults, the respondents report that they still read primarily because they derive great pleasure from novels. Pleasure is primarily in the form of escape, stimulation, and relief from a daily routine. Every day, they routinely set aside time alone, apart from full working and family lives, to read. Their choices in novels as adults are not substantially different from their choices as children. They still tend to select novels according to gender stereotype although the selection is broader with the addition of adult interests. Political intrigue, as an example, is gender neutral for these respondents and of interest now with adult awareness of political realities.

The respondents have fallen into a fixed set of genres they know they will enjoy and stick with what they know rather than experimenting with something radically different. They are seeking pleasure and want to be fairly sure that's what they will find before investing time in an unknown. The respondents may try a new author when they have exhausted authors they know, but stay with their favored themes.

A variety of effects results from reading. Feelings of pleasure are the primary effect and the main reason for reading. The responsible adults can have periods of being irresponsible. They escape from their work and family pressures and vicariously experience excitement, fun, romance or what ever their imagination wishes for. The words of fiction themselves may give pleasure in their rhythm and texture. The desire to use imagination to escape combined with the power of words to capture imagination so that the respondents can see and feel the story, is enchanting.

Learning is also a common effect. The respondents collect facts as they read although they may have no apparent use for them. Attention to facts may be captured for no obvious reason, respondents simply "find something interesting." Those facts may be retained in isolation or added to what a respondent already knows. Respondents report that they feel they have a reasonably good grasp of some topic by virtue of having read a good deal about it in a series of novels using that topic.

Learning about others may also be an effect of reading. Respondents have felt better about their relationships to others as a result of their ability to interact more effectively by using what they have read. They may simply be better able to engage in conversation by calling upon the facts they have collected. They may also improve their appreciation for others different from themselves and be better able to interact effectively with a greater variety of people. Respondents

report that they may even learn something to cause them to evaluate themselves. The effect is to either acknowledge their own biases or shortcomings or to undertake personal change.

Novel reading has never had the effect of changing or even challenging fundamental values for any of the respondents. If anything, they select novels that reaffirm their beliefs and values carried with them from childhood. Those values and beliefs are mainstream standards learned from the example of admired childhood role models.

Intellectual stimulation must also be a reading outcome. Two respondents deliberately used difficult classic literature to force them to concentrate in order to comprehend. All respondents want to be challenged to think and imagine. The use of language and development of plot must have sophistication compatible with good education and take them farther into thinking in new ways. Plots must be realistic yet creative with twists and turns and complexity. Vocabulary used must meet their adult standards. Respondents like to be challenged with perspectives that make them think, "I never thought about it quite like that."

CHAPTER 5 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Novels are a well documented source of learning but there is no clear relationship made to learning theory. Adult learning theory, conversely, takes little note of novels as an opportunity to learn. In this research, how adults may use their leisure reading of novels to result in a variety of learning outcomes and how it affects them was explored. Chapter 5 is a summary of the study and conclusions propose how the learning that novel readers report is supported in the context of adult learning theory.

Summary of the Study

Literature on novels and reading describes readers as engaged in an activity through which they are primarily entertained (Nell, 1988), escape and experience vicariously (Radway, 1984) those things they are unlikely to experience first hand. They deliberately carve time out of their days to enter into a place of imagination. While absorbed in a book, they also have ample opportunity to learn in a variety of ways.

Adult learning theorists especially grounding this study are Tough (1979) on self-directed learning, Knowles (1990) on the characteristics of adult learners, Candy (1991) on constructivism, Brookfield (1986) on critical reflection and Mezirow (1981, 1990, 1991) on transformational learning.

Novel reading fits neatly with Knowles' (1990) discussion of the characteristics of self-directed adult learners. It suggests that adult readers are selecting fiction that meets their personal needs and will use what they want from novels to fulfill their personal requirements based on personal history, preferences, interests and goals. Reading novels as a leisure activity is personal, internally motivated, and an entirely self-directed use of time and interest. Tough's (1979) emphasis was in deliberate self-directed learning projects. Yet reading novels may also be thought of as a deliberate project with a learning outcome which may not necessarily be planned but is nevertheless the result. Tough's (1979) was a theory in informal learning. Informal learning plays an important role since it must be remembered that the principle reason for reading is seldom for learning, but for amusement, yet learning is frequently an outcome.

It is not necessary to consider only classic or 'serious' fiction as a source of learning. There is considerable evidence that popular fiction lends itself readily to learning outcomes. Studies such as Radway's (1984) show that even readers who limit themselves exclusively to formula romances report learning that is both factual and philosophical. Since reading popular fiction occurs on a massive scale, and may be the only fiction reading by a large portion of modern society, it must be considered as a learning source.

Literature on fiction discusses learning as a fiction reading outcome. The simplest outcome is collection of facts. Novels are set in some context that must be described in detail for the story to make sense. The time, place, events, and appearance of the setting must be realistic to give readers some reference for what they are reading. Novels are typically thoroughly grounded in accurate reporting of the details so make the story both interesting and believable. It is the details that can provide a rich source of learning of bits of information.

Novels may be a source of information about societal issues or character. They may reinforce mainstream norms or they may probe the standards of society or behavior from different perspectives to cause a reader to think in different ways.

Novels may also provoke readers to think about their own strengths, weaknesses, stereotypes and ideas. The result may be reaffirmation of self-assessment or there may be discovered a basis for change in thought and personal behavior.

Each of the genres in the variety of fiction available has particular aspects that may contribute to learning. Learning may be collection of factual information or it may be philosophical in nature through which readers may be prompted to analyze, question, reevaluate and change. Romances and historical novels are known to be copiously researched and accurate to lend realism to the story. There is endless opportunity to collect facts. Mysteries, detective stories, spy stories and science fiction also present opportunities to collect information but additionally have a strong aspect of commentary on societal issues and character that may create an opportunity for readers to think about their own place in society, their values, ideas, stereotypes and behavior.

Candy's (1991) theory of constructivism finds a context in readers who read many novels with consistent themes so that there is an accumulation of information with which a reader may 'construct' a good understanding of some area of knowledge. Each novel may provide a bit more information to fill in the gaps, to allow comparison, evaluation and interpretation to form a full picture without contradictions. Any new information that does contradict, causes reconstruction until it can be either accommodated or rejected. Constructivism may be applied to collection of facts or to understanding society or character. Brookfield (1986) is relevant especially to experiences of reading in which is created a conflict of understanding about oneself and relationship to ones environment. Novels may present situations in new perspectives. A new perspective may result in questioning held beliefs such as stereotypes which Brookfield (1986) calls critical reflection. The result may be reevaluation of stereotypes resulting in a more complex understanding of self or society.

A study which particularly informed this research was conducted by Radway (1984) on the experience of reading by a sample of readers who selected only formula romance novels. Formula romances are the most vilified by critics but Radway (1984) found that her respondents had a variety of learning outcomes. Respondents were principally the wives of blue collar workers who were mothers and full time homemakers and copious readers of formula romance. Their chief reason for reading was for entertainment, escape and vicarious experience of other times. They also sited learning as a reason for reading. In focused group interviews, they frequently reported informal learning through collecting information; all deadly accurate as is typical of romance writing. There were also reports of self-assessment in terms of coming to terms with limited prospects for change in their circumstances, awareness of their place in society, and reflection upon their place and roles in comparison to their dreams. Radway (1984) concluded that formula romance for it's devoted fans was clearly a springboard for more than mere distraction, it was a window on the world that its readers could use for better understanding of themselves and the world around them.

This study investigated the experience of reading by a sample of respondents who were also constant readers but selected something other than formula romance. What types of learning might they report, would they simply be strengthening their current views and values or might they find learning to cause them to change, and how did their reading affect their lives.

The case study method was chosen to allow full exploration of reading experience for five respondents. Three women and two men participated in individual interviews. Their ages

ranged from 27 to 54, all were employed full time, three were married with children. Formal education achievement ranged from high school to master's degree, two were from very large families, three were children in single parent households. Each respondent was interviewed on two separate occasions with an average total interview time of 135 minutes. Interviews were transcribed and coded three times to suggest themes relating to (1) types of learning described, (2) effects of reading, and (3) relationship to personal history. Cross case analysis was then conducted to find patterns or deviations in the respondents' reading experience.

The findings of this study showed that reading novels as a leisure activity for four of the five respondents started when they were under 10 years old. One did not start reading novels until teenage years. As children, the boys consistently chose action, adventure and sports stories, the girls were fairly consistent in choosing romance and stories set in romantic places. Their motive for reading was pleasure, excitement and escape.

Pleasure and escape remained the primary reason for reading novels as adults with the added benefit of providing a relief from stress and daily routine. All respondents set aside time every day to read despite full time demands of work, family and running a household. Their choices in novels as adults were fairly consistent with the stereotypes established as children although there was also a greater range on interests reflected in novels selected. Favorite authors and genres were adhered to. No respondent was particularly adventurous about trying a genre totally different than they knew they would enjoy.

All respondents expressed great delight in letting their imagination take over inside the covers of a novel. They found power in words to transport them to experiences outside their normal lives. While being delighted, they also reported a variety of learning outcomes which contributed to the pleasure of reading. Facts were commonly collected out of interest even if there was no apparent application for them. They also felt that they learned about others and could be more effective in their relationships to others as a result of reading. That effect ranged from feeling more confident in conversation having a store of knowledge from reading to call upon, to improving empathy for others different from themselves. There was some suggestion that novels could cause respondents to evaluate themselves, their opinions or stereotypes so that they could be aware of their biases or shortcomings or to undertake personal change. Although an opportunity may have been present, no respondent ever reported a result of questioning lifelong values or beliefs. Novels selected tended to reaffirm the mainstream values they carried from youth.

All respondents required a novel to provide intellectual stimulation by using sophisticated language and realistic, complex plot development. Twists of perspective causing them to think and ability to relate novels to current events or life experiences were pleasing. Classic literature was used by two respondents to provide special challenge to comprehension.

Conclusions

Conclusions will be made about (1) the experience of learning from reading in relation to the literature review on adult learning theory to include discussion of the three guiding questions, (2) popular novels as a learning source in relation to the literature review on novels, (3) and the relationship of this study to Radway's.

The experience of learning

The focus of this study was on learning from reading novels of any type to investigate how adults experience learning from novel reading. Novel reading is an extraordinarily individual experience derived from interweaving a respondent's report of personal history, interests and reading habits, and reading's effects.

Personal history influenced the way in which reading became an important activity. Why there was a need, how that need was met by novels, the source from which novels were available, and structure of each life to enable reading was highly personal. It cannot be generalized beyond saying that there was a need for something, discovery that the need could be met through novels which fortunately could be obtained, and that novels became a lifetime staple. The original need is no longer there. The girl stuck in a small house with a large noisy family or boy who was always in trouble haven't been in those circumstances for a long time. As adults, the respondents seem to need novels because they need to read novels.

Reading seems an end in itself. It feels good. The lengthy explanations given for why reading is important enough to take a significant amount of discretionary time and what reading does for respondents are difficult to articulate and seem secondary to the act of reading itself. If that is the case, it is in the secondary outcomes in which learning is found. Learning outcomes loop back to the intricate interweaving of unique personal history, growth of interests, life experiences and current circumstances to result in the way respondents interpret and make meaning of what they read.

Making meaning in the literature review of adult learning was described as a process of taking individual experience, personal interests and needs, and providing a resource for learning that results in outcomes: (1) adding to, refining, or reorganizing knowledge (constructivism), (2) restructuring knowledge to arrive at changed thought patterns (critical reflection), (3) or becoming aware of the origin of knowledge with the capability of being self-aware to transform its very basis.

In the case of this research, the learning resource being respondents' self-selected novels, made the learning outcomes entirely self-motivated and self-directed. Novel selections evolved according to what respondents wanted the moment they selected a novel, the moment having been driven by reading history and current circumstances. There is an immediacy about reading. It solves a need felt right now according to current whim. The act of selecting a novel closely fits the adult learner model described by Knowles (1990) in that it fills a current need with a solution according to how the reader describes the need, and allows the reader to do what he wishes with the content. Reading also has a cumulative affect when readers relate one novel to another or recall novels read in the past to relate to current real situations. When there is a consistent selection of a theme in novels, it could be classified as an opportunity for a systematic collection of information that can be added together in the form of a learning project consistent with Tough's (1979) observations about adult self-directed learning projects. Yet learning was never the immediate intent and so may be thought of as incidental.

Learning from novels is a curious conglomeration of adult learning theory and observations of adult learning practices. It is self-motivated, self-directed, typically systematic yet incidental all at the same time, but may result in learning outcomes ranging from simple to complex.

How adults learn from novels

The guiding questions steered the course of data gathering to seek evidence of increasingly complex learning outcomes. Findings suggest that learning from novels may be thought of as incremental. At the lowest level, respondents collected facts or reorganized what they new when new information was added. At a higher level, they might understand and appreciate alternative perspectives. At a still higher level, they may be willing to reevaluate or change their opinions, or even change behavior that they determine was misguided. At the highest level, respondents might reevaluate their beliefs or values to examine their source and validity.

One question of this study was what types of learning from novels readers report. Learning is a common effect. Much of the learning reported by respondents could be classified as incidental learning as described by Reischmann (1986). Learning was not a deliberate goal and bits and pieces of information that respondents claimed to have found interesting had no clear purpose for being retained. All respondents reported learning by collecting information described in the setting of novels. Respondents made frequent references to learning about different places, periods in history, or activities with which they were previously unfamiliar. When respondents report that they feel they have a reasonably good grasp of some topic by virtue of having read a good deal about it in a series of novels using that topic, it is similar to the systematic, self-planned, self-directed learning projects described by Tough (1979). It is also consistent with Candy's (1991) description of constructivism in the sense that new information was taken in, compared with existing knowledge, and fit in to create a broader or deeper understanding about some areas of knowledge.

A second question of this study was to find if readers reported reinforcing what they already know and strengthening their acceptance of popular stereotypes or if they described reevaluation. Reevaluation may be consistent with Candy's (1991) theory of constructivism, Brookfield's (1986) theory of reflective learning, or evaluation of the derivation of thought and behavior resulting in a change consistent with Mezirow's (1981, 1990, 1991) theory of transformative learning.

Respondents enjoyed different perspectives that they had not considered so that they might reevaluate opinions. Examples were given of gaining appreciation for others from very different backgrounds or experience than themselves. It did not necessarily change their minds, but caused them to consider what their basis for opinions might be. This suggests evidence of Brookfield's (1986) theory of critical reflection in that respondents were testing their opinions against new information and, in cases where new information was conflicting, respondents may have questioned their opinions and been open to changing them.

There were instances suggestive of Mezirow's (1981, 1990, 1991) theory of transformative learning in which respondents reevaluated their opinions, questioned their source, and then changed behavior. This was never the case for fundamental values and beliefs, only for opinions different from their own.

In all cases, respondents were most responsive to new thinking about their relationships to others. People different from themselves in many instances were described in novels in ways respondents had not experienced or previously considered. The result could range anywhere from mere gathering of more information to form a more complex view, to reflecting on their current understanding and considering reevaluation, to changing behavior toward others.

Referring to the opportunity for change through learning from novels as incremental, none of the respondents considered changing or even challenging fundamental values. Novels chosen consistently reaffirmed mainstream beliefs and values such as honesty, integrity, and strength of character. In this, respondents accepted what they read to be consistent with what they believed and were simply reinforced. Anything inconsistent with respondents' fundamental beliefs was rejected. While the opportunity to transform these most deeply held thought patterns may have been there, no respondent did so.

The third question of the research was how readers who report learning from novels describe the effect of this learning on their lives. All the respondents collected information as they read, so they enjoyed believing they are more knowledgeable as a result. Informal learning through collection of random facts, or systematic collection of information on a consistent topic, or constructivist testing and organizing of information, resulted in respondents feeling as though they had a wide range of knowledge or a good grasp of some area of particular interest. Possessing this knowledge made them feel good about themselves as individuals who are receptive to learning and who have a wide range of information available to them. Constructivist testing and organizing is particularly evident in respondents reports of being surprised and pleased by presentation of information and ideas in ways they had not thought of before. Stretching the edges of what they knew was both informative and enjoyable, making them feel as though they were being intellectually challenged and creative as well as entertained.

They also believe novels have helped them be more open to other people and more effective at relating to others. It may be simply the result of feeling they can be better conversationalists since they have broad exposure to a variety of topics. It suggests that the effect of instances of reflective or transformational learning has allowed them to be more open minded. They find themselves more tolerant and understanding of differences.

The same is the case in their understanding of themselves. Through suggested reflective and transformational learning, respondents acknowledge their own shortcomings, and in a very few instances, have modified behavior to compensate.

The evidence of this study suggests that respondents accept their circumstances as they are and use reading to allow them to go beyond the limitations of their real world to vicariously experience excitement, heroic acts, beauty, adventure and romance that will unlikely be their's in reality. Radway (1984) found the same outcome for her subjects. What is real remains real and can be dealt with. Regular novel reading helps by permitting temporary escape and pleasure without creating destructive feelings of envy or resentment.

The respondents feel that their vicarious experiences and the knowledge they have gathered while reading have made their lives richer. They learn things. They are never bored. In novels they always have some place to go and something to do.

Popular Novels as a Learning Source

While two respondents did use classic literature to challenge themselves, the challenge came from reading difficulty, not because it was a superior source of learning. The range of learning respondents reported supports an argument for popular literature being as effective a learning source. It may even be better if learning results without the distraction of comprehension difficulty. Respondents were entertained while learning making it a much more likely learning avenue.

The novels respondents selected are consistent with the discussion of ‘middlebrow’ books such as those recommended by the Book of the Month Club. One respondent actually started reading because of his father’s Book of the Month Club collection. They are typically considered to have the sophistication of writing respondents desired while at the same time being a good, fast read. ‘Middlebrow’ novels were the perfect answer for respondents to have both the intellectual stimulation and complexity required while also being entertaining.

The literature review described a variety of genres on novels for their potential learning outcomes. The novels selected by respondents fit in mostly with discussions of historical, mystery and detective, and melodrama novels. All provide accurate information in descriptions of background and setting as well as setting the stage for commentary on cultural, social or personal behavior. As described above, respondents did in deed seize opportunities that novels presented to both collect information as well as examine their understanding of their society and themselves.

Comparison to Radway’s (1984) Study

Radway’s (1984) study of formula romance readers particularly informed this study because it suggested complex learning outcomes from the most derided of all forms of fiction. There were many similarities and some differences between Radway’s (1984) and this study’s findings.

In Radway’s (1984) study, respondents were limited to those reading exclusively formula romance. Here, respondents were selected specifically because they did not restrict themselves to formula romance and, in fact, none of the respondents read formula romance. This study’s readers did however find a few genres that they especially liked and generally restricted themselves to those. The genres selected, usually mysteries, westerns, political intrigue, historical romance, and adventure, are typically formulaic as described in the literature review on different genres of popular fiction.

Readers here respond to their novel selections in many ways similar to Radway’s (1984) formula romance readers. Respondents in this study are not as rigid in their requirements for structure, content and outcome, but they stick to what they are fairly certain they will like and are displeased if a novel does not meet their expectations.

This study’s readers required that they be intellectually challenged by a novel to the extent that they need to think and imagine. This outcome was not found in Radway’s (1984) research. This study’s readers needed to find some sophistication and complexity in plot development and use of vocabulary to hold their attention.

Radway (1984) did not describe the fierce possessiveness of novels frequently reported by respondents in this study. Two of the respondents stated that they kept every book they read, one said that he had a collection of favorites that he absolutely wouldn’t part with. The feeling of ownership came from feeling that the books were now part of themselves and for that reason couldn’t be given away.

Just as Radway’s (1984) readers use novels for pleasure, escape, and to do something just for themselves, so too do this study’s readers. Pleasure was always stated as the main reason for reading with escape a close second. “Doing something just for myself” was a remark for the readers in this study more commonly made in reference to reasons for reading as children or teenagers. Radway’s (1984) readers were seeking pleasure and escape from their real life

circumstance of children, financial stress, and boredom. This study's readers were seeking escape mostly from real life circumstances of work and job stress. It is more than just a case of escaping 'from,' it is also a case of escaping 'to.' These readers selected novels that would stimulate their imagination to go to other places, times and situations where they could vicariously experience excitement, fun, romance or whatever their imaginations desired.

Among this study's readers was described one aspect of pleasure from reading that Radway (1984) did not report; delight derived from the pure rhythm and texture of written words themselves. Although they were unable to articulate why words were so pleasing, three of the respondents in this study stated that one of the reasons they loved to read was simply to hear the way words sound and the ability of words create pictures in their mind. These readers would also reread novels and find pleasure in them again for the sound of the words if not for the enjoyment of following a story develop and resolve for the first time.

Just as Radway's (1984) readers did, these respondents spend a significant amount of leisure time reading, establishing a routine to accommodate reading time every day. They also report use of novels and learning outcomes such as collecting facts, greater self-awareness and awareness of society, similar to those found in Radway's (1984) findings. Both readers from Radway's (1984) and this study stated that they picked up random facts that caught their attention. Although they may have no particular use for the facts, they find them interesting. Radway argues that for her readers, collecting facts was evidence of learning to justify time spent reading formula romances since learning and education are valued by society. Three of the five respondents in this study have college or master's degrees. For them, proving their ability to learn is not an issue. Their attention is simply attracted to pieces of information that they find personally interesting.

All the respondents in this study provided evidence that they gained some awareness of themselves from novels. Radway's (1984) respondents read about romance and far off places. They compare what they read to themselves and have learned to acknowledge and accept their roles as middle class wives and mothers with little prospect of change. Respondents in this study also read about characters, events, and places unlike anything in their own lives and also understand and accept their roles at work and at home. Both sets of respondents merely enjoyed the vicarious experience of having some things be different. Radway did not report finding respondents who engaged in evaluating themselves to the point of changing opinions about others or changing behavior. Respondents in this study did report learning which resulted in changing perspectives and in limited instances, changing behavior as well.

Recommendations for Further Research

All respondents in this study were white, middle class, employed full time in federal service, entirely mainstream in their values and beliefs, and all but one had above high school education. They were not remarkably different from Radway's (1984) respondents. Further research should investigate the experience of making meaning from popular novels for respondents outside the mainstream who would be classified as having radical beliefs or deviant lifestyles. Since popular novels typically rely on stereotypical values and beliefs to make their point, how would respondents who do not share those values or beliefs respond to them.

The literature review and this research suggest that novels may provide an alternative to formal education or academic texts. Further research is required to make a direct comparison between those who read history texts or biographies with those who read historical fiction, or

books on pop psychology compared to novels commenting on human behavior, or travelogues compared to novels set in exotic locations. Further research is also required to compare learning outcomes for those who read fiction and the same account as told through another media such as television or movies.

Respondents did not desire to read novels inconsistent with their own beliefs and morals. They required that a novel reaffirm their beliefs. It would be of interest to see what the result might be of forcing respondents to read novels that they ordinarily would refuse. Reading was an important activity to them. Would they ultimately begin to change their minds so that they could enjoy reading again, would they continue to read but dislike what they were reading, or would they rather give up reading as an activity all together.

What are the differences between those who choose to read in their spare time and those who choose to watch television? Are there trends in education level, economic level, and other activities enjoyed. Do people who primarily read for leisure watch different television shows than people who primarily watch television.

Finally, respondents claim they learned a great deal. A researcher could devise a test based on information presented in a novel and test respondents for how much they learned in fact. Follow-on research could investigate learning results from a novel if respondents were shown the test before reading the book. Do they perform better on the test and how much did they enjoy the novel with the knowledge that they would be tested.

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APPENDIX A FIRST INTERVIEW GUIDE

Introduction:

"Thank you for agreeing to meet me and helping with this study. The purpose of the study is to investigate the experience of learning from reading novels. During this interview, I would like to ask you to talk about yourself and hear how you describe your reading and how it may be a learning experience for you. Although I would appreciate it if you would tell me quite a bit about yourself, this is not an attempt to pry into your personal life and you will never be identified by name in the study."

"I would like to record this conversation as we discussed so that I don't have to keep stopping to take notes. I have a some specific questions to ask you but mostly I'd like to have you talk about what ever comes to mind as you think about novels that you read and times when you have noticed learning from reading."

Interview Schedule

1. First let's begin with you. Tell me about yourself.
 - a. Man _____ Woman _____
 - b. What is your age?
 - c. How much formal school have finished?
 - d. Describe what kind of work do you do.
 - e. What types of leisure activities do you enjoy other than reading?
 - f. What other interests to you have?
 - g. Tell me about your family.
 - h. Who are the people who have especially influenced you?
 - i. What are some of the most important events in your life?
2. Lets turn to what you read and what you like about reading.
 - a. How many hours do you read each day?
 - b. How many books do you read each month?
 - c. How does reading novels fit into your day?
 - d. What other types of materials do you read?
 - e. How do you decide what books to select?
 - f. Who are your favorite authors?
 - g. What have you read recently?
 - h. Describe how you became a regular reader.
 - i. What is it about reading that you enjoy?

The following questions may be used to promote a respondent's extended discussion of learning from reading:

3. Please describe what comes to mind when you think about what novels you have read?
4. What are the qualities of books that really get your attention?
5. Do you think other readers get the same things out of reading that you do?
6. What do you think books contribute to your life?

APPENDIX B SECOND INTERVIEW GUIDE

Introduction:

"Thanks for getting together with me again. I'm grateful for your time to do a follow-up of our first conversation. I have looked over a transcription of our first conversation and have some further questions about some of the things you talked about. I'd also like to raise some new questions on which to get your thought."

1. First, lets go back to some things you said last time.

(questions depend on emerging themes from first interview)

Following items are raised if they do not emerge during the first interview:

2. Questions which may be used for data on incidental learning from novels:

a. What types of things do you remember from reading a book?

b. What is it that catches your attention in a book?

c. How often do you read about people, places, or things that are new to you?

d. Describe having learned about something that was later useful to you?

e. How do the people or situations you read about compare with your own real life activities?

f. Do you prefer to read about topics or situations that are new to you or do you enjoy reading about settings that are familiar based on your own experience.

3. Questions which may be used for data on reflective learning.

a. What might make you remember a novel long after you have finished it?

b. What kind of characters in novels have been meaningful to you?

c. How do you react to a novel that presents a situation or character in a different light than what you expect?

4. Questions which may be used for data on transformative learning.

a. What happens when you imagine yourself as a character in a book you are reading.

b. Do you ever refer to anything you have read when working on some situation in your own life? What was the connection?

c. Describe a situation that you have approached differently as a result of something you learned from reading? What happened?

APPENDIX C CASE DESCRIPTION: ALICE

Alice is an attractive, single, 27 year old white woman. She appears open and friendly. She lives on her own in Pensacola, Florida and works for the Air Station Public Affairs Office as an assistant. She also holds a second job as a salesperson in a clothing store for additional income.

Alice's father was a Navy enlisted man and moved the family often to different areas along the U.S. east coast up until her parents' divorce when she was in her early teens. Since her father was often away on cruise, she grew up mostly in the company of her mother, two brothers and one sister. She is the oldest child. Her parents' divorce was a significant event signaling the end of a comfortable family life and the beginning of a diminished standard of living. She does not relay any bitterness about this, she respects her father's professional accomplishments and admires her mother's fortitude in carrying on as a single parent until the children were on their own as responsible adults.

High school graduation is Alice's highest formal scholastic level. She is interested in further education but has not made the commitment to return to school. Aside from reading, her other interests include crafts of various kinds. Reading novels though is her passion and gives her an outlet for a vigorous imagination.

Personal/Reading History

Alice states that she has always been a reader and can't remember ever not reading. Her mother set an example of reading novels and made it a family activity to go to the library. Alice explains that "Mom made a big event out of going to the library with the kids and we would all pick out books to bring home." It was something that they could do together, most likely didn't cost anything, and gave them all something to do when they returned to their residence. Encouraging the children to read quietly at home, also gave Alice's mother a chance to read herself.

Alice's mother was a key influence for Alice. Although she states that she admired her father's professional achievement, little more is said about him. It is her mother who took care of the family in the father's absence while he deployed with the Navy. As a Navy family, they often moved. This probably contributed to Alice's reliance on her mother and siblings for company and stability. Alice describes this in saying, "moving a lot when we were kids made us, my brothers and sister and I, pretty tight. We had each other as friends and we stuck together." Having siblings for companions was helpful in coping with frequent moves but it wasn't always enough. She says that she wanted something for herself, something to do besides playing with her siblings, and to be able to go somewhere else. Reading could do all those things for her.

Now Alice reads two or three novels a week for around two hours a day in the evening when time allows. She says "I have a book with me pretty much everywhere I go." She can read for just a few minutes but prefers to be able to dedicate a good bit of time to allow herself to get fully involved in the story. As an adult her reasons for reading are somewhat but not entirely different from her reasons for reading as a child. She has pressures from her responsibilities to deal with now and reading helps her to unwind and relax. "My head," she says, "is so full of stuff that happened during the day that I like to read to take my mind off it and think about

something else." She is thinking about something else by reading, but she is not necessarily doing something else since a good deal of her position with the Public Affairs Office requires that she read. She says she is, "reading all day in this job, especially the newspaper. That's why I like to read something completely different at night, something not so depressing as the news."

Her taste in novels has expanded from when she was a teenager. She reports that she, "used to read a lot of romance but now I like mysteries, murder mysteries, stories about the old west, and historical romance." Her pleasure in historical romance is a refinement on the formula romances that she observes her mother reading. Alice explains that, "Mother reads the romances that are only so thick and goes through one in a few hours. I don't like them too much, I like the historical ones that are a little bigger and describes times from the past, like 1500s and 1600s when there are castles and kings and wars described."

She is mystified by a particular interest in reading about the old west and horses. She has only ridden a horse once, not successfully, and in fact prefers not to be around horses. She cannot explain where the interest came from or why it continues. She says, "I think of myself as a real city girl . . . I don't know why I like horses so much because I never have anything to do with them. I like watching westerns on TV too. My family kids me about being a western nut when I don't have any reason to have any interest in them at all. I don't know why I like it so much. I can't explain it."

Alice reads novels by the same authors but does not get addicted to one author and read everything she can find under that name. She will read a couple, switch to another, and come back later for more by an author read earlier. She is more likely to read several novels set in the same background by different authors. In selecting a novel, as important as author or background, is the length of a novel. Her preference is to have a long novel that she can climb inside for as long as possible. What contributes to making a novel memorable is, "if it was one that I could really get swept up in, usually if it was pretty long and I could stay in it for a long time."

Once a novel is selected, Alice makes something of a commitment to reading it. She will finish a novel even if she is not enjoying it and is curious enough to get hooked into a story even if she did not intend to. She explains that, "if I don't like it I'll skip to the end and just read the last chapter to find out what happened. Sometimes when I do that there are all new characters and I get interested again and go back to find out who they are and how they got there." Alice explains her commitment to a novel in another way by relating her experience with a period of depression and subsequently consuming every drop a novel had to offer. Reading became an obsession. She describes a time, "about three years ago when I stopped reading. I stopped doing much of anything. It was a bad time for me and I just lost interest in everything. Then I started looking at books again but only the last few pages. Finally I started to read like mad and would start with the first jacket cover, read the copyright page, the acknowledgments, everything right through to the back jacket cover and all about the author."

Novels are an important ingredient in Alice's happiness. They fulfill her fondest wishes for travel and adventure. When reading she can expand her knowledge base and at the same time find the excitement missing in a solitary life.

Case Analysis

Coding falls into four groups. Alice suspects she is more imaginative than most and reference to imagination is often made. In the first grouping, imagination is used in three different ways; (a) to go other places, (b) as a route to deliberate learning, and (c) to understand herself. A second group contains references to collecting information that she can then use in conversation with others. A third grouping shows Alice collecting information for private use, information that she can use to embellish or verify her understanding of the of the worlds she enters into when reading. A fourth grouping includes evidence that Alice prefers to escape from a real world that demands she behave in ways inconsistent with her own preferences.

The grouping under imagination has been labeled for discussion by its subgroups making six groups in all. They have been labeled as imagination and going other places, imagination and deliberate learning, imagination and self understanding, collecting information for public use, collecting information for private use, and escape from a demanding world.

Imagination

a. Going other places. Alice explains that she reads to experience other places and that her experience is quite vivid. There are numerous explicit statements about going somewhere else. She says, "I just like to be able to go places" and "I like to go to other places, especially England and Scotland, and like I said, the old west and horses." "I don't think there is the perfect place. That's why I like to read about all different things. I can go there for a while and then go somewhere else." That she believes her experience is particularly vivid is evidenced by this statement. "I can really see and feel things I read about. When other people talk about reading a book they don't seem to have gotten into it as much as I would. It's hard to describe but imagination is important to me and I think I use it more and better than other people. That's why, when I say I read to go other places, I really go there."

Alice becomes visibly more animated when describing the role of imagination in her reading to transport her not only to other places but to other times. She says, "There was one about time travel that I really loved . . . It was real long and the story was about a girl kind of my age and it jumped back and forth from present time to the 18th century. I think about that book because when ever something is going on and I wish I was somewhere else, I think about jumping away in time."

b. Deliberate learning. Alice's imagination spurs her to actively learn new things. She has often become interested enough in some topic by imagining it from descriptions read in a novel to turn to reference sources to learn more. What she likes to look up especially are pictures of what historical places and figures looked like. The relationship between imagination and learning are described in the following statements:

"I like to use my imagination. Books that have too much detail don't give me a chance to do that. They just describe too much. Others are too vague. I like a book that gives me just enough to imagine it for myself and then I can go check it."

"I have often read about someplace or some character from history and then gone to look it up and read about it some more in a regular reference book."

"It makes me want to know more about things."

"I get a picture in my head about what someone or some place looks like and I want to go look it up to see what it was actually like."

"Sometimes when I do that I look at a picture and think that the picture is all wrong because I know what it should look like and the picture is not at all what I was thinking. Sometimes it's a perfect match and I love to be able to actually see it."

c. Self understanding. Alice not only checks what she has imagined in descriptions of places and things in reference materials, she checks what she imagines with what she understands about herself. She sounds resigned to the realization that it is unlikely she will ever actually go to the places she has read about as in the statement, "At least I leave [Pensacola] sometimes but maybe I'll get to be like the others and won't even do that . . . That's why it's so important to me to read about other places because it's the only way I ever will go there."

Nevertheless, she enjoys testing herself against the settings about which she reads. She says, "I like to imagine what it was like and picture myself being there." She makes comparisons with what she has read and uses her imagination to guess at how she would cope with new or difficult situations. Despite her pleasure in reading about how imaginary characters cope in dire circumstances, she clearly recognizes her own limitations and preferences as in the following statements:

"Sometimes I wonder how I would have done if I had lived then and imagine myself there. The worst would have been having no running water and people never being clean. Maybe that's why I shower so often, thinking about it."

"There's not much I've read where characters are pretty ordinary and not doing anything special. The characters are important but it's really the time and place that I'm interested in. It's not the characters so much as what they have to deal with and I imagine myself in the same time or place and wonder how I would make out. Whether I would immediately freeze or starve to death or whether I could figure out how to survive."

"I have read about how characters would make a fire from twigs or build a shelter or find things to eat. . . I don't know if you dropped me in the woods or on a desert island if I would just sit there and cry till someone found me or whether I could do something about it."

"My mom got me to read Swiss Family Robinson when I was young. After that I had all kinds of fantasies about being marooned and building this wonderful tree house and taming some animals. I'd tramp around in some woods near the house and pretend I was looking for the tree I would pick for the house and how I was going to build it and it all seemed very exciting and romantic. I know better from reading that it's not romantic at all, it's brutal to be cold and hungry and dirty. One night in the woods and I'd probably be crazy just from the bugs. Forget survival. I do think about it though and wonder."

"I wonder sometimes, if I found a gun, if I would know what to look for and not to make a mess."

Alice learns deliberately as a result of reading when she uses it as a springboard for looking up facts in reference material on what real places and people looked like. She also

reflects upon what she has read to wonder about her own abilities. There are also many incidents cited of collecting random facts.

Collecting Information for Public Use

Alice recalls gathering bits of information although she says she isn't always aware of it at the time. "I don't know if I am aware of anything special at the time. It's after I've finished a book that I realize that I'm still thinking about something. It's like something nagging at me that I have to go back and think about. There are times when I am reading something and get a flash where I realize I have read about it before and that I know about it."

Since Alice has read a great many novels with similar settings, she has accumulated enough to feel confident that she has a reasonable understanding of some things. Her enjoyment of mysteries provides an example. "Like with murder mysteries and collecting evidence. That's something I've never checked on but the books describe it pretty much the same way. I've seen TV shows where someone finds a gun and they put their hands all over it. I know immediately that they just ruined the fingerprints."

She uses what she has picked up in novels to support herself in discussion with others. "I'll be talking to someone and suddenly I remember reading about something and I can talk all about it because I have learned about it from reading it." "There have been times when I have read about something and then used it in a conversation. Like on the murder mystery thing, when all the OJ trial was going on, I thought about crime solving from what I have read and sometimes could bring it into conversation about the crime and the trial."

Collecting Information for Private Use

Alice does not make many references to sharing the information she has collected with others. She is more inclined to keep it for herself for her own use. Her wish is to have thorough involvement in the world she is reading about and inaccuracies are a distraction. She feels that she knows enough to evaluate a novel's accuracy from having read so many novels set in the same places and historical periods. "I think I would know if something didn't fit and I wouldn't like a book if it wasn't right. I can't get into it if it isn't right."

The information she seems more interested in is concerned with lifestyle and the feel of other places and times. She says, "It's not what's described so much, specific things, it's more the atmosphere or what's happening that I get into." This is related to her desire to climb into her world of imagination, but she has retrieved information when she climbs back out. For instance, she has a good grasp of information about life in earlier England, Scotland, and America such as, "Things were so incredibly different a few hundred years ago, the way people lived, the sickness and filth and wars, it's hard to understand what it could have been like. The same for the old west when people were traveling for months to get across the country, over the mountains. The hardships they went through." "I like the wildness of the places and the openness. I can picture, the old west, these huge, huge prairies, or the mountains and coming across them on horseback and there's absolutely nothing there but space and wilderness."

Escape From a Demanding World

Alice's preference for quiet, personal time is reflected in her choice of hand crafts as another favored activity. She presents herself as a rather private person who has been forced to become more outgoing to fit into the demands of her surroundings. She explains, "you wouldn't recognize me a few years ago. Now I'm very outgoing and like to be around people. I have to

now with the jobs I have. I mean, a public affairs office and a sales job. I'm talking to people all day long. I didn't used to. I stayed to myself mostly and books were my friends, what I did with myself. They let me go places I'll never go and help me relax. I can't think what it would be like without them."

Despite her claims that she likes to be around other people, the impression remains that she feels uncomfortable and would prefer to be left alone. She makes a second reference to novels being her friends rather than people being her friends in the statement, "books mean a lot to me. They're like friends to me in a way but that's not really it. It's more like the door to new places and different times. I don't know why I like it so much but I really like being able to use my imagination and going to other places."

Alice has also claimed that she is happy with her work which requires her to be outgoing, but again, other statements refute this. She says, "reading is an important part of my life. I would read constantly if I could. Having to go to work really bugs me sometimes because I could be reading instead. I have stayed up for most of a night to read a little bit more to find out what happens and then realize in a few hours I have to get up and go to work. Then I'm dead the next day."

Another indicator of Alice's preference for privacy and quiet is a statement about wanting to be able to relate personally to what she is reading. Novels with ultra rich, jet-set characters and settings do not appeal to her. It may be guessed that a glittery world of great wealth, glamour, and bright lights is simply intimidating. Even if she came into a great deal of money, she states no desire for that. She claims, "maybe then I could go to all those places [read about] but I picture myself in a little cottage, not in a palace." The characters she does admire are typically intelligent rather than wealthy, a trait they have earned through personal hard work. She describes a character she admires as, "usually real smart. Smart about judging other people and situations. They can figure out how to make situations come out the way they want. They understand what will make things fall in place. Sometimes they're a real expert at something."

There are times when she wishes she could be the character in a novel, but even when she places herself inside the story, she is likely to be in the shadows. "Sometimes I put myself in a story as a new character and sort of watch what's happening from the sidelines. I'm not part of the story but I can, see it happening first hand."

Alice does not understand people who are happy to be engaged in activities not involving reading. That novels are not important to others is inexplicable. She cannot understand what other people are doing if reading is not part of their lives. She says, "I don't understand people who don't read but I know it's a big part of my life." About a woman she knows who never reads a novel, she wonders, "what does she do with herself, what does she think about?"

Case Summary

Alice doesn't ask much of daily life and she doesn't get much. She is on her own, struggling to make a living, but at 27 years old, seems to feel she is doing all right. Alice is perfectly capable of filling her own time and that's the way she likes it.

As a child her family often moved and her siblings were best friends. Her siblings had interests of their own, however, so Alice was happy to make novels her friends and did so early and easily. Novels have served her so well that she finds it inconceivable that anyone could not share her same enjoyment in them.

Since Alice lives alone and does not describe any vigorous social life, novels supply the vigor she desires. She makes frequent reference to using her imagination when reading to take her away to favorite places and historical times. The descriptions she reads of real places and people from history piques her curiosity to learn more about them from reference materials. It is not always that she wants to learn more, sometimes she simply wishes to know if her imagination was correct given the descriptions she has read. She finds, though, that her curiosity leads her to check the facts and in reading texts, she does learn a good deal.

Alice's imagination leads her to learn about herself as well. The characters she reads about, especially from historical times, had to cope with difficult lifestyles or circumstances very different from her own. She has arrived at an understanding that she is not cut out for the adventurous or exciting lives that novel characters lead. She doesn't seem to regret this, she simply acknowledges her own limitations and preference for comfort over real adventure. Her imagination allows her to have it all; all the adventure, danger, and romance in her own home.

When called upon to converse, she can call up information from novels to support her. Alice supplies very few instances of having done this. She is more likely to use what she has learned from reading many novels with similar settings to help her enter into imaginary worlds even more fully. She can not only recognize where she is, she can experience what it feels like to be there as well.

Alice would rather be reading than doing anything else. This virtually negates her statements that she likes to be around other people or on the job. She would really rather be reading. It seems perfectly natural given her personal history, preference for quite solo hobbies when she isn't reading, and single lifestyle. Her vivid imagination allows her to have as much company as she wants, knowledge about the things that interest her, adventure without getting dirty, and the wind in her hair while galloping over the moors with a prince. In her real life, no one she may meet, no place she may go, and no amount of money is likely to give her all that. Alice doesn't seem to mind that, she revels in what she has found in novels.

APPENDIX D CASE DESCRIPTION: BEN

Ben is a white male, 54 years old. He is the only son of blue-collar parents, his father a warehouse foreman and his mother a hair stylist. He has studied extensively in psychology and management, and now holds a highly responsible, upper management position as a government employee.

He is married and has adult children, one son and one daughter, and is a doting grandfather to a 5 year old girl. He is candid in describing important aspects of personal history and his relationship to novels.

Ben himself is intelligent and, most probably, honest and loyal but his usual activities are not particularly heroic. While he is an accomplished skier, he does not engage in anything overtly dangerous and enjoys in his real life the family days surrounded by his wife, children, and grandchild. He dreams of being a larger-than-life, heroic person like those in his preferred novels but leaves that strictly to fantasy. Novels provide a pleasurable escape into a fantasy life but there is no blurring of reality and fiction in Ben's behavior.

Personal/Reading History

Ben admits a difficult youth but is not explicit about the source or how he behaved. He simply explains that he has "always had problem with authority" and was often in trouble. He had an experience of awakening to the potential of reading as relief from his problems in his early teenage years as a result of a school assignment. He was also excited to find that he was learning from reading and could demonstrate to others that he was expanding his knowledge base. He says, "I can recall at an early age doing a project for one of my classes that had to do with why airplanes fly. I had to go to the library and get some books on aerodynamics and why the flow of air over wings causes lift and so on, and I remember being really fascinated by that. . . I realized that there were some really interesting things there and I could find things out."

It was his discovery of how reading could be fun and interesting combined with his personal troubles that lead him to start reading novels. Ben explains that, "I think I started reading while I was still not too responsible, not too mature, to escape from what I perceived, probably incorrectly at that time, but what I perceived as a lot of real world things that I didn't want to deal with. It was a good escape to read a lot and I started reading a lot probably before I got out of high school."

Ben became a regular reader of the Walter Farley Black Stallion books, Robert Highland science fiction, and Edgar Burrows Tarzan books. He says, "once I found an author who wrote something that I liked, then I would go back and read every one of his books. Sometimes to the detriment of my studies, mind you. It was a good escape experience."

Ben discovered reading novels on his own. He recalls that his father read the paper every day and his mother read some magazines, but there was no example of reading books set by his parents. He says, that, "in my Dad's den I think there were probably 8 or 10 books or they might have been something that he read at one time and kept or they may have been children's books that he had kept, I think there were Hardy Boys books and that kind of thing. Fairly old but that's all there was around the house. It wasn't something that started at home I don't think."

Scholarship as a teenage was not one of Ben's strong points. His memories of school are more concerned with the after school or weekend activities that he enjoyed. Ben's was a rough

and tumble boyhood of active, outdoor sports; skiing, football, hunting and fishing and camping. The lessons he learned came more from experience and the influence of a few key people in his life. He admired and respected a male geography teacher who also advised the school ski club. Ben describes his influence in the “way I valued things. He was a very, very forthright and very honest, up front kind of guy and I had some very difficult times when I was in high school and he was very influential in helping me work through those times.” The teacher served as a role model who demonstrated the values and behavior of strength of character, honesty, loyalty, and intelligence that Ben admires most.

Ben’s attempt at college right after high school was not a success. He says, “I had flunked out of college because I was much too immature to even be in college. I had no idea what going to college meant except having a good time.” In those years, not being in college meant being in military service. Ben joined the Marines and volunteered, under duress, for Vietnam. He was still having behavior problems that put him in a position where he felt he had to get away from his current environment. Ben explains that in the Marine Corps, he found out “that there was world besides the one that I knew as a child growing up and then getting in enough trouble in the Marine Corps that my only intelligent option was volunteering for Vietnam and that’s a fact. I really had very little option there. It was volunteer for Vietnam or spend some time in a brig so I quickly volunteered.”

Ben was married a few months prior to being released from the Marine Corps and went back to finish college. He was getting a little older but not a lot wiser. He says, “I like to say that I had learned a sense of responsibility in Vietnam but . . . even after I finished my hitch in the Marine Corps and went back home, I still had some serious maturity problems . . . I had some marital problems at the same time, I was not real good at being married just like I was not real good at being a Marine, probably because of my lack of maturity at that time, and some serious personal things happened at the time, that caused me to do some serious evaluation of where I was going to go and what I was going to be. . . I realized that I had to do things differently or I would probably end up dead.”

Ben apparently did do some things differently. Today he is a father, an attentive grandfather and holder of a enough college credits to have earned a masters degree. He reads novels every day at lunch for 35 to 45 minutes and sometimes also in the evening. He claims to be a fast reader so that he can get through a novel a week and sometimes more. His clear preference in novels is for action and adventure. Favorite authors include Tom Clancey, Eric Von Lusbadder, and Louis L’mour. This is his preference in other activities as well, he likes active sports like softball, fishing, hunting, skiing, hiking, camping, and boating, going to action, adventure movies.

Case Analysis

Ben’s discussion of his reading experience falls into five groups. The first to be described shows Ben’s desire for escape and stimulation. A second shows his use of the content of novels as a source of learning from three different perspectives; a. references to facts presented so that he can collect bits of information, b. putting together information from more than one source to accumulate a fuller picture, and c. references to how characters are portrayed from which he can increase his understanding of others. In a third group are references to character traits that Ben admires which reinforce and validate his belief in certain types of behavior and values and also show a strong tie to his personal history and understanding of himself. A forth group describes

Ben's feelings of ownership and possessiveness of novels and authors suggested by comments on buying and keeping novels and references to favorite authors. A fifth group shows Ben using novels as a source of connection to others suggested in comments about sharing novels or their contents.

Desire for Escape and Stimulation

Ben states that for his "recreational reading or viewing, it has to be kind of escapist fare - it needs to be stuff that I don't have to think about too much." He is able to remove himself temporarily from his surroundings and enter into a world of excitement and adventure. He says, "I'm reading to be entertained and get carried away in the story," and "I find that I can really lose myself in books. If something's bothering, whether it's the stress of the job or a family problem, that you don't think about those things while you're reading."

Much of Ben's reaction to a novel is reflected in his affect. He becomes visibly more animated when describing the excitement of becoming involved in a story and launches into long descriptions of what he was reading, what it was about, and what happened. He can't lose himself in a novel, however, unless it can completely hold his attention. An escape must also be stimulating in terms of challenging his intellect. Ben explains, "its entertaining and still has some value to it. The entertainment can't be just silly." He further explains, "I like for the plot to have some real meaning to it, that its not just whimsical nonsense, that there really is some subterfuge and skill involved on the part of the protagonist in solving the mystery or uncovering the clues."

Learning

a. Collecting facts. Ben says that he doesn't deliberately attempt to remember the facts presented in a novel. In fact, he says, "I don't remember specific facts, I couldn't pass a test on details, but I have a feeling that I know about things from having read about them" and "I don't know that I retain very much of that detail as a matter of practical knowledge but I think that at some subconscious level you retain a lot about concepts about things. . . if someone came up and said "what does it do" or "do you know anything about that" you would probably recall some of that."

In contrast with those statements, however, Ben states, "I like reading about something new which is probably the only way I will learn anything about a variety of topics that I wouldn't otherwise think to take an interest in." He frequently describes interest and recall of the specific facts presented in a novel as background. He says, "the kinds of things I remember or sort of remember are descriptions of things I find interesting." Ben is unable to describe why some information catches his interest but he is aware of it when it does. In one instance he describes, "I remember things from books that I wouldn't otherwise know just because for some reason I find it interesting and it catches my attention. I'm not sure why. I wouldn't go look it up to learn more from reference books but authors are thorough enough so that its educational. Take race track betting, I don't go to the track or bet on horses, but the book I just read had something to do with a guy who is a bookie and it describes how the business of a bookie works, percentages and such. I have no personal use for such information and I'm not going to look up how it works in greater detail but it was interesting and I feel like I learned something." There are many further references to collecting such as:

"A lot of the really good writers write such a vivid background for the characters, there's so much research that you can learn about things. Like Louis L'Amour used to say, that if said there was a particular spring in a particular desert, it was there. He actually did the research to find it existed."

"What information I got out of that, even though I'm not a history buff . . . there was a lot of good early American historical stuff in there of a general nature."

"The information I got from that particular book was historical. . . McMurry is very good in his descriptions of the basics of life, the fact that they didn't bathe, they wore the same clothes for days and days, they didn't shave, they had very primitive ways of dealing with injuries, something that wouldn't be a problem today could kill them very easily."

b. Accumulating information. Ben reports using novels to help him comprehend or evaluate situations which arise in the real world that are similar to situations he has read in novels. It makes him "stop and think and question some things" rather than accepting, for example a newspaper item, at face value. In one example, he says, "The Director of the CIA just drowned. Those are the kinds of things that make reading a novel about a guy who is in the CIA and tells you hundreds of different ways that people can be made to appear to have killed themselves or disappear and you read this article in the paper and you say, 'oh really? Fell off his row boat and drowned? Right. The Director of the CIA?'" Since he reads books with similar themes, Ben also builds a knowledge base and continues to add to what he knows about a few areas which especially interest him. As an example, he says, "I like new stuff. I don't mean that I won't read an author who has a continuing series set in the same place or about the same things, that's OK. It's still new because it's about things I have no direct experience with so I actually feel like I'm getting to know a lot about an area if I read several books with the same theme. Almost as though I'm getting to be regular expert because I have read so much about it."

He is usually only entertained by novels from which he can be exposed to new things, or areas which are not part of his real life. He also wants an intellectual challenge of solving puzzles or resolving complex scenarios. In this way, he is actively engaged in continuously gathering information so that it can be arranged in ways that will make sense to him.

Ben describes learning by relating information from in one novel to another or from some other source to what he is reading. He says, "sometimes when the book is finished and before I start another I'll think about it . . . I do find some situations provoking and I think about them in relation to other things I've read."

Ben will relate what reads in a novel to what he reads in nonfiction sources. He says, "I like it to be something I can relate to now or recently" and "it has to be done in such a way that it could really happen, that could actually be true. The things that interest me most are the kind of characters, the believability to the story, the work done on the background." He explains that one of the reasons he has an interest in reading novels with a military theme is "the interest [military] probably arises from things you read every day in the newspaper. There's always some reference to what's going on in industry in China or Japan or what the European nations are doing. . . You don't want what are clearly fictional accounts of things which may have some factual or historical basis to make you paranoid, but it ought to make you stop to think and question some things."

Ben typically reads novels with similar backgrounds and explains, "I actually feel like I'm getting to know a lot about an area if I read several books with the same theme. Almost as though I'm getting to be regular expert because I have read so much about it."

A novel can also serve as a springboard to learning from other sources as seen in Ben's statement, "there have been times when I have read about something in a book that have interested me to the point where I wanted to read more about it. Not typically recreational books but from time to time there have been things I have read that have made me think I would like to read something more about a reference made or more by some writer."

c. Learning about others. Novels have given him a better understanding of others as products of influences he has never experienced and he is therefore able to reserve judgment or change his judgment. He describes a novel about "a guy who becomes a hit man against untouchable drug kings. Even though you believe in his target, still you don't expect to find him a likable person. This is a killer. But the book tells a story of how he came to be where he is and you can understand how he got that way and why he does what he does. He becomes a person instead of a narrowly defined character. There are things that he likes and things that he hates with a whole history behind them so you understand that there is a lot behind how people act." Ben expand his observation further with the comment, "there are stories told about characters that make you think about how people get to a point where they see no alternatives and act in ways that you can understand when you know the background. It doesn't make them innocent, but it makes them believable and I guess you could say that sometimes you end up feeling sympathetic to characters that you don't want to like."

There is one incident described in which he is able to apply understanding to get beyond a stereotyped initial reaction to an individual at his workplace. He says, "I have absorbed enough knowledge of people from very different backgrounds, social classes, incomes and that, in relation to books, typically sub-characters, that I can understand that people will act different from what I would and that there is probably a reason for the way they act."

Validation of Beliefs

In high school Ben found a man whom he greatly admired for his honesty, and integrity. Ben was also raised to practice typically all-male activities of aggressive or violent sports such as hunting, camping, football, and downhill skiing, and admires those who are skillful in them. That admiration is seen in his clear preference in imaginary characters and settings. The significant events in his life, of membership in the Marine Corps and a tour in Vietnam, further add to those themes. He states, "I like the protagonist to be a decisive, strong, action individual" and "I like books with a strong central male character, about guys who are really good at what they do." Often there is a military theme or a direct connection to a military environment. The central character is also often something of a loner and non-conformer. This clear preference is repeated in his choice of other types of reading material, for example, Sports Illustrated during football season, and movies which are consistently high-speed action and often with violence justified in the name of justice or honor.

Ben's enjoyment of very physical, aggressive sports, hunting, skiing, and football, is seen in the highly physical, aggressive actions of the characters he reads about, and his experience of Vietnam and the Marine Corps is captured in the often military-like, high paced action settings in which the characters perform. An example of this is a current favorite author writes about "a white Ninja who was raised by a military father in Japan and after his father was killed was

raised by a Japanese master." This is a character in whom Ben recognizes the very traits he admires and is also set in the type of high energy but disciplined environment Ben appreciates.

Ben wants more than to observe a novel's hero, he wishes to be like him and relate personally to the hero's qualities. Tying himself to a strong, central, male character is vividly apparent in the statement, "I do think that because I am reading about decisive individuals who are direct, able to accomplish things, who are driven to achieve certain things, I'm probably drawn to those types of characters . . . I'm either drawn to those characters because of those qualities or maybe those type of characters and those qualities are the things that I want to develop in myself."

This is the only kind of character model Ben is really comfortable with. He recognizes that he consistently seeks this stereotype and does not care that it is limited. He says, "I typically do not enjoy either films or books that don't have strong male protagonists. I have read very few books where the lead character was a strong female type and in most cases I don't read stuff written by women and most of the movies I see are primarily men playing different kinds of lead roles in action settings. I've wondered from time to time whether I'm limiting my enjoyment and entertainment by doing that but that's the way I've just gone."

Ben has no illusions about who he is and his abilities but compares himself to imaginary characters to arrive at conclusions about himself. He says, "I guess there's a certain vicarious life that I enjoy in books but I certainly have no illusions that its really me. Its just entertaining." "I've never been in a position to live out the kinds of stories I like best," Ben explains, "with action heroes who are terrifically strong and steely eyed and are experts in using all kinds of weapons. . . That doesn't mean I don't enjoy those stories. I'm perfectly happy with my life really . . . I just like the escapism and entertainment of fast action stories with strong characters."

"I know that stuff isn't real and I'm not claiming I think it could be. I know better. But, its not just the action and character I enjoy, its the working out a puzzle, figuring out who the bad guys are and how to get to them that I also like. I admire the craft and expertise that's described."

Ben recognizes for himself a relationship between what he sees in fiction and what sees in his own attitudes and behavior. He says, "I think we can't help but be influenced by all kinds of thing in the way we feel and act and think and since I spend a lot of time reading I have to assume that books have been an influence. I suppose there are influences I'm not aware of. I think some of the influence of books isn't noticeable at the time but it comes back to you when you need it." Ben can use the example set by fiction characters to guide his behavior. He recalls being in "confrontations with really obtuse people sometimes and thought to myself, what would so and so have done with this and it helped to calm me down because heroes of course are always very cool. I could probably have made a real scene, or a fool of myself, I'm not sure which, but thought I did pretty well at being reasonable but still pressing for what I thought was right. I still seldom win but at least feel as though I've acted the best way without foaming at the mouth."

While Ben is impressed by exceptional physical attributes, he is not discouraged by lacking them. No where has he cited those things as important for himself. The people who have influenced him have done so through force of character or helped him become adept at sports which are characterized by companionship or camaraderie as much as they are physical skill or strength.

Ownership

Ben describes favorite authors as though they have a personal relationship as in the statement, "I look for brand new books that I'll never find at the library and wait for it to come out in paper back so that I can afford to go buy it. I have probably half a dozen favorite authors that I do that with. I wait for them to put out a new book for me." When he has finished a novel, he is anxious to find another expressing feelings of deprivation and frustration when he cannot find one quickly by an author he knows as in the statement, "I get frustrated at a book store, I can't find anything by someone I know." As a boy, Ben would find an author and "read everything the library had of his books." Now, Ben can't wait for the library to have a new novel by a favorite author available, he has to buy it as soon as it's for sale.

Ben typically does not reread novels, he would rather start something new. There are a few favorites though that he wishes to own and keep. He says, "the few books that I keep, and most books once I've finished with them hold no interest for me, are books that I believe I can read again one day and enjoy all over" because "some of these books are so interesting as they progress through, even to a known end, that in certain circumstances I would enjoy reading them again."

Relationship with Others

Ben establishes or strengthens relationships with others with the novels he has read. He trades novels and recommendations on novels with friends. It can be a source of finding new authors as in his comment, "In some cases its because someone has recommended a book or maybe someone has given me a book, someone I trade with, and liked it. There was a P. D. James someone gave me. I had seen that author's name for years and never picked one up. Someone gave me one and I really enjoyed it."

Ben uses the information he has gathered from reading with others during conversation when it fits into the subject. He recalls a novel set in a submarine and can relate what he has learned about submarines from it. "I do have conversations with people and when some subject comes up that I have read about in a novel, I can say, 'I've read about that and . . .'"

He saves his favorite novels specifically to be able to lend them when he thinks they might give someone else pleasure. He states this very plainly in the comment, "maybe I keep some of those books because I enjoyed them so much that I want to share them with someone some day and I don't want them to get away because maybe some day I'll be talking to someone about something and they'll mention something and I can say, "hey, I've got a book I think you'll really enjoy." When Ben finds others with his same tastes or interests, he has an immediate connection with them through his ability to share his treasured novels. He says, "I keep them because I know sooner or later there's going to be someone who I think will appreciate reading that some kind of novel."

Case Summary

Ben reads novels as a form of escape and pleasure. He has found what he likes and sticks with it. He does not experiment with other styles and does not finish a novel which doesn't meet his expectations for enjoyment.

There is no deliberate use of novels as a source of learning but the opportunity to learn is recognized. He is conscious of collecting random images from what he is reading and calls upon them when it is appropriate in conversation with others. From his candid remarks, it is

guessed that he is outgoing and easy with other people. He enjoys reading as a private activity but also enjoys sharing what he has read and uses novels as one basis for maintaining a relationship with friends.

He does not label it as learning, but Ben also recognizes that his thinking has been influenced from novels. He has a better relationship with people different than himself because he has learned to put varying behavior into a larger social perspective.

What Ben finds important and meaningful is behavior in terms of demonstrating mainstream values. His favored characters in novels consistently behave this way and he has drawn on them when he has been under pressure to behave similarly. While he enjoys heroic action, he is unthreatened by not being able to imitate it as he has realistic expectations of his own capabilities.

Ben typically reads at least one novel a week but does not read so much that he misses other activities. He is vigorous and busy with outdoor and family events. Novels play an important role in his life by helping him handle stresses of his day to day responsibilities. He can become absorbed in a novel instead of worry, and at the same time confirm his faith in the ability of men to behave honorably in the direst of circumstances.

APPENDIX E CASE DESCRIPTION: CATHY

Cathy is a white woman, 54 years old. She is single and has never been married. She is cheerful and friendly. She is also obese but appears comfortable with herself.

Cathy was raised with two brothers on a working farm in a small Kansas town. Elementary and high school teachers had a significant influence on forming values and interests and she went on immediately after high school to college from which she graduated with honors, started adult working life as teacher, and later earned a master's degree.

Other aspects of Cathy's life that have been important include a two year period of service in the Navy, a decision influenced by her father's and aunt's naval service. While active duty in the Navy did not become a career, it was her introduction to civil service with Navy organizations. Today she is a mid-level government servant. Her special interests include politics, history, and philosophy.

By her description, her history has been unremarkable and stable. It might also be described as a bit bland. However, Cathy finds the stable home she enjoyed as a child to be a special gift enabling her to accomplish a successful if uneventful adult life with no special difficulties to overcome. She makes no complaint about her life but she has enough imagination to dream of other things. Novels have played a large role in compensating for the lack of excitement or romance.

Personal/Reading History

Cathy reports that she has been a fiction reader for as long as she can remember. All her growing up years were spent in a rural area where the most significant parts of her life were caring for the farm the family depended upon, church, and attending the local school. This was a close community in which children were firmly supervised by whatever adult was on scene and school teachers could know their students' interests and abilities. She enjoyed all types of school sports, horseback riding, and the company of friends with similar backgrounds. Her extended family are largely novel readers except for her mother who reads some but not a great deal.

Cathy was a good student. She learned to read early and easily and became a frequent patron of the elementary school library. She was encouraged to read by teachers and the example was set at home of reading as a valued activity. She claims that she did not feel isolated on the farm because she had friends she could ride with. We can suspect, however, that a Kansas farm will have long, cold, dark winter evenings that hold little enchantment for a bright child. Her father is probably reading a novel himself, her mother is busy with household concerns, and her brothers will have activities of their own that they would not wish to share with a sister.

Cathy's selection of people who have been influential for her also suggests greater isolation than she admits. She describes a teacher as being a tennis playmate and a girl several years older than she as someone whom she admired. While Cathy considers them to be her friends, it is unlikely that they spent a great deal of time with this young girl. Finally, we can suspect that other children Cathy's age, also farm children, will have responsibilities at home and may not share her level of imagination, love of school, or level of academic quickness. She is obese now. If she was heavy as a child, she may well have been picked on by children her own age. If in fact she did feel isolated, novels can be the company Cathy is seeking and give her a target for her emotional, intellectual and social desires.

This is consistent with how she describes her love of reading as an adult. Now she reads novels regularly, from her description, almost constantly when not at work. She reports that she reads "usually in the morning before I come to work, while I'm eating breakfast I'm probably reading too. When I get home after work and for while I always read before I go to sleep." She still is reading, "Not as much as I'd like to." Novels are clearly significant part of her life filling a variety of needs and she relies on them heavily. There is a sense of actual panic at the thought of being without reading novels as an activity which she has consciously considered in saying, "The idea of growing older and losing my sight really scares me."

Case Analysis

Cathy describes less her reaction to the contents of her novels, she prefers talking more generally about what reading novels does for her emotionally and intellectually and how they have helped her deal with the world outside her own internal life. Cathy's discussion of her reading experience falls into five groups. The first group includes a expressions of near sensory reaction such as love, relax, enjoy, longing and immersion into fantasy, what may be thought of as a desire for pleasure, excitement or escape. A second group includes references to a desire for wider horizons and wishes for experiences other than those she has had or a need for vicarious experience of events or places she is unlikely to have personally. In the third group, Cathy describes a desire to use and broaden her mind. There are references here to new ideas, stimulation of thought, and engaging in a practice of thinking. It may be described as thinking for the sake of thinking to keep the mind from getting dull or complacent. The first, second and third groups of codes are all internally focused. The fourth and fifth groups are descriptions of how Cathy turns what she has gathered from novels to help her in the outside world. The fourth refers to discussions of using learning from novels in conversation, as a source of information on how people interact and learning about people unlike herself. The fifth group is also about learning, but in a new sense. It goes beyond the practice of thinking or using learning in a social environment, it is building new learning or consciously solidifying knowledge for application in the outside world.

Desire for Pleasure and Escape

Reading is a sensual experience for Cathy. There is almost a dreamy quality during her descriptions of why she likes it. "I always just loved to read," she says, "I just always enjoyed it," and, ". . . what a relaxing thing it is, a stress reliever, and it can be so exciting." She takes pleasure in the simple act of reading itself as illustrated by her comparison between listening and reading. "I listened to an audio book, and that's OK but it's not the same as being able to read it I don't think. There's something about reading the words."

As a method of escape, it may be seen in two different senses. In one sense, is escaping directly away from something she wishes to avoid. As a child it was chores she wanted to avoid and use of reading as her excuse. "It was easy to tune things out when I was reading, like when Mom wanted me to come wash dishes, I could say, 'Just let me finish this page, this chapter,' and, "It took you out of what ever dull thing was going on at the moment like house work you should be doing." As an adult, it removes her directly from boredom or the stress of waiting as in her comment, "I don't go anywhere without a book, especially if I think I'm going to have to wait someplace, I always have a book, like at a doctor's office."

In another sense of escaping, Cathy wants to escape to something or someplace. The rural life she grew up in restricted the opportunity for experience beyond the farm and

community. Cathy claims that she read as a child because, "what's on the other side of the fence is greener than what you grow up with, so you experience anything by reading a book," and "To me it was a big adventure. I could go anyplace in a book." It does not sound as though she went very far as her favorite stories were "horse stories and books about sports" although she also read biographies and novels with other themes. Her adult choices are novels with action, suspense and places she hasn't been. She especially likes novels about political intrigue, historical fiction, adventure stories and romance. "You can experience anything, go anyplace, meet, sort of in a way, meet people you wouldn't otherwise meet, and learn anything."

Need for Vicarious Experience

Reading to get vicarious experience is apparent in the books she selects and her stated reasons for selecting them. The books she selected as a child were often about themes with which she was very familiar from her own activities, but were not limited to these themes. As a teenager she started reading more novels which went beyond her own experience and into a fantasy life and, to a large extent, she still does. Cathy states this clearly in her comment, "I go back and imagine how I would handle it or what it would be like to experience what ever it was that the main character experienced or maybe imagine what I would have done differently. Its kind of a nice fantasy life. I think too I did a whole lot more of that when I was a teenager, reading books about someone having this marvelous relationship and falling in love and the knight in shining armor." She doesn't stop there. She will continue the fantasy with her own imagination. She says, "I also take a book on sometimes and imagine what happens after the story has closed, I keep it going. Not necessarily with me but with the characters from the book," and, "if there is a strong relationship I imagine what's going to happen with that. Are they going to have kids in the future or start some kind of business, I imagine what kind of difficulties or success they might have as that plays out."

It can be guessed that Cathy's personal adult relationships are limited as perhaps they were limited in her childhood. She has never married and she says when she talks to friends on the phone it is usually long distance. Her reported activities outside reading are also solitary such as watching television or videos or attending to household concerns. How others can not read as she does remains a mystery to her. "I've always felt sorry for people who don't read," she says, "I mean, what to they do?"

Given little experience of personal relationships, what fascinates her is reading about other people who have more interesting lives than her own. She says, "I like reading about people. Its usually something about what's going on in their lives and how they cope with those things. . . I imagine how I would handle the same situation and usually the characters in books have lives that are little more exciting than ours. But it just intrigues me the way they deal with life I guess." Characters that she can relate to are women and often are depicted in activities with which she is familiar like farming, horses, sports or periods of history she is knowledgeable about. The characters however are also typically having exciting adventures and are involved in romantic relationships. An example of such reading is Cathy's description of having read The Horse Whisperer about which she says, "the story was partly about horses and it made me think in a new ways about how we interact with animals but it was also a story about the girl's recovery and a love story about the relationship between the whisperer and the mother. I think that book really grabbed me because in a way it was familiar to read about horses but it was done from a perspective that was different and also the stories about the girl and then the mother, how they got themselves back together emotionally after the accident. I just thought it was really

fascinating. I loved the descriptions and the idea of being able to have a special ability to communicate in such a close way with animals. And I'm probably more than a little in love with the whisperer myself."

Desire to Use and Broaden Her Mind

Cathy reads to get more than a make-believe life, she also reads to broaden her intellect. Education is a dominant theme in Cathy's background. She is well educated and in a job that demands intellectual skills. "I like anything that's intellectually challenging, and history is an avocation, I've always liked history. Some of the stuff I read is historically based. Philosophy to some extent although that's very complicated." While her greatest interest in novel reading is the characters, she also requires that novels stimulate some thought and challenge her knowledge or understanding.

She has been exposed to classic fiction and values that experience. Cathy states, "I think people should have backgrounds in certain classical selections, that's why I started reading Faulkner and I thought that was fine for a while . . . and I read Emerson and was into it at the time." She no longer reads such weighty volumes but says, "I really think reading and writing are what being able to think is about. I don't know how you learn to think if you don't read somehow. There seems to be a connection to me, language, the development of language skills, is important from reading too. They expose you to ideas you probably wouldn't have come across on your own and challenge you."

Recognizing that her personal history was limited to farm and small town life, she is interested in the information presented about other places and life styles and she has a preference for reading about skills, things or places that are new to her. She recalls special interest in a novel describing how a business was developed, "the things they had to do to put it together, what kind of facilities they had to have, what kind of help they had to have, advertising, promotion." Reading rather than listening allows her to take her time and reflect as in the statement, "somehow I think that in actually reading it I do more thinking about it."

Similar to her wonder for how others spend their time if they don't read, Cathy also wonders what others could possibly be thinking if they don't read. She believes that if they have some particular interest, "they could learn so much more about it by reading," and that, "you develop your mind and your intellect and have a more interesting life if you read."

Novels are one source of Cathy's education about fitting into society. She collects random facts and puts them together in constructivist learning to give her a picture of what she has missed in personal experience. When what she has learned does not fit with what she already understands, she has an opportunity to amend her understanding and behave differently. Illustrations of how this occurs may be seen in how Cathy applies what she has read to help her social interactions and continue to learn about herself and others.

Interaction with Others

Cathy uses novels to help her interact with other people in the occasions she does socializes or need to converse with others. Having a broad spectrum of things she can talk about from having read about them, she is likely to make reference to things she has read. She also thinks, "it makes for a much more interesting person if you have more things to talk about." Cathy will make a special effort to have something in common with people she may meet socially. She explains, "I deliberately read books listed on the best seller list sometimes to know

what it is that other people are reading. Sometimes it just gives me something to talk about but it also tells me, I think, about what other people find enjoyable. I've done that with popular television too. I want to know what other people are interested in."

She also explains that she has, "read some books that enlightened me about cultures that I didn't understand and had fairly low opinions of that I discovered things I didn't know about. . . I read some books about Hispanic culture that taught me about the importance of family in that culture. I hadn't understood that before. If I met someone from a Hispanic culture I think I would be more inclined to want to get to know them than I would before. I have a broader frame of reference for people from that culture." This example of transformative learning is informative of her ability change her mind and behavior based on new information. Since a great deal of her information is coming from novels rather than texts or personal experience, she is using novels effectively as a learning resource.

Continuing Learning About the World

Cathy uses novels to check what she knows, her own beliefs and broadening her perspectives. Her attention is drawn to topics she has special interest in, or direct experience of, and she takes opportunities to verify or add to them. Her interest in history and experience with horses, for example, produces the comment, "I pick up historical descriptions . . . so a lot of times its some historical fact or event that I remember. When I was young and read a lot of books on sports and read about strategies that were new to me, that I remembered at the time. Another example is books about horses and training techniques, how that's done, and how its supposed to be regulated, that was new to me and intrigued me."

Novels have also influenced her enough to give her a strong belief. She still remembers clearly "a very strong experience from reading when I was a teenager, the book The Ugly American. That scared me silly. I just knew the Communists were going to take us over." That of course turned out to be false but the novel had her absolutely convinced at the time.

Novels have prompted her to go to places she has read about. As a result of reading novels set in New Orleans, Charleston and Savannah, she has gone out of her way to stop to see them. "I did those cities and that came about partially from having read about them and so I wanted to actually see them . . . I think I have developed an interest in visiting certain places because I have read about them."

Early examples of integrity, thinking independently, and accepting the consequences of actions were set for Cathy by a few special teachers, family members and the church. These are the values she reports as being important to her today. They are reflected in the events she has found significant in her life of being invited as a teenager to deliver the Sunday sermon and her college honors graduation. Cathy's attention is captured in novels by descriptions of behavior she admires and which reflect her personal history of developing values and role models. The comparison she makes to herself is not always interpreted favorably. She has states she likes characters who "are smart, willing to be risk takers, maybe because I'm not much of a risk taker, and usually relate well to people who are independent and have a sense of humor and accomplish something with their lives. Probably more women because I guess I identify more with women." This is an interesting statement in that it suggests reflective learning about herself as a risk taker and acknowledgment of this perceived failing. It also suggests her personal validation of her life style of being often alone by labeling it as independence despite her constant interest in reading

about people in relationships. It feels as though she should be adding, "and I'm not happy about that either."

Her respect for education and desire to be informed is apparent in her statement that novels "expose you to ideas you probably wouldn't have come across on your own and challenge you. Take politics for instance, what point of reference would you have when you hear what they're saying. How would you evaluate any theory or opinion if you don't have a point of reference to bounce it against . . . you need to be well read to be an educated person."

Recognizing again the limitations of her own experience, she says, "If you don't read . . . you would be thinking only in terms of what's happening to you, what you experience that day, what you think is going to happen tomorrow, and what you might want to happen. I think that in order to have some frame of reference that it would also be important how developed your language skills were and how much you had read."

Case Summary

Novels are an important part of Cathy's life as they give her the social and intellectual life she lacks in personal experience. When in the company of other people, novels give her clues about how to behave, form opinions, and feed her topics for conversation. But, she is typically alone when not at work. When alone, the characters she enjoys give her good company. They are clever and bold and probably more interesting than anyone she might see socially anyway.

Cathy selects books with characters she is fairly sure she will appreciate as they reinforce the behavior and values she has learned to respect and they engage in activities she wishes she could have for herself. Certainly they are characters she admires as she often prolongs her relationship with them in her own imagination. There is a sense that Cathy enjoys reading about characters not very different from herself but who become involved in more exciting things than she does.

She doesn't seem to mind her relative isolation and predictably ordinary daily life. She cannot expect to have a particularly interesting or exciting life in her current circumstances and there is little reason to expect that those circumstances will change. That she can be satisfied with living a more interesting, exciting life through books is probably just as well. In fact she states, "I think that because I read, I have a richer, fuller life. Its kind of a substitute for me experiencing all those things, so you vicariously experience them, but it gives you something to think about other than just what's happened to you . . . The people you know and interact with are part of what makes your life rich but your internal life, to me, is more significant than what happens without."

APPENDIX F CASE DESCRIPTION: DON

Don is a married 47 year old white man. He is a big man with a kind, bearded face. He seems candid in discussing his background and his thoughts. He likes to talk and seems never to be uncertain about what he intends to say and what he means.

Don is the second child in a family of nine children. His father was a career Air Force officer who moved the family many times to new duty stations mostly in the western United States. When Don's father retired from the Air Force, the family returned to his mother's home town of Pensacola. Don's father moved away from Pensacola to find work when Don was 13 and never returned. Don's mother and siblings all remained in Pensacola as a single parent family. Don expresses absolutely no resentment about this and speaks of his father with warmth and fondness.

After graduating from high school, Don joined the Marine Corps, was ordered to a four month tour in Vietnam, and except for a brief period when he left service, stayed in the Marines for nine years. He was involuntarily discharged from service due to an injury thereby ending his intent to remain for a full service career.

After his discharge from the Marines, Don undertook a bachelor's degree starting first as a business student but finishing nine years later from the University of West Florida with a degree in communications with an emphasis in video production.

He is now a mid-level government servant with expertise in audiovisual production and developing interactive computer courseware. A substantial part of his job is teaching novice interactive courseware developers, from various service schools, how to use a locally developed software package to create interactive courses. His job often calls for travel to other parts of the country which he generally enjoys. He is the father of two grown sons and grandfather to two girls.

Personal/Reading History

Don recalls having becoming a steady reader early and easily. He doesn't remember exactly how he learned to read but was already reading well when he entered first grade. He has no memory of what he was reading that early but specifically recalls, during the first reading lesson at school, asking if there wasn't anything better to read than the beginning readers' books being used.

Don is sure that his love for reading came directly from his father who read voraciously. Don's father had one sister who told Don that his father "read all the time. He would read a book while he was milking a cow. He would hold a book between his forehead and the cow and milk the cow. He had to cut firewood, they lived on a farm in Georgia, and he had a rocking chair and had to cut wood with a saw and he'd sit in the rocking chair and just rock back and forth with the saw and read a book. He'd walk down the street reading a book, while he rode a horse, he had to ride a horse to get to school, and he'd read while he was riding the horse. Anything that he could do while reading a book, he'd read a book."

Don's father was a Book of the Month Club member. Don has a very vivid memory of reading his first novel that hooked him for good. He recalls, "I was in second or third grade and [father] had Hemingway's The Old Man And The Sea and I read that and was fascinated by the book. I read it from cover to cover and couldn't put it down." After that he read all his father's

Book of the Month Club selections. Don says his father “would get all these books and he’d read them and when he was done I would get them and I would read them . . . so I started reading other things that he had. He was an Erle Stanley Gardner fan, Perry Mason, and I’ve read every one of Gardner’s books and I would read them after he read them. I started reading those in third, fourth or fifth grade.”

Don also remembers getting novels from the local library where he says he would get sports books. A great favorite he says, was Joe Archibald “who wrote a lot of sports fiction. I read everything I could get my hands on that he wrote. I really enjoyed it. I was a sports fanatic also. I would read novels about doctors. I wanted to be a neurosurgeon. The desire to be a neurosurgeon came from reading the book. I went to the library and there were no more Joe Archibald books and so I ran around until I found a book and I read it and it was the same type of thing. Instead of being a sports hero, he was a neurosurgeon hero, and he would save everybody’s life.”

In his younger years, Don says, “my older sister and I would get Hardy Boy books and Nancy Drew books for Christmas, birthday, that kind of thing. I’ve read all the Hardy Boy and Nancy Drew books several times. They were a little juvenile but if there was nothing else around to read, that’s what I read.”

Don’s older sister is also an avid reader but is the only other one of the nine children who is. He believes this is also the influence of their father and explains that “she has always read, the rest don’t seem to be that interested. I think its because they don’t really remember my father and they don’t remember seeing him read.”

Despite the father leaving the family, Don does not convey any financial difficulties as a result. Father continued to support the family and Don’s mother did not go to work until she wished to after the youngest child was grown and gone. The father influenced Don in more ways than just reading. Don describes him as “a self educated, very well educated, brilliant man. . . He read all the time and did correspondence courses, he became a watch maker, a locksmith, a finger print expert. I don’t know why or if he did anything with it. He was a man of few words but when he did sit down and talk he said some very profound things.” There were other older men who were also influential in his life. Don describes them as “a college history professor who was also an extremely brilliant man who can talk about any subject and make it interesting” and “a judge, retired, another extremely brilliant man. The common thread between my father and the professor and the judge is they are all very well read.”

Don has a great respect for education and deep thought but this wasn’t always the case. He describes himself as an “absolutely atrocious” student explaining that if, he liked what was being taught, he could perform well in school. If he wasn’t interested, he simply paid no attention, studied or did homework. Beginning in seventh grade he was also enormously distracted by other interests especially playing any kind of ball and socializing. Don was not irresponsible, he was also the second oldest of nine children and helped take care of the rest of the children. He explains that at this point he was reading much less but still reading as much as he could by staying up most of the night and reading by flashlight in bed under a blanket.

It wasn’t until he finished his tour in Vietnam and was reassigned to Okinawa that he started reading novels steadily again. He recalls that “someone came by who had just finished a Louis L’amour novel and threw it at me and asked me if I wanted it. I read it and I was fascinated. Now I’ve read and still have over 100 of Louis L’amour’s books.”

When Don left the Marine Corps after nine years, he had married his high school sweetheart, had a young child, and needed a new job. He held a variety of assorted jobs from salesman to nightclub bouncer. He also used the GI Bill to return to school for a bachelors degree taking nine years to finish on a part time basis. Now he is happy with his position doing what he enjoys. He uses his skills in audiovisual production and gets to talk to people all the time as a teacher in interactive courseware development. He is busy with the job, doing things at home and doing things with his wife and his only leisure activity is reading novels. He now reads for an hour in the morning and about an hour and half or two hours at night.

Most of his books Don buys in the grocery store. He says, “every time I’m in the grocery store I look to see if there’s one I want to buy.” He knows exactly what he is looking for. He is intensely loyal to a few authors and buys the paperback version of their novels as soon as he sees them for sale. Their themes are typically murder mysteries, or novels with a military theme, or with continuation of characters from one book to the next.

Don has an extremely close and personal bond with the novels he reads. In addition to keeping him entertained, they help him in many ways to cope and learn.

Case Analysis

Codes for Don’s description of his reading falls into six groups. In the first group to be described, Don talks about the pleasure he finds in the way certain authors use language. His pleasure comes not at all from a novel’s setting or story line, but the pure use of words. In a second group, Don describes a desire to own and keep all the books he reads and his complete loyalty to a small collection of authors. This second group to be discussed, ownership, includes his feelings about having for himself the complete collection of books he has read so that all the books from which he has learned something or felt something will remain with him always. A third group describes how Don gets reinforcement or validation for his experiences and beliefs by reading. This group is subcategorized into a. support for personal experience and b. support for personal values. Don describes using novels in several ways to help him cope with the stresses of daily life and relationships with other people. This fourth group is subcategorized into a. using authors words to bolster his own position and seeking philosophy to help himself and others cope, and b. using what he has read to help him converse. In a fifth group, Don talks about how he believes reading has helped stimulate his intellect. A final group captures Don’s remarks about how the information provided in novels helps him expand or validate his knowledge base.

Pleasure from Words

Don is enchanted by words and takes pleasure in the activity of reading itself. He says, “I don’t read too fast, not too slow, but not too fast . . . I like to savor what I read. I can be reading and if I find a sentence or paragraph that I liked, I may go back and read it two or three times.”

He likes the power of words to be able to make his imagination visualize. “I like words to make me see something. I like to be able to picture the characters and a lot of exposition.” Of his first experience of being deeply moved by a novel, Hemingway’s The Old Man and The Sea, he says, “the ability to take a word and paint a picture, he does that very well. I was fascinated by the fact that I’m reading text on a page and there’s no pictures or sound but I was just absorbed, I was enthralled.” “I think the ability to use the language that way, to completely and

totally entertain someone in that way, was what fascinated me. I was shocked that you could do that.”

The same enchantment with use of language is caught in Don’s statements about other favorite authors. Done explains that Louis L’amour “has a way of turning a word . . . Louis L’amour says things like . . . ‘I’m simply an ignorant man striving to become less so.’ That type of turning a word I really like.”

Don claims that, although he has favorite novel themes, the theme is less important than the pleasure of simply reading the writing. He says, “as long as its well written and I enjoy reading it, the subject matter doesn’t make any difference. If you go to an art museum, its all the same medium, but they’re all different, all different styles and you can enjoy looking at all those things . . . That’s the way I feel about reading. I like the structure. I like the pictures that I see when I read. The content’s really not important as long as I enjoy reading it.” Don will read the same novels over and over. Sometimes he can reread a novel and feel as though it’s a first reading because he has forgotten much of it. Mostly he can reread a favored novel simply because the enjoyment comes from the texture of the words themselves and their power for Don to evoke images and feelings.

Ownership

Don never uses a library any more, he wants to own everything he reads. He says, “I buy books and I keep books. I have every book I’ve read in the past 18 or 19 years.” “When I read a book, it’s mine and I want to keep it. It would be hard for me to borrow a book, read it and give it back. I’d have to go out and buy it.” “I bought it, its mine. I read it, its part of me now. If reading a book doesn’t change you, if it doesn’t teach you something, then why read it. If you’ve read it, it taught you something, or moved you, or did something, and I may want to read it again.”

Don’s possessiveness of his books seems to extend to his authors as well, as though they are Don’s authors and he wants to keep them too. This is expressed as feelings of intense loyalty to a few authors. He says, “I have a list of authors that I like to read. Tom Clancey, WEB Griffin, Laurence Sanders, John Sandford, Mitchner, a new guy I just started, Martini, he did Undue Influence that a movie was just made of. That’s about it. Those people, Louis L’amour, if I don’t have anything else to read I’ll reread one of his.”

Don would be perfectly happy if he never read any other authors beyond his favorites but eventually, in desperation for something to read, occasionally is introduced to a new author. If a new author is acceptable, he has a new author for his list of favorites and reads all that author’s novels until he has exhausted the supply. He describes it as getting “hung up on certain authors. I don’t want to say I’m not an adventurous person but I’m really not. I know, I’m comfortable, with the people that I read.”

Personal Validation

Despite Don’s claims that the theme of a novel is not important, he seems to select only novels that support his own experience, views, and values and takes particular note of the ways they do. He is not seeking new experiences from novels but reinforcing and validating his personal history. If a novel fails to do this, he will not enjoy it and will not finish it.

a. Support for personal experience. One of the ways novels support him is by taking him to what he likes to do. Many of the novels he enjoys have a military or paramilitary theme. He

is, in a way comforted by associating with military environments through reading. Don explains, "I've always been interested in the military. My grandfather was in the Army for 44 years . . . my father was in the Air Force 22 years, I was in the Marine Corps 9 years. Things military interest me. I like the military, I wish I could have retired from the military, I wish I was still in the military because my personality lends itself better to that than the type of situation I'm in now."

In addition to returning him to the life of military service, Don also enjoys detective mysteries because he says he "wanted to be cop too. I think I would have made a good detective. Reading mystery novels allows me to be a detective trying to figure out what happened before I get to the end of the book." Reading mysteries so that he can be a detective is experienced vicariously but is not out of the realm of possibility. Had Don not chosen military service, he very well could have become a policeman and detective. While many readers enjoy vicarious experience of things they couldn't possibly have done themselves, Don seems to want only experience that he has had or reasonably could have had.

b. Support for personal beliefs. The novels Don enjoys support his beliefs and values as well as experience. Consistent with his personal history of Marine Corps service and the traits he praised in his father, he likes characters in novels to portray courage, honor, loyalty, and intelligence. Don cites Louis L'amour's series about the Sackett family as an example. "The Sacketts were a clannish family and . . . have a code that if one is in trouble they all drop what ever they're doing and go help. . . The team work, the ethic, the family unity, is what makes me like them." These characteristics, which are part of the core values of the Marine Corps, are what Don personally values. He valued them in the Marines and in his own immediate family. "It's their unity, their honor, work ethic, those types of things. In my family . . . if one of the boys got in trouble, the other 3 would be there. Its always been that way. My boys were raised too. . . Its an honor thing, an integrity thing."

Don cites another example of character traits he values from Tom Clancey's novels starring Jack Ryan as the central character and Detective Delaney in novels by Laurence Sanders. "Ryan is a very bright person with high ethical standards, when its time to act, when its time to do something he does it, but he has his fears, he has his problems, he's scared to death of flying, every time he gets on an airplane he gets sick. He's human, yet when the chips are down, he'll do what he has to do." The Detective Delaney example specifically reflects the qualities in his father that Don admires. "Delaney reminds me of my father. He won't go outside unless he's shaved, dressed well, will not tell a lie, won't do something wrong. . . I'm not real meticulous about my personal appearance but I like to think that my word is my bond. If I tell you I'll do something I'll do it. I don't break the law, I don't lie. That's what I like about Delaney."

Don admires the strength of character demonstrated by the characters he likes best and uses it to inspire himself toward the same behavior. The following statement clearly shows how Don uses the behavior of characters he reads about to show the way for his own behavior.

"Even reading fiction, you learn and that type of honesty and integrity is something we all should have regardless of what we do. If somebody was raised without those values, that's one place they could pick them up. Team work, if you look how characters relate, how they interact with each other, you can see how one character acts to help or harm a team. Some books I read, someone, on just sheer guts, gets what he wants and accomplishes what he needs to, facing

insurmountable odds just using stick-to-itiveness and guts, he gets done what he needs to get done. Motivation is something you get from books. Especially the type of books I read. There are heroes. One book I read, and will re-read several times, is a book about Chesty Puller. What a hell of a man. The things he did are motivational. How hard can it be for me to do the things I have to do when I read about what he did. This is not fiction, the things he did in Korea, how hard can it be for me to do the things I have to do. Makes it a lot easier to do.”

Don demands integrity not only from the main characters in fiction, but from the authors themselves. He insists that an author do the research necessary for accuracy, not necessarily because he wants to make sure the facts are right, but because it is dishonorable for an author to cheat on the facts. Without accuracy, Don says, “it takes away the credibility of the book. If someone is going to write a book and expect me to read it, if they want my money, they should make sure that the facts are accurate, even though its fiction. If it talks about history, locations, just make it accurate, its not that hard.” Inaccuracy is “just wrong. If you put something in a book that’s inaccurate, you’re insulting my intelligence and you shouldn’t do that.”

Coping With and Relating to Others

a. Supporting position. To help him relate to others and to understand himself, Don finds words of wisdom in novels that help him in practical ways as well as helping him cope with a stressful world. Don calls upon the words of authors to help him bolster his positions or explain things, as though being able to cite an author validates to others what he has to say. He explains that “in writing things for school I would quote authors, things that I’ve read. When I teach, talking about script writing, I quote Hitchcock frequently. . . about how to do things. I’ve spent time in Amway and in speaking to people I would quote things that I’ve read . . . I do use things I’ve read in my life, just in talking to people, I’ll say so-and-so said and what he meant was . . . “

Similar to the way in which the characters in his novels demonstrate a strength of character that inspires and motivates him, Don is also inspired, motivated, or soothed by the words of authors who help him put things into perspective and relate effectively to the demands of his responsibilities to himself and others. Don says he extracts from novels “slogans and quotes to help me through daily life.” They give him a philosophy for living and getting along. Sometimes a simple phrase catches his attention that captures a perspectives he wishes to remember. He explains, “When I read things like that I write them down. I usually keep a list of them hanging on the wall and they serve as reminders of how to get along, how to cope, how to deal with people and its good just to read those things once in a while. Everyone gets in situations where they’re not particularly happy or are under stress, those types of things help.” Don supplies as an example, the following:

“I’ve had two supervisor positions for civil servants, both of them were nightmares. They would come in handy when I would get irate. They might say something stupid like a bowling ball can’t go to the beach. That’s a dumb sounding thing but what it means is, that whatever you’re doing here finances your leisure time, so if you want your leisure time and your life style, you have to do what a bowling ball does which is get thrown down a lane and hit things. It also helps when you have employees, or now I’m part of team, you can post those things sometimes if someone is having a particular problem with something, you

can find an appropriate quote and hang it up on the wall. It says a lot without saying a lot.”

b. Support for conversation. Sometimes novels help him get along with others by simply giving him something to talk about. Don says, “I like to talk to people on their level. That’s something that my father taught me to do a long time ago. He said the reason you read, the reason you study history, the reason you learn, is so that you can talk to anybody and talk to them on their level because that makes them feel good.” “My father was a conversationalist and believed that everyone should be. If a bunch of people are sitting together and no one is saying anything, you should be able to come up with a topic and start a conversation and keep it going. I can use what I’ve read to talk about.”

Don makes sense of what he reads by relating to his own experience. From reading a Louis L’Amour western, he says, “I try to relate things . . . and I think about how long it would take to ride a horse from here, I’m going to Quantico next week, how long it would take to ride a horse from here to Quantico. How long would I be gone, what would I do for money. It makes me wonder about those type of things.” “I can relate situations I read about to situations I may encounter . . . say a character is stranded in the desert. No water, no food, no horse. Even though I’m not likely to end up in a situation that dire . . . I may not have the tools for the situation I’m in. Its not the same situation but the consequences are on the same level.”

Intellectual Stimulation

Don uses novels to stimulate his intellect. He states that the novels he selects “have to be well written, have to have a vocabulary that’s above forth grade, have to have some sophistication. If its a mystery, don’t make it something lame, it has to have some substance to it that you can be wrong in.” He continues periodically to read more difficult writing deliberately to stretch his ability to comprehend. Don explains, “the classical writers, I’ve read Beowolfe, Dante’s Inferno, Plato. . . By reading things like that, that are a challenge, you grow, intellectually, it gives you the opportunity to read something that’s really good but spoken in a different way. It makes you a better rounded person to know that you can say the same thing in many different ways.”

Don believes that reading difficult prose will help him be a better thinker because, “you always need to learn. The brain, if it isn’t used will atrophy. Your brain has to be exercised like anything else. The more you use it the more of it you can use. . . Its like lifting weights, to get stronger you have to lift heavier weights. Difficult reading is like that for your brain. . . . You have to grow. You have to challenge yourself or there’s no reason to get up in the morning.”

Reading is also intellectually stimulating for Don as he sees its relationship to writing. He says, “I do a lot of writing myself and a lot of times when I’m reading I’ll think, man, why couldn’t I say something like that, or I wish I had written that. The first thing you have to do to be a writer is to be a good reader and I think that’s why I have the ability to write that I do.”

Expand Knowledge Base

Don demands that authors accurately report the facts in the setting of novel and that the story be realistic. As described earlier, he has no interest in fantasy. Therefore, the novels Don selects are full of factual details. When asked what he does with information available, he says, “store it, confirm it, disprove it. If I were to read something I had doubts about, I can go look it up and I will . . . I’ve done that.” Since Don buys and keeps all the books he reads, he considers

them to be a reference as well as entertainment source and will go back to them to brush up on the facts. He says, for example, “if I see a reference to the Cumberland gap in a book, I’ve got a series of books that takes place mostly in the Cumberland Gap and I may want to read those books again or refresh my memory about the area. There’s maps in there I may need again.”

There is ample opportunity for Don to gather random information which he does. Don seems to go beyond this however, to actively using the bits information in books to piece them together to give him an accurate larger picture and as a source for study of an area of particular interest.

Case Summary

Don knows what he likes, and what he likes is what he wants. He wants novels that he is sure he will enjoy, he wants novels to make him see, he wants novels to give him guidance, and he wants novels to exercise his intellect. He has found a small collection of authors who can give him all, or most all, that he wants.

Don does not choose his inner circle of favorite authors lightly. There are several tests they must pass. They must have some sophistication in their use of language and spin a tale that is not too facile. They must agree with him on what are valuable traits and traits of character that Don himself approves. It helps if the main characters are military or paramilitary men or detectives or pioneers, and go forth with integrity, honesty, inner strength, and a sense of what is honorable behavior. These are characters that Don can relate to and the characteristics he expects of himself.

Don is enormously attracted to reading as a primary pastime for the pleasure it gives him to be able to see through words. He is charmed by the ability of words to stimulate his senses. He is also charmed by words that, for him, give a succinct summary of a perspective that he can appreciate. Those words, a phrase or sentence, become slogans or quotes that he uses for guidance. The guidance can be for himself or shared with others to help them all remember to keep their balance in a complex and confusing world.

Don uses novels to keep his mind working. He will undertake difficult works expressly for the purpose of exercising his intellect. In them he finds the intellectual challenge he desires but also the elegant turn of phrase that so well captures the sentiments he wants to remember.

Don has a romantic view of heroic characters but it is more than that he wishes from reading. It is the words themselves in combination with the story they tell which so fully pulls his time and attention.

APPENDIX G CASE DESCRIPTION: ELLEN

Ellen is 37 years old and married with two daughters. She was recently promoted Chief Petty Officer, a Navy enlisted rank of considerable achievement and prestige. She is in charge of administrative support for a large Navy command. She is tiny person but easily holds her own through her manner of confidence and sure direction. She has a conspicuous limp but it has never prevented her from performing her duties with the Navy including tours at sea and she never mentions what ever the infirmity is.

Ellen is a middle child in single parent family of ten children and grew up in a blue collar town near Detroit. She earned a high school diploma from a local Catholic school and has done a few college courses. She wants to continue her education but has not decided whether to pursue a second career after the Navy in teaching or nutrition.

Ellen reads voraciously. Whenever she takes a break from her work space, it's an easy bet that she is reading a novel. She also enjoys reading several magazines. In addition to reading, she enjoys swimming, bicycling, playing cards and occasionally the family will go camping.

Reading has been important to Ellen since childhood as a source of learning and escape.

Personal/Reading History

Ellen's parents were divorced when she was eight years old. She has nothing to say about her father but her mother plays a central role in Ellen's discussion of personal history and influences on her attitudes and behavior. She also says very little about her nine siblings except that some have made satisfactory lives for themselves and some apparently have not.

Ellen's mother was strict in her treatment of the children. There was little latitude allowed in their behavior and activities. Keeping control on her own of a household of ten children must have been a Herculean task for Ellen's mother. Ellen does not say where the money came from to support the family but she does mention that the house was too small for them all.

The children presumably had tasks assigned that were expected to be carried out to the letter. One of Ellen's tasks was to return books and collect a new selection of books for her mother from the public library. Ellen's mother set an example of novel reading. Ellen says of her mother that she was "always a reader. She was a big mystery reader. From the time I was eight or nine years old. The public library was about nine blocks from my house. My mother never drove us anywhere. If we wanted to go somewhere, we walked or rode a bike. Every other week she'd send me up to the library, I was the only child in the entire city who was allowed to check out adult books. She'd send me up to pick up four mystery books and send back the other ones." The public library, Ellen explains, had a children's section, young adult section and adult section. No one under 14 years of age was permitted to check out a book from the adult section except Ellen who was allowed to do it on her mother's behalf.

Ellen as a child wasn't interested in books from the adult section. She liked Encyclopedia Brown. She recalls Encyclopedia Brown as "my favorite. . . They were children's books" about "a boy who opened a detective agency and there were little mini-mysteries, about five pages long, and you had to try to figure it out. . . You had to read the mystery and at the end it would say something like, 'I knew Fred had taken the ball. How did I know that?' You had to

figure out how Fred took the ball and then you could check your answer was in the back. I was eight or nine years old then, third or fourth grade.” Having collected a new batch of mystery novels for her mother, Ellen collected her own batch of Encyclopedia Brown mysteries for herself. She says she has been reading all her life. Visits to the library as a child to check out up books for both her mother and herself is where she picks up the story of her reading history. Ellen remembers Encyclopedia Brown specifically with great fondness. That’s all she refers to in describing her earliest reading memories.

Her school played an important role in encouraging her as a reader as well. She was a good student and particularly liked history. She found she could combine her enjoyment of reading with her interest in history through novels. A ninth grade American Literature course was the turning point for becoming what Ellen refers to as “a serious fiction reader.” She says, “we read a lot of Mark Twain, John Steinbeck, Upton Sinclair, a lot of those books we read dealt with history.”

In describing what was so special about the experience of reading that selection of novels, Ellen explains, “Take for instance, Upton Sinclair, The Jungle which was about the meat packing process and unions and things back in Chicago. It was just interesting to me because I had never seen a meat packing plant and never will see a meat packing plant if I can help it. It was just to learn. I guess hardships was part of it, other hardships that people had to go through to get the country where it was. The Grapes of Wrath was a real good book, people who had to pick up and leave, everything they owned, everything they knew, and travel to a different place. They showed the good points in people.”

Ellen had another high school course that was significant in encouraging her reading called Individualized Reading. She describes it as “a lot of reading and book reports and oral books reports. There wasn’t a reading list, I could pick out what I wanted to read.” One of the novels Ellen selected was to hook her completely on reading and direct her toward one of her favorite types of novels. Ellen remembers, “the very first romance I ever read, it was called Love’s Tender Fury by Jennifer Wilde. That was in ninth grade and I’ll never forget that book, it was the first historical romance I ever read and it was just, I don’t know, it just captured your imagination so because it talked about England way, way back. The way people dressed and way people behaved, it was just, I’ll never forget that book. . . I still have that book, a paperback, I’ve never gotten rid of it.”

Ellen hints at the conditions of her childhood in describing why reading was attractive to her as a child and teenager. She says, “I didn’t read all the time, but at my house, you were in the house when the street lights came on. If the street lights came on at five o’clock in the afternoon, you were in the house. It didn’t matter where you were going and who you were going with, street lights come on, you’re in the house. So you’re stuck in the house from five o’clock at night until the time you go to bed, there’s nine other kids in that house screaming and hollering, one little TV in a little tiny room that’s got a sofa and two chairs, so there’s eleven people and seats for five at the most, it was just much nicer to go upstairs and lie in bed and read a book.” Ellen admits that reading then was, “escapism I guess, even that age.”

Ellen enlisted in the Navy after high school. She explains that she enlisted “originally, because I didn’t have the money for college. I was accepted at three colleges and I had a Pell Grant and a few other things, but if I had gone on to college, I just thought it would be too much because I would have had to work full time plus go to school and I decided if I came into the

Navy maybe I'd see a little bit of something, maybe be able to go to school." After her first enlistment, she was married and expecting her first child. She got out of the Navy so that she could be a full-time mother to the two children she would have over the next few years. She returned to the Navy after seven years when the younger child started kindergarten. At this point, Ellen had had enough of full-time home and motherhood duties.

Ellen has been very successful in the Navy and is considering what she will do after ending her Navy career in another five years. What ever direction she chooses, she knows she will need to finish a college education.

For now, novels fill a great deal of Ellen's time. She reports that she reads regularly for "three to four hours a day. I read during the lunch hour when I take a break, when I get home the first thing I do after I take my shoes off is read the newspaper and then before I go to bed I read for one and a half to two hours before I go to sleep." Ellen says she gets through twenty to thirty novels per month. Many of the novels she reads she has purchased simply because it is easier to keep herself supplied with. She explains, "I don't get as many books out of the library here and I think the reason for that is convenience. The closest library to me is probably 12 miles away. Its just easier. Most of them I buy now just for convenience sake. Before going to the library was a necessity if you wanted to read, now its convenience."

Ellen also subscribes to several magazines, Readers Digest, National Geographic, People, Redbook, and Ladies Home Journal, as well. She says she also likes "some biographies depending on who they are. I have a soft spot for Eleanor Roosevelt for some reason" and "travel brochures, the little books that tell you about the country, culture, that kind of thing." By far her most consistent reading is novels and her favorites are "historical romances, mysteries, contemporary fiction" and humorous writing such as Erma Bombeck and Joan Rivers. Her all time favorite is Sydney Sheldon's contemporary drama.

Case Analysis

Ellen's description of reading falls into five groups. In one group are remarks suggesting her dependence or 'neediness' for novels. A second group shows of references to imagination and being able to 'see' what she is reading about. A third is characterized by reading as an emotional outlet indicated by references to escape, pleasure, being happy, and finding excitement. In a fourth group, Ellen makes specific references to learning. This fourth group is subdivided into a. learning about places and things and b. learning about herself and her own behavior. A final group shows how Ellen reinforces her own values and beliefs by her relationship to characters.

Need for Novels

Ellen reads constantly because it "so easy, its so convenient, you can do it any where, any time, it doesn't require a special skill." But there is more to it than that. She needs to read and requires that novels be available all the time. She is relentless in finding novels that will keep her going. There is a systematic devouring of novels suggested in her description of how she selects novels. She says, "a lot of times we'll go to the bookstore and I'll go to the fiction section and read a title and pull it out and read the back of the book. That's how I've found a lot of the authors I like. I pull out one book and read by this person and then, when you go back to the bio sheet there's listing of other books, so I'll purposely see if I can find more by the same author. That's how I've found most of my books. I also belong to several book clubs. They

send you a little description, if I see one that strikes my fancy I'll send off for it." It almost seems as though it matters little for what novel is selected, as long as it meets minimum requirements for her entertainment. "I'll go to the book store and I'll look at the titles and if it sounds amusing I'll read what it's about and if it sounds interesting, I'll take it."

She knows she can count on a few favorite authors but will take pretty much anything if it's mystery or romance. Once she finds a new author that she enjoys, she will gobble all those up as well. As an example, Ellen says, "this one just jumped out at me from the book club. When I picked this book up and read this, it reminded me of what Pat Cornwell writes and I've always liked her books so I said I'll give it a try. I think it's going to be all right and I'll end up getting the other ones."

Once engrossed in a novel, she is relentless in reading it until the end. She likes suspense because, she says, "I like one . . . that you want to keep reading because you want to find out what happens."

If she is without a new novel, Ellen will reread what she has on hand. She explains, "I don't get rid of books, I have them all over the house so if I need something to read I'll grab something I've already read and read it again."

Use of Imagination

Ellen loves descriptions that let her imagination take over. She rejects television because "the use of your imagination wouldn't be there. When you read something in a book, for instance the meat packing place in The Jungle, you can imagine what that looks like or how these people feel in your head and you can't get that from anything else." Ellen expands on the difference between television and using imagination in reading with the following statement. "You can use imagination to an extent when you're watching TV, say a documentary on the rain forest. It's staring you in the face so you can see exactly what's there. As opposed to a book and it says, 'the green ferns hung down from the tall majestic whatever,' you get a better visual in your head when you can imagine tall, tall trees that have been there for hundreds of years, almost like a canopy, little green ferns falling down, a little mist dripping across, you can see that on TV but in your head you can see it better when you read about it."

If she can't unleash her imagination in a novel, she is not interested in reading it. She specifically doesn't like books of fantasy for that reason and explains, saying, "I don't know if my imagination just can't be open to it when I read it, it's just so far beyond impossible that I don't like it."

Ellen is fascinated by description that she can use to engage imagination. What catches her attention is "the way things are described. Like the Great Barrier Reef, sharp pieces of coral but very colorful and very bright, fish swimming in and out . . . you can see the coral reef browns and blues and pastels and you see these little blue yellow and orange fish swimming all around and yet you know it's as sharp as glass if you were to touch it, it would cut you to ribbons. But it is so stunning to sit back and look at it." Ellen frequently makes reference to imagination as 'seeing' and the power of written description to evoke images. She describes an example from Rage of Angels, saying, "I can see the lawyer in my head, I can see her with her son, and I can see her with the presidential candidate. You can see all these things."

From the images she gets from reading novels, Ellen also describes the stimulation of her imagination as a learning experience. She explains in the following statements:

“You learn of places. If I didn’t read, I would never know about the Great Barrier Reef, I would never know about Ayers Rock, which I imagine to be a big rock out in a field. So you have knowledge of things, so you’re not closed off.”

“You learn so much without even realizing that you’re learning it and you get to see places, I don’t want to say ‘see,’ you get to imagine places that you would never imagine if you didn’t open up a book and read about them. You get to live vicariously through others when you read is a way to put it.”

“Places I have never been that I can imagine what they look like. I read a book on Australia and the Great Barrier Reef. I’ve never been to the Great Barrier Reef but I can imagine this big old lagoon type thing with clear as clear can be water and white sand down on the bottom and little coral shapes with little colorful fish swimming in it.”

“Powerful images. An example, for instance you’re blind and you hear Martin Luther King’s I have a dream speech. Just the words, the images that pass through your mind are very powerful. So you remember. When you’re reading a story, a Patricia Cornwell novel for example, where she’s got the body on the table and she’s describing how she’s going to take the saw and cut off the back part of the skull so that she can get in a weigh the brain. While you’re reading that, you can hear a saw buzzing in the background, or imagine, I imagine it to be like a lid on a pot, the top of the skull being flipped back and pulling out the brain and sticking it on a scale. There’s all kinds of images that remain with you. You read about the pyramids, some of this is visual because you’ve seen them on TV, but you read about them, this big old lion, not really a lion but I’ve always called him a lion, sitting there missing a nose, you can imagine these things. Like Ireland, I have never been to Ireland, but I can see green hills and white fences that go up and down and up and down the hills. Or you can see standing on a cliff with waves smashing against the rocks.”

Ellen explains why novels as a stimulant for imagination are so important for her. She says, “imagination is what makes life interesting. If you can’t imagine and pretend and act things out, your life would be pretty boring,” and “if you can’t read, life cannot be any fun for you. I have never understood how anyone can go through life without reading.”

Reading as an Emotional Outlet

Ellen uses novels to help her cope with daily stress, escape from the ordinary and make her feel better. She explains, on one hand that “it’s relaxing, if you’ve got something bothering you, you can sit down and read for while, it gives you a chance to put it in the back of your mind and when you put your book down you can get a fresh perspective on things,” and “if you have a job that puts you under a lot of stress or a lot of pressure, reading can take you away from it all. It doesn’t take you away to the effect that you don’t care what happens any more, but it gives you a break.”

On the other hand, novels also provide excitement missing in her own life. She reports that she has a “pretty dull life” but can get the excitement or variety she craves from novels. She would much rather read about an environment completely unfamiliar to her own predictable

world. She says that “most of the fiction I read now is so far removed from me. They’re upper, elite, power players, and I’m just little old me.”

Ellen also reads novels to make her feel good or satisfied and will only read them if she can expect that they will. She says “I much prefer a happy ending to a sad ending. That’s not to say that a book that has a sad ending like The Grapes of Wrath, it wasn’t a happy ending, although in a way it kind of was because they got where they were going, but it was still sad.” She knows if she can expect a happy ending because she explains, “a lot of times I’ll read the back of the book first, the last couple of pages. If I don’t like the ending, I won’t read the book.” Knowing the ending doesn’t deny her pleasure in the novel, she simply now feels that it is worth her time to read the novel through because she will be satisfied with how it turns out. She describes it by saying, “if I know what happens on the very last page, I know what happened but I don’t know how it happened. I’ll read the book to find out how it happened. If I don’t like what happens at the end, I won’t read the book.”

Reading for the Purpose of Learning

Ellen recognizes in novels an opportunity to learn. As a result, she has, (a) collected information about places and things and, (b) collected information which she uses to evaluate her behavior and views.

a. Since Ellen says she reads about things that are “definitely not part of my life,” she is constantly exposing herself to something new with which she has no personal experience. She does this deliberately she says because, “you can learn so much from [reading] something that you have no personal experience of . . . a lot of things stick in your mind that you’re not even aware of, that are there. Your memory is so powerful and you don’t tap hardly any of it through your lifetime, but there are things that stick in little nooks and crannies, that you don’t even realize until the time comes. . . . Things that are unfamiliar, you have a chance to do something you enjoy, reading, and at the same time learn without even realizing because you’re doing something you enjoy.”

The rich descriptions that Ellen so enjoys to stimulate her imagination, are also teaching her about what she is reading. There are several examples in her discussion as follows:

“when you’re reading along, like Pat Cornwell for instance, and you’re talking about Kay whose the medical examiner. . . she’ll say, we’re going to make a half inch incision under the breast bone and . . . things like that, the details that you can almost see while you’re reading.”

“Just general stuff you’d never know but, reading around, you can pick up in a book. You never know, you may be watching Jeopardy one day and you know the answer to a question. You may not even consciously know you’re picking it up.”

“Whether you chose to read strictly fiction, strictly non-fiction, a little of both, you can learn a lot from reading.”

“A lot of little trivia stuff that you don’t realize you remember until you’re drawn into a conversation. For instance, we watch Jeopardy, and they’ll have an off the wall category and some question. I don’t remember the question any more but I remember the answer was the Great Barrier Reef. I had just read a book set in Australia and they talked about the great Barrier Reef and Ayers Rock. Just the

way the question was on Jeopardy, I knew what they were talking about. It's little stuff you don't realize you remember until you're drawn into a conversation. Or something just strikes you and then you remember, hey, I know a little bit about that."

b. Ellen has learned from reading that there are alternatives to the behavior or values she learned as a child. She has let novels open her mind to different ways of evaluating what she sees, hears, or believes. The result has been conscious modification of her own understanding of the world around her. Ellen explains that "fiction has taught me that there are no black and white, there are gray areas. . . I've learned that you can't automatically shut out people. . . . Fiction opens your eyes, opens up your world a little bit so you're not so narrow minded. I don't think I was ever narrow minded, but I think it lets you explore your options, not keep you boxed in." Ellen makes a very revealing and vivid statement about what she has learned through novels about her past and herself as follows:

"The perspective changes. . . When I was growing up, my mother said, 'you do this,' and that's what was done. . . But from stories you can see a different way of doing them. . . . My mother was a strict authoritarian type person. When you read, you have to find a happy medium, you can see the damage you inflict, and I believe some damage is there. I don't believe it was intentional. My Mom was very authoritarian and growing up you think this is the only way to be. Then you read things that show you there is a better way. . . There is a book by S. E. Hinton called That Was Then, This Is Now. In Oklahoma. Growing up, I grew up 15 or 20 miles south of Detroit. While I was growing up, gangs were not real prevalent, they were in Detroit, but they never really touched where I grew up, but you'd see it on the news. My first thought was, how can their parents let them do that. Then my next thought was, how can they do that to themselves. Then you start to read and your mind start to open up. Growing up you only know this because that's what Mom taught you. I read that book in eighth grade, That Was Then, This Is Now, and that's where you start to see there's other reasons for things happening. There's not black and white. There's shades of gray that you need to know. That book, it changed my thinking."

Validating Personal Beliefs

Ellen wants a central character to be someone she can admire. She says, "I like someone strong. I don't like a weak one. Not physically, but morally, who stands up for convictions. Someone who says this is the way its going to be. . . . I like the good guy to win. Someone strong in their convictions and not stupid. Maybe a little naive at times, but not incredibly dumb." In view of Ellen's own infirmity, it is interesting to note that she specifically makes reference to moral rather than physical strength.

Ellen reaffirms her value of strength of character in another example. She says, "I like strong characters, I don't like wimpy characters. The Grapes of Wrath, at the very end of the book, there's this family traveling from the dust bowl, a daughter gives birth but the child dies. There's a very old, feeble character that needs nutrition. The baby has died but the mother is still producing milk. Even though this is an old man, she feeds this man. I read this in high school. You get this Madonna image and these things stick with you." This is also an interesting choice for her to mention and has many possible associations with her values springing from personal

history. Ellen attended a Catholic school for all her growing up years, often refers to her role now as a mother, and again can be heard the reference to strength of character over physical strength.

In a final example of how Ellen reinforces her own values in novels is her refusal to accept characters who do not behave as she believes they should. In these cases, Ellen says, “I have rewritten a book, not really rewritten, but I’ll read it and enjoy it, but in my head I’ll be thinking to myself, if I was so and so, I wouldn’t have done it this way, I would have done it another way. I don’t have a strong reaction but the whole time I’ll be thinking to myself I would have made this person do this or that.”

Case Summary

Ellen has not an easy time growing up in a single parent family as one of ten children in a north-central blue collar town. In addition, she has an infirmity which causes her to be different from others. Despite the odds against her, she is doing just fine. This is what she requires the characters in novels to do as well; show some backbone and intelligence to overcome obstacles.

Ellen discovered in novels an escape from her childhood circumstances that has become an adult interest pursued for pleasure and learning. She is a voracious reader, tearing through a novel every few days and immediately consuming another. In many ways her taste in reading from childhood to adulthood has not changed all that much. She loved stories about the boy detective Encyclopedia Brown as a child, and favors adult mysteries now. She was entranced by her first romance as a teenager and reads romances now.

What Ellen emphasizes in describing the fruits of reading novels are the details. She uses every scrap of description to engage her imagination to produce elaborate pictures of what she is reading about. It is from the images she sees that she gains an understanding about other places, times and people. It is also a source of escape from her adult responsibilities and gives her excitement and happiness amid an otherwise steady, predictable life.

Novels have helped Ellen mature. They have opened her eyes to alternatives never considered as a young person and given her an awareness of the complexities that make people and situations what they are. That awareness has made her more tolerant and more willing to accept differences between herself and others. Although novels provide an escape from her real world, in many ways they have made her real world richer.

APPENDIX H
MATRIX OF FINDINGS

	A	B	C	D	E
Reading History					
Parent reads	X		X	X	X
Library	X	X	X	X	X
Home collection				X	
Early start	X		X	X	X
Teenage start		X			
Selection of Novels					
Sports		X	X	X	
Action/Adventure		X	X	X	
Mystery	X		X		X
Romance	X		X		X
Fantasy	X				
Reason for Reading					
Escape	X	X	X		X
Pleasure	X	X	X	X	X
Imagination	X		X		X
Learning		X			

	A	B	C	D	E
Motive					
Escape/Pleasure	X	X	X	X	X
Vicarious experience	X	X	X	X	X
Use of language			X	X	
Dependence	X		X		X
Ownership		X		X	X
Daily Routine					
1-2 hours		X			
2-4 hours	X		X	X	
More					X
Current Preferences					
Historical	X		X		
Romance	X		X		X
Action/Adventure		X	X	X	
Melodrama			X		X
Mystery	X	X	X	X	X
Western	X	X	X	X	
Classic			X	X	
Source					
Library	X		X		
Buy		X		X	X

	A	B	C	D	E
Effects					
Escape/Pleasure	X	X	X	X	X
Imagination	X		X	X	X
Vicarious					
Experience	X	X	X	X	X
Use of Words			X	X	
Learning					
Random facts	X	X	X	X	X
Collected facts	X	X	X	X	X
About self		X	X		
About/Relating					
to others	X	X	X	X	X
Conversation	X	X	X	X	
Understanding		X	X		X
Guide to truth				X	
Reinforcing values		X	X	X	X
Stimulate thought/Ideas	X	X	X	X	X
Intellectual challenge			X	X	

VITAE

Martha Leete Purdy is from Briarcliff Manor, New York, born in 1955. She graduated from State University of New York at Stony Brook with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1977 and received a commission as an Ensign in the United States Navy in 1978. As a Naval Officer she has been assigned to Washington, DC, Bermuda, London, United Kingdom, Norfolk, Virginia, Newport, Rhode Island, and Pensacola, Florida. The majority of her assignments have been in education and training commands. While assigned in Norfolk, she earned a Master of Arts degree in 1988 from Old Dominion University in Adult Education. During her tour in Washington, DC, she completed all course work toward a Doctor of Education degree through the Northern Virginia Graduate Center campus of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. She completed her dissertation to earn an Ed.D. in Adult and Continuing Education while assigned in Pensacola, Florida in 1998 serving as an Executive Officer and holding the rank of Commander.