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AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF THE METACOGNITIVE FUNCTIONING OF VORACIOUS ADULT READERS OF FICTION

by

© CLAUDIA MITCHELL

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
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ABSTRACT

At a time when the processes of reading are under investigation, two important facets of reading behaviour warrant examination: there are many more adults who can read compared to the number who actually do read; and much of the voluntary reading of adults is limited to a specific type, namely fiction. In order to gain insights into the processes and uses of reading, particularly in terms of who reads what, why, and how, ethnographic techniques of participant observation, and indepth interviews were employed in an exploration of the reading behaviours of voracious adult readers of fiction. Thirty-two readers were interviewed, ranging in age from 18 to 79, in interest from those who read exclusively light romance, western or detective formula fiction and best sellers, to those whose reading included both fiction and nonfiction, and in quantities from those who read several hours per day to those who read more than 12 hours per day. These readers were selected on the basis of reputation through a public library, and through pivotal contacts in a rural community.

The metacognitive awareness that these readers have of their reading was elicited through verbal reports about antecedental factors, external influences, purposes for reading and preferences in reading. In order to explore the relationship between these aforementioned variables and the strategies or "how" of reading, and as well to explore the differences between fiction and non-fiction reading in general, particularly as theorized in Rosenblatt's discussion of efferent and aesthetic reading, 12 of the voracious readers were involved in various print settings. Their responses to two different types of short stories were compared; the roles of stance and selective attention were explored through the readers'

responses to ambigious fiction and non-fiction passages; and their "thinking aloud" protocols as they read a fiction and a non-fiction passage were compared.

The steps involved in an ethnographic study, and the translation the data collected, are communicated in descriptive form through the use of the metaphor of photojournalism. "Snapshots" of the readers are presented, and consideration is given to "cropping," "focusing", "enlarging" and "posing" in the fiction reading process.

In terms of conditions necessary to nurture the reading habit several important variables appeared to emerge: the role of "entertainment," particularly as characterized by free choice and free reign; the role of solitude in the solitary reading act; the role of discussion and external influence in broadening reading interests; and the educational and environmental implications of such variables. As well, the interrelatedness of type of reading material, purposes for reading, strategies use, and the social context are considered. Differences in the reading of males and females in the study would seem to suggest that societal expectations for males and females are likely to be important variables in exploring the processes involved in an activity which has been regarded traditionally as cognitive. Confirmation was found for Rosenblatt's argument that readers approach fiction and non-fiction differently, although there is evidence to suggest that the conditions under which reading takes place, the reader's prior experiences, and the nature of the text, are all likely influences on how readers read. As well, there is confirmation in this study for the need for, and feasibility of, further ethnographic studies of real readers reading real texts, since many of the relationships un-

covered in the present study tend to have been masked in general readership studies or in reading studies employing laboratory-like settings. In view of the fact that interviewing one's peers would seem to contribute to qualitatively different data from that elicited from students or anonymous adults, consideration is given to the necessity of exploring the influence of different roles in ethnographic research in education.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Educators and reading researchers frequently gather to discuss such questions as "Why read in the eighties?" in face of the increasing evidence of the dissemination of information through non-print media, and in view of advertisements such as the following which recently appeared in the New York Times Book Review:

> BOOKS ON TAPE
> Drive, Work, relax with
> Best Sellers on cassettes (June 7, 1981)

Such being the case, it is difficult to refrain from analogizing the reputation of the voracious adult reader to Dr. Johnson's famous performing dog: "The wonder is that they do it at all." Recent surveys such as the one conducted by Robinson (1980) on the changing reading habits of American adults between 1946 and 1977 do seem to indicate that reading appears to have become a less prominent feature of daily life for most people, particularly in terms of the decline in the amount of time that is presently given over to newspaper reading. On the other hand, it is to be acknowledged that there has been a modest revival in the amount of time that is spent reading books and magazines, particularly among women.

A study which sheds some light on aspects of this apparent 'specific' increase is a survey conducted by The Book Industry Study Group (1978) on the reading habits of 1450 American adults. Guthrie (1979) and McEvoy and Vincent (1980) in discussing the survey note that of the reasons for reading given by the adults, the most frequent were reading for general knowledge (69 percent) and for pleasure and relaxation (56 per cent). Such findings coincide with those revealed by Strang (1942) when she found that 62 per-

cent of readers sampled read for relaxation, pleasure and amusement, and 38 percent for knowledge. As well, Monteith (1980) cites the results of a Gallup poll conducted for the American Library Association, which point to an increase in the amount of reading which is done for pleasure and relaxation. Only 25 per cent of the readers in The Book Industry Study Group (1978) might be regarded as moderate-to-heavy readers. In the absence of concrete data on what it is that the moderate-to-heavy readers read and their reasons for reading, it is only possible to infer from library use and readership surveys that 60 to 75 per cent of all reading is fiction reading (Foster, 1937; Berelson, 1957) and as such these moderate-to-heavy readers are likely to include a good number of fiction readers! In short, much of the voluntary reading engaged in by 'voracious' adult readers is likely to be fiction reading, and any exploration of voluntary reading must necessarily include an entertainment dimension to it.

In view of the fact that many fewer people voluntarily read compared to the number of people who actually can read, it would appear as though general surveys are likely to shed little light on what actually propels people to take up one of life's 'inexhaustible pleasures'. As Robinson (1980) notes:

> If people spend more time reading, it may indicate they are absorbing more information or widening their personal horizons more; but they may also be processing print content more superficially or less efficiently... Parallel research needs to be devoted to the specific information or satisfaction people derive from their reading, and how their reading contributes to the meaning and quality of their lives as compared to viewing television or other ways of spending time (p. 152).

Such research necessarily includes a focus on those who like to read books, and necessarily excludes the individual who can read but does not read such as the non-reader in Calvino's (1981) novel who comments:

> I've become so accustomed to not reading that I don't even read what appears before my eyes. It's not easy, they teach us to read as children, and for the rest of our lives we remain the slaves of all the written stuff they fling at us. I may have had to make some effort, at first, to learn not to read, but now it comes quite naturally to me (p. 49).

It has been long acknowledged that what chiefly differentiates one reading activity from another invariably has something to do with the specific purposes of the reader at any moment (Hatfield, 1935). Since the reasons given for reading tend to be tied in with the context in which the data is elicited, and as well, the actual reasons for reading are "likely to be a result of available choices and necessary decisions" (Guthrie, 1979, p. 755), who the reader is, when he is asked, how he is asked and by whom are all of concern such that the issue of methodology cannot be separated from the topic of inquiry. As Guthrie (1979) observes:

> When asked (by a total stranger) for reasons (among many other questions) about reading (irrespective of material, time, place, or circumstance), most people (knowing what answers will content the examiner) say (as a first reaction without extended discussion): knowledge, or pleasure (without wondering whether they can be separated). (p. 755)

As well, it must be acknowledged that what particular individuals read and why they read or what satisfactions they gain from such readings are likely to be related to 'how' it is that they derive such satisfaction. As such, an exploration of the voluntary reader who is aware that he derives satisfaction from reading since he engages in it so frequently, and who is

aware that he derives more satisfaction from some types of reading material rather than others, since he does not usually read everything but rather 'chooses', and the strategies he employs to derive that satisfaction or that prevent him from deriving satisfaction, are likely to lead to some understanding of the multi-dimensional aspects of the reading process.

However, as Mendelsohn and Spetnagel (1980) observe, the method of inquiry in such an exploration is of major concern;

> Entertainment phenomena do not take place in vacuua; thus they are not likely to occur in laboratory-like situations where historical, aesthetic, and social influences are considered to be either inoperative or unimportant. Rather, entertainment occurs within a context of complex interactions that involve institutions, social norms, group behaviours, and traditions - all of which can be considered to comprise a sociological enterprise (p. 13).

A form of naturalistic enquiry where the topic (processes involved in fiction reading) is also its source (voluntary fiction readers) might be regarded as a way of apprehending the world. Such understanding, however, as Kushner and Norris (1981/81) note:

> ...can only be successfully pursued when we can provide the conditions under which people can move from merely articulating what they know (i.e. providing us with the data) to theorizing about what they know (i.e. creating meanings) (p. 27).

The study, which is based on the assumption that people 'know' about their own lives, or are able to demonstrate that knowledge through their activities, is in a sense tri-dimensional in purporting to retrieve that knowledge, through interrelating method (naturalistic enquiry through ethnography), data sources (conscious awareness through verbal reporting) and topic (fiction reading).

The purpose of this ethnographic study is to tap the consciousness of the voluntary fiction reader in order to gain some insight into why he reads what he reads, how he reads what he reads, and what propels him to choose the avenue of fiction reading over the competing activities in which he might be engaged. While the underlying assumptions and procedures will be explicated in ensuing chapters, it must be acknowledged that this study is "foreshadowed" by the notion that how a reader reads a particular text is likely to be closely related to why he reads, wnen he reads, or the general circumstances or context in which that particular reading takes place. Moreover, it is "foreshadowed" by the notion that the individual's life history is but part of a greater context, and it is only by coming to discover the social and educational forces in which the individual lives that it is possible to allow to unfold the processes involved in voluntary fiction reading. For example, while reading in general is regarded as a worthwhile activity in western society, fiction reading specifically is often surrounded by themes of "escapism", "head in the clouds", "off in another world" or "idling" away time. How the reader reads fiction, why he reads fiction, and when, are all aspects that are likely to be tainted or affected in some way by the prevailing societal views. Thus, to look at what people read, or how, without considering the broader context might be neglecting some of the more crucial components of the process.

In the "foreshadowing" of the study, it might be considered that researchers have at times muddied rather than elucidated aspects of the processes involved in reading through attempts to de-contextualize, or take a neutral position by eliciting free recall data from a group of anonymous individuals who read well or poorly, and by subsequently retreating from

the field in order to analyze the data. While such studies are likely to be preferable to those involving a count of the number of words correctly identified in a list of 100, we nonetheless ignore much of what is involved in any reading event if we fail to ask questions such as : does the reader voluntarily read anything, and if so what, why and when? Rather than looking at what a subject says about a passage read in four-and-one-half minutes with the intention of extrapolating to the world of readers 'at large', a central aspect of the "foreshadowing" of this study is that it is likely to be more insightful to come to know the individual who does voluntarily engage in reading through his verbal reports of his reading, and through his actual reading behaviour with real reading material. The fact that the majority of real readers may not even regard the passages in many research studies as constituting real reading might preclude the formulation of generalizations about the reading process.

While there have already been dozens of survey studies on the interests of real readers, and statistical data about such readers, there may be little to be gained from the demographic truth that the average reader is between the ages of 35 and 50, female, reared in a home where the mother read, and is now married to someone who does little reading. One's sex does not necessarily make one a reader any more than does the reading habits of one's spouse or one's mother. It would seem that there are likely to be a matrix of factors within a particular context that nurture or fail to nurture the reading habit. Moreover, while any number of people might have read the same book, it may be that where they procured the book, the way they chose it, their contacts outside of their reading, all social-psychological determinants, influence how they read that particular book. Thus,

it is necessary to look at a full range of the social-psychological determinants that might be involved in any reading act.

Far from attempting to provide a set of conclusions about voracious adult fiction reading, this document is really only one step in the exploration, and represents an attempt at translation based on the process of "discovering" the meanings of a particular culture, and the subsequent "communicating" of these meanings to another (Spradley, 1979). In essence then, this ethnographic description might be regarded as a 'way of seeing', which as Spradley notes, involves:

> ... the disciplined study of what the world is like to people who have learned to see, hear, speak, think, act [or read] in ways that are different. Rather than studying people, ethnography means learning from people (Spradley, 1979, p. 3).

The translation process in an ethnography resembles the translating that is involved in photojournalism in that the goal in both is to convey "something approaching the totality of experience" (Woolley, 1980/81, p. 51). Throughout the study the metaphor of the art and science of producing the snapshot will be used to facilitate the communicative process. The translation has been divided into four main parts comprising one or more chapters, and corresponding to components of the photographic process.

Part One will deal with those aspects of photography that relate to choosing the 'subject', selecting the appropriate camera, lens, and film, arranging the lighting, and deciding when to press the shuttle. The rationale, procedures and decisions involved in conducting this ethnographic study of voracious adult readers of fiction as discussed in this first part

will include developing an interview format, designing print settings, choosing a field setting, gaining entry, accumulating statistical data, developing working definitions of key concepts, and collecting the actual data.

Part Two will deal with 'snapshots' of the fiction reader as individual frames, and as part of a series of frames. In this section brief case-study snapshots of the readers will be described along with a discussion of the social context in which these snapshots were taken, and the antecedental factors involved in voracious adult fiction reading.

Part Three will deal with those aspects of photography related to the 'cropping' of a snapshot or the selection of a focus or concentration, the actual 'focusing' process, and the 'enlarging' of this part of the snapshot in order to reveal aspects of the processes involved in fiction reading. As such an exploration of the readers' responses to various types of fiction, a comparison of their responses to fiction and nonfiction, a comparison of their processing strategies used in fiction and nonfiction reading, and the role of their metacognitive awareness in this reading will all be discussed.

Part Four will deal with the "meaning embodied", (Reid 1971), or a consideration of the work as a whole. An attempt will be made in this final section to develop a set of propositions about the fiction reading process. These propositions will not serve as a set of final pronouncements but rather, as Mead (1937) advocates, as a source of "new insight, new illumination, suggestions for research, warnings against blind alleys, a sense of new relationships which seem genuinely worth exploring" (p. 458).

The ethnographer, like the photojournalist, is far from being a "neutral agent who simply trips the shutter" (Kuhn, 1962, p. 194) but rather, is inevitably a part of the interactional situation. Every attempt will be made to describe and explain that interactional situation in the process of translation insofar as it is important in the discovering process.

PART ONE

The house was quiet and the world was calm,
The reader became the book; the summer night

Was like the conscious being of the book
The house was quiet and the world was calm

The words were spoken as if there was no book
Except that the reader leaned above the pages.

(Wallace Stevens, Collected Poems,
New York: Knopf, 1964)

The purpose of this section is threefold: (a) to consider the "unknowns" or the nature of the problem in exploring the voluntary reading of the adult fiction reader; (b) to discuss the appropriate 'methods' for penetrating the relationship between the reader and the book:

> The whole point of photographing people is that you are not intervening in their lives only visiting them. The photographer is supertourist, an extension of the anthropologist ... (Sontag, 1977, p. 42);

and (c) to describe the actual procedures involved in conducting the early stages of the ethnography.

CHAPTER 2

PENETRATING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FICTION READER AND BOOK

THE ETHNOGRAPHIC APPROACH:

ON THE INTERRELATEDNESS OF TOPIC, METHOD AND DATA SOURCE

In attempting to penetrate the relationship between the fiction reader and book, it has been acknowledged that the topic (fiction reading), the method (naturalistic enquiry) and the data source (what fiction readers say about what they do) are themselves interrelated, and as such, characterize an approach to apprehending the world through ethnography. In part, however, it has been considered necessary to discuss each as a 'discrete' dimension in this chapter.

Fiction Reading

Almost 50 years ago Leavis (1932) produced a 'definitive' study on the subject of fiction reading, Fiction and the Reading Public, in an attempt to wrestle with the evolution of the popular novel and the question of what it is and why it is that the public read what they read. Drawing support from the seminal work by Richards (1929), Principles of Literary Criticism, she quotes:

> No theory of criticism is satisfactory which is not able to explain their wide appeal [best sellers] and to give clear reason why those who disdain them are not necessarily snobs (Richards, 1929, p. 203).

Unfortunately, after over seven decades of intensive research in reading we still do not know a great deal about what propels a group of people to take up fiction reading in the first place, and why it is that many adults continue the avid consumption of fiction throughout their lives. In short, we

know little about the voracious adult reader, who, in many cases turns out to be the voracious adult reader of fiction. As noted by Heckelman (1980):

> Every theory of literature is ultimately about the act of reading, for it would be naive to derive a notion of a text without a concept of response or effort, in short, a concept of reading (p. 181).

To adapt the observations of Richards (1929), it might be said that no theory of reading is satisfactory which is not able to explain why it is that people read what they read, what satisfaction they derive, and how it is that they come to prefer one type of reading material over another, or any type of reading material over an avoidance of reading material.

Not only do we know little about the nature of the habit of fiction reading, we perhaps know even less about it as a cognitive activity, generically encouraged in the early years of school, but yet specifically tolerated at best as a 'mind opiate', or, as Wilson (1957) calls aspects of it:

> ...a kind of vice that, for silliness and minor harmfulness ranks somewhere between smoking and cross word puzzles (p. 152).

The exceptions to such a charge lie clearly in artistic works such as those by William Faulkner or James Joyce. However, few readers outside college students who have taken literature courses necessarily treat the novel an art form.

Within the world of readers, there are more people who read fiction than read travelogues, scientific treatises, histories or any of the host of non-fiction possibilities, including the 'passages' that typically are used in reading research. While studies such as the one conducted by The Book Industry Study Group (1978) revealed that 94 per cent of the adults sampled had read a book, magazine or newspaper in the last six months,

many fewer had been found to 'partake' voluntarily a[redacted]y of this activity which Huey (1908) described as "the most remarkable specific performance that civilization has learned in all of its history" (p: 6). This same activity has received a good deal of attention in the last decade from cognitive psychologists, linguists, philosophers, sociologists, and educators. Hardly any of these scholars would, however, term in the same breath as 'remarkable' the reading of the Harlequin romance, the Mickey Spillane thriller, or even Margaret Laurence's The Diviners. Where generically, it may be difficult to admit Kenneth Clark and Sean Connery under the same rubric, it may be even more difficult for many to conceive of Faulkner and Hemingway under the same rubric as Victoria Holt.

Leavis (1932) was aware of the pervasiveness of the reading of the best seller written by a Gene Stratton Porter or an Edgar Rice Burroughs over the reading of the serious novel written by a Virginia Woolfe. Aware, too, that such a pervasive activity warranted study, she embarked upon an 'anthropological' study of fiction reading noting that:

> The relationship between novelist and reader can be most successfully studied by interrogating the more conscious of the two; the question 'why do you read X's novels?' asked even of many hundreds of readers yields little (the writer has tried a good deal of mild inquiry of this sort): the fact that they read X's novels and not Y's, that X's novels are doing this and not that, is more reliable evidence; to ask X in detail what he thinks he is doing when he writes his novels is a more fruitful undertaking (p. 48).

Leavis, then, undertook to study what 25 writers of the popular novel had to say about their reading audience. While it must be admitted that those who manage to satisfy the public taste for fiction must have some insight into what it is that propels such a group on, the argument employed by Leavis for choosing 25 writers rather than 25 readers implies that readers are not

conscious, or cannot be made conscious, of why it is that they do what they do. That the writing of a book demands more 'conscious awareness' compared to the reading of a book is not to be denied. However, that the processing strategies involved in being entertained by, or seeing entertainment in, fiction can be profitably explored through the writers rather than the readers is in question. To make it possible to explore the intentions of the reader and the strategies employed to satisfy those intentions may necessitate only a change of method or technique. That such research has as yet received little attention may reflect, in part, an orientation in reading research which has ignored the "trees for the forest" and has ignored the role of reading in real life.

The Need for Naturalistic Enquiry Research in Reading

Tuinman (1977) notes that reading researchers need contact with real readers

> A scientist must develop a sense of his phenomena and a feel for his data... Roentgen discovered x-rays by accident when he noted that cathode rays penetrated black paper only because he was Roentgen, sensitive to the data coming his way which others might have thought meaningless? There is nothing mystical about this kind of insight. More often than not it presupposses intimate knowledge with the phenomena under study (p. 9).

Likewise, Hatt (1977) notes that such intimate knowledge can only come about through explorations with real readers reading real texts:

> We must learn to ask not what people read, but why this person reads this text; and we must expect our answers to be inadequate if our descriptions of people and texts are inadequate. We must learn to ask, not what effect reading has on people, but what appears to ensue from this reading by this reader of this text; and we must understand that the outcomes would have been different had the reader's need and goals been different (p. 102).

It has only been recently that the educational research community has experienced a paradigm shift (Kuhn, 1970) which has allowed researchers to explore the complexities of reading research. An integral part of this paradigm shift comes in the form of alternate methodologies used to build up "a many sided, complex picture" (Diesing, 1971, p. 147) of the topic at hand, rather than the deductive model of explanation traditionally employed by the experiementalist in seeking to discover casual connection. Increasingly then, there has been recognized the need for "qualitative" indepth studies, holistic research, ethnographies, ethnomethodological approaches, participant-observation, case studies, naturalistic enquiries and phenonemonological sociology in researching reading. Such a need is particularly evidenced in the writings of Carey (1980), Carey, Harste and Smith (1981), Farr and Weintraub (1974/75; 1980), Guthrie (1979) and Vacca (1980).

There have been attempts to acquire "intimate knowledge" about the reading processes of real readers. Hickman (1977), for example, acquired personal accounts of the reading of two voracious readers of fiction, Mollie Hunter, a children's writer, and Alexander Frazier, a professor of education, wherein they talked about what they thought they did when they read. Similarly Gibson and Levin (1975) attempted to describe their own thought process in reading a Jane Austen novel and a dictionary, and as well described an account of Roger Brown's introspections while reading a satirical newspaper article. Case-study to a certain extent has been employed to come to some understanding of the life history of the reader (Brown, 1979), as have indepth interview techniques (Strang 1942; Gray and Rogers (1956). Techniques of introspection and retrospection as employed by researchers such as Jenkinson (1957), Piekarz (1954), Letton

(1958) and Rogers (1965) have been used to "gain intimate knowledge" of what readers do as they read. Finally, Italo Calvino in his recent novel If on a winter's night a traveller has interwoven art and reality through the introspections of a reader reading a novel.

'Tapping' what it is that real readers have to say about what they read, as they are reading, and in the context of their life-history in general is possible through the recent focus on naturalistic enquiry. Moreover, such data would appear to mesh with the verbal reporting and introspective techniques that are currently being explored in cognitive psychology as metacognitive functioning, or the conscious awareness of individuals involved in a particular cognitive activity.

Metacognition and the Reader

Metacognition, as defined by Flavell (1976), refers to:

> ... one's knowledge concerning one's own cognitive processes and products or anything related to them...to the active monitoring and consequent regulation and orchestration of these processes in relation to the cognitive objects or data on which they bear, usually in the service of some concrete goal or object (p. 232).

For example, as Flavell notes, if one notices that he has more trouble learning one subject than another, if one feels the need to go back and double-check an answer if, on a multiple-choice test one realizes the necessity of scrutinizing every alternative before deciding what is the best one, or if one realizes that it is necessary to write down a telephone number because it will not be remembered - one is demonstrating metacognitive behaviour.

In the metacognitive studies of Brown and Deloache (1977), Brown (1975, 1977a, 1977b, 1977c, 1979, 1980), Brown and Smiley (1977), Flavell and Wellman (1977), Kreutzer, Leonard, and Flavell (1975), Wheeler (1979), Miyake and Norman (1978) and Wertsch (1977) to name only a few in this rapidly growing body of research, the researcher studies the conscious knowledge of the individual about a particular cognitive activity in which he is involved. In this body of literature, two main concerns have arisen: the developmental aspects of metacognition or cognitive monitoring; and procedures for eliciting metacognitive data.

The first area, the developmental aspect of metacognition, has received the most attention. Researchers such as Brown and Deloache (1977) have argued that novices at a particular cognitive activity may be novices, not only because they lack certain skills, but also because they are deficient in terms of self-conscious participation and intelligent self-regulation of their own actions:

> The novice tends not to know about either his capabilities on a new task or the techniques necessary to perform efficiently; he may even have difficulty determining what goals are desirable, let alone the steps that are required to get there (p. 21).

In short, they are novices because they are not fully aware of how it is that they should be 'doing' the task, and as well, where it is that they are going. Both Piaget (1929) and Vygotsky (1962) describe similar aspects of developing awareness and control in their studies of pre-school and school-age children. Piaget, for example, noted that young children are less aware of their own thought processes, while Vygotsky noted that with the development of inner speech school age children seem to become more aware of their own actions, and as well seem better able to regulate their

own actions. Becoming aware of what is known or what needs to be known might be regarded as akin to what James (1890) terms "tip-of-the-tongue" phenomena:

> ...that peculiar experience of trying to recall a familiar name, knowing and feeling how close we are, being aware of our inability to retrieve what now is there (p. 251).

Brown and MacNeill (1966) and Wellman (1978) have noted that such a phenomenon is more common in adults than children. That is, adults are more aware of what it is that they do not know and what they should know in order to complete a task. Brown (1977b) suggests that whereas there might be great gaps between what children or novices say they know and how they perform, such gaps narrow as a person reaches adulthood.

The second general concern in the literature of metacognition, that related to procedures for eliciting metacognitive data, brings into consideration the need for alternate methodologies in cognitive research. Seeking what Gibson (1974) and Brown (1980) have called "ecological validity", recent studies in cognitive psychology have confirmed the need for introspective/retrospective approaches in indepth interview study. Brown (1980) suggests the use of questionnaire techniques based on the model of the clinical interview as a method of exploring the metacognitive functioning of middle school children and adults. This clinical interview technique that has been used widely in cognitive studies, most notably by Piaget and his followers, allows verbal reports to be interpreted within a particular context.

While these two concerns arise out of the general literature on metacognition, that which is of specific concern and which has been duly

lamented by Brown (1980), is the apparent dearth of research directly related to the metacognitive aspects of reading. To refer to the position of Leavis (1932) the question arises, is it possible to tap the consciousness of real readers reading real texts in order to gain some insights into the reading process?

Markman (1977) and Meyers and Paris (1978) have conducted developmental studies with regard to reading and metacognitive bahaviour. Meyers and Paris (1978) found that grade six students had a greater awareness of what they know and need to know in order to solve a problem than did grade two students. Markman (1977) made use of children as critics in attempting to read and follow directions. Both pieces of research would confirm that the gap between what is said and what is done narrows with increasing age or practice at a particular cognitive activity. Researchers such as Reid (1966), Hare and Pullian (1979), Baker (1979) and Garner (1980) have attempted to design tasks which will elicit data on metacognition and reading behaviour in an effort to find out what it is that readers know or understand, and how it is that they achieve such knowing, through reading. The questions raised, however, are becoming increasingly those of technique or form, as well as content. In view of the present interest in 'qualitative' research or naturalistic enquiry, Hare and Pullian (1979) have suggested that:

> ...judgements about one's own reading behaviours may provide a window on adult reading comprehension processes, as oral miscues do for young readers' comprehension processes (p. 3).

Likewise, Brown (1980) has suggested the use of questionnaire techniques with mature readers:

> ...the initial question at each point is open-ended and students are encouraged to talk freely about their own experiences. Following this, detailed probe questions are asked to extract information that is not forthcoming in the free situation. Many facets of reading and studying effectiveness are probed. We hope that by comparing the protocols of middle school students with those of college students, we may gain insight into what it is that the efficient reader knows that is not obvious to the neophyte (p. 477).

A format such as that suggested by Brown (1980) allows for the elicitation of data on metacognitive knowledge as well as metacognitive experience. Flavell (1979) uses the former term to describe one's store of world knowledge about people as cognitive beings, and would include knowledge such as an awareness that some people read faster than others or that some people remember more of one type of text rather than another. A metacognitive experience refers to the strategies that a reader can bring into play in order to complete a cognitive task such as reading a poem, a scientific treatise or a novel. For example, if a reader suddenly becomes aware of the fact that his attention has been wandering from the book for the last three pages such that he is not comprehending, he may go back and re-read, or he may skip ahead and read the summary at the end of the chapter. It would thus be possible through carefully designed interview and reading situations to probe what it is that a reader knows about his reading, and how he uses that knowledge to achieve whatever the goals are.

DEVELOPING AN ETHNOGRAPHIC APPROACH TO THE METACOGNITIVE FUNCTIONING OF FICTION READERS

> It is the structure of the reader's experience rather than the structures available on the page that should be the objects of descriptions (Fish, 1976, Cited in Purves, 1980, p. 2).

In an effort to explore what it is that the reader knows about his reading in terms of satisfactions and strategies, it is necessary to meet with real readers to find out what they have to say introspectively about what they read, and retrospectively about what they have read, all within the context of their life in general. As Giddens (1976) notes:

> ...immersion in a form of life is the only means whereby an observer is able to generate characteristics (p. 16).

Such research is ecological (Jenkins, 1977; Bransford and Shaw, 1977), contextualized, and collaborative (Kushner and Norris, 1981) wherein the readers as collaborators work with the researcher rather than for the researcher. Such an approach signifies that the researcher is both a participant in the study as well as an observer, and implies a "relation which the human observer of human beings cannot escape - having to participate in some fashion in the experiences and actions of those he observes" (Blumer, 1966, p. vi). Contrary, too, to the notion that it is possible to 'control' for certain person-variables, the researcher makes use of these variables to explore the 'who, what, why, when, and how' of fiction reading.

The use of such approaches in the study of social behaviour takes its precedent in the research of Whyte (1955), Burgess (1966), Becker (1953; 1956) and Park (1952). Such studies are regarded as 'classic' in the field of participant-observation research in sociology. As well, the emic-etic distinctions (Pike, 1966) in the cross-cultural research of MacArthur (1973), Bruner and Olson (1977) and Greenfield (1972), to name only a few, might be regarded as precursive to the ethnographic approach to studying a particular group. More recently educational researchers such as Fabian (1979), Heyman (1980), Porter-Gehrie (1979), Rist (1980) and Smith (1978) have all advocated a shift to naturalistic enquiry.

While the specifics of the procedures and assumptions will be discussed herewith, it is important to consider the 'stance' or the nature of the ethnographic approach which unites "theoretical insight and imagination with disciplined observation and persistent searching" (Codd, 1981, p. 148). Such a stance is evidenced in Malinowski's (1922) distinction between "foreshadowed" problems and "preconceived ideas":

> Good training in theory, and acquantaince with its latest results, is not identical with being burdened with 'preconceived ideas'. If a man sets out on an expedition determined to prove certain hypotheses, if he is incapable of changing his views constantly and casting them off ungrudgingly under the presssure of evidence, needless to say his work will be worthless. But the more problems he brings with him into the field, the more he is in the habit of moulding his theories according to facts, and of seeing facts in their bearing on theory, the better he is equipped for work. Preconceived ideas are pernicious in any scientific work, but foreshadowed problems are the main endowment of a scientific thinker, and these problems are revealed to the observer by his theoretical studies (p. 809).

An ethnographic study and a more traditional hypothesis-formulation/hypothesis-testing study do not differ in their reliance on foreshadowing. In both the foreshadowing influences where the researcher looks. Rather, they differ in their use of foreshadowing which in the ethnographic study serves to "produce relatively dynamic and integrated explanations in the form of particularized descriptions from which interpretations can be made" (Codd, 1981, p. 148), as opposed to serving to produce a body of facts or predictions. The foreshadowing, then, for the study as a whole which is alluded to in Chapter 1 serves only as an orientation in the exploration. Much of the foreshadowing for the study emerged in the course of analyzing the data. As Bogdan and Taylor (1975) note:

> After and perhaps during the intensive observation stage (data collection) of the research, the observer consults the professional literature. He or she compares findings reported in the literature with what is beginning to appear in his or her data, and looks for answered questions which the study might address (p. 84).

In developing an ethnographic approach to the study of the voracious adult fiction reader, and later in analyzing the data, foreshadowing was used extensively. As well, it was necessary to consider the procedures, key concepts, assumptions and concerns of validity that are specific to the ethnographic approach to the study of human behaviour.

Steps Involved in Conducting an Ethnographic Study

While there is not a consensus in the research community on the 'how to' of ethnographic research, other than that being on site is the sine qua non, Denzin's (1970) discussion of the eight steps essential in participant-observation research appeared to be useful in conducting the study. Smith (1978) has suggested that a useful finding in any ethnographic report comes from the researcher's discussion of the 'dynamics' of the study, "by attending to the creative processes in learning from a field work project" (p. 329). Such being the case these eight steps are of concern in describing the dynamics of this study.

Step 1 involves outlining a general perspective, a relevant research review, and an initial statement of research and theoretical objectives. Step 2 involves selecting a field setting. In Step 3 initial field contacts are made by meeting with pivotal figures, and by outlining the general purposes of the study in order to 'gain entry'. Step 4 involves accumulating demographic or statistical data on the setting and participants, and developing working definitions of key concepts for the purpose of

exploration with the participants. In Step 5 the actual data is collected through interviews with the informants or participants. In Step 6 the researcher begins the process of data analysis which Denzin (1970) terms the process of analytic induction:

> ... a process which entails an effort to formally identify themes and to construct hypotheses (ideas) as they are suggested by the data, and an attempt to demonstrate support for these themes and hypotheses (Gorden, 1980, p. 70).

Steps 7 and 8 involve the development of complex sets of propositions, definitions, and the actual writing up of the ethnography. Simultaneously is the process of disengagement from the field setting carried out. It is important to note that the final ethnographic description does not necessarily adhere to these steps in a linear fashion. The outline of the translation process, or the writing of the ethnography is based on work of Spradley (1979) (see Appendix A).

Assumptions

The most important assumption in ethnographic research is that the researcher share as intimately as possible in the lives of those he is studying through the tools of conversation and observation. The researcher must come to "grasp the native's point of view, his relation to life, to realize his vision of the world" (Malinowski, 1922, p. 25) in his attempts to come to 'know' the individual. The acquisition of such knowledge necessarily relies on the nature of the investigator's relationship with those from whom he is learning.

Key Concepts

There are a number of 'terms' and concepts which are integral parts of the ethnographic approach, and which will appear in the ethnographic

translation.

The Process of Analytic Induction

The data analysis, carried out through the process of analytic induction needs to be discussed briefly. Following a hypothetical definition or explanation of the aspect of the phenomena under study, a small number of cases are explored in the light of such hypotheses. If the hypotheses do not fit the facts, they are reformulated or the phenomena are redefined. The researcher then proceeds with more practical contacts or 'cases' where he may again discover a new set of negative cases, constantly redefining and reformulating until he discovers some universalities. However, as Lindesmith (1947) notes, each succeeding tentative formulation is not constructed de novo but rather, is based on that which precedes it, and might be described as a refining process.

The process of analytic induction which allows the researcher to 'play' with the data is frequently described as "theoretical sampling" (Glaser and Strauss, 1981), or "progressive refocusing" (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972):

> ...data collection for the purpose of creating theory, whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyzes his data, and decides what to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p. 45).

This sampling continues until a point of saturation is reached wherein no new data are found that add to the particular concepts under study. Kaplan (1964) notes of this "pattern model of explanation":

> ...objectivity consists essentially in this, that the pattern can be indefinitely filled in and extended; as we obtain more and more knowledge it continues to fall into place in this pattern, and the pattern itself has a place in a larger whole (p. 335).

Finally, the process involves what Diesing (1971) calls 'the one and the many':

> If I had to generalize at this premature stage, I would be inclined to point to the problem of the One and the Many as the essential problem of scientific method. Any scientific account of human society must somehow deal not only with the uniqueness of which human history and individual life histories consist, but also with the regularities of various sorts that appear in history. If I were to work out this problem in detail to determine how adequately various methods deal with it, case study methods would come out on top. They include both the particular and the universal within science instead of consigning the particular to intuition, practical application or history; they exhibit the universal within the particular instead of segregating the two in one way or another, and they move from the particular to universal and back by gradual steps rather than in one grand jump (p. 286).

When this process of analytic induction is carried out and with whom is subject to debate, particularly insofar as interpretation is concerned. This debate will be discussed under 'validity'.

Roles and Relationships

While being on-site is an essential aspect of ethnographic research in coming to understand a particular group or individual, there are at least four distinct degrees of involvement in the participant-observation methodology. Gold (1958) describes these four roles that the researcher might assume: the full participant, where the researcher conceals his observer-researcher role; the participant as observer where the researcher to a certain extent is part of the phenomena under study but is also able to step out of it, as might exist in the case of a university student who works at a mill for the summer, and who is studying labour-management behaviour; the observer as participant where the researcher attempts to become partially engaged in a new phenomena, as in the case of the 'shadow'

relationship assumed by Sussman (1981) which enabled her to follow a principal in the first year in a school, in an attempt to understand the meanings for those in the school, community, and Department of Education. Finally, there is the complete observer who participates only marginally in the setting under study. For example, the researcher who sits at the back of the classroom compiling notes on who interacts with whom, but engages in little interaction with the observed, would be assuming this fourth role.

Far from being four discrete roles, however, they are better considered as points on a continuum of involvement, with the first role being the most 'involved' and the last role being the least. Moreover, these roles should not be regarded as inflexible roles. The same researcher with the same individuals might assume or be ascribed a variety of roles depending upon the situation. As Wax (1971) notes, there are no neat roles but rather a number of spontaneously invented roles developed by the combined efforts of the respondents and the researcher. For example, in Sussman's shadow relationship she was often identified by her informant as "my administrative intern from Hahvahd" (1981, p. 11). As Wax (1971) observes:

> These new relationships rarely fit precisely into the social structure of either of the participants. But hybrid devices though they may be, they serve as social ties which the involved parties find mutually profitable and satisfactory" (p. 266).

Finally, it should not be assumed that there is one 'best' degree of involvement. While it is important to participate in the lives of those whom one is attempting to understand, there is the possibility that full participation might become detrimental to the goals of the study, in that one so completely comes to see the world through the eyes of the other that one loses a sense

of direction. Homan's (1980) in his attempt to conduct a 'covert' study of a pentecostal sect serves as an example of the pitfalls of full involvement. As well, full participation inevitably implies a degree of deception, and increasingly calls into play the role of ethics in the relationships and roles assumed in ethnographic studies. Bulmer (1980) dismisses this last point:

> Misinformation, dissimulation, deception and lying are features of a range of social relationships to a greater or lesser extent. Indeed in 'open participant observation where the researcher's role is known to those whom he or she is studying, it is not unknown to play down, gloss over or be evasive about the ultimate purpose of the research and its outcome (p. 59).

Denzin (1970) takes a slightly more "principled" stance when he notes:

> ...the observer should not try to present himself as something he is not, and he should use to advantage all the personal characteristics he possesses to enhance his observational role. Depending on the investigation this may include drawing on such diverse past experiences as law violation, experiences as a mental patient, associations with law users, and so on (pp. 188-89).

Suffice it is to say that the researcher is likely to have an impact on what is observed in any relationship which purports to get persons to give freely information about themselves and who will attempt to explain their motivations. In essence, then, whatever roles are assumed by the researcher must be given over largely to promoting the 'collaborative' relationship. Reciprocity in this collaborative relationship is important to consider since the success of an ethnography is largely related to the degree of trust and willingness to share that is evident. Wax (1952) in discussing the concept of reciprocity notes;

> An informant...will talk because he and the field worker are making an exchange, are consciously or unconsciously giving each other something they both desire and need

Finally, Jourard points out that trust is based upon an element of reciprocity in self-disclosure, noting that there is likely to be a strong correlation "between what people are willing to disclose to any other people in their life, and what these other people had disclosed to them" (Cited in Draper, 1981, p. 6).

The Ethnographic Interview

Conversation is one of the main tools of ethnographic research and is facilitated through face-to-face contact between researcher and informants in a situation called the ethnographic interview (Spradley, 1979). A review of literature on interview procedures suitable for this ethnographic study turned up three major forms, each with its own assumptions and format, and as well, each with its own unique form of resulting data. Not unlike the discussion of roles and relationships, there is probably not one 'best' form of interview, nor is it necessary to adhere to only one form when multiple types of data are needed.

Interview types tend to be classified according to their degree of structuring and standardization. In the most highly structured and standardized form the wording and order of all questions is exactly the same for every respondent. The assumption underlying such a form is that "the respondents have a sufficiently common vocabulary so that it is possible to formulate questions which have the same meaning for each of them" (Richardson, Dohrenwend, Klein, 1965, p. 40). The nonscheduled standardized interview is the second form. With this format questions are not asked in

a particular order but basic information is nonetheless covered. Thus, while a certain type of information is desired from all the respondents, the phrasing of questions and their order may need to be varied to fit the respondent. The underlying assumption is that "no fixed sequence of questions is satisfactory to all respondents; the most effective sequence for any respondent is determined by his readiness and willingness to take up a topic as it comes up" (Richardson, Dohrenwend, and Klein, 1965, p. 51). In this particular format respondents might raise issues that would never have come up otherwise, and as well, they might summarize an entire section from the schedule through a monologue (Denzin, 1970). As well, there is the assumption that the interviewer will cover all of the relevant issues and discover new ones. Finally, there is the least structured, least standardized format, the non-standardized interview which has no predetermined set of questions or order. As Denzin (1970) notes, the lack of a schedule gives the interviewer the freedom to probe particular areas, and "to raise and test specific hypotheses during the course of the interview" (p. 126).

While an interview setting of the first type guarantees that certain necessary data are elicited, it also guarantees that only a certain type of data will arise, and that the interviewer has a 'preconceived idea' of what it is that he needs to know. An unstructured, unscheduled format as in the last type allows for a more give and take or 'reciprocal relationship' between interviewer and interviewee, and as well allows the interviewer to probe unique interpretations.

The 'clinical' interview format as described by Gorden (1980), Brown (1980), and Codd (1981) is one that allows the interviewer to capture the best of the nonscheduled standardized interview and the completely non-

standardized interview,although in any face-to-face situation all of the inherent pitfalls of answering according to social desirability or appropriateness are likely to be present. Benny and Hughes (1956) observe:

> ...the interview is an understanding between the two parties that, in return for allowing the interviewer to direct their communication, the informant is assured that he will not meet with denial, contradiction, competition or other harassment (p. 140).

In as much as the interviewer has the skill to elicit volunteered statements as opposed to direct answers, a degree of 'social desirability' responding is avoided. Indeed, as Becker and Geer (1960) note, the success of the interview might be viewed in relation to the following criteria:

> ...(1) Every memeber of the group said in response to a direct question that this was the way he looked at the matter, (2) Every member of the group volunteered to an observer that this is how he viewed the matter, (3) Some given proportion of the group's members either answered a direct question or volunteered the information (pp. 275-276).

In short, it may be not so much what individuals say but when, why and to whom, and as well the ensuing interpretation that is placed on a statement within a particular context. Coming to know the individual as fully as possible in as many ways or under as many different situations as possible allows for exploration. Thomas and Thomas (1928) sum up the position thus:

> There may be, and is, doubt as to the objectivity and veracity of the record, but even the highly subjective record has a value for behaviour study ... Very often it is the wide discrepancy between the situation as it seems to others and the situation as it seems to the individual that brings about the overt behaviour difficulty... If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences (pp. 571-572).

Principles of Multiple Triangulation

Since there are many ways to 'know' a phenomenon with each way adding another dimension to the 'picture' an attempt to use a variety of methods and techniques all within the ethnographic framework is likely to round out the picture as fully as possible. This attempt to use multiple methods in the study of the same event or individual rests on what Denzin (1970) terms "principles of multiple-triangulation". This approach which has been termed multi-trait-multi-method by Campbell and Stanley (1963) allows the researcher to make use of informant interviews, enumeration, field notes, tape-recordings, and case studies to attempt to gain an understanding of the phenomenon under study. Thus, he can ask questions directly, probe what the informant has to say voluntarily, observe behaviour directly and indirectly, talk to 'second-parties', seek statistical data, and explore the backgrounds of the informants in general. All data becomes admissible such that:

> ...when a hypothesis can survive the confrontation of a series of complementary methods of testing, it contains a degree of validity unattainable by one tested within the restricted format of a single method (Webb, Cited in Denzin, 1970, pp. 173-174).

Validity in Ethnographic Research

While the validity of the present study will be dealt with in more detail in the 'interpretation' of the actual data, there are issues of validity which are common to all ethnographic studies. On-site analytic-inductive research typically involves samples which are not large. The inductive process or that of 'theoretical sampling', however, implies that the researcher constantly reformulates and redefines the issues in view of the negative instances as well as the positive. Sampling then, is really one of the key issues in discussing validity; it is 'incumbent' on the

researcher to demonstrate that the cases in the inductive process are somehow representative of the phenomenon under study in a theoretical sense if not statistical. Burgess (1966) in considering what constitutes the representative or typical case notes:

> A case is typical (i.e. belonging to a type) in the same way that every case is representative of its kind or species. This case [of Stanley, a delinquent] is a member of the criminal species, and so of necessity must have the impress of the characteristics and experiences of the criminal. It may not be the best specimen, however, a good specimen, or even a poor one. There can be no doubt that any case, good, bad or indifferent is a specimen of the species to which it belongs (p. 185).

To the extent that principles of multiple triangulation are employed to aid in sampling, as well as in the actual eliciting of data, the concern may be less serious. Smith (1978) cautions the researcher to ask of himself "Have I seen the nooks and crannies of the system as well as the main arenas to give a valid picture of the system?" (p. 348).

A second issue surrounding the validity of ethnographic studies concerns the interpretation of the data. Presently, in the debate over interpretation, researchers such as Elliott (1980) and MacDonald (1977) consider that descriptive accounts can only be validated by the partipants:

> ...the validity of a case study can only be demonstrated to the extent that it makes sense to the world it purports to describe (p. 29).

Such validity, they observe can only be achieved through the process of consensus building based on dialogue and negotiation between the researcher and the participants. For Stenhouse (1978) on the other side, validity rests on being "made public", emphasizing "publically available sources of evidence" (Kushner, and Norris, 1981, p. 29) wherein "the validity of interpretation adheres in the relationship between interpretation (i.e.

descriptive accounts) and the evidence (i.e., the case record) such that analysis is deferred until all the data has been collected" (p. 29). Interpretation on this side of the debate, then, is a retrospective act rather than an introspective act.

To return to the concept of multiple triangulation it is possible that a high degree of internal and external validity might be achieved through attempts at consensus building, in terms of what it is that individuals are aware of, and can articulate, about their own cognitive processes, as well as through retrospective interpretation after all of the data are in. Moreover, as Smith (1978) and Roth (1966) have observed, a degree of validity can be achieved through the translation process. It is incumbent, then, on the researcher to convey to the 'public' the initial plans and intentions, as well as the later decisions and resolutions in the data collection. In short, a detailed procedures chapter, or a methodological appendix is an important component of the process of achieving validity.

Summary

This chapter has dealt with the key concepts, procedures, assumptions, and concerns for validity that are specific to any ethnographic study. As well, it has served to present Step 1 of Denzin's (1970) in terms of dealing with the 'theoretical perspective' as foreshadowed in Chapter 1. In Chapters 3 and 4, the procedures chapters, as advocated by Smith (1978) and Roth (1966), a full discussion will be devoted to the design of the study, and will include decisions about choosing a field setting (Step 2), gaining entry (Step 3), accumulating statistical data and developing working definitions for key concepts (Step 4) and collecting the actual data (Step 5). Parts Two

and Three will deal with a presentation of the processes involved in analytic induction, and the resulting speculations (Step 6), while in Part Four, an attempt will be made to synthesize the data and formulate propositions about the nature of the fiction reading process (Step 7). The ethnographic translation, culminating in Part Four is in a sense, the final disengagement, representing Step 8 in Denzin's (1970) outline.

CHAPTER 3

PROCEDURES IN DESIGNING THE STUDY

> Any claim that documenting an event through photography gives a neutral view must be called into question by the fact that, however neutral the intentions of the cameraman he must at least select what to look at, when to press the shuttle, what direction to look from, and what direction to look in. Any camera shot is, in a sense, already a hypothesis (Woolley, 1981, p. 56).

Where to look for readers, how to ensure a group of willing 'collaborating' readers, what to ask them, and how, are all components of the ethnographic data. The themes that emerge, and which are discussed in Parts Two, Three and Four of this study, are to a large extent a function of the questions raised and the decisions described in this chapter. The conditional tense often used in this chapter reflects the tentativeness of these decisions.

DESIGN

The general purpose of the study has been to investigate through an ethnographic approach the reading patterns and behaviour of a group of voracious adult readers of fiction. The purpose, then, of the techniques that have been tested out, explored and subsequently employed or abandoned has been to gain access to the conscious awarenesses of readers, as well as to facilitate direct observation and inference on what it is that they do in various reading situations.

The study was conducted in four phases: the first phase involved the simultaneous development of an interview format and reading tasks through a pilot study to assess the suitability of particular data gathering techniques.

The second phase involved the development of 'print settings' to be used in the study. Such settings involved the choice of reading materials to be used and the simultaneous 'refinement' of reading tasks. The third phase involved the actual data collection, including gaining entry to a group of readers, selecting the sample, and conducting the interviews. The fourth phase was the actual process of analyzing and interpreting the data. The first two phases will be described in this chapter under the following headings:

1. Developing the Design
2. Developing the Print Settings: Selecting the Reading Materials and Refining the Reading Tasks

Developing the Design

The rationale and assumptions of ethnographic research have already been discussed in Chapter 1. The success or failure of an ethnographic study rests in part on the ability of the researcher to establish a collaborating relationship, as well as to elicit the necessary kind of data. The two important questions to be considered, then, in designing the study were: what is it that needs to be known about fiction readers and their reading, and how can the researcher gain access to the necessary data?

The first phase of the study involved the development of a methodology which would allow the researcher to explore with the readers their reading background and reading patterns, and which would pave the way later for an in-depth study of such reading behaviour. Tangential to the success of phase one would be a delineation of a working set of key concepts and criteria that would be useful in the final data collection.

Interview Format

While any number of researchers have employed survey techniques such as those used by The Book Industry Study Group (1978) to explore the background of readers demographiscally, fewer studies such as those conducted by Easton (1947), Gray and Rogers (1956) Hajda (1963) and Strang (1942) have made use of the in-depth interview approach to explore the reading habits of adults. The goal of the interview format in an ethnographic study is not unlike that discussed by Strang (1942), where the reader comes to "feel that he was not wasting his time and that he was working with the interviewer rather than for the interviewer" (p. 74). In the direct question approaches employed by the aforementioned in-depth researchers, the articulated responses have been regarded as either insightful products of the reader's introspection, or as clues to more basic information which the researcher is able to use in interpretation.

Strang (1942) for example, used a direct question approach in order to study the reading interests, abilities and background of 112 persons ranging in age from 13 to 50. Using a case study format, she attempted to make generalizations about the characteristics of the people's reading, their reading habits in relation to the accessibility of materials, interest, ability and general leisure-time pursuits. In so doing, she made use of a structured questionnaire, and as well had each reader read three articles and interpret their responses in a somewhat introspective-retrospective fashion. Hajda (1963) while similarly using a standardized schedule with female adult readers in Baltimore did not have his readers read but rather inferred social aspects of reading behaviour on the basis of statistical patterns.

Gray and Rogers (1956) made use of a case study approach to explore the nature and extent of reading habits of 38 adults. These adults were required to respond to scale questions concerning different aspects of their reading, such as interests, purposes, nature of their chosen reading material, reactions, and transfer of reading to other aspects of their lives. In addition to using these scales, the researchers also carried out interviews with well-read readers in order to explore further their backgrounds and awarenesses of reading difficulties.

An interpretive approach to the background of readers has been attempted by researchers such as Schramm (1949) and Waples, Berelson, and Bradshaw (1940). While the former explored reading through the use of hypotheses about the pleasure-reality principle, the latter researchers studied the social effects of reading for groups and individuals in order to get at the underlying purposes for reading.

These aforementioned studies are of interest methodologically and hence theoretically, since there is the implicit acknowledgement that it is necessary to come to some understanding of the background of the reader in order to apprehend his reading behaviour. The validity of direct questioning techniques as opposed to unstructured interview format is not in question insofar as marketing survey research in reading is concerned (Agostini, 1966), since there is some basic descriptive data that would be important in regard to all readers in the study. However, the concerns raised earlier about volunteered statements versus direct response statements, and the notion of social desirability, bring into question the validity of direct questioning for gaining insights into the conscious awareness of readers about their reading behaviour.

While the format of the indepth interviews conducted by earlier reading researchers was not regarded as entirely relevant, the types of questions used by Gray and Rogers (1956), Hajda (1963) and Strang (1942) provided the skeleton for an interview situation in a pilot study. On the basis of a nonstandardized schedule format, approximately 100 questions related to reading preferences, outside interests, life-history data, quantity of reading and metacognitive knowledge, were developed. The initial questionnaire consisted of direct questions, multiple choice questions and open-ended questions which could be followed up by probes where necessary. The degree of involvement and 'collaboration' could not be determined until real readers were engaged in the interview format.

Piloting the Interview Format

The piloting of the interview format was conducted in February, 1980, at the University of Alberta. The important questions to be answered with regard to the format of the interviews were the following:

1. Which format of interview would be most useful and feasible in terms of eliciting data?
2. Which questions would be most useful in eliciting as many volunteered statements as possible?

While the question of criteria for selecting participants for the actual data collection was also of concern it will be dealt with separately.

At the outset of the pilot study only two person-variables were considered to be important: that all readers involved be adult, and that all readers involved be voluntary readers of fiction. The cooperation of readers in two fourth year education classes at the University of Alberta was

solicited, as well as that of some of the clerical staff at the university.

A total of ten full or part-time students and two other individuals were interviewed indepth about their reading. Eleven of these readers were female. Ages ranged between 20 and 55. In terms of marital status there were single, married, widowed and divorced individuals. Occupationally, six were full-time education students, four were teachers taking courses part-time, one was a secretary and one a laboratory assistant. The reading interests of the group included those who read science fiction, historical fiction, Canadian fiction, best-sellers, those who read fiction exclusively, and those who enjoyed both fiction and nonfiction. Although all were readers who did read fiction, not all had necessarily read anything voluntarily in the month preceding the study. Others had read three or four books weekly. Thus, while some of the readers appeared to spend most of their non-working hours reading, others could at most, be described as 'casual' readers who might read several novels over a Christmas holiday but would take up reading rarely during the work week. Since all of the readers were engaged outside the home a significant part of each day, these ranges in time-use proved to be useful later in arriving post hoc at a working definition of voraciousness, as well as in becoming aware of the relativism involved, since some readers who really read very little voluntarily compared to some others, nonetheless regarded themselves as voracious as compared to others in their social world.

Eleven of the volunteer readers in the pilot study were interviewed in sessions lasting from 50 to 90 minutes. These interviews were conducted face-to-face and tape-recorded for later transcription and analysis. One of the readers answered the questionnaire in writing although she had already

been briefed as to the purpose of the study and the purpose of the individual questions. In terms of the format of the interview, two of the readers were given a highly structured schedule, taken from the questions of the aforementioned studies by Strang (1942) and others, with the combination of direct questions, multiple-choice questions and some open-ended types. Nine of the readers were interviewed in a semi-structured, semi-scheduled format (see Appendix B).

In the open-ended versions of either format readers invariably provided answers to questions which had not been hitherto formulated, but which appeared to be significant. Consequently, such questions were usually tacked on at the end of interviews with subsequent readers. In all cases, readers were encouraged at the end of the interview to talk freely about any aspects of their reading which they felt had not been tapped by any of the questions asked:

> I: Those were all the questions I planned to ask you about your reading. Is there anything I didn't ask you about your reading that you would like to answer? OR Is there anything you would like to ask about the questions I asked you?

Moreover, readers were also probed on their impressions of the interview, its format, and its utility in terms of finding out about readers:

> I: As you know I'm getting ready to do an indepth study of people who do a lot of fiction reading. Was there anything in the questions that you think might bother readers, or can you think of anything I might do differently?

While the cooperation of these readers had been of a collaborative nature right from the start of the interview since readers knew that they were part of a pilot study of voracious readers of fiction, it is important to

acknowledge that the preface and the 'postscript' statements of a collaborative nature did seem to promote a collegiality, and a working with rather than working for situation. It should also be acknowledged that all readers involved in the pilot study were already known personally by the researcher in an academic or a social setting.

Decisions Arising Out of the Pilot Interviews

A number of major decisions about how the final interviews would be conducted arose out of the pilot study. Perhaps the most important was the confirmation of the feasibility of using an ethnographic approach in the study of what it is that readers know about their reading. In view of the fact that all of the readers knew that they were involved in refining a research technique, and as well, were well-known to the researcher, the element of collaboration which was relatively easily fostered appeared to be important to the success of the study. Seemingly, this aspect of the study would be not unlike the procedures used in eliciting metacognitive data by Brown (1980) and others through 'rigged situations' of having subjects act as 'little teachers', or editors. While there were, no doubt, elements of 'social desirability' evident in the spontaneous comments at the end of the interview, it was nonetheless obvious that readers had been interested in having an opportunity to talk about their own reading, and in so doing provided conscious as well as 'unconscious' insights into the reading process. In considering the reciprocal 'benefits' necessary in an ethnographic research, it would appear as though the pilot situation served to satisfy to a certain extent the intellectual needs of the readers which Cassell (1978) describes thus:

> ...the satisfaction of being able to perceive more about his or her way of life and to analyze and discuss the interrelationships among various areas can be of great interest and stimulation to an informant (p. 138).

Procedures to be used in the final data collection would have to facilitate this collaborative spirit.

A second decision arising out of the pilot study related to the interview format. It had become obvious after the second reader went through the standardized schedule that it was too structured, yielding more direct responses than volunteered statements, and possibly inducing artificial responses. Moreover, since readers did not know what questions would be coming up, they were often motivated by a particular question to talk at great length about aspects of their reading which would have been probed later in the interview. On the other hand, some readers who were more laconic seemed to need probing to a certain extent. Consequently a semi-structured format which made use of direct descriptive questions at the beginning, and became relatively more unstructured through open-ended questions and probes later in the interview would be used. As well, new points were likely to continue to arise such that it would be impossible to anticipate and include every variable or aspect of reading with every reader. A semi-structured format would allow for the inclusion of new questions with a sampling of readers, and would thus allow for theoretical sampling or the process of analytic induction. For example, if a reader made a point of commenting that they had enjoyed a particular 'hard-back' book, or that their best friend never read anything but 'paperback', it was often indicative of an important variable in their reading in terms of their seriousness about reading, or the status they accorded their reading.

Thus, it would probably be useful to probe further those readers who made such distinctions. However, if for a number of readers the distinctions never arose in their conversation, there may be less reason to probe this aspect of their reading.

Although the written format proved to be useful and productive insofar as it allowed readers to reflect more on their reading and might have been particularly useful for those individuals who found it difficult to 'think on their feet', it was felt that few readers would have the time or inclination to answer questions so fully in a written format. In such a format it would be difficult to clarify or rephrase questions. More importantly, however, the 'lapses' as readers often called them in regard to not being able to remember what they just read, tended to yield 'meaningful' information about the reader's approach to reading.

Thus, the decision was made to use direct and open-ended questions in a face-to-face format, facilitating probing and hypotheses-testing in the process of analytic induction, and also guaranteeing the elicitation of certain descriptive data which would get the laconic talking, and which at times could be used to keep the excessive wanderers on topic. Sequencing would not be rigidly adhered to and every attempt would be made to facilitate the collaborator role. To minimize the 'thinking on the spot' constraints, time for reflection, elaboration, rephrasing of questions, adding probes, or returning to issues in the course of the interview would be allowed. Finally it was acknowledged that the task of facilitating the collaborator role would not be as easy with an anonymous group of readers as with a built-in circle of informants.

One minor decision arising out of the interview in the pilot study relates to theuse of tape-recorder. While all interviews had been taped for transcription it became obvious that there were certain problems in ensuring that all relevant data was on tape. For example, although all of the readers in the pilot study were familiar with tape recorders and had been taped in other sessions, they were nonetheless more relaxed about talking about their reading when they felt the interview was 'over' insofar as it was signalled by the researcher's turning off the tape recorder. With the general reader who is not used to being a 'subject' in the myriad of experiments in which college freshmen often find themselves, the problem was likely to be even more acute. Thus, with the reader's permission the tape recorder would be turned on at the very beginning of each session, or at least as soon as decorum would permit, rather than waiting until the first probe or descriptive question was asked, and left on past the statement "Those are all the questions I'm going to ask you. Is there anything else you would want to say about your reading?" so that the 'official' end of the interview would be signalled by a statement rather than a click. What readers had to say beyond this point would still be on tape.

In view of these taping constraints, every attempt would be made in each interview to keep field notes that would be considered part of the triangulated data.

Criteria to be Considered in Sampling

An additional goal of the pilot study interviews was to determine which criteria would be most important for choosing readers to be in the

actual data collection. Adulthood had been established as one criterion in the pilot study and was considered important in terms of the dearth of meta-cognitive data on mature subjects (Brown, 1980), and as well in terms of the knowledge that might be gained from those who chose reading outside of a school setting. However, while all the readers in the pilot study had reached the age of majority, a number of those in the 20 to 22 age range seemed to be very much tied to their parents' backgrounds in terms of newspaper reading, living habits, and approach to life. As students living at home they were more like high school students in many ways. To avoid this it was decided to choose individuals who were over the age of 25.

In terms of sex, only one male had been included in the pilot study. While there is every indication, as considered earlier, that there are more female readers of fiction (Berelson, 1957), it was nonetheless considered desirable to include some male fiction readers.

The range of ages in the pilot study, while not extensive, did give some indication of the effects of one's life situations on reading and shifts in interests. It was decided then, to include a wide range of ages so that readers might reflect on what they had read at earlier stages in their lives and hence add to the data on life-span research. For older readers this would mean that they might be able to reflect on critical periods of their lives in relation to their reading. For younger readers it might be possible to look more closely at the influences of school, and as well look for parallels in their lives with older readers.

A working definition of voraciousness was also necessary in order to aid in the process of theoretical sampling, such that the world of reading addicts might be "tapped". Prior to the pilot study it had not been possible to

operationalize a definition in terms of quantity of books read, or time spent reading. Obviously reading material varies in size, difficulty and format, and may include sagas of a thousand pages or novellas of 90 pages; the readability of adult material might vary from grade seven or eight to college level. Regardless of the readability, readers might skim or they might read every word. Readers, too, might read magazine articles, plays and short stories as well as books. Similarly, time in terms of number of hours per week was not a particularly useful criterion. Someone who is retired and living by himself or who had someone to cook and keep house for him would obviously have more time at their disposal than someone who is married, has a career, and as well looks after a family. Finally, voraciousness is relative. Person X who reads one book per week is certainly more voracious, in all likelihood, than Person Y who reads one book a month, who in turn would be regarded as voracious by Person Z who rarely voluntarily reads anything. On the other hand, compared to someone who reads eight to 10 books per week, Person X might not be regarded as voracious at all.

Given the issues surrounding voraciousness prior to the pilot study and as well, after the pilot study, it was decided that Denzin's (1970) principles of multiple triangulation would help in making the final selection. Readers would be procured through reputational, subjective and objective procedures. Librarians and book-store owners could be asked about who they thought were avid fiction readers. Such readers could then be contacted directly or indirectly and approached about their reading in the format of "I understand you do a lot of reading". In terms of 'objective' criteria, it was felt that anyone who was truly compelled to read would be likely to spend seven or eight hours a week, at least, in voluntary reading.

In terms of range of reading, all types had been represented in the pilot study. It was decided that the only 'initial' criterion would be that readers read a great deal of fiction. This would not rule out the possibility that they might also do a lot of nonfiction reading. To have both the exclusive fiction reader, as well as the fiction-nonfiction reader would provide comparative data.

Occupation was also considered to be a criterion of some relevance insofar as it affects the amount of time readers have to read. Every attempt would be made to include readers who worked, as well as those who did not. Of those individuals who worked, attempts would be made to include readers from both professional and nonprofessional groups, which in turn would probably ensure a range of educational backgrounds.

Book-buying and book-borrowing habits seemed to be relevant variables in the pilot study. People who invest money in purchasing, shelving and moving books around might have a different approach to their reading than people who invest only their time. Book-buyers as well as book-borrowers, then, would be included in the study.

In summary, while no major attempts would be made to achieve representative sampling or random sampling in the final data collection, every attempt would be made to include a group of readers varying according to age, sex, marital status, occupation, book selection habits and range of reading.

Developing the Print Settings

An integral aspect of the overall thesis of the study was that it is not possible to consider the reading process without understanding who the

reader is, what his background is, and the nature of habitual reading. As such, the initial interview format was designed to facilitate an exploration of the reader's reading in general and his 'metacognitive knowledge' about his reading in particular. However, this metacognitive knowledge is only one aspect of reading. The other aspect concerns what it is that a reader does in different print situations, and his awareness of different strategies as he reads a variety of materials (metacognitive experience). Thus, over and above what a reader said in the initial interview situation, it was considered essential to accumulate data on what he said about what he had just read, and what he said as he was reading. As well, it was considered desirable to have the reader expand on aspects of his reading in the context of engaging in a real reading task. In keeping with Denzin's (1970) principle of multiple triangulation, then, it was considered important to have a reader involved (a) in a number of different types of reading situations and (b) with a number of different types of reading texts. Since any print setting might be regarded as involving a particular task with a particular type of reading material it is difficult to separate the two factors. However, to facilitate the discussion of the dynamic processes involved in designing these settings, two separate headings of 'reading tasks' and 'reading materials' will be used.

Reading Tasks

Prior to the actual selection or testing out of any reading techniques, two 'guiding principles' were established. First, there would be no testing or even suggestions of tapping reading ability or reading achievement in the study. While it would have been useful to look at what readers said about their reading in view of their actual reading performance on some particular measure, the goal in the ethnographic approach in the study was to counter-

act any situation which would detract from the collaborative role. One activity which would almost inevitably detract from this role would have been a testing situation. As well it would not even be sufficient to assure readers at the beginning that they were not going to be involved in a testing situation; they would have to become convinced through action rather than just words.

A second 'guiding principle' relates to what it is that readers would be required to do in the data collection. Obviously the goal in this aspect of the study was to have them read. In an effort to involve them as fully as possible, and to avoid 'wasting their time' the readers in the study would have to be involved in reading real material as opposed to reading passages from some unknown work, or written specifically for the study. Wherever possible readers would be given 'complete' works with authors and titles, and they would be encouraged to talk about their readings in the same incidental way that they discussed their readings in the initial interview.

With these 'guiding principles' in mind, a variety of reading situations were developed for use with the readers in the pilot study. The chief questions that arose in testing out a variety of techniques in the pilot study were the following:

1. How are reader's reactions to various forms of fiction related to their habitual reading?
2. How do their reactions to different types of fiction relate to their background histories in general?
3. Do readers react differently to fiction and nonfiction?
4. Do the processes involved in reading fiction and nonfiction appear to differ?

The overriding question that guided the pilot study was which tasks would elicit the most useful data, and minimize the time constraints. Four different techniques were tested out in the pilot study:

1. Probed recalls: What was of interest about fiction readers was why they read the fiction they read, and how their tastes and interests were related to their backgrounds in general. The goal then was to get readers talking freely about a particular text, specifically in terms of what they felt about it, and generally in terms of where it fit into what they usually read.

A number of reading studies have made use of probed recalls. For example, Strang and Rogers (1965) had high school students read short stories and answer open-ended stock questions such as: What did you see this story as being about? Did you see the writer as trying to make a point? What were your impressions of character 'X'? After reading several stories, readers were then encouraged to compare them in terms of which one they liked better and why, or which one was more like what they would normally read.

Holland (1975) made use of a similar technique with five college students who had read several short stories. While Holland's goal had been to relate the readers' responses to psycholanalytic theory, his method had been to get readers freely talking about what they had read.

In the pilot study readers were given short stories to read in a free recall situation. Readers were usually told: "I want you to read this story and afterward tell me about it". All recalls were taped for transcription later. This opening instruction was purposefully ambiguous. After the initial recall readers were then engaged in a probed technique similar to

that used by Strang and Rogers (1965).

In general, the readers in the pilot study appeared to talk less about each story than Holland had found. Holland had engaged readers in discussing a particular short story for several hours through careful probes and clinical interview techniques. In view of the fact that the goals in the Holland (1975) study were somewhat different, it was considered satisfactory to have each reader engaged in a discussion of what they had read for 20 minutes to half-an-hour, particularly as facilitated through the Strang and Rogers probes. What was unexpected in the pilot study was the amount of comparative data that was elicited when readers had occasion to be involved in a number of different reading tasks. Readers invariably referred frequently to the other works that they had read as well as their reading in general. Such comparative references, while initially 'bonus' data, were ultimately to be considered an integral part of the study.

One other piece of bonus data that was elicited in the pilot study data from the probed recalls came as a result of the inclusion of brief biographies and a short literary criticism at the beginning of each story as it was photocopied from an anthology of short stories. These 'blurbs' provided extra data in that since no one had been instructed to read them the reactions of the readers might be taken in part as indicative of habitual response. Some readers read them and commented on them; others did not. In view of the fact that one of the questions that had been asked in the initial interview related to whether readers read information on the blurbs of books, and whether they took notice of titles and authors, the present data could serve as corroborative data.

2. Unaided recalls: In order to determine whether readers recall a different type of information from different readings, readers were given fiction and nonfiction passages to read and freely recall. Again, as with the probed recalls, the initial instruction was "I want you to read this essay/short story and tell me about it". All recalls were taped to be transcribed and analyzed later.

Unaided recalls have been used widely by researchers such as Carey, Harste and Smith (1981), Drum (1979), Furniss (1978), Christopherson, Schultz and Waern (1981) to name only a few. The analysis procedure with unaided recalls usually involves classifying for the purposes of making inferences about the reader's processing strategies on the basis of what he recalled. Only recently have researchers become more sensitive to contextual variables such as the presence of title orienting clues (Carey, Harste, and Smith, 1981), or the role of situational variables. For example, Harste and Carey (1979) have found that it makes a difference whether readers are recalling for their peers or for a researcher. In the past, the tendency has been to maintain a situation which at best might be termed 'arid', or at least to report it as such in the literature.

The role of context seemed to be important in the pilot study. Readers who came in to read and recall, in some cases had been involved in the initial interview situations while others came in only for the unaided recall situation. What became obvious in eliciting these recalls was that the pilot readers who had been involved in the initial interview were already practiced at expanding on their opinions and thoughts. Such being the case, they continued this expansion procedure, and tended to relate what they had been reading in the free recall situation to other texts that they

read in their general reading. In other words, they gave recalls plus much more. They appeared to be interested and ready to introspect or reflect on their reading, and to discuss more about writers and writing styles in general, they forced the researcher into a probed recall situation. Those readers who had not been involved in the interview situation tended to comply more 'aridly' with the demands of the task. For them it appeared to be more of a memory task although this may have been their habitual mode of response.

In a 'refined' version of the unaided recalls used to tap differences in fiction/nonfiction reading, readers were asked to read two full-length passages, one magazine article and one short story. The passages contained a minimum number of 'paracues' in that they were without title, author or other indication of whether they were fiction or nonfiction. After having recalled each passage, readers were encouraged to compare the readings, and to discuss their fiction/nonfiction reading in general.

3. Process Tasks: It was necessary to devise tasks to probe directly the 'processes' involved in fiction and nonfiction reading. While the unaided recalls and probed recalls would allow the researcher to look at the 'product' or the completed responses to fiction and nonfiction, and hence infer processing strategies on the basis of the products, such recalls allow only indirect data on processing strategies. Introspective and retrospective studies of child and adult readers have demonstrated that it is possible to look more directly at the processing strategies of readers. In particular, Fareed (1971), Jenkinson (1957), Letton (1958), Piekarz (1956), Smith (1967), Squire (1964), and Swain (1954) had all made use of introspective and retrospective methods for studying the reading process. The study of 'intangible' thought processes is inevitably fraught with problems, not the least of which is the confusion of present and past knowledge found in retro-

spective studies, and in introspective data the limitations of a subject's ability to theorize about reported behaviour. In order to study more directly the processes involved in reading, and to minimize the memory constraints, two different techniques were tested:

(a) Thinking aloud procedures: In an attempt to identify the processes involved in reading different passages, Olshavsky (1976/77) employed a method of 'protocol analysis' based on having subjects think aloud after each independent clause in a passage. Her 11-year-old subjects were instructed to read along silently in a passage until they came to a blue dot, at which time they were asked to 'think aloud' what was happening in the passage, and what they were thinking about. On the basis of a system of classification for the protocols, she inferred the processes or strategies which the readers appeared to be using with various passages. More recently Kavale and Schreiner(1979) have made use of a similar 'thinking aloud' procedure for subjects involved in problem solving. As well, Christopherson, Schultz and Waern (1981) and Flower and Hayes (1979) have used such procedures on a reading task and writing task respectively. Pope and Singer (1978) have used intermittent 'self-recordings' of on-going thought processes in research into stream of consciousness. Singer (1980) has recently considered how 'bleepers' could be used in naturalistic experiment "to tap in on daily TV viewing with the viewer recording reactions to shows, affect, and comprehension" (p. 62).

Procedures and instructions similar to those employed by Olshavsky (1976/77) were used in the pilot study. Readers who had been given either short stories or magazine articles in which a blue dot had been placed at the end of every independent clause were asked to think aloud at each dot, and as well, were encouraged at the end of the task to discuss what they had

found difficult and why. In their collaborator roles they were also queried on the nature of the task and how they thought readers in the proposed study would react. It was obvious that as the readers got involved in this thinking aloud task, the types of responses varied, and that often the kinds of responses related to remarks that they had made earlier if they had been involved in the initial interview or the other reading tasks.

While this 'thinking aloud' task was not without its problems, most notably in terms of its artificiality and the degree of "self-consciousness" and awkwardness that might appear, readers eventually caught on, and with more practice sessions seemed to lose much of their awkwardness.

(b) Directed reading task: Another type of 'interruption' task for studying the psychological processes of the reader involves the directed reading task as used by researchers such as Wilson (1966), Squire (1964), and Switlick (1974). In such a procedure a passage is divided into five or six short sections. Readers are usually given the passage one section at a time to read silently and subsequently are asked to talk about their feelings and ideas in a non-directive interview form, as outlined by Cannell and Kahn (1953). Wilson (1966) and Squire (1964) employed this procedure with high school and college students, respectively, while Switlick (1974) used a similar format to explore the development of literary responses and reactions to various forms of fiction with native children.

In order to explore the nature of responses to fiction and nonfiction through this procedure, four readers were given a sub-divided short story or magazine article which they proceeded to read and discuss. While there was a range of responses to each section, and variations in terms of total response, it was felt that the aforementioned problems of retrospection would

be in existence. As well, it also appeared as though the technique might be more useful for the exploration of literary response, although the fact that it appeared this way may be an indication of differences in fiction/nonfiction reading.

Decisions Regarding the Reading Tasks

As a result of this aspect of the pilot study a number of decisions were made with respect to which reading tasks would be used, when, why and with whom in the final data collection:

1. All reading situations would follow the initial interview. Since the collaborator role would already have been firmly established, one might expect that the ensuing data would be qualitatively superior.

2. All reading tasks would be done in a face-to-face situation to be tape-recorded and transcribed for analysis later. The exception would be the actual reading of the short stories for the probed recalls. In order to maximize the naturalness of the reading (i.e., in as private a situation as possible) and as well minimize the amount of structured contact time, readers would be able to read them between sessions. If they wished to re-read they would have the opportunity.

3. The reading tasks would be regarded less as tasks and more as foci for discussion. Thus, free recalls would be elicited wherever necessary, but readers would be encouraged as much as possible to relate what they had just read to other readings. Such an occurrence seemed to emerge very naturally with the readers in the pilot study.

4. Sequencing would be regarded as important in the reading situations as in the interview situation. Wherever possible readers would be involved first in

the more natural reading situation as in the case of reading a short story. The thinking aloud task would be scheduled last.

5. The time factor which had to be considered very carefully yielded two questions: How much time could readers be expected to devote to the study on a voluntary basis? How could the contact time be used most productively? Three decisions were made with regard to the time factor. The first decision that was made with regard to the time constraint involved the number and nature of the tasks that would be included. The readers would be involved in a probed fiction recall task, an unaided recall fiction/nonfiction task, and a thinking aloud task. The directed reading task was somewhat like an unaided recall, and in part like a thinking aloud task with added memory constraints. Given that it did not appear to be as natural as the unaided recall situation, and less direct than the thinking aloud task, it was decided that sufficient evidence on processing would arise out of the thinking aloud data, and by inference from the unaided recalls. Eliminating this task would cut out an additional 45 minutes of contact time.

Second, readers would be given two short stories in the probed fiction recall task. It had been expected that it would be necessary to have the readers read at least three stories for the probed recalls. However, with a careful choice of reading material, it was considered that there would be a sufficient range of responses and individual variation with only two short stories. The addition of a third short story would require at least 45 minutes more of face-to-face contact time and up to an hour of the reader's own time. Given that readers invariably discussed the fiction in the other reading tasks, they would still be responding in some way to four short stories.

A third decision relating to the time of the researcher and the issue of 'theoretical sampling' was in terms of how many readers would actually be involved in the study. To ensure a range of readers it was considered desirable to have at least 30 readers who could be interviewed about their reading, and as well involved in the various reading situations. In view of Glaser and Strauss' (1967) concept of 'saturation' in their discussion of theoretical sampling, it was considered that the process of analytic induction might be better facilitated through approximately 30 readers in the initial interview with a smaller number of 'indepth' readers. The sheer volume of data as evidenced in the pilot study would preclude adequate exploration of the data otherwise. Such being the case, the decision was made to collaborate with approximately 30 readers in the initial interview situation, and follow up 'indepth' at least 10 to 12 of these readers.

6. The actual reading situations for the 12 indepth readers would be spread out over several sessions. In the pilot study some readers had spent three to four hours with the researcher at one sitting. Although this was more convenient in terms of scheduling, the time period appeared to be taxing for both researcher and reader. To minimize the time and need for extraneous contact, and as well to facilitate the most natural sequence, a decision was made to set up the final data collection in the following format:

Session 1 - This would involve 70 to 90 minutes of initial interview time. At the end of this session or prior to the second session a short story would be left with an 'indepth' reader.

Session 2 - This would involve 60 to 80 minutes and would consist of the probed recall of the short story left for Session 1 and unaided recalls for the fiction/nonfiction passages. A second short story would also be left.

Session 3 - This session lasting 60 to 90 minutes would involve the probed recall of the second story plus a comparison of the first story with the second. The reader would then be involved in the thinking aloud task with the fiction and nonfiction, followed by a summing up.

Reading Materials

The reader never just 'reads and recalls', he always reads and recalls a particular text. The choice of reading materials in the study was of major concern, not only in terms of readability and length but also content and genre. In choosing appropriate materials there were 'general concerns' and more 'specific concerns'.

The two general concerns in choosing suitable reading materials related to passage length and passage readability. Passage length was of concern chiefly because of time constraints. While real reading material would be used, it did not seem feasible to use novels. Hence short stories were to be used in all the fiction reading tasks. Moreover, whenever possible a shorter story would be used in place of a long one.

Readability also had to be taken into consideration in choosing passages. The variable of readabiljty is never an easy one since the difficulty of a passage entails more than the number of syllables, the length of sentences or the number of propositions. Moreover, it is likely to be partially related to the background of the reader. Since the readers would all be adults from a range of educational backgrounds and reading interests, the chief criterion in readability was that all of the materials would be those likely to be read by adults. As such the sources for short stories and nonfiction tended to be anthologies suitable for high school or college use

or magazines that are read by the general population. As well, the Safran (1966) readability formula was used to ascertain the level of readability of all materials used in the pilot study and in the final study. Of the six stories piloted because of their suitability in terms of content length or genre, the readability varied from grade eight to grade twelve. All final selections were chosen from the grade eight to grade ten range. Of the seven nonfiction passages piloted, the range of readability included grade eight to grade eleven. The two final selections were of a grade eight and grade 10.5 readability.

The specific concerns in choosing passages had to do with the actual content and genre of the passages, and their suitability for eliciting data in the specific type of task. Each of the three reading situations, the probed fiction recalls, the unaided fiction/nonfiction recalls, and the thinking aloud fiction/nonfiction task made different demands in terms of material. Given the close relationship between the nature of the materials and the nature of the reading situations, considerable time and energy went into their selection. Adult readers in the community, research colleagues in the Department of Elementary Education at the University of Alberta, as well as in Secondary English, faculty members of the School of Library Science and a member of the Comparative Literature department were all consulted about the suitability of passages. Following are the important considerations in choosing materials for each task:

1. Materials for the Probed Fiction Recalls: While the use of short stories would minimize the time constraints and facilitate more easily a careful analysis of the responses, there were a number of problems in making the final selection. It became obvious to the researcher in searching through

anthologies of short stories, that far from being able to clearly demarcate specific genres of short stories, the short story is a genre unto itself. Such being the case, in the tastes of fiction readers there are preferences for science fiction, thrillers, espionage novels, or other types of novels, and the short story. The exclusive use of short stories as the fiction in the study would thus entail certain limitations. What criteria then would be most useful in making the final selection? Four short stories were chosen for a variety of volunteer readers to read: "Snow" by Frederick Phillip Grove, "A Doll's House" by Katherine Mansfield, "A Summer's Reading", by Bernard Malamud, and "A Rose for Miss Emily", by William Faulkner. The only *a priori* consideration in piloting these short stories was with regard to the need to choose stories which elicited a wide range of responses insofar as liking and disliking them was concerned. While the Faulkner short story would have been particularly useful in that Holland (1975) had also used this story and the results here could have been used in a comparative way, the story was regarded as well-known and possibly a stimulus for stock phrases. Ultimately the short stories by Grove and Malamud were chosen for the probed recalls.

While both writers are relatively well-known in the United States and Canada respectively, these two short stories are certainly less well-known such that the responses were less likely to include a number of stock phrases. Both stories are approximately 4000 words in length with "A Summer's Reading" being of grade ten and "Snow" of grade eight readability. Reader's copies of these short stories were presented with the accompanying biographical blurbs (see Appendix C). Contrasts between these two short stories exist in terms of the authors' nationalities, Jewish/American-Swedish/Canadian; the settings, the Bronx in New York - a Northern Canadian farm; the eras in which

the story had been written, late 1950's - early 1930's; the types of descriptions, psychological - physical setting; the descriptive climate, the heat of the summer in the city - a cold bleak blizzard; and the amount of dialogue, a great deal - almost none. While these aforementioned contrasts are by no means "discrete" and exhaustive indications of genre, they nonetheless appeared to contribute to a range of responses. For example, when these two short stories were used in the pilot study, most readers seemed to have a preference for one over the other. The exploration of what comprises preference would be part of the actual data analysis.

2. Materials for the Unaided Recalls: In order to explore the differences between the way readers approach fiction and nonfiction, and as well to compare what it is that readers 'take away' from reading fiction or nonfiction, it had been considered useful in the pilot study to present a fiction passage and a nonfiction passage each devoid of paracues such as title, author, or introductory comments which would indicate to the reader that they were reading fiction or nonfiction. The ideal nonfiction piece would not be obvious from the beginning as a piece of nonfiction, while the ideal fiction piece would not appear to be a short story right from the beginning. Consequently, ambiguous pieces of similar length and readability were sought. The length constraint was particularly important, since it was considered desirable to have the reader read, respond, and compare the two passages in one session. From a wide range of magazine articles and short stories evaluated in terms of the aforementioned criteria, a short story, "The Sniper" by Liam O'Flaherty and a magazine article, "Desensitization of Twentieth Century Man" by Norman Cousins appeared to satisfy the conditions. These two passages were of

similar length, 1500 words, of "acceptable" readability, grade ten and grade eight respectively, and most importantly, of sufficient ambiguity in the beginning with the short story starting out somewhat like a neutral description, and the magazine article starting out more like a fictionalized account of violence. This account is really an example to support an argument about violence. In addition to this similarity in terms of ambiguity there is a thematic relationship which although of secondary concern, was considered a bonus as far as facilitating possible comparisons for the reader. These two passages (see Appendix D) were given to two university students to read, recall, and discuss in terms of their approach to reading fiction and nonfiction. As well these readers were queried on the suitability of the passages for use in the study. In their discussions, they confirmed the suitability of the two passages to be used in conjunction with each other.

3. Materials for Use in the Thinking Aloud Task: The main criterion in choosing materials for this task, over and above selecting intact fiction and nonfiction passages was that of brevity. The task was likely to be tedious at best, and as well would need to be completed in one session so that it would be possible to have the reader compare the nature of the task and their responses to the two passages. While there are any number of articles and essays that are reasonably short, it is not as easy to find a short story with less than a thousand words. After searching through a number of anthologies, and testing out short stories with the pilot readers, the short story "True Confession" by Alden Nowlan was chosen. For the nonfiction aspect of the thinking aloud task a biographical passage on the life of Albert Einstein was selected from a full-length work Einstein: Creator and Rebel by B. Hoffmann (1978). Both passages were approximately 1000 words long and of grade 10 and grade 10.5 readability respectively. The

'violated' form in which the two passages were presented to the readers, can be seen in APPENDIX E.

The following selections, then, comprised the different reading situations with the 10 to 12 'indepth' readers:

1. Probed fiction recalls: "Snow" by Frederick Phillip Grove
   "A Summer's Reading" by Bernard Malamud
2. Unaided recalls: "Desensitization of Twentieth Century Man" by Norman Cousins
   "The Sniper" by Liam O'Flaherty
3. Thinking aloud: "True Confession" by Alden Nowlan
   "Albert Einstein: Creator or Rebel" by B. Hoffman

SUMMARY

This chapter has dealt with a description of the type of data that would be collected in the final data collection, and as well an exploration of the decisions that were basic to later steps in the ethnography such as choosing a field setting or selecting readers. Because such data has a major bearing on the analysis and interpretations made in ensuring chapters, attempts have been made throughout to provide the "careful" descriptions advocated by Smith (1978) and others with regard to procedures. The substance of this chapter might be regarded as parallel to the substance of a chapter in a photography manual on lighting, exposure time, or colour. One does not attend to these details in the photograph, but yet the finished product would have looked quite different had different decisions been made. The fact that the foreshadowing only allowed these decisions to be tentative is borne out in the next chapter where the dynamics of the final data collection are described.

CHAPTER 4

DATA COLLECTION

In Denzin's (1970) discussion of steps involved in conducting ethnographic research, a field setting must be selected (step 2), access must be gained (step 3), demographic or statistical data must be collected on the participants (step 4) and the actual interviews are conducted (step 5). To a certain extent these steps are simultaneous rather than successive. For example, an actual field setting can be selected only when it is possible to gain access. As much as possible, however, the dynamic process involved for each of these steps will be discussed.

SELECTING A FIELD SETTING

Because in a sense, each voracious reader of fiction is a setting unto himself, step 2 was probably less important in this study than in one where a researcher wishes to study the social interaction in a Hutterite colony or a junior high school classroom. As well, certain aspects of the field setting had been established in the pilot study insofar as criteria for selection had already been determined. What was important was easy access to approximately 30 voracious adult readers of fiction who were willing and able to participate in the study voluntarily. While an ad in a newspaper, library or bookstore, or a general call for volunteer readers from various sources might have sufficed, it was considered important to establish a reputational criterion in selecting readers. Bookstore personnel or library clerks would be most directly in touch with people who do a lot of fiction reading since they would have had the opportunity to make first hand observations, and hence provide validation for the range of reading done.

Library or bookstore people would also be able to serve as pivotal 'contact' persons since it has been the researcher's experience that a close bond tends to exist between 'book' personnel and their patrons. Such contacts could be particularly important in helping to establish a collaborative relationship with potential participants since someone close to the readers might approach them first on participating in the study. By association, a degree of familiarity might be assumed earlier between researcher and participants. By contacting participants indirectly through pivotal individuals, the rights of the individual would be protected, and as well those who did not wish to participate in the study would be afforded the easiest opportunity to refuse since in essence there would be no pressure forthcoming from a neutral person.

Given this need for a contact person who would know a group of readers well, and who would be willing to assist in the process of gaining access to a group of readers, it seemed 'timely' to renew contact with a librarian of a regional library in the rural Atlantic region where other support staff at the library in general were also well known. The head librarian was contacted by mail in February, 1980 with a brief description of the study along with a request for assistance in contacting a number of adult readers of fiction who would be interested in participating in a study of their reading. Such a request was granted. Although at this point there was only an informal 'guarantee' of some book borrowers, it was considered that it would be easy to renew contact with other pivotal members of this rural area with regard to gaining access to some book buyers.

GAINING ENTRY

One of the branch librarians in the regional library system agreed to screen the names of possible participants, and as well, to serve as liaison between the researcher and readers in terms of making all the initial contacts. This 'mediating' position, as anticipated, proved to be very useful in that it served three purposes: first, all readers were likely to be truly voracious since their reading habits stood out in the mind of the librarian. Any concerns with exaggeration of the amount read would be minimized. Secondly, as alluded to earlier those who actually agreed to participate in the study were under no direct pressure to do so. Consequently they were apt to be interested and willing collaborators. This latter point might have been more relevant in a larger city where people are more accustomed to being approached with regard to research, and as well more accustomed to refusing. As it turned out only one individual who had been approached by the librarian did not agree to participate in the study. Finally, the mediator served to provide a mutual 'halo' effect for the researcher and for herself, since as anticipated, an immediate collaborative spirit by association was facilitated. As well, the librarian noted near the end of the study that readers accorded her a greater familiarity by association since they assumed that she was in someway involved in the data analysis.

In order to gain access to a number of book-buyers, two pivotal members of the community, who were well-known to the researcher as former teaching colleagues, and who were fiction book-buyers and readers themselves were contacted. Including in the sample of readers a group of book-buyers was perhaps less important than it might have been in a larger centre, since the public library, excellent for a mid-sized town, was really the only

source of books. While some books could be procured at a local card shop, at a drug store, or at the checkout of a supermarket, the closest full-fledged book store was almost 200 kilometers away.

By late April, 1980, the branch librarian 'contact' was able to provide the names and verbal consent of 22 potential 'collaborators'. Six more voracious adult book-buying readers of fiction had been approached by the two other contact people. All of these readers had only been told that there was a researcher interested in finding out about what adults read, and that an interview time would be set up in late April, or early May.

Initial contacts with the readers were made by telephone in late April and early May. The nature of the study was briefly outlined over the telephone with indications of the kinds of questions that would be asked and the amount of time that would be involved in the interview. Finally, a convenient time and place for the interview was arranged.

THE SETTING

Most of the readers were residing in or around a town of approximately 8800 people. This town is the major commercial centre of the area and the headquarters of the public library. However, since the outlying areas are also served by bookmobiles, the book borrowers were not all necessarily patrons of the main library.

The chief industries of the area are fishing, tourism, and farming. There may be certain 'biases' inherent in choosing so many readers from one area. For example given that the town is in a section of the province known for its temperate climate and coastal beauty, a number of people often choose to retire to this area from other parts of Canada and the United States.

Because of the rural setting and the tourism industry [redacted] who might be regarded as outside the 'mainstream' work force are attracted to the area. Finally, because it is a fairly traditional area in terms of family and community life, there are probably fewer single people, and as well fewer opportunities for women to be involved in careers.

As a way of counterbalancing inherent biases, or at least ensuring an adequate range of readers in the process of 'theoretical sampling', the transcripts of four of the readers who had participated in the full interview in the pilot study were included in the data analysis, and hence are considered part of the final sample. These four readers who serve to 'round out' the sample were voracious by any criteria that appeared ex post facto.

THE PARTICIPANTS

On the basis of the criteria derived from the pilot study regarding sampling, the actual interview data collection/analysis involved 32 voracious adult readers of fiction. Considerations for inclusion, in addition to willingness, involved age, sex, occupation, marital status, educational background, degree of voraciousness, range of material read and book-buying-borrowing habits.

Age

Readers ranged from the age of 18 to 79. While the age of 25 had been earlier considered to be the 'cut off' point, it became apparent that adult status was more related to living conditions such as being supported by one's parents or being on one's own, rather than chronological age. The one 18 year-old

in the study, while still in grade school, lived on her own and represented too voracious a reader to be left out. Five readers were in their twenties, nine in their thirties, three in their forties, six in their fifties, six in their sixties, and two in their seventies.

Sex

Of the 32 readers, 28 were female and four were male. While this distribution is not of concern, the fact that of the four males involved in the study three were retired may bring into play an added bias.

Occupation

The demands of the study in terms of time, the proportion of females in the study in an area which tends to foster traditional roles, and which tends to have a high rate of unemployment, were all factors that tended to rule out a large number of working people in the study. Half of the people in the study were not working outside the home at the time of data collection. Eight of these people who had already retired because of age included an air commander, a medical doctor, two registered nurses, a librarian, an accountant, a secretary, and a teacher of home economics. Five were full-time homemakers either with small children or grown-up children. Two others, who described themselves as homemakers, were working outside the home on a part-time basis as a secretary and home-economist. Of the 16 readers who were involved outside the home on a full-time basis, seven were teachers, two were students, two were secretaries, one was a business proprietor, one was a clerk, one was a farmer, one was a waitress, and one worked in a zoology laboratory.

Marital Status

The majority of the people in the study were married at the time of data collection or had been married. Twenty-four were currently married, two were widowed and six were single.

Education

The readers ranged from those who had approximately eight years of formal education to those who had twenty years. While there was a clustering of eight avid readers who had not completed high school, and who in five cases had less than grade ten, there were twelve readers who had taken some post-secondary training in nursing, accounting or business. Six more readers had a degree in education, three had masters degrees, two had degrees in home-economics and one had a medical degree.

Voraciousness

Quantity of reading was probably more standardized in the final sample than it had been in the pilot study. Readers were not only reputed to be voracious, and claimed to be voracious, they all tended to read more than ten hours per week although the allocation of this time varied. Some would read voraciously in the winter but not in the summer and vice versa. On the low end, readers read one or two books per week; on the upper end there were those who spent eight to ten hours a day reading and were able to complete 12 to 15 books per week.

Range of Reading

The final sample included readers who read exclusively the formula book such as Zane Gray westerns or Nick Carter's, as well as those who described their tastes as 'catholic' in that in addition to a range of fiction, which

included best sellers and escapist romances, they also read politics, sociology, psychology, history and 'how to's'.

Source of Reading Material

While the majority of the readers in the study were library patrons whose main source of books was through borrowing, there were a number of these readers who also purchased books at second-hand stores and flea markets. In some cases the books purchased, such as Harlequin romances, were those which could not be procured at the library. Seven of the readers always purchased their books or received them as gifts. Two readers purchased half and borrowed half.

SOURCES OF DATA

Three primary sources of data served as the raw material for the analysis: the transcriptions of the taped interviews and indepth reading situations (see Appendix F); field notes (see Appendix G) made by the researcher at the end of each interview or on the basis of 'secondary' sources such as the librarian; and 'transcriber asides' (see Appendix H) made by the transcriber in regard to what the readers said on tape.

The Tapes

All face-to-face interviews were taped. In order to minimize the obtrusiveness of the tape recorder in the most 'crucial' parts of the interview, and as well to ensure that all potentially relevant information was obtained, the recorder was turned on as soon as possible. The cassette tapes were for the most part transcribed in their entirety for later analysis although exceptions would include unrelated data such as the exchange of con-

versation between the reader and a child with a missing shoe. Hence, there is a verbatim account of each contact in its entirety, resulting in approximately 1500 pages of transcription for data analysis.

Field Notes

In spite of efforts to get everything down on tape, there were, nonetheless, occasions when comments about reading were made on the way out the door. In addition impressions were formulated or points which might be raised in the second interview were noted. The field notes were also used to aid in the process of analytic induction since propositions and hypothesis about readers of fiction would often occur to the researcher after an interview in a very 'holistic' sense. Schumacher (1972) would call this a 'skimming the cream' approach. As Smith (1978) notes of his research behaviour after an interview:

> ... the procedure is inductive and more 'quick and dirty' ... The tactic we adopted was a simple one. In a local coffee shop for a period of a couple of hours we asked ourselves "What were the major things we have learned from our year [hour] in the field?" As we brainstormed these ideas, with no references to our file drawer of notes, interpretive asides or summary interpretations (some of which were still untyped off tape because of organization resource problems), we gradually accumulated a list of ideas, findings (p. 337).

In a sense the field notes were to the transcriptions what Smith's 'quick and dirty' approach was to the volume of already recorded data.

The main reasons for keeping field notes in this study related to the nature of the interview situations and the sequencing of events for the in-depth readers. For example, as it turned out many of the interviews were conducted in the homes of the readers. Such being the case there was usually evidence of reading such as books lying around or shelves of books. Often

these shelves were perused at the conclusion of the session or a comment would be made by the reader on a book she had just read. Thus, informal data tended to be elicited after the recorder had already been turned off.

Occasionally, too, readers might want to make a comment they felt was unsuitable for taping in that they regarded it as confidential. Such being the case they would say 'turn that thing off!'. While such requests were always respected, it did occur on rare occasions that what was said off the tape shed light on some aspect of the reader's reading. Consequently, notes were necessary.

Because of the informal nature of the interviews, particularly when they were conducted in the homes of the readers, a coffee-break, on occasion, was taken in the middle of the interview, or at the end prior to terminating the contact. On rare occasions the tape recorder was unobtrusively left on, sometimes intentionally and sometimes accidentally. In cases where the tape recorder had already been turned off or where the reader realized that the recorder was about to be turned off, the act of re-engaging the tape recorder would not have been regarded as socially appropriate. Since inevitably the topic of reading habits and interests arose over coffee, it was necessary to add such data to the field notes.

For the readers who would be involved in the indepth studies, the notes were important insofar as comments or impressions from the first interview might have to be expanded later. What a reader said in the initial interview was occasionally contradicted or strongly confirmed in a second. Having notes available and adding to those notes became useful in eliciting further data. For example, one reader in the initial interview had commented that

he did not like a particular book because it was about Ireland. However, his favorite story in the reading situations was the Irish story "The Sniper", by Liam O'Flaherty. At that point it was possible to probe further on what it was about the earlier Irish work that he had disliked.

As well, because of the local flavour of the setting, it frequently turned out that readers would make reference to other individuals who were involved in the study. For instance readers might say 'well X and I have very similar reading interests and we often talk about what we are reading." The individual X in question when queried as to whether there was anyone with whom he ever discussed books might say "oh, yes, there's Y", or, on rarer occasions, "no, there's no one at all that I talk to about books". Using field notes made it possible to seek corroborative data, or as in the case of contradictory data, these notes made it necessary to seek interpretation. For example, on one occasion when a reader had commented that he never wrote letters to the editor or members of parliament, three weeks later a letter to the editor from this individual appeared in the local newspaper.

Transcriber Asides

The transcriber, a voracious adult reader of fiction 'schooled' *a priori* in terms of the purposes of the study, and as well 'on the job', spent much more listening time with every reader than the researcher did in the initial face-to-face contacts. In the course of the study the transcriber assumed a collaborative role, adding comments and interpretive asides amidst the taped transcriptions. In some cases these asides coincided with notes and impresssions already made by the researcher, and so, to a certain extent provided a source of validation. In other cases these asides brought to the surface additional speculations, hypotheses and propositions. Since the

transcriber lived on the other side of the continent during the transcriptions of the pilot data and 400 kilometers away during the transcribing of the final data, there were few opportunities for direct collaboration or conference. Tapes would be mailed off weekly with instructions such as "transcribe the whole thing" or "delete everything at the beginning until'. I understand you read a lot of fiction." Any interpretations made by the transcriber then, were independent.

These asides represent a type of 'distancing' which is not always possible for the researcher in the process of analysis. As Denzin (1970) has noted, it is possible for the participant-observer to become so much the participant that he comes to see the situation too much from the point of view of informants. The transcriber, once removed from the face-to-face contact and twice removed in terms of the inherent biases of the researcher, added to the data both quantitatively as well as qualitatively. In terms of an added degree of validity, too, there is inevitably the problem in the translation process of conveying what it was like 'to be there', and 'make public' such interpretations The transcriber was, in part, involved in the discovering, pre-translation process.

CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEWS

Location

In most cases, the interviews carried out in April, May and June of 1980, were conducted in the homes of the readers. However, all readers involved in the study had the option of being interviewed either in the office of the researcher or in a room at the public library. In view of the life situations of many of the readers, homebound with pre-school-age children or families who would need lunch or dinner at specific times, most readers chose to be interviewed at home. From the point of view of facilitating naturalistic

enquiry, conducting the interviews in their homes was preferable, particularly because it was possible to collect additional data on life situations and the role of reading in the homes. It was not possible to 'measure' the effects of such 'on-site' research except to say that while the readers in the pilot study were not in their homes but rather in the office of the researcher, all were very familiar with the setting and had been ~~in the office~~ under social/academic situations prior to the study.

The interviews conducted in the homes usually took place in a fairly public setting such as a living room or kitchen. While such on-site research also provides for all the intrusions and uncontrollable events that occur in someone else's house, it seemed that such day-to-day shared happenings tended to contribute to informality, ease, and the collaborative spirit. In all cases, the time of the interview was determined by the reader who usually took into consideration the times that interruptions would be minimized. It must be noted, however, that babies did wake up, neighbours telephoned, spouses came home or delivery men made deliveries.

In most cases the interview involved only the researcher and the reader although occasionally there was the presence of a young child. In several cases, too, a spouse was near-by listening, adding comments, or serving coffee. In three cases the spouses became involved in the interview itself to a certain extent. In two of these cases the spouses were also readers who provided additional, albeit unsolicited, data on their own reading, corroborative evidence in terms of what their spouses were saying, and who contributed to the informality of the interview. While the social context involved a 'making the best of it', and certainly ruled out asking these individuals to leave the room, it should be noted that the presence of such

individuals may have constrained the readers to a certain extent since the questions asked were often as revealing of the spouses as the readers. For example, readers were asked whether they thought they read any differently from their spouses, or whether their voracious reading bothered their spouses. Whenever possible such topics were avoided until a more convenient time in the interview.

Facilitating the Collaborator Role

Although all readers willingly agreed to participate in the study, they were not necessarily 'collaborators' from the beginning. The seeds for establishing such a role had to be planted and nurtured. As already mentioned, the location of the interviews helped. Moreover, owing to the cooperation of the branch librarian and her knowledge of the readers, it was at least possible to know something about each reader prior to the first interview. During the initial contact by telephone, readers often gave an indication of some 'point of commonality' which could be explored early in the interview. For example, a reader might comment that it was impossible to meet before the following week because she has to canvass for the Kidney Foundation, or would be going to England for a brief visit. To return to a point raised earlier by Denzin (1970), the researcher must use to advantage "all the personal characteristics he possesses to enhance his observational role" (p. 199-89). The approach used with the readers was to draw on whatever pertinent background might be relevant to the situation: as a former school teacher in the area; as a parent of two young children; as a fiction reader; as a former gardener, or as a struggling student. Such roles comprising the researcher 'stance' (Reinharz, 1980) were always "assumed" in the context of presently conducting research at the University of Alberta.

Facilitating a collaborative relationship differs somewhat from the relationships extant in typical survey interview situations. As Galtung (1967) observes, there is a need for a degree of socialization on the part of the survey respondent, wherein such an individual:

> ...(must be) well socialized and disciplined, used to examinations, to listening, to answering honestly and clearly. He has a certain minimum of formal education, good enough to fill in a standard questionnaire. He is below the average social scientist in social rank ... Without too much protest he fits into the precoded answers. Finally, he expresses some joy at having had the favour of being included in this important study; he is grateful, not overly critical' (p. 157).

In the present study it was important to draw on what would be more likely to nurture a 'peer' collaborative relationship.

After an amount of time had been given over to 'placing' each other, the readers were usually given some opening statements about the study:

> I - What we don't know enough about in reading research is why some people become readers and why others do not, or why it is that people read what they read. I'll be bombarding you with questions about your reading. If there is anything you don't wish to answer please feel free to ignore it. Anything you do say would be confidential. I would never use your name in regard to writing up any parts of the study.
>
> I understand you do a lot of reading ...

As it turned out there did not appear to be any questions that readers did not want to answer although most appeared to appreciate the consideration. It should be pointed out, however, that attempts to provide the rationale and purposes of the study in the initial 'placing', and eventual commitment to provide some feedback about the results of the study were not without problems. While such problems may be more serious in research such as that of Platt's (1981) where she was interviewing other sociologists who were also her academic colleagues, it, nonetheless, behooves the researcher to explain without being

condescending or placing participants into a negative light. As Platt (1981) observes:

> To succeed, as textbooks usually suggest, in concealing one's specific hypotheses is to place oneself in the academically embarrassing situation of possibly appearing to have none ... On the other hand, whether they are overtly stated or not, it can be embarrassing evidently to have hypotheses that reflect unfavourably on one's respondents ... (p. 80).

Along with the initial 'p[illegible]cing' every attempt was made to make use of the pronoun 'we' as indicated in the above excerpt, and to facilitate a reciprocity or give-and-take with regard to aspects of reading behaviour, since it was expected that on occasion comments and opinions would be elicited by the reader of the researcher. As Gorden (1980) notes, in attempting to establish the collaborative role "it is probably unfair and undoubtedly counterproductive for the researcher to completely hold back his or her feelings" (p. 108). Finally, as Jourard (1968) observes: "Man is the master of the mendacious arts... if you want to study me and I don't know you or trust you, I'll kick you out or I'll lie to you" (Cited in Draper, 1981, p. 6). While conducting the interviews in the homes seemed to ensure that readers would 'give' more, it also ensured that they would 'take' more from the relationship. They became collaborators in terms of the reading behaviour under study, primarily because of the 'give-and-take' on more mundane levels. They were willing to give on a cognitive level providing the researcher was willing to give in their everyday life. On one occasion the researcher was involved in providing a taxi-service for a reader without a car who needed to get to the bank shortly after the interview. On another occasion the researcher provided child-care so that a mother could engage in the 'thinking aloud' task without interruption. Advice on selling property,

pruning trees, or choosing books for children was solicited and provided where necessary.

Establishing a collaborative relationship requires a high degree of 'paying attention'. As Cottle (1973) notes:

> Paying attention implies an openness, not any special or metaphysical kind of openness, but merely a watch on one's self, a self-consciousness, a belief that everything one takes in from the outside and experiences within one's own interior is worthy of consideration and essential for understanding and knowing those whom one encounters (p. 351).

'Paying attention' is a concept that is addressed only marginally in the review literature on ethnographic research. Attending to what the reader is saying, noting their reticence on a particular topic and returning to the topic later, probing where necessary, keeping the reader on topic, giving without dominating or competing, taking 'nonjudgmentally', and maintaining socially appropriate behaviours are all part of this concept of 'paying attention'.

For example, with regard to socially appropriate behaviour, readers are less likely to become collaborators if the researcher arrives late, or 'cuts off' the reader too abruptly in order to get to the bank herself before closing time. As well, socially appropriate behaviour implies answering the door while the informant answers the telephone, sampling a chicory substitute for coffee, or the products of a new recipe which has been prepared for the occasion, and using tact in the nature of the questions asked. As an example of 'tact', since knowing specific chronological age was of less significance than knowing 'general' age, readers were not always asked how old they were. Readers often gave an approximation of their age in the interview in

any case so that the researcher usually avoided asking them directly how old they were.

To ensure this element of 'paying attention' which appeared to be crucial in establishing the collaborative role, the element of time cannot be minimized. Every attempt was made to avoid what Rist (1980) calls "blitzkreig ethnography". In the present study it was seldom possible physically or psychologically to conduct more than two interviews per day. Benney and Hughes (1956) aptly described the interview situation thus:

> ... the interview is still more than a tool and object of study. It is the art of sociological sociability, the game we play for the pleasure of savouring its subtleties. It is our flirtation with life, our eternal affair, played hard and to win, but played with that detachment and amusement which give us, win or lose, the spirit to rise up and interview again and again (p. 138).

CONDUCTING THE INDEPTH READING SITUATIONS

Ten to twelve readers were to be involved in the indepth reading situations described earlier. The purpose of these indepth reading situations was to look at the reading behaviours of readers in the context of what they had already said about their reading, and the relationship between their metacognitive knowledge and their metacognitive experiences. Decisions had to be made with regard to which readers to interview further. In considering the process of theoretical sampling, Smith (1978) notes:

> Most participant-observers don't speak to the issue of sampling. In our view it lurks behind every decision the investigator makes when he elects to be here or there, to spend more time here rather than there, and decides what array of documents to read, of people to interview, or settings to hand around (p. 358).

An important factor to consider was time. For some of the readers the initial 90 minute interview was an imposition, and they could not afford to

spend another four to five hours of time involved in the indepth part of the study. Usually by the end of the initial interview the researcher was able to determine who might potentially have more time to be involved, and of those, who would be willing, able and 'useful' as far as the process of theoretical sampling was concerned. In some cases readers freely volunteered further time if it was necessary. However, even if a reader was willing and able, it was possible in some cases that he would 'saturate' a particular topic rather than provide another perspective.

A total of 12 readers were involved in the indepth reading situations. Of geographical necessity, none of the four readers from the pilot study were involved. The following range comprised the sample.

Age: Readers ranged from early twenties to late sixties with one reader in her twenties, three in their thirties, three in their forties (all 43), two in their fifties, and two in their sixties.

Sex: There were 10 females and two males.

Occupation: Three of the readers worked outside the home as a waitress, secretary, and a clerk respectively; two worked part-time, three were retired, and four were homemakers.

Education: Three of the readers had achieved grade 10 or less, two had secured their grade 12, one had a professional degree, and six had taken some post-secondary training.

Voraciousness: Quantity of reading varied from one book plus a number of magazines per week to 12 to 15 books per week. The two most voracious readers in the entire study were involved in the readings.

Range of reading: There was a wide range of reading; several readers read historical fiction, two were readers of formula westerns and mysteries and romances, several were espionage readers. There were those who read fiction exclusively as well as those who read both fiction and nonfiction.

The reading tasks were conducted as planned in the pilot study.

DISENGAGEMENT

The process of disengagement or withdrawing from the research setting was not as significant in this study as it might have been in a situation where the researcher had actually been living within a subculture for a period of time. Readers knew what they were getting themselves involved in before the study even began since they were engaged for the initial interview only, originally. If they were willing and able, and if it was felt that a further exploration of their reading would be productive, they were asked if they would be willing to participate in a second session. At the end of the second session they were asked again if they would be willing to participate in one final session. Fortunately none of the readers refused to participate in this third session.

It is important to note that in the process of disengagement, most of the readers expressed some interest in knowing what would happen to the data and whether they would get some indication of the results. In a situation involving "collaborative peers" who have been drawn into the ethnographic interview it would be considered socially inappropriate to simply 'terminate' the relationship. Platt (1981) in considering the implications of interviewing friends and acquaintances, or members of the same restricted community, sheds some light on the sociability involved, when she discusses her own research

with academic colleagues:

> I found that joking remarks circulated about the therapeutic qualities of interviews, people tried to find out what others had told me, further respondents were recommended on the basis of my presumed interests, people not approached asked why I left them out (p. 77).

Similarly, after facilitating and operating within an egalitarian relationship for up to five or six hours with people who would in many cases be seen again on a social basis, it was deemed more appropriate to "put on hold" the relationships. All were assured that they would eventually receive some written statement about the results. Occasionally some readers would remain convinced that there was some direct connection between the library and the study. Hence, they persisted in noting problems about making requests, or commenting that they wished the library would refrain from pasting card pockets on the biographies of the writers. Such comments were always dutifully passed on to the librarians.

THE SOCIOPOLITICAL CONTEXT OF DATA COLLECTION

As a final aspect of the 'dynamics' involved in the study it is important to acknowledge that each ethnographic study must be regarded as having a unique sociopolitical context. Gaining entry, selecting the participants, conducting the interviews, and disengaging are all related to this context. For example, the decision to select a group of readers in an area already well-known to the researcher deviates from the situations in which many of the interviews in textbooks are presented. As noted by Platt (1981) there is the usual assumption that interviewer and respondent are unknown to each other, that they are likely to belong to different social groups and that they are unlikely to ever see each other again. As such:

> ... the interviewer bears no practical responsibility for the research since the interview cannot have any consequences that she will need to live with. The assumption is also that the interviewer is entitled to manipulate the situation and has a good chance of getting away with it, because the respondent is a relatively low-status person who is not sophisticated enough to realize what is going on and/or not technically qualified to judge the research (Platt, 1981, p. 75).

As well, there is often the assumption that the interviewer is not the person responsible for the research but rather is hired by a social agency or a chief researcher. Hence, he can be distanced from it and not to blame for the line of questioning. Finally, there is the assumption in many studies that each respondent is socially isolated from every other respondent, and as such unlikely to communicate with others in the study about the procedures.

These assumptions did not necessarily hold true in the present study. For example, since the readers were procured from an area well-known to the researcher, and through former colleagues and acquaintances (i.e. the librarian and other pivotal members of the community), it was inevitable that some of the readers were well-known to the researcher. As it turned out six of the readers were known directly while another four were known indirectly through mutual friends. Moreover, the readers who had participated in the pilot study and whose transcripts were actually used in the data analysis had also been known to the researcher prior to the study. While the fact that the researcher had not been living in the area immediately prior to the data collection may have lessened the impact of familiarity somewhat, it is important to note that many of the concerns raised by Platt (1981) were extant in the present study.

As examples of these quasi-violations one might consider the conscious role-playing required in asking a reader the reading habits of her husband in the full prior knowledge that the particular individual had never voluntarily picked up a book in his life. Moreover, as will be noted throughout the analysis of the data, being responsible for the nature of the questions, and the nature of the print settings did not afford the researcher the luxury of 'excuse'. In short, the social consequences of asking certain questions or requiring individuals to participate in an activity that they might regard as less than enjoyable had to be borne fully by the researcher. Finally, the readers were not necessarily socially isolated from each other. Several of the readers obviously knew each other and acknowledged in the course of the interview that they already knew about a certain type of question or predicted what their acquaintance had said about a certain topic. As well, three of the readers belonged to the same social cluster in one school. The anxieties possessed by two of these readers about participating in the study had already been conveyed to the researcher by the third individual even before the study commenced. A fourth member of this cluster had also been interviewed about her reading not because she was a voracious reader, or even a voluntary reader of anything, but because she did not want to be left out.

The ethics of reporting back to participants also enters into the sociopolitical context of data collection and subsequent data analysis. In the same way that it was difficult to explain fully the purpose of the study and the foreshadowing hypotheses because they might place certain readers in an unfavourable light, the inductive process is fraught with problems. Such problems are not necessarily dealt with in the typical

ethnographic textbook except insofar as researchers such as Elliott (1980) and Macdonald (1977) consider that descriptive accounts should be validated by participants or negotiated by consensus-building. Having waived this 'negotiating' it behooves the researcher to satisfy the necessity for feedback and as well, to be loyal to the data.

These points are raised as part of the context in which the data subsequently presented must be considered.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this chapter has been to explicate the dynamics of the data collection in terms of actually selecting a field setting, gaining entry, selecting readers, carrying out the interviews and reading situations, and disengaging. Consideration has also been given to the uniqueness of the sociopolitical context, and hence the role of the tentative decisions described in Chapter three. In short it has dealt with the nature of the data collected, from whom, through what procedures and in what context. The questions raised and answered in this chapter."Who takes the pictures and why? Who chooses and for whom?" leave to be discussed in ensuing chapters "What do the pictures mean and to whom?" (Bethell, 1980 Cited in Woolley, 1980/81, p. 57).

PART TWO

> The camera cannot lie, as the old saying has it, and in one sense this is true; put anything material in front of the camera lens and it will be recorded. However, the image on the sensitized plate bears surprisingly little resemblance to our experience of the same scene. We have only to consider the disappointment often experienced when we, as novices, photograph the distant yet towering mountains. Eagerly we wait for the snapshots to return, only to find our giant peaks shrunk to insignificant hillocks. Our vision is selective and interpretive in a way that the camera is not. The lens, like the eyeball is blind; it is the mind which seeks meaning in and gives meaning to visual input (Woolley, 1980-81, p. 51).

A theme to be developed in this section of the 'translation' is that it is necessary to have some understanding of the social context in which any reading takes place in order to 'give meaning' to what might be observed about that reading. The two chapters ensuing represent attempts at translating the social-psychological aspects of fiction reading through the use of frames or 'still' snapshots of the readers, individually, and in the context of other frames.

CHAPTER 5

SOCIAL SHAPSHOTS OF THE FICTION READER

FORESHADOWING

Why a reader engages in reading, and the satisfactions he appears to derive from a reading are likely to be related to how it is that he reads or the processing strategies employed. For example, readers who 'wish to get away' or read for 'escape' may make use of the words on the page in a way quite unlike what readers who are seeking self-knowledge would do. Their social world may condition their approach to the words on the page, and the subsequent satisfactions derived from the words. The question which is raised, then, is what type of social world do fiction readers have, and how does it appear to be related to their reading?

At present, theories conflict with regard to the relationship between fiction reading and the social involvement and sociability of the reader. This conflict would appear to be a result, in part, of what researchers have asked and of whom. For example, in contrast to the stereotyped notion of the reader as a lonely isolate who substitutes books for real life, researchers such as Hajda (1963) and Gray and Rogers (1956) found that well-read adults tended to be outgoing individuals, involved in the world around them. Hajda's exploration of the reading habits of adult women in Baltimore revealed that a high degree of 'social integration' or involvement in the world was, in fact, often a motivation to read, or a 'cause'. Other factors, such as availability of time which might be more closely associated with the isolate, seemed to have no positive influence on reading behaviour at all. If anything, availability of time appeared to be negatively related since in general society,

being 'socially integrated' implies that much of one's time is taken up by the company of others or at least in the concern of others. As well, as noted by Steinberg (1979) in his analysis of the Hajda findings:

> ... the statement 'I don't have time to read' reveals only the lack of interest for the book, since the speaker does have time, for example to read another book or to visit the North Pole or run in the business rat race or to go bowling (p. 745).

While the act of reading requires that one withdraw from the company of others, it may be that the solitude 'refreshes', especially if the individual has the option of withdrawing temporarily and subsequently returning more attentively to those around him. Isolation, on the other hand, if not chosen, as in the case of widowhood, is painful and senseless. For many isolated persons books may have little significance since they do not reduce the isolation. As such, it might be considered that reading is not an acceptable substitute for human contact and participation, especially in that society which has condemned the individual to isolation.

Gray and Rogers (1956) describe the personal orientation of individuals toward the world around them as "social participation":

> ... an individual sees himself as a responsible member of the larger community of which he is part... he feels himself personally involved in problems and events outside the orbit of his daily routine... (p. 234).

They note further that while the factor of education might be considered important in terms of serving to develop reading skills that ensure that people <u>can</u> read, its role in maintaining a situation where people actually <u>do</u> read, is less clear-cut. A useful framework, they offer, in which to explore reading interests, purposes and behaviours of individuals would be to consider their level of social participation or integration.

Since neither Gray and Rogers (1956) or Hajda (1963) clearly delineated the kind of reading in which their "well-read" readers were engaged, their findings with regard to social participation, while insightful, may have masked certain patterns. For example, it may be that only readers of certain types of works, read for particular purposes, have a high degree of social involvement. As well, as their social involvement changes under particular circumstances so too might their processes in reading. For example, when the protagonist in Calvino's (1981) novel discovers that Ludmilla, his new found reading 'comrade',will be reading the same novel at the same time as he is, he observes:

> Your reading is no longer solitary: you think of the Other Reader, who, at this moment, is also opening the book; and there the novel to be read is superimposed by a possible novel to be lived, the continuation of your story with her, or better still, the beginning of a possible story (p. 32).

While there is evidence in the literature on fiction-reading corroborating the significance of the factor of social involvement, the perspective is slightly different. Harding (1968) speculates that many fiction readers, while not using books as a substitute for real life, do use books as a means of maintaining contact with a world in which they have always been only marginally involved, noting that the fiction reader is:

> ... some one whose actual participation in social life is not very satisfying either because of his own clumsiness and inhibitions or because the social group available to him can share too few of his values; he remains, however, a person whose social responsiveness is potentially great, and he finds in fiction an outlet for that positive capacity as well as an escape from his difficulties (p. 15).

He further suggests that such fiction reading is somewhat akin to gossip in that both activities depend on a wish to follow the doings of others "to try to

understand their motives and to join with someone else in making an emotional response to their behaviour and supposed experience" (p. 14).

Similarly Escarpit (1971) describes "gratuitous" or voluntary fiction reading as social to the extent that we go to another person, or have recourse to someone else's doings in order to get away from ourselves. The desire to seek out another, then, is not to be regarded as a social behaviour but rather as a sign of dissatisfaction:

> ... a lack of harmony between the reader and his milieu, whether due to causes inherent in human nature (shortness and frailty of existence) or to the clash of individuals (love, hate, pity) or to social structures (oppression, poverty, fear of the future, boredom). In a word, it is a recourse against the absurdity of the human condition. A happy people might not have a history, but it certainly would have no literature for it would not feel the need to read (p. 91).

Tannenbaum (1980), in describing his own voracious reading, notes that voluntary fiction reading which is often regarded as 'escape' reading involves:

> ... escape from one's own limited environment but also (to) escape to new worlds, new situations, new companions, new dilemmas, new adventures, even if - indeed probably because - it is all fantasy (p. 109).

As well, Calvino (1981) notes, books can occupy various positions in one's life:

> ... if they are a defense you set up to keep the outside world at a distance, if they are a dream into which you sink as if into a drug, or bridges you cast toward the world that interests you so much that you want to multiply and extend its dimensions through books (p. 142).

While there may be no question that the social participation or at least the social responsiveness of an individual reader is related to what he reads,

or why he reads, it would appear to be necessary to look more closely at the dimensions of social responsiveness before considering 'how' he reads. How a person approaches the world in general, or his modus operandi, may be revealed a number of different ways: whether he regards others as instruments or hindrances, or whether he has a genuine interest in others, whether he maintains a prime interest in the humanities, or whether he follows asocial pursuits in the sciences and the ensuing degree of satisfaction with and adjustment to his life-situation. While such indices are to a certain extent a function of the life situation in which the individual has been placed, they are, as well, indicative of what the individual has made of his world. As such, factors in the reader's life warrant attention insofar as they relate to his modus operandi in general and his reading behaviour in particular. For example, Harding (1968) has suggested that people who have an adequate social adjustment may feel no need for fiction reading in their lives, and as well are unlikely to do so until they have discovered a puzzling or challenging aspect of their social life.

A number of questions are raised in this 'foreshadowing' of the relationship between reading and social behaviour as revealed through modus operandi. Do fiction readers appear to have different approaches to their reading depending upon their personal social circumstances? Which life circumstances appear to contribute to what fiction readers choose to read and why? What evidence is there to indicate that the reader's modus operandi might be reflected in his reading behaviour?

People tend to reveal themselves through what they say about what they do and what they actually do. It was not possible to follow all 32 readers in the study with a hidden videotape and tape recorder for days on end, nor

was it possible to have them all actually read various selections in addition to talking about their reading. However, they all had a chance to talk for approximately two hours with at least 90 minutes of that being given over to a focussed discussion about one of their favourite activities, fiction reading. What ensues is an attempt to shed light on the questions raised through an exploration of the theme of the 'social' functions of reading in the modus operandi of the individual reader.

INDIVIDUAL FRAMES

Brief encapsulations or 'snapshots' of each reader were made in terms of their general approach to life and the specific social context of their reading. These snapshots grew out of a preliminary desire to 'skim the cream', and as well, a need to be 'quick and dirty', after the initial field work which, as Stenhouse (1978) observes, is "evocative of data, but parsimonious of structuring" (p. 30). There was a need then to capture on paper the flavour of each individual's transcript, the field notes, and the asides of the transcriber. Originally three or four pages were written on each reader, and it was in these early writings that sub-themes appeared to be emerging. These sub-themes seemed to hinge on the social functions of an individual's reading in relation to his modus operandi in general.

What is included here are brief quotations taken from the initial interviews with each reader which seemed to encapsulate something of the flavour of the individual's reading and approach to the world. Each encapsulation includes a brief interpretation, and as well is frequently prefaced or followed by more general observations and connecting comments in

a compare/contrast relationship with other encapsulations. These 'snapshots' are subject to the same contextual constraints as the regular photograph. As Sontag (1977) observes:

> Because each photograph is only a fragment, its moral and emotional weight depends on where it is inserted. A photograph changes according to the context in which it is seen: thus Smith's Minamata photographs will seem different on a contact sheet, in a gallery, in a political demonstration, in a police file, in a photographic magazine, in a general news magazine, in a book, or on a livingroom wall. Each of these situations suggests a different use for the photographs but none can secure their meaning. As Wittgenstein argued for words, that the meaning is the use - so for each photograph (pp. 105-106).

Readers will be anonymously referred to as reader 23 or reader 4. These anonymous titles are employed throughout the study whenever deemed appropriate, and as well, coincide with the data in Table 1. The encapsulations should serve a two-fold purpose in the translation: (a) they represent a component of the 'discovering' process, and (b) they have been written to aid in the 'communicating' process. In short, they "speak to issues in the cognitive processes involved in qualitative observational research"(Smith, 1978, p. 329) in a way that serves to indicate the 'dynamics' of an ethnography.

Reader 1 - female - aged 34, homemaker - married with two young children

I just read for the pure enjoyment of reading and getting something from a book. Whether it's some place in a country or whether it's something about Napoleon or whatever. It's almost like bits of trivia that I like to pick up on.

This reader might be described as anecdotal in her approach to a number different aspects of her life, whether in recollecting something about her grade eight teacher, her attendance at her first political meeting, or the circumstances under which her husband read a dozen books six years ago. In

TABLE 1

Overview of Readers

Reader no.	Age	Sex	Marital Status	Educ.	Fiction Interests	Favourite book in last year
1	34	F	married	1 yr. college	bestsellers	Roots
2	23	F	single	B. Ed.	bestsellers/ accounts of handicapped	Go out in Joy
3	29	F	single	B. Ed.	romances/ bestsellers	The Thorn Birds
4	23	F	single	B. Ed.	feminist literature	Six of one The Belljar
5	31	F	married	B. Ed.	Canadian literature	A jest of God
6	33	F	married	B. Ed.	mysteries/ hist. fic./ Canadian lit.	The book of small
7	32	F	single	M. Sc.	science fict.	Charryh's faded sun
8	21	F	single	univ. stud.	science fict.	Dune
*9	43	F	married	gr. 9	hist. romance/ bestsellers	Act of God The Thorn Birds
*10	43	F	married	gr. 12	bestsellers	Beulah's Land
*11	43	F	married	gr. 8	Canadian hist. fict./bestsel.	Bartlett, The Great Explorer
*12	57	M	married	gr. 12/ tech.	police/espion.	Trinity
*13	63	M	married	gr. 12/ bus.	espionage/ mystery	Guns of Navaronne
14	60's	F	married	gr. 12	espionage/ myst/bestsel.	The Thorn Birds
15	57	F	married	gr. 12/ nursing asst.	bestsellers	Save a seat for me

TABLE 1 (Continued)

Reader no.	Age	Sex	Marital Status	Educ.	Fiction Interests	Favourite book in last year
*16	61	F	married	gr. 12/ nursing	hist. fict.	Eagle and the Raven
17	60's	F	married	M.A.	hist./best-sellers/espion.	Eye of the needle
18	67	F	married	gr. 12	Canadian hist.	Hangman's beach
*19	68	F	widow	gr. 12	hist. fict./ myst./espion.	nothing in part.
20	51	F	married	B.Ed.	myst./bestsel.	nothing in part.
21	55	F	married	gr. 12	occult/bestsel	The love story
*22	52	F	married	gr. 12	hist. romance	The Thorn Birds
23	50's	M	married	gr. 12	science fict.	The tactics of mistakes
24	79	F	widow	B. Home Econ.	nature	Growing up in Iowa
25	70's	M	married	medical degree	war	all novels by Walter Kirst
26	18	F	single	gr. 10	det/thriller myst./romance	The Bastard
*27	26	F	married	gr. 9	west/mystery	The Thorn Birds
*28	30	F	married	gr. 12	det/bestsel/ westerns	The Shining
29	34	F	married	B.A.	myst/bestsel.	Centennial
30	39	F	married	M.Ed.	bestsel/espion	The Thorn Birds
*31	33	F	married	B. Home Econ.	hist. fiction	Clementine
*32	33	F	married	gr. 10	bestsellers/ mysteries	nothing in part.

* indepth readers

her discussion of her reading there are frequent anecdotes covering which store she bought a particular novel, the number of books she owns, and the names of all the books on a particular topic that she owns. Her book habits in general,which include joining book clubs, buying books, moving books, finding shelves for books, and allocating suitable places in the house for reading, comprise an anecdote. It is discussion about these aspects of books rather than the actual reading of books that pervades the conversation. Just as some people talk about their interest in macrame or racquetball, this reader talks about her books and her reading. In a sense, there would appear to be almost an 'exploitation' of books in the social setting. Reader 1 in reading several books a week was far from being the most voracious, although close to being the most gregarious and 'book fluent' in terms of having quick access to titles and authors. Having read particular books and recalling 'bits of trivia' would appear to serve an important social function for this reader whose personal identity seems to be very much connected to books.

In contrast, readers 2 and 3 would appear to be readers because of social involvement, rather than as a facilitation of social involvement.

Reader 2 - female - aged 23 - professional - single

When I read a novel it's usually something that somebody has said 'read this'. We'll then sit around and talk about the things we've read! Well, it's really impressed me.

'Impressionable'or'malleable'are both words that might be used to describe this reader who appears to be as much 'addicted' to the friends and family that read and the ensuing conversation, as the actual reading. This reader has a close relationship with other family members with whom

books are regularly exchanged and often shared quote-by-quote or line-by-line. In the same way that this reader is influenced or affected by those around her in terms of her reading, she is likewise 'affected' deeply by her work with handicapped children, her reading about the handicapped, or by novels where characters are placed in survival predicaments. This same reader, in her desire to feel and be affected by what she reads or does, will often start re-reading a book the minute she has finished in an effort to get more out of it. Since such reading behaviour is very much related to the fact that she will be subsequently discussing what she has read, and is as well very much tied in to her career and her circle of friends and interests of the family, it is difficult to penetrate the 'chicken/egg' question. What is certain is that much of the reading of reader 2 would appear to be dependent upon a milieu within which to explore, discuss or be influenced.

Reader 3 - female - aged 29 - professional - single

Sometimes I'll get a book and have it lying around. A friend will see it and say 'I'll read it'. Then if they don't like it I don't want to read it. I guess I'm like that in a lot of ways because it's the same with records or anything like that. I would never go into a store and look at records and buy them unless someone recommended them to me.

The fact that this reader is a voracious reader at all would appear to lie primarily in the influences of reading friends and a boyfriend who reads avidly. Living what appears to be a quiet life in a small community, this reader reads fiction exclusively, noting:

...things that aren't really true are more interesting. You don't expect something really exciting in somebody's life, or if you know what a person is well-known for anyway, you'll know that before you read the biography.

Reader 3 could probably be described as one of the least 'individualistic' readers in the study, particularly with regard to her reading which is

limited exclusively to bestsellers (which have been read by many others first so "they must be good"), novel versions of movies that have already been viewed such as Kramer vs. Kramer (since she knows ahead of time that she will like them), and books recommended by friends (since they will have read them). Unlike reader 2 who reads books to discuss, there is little reason for reader 3 to discuss a book after she has read it since it has already been discussed before by someone else in the recommendation. Tied in with this aspect of discussion, reader 3, unlike reader 2, has little reason to re-read a book.

The first three readers, all book buyers, appeared to have very different needs in their reading but yet they were all in some way related to social involvement. The next three readers, also all book buyers, appear to use fiction reading for purposes that would be related more to a quest for understanding society, a testing out of hypotheses about society, rather than a need to establish direct contact with society through books. All three are writers or aspiring writers whose use of fiction is definitely not for 'something to do'.

Reader 4 - female - aged 23 - professional - single

> *What you saw was what you got; there was no rereading it to get at why someone was doing something at a particular time, or why they would use a particular name because in mythology it means something; everything was superficial.*

This excerpt would appear to summarize an important reason why reader 4 avoids certain books. One of the important reasons given by this reader for reading what she reads is to find out how a particular writer handles an event or theme, and to speculate on whether in her own writing she might have handled the matter differently. Books are not to be taken lightly but rather to be purchased and constantly re-read and re-analyzed. Reader 4 is a person who

appears to thrive on discussions about books, and in part,reads with discussion in mind although one gets the impression that such dialogue could as easily be internal or written in the absence of external outlets. Reading would appear to be a socially and intellectually valued pursuit, nurtured by a father who read and sustained, in part, by the personal esteem it accords her and the explorations it facilitates. Unlike many of the readers who would read to fall asleep, this reader would assign the reading of fiction to her more alert parts of the day.

Reader 5 - female - aged 31 - professional - married without children

Maybe I take Canadian literature too personally, but Moore's latest novel deals with his attempt to find out who he really is.

This reader reads, writes, and to a certain extent lives Canadian fiction, and describes much of the activity as one of searching. Unlike reader 1 whose awareness of books in general is indicated through an abundant number of references to titles and authors, this reader refers specifically to characters who speak for their authors. For example when reader 5 mentions 'Duddy' or 'Joshua' she is really referring to Mordecai Richler; whereas other readers talk about someone as being their favorite author, this reader has so internalized the characters that she refers to an actual character. While books and discussions about books are certainly part of this reader's professional life, there is little suggestion that she has any occasion to discuss books in her private life, not unlike the situation with reader 4 for whom, one could not refrain from thinking, the searching-reading-writing triad affords the opportunity for internal dialogue. Such being the case external dialogue may be less important in social contacts.

Reader 6 - female - aged 33 - homemaker - married with three small children

I just never have the feeling of wanting to go into something full scale. Keith is always wanting to get a grasp on things, and have things under control. And I find it sort of so huge. Life is too short, and there's so much to learn and experience.

Where the last two readers appear to have an intensity and direction in their searching/reading, reader 6 who is nonetheless 'serious' in her reading tends to be much more haphazard in what she reads, when she reads and to a certain extent how she reads. For example, many of her books rather than personally chosen are received as gifts. Every room in the house is full of books/ and should this reader happen to be attracted to a particular book in a particular room,she confesses to be easily 'overtaken', engaging in her reading to the neglect of everything around her. She also appeared to be one of the most erratic readers in the study in that she might read nothing for several weeks, and then do nothing but read for several weeks. This haphazardness is evident in general discussion too in terms of the circularity of argument, with ends not quite meeting, and many unfinished statements. As a compensation for this same haphazardness that characterizes her style of reading, this reader has attempted to create structure through reading-discussion clubs and dinner parties organized around a novel as a predetermined after-dinner topic of discussion.

Readers 4 and 5 both seemed to create an internal social dialogue, while for reader 6 certain social contact served to provide direction in the reading.

Two readers who were equally analytical and knowledgeable about the fiction that they read, and who were also interested in writing, were two of the 'speculative fiction' or science fiction 'buffs' in the study. While certain

aspects of their reading serve very similar functions to the 'testing out of ideas' noted by readers 4 and 5, it is interesting to see how different social and antecedental factors contribute to their individual needs and interests in reading.

Reader 7 - female - aged 32 - laboratory assistant - single

Science fiction is the literature of ideas. It's the only avenue where you can explore 'what if's' as alternatives, and the effects of alien influences on humanity... The first time I read a book I'm so curious as to what will happen in ten pages that I pay little attention to what is happening on the page that I am reading. So I miss a lot of detail, and if it's a good book I enjoy going back and getting the detail. That's partly why I like to own books. I can go back when the mood strikes me.

The same sort of words were uttered by reader 4 in her quest for story as well as depth, and there are no doubt parallels between reader 4's reading to see how a particular writer handled a theme, and the reading of the 'what if's' in science fiction. Moreover, there would appear to be parallels between reader 7 and reader 5 in terms of their searching. What appears to differentiate the two is the concern for the here-and-now for reader 5 and the exploration through speculative alternatives for reader 7. To return to Harding's (1968) discussion of the approaches the different individuals have to other people, it is important to note that reader 7 has always been interested in science and mathematics. As well she is only marginally interested in local, national or international politics, and does not appear to have a great need for social contacts. It is possible that the reading of science fiction for this individual affords the opportunity for societal connection without being encumbered with direct involvement.

Reader 8 - female - aged 21 - university student - single

Science fiction is just a different way of looking at the world. It gives me a whole new perspective on things, not the world we are talking about, but it's something out there in somebody's mind.

Reader 8 like reader 7 aspires to write science fiction. As well, she is serious about her reading in that she likes to re-read and re-analyze. Where reader 7 is decidely apolitical, however, reader 8 is very active in politics, protest groups and various social movements. Moreover, she also would appear to be much more involved with other people in general so that her social base would appear to be much broader. Seeking depth in her reading and a self-understanding through the explorations of alien worlds as well as the immediate one, reader 8 would appear to have different social reasons for pursuing speculative fiction.

Both reader 7 and reader 8 are serious individuals, who seek meaning through their reading. Where the former has more cosmic interests, the latter would appear to have more concrete concerns in the immediate world. One of the intervening variables would appear to be external influence of social contact. Where reader 8 is particularly sustained in her reading by discussion with others with similar interests and a concern for alternatives, reader 7 would appear to be able to by-pass the present world, establishing more of her own internal dialogue in the same way as is evident with reader 5.

While these first eight readers are all relatively young, with similarities in educational background and book buying practices, there would appear to be only incidental similarities in their reasons for reading or their social environments. Even in situations where several readers might read the same books their reasons for reading them were different, their social situations varied, and there were signs that they also read these books differently. There were indications, however, that how they regarded people in general, or how they engaged in other activities in their lives, was often indicative of an approach to their reading. As a further indication of the

minimal contribution of factors such as age and education compared to general modus operandi in determining who reads, what, why and how, the next three readers to be discussed are all 43 years old, married with families, book borrowers, readers of similar material in terms of bestsellers, or recent popular works by writers such as Pierre Berton. As well, two have grade nine education.

Reader 9 - female - aged 43 - homemaker - married with one child

> *I get what I want from it reading ; I don't really care what someone else thinks I should want... I hate to be disturbed when I'm reading something good; I'll even save a chapter for morning when I know there won't be someone at me or the phone ringing.*

Reading for this individual would appear to be one of the few indulgent activities in which she had engaged during a life of missed opportunities; with illness as a child, few educational possibilities, a marriage of convenience, a handicapped child and responsibility for aging parents. At the age of 43 this reader gives every indication of being at least 20 years older, dotting her conversation frequently with allusions to getting older and with regrets about missed opportunities. Receiving nothing but discouragement from her husband who only reads nonfiction, she would appear to have invested a great deal of mental energy in perservering in her fiction reading. While this reader does have contact with some relatives who are fiction readers, there is a curious 'solipsism' about her reading which tends to preclude discussion. Moreover, she appears to feed on the inadequacies that she feels exist in her reading, rather than compensating. For example, her husband feels that she wastes time reading so much fiction. Consequently, she receives no encouragement and no practice in discussing what she is reading. Of all the readers in the study she was perhaps the most stymied by the task of talking about what it was that she liked about particular books, even in the most

superficial way. Her reading,then,is really like a clandestine friendship that is not fully consummated because it is seldom made public.

Reader 10 - female - aged 43 - homemaker - married with one child

When I go to the library I just pick up some books; I don't go for anything special... There's so many things I want to learn - that's the problem, you can't learn everything.

An open, easy-going person, reader 10 gives the impression of being energetic and willing to try anything once unlike the previous reader. While neither reader 9 or 10 are involved socially to any extent outside of the home, reader 9 merely regrets, while reader 10 jumps into every new endeavor because of its possibilities. Her comment about wanting to learn everything was verified all around her farm home where she engaged in bee-keeping, raising chickens, gardening, upholstering, sewing, bridge playing and conducting a small retail business in addition to the usual homemaking duties. Where reader 9 confessed to re-reading rather than launching into "some of that new stuff", reader 10 would avoid re-reading in a world where there was still so much left to read. As well, where reader 9 would avoid anything technical in her reading because it would be too difficult and not what she wanted, reader 10 would read it regardless of its difficulties by developing compensating strategies. Finally,where there were any number of genres such as science fiction and Harlequin romances which reader 9 did not like but apparently had never tried, reader 10 had tried almost anything and everything before rejecting.

Reader 11 - female - aged 43 - clerk - married with four children

I try to read what my seventeen-year-old daughter is reading. You've got to get together and discuss things with your family. You know, when you think of 17, it's very important to keep the lines of communication open.

What was of particular interest about the [redacted]re interview with reader 11 was that while the conversation was obs[redacted]ly about books and reading, it was really about her family, home, places she had lived, and projects in which she was involved. Of the three readers, reader 11 is without doubt the most socially involved through her job and family, and she shares aspects of both in her discussions about her reading. Like reader 10 there is some of the openness to trying anything once, although with reader 11 this openness would seem to be more related to concrete associations rather than an inner need to experiement. Like reader 10, too, with difficulties in her reading of technical materials she at least does not avoid them, and notes that she forces herself to slow down. Neither reader 10 or 11 read magazines while reader 9 is probably one of the most voracious magazine readers in the study. Given that reader 10 and reader 11 are both involved in community activities and 'busy-ness' in general, there might be speculation about the 'social' function which current news and women's journals might play.

Although all three readers read many of the same authors and the same types of books, it would appear as though they read them for different reasons and in different ways. For example, reader 9 would be most likely to read a bestseller because she had read so much about it in various magazines; reader 10 would be most likely to 'happen' upon a book with the attitude of 'why not?'. Reader 11 in her social network or through her family would be most apt to hear of a book and read it. For her the reading would inevitably involve a discussion afterward.

Readers 12 and 13, two of the male readers in the study, serve to confirm the minimal influence of age, and in their cases also education, socioeconomic

status, profession, family situations, acquaintances and reading interests, compared to the role of modus operandi in terms of why they read and how they read.

Reader 12 - male - aged 57 - retired military - married with grown children

Well, it's a mental exercise, the old whodunit deal. I find it's that way reading anything even the Enquirer... When I no longer have the urge to learn something, I think I'll go up and knock on the old age door and say "I'm going to watch the rest of the old people die along with me."

For reader 12, life is learning and there does not appear to be a social or literary situation from which he could not learn something. Of all the readers in this study, this reader would appear to have the greatest reserve of energy and a capacity to seek new experiences, in marked contrast to individuals such as reader 3, who at age 29 can think of nothing that she would still like to learn about. Reader 12 takes on new reading material with an open-mind, determined to finish anything he has started. Not unlike reader 10 he does very little re-reading since there is so much in the world left to read. With several fiction and nonfiction books 'on the go' simultaneously he is always seeking to know more. When asked if there was anything he wanted to improve about his reading his response was "everything!". While lamenting the dearth of like-minded social contacts, reader 12 seemed to compensate for any apparent gaps by throwing himself into every new experience in the same way as reader 10.

Reader 13 - aged 63 - retired businessman - married with grown children

I like to read what I read for what I want to get out of it. When I'm reading I want something on the go. I don't want something I've got to wade through. For instance, in a spy story I don't want a political aspect.

The two most outstanding aspects of the reading of reader 13 are that he is highly 'book fluent', dropping the names of more titles and authors than

almost anyone else in the study; and he is completely uninterested in non-fiction. In contrast, reader 12 with his interest in everything could scarcely be pinned down on a title or author. While reader 13 regards his own reading as motivated by a need for 'escape and enjoyment', not unlike reader 9, he, nonetheless, expects some mental exercise in the same way that crossword puzzles or bridge provide mental exercise. However, where reader 12 in his quest for 'mental exercise' would read every word, reader 13 would skip through, 'demanding' to be entertained. Where there is everything that reader 12 would like to improve about his reading, there is nothing that dissatisfies reader 13, nor is there anything that he would still like to learn. Reader 13 does have a network of social contacts who read similar materials, and one might speculate that much of his apparent 'book fluency' comes from the trading of titles and authors with these acquaintances, such that there is a sociability to his reading similar to the reading of reader 1.

Six more readers fall into the category of retired or soon-to-be retired. These six female readers, ranging in age from 57 to mid-sixties, serve to shed further light on the speculation that it is approach to the world in general, as much as anything that determines the reasons for reading, the way readers read, and perhaps the range of reading.

Reader 14 - female - aged early 60's - homemaker - married with grown children

To know what to do with one's self when health is gone - that's an important part of reading.

Reading for enjoyment, an important 'something to do' with a modicum of challenge, reader 14 is very much the female counterpart of reader 13, both figuratively as well as literally, since they apparently share books, titles,

and occasional games of bridge. Reader 14 regards reading as a pleasant addiction, something which fills in several hours a day and which serves a soporific function. Not unlike reader 9 she avoids what she perceives to be 'work' in reading and has no desire to change, but like reader 13 she enjoys the challenge of a good mystery or novel of intrigue in the same way she enjoys a good crossword. Both the 'mental exercise' of reading and the 'drugging' aspects are insulation against illness or insomnia. While a discussion about books, like a reading of books, is pleasant for this reason, it is likely that the 'investment' quality to the reading is more important than the sociability function noted with reader 13.

Reader 15 - female - aged 57 - retired nurse - married with grown children

I just like a good book. I like to get lost in it. A lot of people say they like these soap operas. My sister-in-law says 'it's the same thing - you can get lost'. I don't know. Reading, you can grasp things and maybe get them a little deeper into your life.

Reading for this reader serves a similar function to that to which reader 14 alludes. Lacking in social contacts or any particular dissatisfaction with her own abilities to read or knowledge in general, this reader has a very nonchalant approach to reading and her life in general. Reading mainly bestsellers and historical fiction, this reader appears to 'take away' very little of what she reads, being largely unaware of titles, authors or impressions of books. Curious about people and events, but not overly involved in social life, reading for this individual would appear to serve a function somewhat like that theorized by Harding; it is akin to gossip, serving to substitute social responsiveness for direct involvement.

While reader 12 is anything but retired from living and learning as is clearly reflected in his reading, readers 13, 14 and 15 are quite settled and satisfied. Readers 16 though to-19 while of similar age and 'consumers' of similar fiction as these aforementioned three readers, extend the range of their reading in general a great deal, place different demands on authors, and in general appear to approach life quite differently.

Reader 16 - female - aged 61 - retired professional - married with grown children

Well, the first hundred pages or so of The Eagle and the Raven was interesting because it was explaining all those things and I was learning something. But I wouldn't read it if it was work.

This reader, while reading much of the same espionage and historical fiction as read by reader 12, approaches it quite differently since she enjoys learning something along the way. If anything is worth knowing, she will pursue it to the fullest, following up an era covered in fiction with pertinent nonfiction whether it is biblical history or politics. Her allusion to 'work' would seem to signify that there is an optimum degree of challenge that is satisfied through learning via reading. She is a woman with a keen interest in the world around her, and was impassioned about the Quebec referendum on the day of the initial interview. While she does not have an extensive social network or contacts with whom she might discuss reading, it would appear as though she makes use of her reading to enhance her 'intellectual' world, not unlike reader 12.

Reader 17 - female - aged early sixties - retired professional married without children

I find myself turned off by American writers who, in my opinion, presume to write historical novels about England. I say 'presume' because they obviously haven't researched the thing, and in about a chapter of it I feel disgusted and close it.

'Knowledgeable' about the world socially and politically, 'opinionated' and 'achieving', are all adjectives which might be applied to this reader as well as reader 16 and reader 12. Authority and authenticity are important concepts not only in her reading, but also in her day-to-day life. She feels no great compulsion to finish a book, not because it ceases to be entertaining, or because it is work, but because the writer has failed to convince her of his authenticity. While both reader 12 and reader 17 appear to lament the 'intellectual desert' around them, their reading of fiction 'to learn something', as well as their extensive reading of nonfiction, appears to fill many of the intellectual gaps in their environment. Where reader 12 feels he learns from everything, reader 17 insists on authenticity as a means of satisfying her intellectual and social needs.

Reader 18 - female - aged 67 - retired secretary - married with grown children

If I'm going to do something I'll darn well do it well. If I take on a job I'm going to do it to the best of my ability. Otherwise I'd rather say no and not do it at all.

This reader is another one of the 'boundless energy' - 'I want to learn it all' individuals in the study. Reading an abundance of both fiction and nonfiction, particularly East Coast historical fiction such as that by Thomas Raddall, she notes that she would like to take a speed reading course so that she could get through more of his material. Her curiosity for a taste of everything takes her into a wandering approach to reading in a way similar to reader 12. While both she and her husband, also a reader, are retired from their careers, they are not retired from learning and living. This is particularly evident in the number of community affairs and activist groups in which reader 18 is involved. This outward seeking of what is new, reflected in the thirst for factual material in fiction and nonfiction, contrasts sharply with readers like 3, 9 or 13 who are satisfied to be 'en-

tertained' for a time.

Reader 19 - female - aged 68 - retired secretary - widow

We've kept on studying all of our lives. We went into things more deeply than just fiction.

This reader is, without doubt the most voracious reader in the study, and probably the most socially reclusive, lacking almost entirely in social contacts. However, this reader is anything but a recluse in her interests, reading and exploring a wide range of topics through fiction and nonfiction in what might be called an 'open' manner. In the past decade she and her husband embraced a new rural life, learned to restore an old farmhouse, took up gardening, bee-keeping and herb-growing. She is research oriented in her fiction and nonfiction reading such that her interest in people, places and events would appear to be satisfied through careful readings of many different types of books. While the absence of social contacts had prevented this reader from 'testing out' many of her impressions of life so that at times there is a curious 'ivory tower' approach to life, she nonetheless has a high degree of social responsiveness which is activated in her reading.

In looking more closely at these eight readers (12 through 19) there are some interesting parallels and contrasts. All, apparently, have always been readers. They have similar reading interests to the extent that they like authors such as Robert Ludlum. For three of these readers their reading is taken up almost exclusively by fiction--historical, espionage or romantic. While these three readers could not be described as anti-social, there appeared to be a general lack of interest or curiosity about the outside world, which is revealed in the comments that they made about their reasons for reading in terms of seeking some mental stimulation for themselves, and their apparent disinterest in wanting to learn more about a particular topic.

Five of the readers read both fiction and nonfiction. While these readers tended to lack social contacts with others, such a situation did not appear to preclude an interest in others. Their reading of both fiction and nonfiction seemed to serve a purpose of exploring the world.

In trying to account for these different approaches to reading and the world, in general, it seemed useful to look into antecedental factors; were there any patterns wherein readers had been loners as children, or had unusual experiences with reading? A 'quick and dirty' overview merely served to point out the circularity of the situation. The outward seekers, the readers who were curious, appeared to have always approached their reading as if they would learn something and had always appeared to derive a social satisfaction from their reading. Readers such as 13 or 14 had always appeared to be less broad in their interests, placed fewer demands on their reading, and to a certain extent, had real people who served a social function. Reader13 and 14 were more apt to test out their hypotheses about the world through direct discussion with others. Readers such as 12, 16, 17, 18 or 19 tested their hypotheses about the world through fiction and nonfiction.

A speculation that arises from such 'snapshots' is that a particular predisposition of being curious about the world moves one to seek validation or confirmation of one's views in the reading of fiction with the expectation that one will learn something. As well, a particular predisposition to ' amuse oneself ' through reading about others might lead one's fiction reading to take one even further away from an interest in other people. To explore further this element of predisposition toward the world or modus operandi, it seemed useful to look at younger adult readers who, because they were not retired, would have more opportunities for social involvement whether they needed it or wanted it, and as well, older readers who, because

of reduced physical capacity, would have less possibility for direct social involvement. In so doing it might be possible to see whether the social contacts that younger readers had were important to their reading, or whether older readers without as many social contacts still were interested in others.

Readers 20 through to 23 are all middle-aged and 'professionals' or married to professionals. All lead active lives and appear to have successful marriages and successful children who are just finishing high school or are entering university. In demographic ways, these readers are the junior versions of readers 12 through 19.

Reader 20 - female - early fifties - part-time professional - married teen-aged sons

Reading is what one must do in order to know what's going on in the world.

Reader 20 might be described as the 'informed reader', reading widely and voraciously from a range of political memoirs, current affairs, and social issues, interspersed with detective fiction, mysteries and historical romances, as well as many magazines. What is interesting in her discussions about her readings is her ability to rationalize the good in all her reading. She learns something from everything she reads. It is important with reader 20 as with reader 17 to 'keep up' socially, politically and cognitively. Books circulate within her nuclear and extended family, as do ideas. When certain types of reading are difficult for this reader, as in the case of constitutional matters, she sets aside the 'business' part of the day for such readings. While reader 20 is not a socialite, she is nonetheless, interested in all that goes on around her. Part of this interest is sustained in the wide range of magazines she reads in a manner not unlike reader 9.

Reader 21 - female - aged 55 - married with teen-aged and grown up children

Everything that I know that I've done in my life, I've done from reading. Like when I was raising my kids. I read books constantly about raising kids, I'm gardening now and I spent all week-end reading seed catalogues. I don't do anything without reading about it first. It really is an addiction. I never go anywhere without books.

Reader 21 has a myriad of interests and she reads about them all in an erratic fashion, her house being full of books with book marks. Her reading, too, begets new interests as she follows up topics encountered in novels through nonfiction. Currently her interest is in the occult, and she devours any book, fiction or nonfiction, on the subject. In some ways she is a bit like reader 1 or reader 7 in these binges. Her involvement in family is similar to that of reader 11. Like reader 11, too, her day-to-day contacts socially and through reading take her into a broader scope of reading. What she reads enhances her social or public life.

Reader 22 - female - early fifties - homemaker/volunteer - married with two teen-aged sons

I feel that life has enough sad patches in it - we've had enough problems of our own, without reading about everybody else's.

This inverterate reader of the historical romance and the popular biography avoids anything in print or on the screen that is gloomy or 'realistic'. This reader is a very vivacious person with lots of energy for any number of worthy causes such as the Red Cross, the animal shelter or the school band. While acknowledging that the gloomy and morbid exist, to read about such events rather than to act is unsatisfactory. Reading to her is not taken seriously, and she 'brashly' admits she would never finish a book unless it was worthwhile. Throughout the interview there is a certain 'so there' as also exists with readers 9, 13 or 14. Books are not read to be discussed such that whether reader 22 has extensive social contacts or not,

the basis for the contact is not reading. She does comment, however, that she does not bother with any people who are a "hassle" in the same way that she does not bother with such books. Reading for this reader is, and always has been, a pleasant pastime which is neither a substitute for life, nor an additional contact with real life.

Reader 23 - male - aged early fifties - businessman - married with two grown children

In everything I read, even in the type of mysteries I enjoy, you're looking at the old rags-to-riches business. Usually the hero is a Scotland Yard superintendant who is working his way up to being a pretty good fellow at the time, and the science fiction that I've most enjoyed and which has left the most impression on me was the same.

Reader 23 is a self-acknowledged 'escape' reader with a passion for science fiction. While he is relatively 'book fluent' in terms of titles and authors, his interest is more in the bare bones of the story and the 'living through' rather than any particular analysis of the writing. Both reader 23 and reader 12 have espoused the Dale Carnegie success formula so that in a certain sense this predisposition to the rags-to-riches formula is lived as well as read. Reading, for reader 23, is not a social affair; he has a great number of social contacts in his work so that his reading, which is entirely fiction, is what he regards as one of his 'indulgences' rather than related to anything cognitive.

What becomes obvious with these last four readers is the 'reading to learn through fiction and nonfiction' versus 'reading for enjoyment' dichotomy. While currently all four readers are involved outside the home, the latter two separate their reading from their doing; the former two bring reading to their outside contacts. Given the range of interests in these former two, and the limits to the reading of the latter, one cannot help but consider what will happen to their range of interests and satisfactions in life in

the absence of such extensive contact with the outside world. Readers 24 and 25, both retired and in their seventies, provide some corroborative evidence for the role of modus operandi and life situations in the relationship of reading to social life.

Reader 24 - female - aged 79 - retired professional - widow with grown children

My reading's not just been for myself and my home, but when I see what it's meant to the children in their homes, when I think of the young people in school, and the young people who come to me now and who will go over and pull out one of those books - that's my reading.

Reader 24, is without doubt, the most social reader in the group. Whenever she reads, she observes that she invariably has someone in mind who would also enjoy the book or who would like to hear quotations or excerpts. Living in a senior citizens home, she makes a point of sharing her books and her interests with those around her. Books, to her, are friends. Just as one would talk about one's friends to others, one might also want to actually introduce them, too. She expresses this 'books-as-friends' sentiment thus:

It's not everyone you'd want to visit with at the close of the day, but usually the right person comes along. It's just like that with books.

With a keen mind, and an interest in the world around her, reader 24 has a broad range of interests in both fiction and nonfiction. She always finishes any book she starts, not out of grim perseverance as do some, or out of a guarantee that something will be learned, but rather to give each human being (and author) his due. She is interested in whatever is new and keeps up through magazines and newspapers as well as through people. One gets the sense that she is the senior counterpart of reader 12 or reader 20. Her approach to living and reading contrasts sharply with reader 9 who is almost 40 years her junior or reader 3 who is at least 50 years younger. As well,

it is only necessary to look at the following aging individual, reader 25, to become aware of the role of modus operandi in the relationship between reading and social life.

Reader 25 - male - aged early seventies - retired professional - married with several grown children

I just read fiction for something to do. I'd like to find something to do. I get very bored.

While there were many readers in the study who were quick to point out that they did not read just for something to do, there is a note of resignation in the comments of reader 25 about life, in general, and about reading, in particular. What is interesting, however, is that reading always has been a time-filler for this reader--during the war when there was much time to be filled, and later in a busy work schedule which did not allow sufficient time for developing active outside interests such as curling or stamp-collecting but did allow for odd moments to be filled with reading. Books, for this reader, are not read to be discussed but rather to be consumed and completed, having served their purpose of filling up time in the same way that a meal fills up an empty stomach. The scope of reading for this reader is limited primarily to "swastika" fiction, rather than particular titles or authors. Reader 25 is almost as socially reclusive as reader 19, although in his case it would appear that he chooses not to be bothered with others. A curious disinterest in the people around or the books that are read reflect this withdrawal from life in general.

While it is premature to suggest that an individual such as reader 3 is already being set up to be reader 25 in fifty years, there is much evidence to support the possibility that without an interest in the outside world, the range of reading may become increasingly narrowed with reduced opportunities for social contact, and ultimately less satisfaction. Such an interest in

the outside world may not necessarily rest on immediate contact but rather on a predisposition to respond socially.

In pursuing further this notion of predisposition or 'approach to the world', there is evidence from some of the youngest readers in the study, particularly those who might be 'impressionable', that external influence might serve a function as far as expanding the range of interests of a reader. Thus, while readers such as reader 25 have possibly never felt the need for the company of others or involvement with others, there may be other readers who have had fewer opportunities, for whatever reason, to be involved with others such that a capacity for involvement, either directly or indirectly, may need to be triggered by literate external influences. The source of this speculation arises from the data on readers 26 through 32, all relatively young readers whose sphere of influence in some cases would seem to be related to the expansion or 'contraction' of their reading interests.

Reader 26 - aged 18 - high school student - single

I wish I could stop reading so much. It's kind of a drag, a compulsion. I can't stop. I read too much and I depend on it. I like reading and I know I've always got something I can read, but it would be nice to know that if I planned to do something I could do it without getting involved in a book.

Reader 26 is compulsive in her voraciousness. Somewhat of a social isolate, she spends most of her evenings and weekends as well as a number of school days engaged in reading a Zane Gray western or a Nick Carter suspense story. At some point, too, reader 26 will read the same book two days in a row, confirming her point that she really does always have something she can read. Presently she would appear to have few outside interests, although given the number of hours she is in school, the number of hours she spends reading, and the substance of what she reads, it is difficult for her to broaden her interests. She would appear to have trouble getting anything

out of nonfiction such that there is little opportunity for her to expand any interests through her reading. In many ways she is the junior version of reader 27 who likewise lacks in social contacts, literate or otherwise, seems disinterested in the immediate political world, and reads material which allows for little room for growth and expansion.

Reader 27 - female - aged 26 - clerk - married with two children

I read to get away from this life and into another life...and nonfiction, to me is this life. I'm not a factual person. I don't like to know what's going on in this world although I do.

The reading tastes of reader 27 include Zane Grey novels, mysteries and historical romances. Her life outside of a job and family is mainly taken up with fiction reading such that she appears to have few social contacts. Like reader 26 she is very much a re-reader and both readers would certainly read even more if they did not have other commitments. Both are totally involved in reading that is not subject to external influence and which lacks in the potential for expansion. In essence they tend not to discover new topics in their reading, unlike reader 21, since the potential in the material simply is not there. Whether it is a lack of curiosity about new things, or a lack of actual external influences, that seems to preclude 'expanding' their reading into other topics or genres is not clear. However, a slightly senior version of reader 26 or 27, reader 28, serves to provide evidence on the role of external influence in broadening the scope of reading and the approach to books. This reader, as described below, has only recently become involved in a social circle which includes readers of less-formula-bound material who, as well, talk about their reading.

Reader 28 - female - aged 30 - clerk - married with no children

I find that I get into different moods. Like right now all the books I got are autobiographies. And sometimes I will go into the fiction section and get a - well, it's not trash; no book

is trash, but something that's fast and easy, like a detective or something. I think I'd like to stop reading as much trash as I do but I can't stop right now.

This same vaguely self-effacing manner about her reading carries over into personal life. For example she appears to regret not having taken the academic route in school since professional options are non-existent. Moreover, while she would appear to be happy in a second marriage, there is no intellectual basis since her husband does not share in her reading interests at all. Her self-esteem is not high and one gets the impression that this is part of her reading, too, in that her moods take her to Ellery Queen-'trash-but-not-really-trash' books, as well as recent biographies which she feels are more worthwhile. She notes that in her previous marriage to someone who did a lot of reading she read 'better' things. Without that influence she has found her tastes slipping, although this slipping appears to have been more obvious to her now that she has a circle of friends who also read.

Seemingly, with readers such 26, 27 or 28 there may be necessary a modicum of influence in order to expand or broaden reading interests. None of these three readers seemed to be sufficiently curious or interested in the new on his own. Readers too, even once having had this influence, can easily lapse into a narrower approach to life and books in its absence as is the case with reader 29.

Reader 29 - female - aged 34 - homemaker - married with one child

Well, when I choose books it's usually hit or miss. Saturday at the library and what looks good.

While this reader has always been, in part, an escapist reader, soaking up James Bond novels during exams at university, the range of reading at other times and under different circumstances has also included more serious fiction

as well as nonfiction. Presently, however, she has no desire to read anything but that which is light and entertaining, and she speeds through books on the occult or detective mysteries. She notes no shifts in her fiction reading other than in the range. Cut off from most outside literate contacts, home all day with an infant, and married to someone who does not read at all, there are no outside sources in her life who would sustain a broader approach to reading. Moreover, she is perfectly content in this approach. She notes that in the past she has had trouble with nonfiction; now without the outside pressure she has abandoned anything 'heavy'. Without either outside influence, or an internal interest in the outside world, the approach to fiction reading again remains somewhat narrow.

Readers 30, 31 and 32 provide evidence of the power of influence and/or the desire to 'keep up' that might intervene in the range of reading.

Reader 30 - female - aged 39 - professional - married with two children

Two or three people, men and women, who I think have really good minds and they enjoy seeing a certain development of plot in a mystery that is tight, controlled and a good, well, I would say that if they said such-and-such is good, whether I knew the author or not, I would read it. Because I would feel that they know what's good writing and good reading...

This reader, who reads one hour after work, Sunday afternoons and just before bed is far from being the most voracious. However, she is probably representative of the person whose reading is in part a social activity in terms of promoting conversation, as well as a source of intellectual satisfaction because she feels it is a worthwhile activity. Part of her satisfaction in reading would appear to be derived from these aforementioned reasons. She also reveals a certain ' discrimination' about her reading as is evidenced in her distinction between hard-bound and soft-bound books, thick and thin novels, and the importance of reading and advanced education. While

her reading is, to a certain extent haphazard, this may only be because her contacts are haphazard. In any case there would appear to be a definite need for contact with others about reading in order to maintain a 'with-it-ness'. This reader likes to have a structure and direction as far as her reading is concerned, not only in terms of timeliness and approval by others, but also in the nature of the material to be read:

> *Basically I don't like a book if it's not really a story, if it's just outpourings of the feelings and the thoughts where there doesn't seem to be any direction in which they are going.*

There needs to be a particular point to what she reads. While certainly much better educated than readers like 28 or 29, reader 30 nonetheless would appear to have taken on depth and breadth to her reading primarily as a result of external influence.

Reader 31 - female - aged 33 - homemaker/part-time professional - married with one child

> *I can't read for the sake of reading; I've got to be interested in it.*

In the same way that there must be something intrinsically worthwhile about one's reading for it to be socially useful as in the case of reader 30, reader 31 expresses a note of condescension about doing anything just for the sake of doing it. Jogging is to keep fit, eating yogurt is to keep healthy, and reading is to keep the mind alert. Where reader 30 needed external influence to maintain this stance, reader 31 has a strong inner need for doing what is worthwhile and would need little external contact for maintenance. Reader 31 goes to great lengths to keep herself up on things, to keep herself active, organized and busy. What appears to be significant about this reader is not so much her compulsion to read as her compulsion to be engaged in useful and worthwhile activities. To avoid any associations with idleness in reading,

she reads only after the house is clean, and sits in an upright position, on a chair as opposed to a bed; the reading material is usually something having hard covers. There is a certain commonality between reader 30 and 31 in this regard. For reader 31 much responsibility is placed on the author. Finishing a book is not a must nor is re-reading it. Each writer gets his due but not overly so. In the course of a day this reader sets aside time for the business of nonfiction, not unlike reader 20. Moreover, reader 20 and reader 31 are the only readers in the study who regularly make use of card catalogues in their selecting of books. Both have a plan of what they intend to read and a long list of requests in at the library. Both seem to regard what they read as being proper and good because of their approach to these books. Where readers 28 or 29 might read the same books as reader 30 or 31, their approach to enjoyment and escape would preclude their worrying about whether they were reading good books or not.

Reader 32 - female - aged 33 - homemaker - married with two children

When I go to the library I know what I want, and I'll either get all novels or something that I can learn from.

Reader 32 is actively involved in the fiction and nonfiction she reads and, like reader 2, she tends to be touched by it all. She reads to experience. This reader is probably the most politically aware in the group and appears to have always been so. While her educational background has been limited, she is surrounded by friends who read a lot, discuss a lot and who are much better educated. However, it is likely that rather than reading broadly solely because her contacts have influenced her, she has sought out contacts because she was aware of the need to know more about a particular issue. In this way, too, she is like reader 2. They book seek out experiences. While

reader 32 would also appear to have 'escapist' tendencies in her fiction reading she has taken on much non-escapist fiction as well as much nonfiction.

In looking at readers 30, 31 and 32 it is hard for one to avoid the circular question: does the external influence get a reader into reading more nonfiction and fiction more deeply, or is it a basic interest in the outside world which leads a reader into relationships that would serve to expand the reading? Would individuals such as reader 15 or reader 26 broaden their interests under the external influence of literate friends who read as would be appearing to happen with reader 30, or is it that they really have a predisposition to avoid social contact as in the case of reader 25?

SOCIAL RESPONSIVENESS AND READING

On the basis of these snapshots of fiction readers a number of speculations have already arisen about the relationship between one's modus operandi in terms of social involvement, participation, integration or responsiveness and the range, depth, purposes and processes involved in a particular individual's reading. In looking at the data in the light of the 'foreshadowings', it would appear as though there is no strong support for the findings in the Hajda (1963) study that readers of fiction are necessarily well integrated socially or actively involved in the world around them. While it has already been acknowledged that the sample may have been 'biased' in terms of the number of retired individuals or those who have no direct contact with the outside world, it is nonetheless clear from the data that the most reclusive individuals were not necessarily the most detached or unresponsive socially. Mental involvement as revealed through a curiosity about others and the world in general would appear to be a more useful working definition for

social integration than would physical involvement: This might be evidenced too by the fact that many of the readers who had retired physically gave no indication of ever having been actively interested in the world around them. Many young readers had a disinterest in the world around them too.

Stereotyped notions of fiction readers 'lost in a make-believe-world', would not appear to be without grounds on the basis of superficial analysis of the data. For example, few of the readers appeared to be actively involved in the world around them in a physical sense. In addition to the fact that only one-half of the readers worked outside the home in any case, there were indications that of those who worked outside the home many did their work for eight hours and came home to read. As well, some of the readers who were most actively involved in the world around them such as reader 21, still were in a 'make-believe' world when it came to reading.

Moreover, only ten of the readers appeared to have any close friends or close social contacts. While no one was asked directly if he had a best friend or a close friend, all were asked if they had close friends who read, or if they had any friends with whom they discussed books. Several regarded themselves as living in an 'intellectual desert', some had no contacts whatsoever.

In addition to having few friends and few opportunities for physical involvement outside the home, there were many who appeared to be disinterested in politics, community affairs or newspaper reading. However, the most apolitical were not necessarily the most asocial. Reader 13, for instance, had lots of friends but seemed to care little about knowing of the world around him. Reader 25 had the full potential for lots of social contacts, but chose not to participate and appeared to be disinterested in the political world.

In contrast, reader 19 had no social contacts but was extremely curious about the world around her both socially and politically.

While it is to be acknowledged, then, that many of these readers do appear to fit a number of the stereotypes of the fiction reader, the data cannot be ignored. For example, readers 12, 16, 19 and 20 use their fiction reading to acquire knowledge, to gain an impression of an event, or another interpretation of something that they might have read about in nonfiction or heard on television. While all four were without extensive social contacts, they knew a great deal of what was going on around them, were curious about the world, and satisfied much of that curiosity through the reading of both fiction and nonfiction. Readers 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 used fiction to explore aspects of their own identity or the nature of the society around them. For reader 24, other people with whom she might eventually share her reading were ever-present in her mind as she read. There are readers, then, whose approach to the world and other people takes them into a variety of genres of reading material, for a variety of purposes, not the least of which might be to shed light on the world around them, and possibly through a variety of strategies.

There is evidence to suggest that reading does serve definite social functions in the lives of the readers, either towards other people or inward and away from other people. The question arises as to how, why, and under what circumstances? Related questions arise as to whether fiction readers have always been without social contacts or whether it is a phenomena of adult life or advanced adult life as in the case of many of the readers. As well it may be necessary to consider how antecedental factors in early life affect this <u>modus operandi</u> and the need for social contacts.

Thus, while personal orientation, or modus operandi, would appear to shed some light on who reads what, why and how, the context in which particular predispositions toward the world arise cannot be ignored. External influence might come in the form of other people, other books, or a television program. For example, from the life-history snapshots it would appear as though people, who lack social contacts, and who also, for whatever reasons, steer away from reading nonfiction may be likely to become increasingly narrow in their approach to books, and to possibly derive less satisfaction from reading over time.

Further speculation is not possible with regard to the role of external influence of even 'predisposition toward the world' without some understanding of how people regard fiction reading, how it is regarded by the significant others around them, why it is that they avoid contact with others who read or seek contact with others who read, or the nature of the satisfaction that they derive from fiction as opposed to nonfiction. In short the 'dialectics' of fiction reading in general warrant attention.

SUMMARY

To return to the 'snap-shot' metaphor, it is not possible to fully consider why the subject stands this way, rather than that, or why a particular expression appears on his face at the moment of the shuttle-pressing without understanding the social context. While part of that social context inevitably includes the relationship between the photographer and 'subject', it also includes antecedental factors and general life-situation of the individual. As will be discussed in Chapter 6, people are shaped by the world around them and a study of any form of behaviour may be as much a study of reactions as well of as actions.

CHAPTER 6

THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF FICTION READING

FORESHADOWING

> And while the abilities of the nine-hundredth abridger of the History of Mankind, or of the man who collects and publishes in a volume some dozen lines of Milton, Pope and Prior, with a paper from the Spectator, and a chapter from Sterne, are eulogized by a thousand pens - there seems almost a general wish of decrying the capacity and under-valuing the labour of the novelist... "I am no novel reader" - "I seldom look in novels" - "Do not imagine that I often read novels" - "It is really very well for a novel". Such is the common cant. "And what are you reading Miss." "Oh it is only a novel!" replies the young lady, while she lays down her book with affected indifference, or momentary shame... Now, had the same young lady been engaged with a volume of the Spectator, instead of such a work, how proudly would she have produced the book and told its name...
>
> (Jane Austen, Northanger Abbey, p. 22)

The frames presented in Chapter 5 must be placed into a context since what people say and do is inevitably related to what came before. The purpose of this chapter is to consider the social, historical and educational components of context insofar as they relate to fiction reading.

The story genre has persisted for centuries and it is not possible to state with any certainty just how many thousands of years man has told or listened to stories. The oral tradition has been around for more years than the written and as Lesser (1957) notes, by the time man had learned to read and write, a great deal of wisdom had already been amassed in story form. For example, stories about man's place in the universe evolved early such that, as Lesser observes:

> It must have seemed natural to man, from a very early period in his sojourn with this planet, to turn to this image of his experience, his wishes and fears (p. 3).

Children are able to listen to and make up stories from a very early age, and their imaginative play is the very essence of fiction. Two-thirds to three-quarters of the leisure time reading of adolescents and adults is devoted to fiction (Lesser, 1957) and other types of leisure activities such as movie attendance and television viewing are taken up with the story genre. Curiously, however, our awareness of our appetite for fiction appears to go unnoticed in our eagerness to satisfy it:

> It is perhaps less a matter for wonder, though not I think without significance that the activity is almost never accorded praise. The reading of fiction is seldom proscribed or strenuously opposed. Like an old dog by the fire, it has an accepted place in the scheme of things. But it appears to be suffered rather than honored (Lesser, 1957, p. 4).

Although there is evidence to suggest that the story genre is both entertaining and facilitative of improved recall of certain textual information (Furniss, 1979), expressions such as 'to sit back with a good book' tend to connote an element of passivity or spectatorship (Harding, 1961), and it may be this seemingly effortless aspect of fiction reading that is disparaged. As well, Laski (1981) has noted:

> The appetite for story, even still for written story has always led to imposed conditions for its enjoyment. Not to be read on the Sabbath, or when outdoor sports are available. Not to be read until censored. To be art or nothing (p. 20).

Indeed, Leavis (1932) charges that the "value of reading is proportionate to the amount of difficulty it offers" (Cited in Lesser, 1957, p. 5). Such a view, however, tends to suggest that complexity rests entirely in the subject matter or the text. But what is effortless for one reader may be effort for another. A reader may choose how deeply he wishes to go into a particular

text in order to derive satisfaction in the same way that he might listen to a Bach fugue or a composition by John Lennon on a number of different levels. In reading, it may be easier to describe why it is that we took up a particular 'informational text' since we might say that we learned this or that. After a reading of Marian Engel's Lunatic Villas it may not be easy to explain what was 'good' about it.

What propels us from one novel to another is not easy to say although Lesser (1957) suggests that both motivation and the activity itself may be far more serious than has been thought. Escarpit (1972) notes of fiction reading:

> Hardly anyone says now that reading is 'all right for women', but there is still a widespread feeling that reading is good for other people, particularly it is implied, those 'who have nothing better to do' (p. 9).

That such attitudes prevail in face of the pervasiveness of the activity tends to preclude a serious investigation of fiction reading, and perhaps, for many a serious reading of fiction. Sutherland's (1981) recent research on the popular novel takes on an aura of contempt for the 'story consumer' and the object of his consumption which is treated sui generis. Pici (1980) recently describes an aspect of the fiction reading syndrome as 'readaholics anonymous' while Wilson (1958) writes of detective story readers:

> ... (they) feel guilty, they are habitually on the defensive and all their talk about well-written mysteries is simply an excuse for their vice, like reasons that the alcoholic can always produce for a drink (p. 152).

One is left to speculate that the way fiction readers approach reading, what they read, how they read, and what they have to say about their reading and to whom, are likely to be affected by such attitudes. Short of the respectability of 'literary criticism' or the occasional article in a journal of popular culture on the reading of 'literature', the social or educational

implications of an activity which is engaged in by readers for hundreds of hours a year is largely ignored. The questions that arise relate to how such prevailing attitudes affect the reading behaviour of fiction readers. What attitudes do fiction readers hold of their reading? How do they perceive the way others react to their reading? What societal issues about fiction reading arise? How are dominant attitudes related to why it is that readers read? What are the antecedental factors in fiction reading?

ATTITUDES OF FICTION READERS TOWARD FICTION READING

The data on attitudes toward their own reading were elicited from readers in an indirect manner in different ways from different readers. For example, with some the statement: "I understand you do a lot of fiction reading" elicited attitudinal data. With others responses to questions like "Is there anything you would want to improve or change about your reading?" or "Do you and your husband read the same type of material?" included an indication of attitude. There appeared to be three main attitudes toward fiction reading, two paralleling closely the 'prevailing views', and one that took a more positive view. As well, some readers included what they felt to be some of the dominant views of fiction reading, regardless of whether they personally held such views.

Apology

Eight of the 32 readers made some form of apologetic comment regarding their reading. Even in the initial telephone contact, this view was expressed by several. For example:

I - I understand you do a lot of reading.
R - *Oh, well, I just read novels and that sort of thing*
I - But that's what I'm interesting in - fiction reading.
R - *Oh wait until I tell my husband; he's always telling me I should be doing some real reading.*

In the course of the actual interviews another reader commented that a lot of her fiction reading was a 'lower form'. One reader was ashamed to say how much fiction reading she did in the course of a day. Another reader wondered if her reading was a waste of time since she could not even recall the names of many of the books she had read, or even what they were about. Finally others commented that they were not terribly proud of what they read sometimes, and that it might be considered trash.

Defense

Almost one-half of the readers included somewhere in their comments an aspect of defensiveness, not unlike that to which Wilson (1958) alludes. It would seem that this defensive attitude must be particularly pervasive since the readers were being sought out in a 'positive' light. Regardless, several of the readers at the very beginning of the interview were quick to point out that whereas they did do a lot of fiction reading, it was not because they were lacking in other things to do, or lacking in opportunities to read more 'worthwhile' books, making comments such as:

Yes, I read fiction <u>but</u> I also read nonfiction.

Yes, I read fiction, but a lot of it is really like nonfiction you know. You still learn something.

For some readers it seemed to be important to learn something from everything they read, even if it was just a fact related to the current value of the English pound in an Agatha Christie mystery, and it seemed important that this be made clear in the interview. It would appear from the spontaneity in which such comments were made, that readers were 'used to' making

them. One reader, in particular, noted this in terms of the quantity of fiction read since a number of people, including those at the library often expressed a disbelief in the amount she actually read. Her stock comment apparently was:

I don't sleep; I read!

Three others noted that it was their right to read what they wanted, and indeed felt that they could "pamper" themselves through their reading. Since there was no suggestion in the line of questioning that they ought not to indulge themselves, there is again the impression that they were used to making such comments.

Another type of defensiveness surfaced in the form of establishing personal hierarchies for fiction reading. While readers were generally asked if there was any type of material that they never read, their responses usually included a suggestion of 'inferior' status rather than superior or just neutral. As well, where readers might have acknowledged that different people have different tastes, they were more likely to make comments such as:

> *Well, I read a lot of fiction, but there are people who read lots worse than me.*

> *My neighbour likes horror stories, and she reads love stories a lot more - True Love and Harlequin romances; to me that's not reading. I mean that's her opinion; she has her own choice of what she reads; but to me that's just something to do.*

The Harlequin romance received an almost unanimous 'eschewing' even by those who read them, with dismissals such as 'little love stories' or 'light and fluffy' books. Many people were quick to point out in the early moments of the interview that Harlequins were what they did not read. Since the local library did not stock Harlequin romances, their defense was perhaps less than necessary. Of the three people who did read these romances, two pointed out (a) that such reading was really akin to taking a sleeping tablet, and (b)

they always purchased them at flea markets so there was no great outlay of money. A good night's sleep was worth the 25 cents investment. As one reader noted:

> *I couldn't even bear to think of paying a dollar and a half for one of those Harlequins. You see them coming through the shopping centre. I think there's four of them [Harlequins] on stands by the checkout. People will take three or four. That sort of boggles my mind that people will pay that much for those... At K-Mart food the other day I was particularly taken aback - there was a girl ahead of me who didn't look very well off, and she had four!*

While the Harlequin romance did appear to be at the 'bottom' in terms of quality of fiction, it should be mentioned that almost everybody's choice of books would have been frowned upon by at least one or two other people in the study. For example, although a number of people read westerns written by Louis L'Amour or Zane Grey, at least one reader commented that she had a girl-friend who once became so desperate for something to read that she actually read one of her husband's westerns. One female reader eschewed writers such as Norah Lofts and Jean Plaidy, although she acknowledged that women her age usually liked them. Some readers specifically mentioned the 'cops and robbers' variety that their husbands read; others avoided anything with harsh language or pornographic references. Three readers avoided female authors whom they regarded as 'flighty'. Since the majority of the readers in the study were women, this aspect may have been less apparent than if the study had included a greater number of men. Foster (1936) had found that male fiction readers, in particular, tended to prefer books written by their own sex.

These dismissals of certain genres were mainly volunteered statements such that they are probably a good reflection of what people genuinely disliked and avoided. Some genres such as science fiction rarely came up in volunteered statements although if mentioned in passing many of the readers dismissed them. One might speculate that some reading material is so 'out of the reader's consciousness' that it is unworthy of mention. Science fiction may have been such a genre for many of the readers.

A final type of defensiveness that arose appeared to be related less to the type of book read, as the way it was chosen or the circumstances under which it was read. For instance, two of the readers regularly made use of the card catalogue and the request system at the library to procure their books which in many cases were the same ones chosen randomly by other readers in the study. Seemingly, they felt this provided more 'direction' to their reading. They were not just reading for 'the sake of reading'. Others would insist that whatever they read be authentic, such that the same novel which was read by ten other readers in the study for a good story and nothing else, was 'processed' by another reader because it was worthwhile and authentic. Several readers avoided reading paperbacks,or included in their comments references to a good 'hardback book', noting:

> *I hate to read a paperback. I think it's the paper. I'm not comfortable with it. I'm not going to buy them because I know I won't enjoy them. If they were in hardcover I'd buy them.*

This same sentiment seemed to be related to the circumstance under which the reading takes place:

> *I can't read lying down; I don't care to read lying down...Now Dave's sister will read everything, but I think she just reads for escape. She lives in a hovel for no reason... And she reads when she has dishes in the sink, dishes to the ceiling and she wouldn't even know, but she reads everything. She reads for the sake of reading and I don't.*

Elevation

Two situations or contexts seemed to 'promote' the importance of fiction reading, and hence counteract the apologies and the rationalizations. Readers who were married to non-readers, particularly those who had problems reading themselves or had never been motivated to read, usually had a more positive opinion of their own reading. As well, those readers who had been involved in literary criticism in high school or university, or who exercised opportunities to talk to a number of people about their reading in a somewhat analytical sense, seemed to value their fiction reading. Context through external influence seemed to be important, too. When fiction reading was taken seriously enough to warrant using time for 'literate' discussions, it was no longer something that had to be rationalized, defended or legitimized.

Direct Comments on the Societal View of Fiction Reading

In addition to the readers' personal reactions to questions about fiction reading, there were a number of individuals who gave indications of how people around them have regarded fiction reading. For example, they included comments to the effect that they had been teased as children about their reading, or had been the object of jokes which were usually dismissed lightly. The brothers of one voracious reader had presented her with a Christmas present of a book case as a joke. Others had been labelled as 'nose-in the-book' types which they made no effort to live down:

> *If I was ever left in a room with a book and told to keep the fire going, it would always go out.*
>
> *There was one girl in our house, and we went out and locked the door, leaving her in there by herself. We eventually came back and apologized to her for locking her in but she didn't even know we'd been out. Still reading!*

With a note of pride, the following anecdote was offered:

> *We were in Montreal a few years ago visiting a girl friend; we were just sitting there and I picked up a magazine. I got interested in what I was reading, and all of a sudden my girl friend looked over and said to me 'well I see you're still reading; you haven't changed a bit. You still have your nose in a book.'*

However, although there were some positive attitudes expressed toward their reading, it would appear as though readers in the study had internalized many of the prevailing views held of fiction reading as a second-class activity. Obviously there were contexts which appeared to nurture fiction reading in an elevating, positive light rather than in disparaging terms. It seemed useful to look more closely at the comments of those readers whose attitudes toward fiction reading were negative, in order to come to some understanding of the role of context for these readers. Because there were more women in the study, there were naturally more negative comments given by women. However, given that fiction reading appears to be more of a female activity, it seemed necessary to explore fiction reading briefly as an issue pertaining to the roles and status of women.

FICTION READING AND WOMEN

The speculations about fiction reading as a 'second-class' female activity arose through a discussion of several different topics in the interviews: reading habits of husbands or boy friends, characteristics of a good reader, the need for improvement in certain areas of reading, the role of their reading in the 'family', and situations under which reading occurred. Data on the second-class nature of fiction reading took a number of different forms.

Societal Attitude: 'It's all Right for Women'

Several of the female readers expressed the view that fiction reading is what you would expect women to do. For example, one reader noted that probably a lot of husbands objected to their wives' reading, the assumption being that it is an activity engaged in primarily by women and/or people who have lots of time. On these grounds she excused the fact that her working husband never read, and as well her daughter-in-law because she, too, worked One husband would barely allow fiction into the house although he did not appear to object to reading in general:

> *He doesn't believe in fiction; he thinks it's garbage, a waste of time. 'If you've got time to do nothing, mow the lawn or wash a wall.' But read that trash!*

The husband of one of the readers had recently read the Carpetbaggers which he had apparently enjoyed, but resented the amount of time it took to read, considering it a waste of time. The son of another reader had observed that since his mother could and did learn so much from reading nonfiction, it was a waste of time for her to be reading so much fiction. Finally, one of the readers offers the following insight into the 'societal view of fiction reading':

> *The fellows don't read as much. I don't know whether it is the way they are taught in school, reading is a chore... You know, boys are always out riding their bicycles or something, they're more active.*

Contexts in Which Reading Takes Place

Well over half of the readers were married or engaged to people who did no voluntary reading whatsoever. In only three cases did a spouse or boy friend read as much as the reader queried. Another nine were married to spouses

who did some reading but who could certainly not be regarded as 'avid'. Of these nine readers, three read nonfiction exclusively. Thus even in situations where the habit of reading might have been shared, the type of reading was not.

In looking at the view that spouses might hold of their wives' reading, it appeared that only four readers were openly discouraged in the quality or quantity of what they read. However, such attitudes may perform the same function as the attitudes of individuals who disapprove of their spouse's hunting habits or smoking habits; they do it regardless. A more 'subversive' force appeared in the form of those husbands and families who were less vocal about time spent reading but whose actions signalled their disapproval.

Ten of the readers noted 'guilt' situations where they really wanted to read, but yet they did not want to shortchange their husbands and families in terms of spending time with them. Consequently they appear to have learned to compensate through the apologetic and defensive attitudes expressed earlier: "it's fiction but...", and as well through more direction action. For example, several readers noted that they always tried to sit in the livingroom to read while the rest of their family watched television. Thus, they kept an eye on the proceedings and another on their book. Others sped through their housework early in the day so that they would be free to read before it was time to start lunch or dinner. Others saved up the ending of a book to read after everyone else was in bed, or awoke early so they could read before everyone else was awake. Most carried books with them to read in the car and to read while waiting for children at swimming class or the dentist. Much of their reading too, was often done outside while the children were playing so that they would be nearby in case of accident or argument. As well, readers noted that they would snatch up a book while dinner was cooking. In short, the quality of time that many of the readers

were able to devote to reading could hardly be described as 'serious' or 'uninterrupted'. Their conversations were dotted with such comments as:

> *My husband could read much faster than me and could absorb and hold material better. I always felt that it was because I read too sketchily - you know one eye on the children...*
>
> *I'm very bad at reading up on how to do things and can only read for so long on anything. It's a habit I guess. I have been used to picking up a book and reading while the potatoes are boiling, and putting it down again, that sort of thing.*
>
> *I find it difficult if I'm fixing a meal even in my microwave to sit and wait for something to get done. And if I can have a book in my left hand and stirring with my right hand, then it's not a total waste of time because I resent having to cook in the first place. Often someone will come in the kitchen and I'm sitting on the floor, crouched in the corner reading because I'm waiting for something on the stove.*
>
> *When the children were younger I was too tired to concentrate.*
>
> *I'd spend hours giving a baby a bottle and reading. That's when I did my most reading.*

Given the situations under which much of their reading practice is done, it is perhaps not surprising that many of the female readers had the particular problems in reading that they did.

Problems in Reading Noted by Women

Female readers pointed out that there was an inferior quality in their reading in terms of strategies and approaches two different ways: in response to questions about what they would like to change or improve about their reading, and who they thought would be better readers, themselves or their husbands.

Many of the 'one-eye-on-the-children' readers appeared to find it difficult to read nonfiction, in part, because they were used to employing

skimming and skipping strategies with their fiction reading. Whether they had always used such strategies and hence were able to fit in reading with house-keeping, or whether they had developed such strategies in reaction to the situations in which they were placed was not clear. Certainly anyone who has ever tried to finish off a chapter in a book with a child in the background demanding to be fed, changed or protected from the neighborhood bully will recognize the necessity for speed, as well as the difficulty of reading anything which requires much concentration. Thus, one might speculate that because they cannot give reading their full attention, their approach to it and what they 'take away' will be qualitatively affected. Because it has been approached less seriously and there is less to show for it, it may be that fiction reading acquires the secondary status it does.

Male readers whose attention is less apt to be taken away from their reading by household demands might be expected to read differently. Regardless of the way they read, however, it may be that males in our society even in preschool, and in early school experiences may be encouraged to be more fact oriented, and hence moved to read more nonfiction materials from which one might take away more facts. Reading habits nurtured in such a context may give way to a more serious approach to reading. As well, since many of the husbands appeared to read different material from which they would 'take away' more in any case, their reading might be expected to contribute further to the second-class, effacing attitude that many women have adopted toward their own reading. When women were queried on their reading abilities, the following types of comments were usually made:

> *My husband and I can be reading something in a newspaper and I can be through it in half the time he is. But when we get through and are discussing the item, he has retained a lot more, such as what actually was said. I may give the highlights but not every word... I don't get as much from it as he does.*

> *I read a lot and I know what I'm reading, but I really think my husband gets more out of it. Maybe it's his memory.*
>
> *My husband is a better reader in the sense that he could remember what he reads; he had a photographic memory for what he reads.*
>
> *My husband's a better reader than I am. I mean he's got a memory like a steel trap; anything he reads stays in there.*
>
> *T. is really a good reader. We had the Book of Lists here one night so we just took the book and went through it. And he remembered everything. Like he's got a better memory for what he reads.*
>
> *My father gets into his reading a lot more, like trade journals or technical books and things like that.*

What is interesting about these comments on relative reading ability is that invariably they are made with regard to people who read nonfiction. In other words, either through conversation or direct observation, these fiction readers have observed that they did not recall the same things as their husbands, but they did not seem to be as aware of the fact that (a) they were not reading the same type of material, (b) they may have been reading for different reasons, (c) they had been reading under different conditions, and (d) to recall word-for-word, or make use of a 'memory like a steel trap', may preclude an enjoyment of certain aspects of literature.

In contrast, one of the male readers less humbly noted of his fiction and nonfiction reading:

> *Well, what almost destroyed my reading was my technical background. You get the meat out of a paragraph, and that's all you take out. And I sometimes carry this over; you have to be awfully careful to separate the two.*

Another male reader also differentiated the two, without apology:

My livelihood depends on accurate interpretation of the material that I'm given. But this is a different matter. I read fiction to escape.

In addition to the absence of any apology about their fiction reading it should be noted that the reading of all four male readers in the study appeared to be accorded more status in general by their wives, than would be the case for most of the female readers in the study. None of these male readers appeared to feel that they had to offer any justification for what they read or when they read. All four had at their disposal all that time which might be given over to maintaining a house or day-to-day living. As well, all four had a secluded spot such as a study in which they could read. At the risk of over-stating the case, there is evidence to suggest that the context in which a reader reads, and how his reading is regarded by those around him, may affect how he approaches various reading situations and how he actually processes various forms of print.

Any points raised with respect to the status of fiction reading in the lives of women at this juncture would be purely speculative. Given the relative positions of the women in the study in terms of power and influence, there is perhaps a built-in sense of apology about taking up so much time for something that is valued so little socially. It may even be that part of the 'necessary choices and decisions' open to many of the readers imposes a need to read 'escapist' fiction. In short, perhaps the context of fiction reading, particularly for women who 'do it on the side', is closely related to the reasons why women do so much fiction reading. The question that arises from this speculation must inevitably be why is it that so many people engage in something that is valued so little?

REASONS FOR READING

Scrutton (1956) raises an important question with regard to the reasons that readers who 'downplay' or apologize for what it is that they read continue to spend so much time engaged in such an activity:

> Why are we so ready to abandon the half-told story of our own lives, to which we might be adding the most essential chapters, in our hurry to find out what happened next to someone whom, as we know, nothing could actually happen, and for whom what might have happened is any way already decided and would very well keep until another day? (p. 363).

Obviously the people in this study, a number of whom read eight to ten hours a day are more than willing to 'abandon' their own half-told stories. Without being asked directly about the importance of reading in their lives, one might infer from their actions that they place a very high premium on reading. For every hour that they spend reading, they could be talking to their families, earning money, or watching television. While attempts were made throughout the interview to probe directly the reasons why these readers read, what they revealed in their answers was invariably replete with stock answers, and an abundance of socially appropriate comments or circular points such as "*I like reading because it's something really enjoyable*". However, questions such as "Would it be a loss to you personally if the library closed down" or "what is the bottom-line material you would read?" tended to more productive in terms of eliciting the following reasons why readers read. The comments of the readers tended to suggest the following reasons.

Reading 'Out of Habit'

While the subject of conscious awareness will be dealt with more fully elsewhere, it is important to consider that for several of the readers, reading was almost an unconscious as their breathing. Although they were

articulate about what they liked in terms of titles, authors or genres, their comments tended to indicate that they could hardly imagine a non-reading world. Thirteen of the readers expressed more directly the fact that reading was a part of their 'being':

> *Reading is a part of me; I'd read anything if I had to.*
>
> *I'm addicted; I'd read anything.*
>
> *I'm like an alcoholic in a way; I read everything that I can...*
>
> *I'd go crazy if the library closed but I'd get the books by hook or by crook.*
>
> *If I didn't have a book with me, well, heaven forbid! I'd pick up a timetable and read that.*
>
> *I'm appalled at how many people tell me they don't read and then I try to figure out without being too nosy what they do, and they don't watch television very much, and they don't have very much in the way of hobbies. What do they do?*

One of the most compulsive readers in the study noted a 'read to live' situation, fitting her day around her reading:

> *I plan it this way... I say 'okay when I come home I'm going to read. I'm going to eat supper. Then I'll read until 7 or 8, watch TV for an hour, and then I'm going to study'. Trouble is, I get myself home; I read my book; sometimes I don't even stop for supper and I keep reading and reading!*

Another reader observes:

> *I am afraid most people do their reading around their housework. I do my housework around my reading.*

Timefiller

Several readers admitted to reading to 'fill in time'. For example, one whose boyfriend was the reading influence notes:

> *He just likes to sit and read and do nothing around. When I didn't do that, lots of times I'd be at his place and I wouldn't have a book with me, I'd be lost for something to do.*

Another reader tended to make several trips to the library in one day, such that it seemed as though the trips to the library and subsequent readings were all part of a necessary routine for filling in time.

Therapy

Four of the readers seemed to regard their reading as a form of therapy in terms of relaxation and self-discovery, for themselves, or as in the case of the one reader in the nursing home, therapy for her friends:

> *Nothing I do is near as soothing as a quiet voice and an interesting book on nature.*

Another reader notes:

> *Reading is like a sleeping pill for me. I have nights when I simply can't sleep ... and I wouldn't be able to tell you a thing I've read the next morning but they do put me to sleep.*

Several readers noted that their reading helped them come to terms with various situations in life.

> *Books have helped me; they often have messages. Like I had lost a very dear friend, and I had gone to the library and got a book, just at random, and it was just the right message.*

> *Reading just brings so many things to the surface that you'd shied away from, and you've forgotten about... I'm just sorry it's taken me 30 years to put it all together.*

Shared Family Experience

For a number of readers reading always had been and would continue to be a shared family experience. Such readers had been read to as children, and shared books as they were growing up. They continued this with their own families:

> *Our family really shares books and gets into each other's reading.*

> *I'd read a lot for the children's sake and for their background. Both my husband and I reveled in reading and in bringing that material into the home because it was what we had met too. So we just enjoyed it with them.*

As well, in a number of homes reading to one's children came before doing housework.

Educational Purposes

Reading for educational purposes surfaced in the comments of some readers:

> *I can't understand someone who appears intelligent in every other sense of the word not reading. I can't conceive of that. Amazing!*

> *One of the reasons that a lot of my children's friends didn't do that well in school is because they didn't read. You'd go into their houses and you wouldn't see any books around.*

One reader also noted of library borrowing:

> *It's a good incentive to get off their rear ends and go out and spend time choosing books.*

The readers who were involved in the indepth reading situations had several opportunities to comment further on reasons for reading in their discussions of the stories they read. For example, in the short story "A Summer Reading" by Bernard Malamud, the main character is a high-school drop-out who decides he is going to impress the neighbourhood over the summer by reading 100 books. While the task is formidable, George is eventually 'shamed' by a neighbour into going into the library and counting off 100 books to read. Two of the readers did offer comments which provided additional 'educational' data:

Well, I think reading was a real status symbol to this George and I think it really inspired him to do a lot when people thought he read.

I think that story is a statement of today's attitude: just too much trouble to read. 'If I read that book I wouldn't get any money for it so why should I read it?' But what they don't realize is that they'd get something that one could never buy. I think a man may have but five cents in his pocket- but if he can read and get something out of a novel or any other books he is rich.

Reading for Escape

At least 11 of the readers made direct comments about reading for escape such as:

I read to get away from this life and into another. Sometimes I read just to blank out the world. I read to close my mind down for a little while.

Reading seems to take me away. I can close my mind off and get lost in a book.

While such data also proved useful later in terms of considering processes involved in fiction reading, the context surrounding 'escape' reading warranted exploration. The escape readers came from all age groups, educational groups and both sexes. Given the small number of males in the study, and their similar life situations, three out of four might be an over-representation of male escape readers.

However, there were a number of commonalities or patterns that appeared to emerge with the escape readers. For example almost all were exclusively fiction readers. While there was the suggestion of a reading of an occasional biography, the distinct impression formed was that such nonfiction works were read in an 'escape' fashion, in that readers often had a difficult time recalling what such works had been about. As well, none of the 'escapist' readers could be said to discuss books with others in any detail,

other than to swap titles and authors: "Did you read the latest Ludlum book yet?" While some of the most 'escapist' readers had good memories for titles and authors but little else, there were others who recalled neither title, author or anything else about the book. As one of the readers notes of her escape-reading sister-in-law:

> *Oh, she wouldn't remember a title from one day to the other. I think the only way she would have of remembering any book is if she recognized a cover.*

Such patterns are consistent with what Page (1980) has observed:

> Many voracious readers can plow through a dozen paper-back novels a week and are happy to forget most of what they have encountered. For some, the process of comprehending is a recreation objective. The fact that proficient readers report that they often engage in comprehending without remembering what they read for recreation underscores the unusual characteristics of the contrived tasks we ask readers to perform to permit us to infer that comprehending has taken place... (p. 228).

While several of these readers who never discussed books did have a social contact, it is important to note that the basis for the relationship was usually not reading.

Given that at least one-third of the readers in the study included some reference to 'escape' in their discussions about why they read, as well as descriptors such as 'compulsive' and 'addicting', and given their apparent low regard for this compulsion, one must wonder how such readers came to read fiction. In short, what are the antecedental factors involved in fiction reading?

ANTECEDENTAL FACTORS IN FICTION READING

Exploring how readers have become readers, or why it is that they take up particular forms of fiction, is likely to shed some light on processes

involved in fiction reading, as well as 'purposes' or satisfactions sought. While longitudinal studies and retrospective studies are needed in exploring antecedental factors, both are problematic: the former because of the difficulty of maintaining or controlling certain contexts; the latter because of constraints in terms of validity. Guthrie (1979) questions the validity of the telephone survey of reading habits conducted by The Book Industry Study Group (1978), observing that the responses to such survey techniques may be more the products of the social conditions as perceived by the readers since it is likely that such verbal reports:

> ...have to meet standards of acceptability and appropriateness in the personal context in which the conversation takes place. Since the motivations for reading are often intensely personal the real reasons may not meet the standards of acceptability and appropriateness that often apply under survey conditions (p. 755).

To illustrate, in an interview with a female reader regarding her reasons for reading, Guthrie discovered that her 'real' reason for reading was mainly related to associations with boring people at her office. Seeking 'anything better to do' on her lunch hours and coffee breaks, something away from noisy chatter and something not too demanding, she chose light fiction. Without knowing the 'necessary choices and decisions' that have contributed to each reader's behaviour over a life-time, it is difficult to understand their present situations. An exploration, then, of home influences, school influences and 'critical' points throughout a life-time should shed light on the satisfaction sought and gained from reading.

Home Influences

While researchers such as Schubert (1979), O'Rourke (1979), Moon and Wells (1979) and Ryan (1977) have all recently looked at general home influences in reading, that research which is most pertinent here is the case-

study approach as a means of gaining insights into antecedental factors in reading. One such study conducted by Brown (1979) involves the use of an indepth interview technique along with a reader's personal record of books read. Brown studied the antecedental factors and present circumstances of an 11 year-old girl over a period of three years. What she found in the child's history was a strong reading background in terms of familial influences, an abundant supply of books at 'easy' reading level, frequent opportunities to talk about books in a casual manner at home, and frequent opportunities for free reading at school. It should be pointed out that while the last factor was not irrelevant, it did appear as though the child's passion for books had been kindled elsewhere and was really sustained by outside reading rather than 'in school' reading. Much of this passion for reading would appear to be related to an early awareness of the free choice, absence of 'work', and awareness of the entertainment aspects of fiction reading. This was particularly evident in the frequency of the opportunities to re-read or read light easy fiction as a relief from exams and the other demanding situations. "Catherine" a case-study notes of this 're-reading':

> I read books more carefully the second time and I enjoy them more (Cited in Brown, 1979, p. 22).

Such a comment is not unlike that made by reader 7 in the snapshots. Seemingly then, an early awareness of the entertainment function of reading as a result of an easy nonthreatening atmosphere may be an important aspect of the 'creation' of the reader. As novelist Doris Lessing notes:

> There is only one way to read, which is to browse in libraries and bookshops, picking up books that attract you, reading only those, dropping them when they bore you, skipping the parts that drag - and never, never reading anything because you feel you ought... (Cited in Wright, 1981, p. 108).

Hickman (1977) has noted of the retrospections of two adult readers:

> Fluent readers get to be that way by reading, and by reading a good deal, of something of their own choosing (p. 375.).

As well, Duquette (1980) observes:

> Making readers of children implies that children not only read more than what has been approved for use in the classrooms, but also that they elect to do so. In a sense, children look beyond their classroom walls, to read for interest, for enjoyment, or for school assignments (p. 74).

It was anticipated that no one variable such as the presence of a reading model, lots of books, or even discussions of books would be sufficient to guarantee an individual who would be 'entertained' by books, but rather it was considered that all could be important.

All readers were queried directly about their early reading through questions such as "Have you always been a reader?" or "How do you think you came to be such an avid reader?" Two general conditions appeared to characterize home influences: the presence of reading models, and the need for a social substitute.

Reading Models

In all but six of the reader-histories there was evidence of strong parental influence on reading. Six readers came from homes where both parents read, 14 came from homes where the mother read, and six readers from homes where the father read. Such comments as the following emerged:

> *Maybe it was because Dad had a book in his hand. My sister would have a book in her hand. Mother was the same. It was just something we did.*

> *We always had books. My mum and dad were always buying us books and they always read to us.*

> *It was a small community, and I would say that we were the readers in the community, you know. I'm quite sure that the neighbours would say, 'well, the X household isn't that tidy because they're all too busy reading!' Mother would sit down and knit at the same time, or when we were children knit and recite poems to us.*

However, it was obvious in talking about the reading behaviour of siblings that the presence of a reading model was not sufficient since all members of a family did not become readers. Moreover, the offspring of one of the more voracious readers in the study eschewed reading completely.

It is difficult to weigh relative influence of 'models' and the particular context in which such models appear. There is some evidence that parental influence may be one of the more crucial variables in facilitating early reading behaviour and later general adult reading behaviour. In all but six of the homes one or both parents had read. Of the six readers who were not voracious readers as children, four came from these homes where little or no reading was done by parents. Such readers tended not to become voracious readers until university, or as in the case of one reader, a situation where he found much time on his hands.

Parental models would appear to have some influence on later factors related to reading as well. For example, the readers who came from homes where there was little reading done by parents, were more likely to marry spouses who did no reading at all. This data may not be surprising since an immediate model or contact with a reader never had been an important factor in their reading behaviour. As well, it was interesting to note that those females whose fathers read in all cases married men who did a lot of reading.

Hajda (1963) had found in his study of female readers that in order for avid reading to carry over into adulthood from adolescent reading there were certain 'social' variables or influences. Either readers had to marry someone who read or they had to maintain reading contacts with other readers outside the home. It would appear that the connection is more complex. However, there is some corroborative data for Hajda's observation in the lives of those readers who did not become voracious until their teens. Seemingly, at the time they discovered reading, it had been in a shared context where there was much analysis and discussion, in much the same way as alluded to in the case study by Brown (1979).

Social substitute

There was the suggestion in the comments of the readers that many read because they had few social contacts as children or were at a loss as to what to do with themselves. At least one-half of the readers in the study noted that they had been 'loners' as children: six having been 'only' children, four having been sickly and another six having skipped grades and hence were much younger than the others in the class. Two others had been members of nomadic families so that they seldom had opportunities to make close friends. While several others did not report themselves as loners, they did note that they too had been in situations of being transient, sickly or an only child. Readers often made comments such as the following:

> *One of the reasons I came to read so much was out of boredom. I had broken my arm. I had always been big on stories since we didn't have a television until I was quite big. We had a choice of either the radio which crackled, or a book, and I always picked the book.*

In addition to the 'loner' element in the backgrounds of many of the readers, there was also the suggestion by some that, even as children, they could not think of anything else to do, or they had never become involved in other activities.

> *I was never good with my hands. So reading seemed the thing to do.*
>
> *I started to read for something to do, I guess.*
>
> *...young girls have more time to moon and languish around...*

All of this data on 'being a loner' was, of course, retrospective. Researchers in attribution theory such as Langer (1973) would perhaps question such data since there is a general belief in our society that many readers are loners such that the readers in the study may have adopted this commonly held view. Readers would occasionally mention that their parents had noted of them as a child "Oh, X is always reading, he always has his nose in a book." Since to people who do not read, anyone who does much reading might be accused of having their nose in a book, it is difficult to corroborate the 'loner' data except to say that for many of the readers presently this is their status.

School Influences

Readers were queried on the influences of school in terms of whether they had ever been inspired by any of their teachers in reading, whether they could recall any particular pleasant or unpleasant experience at school with regard to reading, and their general performance at school. While the influence of schools may be much more unobtrusive than children are aware of in any case, it would appear that in the reflections of these readers, the school influence

was minimal. At least two-thirds of the readers recalled nothing in school that they felt had had any positive influence on their reading although several could recall specific negative influences.

As an example of this negative influence, one reader noted that she had always been bored by history as it was presented in school. It was not until she had an opportunity of taking a correspondence course in history that she realized that nonfiction reading material could be interesting. Another reader had been negatively affected by a high school English teacher whose existential approach to literature had caused her to turn away from fiction entirely for several years.

Ten of the readers did point out some positive influences of the school, albeit minor ones. In some cases an individual teacher had taken a particular interest in a student's reading. In other cases a teacher had 'brought alive' a particular subject so that the individual was motivated to read more. It is important to point out, however, that these positive influences usually occured in situations where the child was already encouraged in reading at home.

Few of the readers regarded themselves as having been excellent students at school although most considered that they had not been at the bottom of the class. What is of interest is the fact that even their reading of literature in school did not necessarily elicit fond memories:

> *When I had any special reading to do in school, it was a battle because I liked to read what I wanted to read, but if I had to read something for school I'd either leave it until the last minute or get the Coles notes.*

The one high school student in the sample confessed that she often read what she wanted to read rather than what was on the curriculum:

I'd bring a book every day for three classes and I'd sit there and read. Every free moment I got, I'd read.

However, two-thirds of readers did note that 'reading' subjects such as English and history had been their favourite subjects, while only nine readers mentioned mathematics as their best subject. Harding (1968) has pointed out that fiction readers are more apt to be people-oriented or at least socially responsive. If an interest in literature or history can be taken as evidence of such a predisposition, then there might be some substantiation for this observation in the present study.

The influences or absence of influences that schools would appear to have on children bring to the surface several interesting points. A charge frequently levelled at schools is that they may be more successful at passing on the skills for reading rather than the motivations. There is evidence of this in the present study. If a necessary aspect of taking up reading is free choice, access to much easy or 'unthreatening' reading material, and ample opportunities for discussion, then the recollections that readers have of schools might explain the apparent lack of positive influence.

Shifts in Reading

Another way of looking at antecedental factors in reading is to consider the influences on a person's reading over a life-time, rather than just in their early years. A number of researchers have looked at the reading experiences of the literate older adult. Barnett (1961), Buswell (1971), Kanner (1972), Long (1973), Ribovich and Erickson (1980) and Romani (1973) have all looked at the factors involved in maintaining the reading of older adults.

In exploring aspects of lifelong reading, Bussell (1971) studied the reading habits of men in a home for retired veterans, and discovered the difficulty of motivating individuals to read who have had a lifelong habit of not reading. As well, Ribovich and Erickson (1980) who interviewed 30 readers over the age of 60 about their reading habits, found that the readers who valued reading at that age had always valued reading although they tended to value it more highly as they got older. They tended to rate reading as less important during middle life when they were more actively involved in careers and families. However, even with advancing age, their reading was still only one of the activities in which they were interested.

To gain some insight into the shifts in reading interests or reading behaviours of readers, all were asked whether they had ever read more than they do now, or whether they read different material. The responses of the readers to these questions tended to fall into three categories: those who felt that there had been no change either in quantity or quality; those who felt that their reading had deteriorated in terms of quantity; and finally, those who felt their reading was improving in terms of quality or style of reading.

Eight of the readers fell into the first category of feeling that there had been no change in their reading. While one of the eight readers interpreted this rather positively, noting that he had always read to learn and would continue to do so, most others felt that they had always read for escape and enjoyment and they would continue to do so. Eight others noted that they had moved from spy stories to murder mysteries because they had exhausted a particular genre but they did not regard this as a qualitative change.

Three readers felt that their reading had deteriorated in terms of quality. In these cases they remarked that they had read more serious fiction and classics when they were younger but now that they were so involved with their families or careers, they felt that they had become more inclined to read purely "light" fiction for relaxation.

Ten of the readers felt that they were improving in their reading in both breadth and depth. Interestingly, nine of these readers comprised a cluster of 'under-aged 34' individuals in the study. Considering that the total number of readers in this age range was 13, it would appear as though the majority of these readers had a more optimistic view of their reading. In looking more closely at the context in which such an attitude is maintained to see if there were any particular patterns, one notices that five of these readers were currently involved in establishing a career of some sort, and another three had had careers but were currently at home with their children. One other reader was involved in establishing a farm with her husband. All but this last reader also had some university training. At least six of these readers were involved with other people as far as discussing books, and as well, were often in situations where they found that they were reading more nonfiction.

What seemed to make the difference in these 'improvers' was not so much what they read, but their approach to reading. For example, two readers not only read science fiction, but they were aspiring to write it. As well they had started to look at the genre more critically through literary journals. Readers of Agatha Christie mysteries were more apt to read biographies of Agatha Christie. One might question whether this aspect of improving was peculiar to people who are in the midst of careers and actively involved

in what is going on around them; whether such a stance was peculiar to the people sampled; or whether people who find time to read voraciously amid an extremely busy life are 'dedicated' to making their reading worthwhile since they are obviously making time sacrifices in terms of their homes, families or careers in order to read. Do they make sure that they read qualitatively better material or get more out of what they read, or do they at least rationalize that they do?

There is some evidence to indicate that such readers do more than just rationalize that their reading is qualitatively superior. The nine readers had all noted in some way that they were becoming more analytical or introspective about their reading. One might question as Nisbet (1979) does whether enjoying the analysis of a good novel requires more:

> ... in the way of psychological energies, a libido, than other kinds of writings. One might well ask if there is as much sustained 'other interest' in the foibles of mankind after a certain point in one's life (Cited in American Scholar, p. 186).

One's life situations might be expected to have a bearing on whether one is interested in reading about the foibles of others, or engaging in introspection with regard to one's own foibles, through reading material. Outlook on life as a function of age or experience might well have some bearing on this analytical introspective approach. Chedzoy (1980) sheds some light on this:

> It is, I think, part of our habitual response to fiction to assess its veracity in terms of our own experiences of people and events. If we find a correspondance between the pattern of events and experiences of our daily life, and those depicted in fiction then we judge it to be true; if not we consider it to be false. I suspect that we tend to use such an empirical test rather more when we are older and have the requisite experiences to bring to our fictions. Younger readers, lacking in width of experiences are less well placed to

> make such comparisons and are forced back upon their instrospected responses by which to judge a fiction. They will work out what they are likely to do and feel if they were to undergo the experiences presented in the novel or story. Thus fiction reading for them is anticipatory of experience and forces them into self-analysis. For older readers it confirms or denies experiences...We may have read War and Peace many years before when it seemed a definite statement on the human condition. My own experience is that I am constantly defining and re-defining my attitude to such a novel and its truth to life, years after I have read it (p. 272).

In contrast to the 'introspective' readers, those who felt that their reading was deteriorating were older and more established in careers. Their children were older, and those readers had more time to themselves. As well they had been around longer to employ the empirical test to which Chedzoy alludes. They may be recalling that they had had more serious approaches to reading in their late twenties or early thirties, or they may be merely acknowledging a futility of reading to analyze in the view of their own lives. In regard to this the novelist Doris Lessing notes:

> ...Remember that the book which bores you when you are 20 or 30 will open doors for you when you are 40 or 50 - and vice versa. Don't read a book out of it[illegible] right time for you (Cited in Wright, 1981, p. 108).

SUMMARY

Who reads what, and why, would appear to be related to when and where. The purpose of this chapter has been to explore the context in which fiction reading takes place in terms of societal and antecedental factors in an effort to come to some understanding of why people seek a satisfaction in fiction reading or why they seemed to be 'posed' the way they were in the snapshots in Chapter 5. How they achieve their satisfactions and 'poses' remains to be explored. The speculations which have been made in this chapter provide a framework within which to explore more closely in the following section the processes involved in fiction reading.

PART THREE

> We have developed elaborate vocabularies for classifying literary works; we scarcely know how to talk about the powers and effects. We have an immense accumulation of knowledge about authors, periods, movements and individual texts; we know almost nothing about the processes of reading and the interaction of man and book.
>
> We have an astronomical number of assertions that literature is not and should not be confused with life; we have almost nothing to say about the danger of separating them, the danger of viewing literature in such a way as to make it an object which we can manipulate instead of a force which can shape us (Slatoff, 1970, pp. 187-188).

The purpose of this section is to 'crop' the snapshot of the fiction reader in order to 'focus on' and 'enlarge' the processes involved in fiction reading, and to consider the role of the subject's awareness on how he reads. There are two main concerns about the fiction reading process to be explored in the chapters in this section. The first concern relates to how the literary response is shaped, or how and why it is that literary response varies from person to person. A second concern relates to whether readers read fiction and nonfiction differently. The data to be discussed in this section, then, will deal with how it is and why it is that readers derive satisfaction from various texts.

CHAPTER 7



'CROPPING' THE FICTION READING PROCESS

FORESHADOWING

> In reality, each reader reads only what is already within himself. The book is only a sort of optical instrument which the writer offers to the reader to enable the latter to discover in himself what he would not have found but for the aid of a book (Proust, Cited in Holland, 1975, p. 19).

How it is that the reader reads 'what is already within himself' is an area of research that has received only indirect attention in literary criicism and interpretation. Beginning with Richard's (1929) seminal study Practical Criticism:A Study of Literary Judgment, researchers have given us some idea of what low, average and above average readers in the 11th grade had to say about a particular short story (Strang and Rogers, 1965), how 22 ninth graders responded as they read a poem (Letton, 1958), the responses of ninth and tenth graders as they read a short story (Squire 1956), and as well, have a psychoanalytic interpretation of what college students said about short stories they had read (Holland, 1976). One might speculate that it is not possible to see what is 'within the reader' without knowing about the reader in terms of his habitual reading behaviour, and his plans and intentions in reading. In short, data from the aforementioned studies is likely to leave an incomplete picture.

While the interaction of purposes and plans, the background of the reader, and the actual reading of a particular work of fiction will be explored herewith, it should be noted that the role of plans and intentions is also under study in neuropsychological research at this time (Ramey, personal communication). Research on how it is that readers read what they read begins in the early work of the Russian bibliopsychologist Rubakin (Simsova,

1966). Rubakin developed the "science of book reading" in the late nineteenth century in an attempt to gain insights into the minds of readers as they read, and the interaction of the reader's mind and the structure and style of the book read. Seemingly there are two 'forces' at work: "the author's mind which recreates the book, and the reader's mind which recreates the book in pursuit of its own ends" (p. 122). Because of these forces it is possible that two readers might have entirely different impressions of the same book, in the same way that a reader on re-reading a favourite book, might find it disappointing. As well, Morris (1976) has observed this:

> No two readers, if the fiction is good, can be said to have read the same novel. No fiction can be appraised in regard to its content, sensibly discussed in regard to its message, but the good story or the great work, is processed if at all, on individual levels that are unique. The work of fiction that unlocks the soul of one reader, is by its nature closed to many others (p. 74).

Rubakin (1934) made use of "special methods of bibliopsychology" in which he artifically slowed down the process of reading in order to observe the reader's reactions word for word. As well, he made use of introspective reportings elicited in responses to a questionnaire. In one of the few articles translated into English, "Reader, know thyself", Rubakin explains:

> ... thanks to reading, we learn to know the qualities, the peculiarities of our mind, our temperament, and our character, our interests, our feelings - at times very deep - and which we hide. We discover our needs as well as the standard of our knowledge. Such psychological and social phenomena which would have never been discovered without reading thus becomes evident to the attentive reader (1934, p. 344).

The psychological activity that is experienced through the processing of literary works of art has been explored in terms of its function in the life of the reader (Greene, 1968), the reading dialectic (Speare, 1977) and phenomenologically (Heap, 1978; Ingarden, 1974; Iser, 1971; Poulet, 1970; and

Ruthrof, 1974). Recently, Blunt (1977) and Thompson (1979) have explored the processes involved in fiction reading through the use of indepth interviews with young readers wherein they have attempted to identify what happens in "the mind of the young reader as he engages in the ebb and flow of narrative in print" (Blunt, 1977, p. 35).

Harding's (1968) theoretical stance on the nature of fiction reading forms the basis for the indepth research of Blunt (1977) and Thompson (1979). Harding speculates that the mature reader 'accepts' the role of on-looker or spectator, absorbs and willingly attends to the work, empathizes with the characters engaging in a distanced evaluation, reviews the whole work as the author's creation, formulates wishes via identification, and finally, analogizes and searches for self-identity. To return to the Proustian point raised earlier "each reader reads only what is already within himself".

Blunt (1977) chose to consciously search for these elements in the responses of young readers to fiction works. What appeared to characterize the 'mature' reading response was a tendency for readers to adopt a spectator stance, as evidenced in responses such as "it's like a cinema/you see it going past/you're on the outskirts..." (p. 37). All the readers who read a great deal of fiction 'attended willingly', particularly in response to their choice of reading material which appeared to be unlikely to endanger their comprehension. They also appeared to be able to empathize with characters. Of those who did not appear to enjoy fiction, few mentioned anything akin to the distancing stance as Harding (1968) described it:

> ... the reader of a novel is in the position of a ghost watching unseen the behaviour of a group of people in whom he is deeply interested; he can imagine what they are feeling, he takes sides in their conflicts, regrets this bit of behaviour, applauds

> that, and he has hopes and fears about the outcome but can say nothing and do nothing to affect it (p. 12).

As an example of this distancing Blunt cites the immature response of a reader who would appear to be confused by the techniques of novel writing:

> You can actually take part/ you sometimes think of alternative endings that might have been better for that book/ or worse/ I like to change it around a bit/ (p. 37).

A necessary ingredient for the full literary response seemed to be an awareness and recognition that the author was presenting through his own style an evaluation of possible human experiences. Only two of the 16 early adolescent readers involved in the study appeared to reach this full mature response.

In Blunt's exploration of Harding's (1968) characteristics of mature literary response, a number of patterns emerged; notably, the pupils of very low reading ability appeared to find it difficult to discuss anything about psychological processes at all. As well, a high IQ was no guarantee of a full response. What did characterize the more mature responses was a readiness to imagine and daydream. The more practiced readers sought out characters in their books with whom to identify. As well, they would appear to have been exposed to a wide range of high and low quality materials where they had opportunities to practice the distancing.

Such a readiness to imagine and daydream might be somewhat akin to what Rosenblatt (1978) calls stance or organizing framework within which one 'lives through' rather than 'takes away' the words or ideas, and as well, as Purves (1979) notes, this readiness may be similar to the concept of schemata as is discussed in recent psychological literature.

The initial question to be raised and explored with regard to the fiction reading process was how a number of readers varying in terms of age, sex, background interests, reading behaviour, education and approach to the world in general, would react to several different fiction texts. In other words, how do such factors as life-situation, degree of social integration, needs for reading, and background knowledge enter into the formation of the literary response?

RESPONSES TO FICTION

In an attempt to gain some insights into the fiction reading response, data was elicited primarily through the probed fiction recalls described in Chapter 3 wherein the 12 indepth readers were required to read and respond to the short stories "Snow" by Frederick Phillip Grove, and "A Summer's Reading" by Bernard Malamud. As well, these readers provided data on their approach to fiction through novels as opposed to short stories, and freely provided additional data on responses to different fiction content in their responses to "The Sniper" and "True Confession", two other short stories used in the unaided recalls and thinking aloud task respectively. A second source of data, albeit serendipitous, came from the initial interviews where at least one-third of the readers revealed that they had all read the same bestseller. As such, then, they were able to shed light on responses to a longer work, and as well the role of social context in helping to formulate the literary response.

Probed Fiction Recalls

As described in Chapter 3, readers were given one of the two short stories with the instructions that they were to read it and were to be ready to talk about it. Following such free recall situations, readers were then

probed further through a number of stock questions about their reasons for liking or disliking a particular work, and its similarity to what they usually read. As well, after the reading of the second short story, they were encouraged to compare the two (see Appendix C). Thus it was possible to explore their 'habitual' form of response, and possibly the reasons for such a response.

Classifying the Free Recalls

The initial stage of eliciting the free recalls was as arid and ambiguous as might be allowed in a situation which had been prefaced by an extensive 'reciprocating' interview. Readers were allowed to talk as extensively as they wished without any intervention or probing, and as well, as in the case of several of the more laconic readers were not subjected to extensive silence without intervention. It was considered that such 'silences' would violate the social bonds, and perhaps signal that what was expected differed from what was being offered. The initial responses to the question "Well, what can you tell me about this story?" appeared to fall into one of the four categories:

1. Clarification comments: In this type of a 'recall' the reader appeared to spend most of the time trying to ascertain what it was that he ought to talk about after having read the story. A clarification response usually began with:

> *What do you mean? Do you want me to tell the whole story?*
>
> *I'm no good at analyzing stories, but is that what you want?*

Such comments proved to be somewhat frustrating in that the intention at this point was to avoid 'cuing' the reader to respond in a particular manner. Thus, while they could have been assisted in their attempts by receiving a suggestion such as "well, why don't you go ahead and re-tell the story", it was felt that

their habitual response was being contaminated in some way. The fact that a reader might display this initial reaction was regarded as 'meaningful' in itself, as was the fact that even though such a reader appeared to realize that he might have analyzed or retold a story they did not. Such an attempt at clarification would usually result in a final short statement such as:

> *Well, it was about a boy who moped around all summer instead of reading.*

2. Evaluative comments: In this form of recall the reader was most likely to discuss the story in terms of whether he liked it or disliked it. Any interpretation would usually include primarily 'connotative' types of statements. While almost every reader inevitably gave some indication of evaluation in their free recall, a typical evaluative response would be one which was devoted almost entirely to an evaluation of the story without going into any details about what actually happened in the story, or attempting a synthesis or interpretation. A typical evaluative comment usually commenced with evaluative statements such as:

> *Well, that didn't appeal to me.*
>
> *It's not something I'd ever pick up; just a pretty little story.*

3. Verbatim comments: In this form of recall the reader would attempt to recollect the entire story usually in the sequence in which it had been presented. While such readers would usually include at some point an evaluation or even a brief synthesis near the beginning or end, their general purpose appeared to be to give back the story in a way similar to the way it had been received. Such a recall might start out like the following:

> *Well, George was a weird type, and he dropped out of school at the age of 16 for some unknown reason, like they say in the story, 'through accident or design', I don't know which but as I say he dropped out of school and spent most of his time at home for the simple reason that*

4. Synthesizing comments: These might be called a gist-plus-interpretation response wherein the reader would give a brief encapsulation of the story and provide a personal interpretation of the story.

> *Well, I think reading was a real status symbol to this George and I think it really inspired him to do a lot when a lot of people thought he read. I think he was imagining a lot of it you know, a lot of these emotions that he was feeling like dejection and all this business...*

Analyzing the Responses

In the analysis of the responses, the nature of the recalls for each story was considered before any attempts were made at a comparative analysis of the responses.

Nature of recalls

The free recalls as noted fell fairly neatly into the four categories: clarification, evaluation, verbatim, and synthesis.

1. Clarification: In response to "A Summer Reading", one of the twelve people provided a clarification recall. She appeared to be very uncomfortable in the reading endeavour as well as the recalling endeavour, having noted that she had had to read the story several times. She ultimately was at a loss as to what to say about the story except to note that she had probably missed the main point.

In response to "Snow" this one particular reader also provided the only clarification recall, commenting:

> *Well, it's about a miserable blizzard - mostly - I don't know - well I've learned a lot from this business and I'm not very good at analyzing something like this. I've learned that I guess I don't read that way - Now I've been discussing all this with my neighbours and - is this what you want?*

2. Evaluation: Two of the readers offered an evaluative recall in response to "A Summer's Reading". In both cases the responses were negative such that the two readers spent their recall time talking about why they had disliked the story.

Two of the readers offered an evaluative recall of "Snow", with one of them having provided the negative evaluation as for "A Summer's Reading", while another reader offered a positive evaluation commenting thus:

> *Snow - I enjoyed that. It's about - I think, a guy who gets lost in a blizzard. And these three - I think it's three men happened to find him... And I really liked the story. I really did. I found it very interesting; you can relate to a story like that without too much difficulty.*

3. Verbatim recall: Two people, in response to "A Summer's Reading", provided verbatim recalls, making every attempt to maintain the sequence of the story, and as well, refer to all characters by their proper names. For example, where readers who recalled evaluatively or in gist form might refer to a character as 'that old guy', the verbatim readers referred to him as Mr. Cattanzara. One of the two verbatim readers had gone so far as to write down the names of the characters with diacritical marks so as to ensure correct pronunciation in his recall. This effort, he noted, was for his own benefit since he liked to be able to pronounce all names correctly as he was reading.

Two readers gave verbatim recalls for "Snow". One of these verbatim readers was the aforementioned reader who had kept a list of names of the characters in "A Summer's Reading". In "Snow" he had constructed a map of the region in order to keep the directions straight. His recall commenced thus:

Well, the story begins - it's not quite daylight, and the blizzard has been dying down. And as the first paragraph opens it describes a man walking through the snow and approaching a home on the edge of the woods. He knocks on the door with his knuckles and after three minutes of pounding with his fists, he finally hears some sounds of life inside, and a man comes to the door and he enters ... [63 lines of verbatim recall ensue, culminating in] ... And on telling the news they became quite shaky, even their legs were shaky so they had to sit down. And the old woman sat down with her - how did they describe it - her fat pudgy hands in her lap and said 'God's will be done', and that's it finis!

4. Synthesis recall: Of the 12 readers, seven provided a synthesis recall for "A Summer's Reading". In almost all cases the opening statement tended to be an indication of what was to come:

Well, here was a fellow who was a real loser...

It was about this shiftless young man who...

Seven of the readers also provided syntheses recalls for "Snow" making comments such as:

Well, the story was about - I don't think the story was as much about the man who was frozen to death in the snow as about his family... The woman's father was the real loser, the dead man's father-in-law. He is so dependent on everyone but himself... And it's a depressing story really because everyone seems to do the wrong thing.

Length of recalls

In addition to varying in terms of the nature of the recall, readers also varied in terms of the length of their recalls. Some readers went on at great length in their attempts to recall the story word for word or scene for scene, while others scarcely knew what to say at all, or gave brief synthesizing comments. The easiest 'retrospective' way of comparing the among that readers had to say spontaneously was to note the number of lines of typed transcript for each reader. In recalling "A Summer's Reading", the clarification-reader gave only two or three lines of recall. The more verbose 'verbatim' readers provided approximately 88 lines of typed transcript. The average recall,

which was a form of synthesis, was 12 lines long.

Similarly, in response to "Snow", the reader who gave the clarification comments had a very short recall while the verbatim recalls went on for at least 80 lines. Again the average, and most prevalent type of recall, the synthesis, was 12 lines long.

Attitudes toward "A Summer's Reading"

Probably one of the most basic forms of literary responses is in terms of whether a reader has liked or disliked a story. Obviously people who read a great deal are practiced at accepting/rejecting or liking/disliking material since they read fewer books than are actually available. The question which arose with regard to attitude related to how a variety of readers would vary in their reactions to a 'slice-of-life' work of contemporary fiction and a work containing much physical description and little action.

Of the 12 people who read "A Summer's Reading", only four actually liked it. Predictably, perhaps, in the light of earlier comments about the possible disinterest of many older readers in the foibles and neuroses of others, three of the four readers who liked the story were in their late twenties or early thirties. The older readers, for the most part, took strong exception to the story with comments such as:

> *If you had searched for years, you couldn't have picked a type of story I disliked more! That's a perfect example.*

As well, when readers were asked whom they thought might like the story, there were invariably those who felt that no one would, but there were others who, although they had not liked the story themselves, felt that it would appeal to someone younger, such as teenagers, university students or, as in the case of the 30-year-old, peers.

The four readers who had enjoyed the story offered a variety of reasons. One had enjoyed the scenes and appeared to have enjoyed the 'psychological description' of George's character. Three out of four of the readers found it a challenge, commenting that it was at least as difficult or more difficult than the material that they usually read. One of these readers, too, had apparently 'created' a challenge for herself. The first time she had read the story she had found it overly simplistic. However, she went through the short story a second time and tried to 'visualize' each scene. In so doing, she enjoyed the story more. All three readers who had found the story challenging noted that they had read the story twice in order 'to get more out of it'. These same three readers had commented in the initial interview that they characteristically did a lot of re-reading. One can only speculate at this point as to whether their habitual re-reading is directly related to liking a story in the first place, or whether it is the added comprehension that is brought on by a second reading that contributes to a positive overall impression of the story.

Two-thirds of the readers, however, had not liked "A Summer's Reading" and did not feel that they wanted to read anything else by Bernard Malamud. Seven of these eight readers had commented that they had not found the story in the least bit challenging, dismissing it with comments such as "it's just a pretty little story". The one person who had found it difficult to read and recall noted that the story was boring and plodding. As well, she felt that she had missed the main point of the story. She seemed to feel that because she had not determined what the point of the story was, there must be something wrong with her reading. In a rather self-effacing manner this reader had commented:

> *At the end I'm always wondering what I've missed, because I know there's more in it you know - I suppose psychology - you can get more out of it than I can.*

What was particularly interesting about this reader's self-effacing comments in comparison to what other 'negative' readers said is that one of the very reasons that other readers gave for disliking the story was that they could not see any point to it, with the implication that there was no point to the story. The question arises as to whether people who do not see the point of a story are likely to like such a work, and as well, if they do not see the point of a story are they likely to admit that there might be something they missed?

Attitudes toward "Snow"

Again, there were wide ranges in the reactions to this story, varying from "*fantastic*" to "*I can't imagine anyone liking that ruddy story!*" More people did like this story, with 7 of the 12 people commenting favourably on it.

Out of the seven people who liked the story, all mentioned something about the physical description and the imagery that came to mind. The husband of one of the readers had apparently also had an opportunity to read the story, and his reaction was "What a lot of metaphors and similes!" Again, more of the younger readers liked the story with only one reader in their fifties or sixties liking it.

Looking more closely at the people who liked the story, four of them apparently had some difficulty with the story since there was so much descriptive detail. However, in several instances readers noted that they often left out such details which they found trivial or unnecessary in furthering the plot of the story. Again, then, there are indications that readers 'create' an optimal degree of difficulty or challenge for themselves. The three readers who noted that the story was more difficult than what they usually read noted they had found it somewhat of a challenge to keep the

details straight. As already noted, one reader had drawn a map in order to keep the directions straight. To go to such lengths to 'master' the story is further corroborative evidence that readers, to a certain extent 'create' the difficulty of the story. Moreover, that readers read 'what is already within themselves' is expressed rather succintly by one of the readers whose husband had read the story:

> *I didn't ask him what made him feel that there was still hope for the missing man. Of course that's his nature. He will not give up until the very end. My nature - I'm a little more negative. Maybe he held out all hope for the man until the very end. Maybe it wasn't what he was reading; it was his own feelings.*

The readers who liked the story did not necessarily see that the writer was trying to make any point, other than to describe conditions during the settling of the West, or to represent a particular philosophy of life. In short, whether they saw a story as having a particular point or not, then, did not seem to be related to their liking or disliking of a story.

Four of the five people who disliked the story were in their fifties or older. Their negative comments seemed to be related to the dominant sense of gloom and depression that they found in the story. Again, to maintain an interest in the foibles of others may be related to the age or life situations of the readers.

Dominant themes

Readers seemed to be able to express more concisely the reasons why they disliked a particular text than why they liked it. The text as 'optical instrument' seemed to mirror a number of dominant themes or characteristic responses of these readers. For example, what appeared to characterize the negative comments of the readers in regard to "A Summer's Reading" was not so much the 'slice-of-life' open-endedness of the story although certainly such attributes may not have been highly regarded in any

case, but rather they objected to the anti-hero George whom many described as 'shiftless', 'lacking in motivation', and a 'loser' since George was the type of character who deliberated and procrastinated.

The readers who objected vehemently to this type of character were for the most part older readers who themselves were vigorous 'achievers' in their approach to life. In most cases they tended to be interested in community organizations, and taking on new hobbies and interests. As well, the one younger reader who objected to George was active both politically and socially. Their exasperation with George as a shiftless, useless character appeared to carry over into their dislike of the story in general as they made comments such as:

> *Why didn't he get busy and do something instead of just sitting?*
>
> *I became frustrated with him. I wanted to say to him 'get out there and do something; don't be so stupid.'*

The six readers who made such comments about George were all 'outward seeking' individuals themselves. They were the readers who were not only knowledgeable about the world and politics in general, but who approached the acquisition of knowledge with gusto, wanting to know everything about bee-keeping or biblical history. Even the reader in the study who was as socially reclusive as George took issue with his isolation, noting in an optimistic way:

> *I thought it was rather hopeless... At that time of life one is usually bubbling over with ambition, enthusiasm and adventure.*

All six of the readers who objected to George's shiftlessness felt that the story was quite unlike anything they would ever read. No doubt they were quite accurate in their perceptions since in the initial interviews they had

indicated that they liked books where something happened as in espionage, thrillers, mysteries and historical romances.

In addition to objecting to the inaction of the main character, readers also stressed the depressing qualities of the story. What was regarded as realism or a 'slice of life' by some readers who liked the story was taken as sordidness by readers who disliked it. One of the most actively involved readers in community affairs expressed her reason for disliking this story thus:

> *Most of my friends have things to do, and if they are going to read, they want something entertaining... Frankly, these little bits of life aren't. We see them, you know, when you walk into any room at the hospital and it's there. It hits you. Frankly, there's no point in getting angry about something I can't do anything about.*

As well, readers who disliked the story "Snow" seemed to find it gloomy and depressing commenting:

> *Anyone who likes that is warped.*
>
> *It's true to life but that's what one wants to get away from.*

The reader who made this last comment had been recently widowed. While maintaining an interest in the outside world, perhaps it is natural that she would prefer to read about more optimistic aspects of that world. The reader who had no desire to read about the misfortune of others in "A Summer's Reading" likewise objected to the gloomy qualities of "Snow":

> *I didn't like it. I was in a very elated mood, and it was a real comedown to read that... Last night was a particularly good evening with the family; Ted had been out on his job interview and things were going well. We were very happy. I'm one of these people who when stories don't have a happy ending now, I get frustrated about the whole thing. I would prefer to be left in a happy mood rather than feeling badly about anything.*

Another reader who had disliked the story had known someone who had frozen to death much like the character in the story. She took the story very personally.

What is interesting to note with both stories is that readers either found them both gloomy or did not talk about gloom at all. In short, such an element was not even in the consciousness of some readers, while it was in the forefront in the minds of other readers.

Emerging Patterns in Literary Response

On the basis of the responses of the twelve readers to the two short stories there would appear to be certain patterns emerging which shed light on why people read what they read. As such, coming to understand the reading transaction would appear to involve knowing about the dominant themes and habitual responses which characterize a reader's approach to any text, all within the social context in which these responses were elicited, and a knowledge of what readers generally read.

Several dominant themes seemed to emerge in the responses. Although readers who preferred psychological description would be more likely to prefer "A Summer's Reading", and those people who prefer physical description would be likely to prefer "Snow", the mood as perceived by the reader would seem to be a more pervasive force in determining whether a reader would like a particular work. The readers who were 'up and doing' in an effort to avoid gloom, stressed the gloomy depressing aspects of both stories. However, references to gloom and depression were completely absent from the responses of many of the readers whose needs and purposes in reading were different.

Moreover, the readers who mentioned gloom had invariably made references to avoiding gloom and 'realism' in their initial interviews. One might speculate that readers approach reading with different needs to be satisfied. For some, this need may be to avoid the gloom of life. In response to a question raised by one of the former readers *"Do readers read for gloom?"*, the answer may be that some readers do read to gain an understanding of life which may be realized through reading material which they regard as realistic. If readers read to get away from aspects of life, then anything that does not take them a sufficient distance away may be inevitably tainted with 'gloom'.

The final line in "Snow", "God's will be done" served to 'tap' more of the theme of gloom or the theme of exasperation for some of the readers:

> *When I read that, I thought I would describe them as stolid peasants - without trying to sound like a snob. The ones that just accept no matter what happens to them. I feel sorry for people like that.*
>
> *What a stupid remark! She's just resigning herself.*
>
> *I didn't like that. I resent it. Well, I suppose I'm not in a fit mood to acknowledge that God's will be done, and so of course I didn't.*

One other reader who disliked both stories frequently made references to advancing age. While only 43-years-old she presented herself as someone much older in the way she dressed, talked and 'approached' the world around her. For example, in the initial interview with this reader at least 20 references were made to age: *"I'm like an old shoe to the librarians"*, *"As I get older..."*, *"My memory's terrible now"*, *"I belong in about two centuries back when it comes to machines"*. A comparative analysis of age reference in all the other transcripts was not seriously attempted. This theme of age merely 'stood out' in her discussions. This particular reader, prematurely 'settled' by force of circumstances, and surrounded by aging relatives, noted in response to the

ending of "Snow", "God's will be done":

> *Oh my Lord, nobody would say that. Surely there's nobody in the world who is that docile to accept something like that. I guess I'm not that type of person who thinks things are that way. I suppose an older person would more than a younger one. You get a certain type of person who thinks things are just to be accepted. I don't have that; maybe when I'm 70.*

In addition to the themes that readers tended to include in their responses and discussion about life in general, there also appeared to be habitual modes of response. For example, three-quarters of the readers made the same type of response for both stories. Two mainly gave evaluative responses, four were consistent in their synthesizing responses one in verbatim responses, and one in seeking clarification. Consistent with that aspect, too, they tended to talk spontaneously for about the same length of time for both stories. Although this will be discussed in more detail subsequently, length of recall would appear to be part of habitual response.

Readers in the initial interview had occasionally given an indication of patterns or tendencies that readers habitually exhibit in talking about their reading:

> *In the books she is reading she always regales you with the plot for 10 minutes and then says "Do you want to read it?"*

It had been considered that the two short stories were sufficiently dissimilar and hence, would appeal to different readers such that if a reader liked one story he would be unlikely to like the other too. To a certain extent this was borne out by the comments of the readers. Five of the eight people who disliked "A Summer's Reading" did like "Snow". As well, three of the four people who liked "A Summer's Reading" disliked "Snow". However, one person, in liking both stories, also displayed an openness to almost all of

the fiction passages in the study. In considering this aspect of habitual responses one is reminded of a character in a short story by Mary McCarthy (1942) "The Man in the Brooks Brother Shirt":

> ...the man belonged to that extraordinary class of readers who have perfect literature digestions, who can devour anything printed, retaining what suits them, eliminating what does not, and liking all impartially because since they take what they want from each book they are always actually reading the same book (she had a cousin who was always like that about the theatre, and she remembered how her aunt used to complain, saying 'it's no use askjng Cousin Florence whether the show at the stock company is any good this week; Cousin Florence has never seen a bad play) (pp. 85-86).

Another aspect of habitual response surfaced in the way readers 'tailor' a text to the amount of challenge they are seeking or the satisfactions they are seeking. Readers who like details, images and descriptions in a text can either choose stories that have lots of detail in them, or they can focus more on the details of any story. Readers who like the bare bones of the story or take a more holistic approach can leave out the details and still retain the gist of the story.

To highlight further this aspect of habitual response, readers were read several excerpts from the story "A Summer's Reading" and the story "Snow" in the course of the probed recalls. They were asked, in regard to these excerpts if they could remember reading that part and if they could remember what they had been thinking at the time. For example, from the story "Snow" the following excerpt was read aloud to each reader:

> Abe's thought ran thus. The horse had gone against the wind. It would never have done so without good reason; that reason could have been no other than a scent to follow. If that was so, however, it would have gone in as straight a line as it could. The sand-flats stretched away to the south-west for sixteen miles with not a settlement, not a farm but Redcliff's. If Abe managed to strike that line of

> scent, it must make him go to the point whence the horses had started.

Responses based on the life circumstances of the reader or 'habitual' responses tended to surface. For example, the reader who had made impressive efforts to keep details straight through diagrams and lists commented:

> *It gave me an overall picture of the location. I got a better mental picture of the area through that, and I find it quite necessary. It's hard to picture landscape.*

Another reader with an interest in learning from fiction or fact noted:

> *I thought 'aren't horses smart!' They're smarter than I thought they were.*

Another reader who was also interested in the factual aspects of reading, and who also delved into nonfiction, read the factual aspects of this description more critically, as is her tendency with whatever she is reading:

> *I found it a little bit confusing because in the peak of the storm, where the story starts, I can't even picture a horse picking up a particular scent, unless it was very strong, and even then I can't; the only thing I can think of would be wood smoke. But in a blizzard the wood smoke wouldn't be down at that level to scent; it would be up over the horse. You've heard of herds of cattle drifting with the storm in their backs. They can drift for miles. Now a horse can find its way quite easily. They seem to have a built-in radar system.*

Two of the readers who had no particular recollection of the excerpt at all commented more generally "*I presumed he was dead*". Both tended to be very holistic fiction readers, having noted that if they ever wanted to remember something in nonfiction technical material, they always went back to re-read. Another reader who appeared to read somewhat holistically, or for general impresssion found it difficult to explain, commenting:

> *I remember reading it. I would think that the writer was someone who knew the land very well. Certainly no city person, someone who was in tune with the land.*

One reader who took what she read very personally, and who in all of the reading situations brought in very personal associations observes:

> *It sort of impressed me because I know a person who froze to death, and in order to find him they had to check out snow banks and other things, and find out if the wind had changed. It brought that to mind.*

Finally, one of the readers who read almost exclusively 'formula' fiction, the Zane Grey western, the mystery story or some form of gothic romance seemed to impose a formula or a predictable schema for the story noting:

> *I thought he was close to Abe's property and didn't know it. That's what hit me - you know you hear about someone just out in their backyard freezing to death because they are so close and yet so far. Of course it didn't work out that way but...*

In looking at emerging patterns, it seemed that a number of stock phrases appeared. Richards (1929) in eliciting the responses of university students to 13 poems found that there were a number of stock phrases which seemed to pervade their comments. While the present sample was perhaps less 'schooled' in stock phrases, there were, nonetheless, two stock phrases which surfaced a number of times in response to both stories: "*the story really flowed*", and "*I could visualize it*". What was interesting about the use of such phrases is the fact that if a reader liked a story they invariably said it flowed. If they didn't like a story it plodded. Since readers varied in their likes and dislikes, it was obvious that such a 'state of flowing' was quite subjective. Similarly readers would comment that they could easily visualize a scene that they liked, or that they found it hard to visualize scenes in stories they did not like. Again the story has remained intact; only the readers and their response to the words had changed.

Another 'emerging' pattern relates to the form in which the data were collected. Harste, Burke and Woodward (in press) have considered the relationship between the person recalling and the listener as a variable to consider in looking at unaided recalls. As well, it may be necessary to look at the social appropriateness of such an activity for adults. What a reader says about a passage, and how much he says may be related more to how he perceives the social situation than his actual reading 'ability'. As well, his reading 'ability' may be related to the nature of the practice he has had in reading and talking about what he has read.

In considering how the social situation might affect what a reader says, it may be necessary to consider that variables such as habitual length of response are likely to be related to what the reader is used to doing in social situations. Some people will talk on at great length regardless of whether they are responding to phatic communion about the weather, talking about their health, or a book they have read. Others, either through a self-effacing attitude, or through a recognition that it is not socially acceptable to talk on about one's self regardless of whether it is in relation to something one feels or has read, are likely to talk very briefly in an unaided recall situation. Outside the context of the nuclear family it is often regarded as "inconsiderate" to talk on at great length about one's own opinions. Moreover, even if one does have an opinion about something and is willing to share it as in the case of responding to something read, there is still a degree of social decorum that rules that one draw on the opinions of the other person to a certain extent. People sensitive to the social situation will 'feel out' the listener. Again, they would probably be less likely to talk at great length spontaneously about what they would have just read without soliciting some input from the listener.

In addition to these social constraints, there are also likely to be situations where readers might feel relatively at ease about talking about what they have just read if they felt confident about the correctness or validity of what they were saying. While some readers are practiced in keeping their opinions to themselves in daily life because of this factor, it did also occur in the course of the study that one or two readers seemed to feel that since they had much less education than the researcher that probably their own recalls were not particularly worthwhile. As such their recalls tended to be brief and, in the one case, of a clarification-seeking nature.

One final social constraint with regard to eliciting free recalls relates to the social inappropriateness of 'regaling' someone else with the entire substance of what one has just read or seen on television. While it is appropriate to give a brief description of the plot along with a synthesis or evaluation, it is not the case that adults are encouraged to go on at great length. Such a habit is akin to recounting one's dreams or nighmares. Adults tend to be amused, and at the same time intolerant, of the young child who describes the story he has just read in great detail with frequent connections such as "and then ... and then ... and then ...". Young children are taught both directly and through more unobtrusive 'extinguishing' behaviour that one simply does not go on in a verbatim fashion about a book read or a movie viewed. An additional constraint too, for the fiction reader relates to the possible second-class status of fiction. While it might be acceptable to go on at great length about Einstein's theory of relativity, hardly anyone will tolerate the denouement of Nurse Blackshaw's marriage to Doctor McLeod.

In view of these social constraints on the re-telling or recalling of a story, questions inevitably arise on the nature of the free recalls elicited from the readers: were they incapable of recalling any more or any differently? Did they recall the way their immediate environment had conditioned them to recall? Did they recall what they recalled because they had read with a particular type of recall in mind? There is no point in 'reading to retell' an entire story to someone else if one is not encouraged to talk about books that way, or indeed to talk about one's reading at all. On the other hand, if one is used to having a willing audience in the form of a spouse or friend who will listen to what one has to say about reading material or any other topic, then perhaps one becomes more practiced at reading for that purpose.

While it is only possible to speculate at this point, it may not be surprising that two of the readers, both male, who were the least defensive or apologetic about their fiction reading were the most verbose about what they recalled from a particular passage. While one of these readers tended to give verbatim responses, the other expressed at great length his opinions of the story in an evaluative way. The reading of both of the readers was accorded a relatively important status in that it was taken seriously by spouses and not subject to any competition from the reading behaviour of anyone around them. The reader who recalled the least amount from either story, and who talked the least in a spontaneous situation, was also one of the readers who was most apologetic about her reading, and whose husband's nonfiction reading was regarded more highly by both the participant and her husband. Whether males and females recall differently as a result of the social context in which their reading is done, or whether the aforementioned data are merely a function of sampling, is not clear. Suffice it is to say

that the free recall context is a type of social situation. As such the data are likely to be related to the social context in which they are elicited.

In addition to a consideration of the social context in which the probed recalls were elicited, another 'variable' which entered into the emerging patterns of fiction reading related to the form of the reading material presented to the readers of the probed recalls. All of the fiction in the study was in the form of short stories which, as it turned out were almost never voluntarily read by the readers in the study. While negative comments about the short story occasionally arose in the initial interviews, such comments were more prevalent and significant in the actual reading situations. It is possible that one of the reasons that data on the short story seldom arose in the interviews relates to the fact that readers seldom appeared to think of short stories as reading material at all, any more than they regarded as reading material labels on cereal boxes or manuals which accompany vacuum cleaners. Reading for these readers, as for the readers described in the Leavis (1932) study,means a full length work, usually fiction. As Leavis observes:

> It is not an exaggeration to say that for most people 'a book' means a novel. This becomes apparent if one watches the process of selection, in which the assistant is generally consulted in some formula as 'another book like this one, please' or 'Can you recommend a nice book?' The assistant glances at the novel held up and produces another novel which is accepted without question (p. 21).

In exploring why it is that the short literary work is unsatisfactory as reading material for most fiction readers a number of points were raised by the readers in the indepth reading situations. Several people mentioned that they felt cheated, annoyed or frustrated since they were just getting into the plot and characters when the story ended. As one reader noted of "Snow":

> *I thought, you're not going to leave me like that. If you're going to tell me a story, tell me the whole thing.*

Others regarded short stories as being too superficial. A universal response seemed to be that short stories were all very well if one was stranded in a doctor's waiting room or about to fall asleep since nothing was lost if one did not finish them. It became apparent that the majority of readers seemed to associate the short story with the fiction found in women's magazines such as Redbook or Chatelaine. However, while these are certainly 'visible' spots for short stories, there are many anthologies of short stories dealing with particular themes and collections of short stories by one particular author. Few readers seemed to acknowledge the existence of such anthologies, although one reader admitted that even if he came across a collection of short stories by his favourite author he still would not read them. Another reader commented that he wouldn't mind reading short stories since there is no 'gobbledygook in them' but he never saw such collections.

Just why short stories frustrate or 'cheat' their readers is not clear, although comments that readers made in regard to their favourite full-length works did give some indication of what readers were looking for:

> *It was tops for keeping me there.*
>
> *You could get into the story and stay with it. You could understand what was going on, they didn't jump from one thing to another like they do in some books.*

As well, Leavis (1932) in commenting on the unpopularity of the short story notes:

> ...books of short stories are almost invariably ignored by the press, distrusted by book sellers, and refused by Lending Libraries whose subscribers want 'something to keep them going for a good long while', and 'a story that gets you somewhere'. Short stories apparently do neither. The truth is, I suppose, they offer less opportunity for giving at the expense of the author, and their public is restricted accordingly. (p. 40).

In looking for a good long 'read', readers not only embraced the nover over the short story, but also, in the case of many of the readers lauded the 'dynasty' or saga books which would chronicle a family over several generations, and often on into another book or two. While one reader did acknowledge that probably it is more difficult to write a good short story in the same way that it is harder to give a good two minute speech than to give a good 30 minute speech, the majority of readers did not appreciate such skill. The face that they preferred the novel over the short work, then,cannot be ignored as a possible 'insight' into the processes of fiction.

Responses to Other Short Stories

Originally it had been planned that only the recalls from "Snow" and "A Summer's Reading" would be used to examine literary response since the reading s of any of the other short stories would be done under slightly more artificial circumstances. However, readers were spontaneous in their 'responses' to all of the literary works, regardless of how the task had been set up. Thus, in addition to the responses to "Snow" and "A Summer's Reading", they also provided response data for "The Sniper" in the fiction/nonfiction unaided recall reading situation, and for "True Confession" in the thinking aloud task. Without the initial interview situation and without the first probed recalls, it is unlikely that readers would have been quite so spontaneous in these recalls. However, since they had been encouraged throughout to express their opinions very freely, it is likely that they were attempting to provide the kind of data that they thought would be useful to the researcher. This is not unlike what Strauss (1969) describes in his description of roles and relationships ascribed and assumed in field work:

> In due time the respondents would hail the field worker with 'you should have been here last night' or 'how come you didn't ask me about the --- incident? When this kind of thing began happening with increasing frequency, the fieldworker had become part of the natural flow of events, without necessarily determining its course (Cited in Draper, 1981, p. 8).

Field notes were often useful in keeping track of such 'unsolicited' comments, particularly when readers would launch into a comment even before the tape recorder was turned on. For example, at the beginning of the third interview one reader at the front door exclaimed:

> *That was some story you left me - better than the thing about the war!*

Almost everyone in the indepth reading situations had one text that they had preferred over all of the others. As well, there was no one who was enthusiastic about all the passages used in the study although, as noted earlier, one reader did like all of the fiction. Two of the people in the study did not like any of the fiction they had been asked to read but had enjoyed the nonfiction. While this might appear to be somewhat incongruous in a study of voracious adult readers of fiction, it is important to bear in mind the form of what they had to read (short stories) and the content (perceived by some to be entirely gloom). Those who did not like the fiction invariably objected to the depressing qualities about all of it. Indeed, George in "A Summer's Reading" does spend the entire summer in a hot apartment procrastinating and perpetuating his lie about reading; a fellow does get lost in a blizzard, leaving behind a wife, six children and destitute in-laws in "Snow"; Arleigh and his wife in "True Confession" are caught up in a marriage that could be described as disappointing; and a soldier does kill his own brother in "The Sniper".

The most popular writing in the study was "The Sniper" which appeared to be the favourite of five readers. "True Confession" was the least popular having been positively regarded by only one reader. Both of the non-fiction works, were regarded highly by many of the readers. However, since they were both magazine articles, they were probably closer to what many of these readers read in comparison to the short stories.

Responses to the Novel

In view of the fact that readers were placed in situations of reading and recalling fiction material that was unlike what they normally read in terms of form as well as content to a certain extent, an alternative approach to looking at why people read fiction or the satisfactions they derive is to explore their comments on something they had voluntarily chosen and enjoyed. What ensues is a discussion of a particular type of reading transaction in which many of the readers engaged, the social context of that reading, and within that a discussion of one particular novel that over one-third of the readers had read. In this discussion the nature of the reading of the popular novel, the bestseller,will be explored.

The Bestseller

All readers were queried directly on whether they read bestsellers. Such a question was originally included in order to explore aspects of influence in terms of choosing books. A number of readers volunteered comments near the beginning of the interview that they characteristically read bestsellers. Others were forthright in responding to the question "do you ever read bestsellers?" by answering "*yes, as many as possible!*" explaining:

> *The book is obviously well written and well received by the public. And if a majority of people like it, obviously I think I would like it on that score.*

As Leavis (1932) observes in regard to this herd instinct:

> ...there is the assumption that a novel is more likely to be 'good' if it appeals to a horde of readers than a minority (p. 35).

Hence, the success of ads such as following:

> Old Pybus by Warwick Keeping
> 75,000 copies in 6 weeks (p. 35)

Another reader noted that while she basically eschewed the bestseller, her husband who never read any fiction himself, encouraged her by saying "*they're bestsellers; you should read them*". This desire for timeliness and social desirability was expressed by several other readers whose selection of books was based almost entirely on what other people recommended either through the bestseller list or through friends.

Some of the readers were defensive about bestsellers in the same way that they were defensive about fiction reading. One-third of the readers made a comment such as the following:

> *I read bestsellers, but not because they're bestsellers, but because they're good.*

Leavis'(1932) discussion of 'mass psychology' in advertising books is brought to mind:

> A Book for the Few
> 120th thousand (p. 243)

However, an attitude expressed by one of the most social readers in the study, reader 24, seems to capture the essence of the popularity of the bestseller as social reading:

> *I think that [reading bestsellers] is a natural thing that the majority of people follow. You want to know what the other fellow thinks of a certain book... I think that's one of the aftermaths of reading, one of the pleasures of reading, to be able to discuss it with people.*

The readers in the study who read a number of bestsellers did seem to be those who had a network of contacts with other readers. While it would appear as though their conversations about books may have gone no deeper than sharing title/author or liked/disliked, there nonetheless existed a form of shared contact.

One small group of readers who did not read bestsellers included those whose tastes tended to run counter to the norm. Such being the case their preferred type of reading material seldom if ever appeared on the bestseller list. For example, the people who read science fiction tended to make comments to the effect that it was not so much that they avoided bestsellers but rather they avoided non-science fiction.

Given the voracity of some of the readers in the study, and the nature of the bestseller, it is perhaps not surprising that a number of the people in the study had all read the same bestseller, and hence were able to provide comparative data on responses to a novel. Eleven of the readers, or over one-third, all volunteered that they had read The Thorn Birds by Colleen McCullough, a book which had appeared on the bestseller list in North America for many weeks in 1977/78. While even more than the 11 women who volunteered it might have read it, it was at least on the "tip of the tongue" of a number of readers, if for no other reason than the publicity which surrounds the bestseller. As one reader noted:

> *There have been a number of other books that I have really liked but I remember that one because it's so visible; you hear so much about it.*

In view of the social context in which readers met The Thorn Birds, it was considered useful to compare their responses. Leavis (1932), in querying the writers in her study as to why the various readers said they admired their

works, found that the bestseller:

> ...offers ideal companionship to the reader by its uniquely compelling illusion of a life in which sympathetic characters of a convincing verisimilitude touch off the warmer emotional responses. Quotations from readers' letters ... show that fiction for many people is a means of easing a desolating sense of isolation and compensates for the poverty of their emotional lives:
>
> All the people who live in the pages of your work are so intensely real. One knows them as friends.
>
> Your characters are so human that they live with me as friends... They are all real men, with real men's temptations and difficulties, and the way in which they face these temptations leaves a very deep impression (p. 58).

Of the 11 readers who had read The Thorn Birds, 10 made favourable comments. Six of the readers considered the book the best they had read in the last year explaining as did the readers in the Leavis (1932) study:

> *The characters were awfully well-done, especially the priest.*
>
> *It was the best of the year mainly because of the characterization: the characters were very real. They weren't beautiful; they weren't perfect; they weren't brilliant and so forth. They were human beings and they were portrayed that way...*

Leavis (1932) considered that people see characters as real because of the bold outlines that are provided by the writer. These outlines serve as a backdrop wherein the reader cooperates "to persuade himself that he is in contact with 'real people'" (p. 59). She further notes that this readiness to respond to characters explains the popularity of Shakespeare even to an uneducated public:

> The fascination his plays had for various bestsellers is notorious and genuine; for them, indeed for most people, Shakespeare is the creator of characters, and they translate his dreams into novels, so that nearly all Shakespearian criticism is a discussion of the supposititious life of the dramatis personae (p. 59).

With regard to the readiness of readers to perceive characters as real, it must be pointed out that the characters in stories such as "A Summer's Reading" and "True Confession" are certainly fraught with 'humanness'; they are anything but perfect, brilliant or beautiful. However in considering such 'humanness' the advice of an American editor to aspiring writers warrants examining:

> If you want to be a successful writer for American publications, for which high prices are paid for a really first-class matter, bear in mind that American fiction in the main, is not pessimistic, nor is it lewd, or irreverent, neither is it red, or un-American.
>
> Avoid morbidity. The Americans don't want gloom, but something that will brighten life. The sun must always be shining. Treat sex reverently and avoid its unsavoury aspects. Don't be vulgar. Remember that serious thought is not looked for in the majority of American magazines. Don't discuss religious questions in a manner that would offend national sentiment, and leave evolution out of your writings. Religion that brings out its boons and blessings to long-suffering humanity is deemed worthy. Leave social and political problems to take care of themselves (Cited in Leavis, 1932, p. 38).

Leavis (1932) quotes the advice of the Amercian journalist Henry Baker:

> Writers of short stories who are ambitious to get into good magazines should remember further that certain subjects are in themselves undesirable, regardless of the merits of the story. Very few periodicals admit anything sordid or depressing. Writers like Thomas Hardy who have a dreary, hopeless outlook on life are not welcome in popular magazines, however deft their literary art (Cited in Leavis, 1932, p. 51).

While those involved in book censorship would no doubt call into question the relevance of such statements in view of what is deemed by many as lewdness and vulgarity in current fiction, it must be acknowledged that the majority of readers, particularly the 'escapist' variety in this study, said that they preferred something that is not pessimistic, morbid or dreary.

Most of the readers of The Thorn Birds felt that the novel contained a

true-to-life quality as well as something to be learned, noting:

> *It taught me something about Australia.*
>
> *That's one I'm not taking to the flea market. Australiqms fascinate me.*
>
> *It's what I would call a 'good' book. That's a book I would find difficult to pick up and get into if I was really tired. Because I would have to do a fair bit of imagery, and that kind of thing in my mind...*

Leavis (1932) notes that the "staple" of the middle-brow is something that leaves the reader with "the agreeable sensation of having improved themselves without incurring fatigue" (p. 44), such that as long as the reader gets the general direction or the gist of what his literary training recognizes as appropriate, his imagination will allow him to fill in the rest:

> The bestseller who has collected for her 'Indian' novels an enthusiastic public of a quarter of a million who write to tell her how 'real' and 'true-to-life' her Indian characters are, admits in some bewilderment: I don't know how or why I am so successful in getting the Indian quality of my characters so true. I have really known very few Indians; one didn't know them in my day. It is some sort of sympathetic insight that guides me - and guides me right (p. 61).

Calvino (1981) notes of these "sympathetic insights" or outlines:

> ... you must remain both oblivious and highly alert, as I am abstracted but prick up my ears with my elbow on the counter of the bar and my cheek on my wrist. And if now the novel begins to abandon its misty vagueness and give some details about the appearance of the people, the sensation it wants to transmit to you is that of faces seen for the first time but also faces that seem to have been seen thousands of times (p. 18).

As well, as Bogart (1980) observes in explaining the appeal of fiction,

> Fiction is by definition something made up, fancied though it may represent the heart of truth in a deeper sense. Fiction is created by the fantasy or the imagination of a writer and is successful insofar as it evokes imagination by way of response (p. 240).

It is the writer's craft, then, in a full-length work to evoke this imagination. However, as McCarthy (1960) notes, it is important that there exist an air of veracity about a work such that it must seem plausible in these imaginings:

> We not only make believe a novel, but we do so substantially believe it, as being continuous with real life, made of the same stuff, and the presence of fact in fiction, of dates and times and distances, it is a kind of reassurance -- a guarantee of credibility. If we read a novel, say, about conditions in post-war Germany, we expect it to be an accurate report of conditions of post-war Germany; if we find out that it is not, the novel is discredited (p. 451).

The air of veracity, rather than veracity or fact itself, is what is important. The role of social pressure on reading the effortless "agreeable sensation" described by Leavis should not be confused with authenticity. As one of the more serious readers notes of The Thorn Birds which she apparently did not enjoy:

> *There was just the story: there was no research except that she might have visited an Australian sheep farm for the weekend, very superficial, got the details and the right name which is written in quotation marks.*

Another aspect of looking at fiction is to consider the 'pressure' or motivation related to reading bestsellers. In looking at the responses to The Thorn Birds, one notices that eleven readers observed that they had read the book because it has been recommended by someone else. This element of 'everybody's reading it/everybody's talking about it' seemed to positively enhance their regard for the book. Considering that many people claimed to read bestsellers because the books were "good" and not because they were bestsellers, there may be new dimensions to the adjective 'good'. One might consider that most people would not have read the book at all if it had not been a bestseller since the chances of their accidentally stumbling upon it, or completing it if they had not felt some social pressure, are remote.

This is perhaps best expressed by one of the most impressionable readers in the study who reads primarily bestsellers:

> *It was hard to get into. I had heard so many people say it was a really good book. I had to start it three times before I really liked it. I'd read about 20 pages and I'd think 'Oh, I don't like it at all'. I don't know if it was because there was so much description, but then I tried it again. Then somebody told me 'oh, they really loved the book' so this time I tried to and I sat down and read about the first 50 pages to get started in it. Then I really liked it.*

What people read in terms of difficulty is certainly likely to be related to how much pressure there is to read a particular work as well as the image the reader has of herself. Obviously if a reader feels compelled to read a book because of social pressure, he would be more likely to endure pages of descriptions or whatever it is that normally gives them problems, as well as re-read or slow down in sections so that he could comprehend sufficiently to go on. This again would be support for the importance of considering the life circumstances in exploring the response of a reader to a particular work. Without a certain degree of pressure or social influence one must question whether a reader would voluntarily choose a particular book, and having chose it whether he would put forth the same effort to complete it? As one reader notes of her reading of The Thorn Birds:

> *It was so big, but after I'd read one chapter I was hooked.*

Berelson (1957) notes:

> People read what other people around them are reading; in a sense they are 'forced' to read certain books in order to be up-to-date in bookish conversations (p. 124).

One might question the validity of reading situations or tasks in the research where there is a failure to consider the role of social context. Those who have had occasion to teach adolescents who are close to the legal driving age would understand the force of the external pressure to procure a driver's

license. Such pressure will often compel students to read successfully a driver's manual whose readability is well above the student's achieved score on a reading test.

SUMMARY

This chapter has attempted to 'crop' the data on the fiction reading process through a discussion of response to fiction as "optical instrument". What a reader says about a particular text would appear to be related to his life circumstances in general and the setting in which he reads the particular text. What is described in the ensuing chapters in this section is the ' focusing' and 'enlarging' of the fiction reading process through the use of the unaided recall and thinking aloud tasks, and the role of the consciousness of the reader-subject on his reading.

CHAPTER 8

'FOCUSING' ON THE FICTION READING PROCESS

FORESHADOWING

In the previous chapter it has been suggested that the fiction reader may be really reading what is already within himself. As was evident in the responses of readers to two short stories, different readers respond to different elements in a text. Such being the case it is necessary to know something of a reader's general background in order to come to some understanding of why he responds to what he does in a text, and why he choooses what he reads. Another way of looking at the question of who reads what, why and how is to compare the way the reader responds to and processes other types of texts, particularly those that he does not habitually read, with the way he responds to and processes fiction. What are the satisfactions that are derived or not derived from particular readings, and how are these satisfactions related to purposes for reading and apparent processes involved in a reading?

AESTHETIC AND EFFERENT READING

Rosenblatt (1978, 1968) has explored the possibility of different 'processes' involved in different types of readings by considering what it is that is known at the conclusion of various readings. A 'known', she speculates, assumes a 'knower' but it is the 'knowing' or process of coming to know that demarcates different forms of readings. In certain types of readings, as in the case of fiction or "aesthetic reading" as Rosenblatt terms it, it would appear as though the reader's primary concern is likely

to be with what happens during the actual reading [redacted] as a form of 'living through'. In other types of reading, as in dealing with informational texts, the reader's attention or concern is likely to be focused primarily on what will remain as the residue after reading. In this "efferent" reading, the information to be carried away or acquired, the logical solution to a problem, or the actions to be carried out after the reading are the foci.

Even within this general category of reading there may be degrees of 'carrying away', as is suggested by Ingarden (1973) in his discussion of "cognitive" or "investigative" reading versus "practical reading". In "investigative" reading the reader is more likely to "play" with the ideas and to entertain possibilities rather than to actually take away information. Indeed aspects of this "investigative" reading may coincide with the 'living through' experience of fiction reading. In "practical reading", on the other hand, the reader may be attempting to locate and take away a piece of information such as the price of grapefruit at the Safeway store, or the steps involved in assembling a picnic table. As well, while there may be a pleasure accompanying the acquisition of ideas in "investigative" reading, the reading of practical texts may be a substitute for acquiring the information another way such as through personal contact or the radio. Recently Diehl and Mikulecky (1980) further divided practical reading into categories such as reading-to-learn, reading-to-do, reading-to-do-with incidental learning, and reading-to-access. What is important in considering these different readings is the role of purpose on the elements of a text that a reader focuses, and the ensuing knowledge or satisfaction that he derives.

It may be that it is the process of coming to know that differentiates these aforementioned forms of reading. In "practical" reading the reader may be satisfied when he has located the information he was looking for. In

other cases he may only be satisfied if he can locate the information as well as retain the information. In "investigative" reading the reader may not be satisfied with the reading until he has weighed a number of arguments carefully, or at least turned them over in his head from a number of different angles. Where the reader will only prolong the "practical" reading if he is having difficulty as in the case of understanding the directions for constructing a picnic table, he might savour the ideas indefinitely in the "investigative" reading. The purposes for reading the elements in the text that are important, and even the speed of reading, are likely to vary in the process of coming to know from different texts.

In "aesthetic" reading, there may be no reason to recall that the butler's name was Giles, and as well, no need to savour in one's head the plausibility of whether the butler or the chauffeur committed the murder. Rather, the reader may find himself racing through a book at top speed with a sense of 'and then...'. Or, he may find himself witholding the last chapter as a way of savouring the experiences or prolonging the relationship with the author and characters as much as possible. The reader might even read the last page first either because he regards the reading more as a form of problem-solving or because he derives some satisfaction from the living through rather than from the 'ending'. Writers of the 'flashback' novel play on this in any case as in the novel the Stone Angel by Margaret Laurence, where we know on page one the situation of the main character but we are happy to read on to find out how she came to be there.

While there may be less question about what is to be known after the reading of a history textbook, or that what is known after the reading of that textbook and a novel is likely to differ, there is more question about what it is that readers actually 'know' after reading a novel, how it is that

readers arrive at these different forms, and, as Obah (1980) questions, whether there are any process differences at all. Rosenblatt (1978) speculates that the processes involved in coming to know an "aesthetic" work, and coming to know an "efferent" work are quite different in terms of how the reader chooses to organize any set of verbal symbols. The physical text or the marks on the page become the text of a poem, a scientific formula or a novel on the basis of the relationship with the reader and the way he chooses or feels compelled to organize these marks. Like Dewey and Bentley (1949), Rosenblatt (1978) rejects the notion of reading as a purely interactive process since such a description implies separate self-contained entities acting upon one another like billiard balls colliding. While our language imposes the constraint of saying either that the reader interprets the text, or the text produces a response in the reader, the process may be really more one of 'conditioning': the reader's stance or approach to a text, and cues in the text tend to condition each other. Such being the case, to look at either the reader or the text in isolation is likely to be unprofitable. To look at how a reader approaches various texts (his stance) and what cues in the text are deemed important (selective attention) may shed light on the processes involved in various forms of reading.

STANCE

Rosenblatt (1978) uses the term 'stance' to denote the approach that readers take to various texts. She describes a type of organizing framework wherein the reader selectively attends to particular aspects of a text.

In exploring this organizing framework, Rosenblatt (1966, 1978) describes how she had a group of high school teachers read four lines and jot down their thoughts and association about these lines over a period of 30

minutes. The readers were not informed that the four lines were a quatrain from a poem by Frost. While early jottings reflected an initial confusion, readers soon groped for some form of organization making such comments as 'This seems to be like bits of conversation,' 'Sounds like...', 'Seems to be...'. As some of the readers happened upon a rhyme scheme they re-read for the purpose of paying attention to the rhythm throughout. The comments contained more and more indications of 'on second thought', 'a second look', or 'another idea'. On the basis of an analysis of the jottings of these readers, Rosenblatt concluded that readers assumed an active involvement in building or constructing for themselves a poem or whatever, through their selective attention to particular elements on the page. Each reader appeared to be somewhat egocentric in seeking some form of organizing principle or tentative framework that would guide their attention in a "self-ordering and self-correcting process" (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 11).

A question that warranted exploration with readers relates to what would be held in the "forefront of the reader's attention" (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 11), and why. In the processing of literary works, or fiction, one might expect that the reader would attend to information that is directly centered in the 'living through' experience through a 'free reign' to attend to particular scenes, images and impressions. Bogart (1980) discusses this 'free reign':

> Written fiction, being wholly symbolic in character, is accepted by the audience as something that must be interpreted and recreated by them. The reader fills in. No novelist can possibly describe (or would want to) every feature of the appearance of every one of his characters, every furnishing of every room, of every act, and every gesture that accompanies the conversation presented. The reader is expected to cover the gaps, to embellish the outlines with details. Similarly it is understood that the author must be highly selective in what he tells.

> The fact that the reader determines the color of the hero's eyes and hair, the shade of the draperies in the bedroom, that the reader furnishes the backgrounds from imagination and past experience - all this is what makes the work of art compelling. The reader's attention is expected to wander, so that he often catches himself at the end of a paragraph, realizing that his mind has not followed what his eyes have just read because his imagination was racing off in amplification of what the writer has said (p. 240).

The experience of 'living through' or "free reign" may be the knowing and the satisfaction that accompanies the reading of novels. Calvino (1981) likens this 'free reign' to the experience of flying:

> To fly is the opposite of travelling: you cross a gap into space, you vanish into the void, you accept not being in any place for a duration that is itself a kind of void in time ... How do you occupy this absence of yourself from the world, and of the world from you? You read; you do not raise your eyes from the book between one airport and the other, because beyond the page there is the void, the anonymity of stopovers... You might as well stick with this other abstraction of travel, accomplished by the anonymous uniformity of typographical characters: here too is the evocative power of the names that persuade you that you are flying over something and not nothingness. You realize that it takes considerable heedlessness to entrust yourself to unsure instruments, handled with approximations ... (p. 210).

In the processing of "efferent" materials, on the other hand, one might expect that readers would attend more to information that they could take away. The satisfaction that accompanies such readings would be related to 'knowing' some specific information at the end. While readers may read for different purposes in any case, it is important to consider that the reader's purposes in reading may be conditioned in part by the success that they have previously derived from particular readings. The reading ability needed to 'recreate' the impact of a literary work may be quite different from that required to locate and retain information to be taken away from an "efferent" work (Parker, 1969), such that being able to utilize the appropriate stance may be one of

the reasons why readers appear to derive more satisfaction from one type of reading material and not another.

The mature reader as described by Gray (1960), Judd and Buswell (1922) and Thorndike (1919) may have the flexibility to adapt or appropriately shift frameworks given various types of reading material. For example, he might have the expectation of 'taking away' information from a history textbook. Moreover, he might also be able to adopt an "efferent" stance in reading aesthetic materials should the purpose of the reading be to analyze the syntax of Keats "Ode on a Grecian Urn", and as well, adopt an "aesthetic" stance with certain efferent materials as in the case of the mathematician who:

> ...turns from his efferent abstract manipulation of the symbols to focus his attention on and to aesthetically savour the 'elegance' of his solution (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 25).

As well, this element of 'stance' may be related to the relationship between the author and the text, as perceived by the reader. In a way that parallels Harding's (1968) discussion of distancing as described in Chapter 7, Escarpit (1971) sheds light on the difference between the functional (efferent work) and the aesthetic (literary) work:

> Any work which is not functional, but an end in itself is literature (p. 14)... A work is functional when the addressed public coincides with the public for which the book is published. A literary work on the contrary brings the anonymous reader as a stranger into the dialogue. The reader is not at home and knows it; he is like an invisible being who sees everything, feels and understands everything without having real existence in the life of a dialogue which is not his. The echoed pleasure he feels as he lets himself be carried away by emotions, the ideas and the style is a gratuitous pleasure, for it does not involve him. All aesthetic pleasure, and thus all literary intercourse would become impossible were the public to lose the security and anonymity of distance which allows him to participate without involvement... (p. 15).

The experiences of 'being carried away' versus 'carrying away' would appear to rest on what it is that the reader expects (stance) and what it is that he attends to in the reading, or his selective attention.

Selective Attention

Judd and Buswell (1922) write that:

> ...a printed page turns out to be... a source of a mass of impressions which the active mind begins to organize and arrange with reference to some pattern which he has trained to work out (p. 4).

What warrants investigation is how readers selectively attend, how the readers intentions are conditioned by the text, or how intention and attention condition each other. The flexible reader, or the one who can derive satisfaction from many different forms of text, is likely to be the one who not only knows 'how' to shift stance but also 'when':

> ...when to skim or to read closely, to read rapidly or to linger, to get a general impression, or to master details, to read orally or silently; when to reflect, to visualize, to infer, to evaluate; or when to use any of the other skills and abilities one has acquired (Gray, 1960, p. 129).

Stauffer (1977), as well, considers that the relationship between intention and attention is part of the fluent reading process:

> ...In essence the dimensions of creative and versatile reading are: ability to actualize concepts and intentions; ability to sift information and determine its relevance to one's anticipations as well as to actively follow an author's intentions and fidelity; ability to deal with constraints and invariants in terms of goals being sought; ability to maintain in dynamic equilibrium the personal components of convictions and inclinations (p. 52).

These personal "convictions" and "inclinations" might be regarded as similar to what Gates (1949) has described in his discussion of reading "as a thought-getting process "which should embrace all types of thinking as well as the emotions. The reader's attitudes and purposes are modified; indeed his

innermost being is involved" (p. 3). Finally, Bruner (1971) in describing the role of intention, notes:

> En route he [man] acquires and sorts information relevant to his purpose. In time there is a puzzling process by which such purposefully organized knowledge is converted into a more generalized form so that it can be used for many ends. It then becomes 'knowledge' in the most general sense... (Cited in Wanat, 1977, p. 51).

The knowledge-seeking that the reader is engaged in might be regarded as the process of 'making sense' as described by Goodman (1976) and Smith (1971), resulting in "minor alterations of attitue to a sweeping change in sympathics, knowledge and behaviour" (Waples, Berelson and Bradshaw, 1940, p. 21).

In this intentional 'making sense' activity, one might consider that the reader samples certain cues rather than attends to all incoming data indiscriminately. Khodzava (1957) describes the relationship between intention and cue selection'arousal as one which creates:

> ...a certain orientation or apperception which makes the subsequent reading an active process in which the search for the desired meaning and the discernment of agreements or disagreements with the expected meaning begins to assume an almost exclusive role (p. 4).

Similarly, Neisser (1967) conceives of reading as a type of silent calculation where the reader formulates hypotheses about the incoming data. Rapid reading is a "continuous silent stream of thought" (p. 136), based on these hypotheses and culminating in decisions or syntheses that permit the apprehension of meaning. James (1890), much earlier, had referred to "silent streams of thought" which, as Rosenblatt (1978) notes, seem to be a useful way of describing the flow of "sensations, feelings, attitudes, and ideas funded in latent memories" (p. 42).

Gibson (1972) has suggested: "We do not just see, we look; we do not merely hear, we listen" (p. 7). But what is it that allows us to select the right elements to 'look' and to 'listen'? Rosenblatt (1978) would argue that

the efferent reader screens or selects only that which is needed in the end result or residue. One might speculate that the 'test-wise' child already knows this when he performs well with informational passages on a reading test. The aesthetic reader, on the other hand, may bestow his attention "on a fuller arc of his responses to the verbal symbols, selecting out what can be woven into the relevant structure of ideas, feeling, and attitude" (p. 43).

The questions to be answered relate to how it is that particular readers selectively attend to different aspects of different texts. Are there certain cues inherent in the text that serve to condition his selective attention to a certain extent, as for example, the 'paracues' in the cover of the book, the physical setting in which the book is encountered, its call number, the organization of the words on the page, or even the 'practice' a reader has had with various forms of text? Whether a text is a 'found' poem or whether it is a newspaper article depends on how it looks, where it is seen, the reader's experience with newspaper articles and 'found' poetry, and ultimately, the cues to which he selectively attends. The reader, then, is accessory to the text rather than subservient (Rosenblatt, 1978).

EXPLORING STANCE AND SELECTIVE ATTENTION

As a means of coming to understand the processes involved in various forms of reading the terms "stance", "selective attention" and "organizing framework" as used by Rosenblatt (1978) seemed useful. However, it is important to consider that while the terms have been borrowed, their full explication was part of the exploration.

To gain insights into the role of stance and selective attention, in the knowing that accompanies various readings, Denzin's (1970) principles of multiple triangulation were used, such that readers were involved in a variety of different print situations, and as well, through a variety of probes, had opportunities to retrospect about how they read various texts. Thus, what readers said about what they did with various texts (metacognitive knowledge) along with what they actually appeared to do in a variety of print settings in terms of strategy (metacognitive experience) were explored. The main questions to be answered in these metacognitive explorations related to whether readers read fiction and nonfiction any differently, and if so, how and why?

Metacognitive Knowledge About Fiction/Nonfiction Reading

To explore metacognitive knowledge about the difference between reading fiction and nonfiction, the transcripts of all 32 readers were scrutinized with regard to comments about material that was difficult to read, aspects of reading that readers would like to improve, and the reading material that would be avoided. A second approach was to look at what the 12 indepth readers said about the fiction/nonfiction they read in the unaided recall situations. What they considered to be differences in their readings of the fiction and nonfiction as triggered by the task was taken as further data on stance and selective attention. As well, readers frequently made comments about how they approached fiction or nonfiction in the course of the thinking aloud task.

Prior to a discussion of what it was that readers are aware of in reading fiction and nonfiction in terms of stance and selective attention, it is important to point out the difficulties of eliciting such data. For example, 'fiction' and 'nonfiction' are by no means universal in their denotative

meanings as far as the readers in the study were concerned. To some readers the term fiction implied either science fiction or some form of fantasy, whereas nonfiction referred to any story which could be true. Since much of what comes under the rubric of fiction could be true, historical fiction, espionage, or war stories were not necessarily regarded as fiction. Such being the case it was difficult to ask many of the readers directly whether they found differences in reading fiction and nonfiction.

As well, to ask readers directly whether there were any books they had difficulty reading also created some problems with interpretation of the question. For example, a number of readers noted that they had not had any difficulty because they chose very carefully, avoiding books that would bother them or books 'with obscure meanings'.

However, once the 'semantics' of the question about problems in reading had been straightened out it was found that at least 13 of the readers had some difficulty reading technical articles and books such as 'how to...', explaining that they read too quickly, lacked in background knowledge or simply felt that it was 'like work'. The notion of speed figured very prominently in their discussions. Most seemed to feel that because they were used to reading fiction so quickly, either because they wanted to capture quickly the 'essence' of the story or for other reasons such as the context in which they engaged in such readings, that they were unused to slowing down when it was necessary with nonfiction. In other words, they lacked flexibility in reading and whereas speed reading a novel could yield a satisfying experience, speed reading a book on the sociology of race relations would probably not be particularly satisfying during the reading, and would yield little for retention at the end. While several readers noted that they habitually skip-read and did

not ever read word-for-word, other readers who skip-read fiction read nonfiction word-for-word. Seemingly the readers who read both fiction and nonfiction were able to use different strategies while some of the readers who read fiction only appeared to have only one strategy. While it may be necessary to read fiction quickly if one is to be constantly entertained by it, as was suggested by one of the readers in the study as well as by Blunt (1977) in her discussion of reading-as-cinema, such an approach would appear to preclude the enjoyment of nonfiction.

All 12 indepth readers similarly considered that they had read the fiction and nonfiction passages quite differently and as well noted that it was necessary to do that in their general reading. For example, one reader noted that since she only picked up nonfiction with a purpose in mind, or when she wanted to learn something specifically, she always retained more from nonfiction. What she wanted to get out of the text served to guide her attention. Similarly another commented that she read nonfiction slowly because she wanted to learn something; she had a goal in mind.

While the importance of goal in reading has been acknowledged earlier in the discussion of stance and elsewhere (Stauffer, 1969a, 1969b, 1969c, 1977) it may be that another element in this 'frame of mind' concerns emotion and psychological expectation. A number of readers commented that they read fiction in a more relaxed manner:

> *I think probably with the fiction I read with a more relaxed attitude; with nonfiction I pay a lot more attention to detail; in fact, I won't skim nonfiction. I'm not getting as much out of fiction because I don't have to.*
>
> *When I'm going to read nonfiction, it's something I'm really interested in. So therefore I really pay attention to what I'm reading. Whereas with a lot of fiction it's just pleasant recreation.*

> *I don't absorb nonfiction as well. You feel that you have to think about it and analyze it. I don't do that with fiction; it's just something I do.*

In addition to the free and relaxed manner that readers of fiction might assume, one reader notes the free manner with which fiction writers might write:

> *Fiction writers have free reign. If you are writing about something that is true you are confined to the facts; they have to be condensed.*

Whether it is that readers approach fiction with a more relaxed manner because of less demanding expectations, or whether it is that 'being carried away' serves to relax them is not clear. Regardless of the cause-effect relationship, it may be that it is this relaxed manner which serves to perpetuate the second-class status of fiction reading. As Leavis (1932) notes:

> The effects of an inordinate addiction to light reading was known (mainly by repute) to the nineteenth century; it came under the heading of 'dissipation', and to read novels as to drink wine, in the morning was far into the century a vice while to devote a fixed time to solid reading was a matter of conscience (p. 53).

Metacognitive Experiences in Fiction-Nonfiction Reading

Two approaches were taken to exploring more closely how it is that readers approach types of texts, and what knowing it is that accompanies the reading of different texts. Having the readers read ambiguous fiction-nonfiction passages in an unaided recall situation will be the first approach discussed. The second approach which will be described in Chapter 9 was through the 'thinking aloud' procedures.

Fiction-Nonfiction Unaided Recalls

It was anticipated that the free recalls and the subsequent probing based on the ambiguous fiction-nonfiction passages (Appendix D) described in Chapter 3 would shed light on stance and selective attention in various

readings, and also the knowing that accompanies such readings. It must be acknowledged that the reading situation was somewhat contrived to the extent that readers were given no indication as to who wrote the passages, what the titles were, or if they were fiction or nonfiction. However, the task did appear to allow for an exploration of stance, and as well, was presented in a collaborative context rather than the more traditional experimental approach. It must also be acknowledged that the fact that both passages dealt in some way with violence might further facilitate a comparative analysis.

Readers had simply been asked to read the "Desensitization of Twentieth Century Man" passage and talk about it followed by "The Sniper" which they were to talk about, or vice versa. Following the elicitation of these free recalls, readers were probed further with questions such as the following:

1. Did you see any similarity between the two passages?
2. Were you aware of any differences in the way you read the two passages?
3. Did you find one easier to read than the other?
4. Where do you think you would be likely to see the first passage? the second passage?
5. Which one is more like what you usually read?
6. Did you enjoy one more than the other?
7. Did you see one as being fiction and the other as nonfiction?
8. Are you aware of any differences in the way you read fiction or nonfiction?

Nature of the Recalls

In general, the recalls fell into one of the following categories: a

verbatim response where the reader tried to maintain the sequence of events; a personal interpretation much like the synthesizing recalls of the short stories as described in Chapter 7; and clarification comments which again were similar to those described in Chapter 7.

Although the readers had not been given any indication as to whether they were reading fiction or nonfiction, it is interesting to note that their free recalls tended to reflect inherent distinctions that they made. For example, in response to "The Sniper" more of the readers tended to provide many details from the story; and in fact, at least six of the responses were verbatim recalls:

> *One sniper, a Republican was on a rooftop. And every-time he ventured forth, the sniper across the road fired at him. Well, he saw an old lady, and an armoured car came along, and the armoured car stopped, and the old lady pointed out his position. So he shot the gunner in the armoured car, and then he shot the old lady...And he decided to check on the other sniper who was a good shot, and discovered it was his brother.*

Another reader,who also included an attempt at interpretation, nonetheless, retained the sequence of the story and made many references to the text:

> *Well, it's about war. About this young man going on a rooftop. It's a little bit contradictory, it says he's a fanatic, and then it says he has remorse over killing another man. But if he's a fanatic he shouldn't have any remorse. Apparently it's in the civil war; he's lying on the rooftop trying to get his own battalion, and can't because of the enemies around him... Then he gets curious and wants to know what the person he killed looked like. And it turned out it's his brother...*

Only two readers made any attempt at a verbatim recall of the nonfiction passages. In the two cases the readers also attempted to include an interpretation:

> *Well it starts off, it's about crime and violence, and it's really the author's feelings, how he feels about it. I think it's disappointing because he starts off with, like what you would read in a mystery book, and then suddenly you get in the middle of it and there's no story at all. It's about how he describes a scene of a women being beaten, someone trying to kill her or*

> *something, and how people stand by and watch it and don't really help. And he goes on - he uses that scene for an example...*
>
> *Well, it starts telling about a woman who's being chased by a man, and she runs into a station where there are a dozen or so people, men in uniform and other people waiting around, and she comes in screaming that the man is trying to kill her. And she runs over and gets near the author and he stands in front and tries to protect her... And the author is horrified by the fact that the people who are standing around don't try to help the woman...*

The more prevalent response to the nonfiction was some form of personal interpretation, with the readers tending to relate the gist of the passage more to their personal lives, than to the actual sequence of events in the text:

> *Well, I do agree with what they say, that people will stand by and see a brutal act carried out. I believe it's a case of not wanting to get involved. In the case of the girl in the railroad station it does happen. It could happen, people stand by - I don't know if it's fear of physical damage, injury or just a lack of spirit really. And as they say in there, on our media today we have so much violence we take it for granted. But I was most surprised with the servicemen standing on the platform there, going to New York, that they should stand by...*

In other recalls of personal interpretation, readers referred even less to the text:

> *Well, we're not sensitive to violence any more... it's so true... I was thinking about the things we see around us, like I was born after the war, when people were - nobody wanted to fight, nobody wanted to hurt anybody anymore. And my children, they're of a generation where it's going on all around them in the world, and they've been to the States, and different places where this stuff happens...*

Those readers who gave a personal interpretation recall for the short story tended to refer more to the text:

> *Well, that's the civil war in Ireland and the question of the last line, well the last line doesn't say it, but he finds he's shot his own brother; it's family against family, brother gainst brother which is true.*

> *The story is good the plot is good, the fellow, the sniper is smart in the way he entices the other sniper and that, to make him think he's killed the man...*

The reader who found it difficult to organize any form of recall in the probed fiction recall situation, and hence sought clarification, likewise found it difficult to discuss "The Sniper":

> *I never read anything like this because I hate violence... I find this difficult; I'm not really interested in it.*

She maintained that she found it difficult to analyze things. However, it is interesting to note that with the nonfiction she was at least able to fill in more with an opinion:

> *It's about how people are getting use to violence and don't mind it. I don't - surely everyone isn't. I know I'm not. The ones that - maybe it's like - let's see Im getting away from what it's about. I was going to say we hear about the few kids who are troublemakers and you know you don't hear about the rest of them...*

What is interesting about a comparison of the recalls to the short story and the nonfiction piece is the observation made by the last reader: there is a greater tendency to wander away from the nonfiction text, whereas readers who were practised in reading fiction found it easier to organize their responses to the fiction. The question arises, however, as to whether readers actually read them differently or whether they used the same strategies with both, with such strategies being more effective or appropriate for one text.

Responses to Fiction-Nonfiction

Readers had been asked about the similarities and differences between the two passages. The question had been presented rather vaguely so that readers might consider either content or form. Most people spontaneously commented on content in that they saw both passages as being about violence. Only one person did not comment directly on this, noting rather that these passages

represented two different ways of expressing a personal opinion. Two people commented that they thought the two passages must have been written by the same author since both were made up of short sentences with a great number of commas. Although the ambiguity of instructions may have lead readers to suspect a trick, their reasons for believing that they were written by the same author were legitimate. However, it should be noted that another reader freely commented that the two passages obviously were not written by the same author.

In terms of ease of reading, seven of the readers found the fiction piece easier to read, although both passages were of grade 10 readability. Two readers provided an unexpected comment in that they said the nonfiction was easier to read because they had read it faster 'just to get through', feeling free to skip. Three people did not note any difference at all in the readings.

Speed in reading presents an interesting issue. Seemingly people do not always read faster that which they enjoy. Three of the six readers who had read "The Sniper" faster explained that they had read it quickly just to get through it, while three others who liked it read it quickly because it flowed so well. The change of speed in some cases indicated a change in attitude toward the text:

> *I had to read it (nonfiction) twice just to make sure I was following what he was saying. Once I realized it was nonfiction, I just tended to concentrate more.*
>
> *Well, if I'm reading fiction, if it's just going on carrying on a light conversation or something like that I read it quickly. But if I come to a part where I want to learn something then I slow down and try to remember what I read.*
>
> *I think I maybe might have slowed down to see what was really coming, because after you got past the episodes you could see the change was coming.*

Since all of the people who read the two passages read a great deal of fiction, one might expect that they would be familiar with the conventions of reading material such as the difference between fiction and nonfiction and the location of such works. All twelve of the readers recognized that "Desensitization of Twentieth Century Man" was a work of nonfiction and commented that it probably would have appeared in Reader's Digest or Newsweek as an editorial. Since the passage had been chosen for its ambiguity in that it started off like fiction and became nonfiction, readers were queried as to when they became aware of the fact that it was nonfiction. Readers in general were able to pinpoint exactly where their 'stance' changed, either speeding up or slowing down depending upon their habitual response to non-fiction. One reader who usually eschews nonfiction noted:

> *You think immediately this is interesting. What's happening? Who is that man with the woman? Who is the other man helping? Is he going to do something? Now this first page is very interesting - I read that very well, but after the first page I started skipping...*

A reader with an opposite view notes:

> *I was more interested in reading that part as opposed to the first part because to me that was just describing a situation that isn't real. But when they actually get down to facts, talking about the way our lives are changing people becoming more impersonal and not caring about others, then I really got interested.*

While almost all of the readers were aware of the origins of the non-fiction passage, only eight of the twelve readers recognized that the "Sniper" was fiction, or that it was a short story. While the story had been presented in an ambiguous manner, and in the same context as a definite work of non-fiction, it was interesting to note that one-third of the readers did not realize that it was fiction. However, given the conventional notion of fiction as being a full length work, with two covers, a title and an author, perhaps it is not surprising that readers did not realize it was fiction.

In this regard too, seven of the readers felt that the nonfiction passage "Desensitization of Twentieth Century Man" was closer to what they usually read. Although the expectation had been that they would say "The Sniper", it is important to recall that these readers were not short stories readers, whereas most of them were magazine or newspaper readers.

Five of the readers preferred "The Sniper", regarding it as an excellent story. Three others, while preferring "The Sniper" to "Desensitization of Twentieth Century Man", appeared really to be expressing a view about the lesser of two evils. One person liked both passages equally well, while three preferred the nonfiction. Part of this last preference no doubt reflects their eschewing of the short story, although a number of readers regarded "The Sniper" as one more in a long line of violent, depressing passages, and comments such as the following surfaced:

> *Why don't you pick something nicer?*
>
> *I don't like your choice of reading material too much. It would be nice to read something a little more cheerful.*
>
> *I was just wondering why you pick so many stories with losers in them?*
>
> *The one thing that went through my mind was why did you choose both on ... why not one relatively happy?*

Although the nonfiction passage did pertain to violence also, it had a more optimistic tone to it since the writer appeared to be making attempts to spur people to action rather than to passivity. The fiction piece could have that effect on a reader also, but the tendency of readers was more to regard it with a certain degree of resignation. Perhaps even the more detached view of violence that readers expressed as a result of reading the nonfiction piece might be taken as further evidence of a stance of less direct involvement.

The 'Knowing' of Fiction-Nonfiction

The argument raised by Rosenblatt (1978) has been that the knowing of fiction reading tends to be more a 'living through' rather than a 'taking away'. What is evident in comparing the types of responses that the readers offered in response to the fiction and nonfiction is that in most cases they were able to take away more from the fiction reading than the non-fiction where they tended to fill in with personal opinion for the most part. However, such evidence in conjunction with the fact that readers found the fiction easier to read only substantiates that the readers found it easier to take away factual material from the fiction piece. This could mean that whatever strategies they used in reading the story did not work so effectively with the nonfiction. Restated, one might speculate that the 'living through' strategies of the fiction readers allowed them to take away more information from fiction than from nonfiction.

The other point to be considered, however, with regard to this 'taking away' from fiction relates to the actual content of the material. Many of the readers had been quick to point out in the initial interviews that they were seeking something with authenticity, a little 'mental exercise' or a challenge. Thus, while they did not necessarily always 'take away' such information, it is not to be denied that facts about people and places contribute to the overall fabric and veracity of a work. As well, too, although a 10-year-old will not necessarily regard a manual on horse care as a substitute for another Walter Farley book on the Black Stallion, he will not accept a story about horses that has little authenticity to it. Griffiths (1932) notes in this regard too:

> Though I am interested in India, and willing to learn more about the life of its people, I read Kim, not for this reason, but because it's a good story. My curiosity is only part of a general desire to know more of an

> experience beyond the limits of my own environment (p. 20).

The novelist, in essence, refines or distils fact in its raw state. As McCarthy (1960) notes, "most of the great novels do contain certain blocks or 'refractory lumps' in the porridge of the story" (p. 446). Victor Hugo wrote of prisons and political events; Tolstoy of war and family life; Dreiser, Sinclair Lewis, Hemingway, O'Hara and Faulkner all fictionalized the newspaper man as 'seeker of truth'; Melville, Conrad, Kipling and D.H. Lawrence provide the travel book; Stendhal, Henry James, Mark Twain, Henry Miller, George Orwell all provide 'impressions of travel'. Balzac, as McCarthy notes, devotes a whole chapter of Les Illusions Perdues to a description of the way paper is made. Marian Engel planned to live in a convent for a short period of time before writing her novel "The Glassy Sea" (personal communication).

The fiction reader is a free agent in attending to the facts that he does since convention has not decreed purposes for fiction in quite the same way as for nonfiction. As one reader comments with regard to fiction:

> *It was a story; it didn't matter as much what you got out of it.*

In the same way that the author has 'free reign' up to a point, it may be that the reader has free reign. Part of such free reign may be the entertainment component in fiction and may explain why many non-readers do not read fiction; they have not learned this 'stance'. The knowing in fiction reading, then, rather than being a substitute for experience in real life is 'better' than real life. As Booth (1961) writes:

> One of the most obviously artificial devices of the story teller is the trick of going beneath the surface of the action to obtain a reliable view of the character's mind and heart. Whatever our ideas may be about the natural way to tell a story, artifice is unmistakably present whenever the author tells us that no one in so-called real life could possibly know. In life we never know anyone but ourselves by thor-

> ough, reliable, internal signs, and most of us achieve an all too partial view even of ourselves. It is, in a way strange, then, that in literature, from the very beginning we have been told motives directly and authoritatively without being forced to rely on those shaky inferences about other men which we cannot avoid in our lives (p. 3).

It was considered useful to look at some of the 'refracting' that the readers did with the factual aspects of the short story "The Sniper". Some readers had earlier commented that they read fiction as a form of fact. While their comments were taken in part as an example of their defensiveness about fiction reading, it seemed to be the case that after one reading of "The Sniper" 'on the spot' they did tend to remember many facts. For example, one reader who read for 'the mental exercise' observes:

> *I think his method of getting the other sniper was rather smart. But, he didn't say how many yards away he was - well - I was concerned with the fact that he was using a revolver as opposed to the rifle. That shows up his smartness. With a revolver as against a rifle, why you can knock somebody off a lot easier with a rifle! I have always found a revolver recoiled in my hands.*

Such readers, too, at least were aware of where the story was taking place, and by inference, why it was taking place:

> *One sniper, a Republican sniper was on a rooftop, it was the Irish war.*

Others missed certain factual aspects of the story completely:

> *He was on one side - so it must have been in the States, in one of the civil wars, and - he was out to kill someone on the other side.*

Only later as this reader is talking in the probed recalls about the story does it occur to her to go back and check the actual location of the story. The brother-against-brother element or the general theme had been sufficient 'knowledge' for her.

Two of the readers who provided verbatim recalls of "The Sniper" as well as "Desensitization" demonstrated that they were also attentive to details of form, noting in their spontaneous free recalls:

> *One thing I noticed was the punctuation. They had a comma in there which I didn't think should be. The Recorder does the same thing. They had a form in it once calling for opinions so I filled it out and told them that's one of the bad things - their use of commas, because they break your train of thought. But outside of that, the story was okay.*

> *There seemed to be so many short sentences in both of these. There didn't seem to be any long flow of sentences. There seems to be almost more full stops than there are commas or semi-colons to keep the continuity or give you that little pause to go on. You come to a stop - now this one's got five words - and here's four 'it was an enemy plan'. Let's see in that short area you've got six full stops...*

One must speculate on why it is that some readers can take away a good deal of factual content and as well discuss form, while others can scarcely articulate even what went on in the story after having read it. While reading ability is likely to be related, there is the possibility that the readers who recalled little tended to be 'carried away' more, either in the form of vicarious excitement or, as in the case of murder mysteries, excitement without the inconvenience. However, it must be acknowledged that there are many novels such as those by Trollope or Austen that in many cases are even less exciting than real life. Humdrum details, as Scrutton (1956) observes are, even in exciting novels, part of the fabric of fiction. People eat, tie shoelaces and gaze out onto vast vistas of nothingness. However, as opposed to our own lives which are largely formless, incomplete and open-ended, literary experiences are patterned and unified. Scrutton (1956) observes:

> Unable to see the wood of our lives for the trees, even at times unable to see the trees for the woodlice, we desire a landscape that can be taken in at a whole glance (p. 364).

How attempts were made to explore that 'landscape' by looking as "closely as we can into our minds as we read" (Richards, 1942, p. 24) will be discussed in Chapter 9.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this chapter has been to introduce the theoretical 'foreshadowing' on the fiction reading process by exploring generally the metacognitive knowledge that readers appeared to have with respect to reading fiction and nonfiction, and by describing one approach to exploring the metacognitive experiences of readers in terms of how they approach fiction and nonfiction (stance), what it is they appear to do with fiction and nonfiction (selection attention), and what it is that they 'know' after fiction or nonfiction reading. Having 'focused' on the fiction reading through a comparison of recalls to a fiction and a nonfiction work, it was useful to utilize the photographic practice of 'enlarging' in order to derive a closer, clearer look at the fiction reading process. This 'enlarging' will be explored in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 9

'ENLARGING' THE FICTION READING PROCESS

FORESHADOWING

A second approach to exploring how readers appear to process fiction and nonfiction was to make use of a "thinking aloud" procedure. The recent process research conducted by Olshavsky (1976/77) and by Christopherson, Schultz and Waern (1981) served as precedents for the design of this reading situation.

On the basis of the free recalls from the fiction/nonfiction passages described in Chapter 8, there was some evidence to suggest that readers were able to take away more from a reading of fiction than from nonfiction. The main question raised with regard to the "thinking aloud" task related to whether readers would employ different strategies with the fiction and nonfiction passages and as well whether there would be further indications of stance or approach to fiction/nonfiction, and selective attention.

THINKING ALOUD: FICTION/NONFICTION

Presented with the nonfiction passage "Einstein: Creator and Rebel" and the short story "True Confession" each of which had been violated with a blue dot following every independent clause (see Appendix E), each reader was given the following instruction:

> Here is a passage that I would like you to read. You will notice that there are blue dots throughout. What I would like you to do is to start reading silently. When you come to a blue dot I would like you to talk about what is happening in the passage and what you are thinking about as you are reading it. Just continue reading silently and then talking out loud about what you are thinking until you finish the passage. Read as if you were alone. You won't be interrupted.

> I have some examples of what other readers have said about what they were thinking as they read a story (three different examples of three types of things that might be said)... But these are only examples and I would like to know what you are thinking as you are going along. Here's a passage you can practice on.

The practice sessions were considered to be very important to the success of the task which at best might be considered 'unnatural'. While the task would be unnatural for tenth graders as used in Olshavsky's work (1976/77) or with college students as in the Christopherson, Schultz and Waern study (1981), it should be noted that at least such 'captive' audiences are used to having odd tasks foisted upon them. For the readers in this study it was important to keep the nature of the questions and the reading situations as 'natural' as possible. Indeed, as became evident in the progress of the study the willingness of the readers to do almost anything including 'thinking aloud' came only as a result of a gradual build-up of trust.

Following the 'thinking aloud' for the first passage, readers were merely asked if they had found it difficult, or if they were willing to try another one. No special attempts were made to probe their recalls. However, since this thinking aloud task was carried out in the third session, and since readers had already become used to reflecting on their reading and as well, offering opinions, it was not surprising that they spoke quite freely about the passages in terms of what they liked or disliked.

Intervening variables

Three factors which intervened, or at least contributed to the results, must be considered before actually presenting the data for the 'thinking aloud' tasks. While these 'intervening variables' are, in a sense part of the findings, they are more appropriately part of the 'context' within which

the data were analyzed.

The first factor relates to the title and nature of the nonfiction passage, "Einstein: Creator and Rebel". No attempts had been made in this task to mask the nature of the passage. Moreover, with the title, readers might be expected to realize that such a passage was less likely to be fiction. What was unexpected, and suggestive of an emotional aspect of "stance", were the reactions of the readers to the subject matter/content before they actually got into the thinking aloud situations. Comments such as the following were elicited:

> *Oh, Einstein, well I'm out of my depth here.*
>
> *When it comes to physics and math I'm hopeless.*
>
> *Don't expect too much from somebody who only has grade nine education!*

Obviously, for a number of these readers, many of whom had revealed in the initial interview that math and science were not their best subjects, the title alone, regardless of the nonfiction aspect of the passage,contributed to the "stance" they were taking. For several other readers the name "Einstein" in the title appeared to suggest that this was something worthwhile that should be read closely. This situation might be particularly relevant in view of the recent media presentations of Einstein, and the proliferation of recent biographies on the man and the general 'status' accorded to knowledge about Einstein. Comments such as *"Oh, Einstein!"* in a pleasantly surprised tone elicited even before readers started "thinking aloud" might be taken as a further indication of "stance".

A second 'confounding' variable came in the choice of a short story with the title "True Confession". The title is significant to the extent that the story is somewhat of a parody of the romance magazine genre, presenting

the "reality" of marriage in the life of a young woman caught up in a dream world about what she thought marriage would be.

In the magazine male-female relationships are depicted in a very romantic light while in the real life of the female character, marriage is dull and humdrum. The story itself, then, is not the kind that would ever appear in a romance magazine since it is the very antithesis of such a genre. The title of the story, however, was enough to elicit laments, guffaws, snickers, of "*Oh, True Confession!*". These initial reactions tended to signal a frivolous approach to the story. Moreover, since it was probably necessary to have read some "true confessions" stories or at least to have an idea of what was entailed in these stories in order to appreciate the "parody" of the story, readers might have been indicating their own preconceptions of such stories.

With regard to the confounding aspects of both of these titles, it is only possible to speculate that their modification would have made a difference in that title seems to cue the reader to respond in a certain way. Certainly recent research by Christopherson, Schultz, and Waern (1981), in which they varied the contextual situation of a passage by including or leaving out title, further serves to indicate the role of "organizing framework" or "stance". Since readers seldom approach reading material without some preconceived notions based on title or source, the aforementioned confounding data may merely serve to elucidate the multi-faceted nature of each print setting.

A third confounding factor came in the choice of a standardized passage length. Both passages contained approximately 1200 words. However, the passages differed significantly in the number of independent clauses contained within, such that the nonfiction passage with longer independent

clauses contained 51, while "True Confession" had 71. While statistical adjustments were made in order to carry out the comparative analysis, it is possible that the frequency with which readers were compelled to respond in the short story may have affected qualitatively the nature of the responses. For example, in the following excerpt the reader must 'think aloud' four times for 26 words:

> You have enough stuff in your lunch pain today? she asked.*
>
> He looked up.*
>
> What?*
>
> You have enough stuff in your lunch pail today? she repeated.*

This can be compared to the need for only one comment for 38 words in "Einstein":

> After being lionized at a social affair, he confided dolefully, 'When I was young, all I wanted and expected from life was to sit quietly in some corner doing my work without the public paying attention to me.*

While it will not be argued that "True Confession" is an atypical story, it must be pointed out that had a story with longer independent clauses been used, the results might have varied somewhat.

Coding the data

In looking at the protocols elicited in the thinking aloud tasks, it was considered important to devise some form of coding system that would provide for a comparative analysis of the responses to fiction and nonfiction. Coding systems which might have been useful for analyzing the relationship between interest level, reader proficiency and style of writing as in the case of Olshavsky's (1976/77) work were not necessarily appropriate under the present circumstances.

The coding system devised by Christopherson, Schultz and Waern (1981) to compare the reading responses to two different contextual conditions appeared to be relevant to the present task, since they were attempting to see what effect contextual constraints such as title has on what readers say as they read and after they have read a passage. Each protocol in the Christopherson et al. (1981) study was classified as being either related to the meaning of the text or unrelated. Those that were related to the text were classified as the following:

1. Implicit attempts at representation or getting meaning as in "I see" or "I don't understand."

2. Explicit representations at getting meaning as in the case of a paraphrase or re-statement.

3. Attempts to match what the author just said with:

   a. prior knowledge: *"I didn't know that before."*
   b. prior text: *"That's not what the writer said before."*

4. Attempts to construct a new meaning through the use of some form of prior knowledge: *"It's also the most dangerous mountain in the world"*.

5. Interests/disinterest, free associations and value judgements.

Those protocols that were not related to the text included the following:

1. Comments on the style of the writer.

2. Thoughts which control processing such as *"I think I'll read that again"*.

3. Comments about the actual experimental task, or meta statements, such as *"This is hard to do"*.

One might expect from all that has been written about fiction reading and from what fiction readers said earlier about their reading, that there would be more 'implicit representation' types of statements such as "I see" when reading fiction. Throughout, there has been the suggestion of 'automaticity' in the fiction reading in comments such as *"losing one-self"*, *"closing off one's mind"* or *"putting one's self on idle"*. In spite of the fact that the task was

anything but unconscious or automatic since readers were being forced to consciously articulate what was going on in their minds, one might expect that the responses to the fiction would be closer to being 'unconscious'. For that reason, too, one might expect that the fiction 'thinking aloud' would be more difficult to do.

By the same token, the more difficult the text for the reader, or the more necessary he might feel it is to concentrate, the greater the effort there would be in "gaining representation", or getting meaning from the text. Hence there would be fewer"matches"with the text. With material that is less apt to provide a 'living through' or unconscious experience, one might expect that there would be more paraphrases or restatements and fewer comments such as "I see" or "that's true!". In a situation where it is difficult to achieve matches, one might expect that there would be more statements related to the difficulties of the task, or related to an awareness of problems, such as going back to re-read or to figuring out a meaning of a word. Using the terminology of Christopherson et al (1981) one might expect more control and meta statements with the reading of the nonfiction. As well,it could be expected that the readers would find the task "easier" to do, to the extent that there would have been less "automaticity" or unconsciousness in any case.

Finally, one might consider that the more practiced the reader is with a certain type of text, the more likely he would be to bring in background knowledge through inferences. This could be done either on the basis of what had already happened in the text, or on the basis of what they already know in general. Readers with little background in a certain area would have a greater difficulty making such statements since they would be basically engaging in 'effort after meaning' or attempting to make"representations"with the text. Given the possibility of making inferences with familiar material

the opportunity to construct new meaning would be more in evidence with familiar material also.

In view of these aforementioned considerations, the following coding system, an adaptation of that used by Christopherson et al.(1981) emerged:

There appeared to be nine different kinds of responses:

1. Meta statements: These included any comments that indicated that there was not a match between what the reader read and what would make sense to him:
   a. question raising - *"I wonder what this means?"*
   b. bafflement - *"I don't get it"*.
      "I don't understand this".
      "This is beyond me".
      "I'm going to have to go back and re-read this".
2. Misreadings: These were direct comments which indicated that the reader had failed to understand what he had read, although as far as he was concerned it had made sense:
   a. misreading - a word or a phrase - usually indicated through an erroneous restatement.
   b. misinterpretation - indicated through an erroneous inference.
3. Restatement: This would be an accurate 'in other words' type of comment without any attempt on the reader's part to go beyond the text in order to make any sort of inference.
4. Cognitive matches: These were taken to include any situations where the reader appeared to have got the point of a line, and was beyond merely restating, but was not at the point where he was likely to bring in further background information to make an inference. In other words, he had already achieved a representation, and was indicating a match with

the text. These cognitive matches were indicated two different ways:

a. through statements such as '*that's true*', '*unhum*' or '*that's funny*'.

b. conscious comments that indicated a match such as '*well, what can you say about a statement like that?*' or '*what can you say about someone's taking their shirt off?*'

5. No comment: This was either signalled by the reader's saying 'no comment' or the absence of anything. While this latter protocol or "lack of it" would appear to be somewhat difficult to draw inferences from silence, the decision was made to categorize such 'nonstatements' since readers often freely commented after they had finished the task that they knew they had left some of the clauses out, but that they had simply become carried away, forgetting to stop. If they had had a difficult time stopping they were obviously not bothered by what they were reading, and as well were not inclined to elaborate. Some readers eliminated this silent category by reading every line aloud. If they failed to comment it was at least known that they had actually processed, consciously or unconsciously, every line.

6. Inferences: All attempts to go beyond the information given, without bringing in new details were labelled as inferences and were indicated by such comments as "*he must be getting older*" or "*I gather he doesn't like his job*".

7. Elaboration: This involved talking on at greater length about the text, either bringing in new information or expanding on what was already there.

Text: Maybe we could go to the movies in town this Saturday night. I hear they're showing a real good movie.

Response: *Then I can picture her asking him, you know, about the movies, and could they go to the movies. And why should she ask? She*

should just tell him they're going to a show.

or

Text: the first story was entitled I couldn't help loving him.

Response: *The title of the first story sort of strikes me as being a little ironic and funny. Because what is there to love?*

8. Miscellaneous: This category included statements covering likes/dislikes, free associations, and judgements about the actual work. Within this category, free associations such as "I get the picture of..." or "It makes me think of ..." were the most prevalent form. However, even those statements tended to be rare and idiosyncratic. Moreover, it was not always clear whether readers were making such comments because they understood or had failed to understand but yet felt obligated to say something, or whether they were taking "free reign".

9. Garbled: Some statements were not able to be transcribed since they were impossible to decipher. In some cases these garbled statements may have been a result of poor taping conditions. In other cases they were probably more related to aspects of the task where readers were reticent to be bold and outspoken in their endeavours. One final explanation for some of the garbled statements is that they were really indicative of a cognitive match in the same way that a silence of a 'no comment' was. Readers may have been processing the information on a semi-conscious level and found it difficult to actually articulate what it was that was happening. In any case the percentage of garbled statements was relatively consistent for both passages with 4.7 percent of the protocols for "True Confession" garbled, and 3.9 percent of the protocols for "Einstein" garbled.

Organizing the data

Each statement made in response to a blue dot was classified according to one of the nine categories above. On the basis of this coding system the types of responses were categorized as follows:

Type 1 statements: These indicated problems with the text and were comprised of category 1, meta statements, and category 2, misreadings.

Type 2 statements: These indicated a literal understanding of the text and included all category 3 comments, or restatements/paraphrases.

Type 3 statements: These indicated a relatively unconscious or automatic processing of the text and included all category 4 cognitive match statements and category 5, no comment responses.

Type 4 statements: These indicated a type of processing whereby the readers were "going beyond the information given" either to infer or elaborate. All category 6 and 7 protocols were included here.

Miscellaneous statements were not included in the system since it was difficult to infer whether they represented an understanding or a misunderstanding of the text. In any case approximately the same number appeared in both the fiction and the nonfiction. As well garbled statements were not considered to be part of the system.

In view of the above coding system and general speculations about fiction and nonfiction reading, a number of 'foreshadowing' points arose. For example, the more difficult that readers found a text, or the more unused they were

to such text material, the more type 1 and type 2 statements one might expect. Given that "Einstein" is nonfiction, and has a higher readability level than "True Confession", and in view of the initial reactions of readers to anything to do with science or math, one might expect that the readers would respond with more type 1 and 2 statements for the "Einstein" passage. By the same token, the easier the text as far as practice is concerned the more type 3 and 4 statements one might expect. Since "True Confession" is not only easier from a readability stand-point, but also more like what readers were used to, one might expect that they would produce more type 3 and 4 statements in reading it. One might further consider that if the nature of fiction reading is somewhat 'automatic', readers would find it more difficult to slow down and comment on the fiction passage, and hence would give more type 3 statements. Finally, one might expect that readers would enjoy that which is easier more than that which is difficult to read. Consequently, with these readers one might expect that enjoyment would be associated with producing more type 3 and 4 statements.

Thinking aloud data

Table 2 gives an overall indication of the percentage of protocols that were elicited for the two passages according to the nine categories: meta statements, misreadings, restatements, cognitive matches, no comments, inferences, elaborations, miscellaneous and garbled. What is most obvious in this table is the abundance of meta statements and misreadings for the nonfiction passages and the abundance of inferences for the fiction passage.

When the categories are collapsed into types of responses in Table 3 it would appear as though there are many more type 1 protocols for "Einstein", virtually no differences between the two passages on type 2 and 3 statements and many more type 4 statements for "True Confession".

TABLE 2

Classification of Protocols For Each Story According To Percentages*

Protocols	True Confession	Einstein
Meta Statements	3.2	9.9
Misreadings	3.7	13.4
Restatements	11.6	14.7
Cognitive Matches	10.8	20.2
No Comment	20.2	17.2
Inferences	33.7	11.6
Elaborations	6.7	6.8
Miscellaneous	4.2	6.0
Garbled	4.7	3.9

* The total number of protocols for True Confession was 852(71 x 12) and for Einstein 612(51 x 12).

TABLE 3

Classification of Types of Protocols For Each Story According To Percentage

Type	True Confession	Einstein
Type 1	7.0	23.3
Type 2	11.2	14.7
Type 3	31.1	39.8
Type 4	40.4	18.5

In addition to the initial comments that readers had made in response to the "Einstein" article, most noted that they found it a difficult passage. Such a comment is validated by the number of meta and misreading statements at type 1. The majority of people commented that they had found "True Confession" easy reading. While there were no major differences between the number of 'matches' in response to the two passages, it is interesting to note that readers did seem to go beyond the information given, or fill in gaps more with the fiction than the nonfiction. Thus, there was support for the 'foreshadowing' that readers would make more type 1 statements for that which they found harder to read, and more type 4 statements for that which they found easier.

While there was not a sufficiently greater number of match statements for the fiction to indicate that it might have been harder to slow down, it is important to consider that readers spontaneously noted that they did find it hard to slow down. What they said about the task might be as insightful as what they actually did with the task.

Finally, there was no support for the suggestion that readers would like better that which 'flowed' easier as far as automaticity was concerned. While all of the readers found "True Confession" easier to process, only one reader actually enjoyed the story and commented that she would not mind reading another story by the same writer. While there were several readers who were not enamoured with either passage, the majority of the readers at least found the "Einstein" passage interesting and challenging.

The aforementioned data on the "thinking aloud" tasks gives only a very broad indication that fiction readers in general found the nonfiction passage harder to read, and as such responded with more type 1 statements; in find-

ing the fiction easier they found it easier to infer or 'read between the lines'. To get more insights into the processes involved in fiction/non-fiction reading, it seemed useful to look more closely at the patterns of the individual responses in the context of what they had said about the passages after reading them, and in the greater context of what they had said about their reading in general. Table 4 gives an indication of the individual protocol responses, providing the percentage of responses. Table 5 gives an indication of the individual responses classified according to types.

What appeared to be characteristic for many readers was that they read along somewhat 'idly' or automatically with a great number of "I see" cognitive match statements. When they got into difficulty as many of them did with the "Einstein" passage, they reverted to restatements, or, more commonly, meta statements which indicated the specific difficulty they were having at the word or phrase level. On the other hand, with the fiction passage which went almost to an unconscious level for many of the readers, it appeared as though they "filled in" with images and inferences about the characters in the form of character judgements.

The readers tended to make comments after the completion of the task which gave further insights into their apparent differences in the reading of the fiction and nonfiction.

There are a number of examples from what the readers said that support to a certain extent the notion of habitual response. For example, reader 22 had given a great many matches and miscellaneous free associations for both passages. Where her responses differed was in her elaborations of "True Confession", and her meta statements of "Einstein". She explains it thus:

TABLE 4

Classification of Protocol Categories For Each Reader According To Percentages*

Reader No.	Meta	Misread	Restatements	Cog. Match	No Comment	Inference	Elaboration	Misc.	Garbled
9	8.4	0	5.1	45.0	9.8	28.1	1.4	1.4	0
	25.0	19.2	5.7	23.0	5.7	11.5	11.5	0	0
10	14.0	0	12.6	11.2	19.7	39.4	1.4	1.4	0
	19.2	1.9	13.4	44.2	0	5.7	1.9	1.9	0
11	0	8.4	0	11.2	16.9	35.2	9.8	5.6	9.8
	19.2	1.9	13.4	44.2	0	17.3	0	0	1.9
12	1.4	0	12.6	0	56.6	18.3	9.8	0	1.4
	0	3.8	44.2	7.6	28.8	11.5	0	1.9	1.9
13	0	9.8	18.3	0	32.3	28.1	0	7.0	2.8
	3.8	28.8	25.0	7.7	25.0	7.6	3.8	0	0
16	0	1.4	38.0	11.2	33.8	14.0	1.4	0	0
	1.9	0	1.9	1.9	78.8	7.6	7.6	0	0
19	4.2	0	2.8	21.1	19.7	21.1	0	1.4	29.5
	11.5	1.9	0	40.3	5.7	11.5	3.9	5.7	19.2
22	8.4	1.4	1.4	23.9	14.0	28.0	0	19.7	2.8
	26.9	1.9	9.6	23.0	17.3	7.6	0	13.4	0
27	0	8.4	16.9	4.2	8.4	58.3	0	2.8	2.8
	0	23.0	15.3	7.6	15.3	15.5	0	0	23.0
28	1.4	9.8	5.6	0	16.9	28.1	29.5	0	8.4
	3.8	25.0	23.0	3.8	1.9	15.3	21.1	3.8	1.9
31	1.4	5.6	15.4	1.8	0	70.4	0	4.2	0
	15.3	23.0	5.7	21.1	0	15.3	15.3	3.8	0
32	0	0	11.5	0	15.3	38.4	*26.9	7.6	0
	0	5.7	11.5	0	9.6	13.4	17.3	42.3	0

* The top row of percentages for each reader relates to True Confession and the bottom row to Einstein.

TABLE 5

Classification of Types of Protocols For Each Reader According To Percentages*

Reader	Type 1	Type 2	Type 3	Type 4
9	8.4	5.1	54.8	29.5
	44.2	5.7	28.7	23.0
10	14.0	12.6	30.9	40.8
	21.1	13.4	44.2	17.3
11	8.4	0	27.9	45.0
	38.4	21.1	30.7	7.6
12	1.4	12.6	56.6	28.1
	3.8	44.2	36.1	11.5
13	9.8	18.3	32.3	28.1
	32.6	25.0	32.7	11.4
16	1.4	38.0	45.0	15.4
	1.9	1.9	80.7	15.2
19	4.2	2.8	40.8	21.1
	13.4	0	46.0	15.4
22	9.8	1.4	37.9	28.0
	28.8	9.6	40.3	7.6
27	8.4	16.9	12.6	56.3
	23.0	15.3	22.9	15.3
28	11.2	5.6	16.9	57.6
	28.8	23.0	5.7	36.4
31	7.0	15.4	2.8	70.4
	38.3	5.7	21.1	30.6
32	0	11.5	15.3	65.3
	5.7	11.5	9.6	30.7

* The top row of percentages for each reader relates to True Confession and the bottom row to Einstein.

> *Einstein triggered my curiosity. I wanted to read more on this so I could get a clear picutre. With True Confession I didn't mind stopping. I could get a clear picture; I could almost see her and I didn't want to read more.*

Reader 31 who gave many more type 1 statements for the "Einstein" passage noted:

> *I think with Einstein I was trying to get more out of it. I slowed down so I could absorb more because it was more important for me to take something away from it. It had more in it.*

A third reader who found depth in the "Einstein" passage attributed a greater ease of responding to that depth. She had found it harder to note anything specifically worthwhile to warrant a comment in "True Confession". Consequently there were many more garbled statements for "True Confession". With the "Einstein" passage, however, there were fewer garbled statements.

Reader 16 who liked the passage "Einstein" but found it difficult to process in general, indicated a match or attempt at match by an absence of comments. With the fiction she either made a conscious attempt to restate or infer. However, as she noted, her natural reaction to "True Confession" was neither of these; it would have been the following:

> *...to leave out the whole thing because I can't see anything to say. It wasn't deep enough to bring out much of a comment. It's just a light thing; you can't say much about it really. I guess I'd just keep going along and connect it all together. You sort of put the conversation together after you read a page or two, something like that.*

She explains her failure to make comments in the more difficult passage "Einstein" thus:

> *I found this difficult, because when it comes to math or physics or anything like that, my mind shuts right up. If it were languages, or history or something like that it would be different.*

Reader 28 found it difficult to comment on the "Einstein" passage because she felt she knew too much about him:

> *If I could have read the whole thing and kept a flow and then gave an overall impression it would have been far simpler. Like they say, for example, he was not a great scientific technician, but he was curious. Well, what else can you say. Perhaps the disadvantage was there that I'd read quite a bit about him.*

Of "True Confession" reader 10 comments:

> *It's just the same thing over and over again: it doesn't get your mind rolling like the Einstein one.*

Britton (1977) brings in to question this notion of total response, or "global contextualization" as opposed to the line-by-line comments necessitated in this task:

> The appropriate response for a reader is to reconstruct the verbal object in the terms in which it is presented-in accordance, that is, with the complexity of its internal organization; and having done that to his satisfaction, to relate it as a total construct to his own values and opinions (If a novel has a 'message', say a social one, that message is in the work as a whole and not in any fragment of it) (p. 35).

A number of readers found it difficult to read and comment on "Einstein". While it had been their habitual response to expand and elaborate, they could not do this with "Einstein". Consequently, they failed to enjoy it. As reader 13 notes:

> *I'm not versed with Einstein and all that ...*

In his nonfiction protocols he made few inferences, giving mainly restatements, such that he appeared to be processing at a literal level. Interestingly, he is a reader who never reads nonfiction.

Reader 9 who offered almost half of her comments on "Einstein" as type 1 statements, while for "True Confession" was able to provide many matches, notes:

> *I would have to read this [Einstein] 20 times before I could comment. I'm about as far out of my knowledge as I could get. When you only have grade 9 you don't take something like that in easily. I got hung up with having to react immediately. With the story you didn't feel it mattered as much. But this, if you don't react the way you think you should, it shows up what you are lacking in.*

It must also be noted that "habitual response" could come in the form of how the reader interpreted the task. Just as some readers saw the unaided recalls alluded to earlier as a license "to tell" at great length, others, wanting to do the "right thing", responded to different social aspects of the situation. Reader 31 dutifully responded to every independent clause in a clear voice; others such as reader 16 frequently failed to comment, and reader 19 'garbled' what she said. Such behaviour might be taken as an indication of the reader's interpretation of the task as much as how they would spontaneously think aloud.

However, such data, far from "contaminating" the results, may only serve to point out the social and affective components of reading. For example, reader 31 attributes her general fluency with titles and authors to an unpleasant situation in university when she was penalized for forgetting such data. One might speculate that her careful approach to the task is but another example of doing the "right thing", as are her comments that she does not just read for the sake of reading, or the fact that she sets aside different parts of the day for "educational" reading and lighter reading.

INSIGHTS INTO THE PROCESSING OF FICTION/NONFICTION

What had been of concern in having readers read fiction and nonfiction in

a variety of different situations was whether they processed such materials differently, or whether they approached them very similarly with their approach more appropriate for one form of writing rather than another. The term 'stance' and 'selective attention' have been raised by Rosenblatt (1978) to denote different approaches to aesthetic and efferent texts, and in turn different attentions on the basis of different intentions.

Stance

In looking at the comments made before, during, and after the reading and 'thinking aloud' of the nonfiction and fiction texts, one notices at least four major indications that readers approached the two genres differently in terms of expectations of what they would get out of it, emotion, interest/disinterest, and speed, although it is difficult to treat these as separate indices.

Expectation

Readers appeared to be aware that when they read nonfiction they were expected to be able to get something out of it; as revealed in such comments as:

> *It was more important for me to take something away.*
>
> *Once I realized it was nonfiction I just tended to concentrate more.*
>
> *You feel that you have to think about it and analyze it.*

Readers appeared to realize that it was necessary to have specific purposes in mind when they read nonfiction, and that when they finished they ought to be able to say something about it. If they had not been able to 'absorb' as several readers noted, then it would be obvious that the main point had been missed. As well, with the fiction passage, the very title seemed to indicate that there was an element of frivolity and as such they might take freer reign

to infer, elaborate or fail to comment.

A second aspect of this expectation component for most of the readers relates to their negative reactions to the form of the short story. Seemingly when they take up fiction they want a "good read" where they can be involved in the lives of the characters and the plot. These readers did not feel that the short story allowed them to do that. However, none of the readers objected to the short nonfiction articles. Moreover, many had noted that they habitually read magazines and newspapers a great deal. This expectation of "settling in" with a good novel and the accompanying racing ahead and savouring endings would appear to be indicative of a willingness to be absorbed in a sustained reading.

Emotional responses

There is the suggestion in the comments that because of the perceived expectation to respond in particular ways to nonfiction and fiction their emotional state is somewhat different with the two reading situations. Since many of the readers never talk about their fiction reading other than to exchange titles or authors at best, there is certainly less pressure to stay faithful to the text. They regarded fiction reading as 'relaxing', 'pleasant recreation' where writers (and readers) have 'free reign'.

Fiction reading was often regarded as an indulgence; something to be enjoyed with no pressure to respond in predetermined ways:

> *I want to read what I read for what I want to read.*
>
> *I get what I want from it, I don't really care what someone else thinks I should get from it.*
>
> *I wouldn't read it if it was work.*

As well certain readers felt that they could play with fiction.

> *I love taking characters out of one work and putting*

them into another.

At least 10 of the 32 readers in discussing criteria for being a good reader had mentioned the importance of retention in reading, noting that their own retention, particularly of technical works and nonfiction, was inadequate:

> *My husband could absorb and hold material better.*
>
> *I'm very bad at reading up on how to do things;- I would have a problem 'absorbing', wouldn't you say?*

Their eschewing of nonfiction, then, in many cases could appear to be somewhat of an avoidance reaction towards material tainted with unpleasantness. The reactions that readers had to "Einstein", even before they read it, were further indications of this emotional attitude; if it was about "Einstein" and hence science or nonfiction, the experience was going to be unpleasant.

A second emotional component of stance appeared in the different effects fiction and nonfiction had on the readers. Readers seemed to take a more detached view of the content of nonfiction, and were less emotionally involved. For example, as noted earlier, the two situations presented in "The Sniper" and in "Desensitization" were somewhat parallel in their treatment of violence. The brother-against-brother theme is depicted in the story, while man's insensitivity to his fellowmen is described in the nonfiction. Interestingly, where many of the readers objected to the gloom in the story, they were spurred to make a personal statement about what "they would do" after reading the nonfiction. While these latter comments were certainly less than 'objective' they nonetheless had a detached flavour to them.

Interest/disinterest

There was the suggestion throughout that when readers saw there was going to be 'free reign' fiction their interest picked up; where they saw that what they were about to read was 'dull', translated as nonfiction, they

assumed a plodding, dogged attitude:

> *Now this first page is very interesting* [story aspect of "Desensitization of Twentieth Century Man"], *I read that part very well, but after the first part I started skipping-*

On the other hand, other readers who always "read to learn" whether the material was fiction or nonfiction had their interest pick up when they realized that there was something more than light and fluffy conversation, or "just another story", as they had been reading in prior sessions.

> *When he actually got down to facts, talking about the way our lives are changing, people are becoming more impersonal, and not caring about others, then I really got interested.*

> *When I'm going to read nonfiction it's something I'm really interested in. So therefore I really pay attention to what I'm reading.*

Speed

There is an awareness on the part of the readers that if they are about to take up 'heavy' fiction or nonfiction they are not going to be able to read it with the same ease:

> *That's a book I would find difficult to pick up and get into if I was really tired.*

Part of this speed also relates to the fact that many of the readers felt that they could 'skip' through fiction, leaving out pages of description if they felt like it,without significantly affecting the plot of the story, whereas with nonfiction they would have to 'wade' through it or 'plod'. One reader who in his line of business found that he was able to effectively deal with a range of technical materials noted that in his free reading his timing was quite different:

> *...from an ability point of view, I'm an excellent reader - from the point of view of being a good reader in the sense of actually reading everything that is there, I would probably say that I am sloppy reader.*

This recognition of different speed requirements was also evident in the comment of the reader whose technical reading tended to interfere with his fiction reading:

> *It's a different reading, your retention in technical reading- it has to be. With a novel sometimes you can skip through it a bit. It's not important that you retain everything out of it.*

There is the suggestion too, that in reading fiction it is easier for the reader to set the standards as far as degree of retention for satisfaction. If one chooses to be satisfied with the thread of the story without the retention of facts then one can predetermine the pace:

> *I can go through a fairly thick novel in an evening, if I put my mind to it. If you mean 'how much do you retain?' I don't come up so well.*

In summary, it would appear as though 'stance' or approach to fiction or nonfiction is in part tied up with the expectations on the part of the reader that he must retain a certain amount, or that he is free to go off 'on a tangent', and the accompanying amount of time he will have to include. In view of the expectation, too, there would appear to be an accompanying emotional aspect which contributes to a reader's predisposition or stance. Part of this emotional appeal is certainly likely to be tied in with interest and disinterest. If a reader is not overly anxious about the material and feels that what he will get out of it and experience during it is worthwhile then perhaps this will translate as 'interest'. By the same token, if he is unduly anxious about a particular reading, either because of inadequacies he is aware of within his own reading or because of external pressure and feels that he is unlikely to achieve satisfaction in the reading, then perhaps this

will translate into 'disinterest'.

Selective attention

The second question to be answered with regard to differences in reading fiction and nonfiction is how 'stance' or approach to a work affects what it is that the reader actually attends to 'during' the reading. Again the evidence is taken from what readers say and what they actually appear to do.

Many readers had noted that they felt less obliged 'to take something away' from fiction and that they felt free to get what they wanted from it, whereas with nonfiction they felt that there was an expectation to produce. The evidence on what readers actually do, however, is somewhat paradoxical, since in the reading of the fiction/nonfiction where readers provided free recalls to "Desensitization" and "The Sniper", they tended to give more verbatim recalls to the short story than they did to the magazine article. Certainly, they tended to refer to the text more. In the recalls to the nonfiction, however, readers seemed to give more of a personal opinion, triggered by what was in the text, but only indirectly related to what was in the text. Thus, it is obvious that readers are capable of 'taking away information', but seemingly, mainly from fiction.

In looking more closely at the "in-process" comments, however, one notices that readers tended to take a greater amount of 'free reign' in response to the fiction than the nonfiction just as they had suggested in their verbal reports of what they thought they did in fiction reading. More inferences were evident in their fiction protocols, while, with the nonfiction passage more of their protocols involved meta statements and misreadings. Certainly readers did stay closer to the nonfiction text, albeit incorrectly at times.

There are several possibilities for the inconsistencies between what readers say they do and what they actually do. One possible reason might be related to the emotional aspects of "stance". Those readers who felt particularly inadequate with nonfiction appeared to panic when they saw the title "Einstein" and the subject matter. Those readers whose initial reactions to the "Einstein" passage were most indicative of panic, also tended to have the highest percentage of their protocols in the "Einstein" passage as type 1 statements. Since all three readers, reader 9, reader 11, and reader 27, had less than grade 10 education, their reactions may have been indicative of their genuine difficulty with the passage, or merely their expectations of difficulty with the passage. Certainly with the passage "Desensitization" they had less opportunity to formulate preconceptions about the passage until they were well into it. Even there, however, reader 27 was annoyed and 'indignant' about the sudden change from fiction to nonfiction.

> *Suddenly you stop - it isn't interesting anymore, because you realize it isn't a story. He's just using it.*

Another possibility as to why readers found it easier to refer specifically to the facts of the fiction text even in view of the fact that 'during' their reading they appeared to be going beyond the text, is that they had such a firm grasp of the images in the story that they were able to go beyond the information given. In other words, when readers were not providing 'matches' with the fiction they truly went beyond it; with nonfiction when they were not providing matches with the text they were usually stumbling. They had not even achieved a 'representation' of the text. Leavis (1932) considers that it may be the reader's schema for stories that assists him in 'going beyond the information given' in fiction rather than nonfiction:

> ...the ordinary reader is content with the general direction for what his literary training recognizes as appropriate, and his imagination will do the rest (p. 61).

A recognition of the conventions of story telling, practice in dealing with a wide variety of plots, and 'free reign' to fill in the rest might account for the added text-specific verbatim responses to the short story "The Sniper" as opposed to the nonfiction piece "Desensitization". As evidence of this ability to 'fill in' one reader after having completed "True Confession" with a large percentage of inferences and elaborations noted:

> *When you read the first line, you'd read everything. It's just the same thing over and over again.*

Certainly there is evidence elsewhere to indicate that the personal schema of the reader, based on his background and the context in which he reads a particular text, determines that to which he selectively attends (Anderson, 1977; Anderson, Spiro & Anderson, 1978); (Spiro, 1977; Steffenson, Joag-Dev, & Anderson, 1979). As well, this can be noted in the findings of Bartlett (1932) in terms of the personal reactions of different cultural groups to his "War of the Ghosts" legend. It may be that the qualitatively superior schema for stories compared to a schema for nonfiction prose serves as an organizing principle for the voracious adult readers of fiction in the present study, in the same way that school children who appear to have phonomenal abilities to recall plots of scenarios of their favourite television shows are found to have shortcomings in short-term and long-term memory as measured on a standardized ability test.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this chapter has been to 'enlarge' the understanding of the fiction reading process through an extension of the metaphor of the 'practices' of photography. Aspects of stance, selective attention, and

Aspects of stance, selective attention, and strategies employed in particular readings have been explored through the use of "thinking aloud" procedures. In taking the photographic metaphor one step further, it seemed appropriate to consider the role of one's awareness of being photographed on how one actually poses. The role of awareness of stance and selective attention, or the role awareness of one's own cognitive processes on what one reads, when, and how, will be explored in Chapter 10.

CHAPTER 10

THE SELF-CONSCIOUS SUBJECT: THE ROLE OF METACOGNITION IN FICTION READING BEHAVIOUR

The purpose of this chapter is to consider the role of the content of what readers know or say they know about their reading in their voluntary reading transactions. The role of such knowledge might be regarded as parallel to the use the photographic subject makes of knowing that he is being photographed in the way he presents himself in the photograph. The major questions under study in this chapter are less concerned with 'if' and more with 'when' and 'how' mature readers make use of their knowledge of their own cognitive processes "in the service of some concrete goal or object" (Flavell, 1976, p. 232), and, indeed, 'what' the nature of the concrete goal of fiction reading really is. The thrust of this chapter, then, deviates somewhat from the ontogenesis of metacognition currently extant in the literature which has dealt primarily with the developmental aspects of metacognitive behaviour.

FORESHADOWING

> ...understanding is not an all or none phenomenon; it must be judged against the criteria set by the reader as a goal of the activity. Reader's purposes vary and, as such, criteria of comprehension also change as a function of the particular reading task at hand. In some reading situations the participant may be quite satisfied with gleaning a cursory overview of the gist, whereas in others the reader may set more demanding criteria of comprehension. The decision to process deeply and actively (Brown, 1979) or merely to skim the surface will determine not only the strategies necessary for the task but also the reader's tolerance for intrusive feelings of failing to understand the text. In short, the reader's purpose determines how he or she sets about reading and how closely he or she monitors the purpose of reading, that is, understanding the text (Brown, 1980, p. 455).

Woods (1980) considers that there may be periods of automaticity in reading such that intelligent processing is below the level of consciousness. Many subconscious inferences may be performed automatically and rapidly, much like Neisser's (1967) "silent streams of thought". The skilled reader may be really 'running on idle' or, as Brown (1980) notes "may be the lazy processor' with all of their 'top down' and 'bottom up' skills running fluently so that they can 'proceed merrily on automatic pilot', until a triggering event alerts them to comprehension failure" (p. 455). Once their comprehension failure is detected the reader might allow extra and deliberate time for processing by employing 'debugging' strategies. For example, we might discover that what we expected in the text does not occur, or that the concepts encountered are too baffling to be tolerated given the criteria of comprehension. For whatever reason we realize that we must clear up the comprehension failure such that:

> ...in the process of disambiguation and clarification, we enter a deliberate, planful, strategic stage that is quite distinct from the automatic pilot stage in which we are not actively at work on debugging activities (Brown, 1980, p. 455).

Awareness that we will require certain 'debugging' strategies in the reading of particular types of texts, ability to use such debugging strategies appropriately, an awareness of an optimal level of comprehension, and some awareness of the goal of our reading are all factors that are likely to interact in terms of influencing who reads what, why and when. Thus, knowing what particular readers' chose to read voluntarily, how they go about choosing voluntarily, what they find difficult or necessary to 'debug' and how they go about 'debugging' are all to be considered in the cognitive monitoring strategies or metacognitive of readers.

In conducting research in this area, researchers would seem to have made use of much contrivance. As well, it has been focused primarily

on the deliberate 'debugging' strategies that mature or beginning readers use, rather than the 'automatic pilot' strategies of the smooth reading process. Such a focus is perhaps understandable given the difficulty of 'controlling' for what might make automatic reading, and as well the difficulty of observing something that is automatic. When researchers such as Olshavsky (1976/77) and Hare and Pullian (1979) attempted to compare the reading strategies of good and poor readers at grade school and college levels respectively, they did find that the more skilled readers appeared to be able to make use of a wider range of reading strategies in the service of a 'making sense' goal, employing strategies such as re-reading, selectively reading and adjusting reading speed. This data on 'spontaneous monitoring' is somewhat in question, however, since in the aforementioned studies it was difficult to determine when readers were having difficulties.

In an attempt to explore monitoring more carefully Baker (1979) manipulated the comprehensibility of passages for college readers through the inclusion of incongruous statements, illogical connectives and ambiguous anaphoric references. Readers after having read such 'violated' passages were asked to recall what they had read. Following this initial recall they were informed of the presence of incongruities and asked to re-read the passage. While less than half of the readers had noted any incongruities in their initial reading, at least three-quarters were able to note the inconsistencies when they re-read. What was of particular interest after these second readings were the ways that students appeared to 'accommodate' or 'fix up' these incongruities. Many explained that they just read for overall gist such that as long as this broad purpose had been satisfied they did not feel that it had been necessary to 'monitor' the inconsistencies. Others noted that they had just read sentence by sentence 'to get the facts

straight'. As long as all sentences were intact, as indeed they were, being inconsistent only in the context of the other sentences, the students did not feel that they had to deal with them.

On the basis of the Baker (1979) study and reviews of similar studies (Baker and Brown, 1980) it would appear as though it is not so much a question of whether proficient readers are involved in cognitive monitoring but rather when do they monitor, how and why? How do these monitoring strategies relate to their voluntary choice of reading material? For example, what kinds of materials would most satisfy their purpose in reading for gist? One might expect that certain types of reading materials would be more satisfying to read for a particular reader because they place fewer demands on a certain type of monitoring strategy with which he has difficulty. Knowing what the reader consciously avoids in choosing books, and as well, knowing how he reads the material voluntarily chosen in terms of monitoring strategies, should serve to shed light on the role of metacognitive functioning in reading.

Metacognition and Voluntary Reading

Baker (1979), like Brown (1980), suggests that readers in choosing the books they read are really choosing a 'standard' for themselves in terms of comprehension. They are likely to choose those materials which will place 'optimum' demands or levels of challenge in order to achieve the desired level of comprehension. In other words, if their reading for enjoyment is satisfied by something that provides some challenge or 'mental exercise', they are not likely to consistently choose something which can be understood completely without any challenge whatsoever. The reader whose pleasure it is to compete with Inspector Poirot in solving the latest murder, then, is unlikely to be satisfied with a steady diet of 'good-guys/bad-guys' in a Zane

Grey western or the ploys of Nurse Blackshaw in winning the affections of young Dr. McLeod in the newest Harlequin romance. This is not to suggest, however, that the reader in question would never read either of the latter genres. Many readers would enjoy the challenge of processing a Harlequin romance 'once' just to see what it was masses of people were seeking, or even a number of times if they were stranded in a bus depot without a thing to read, or suffering from insomnia in a hotel room. The same reader too might choose the Harlequin romance over a Jean-Paul Sartre novel in a hotel room even though they normally seek challenge. Thus there is likely to be an optimal level of challenge that varies according to the situation. Reader 14 who normally reads Robert Ludlum and other espionage types by day reads Harlequins late at night for different purposes. The circumstances of particular readings, an awareness of what one is seeking or the purposes for reading at a particular time, and what strategies will be needed to satisfy that purpose are all likely to account, in part, for the range of materials which people read. As Lesser (1957) notes:

> A person may like Proust, and Dashielle Hammet, Shakespeare and William Inge. Furthermore, the various factors involved in response interact upon one another, and we may be willing to read a subtler or simpler story than we normally enjoy if we feel it has something especially significant to say to us. But while the boundaries of our band of sensibility are fluid, we know very well when we have gone outside them. We are incapable of enjoying books above or below the band and very often have strong negative feelings about them (p. 208).

There appears to exist some form of 'optimal' match between the knowing that is entailed in the text and the knowing which is sought by the reader. Lesser (1957) uses the term 'texture' to describe this match in reference to the "crudity or subtelty with which a work is developed in all of its aspects, its general plane of sensibility" (p. 208).

With respect to a consideration of reading as a cognitive activity, Davis (1971) notes that cognitive psychologists should not limit themselves to:

> ...what the individual perceiver knows, rather they must also take into account who the individual perceiver is, what he wants to do, and what his strategies are in approaching the task (p. 109).

In Flavell's (1979) terms the setting of criteria for comprehension and purpose by the reader may be an example of his metacognitive knowledge. Over time, the reader may have come to realize through many reading experiences that he can read Sartre when he is alert and refreshed in the morning and a Jacqueline Suzanne novel late at night when he is seeking something lighter and less demanding. He will have realized what is involved in meeting particular levels of satisfaction/comprehension.

Awareness of the role of the reading situation in achieving a particular goal of reading, may account for the choice of timefilling material in a waiting room. For example, a reader may just want to read to get gist. A cursory reading of an article in Reader's Digest will allow for 'gist' with fewer demands then will a cursory reading of an article on a similar topic in Psychology Today, which in turn makes fewer demands than Scientific American. Readers whose goal is some sort of 'living through' as is most appropriately satisfied through the reading of a certain fiction work might also read some nonfiction the same way and achieve a similar level of 'living through' satisfaction providing that he is not going to be examined on such material, and will not be required to discuss it at length with anyone other than to say "I'm reading Clementine Churchill's biography right now". This does not mean that the reader is reading such material just to say he has read it. He may be comprehending sufficiently for his purposes as he is going through it even on 'automatic pilot' without having to call into action a number of debugging

strategies. There has been sufficient comprehension for satisfaction in the 'living through' but not enough for 'taking away'.

On the other hand, a reader may have realized that it is a waste of time to speed through a particular novel at a 'gist' level, satisfying as it might be, if he is going to be called upon by a spouse or close friend to discuss it at a later point. He will need to have a greater 'knowing' than gist. Conversely, if the optimum level of satisfaction is 'gist' or complete 'living through' without any taking away, he may avoid altogether discussing books with people. Such behaviour is not unlikely given the number of readers in this study who, while maintaining contact with other people who read, never discussed books. As well, such behaviour might be evidenced in the readers who come together every day at work or in leisure time pursuits who might all be voluntary readers but who have no idea what their colleagues read voluntarily.

The context in which readers find themselves may cause readers to avoid certain works or certain situations because of inadequacies in their reading which will be 'shown up'. As well it might cause them to read works in which they otherwise would never perservere because it would be important to them to have read with comprehension sufficient to discuss a particular work. For example, the reader who attempted the bestseller The Thorn Birds three times before getting through it was aware of problems, but was also aware of the social significance of having read it. Conversely readers who might have been prepared to discuss books had they ever had practice may have become 'unskilled' in such ventures because of an acknowledged awareness of the intellectual waste or second-class status of fiction reading. Reader 9 whose husband eschewed the reading of fiction and the time given over to such readings might be forgiven her total inability to discuss what she had read,

given the context of fiction reading in her household.

In summary, whether a reader reads to discuss with others might determine whether he aims for gist, topic, the main idea or an entirely 'living through' experience. Whether they get a lot of practice 'living through' fiction and 'taking away' nonfiction or whether their range is limited to one or the other will determine which strategies they will use and their facility with such strategies, as well as the success of such strategies in comprehending. The demands of the task as perceived by the reader, the criteria they set for comprehending, and the context in which they read, are all aspects of metacognitive knowledge which would appear to have an effect on their reading.

Metacognitive research in isolation from the history of the reader is likely to shed little light on the processes involved in particular readings. One study which has attempted to at least consider aspects of the reader's history is that conducted by Garner (1980) who looked at the monitoring strategies of good and poor junior high school readers in terms of their reported awareness of inconsistencies in short passages. The readers had been asked to act as editors for four different passages, two of which were well-written passages and two which had been altered to induce miscomprehension. Good readers tended to rate nearly all of the 'intact' passages as easy to understand whereas with the altered passages, they noted that they were hard to understand. Poor readers on the other hand made few distinctions in terms of the inconsistencies but did recognize that they had 'liked' them differently. For example where good readers would make such comments as:

> I don't see what letters have to do with Jefferson...

poor readers would be more likely to make such comments as:

> I didn't like that part as well.
>
> That was boring.

The words were too long.

Garner (1980) considers that the comments of the poor readers in response to the inconsistent passages reflect a history of a situation where reading makes only minimal sense to them, such that they had developed 'rationalizations' and excuses for getting little out of a passage. Reluctant readers, or readers whose range of reading is very narrow may be unconscious of how it is that they can gain satisfaction from a particular writing or even what level of satisfaction might be appropriate. Finding such material 'boring' wards off the necessity of bringing into service 'debugging' strategies or the motivation to do so. However, as Sontag (1966) observes of the apparent 'boring' nature that many readers attribute to the narratives of Burroughs and Beckett:

> Boredom is only another name for a certain species of frustration (p. 303).

For example, one of the most voracious readers in the present study in terms of time spent reading and re-reading fiction, as well as the number of books in a week, noted that she had difficulty in those subjects in school which require a great deal of reading 'to learn and recall' as opposed to reading to escape. Of the nonfiction she is required to read she notes:

> *In history and that, I can't read slow. If I have an assignment to do, a reading assignment I can read it but there's no way I can read it over again. My mind keeps wandering. I don't go to school books and read it over and over and over... Nonfiction - I just find it difficult to get into. Because it's kind of boring. They've got these words a mile long. Like Chariot of the Gods, I couldn't get into that. Things are just boring. I can't read them. But if I read them I'd understand them. But I didn't like the way it was written or something...*

Poor readers who avoid certain types of material may also be unaware of what the goal is for reading a particular type of text. For example, the poor readers in Garner's study may not have realized that the goal of reading was

to make sense or even that there are different types of 'making sense'. For example,some readers may have been aware of the 'taking away' aspect of reading, only.'Taking away' may serve no particular purpose outside of functions such as passing an exam. The end may justify the means but the means itself is not particularly satisfying or 'entertaining' in any way. As reader 16 notes of reading history.

> *One reason I think a lot of the people are turned against history is because they practically had to memorize the whole textbook instead of taking it as a general thing, you know. The importance say, of something happening in the first half of the eighteenth century or something like that. They had to learn all the dates and practically word-for-word the whole textbook. Well who's going to like history, if they have to learn it that way?*

To answer this reader's question there are readers who would enjoy reading that way - such as reader 12 who likes nothing better than to read material word-for-word to see how much he can get and retain. Other readers may never have become aware of the entertainment functions of fiction. One laconic adolescent in Blunt's (1977) study of processes in fiction reading notes:

> I just read it and don't get right into it. I just read it and that's it (p. 37).

To return to the discussion of stance as theorized by Rosenblatt (1978) and as exemplified in the previous chapter in the responses of the readers to fiction and nonfiction, it is likely that awareness of the goals and satisfactions to be gained are a part of stance.

Cognitive Monitoring Strategies of the Readers

The cognitive monitoring strategies or metacognitive experiences involved in gaining meaning were most directly observed in the thinking aloud tasks described in Chapter 9. There is no question that the readers in general, all of whom were habitually readers of fiction, made more meta statements

(type 1) with the nonfiction, and more 'going beyond' inferences and elaborations (type 4) with the fiction. They noted, in general, that they regarded the subject matter of "Einstein" as being more difficult, because of actual problems and as such brought into service 'debugging' strategies. As well they noted, in general, that it was harder to stop and think aloud in the fiction which may be attributed to their general "automatic idle" processing of such material. With the nonfiction they would have had to slow down, and possibly read sentence-by-sentence in any case if they had wanted to get anything out of it (the goal of nonfiction) so that it was less effort to be 'conscious' with the nonfiction.

They might have found the processing of nonfiction a more satisfying experience because the task was not unlike what they would have done with such nonfiction in any case. On the other hand in fiction reading where many had noted that they liked to 'close their mind', it was likely to be frustrating to process at the word or sentence level. One might argue that it is the task of the novelist to get the reader off into the imaginary world by conjuring up images and impressions. As one reader in the initial interviews observes:

> *The first time I read a book, I'm so serious as to what will happen in ten pages that I pay little attention to what is happening in the page that I am reading.*

The very success of many good mystery writers often rests in their ability to give the reader a particular impression that it was the chauffeur who committed the murder so that the facts leading to the disclosure of the real murderer who is the grieving widow are somewhat obscured and hence facilitative of the 'surprise' ending. One of the more 'serious' readers in the study whose approach to fiction tended to be careful and analytical eschews the mystery for that very reason:

> *I hate the frustration of trying to figure it out - I always think he did it and then in the end he didn't, and I had it all figured out as to what it should have been... It's because the writer obscured some fine point, or just said it in passing. It wasn't fair to me. So I don't read them. Now in a book like House of Pride, the symbolism in that is just like a mystery, really. I mean you work out patterns and things. I find that a lot more rewarding than finding out in the end of a mystery that the wife did it.*

The fact, then, that readers found it harder to stop for the fiction rather than the nonfiction supports the notion of different strategies and stance because of different purposes. There is no point in engaging in a 'living through' experience with a history textbook if one is to be quizzed on names, dates and places, any more than there is a point to reading Erica Jong's novel How to Save Your Own Life as a manual for survival.

Gaining access to the reader's history, and the strategies used to process a particular text in terms of automatic 'idling' or 'debugging', was important. To be able to explore such strategies in the context of what the particular reader had said and done in free recall situations with different texts added another dimension to the exploration. The main question to be explored, in terms of cognitive monitoring was with regard to how knowledge of the task, satisfactions sought and strategies used, interacted. While data such as that elicited in the thinking aloud task and presented in Tables 2, 3, 4 and 5 gave an indication of general patterns and trends, what follows are more specific indications of these interactions.

Reader 9 had been extremely self-effacing about the nature of her fiction reading, but at the same time regarded it as her indulgence or her due. In view of the fact that she avoided most technical material, and as well avoided

analytical discussions of anything she read, she found it very difficult to organize her recalls for any of the reading situations and sought clarification throughout as to what she should be doing. As part of her indulgence, she had commented that in fiction reading it was less important to get anything out of it as it was with nonfiction where "*it shows up what you're lacking in*". Magazines were an exception for this reader; one can pick up the 'gist' of an article, particularly if one reads a number of current news journals as this reader does, since they tend to cover the same issues. When one looks at what reader 9 enjoyed most, it was the magazine-type article, "Desensitization of Twentieth Century Man" which allowed her to bring in personal opinions on the basis of the gist of the article. In looking at the protocols in the thinking aloud task, one notices that at least one-half of those for the fiction were cognitive matches. Whether they were really cognitive matches or indices of 'satisfaction' was not certain but it was obvious that she did not regard the story as placing large demands on her processing ability. With the "Einstein" passage, on the other hand, about half of the protocols were type 1 statements, indicating general attempts, albeit unsuccessful at 'debugging'. Aware of different goals in reading, aware of the need for different stances for fiction and nonfiction and aware of inadequacies in achieving the appropriate stance and goals with nonfiction, her choice of fiction reading of historical romance and some bestsellers would seem to allow for optimum satisfaction.

Reader 10, on the other hand could be described as laissez-faire about her reading. Willing to try anything once without excessive aspiration, she reads fiction primarily for pleasure, and technical nonfiction for particular information. Aware that she has problems with technical material, particularly due to problems in slowing down, she is not overly anxious but rather has

developed strategies of re-reading when she most needs the information. Her strategies for reading fiction obviously produce more satisfaction but she has learned a 'debugging' strategy for nonfiction, if needed. In looking at the protocols of reader 10, it was interesting to note that her strategies for both fiction and nonfiction were almost identical with three-quarters of both being cognitive matches and elaborations, or type 3 and 4 statements. Aware that retention is important in nonfiction reading as opposed to fiction, it appeared as though she would employ a re-reading strategy with "Einstein" under ordinary reading circumstances.

Reader 11, tended to be very much aware of the need for speed and retention in fluent reading, particularly with nonfiction. She noted that she had become increasingly aware of the fact that she finds it easier to read fiction than nonfiction than she ever did before. Haven chosen to read material that is at a very concrete level in terms of being related to something in which she already has a personal interest, such as Nova Scotian history or building stairs, she tended to stay close to that for which she has some background. Her interest in pioneer days assured an enjoyment of "Snow", as did her interest in the Irish situation in terms of "The Sniper". Similarly in reading "True Confession", her protocols were largely 'matches' or laments indicating a situation with which she was familiar. With "Einstein", however, she panicked from the beginning, and noted a disinterest and dislike of physics and math. She proceeded to respond with meta statements, bafflements and restatements at a very literal level. It was a frustrating piece of material for reader 11 and certainly her eschewing of such works is no doubt a reflection of her awareness of problems.

Reader 12, the individual who tried to learn from every new experience, approached each reading experience with the expectation of coming to know, either efferently as in the case of technical reading or "psychologically" through the experiences of characters in novels. Aware of the different goals of reading and the different strategies needed to attain these goals, he appeared to be a versatile reader, having 'on the go' at any one time at least one nonfiction and one fiction book. Able to work out easily the informational aspects of "Snow" and also to enjoy the story, and easily capable of providing verbatim responses to any nonfiction, his protocols in the thinking aloud task reflected his versatility. With the fiction his protocols were largely cognitive matches and elaborations. With the "Einstein" passage his protocols were either cognitive match or restatements producing a satisfactory level of comprehension which, for reader 12 necessitated a detailed, verbatim recall.

Reader 13, who reads for 'mental exercise-minus-work' seeks enjoyment and escape in his fiction reading, and avoids nonfiction and political novels, although does not avoid facts specifically, which as he noted are often present in fiction. Confirming his ability to find challenge in the twists of fiction, he noted of "The Sniper", "*it's the blood and thunder that's just up my alley*", and indeed was able to elaborate on the plausibility of the sniper's using a rifle as opposed to a handgun, although this detail was not mentioned by any other reader. What was interesting in regard to his general avoidance of nonfiction was that, in looking at his protocols for "Einstein" in which he was 'not well versed', there were many restatements and misreadings at type 1. There was evidence to indicate his awareness of the need for different strategies and background for nonfiction, and also an awareness of the

difficulty of pulling in the appropriate 'debugging' strategies; hence his avoidance of nonfiction.

Reader 16 likewise avoided anything that was work, although she sought knowledge from what she read in a 'gestaltist' sense. In the same way that reader 13 was able to comment on the rifle incident in "The Sniper", reader 16 had been struck by the fact that the search party in "Snow" had stood for over three hours not saying a word. Like reader 13, too, she appeared to have an amazing eye for details of form, noting spelling errors and an overuse of commas in one passage, while reader 13 had picked up on the short sentence as part of his free recall. The recalls of much of reader 16's fiction reading as well as her 'thinking aloud' protocols appeared to be verbatim. With "Einstein", on the other hand, which bothered her in terms of its content, and which frustrated her greatly even in the demands of the task of responding to every line, she gave many more 'cognitive matches' which for this reader may have been more of an indication of a loss as to knowing what to say, or knowing what it was that she did not know about each line. Seemingly her choices of historical and espionage fiction has provided the detail in story form without constituting 'work'.

Reader 19, is much like reader 12 in that she read a good deal of fiction and nonfiction in a complementary fashion - espionage and political history, historical fiction and biblical history, and mysteries, but avoids all that is gloomy. The only passage which really appealed to her in the study was the "Einstein" passage because it 'had depth' and lacked gloom. Thus mood as well as level of difficulty of fiction-nonfiction is an important criterion for reader 19. She appeared to be equally facile with both fiction and non-fiction, having noted earlier that there was nothing in particular that caused her difficulty in her reading except for gloom and unprounouncable names. In

looking at protocols, it would appear as though her profile for both fiction and nonfiction was similar, made up largely of cognitive matches or elaborations. While she noted that she found "Einstein" slightly more difficult, as is reflected in more type 1 meta statements, she nonetheless found it more challenging.

Reader 21 read briefly for escape, and in so doing chose the gothic romances and light historical fiction, avoiding all the while anything unpleasant. Not surprisingly, the gloomy literature which prevailed in the study was bothersome. Reader 21 was quite satisfied with her reading; there was nothing she wanted to change and as long as she could continue to find fiction material that would take her away she appeared to be happy. In her protocols, there were indications of 'cognitive matches', elaborations and free associations. While she was able to engage in some free associations with the "Einstein" passage along with cognitive matches, it obviously was more difficult for her as evidenced in the type 1 statements, and in the relatively unsuccessful attempts at 'debugging'.

Reader 27 is another escapist reader who avoided all nonfiction, limiting herself largely to formula westerns and mysteries. Being disinterested in the world around her, she avoided fiction material that dealt with governments, and espionage. Recognizing that it is difficult to read nonfiction and that for which she lacks background, she appeared to employ many inferences and elaborations which seemed to characterize her 'living through' in the fiction and many more meta statements and misreadings in the nonfiction.

Similarly, reader 28 read a great number of formula books such as Mickey Spillane's and Ellery Queen's as well as westerns, seeking to 'close her mind'.

Aware that it was important to retain facts in the nonfiction, she realized that it was difficult for her to reach such a goal. Liking all of the fiction in the study, almost indiscriminantly, she lamented the lack of story in the two nonfiction passages. "Desensitization of Twentieth Century Man" she found too philosophical, and "Einstein" she found too "scientific". The difficulties she appeared to find with nonfiction were confirmed in the protocols for "Einstein" in which over half were meta statements or restatements. Over half of her protocols for the story on the other hand were elaboration and inferences, indicating that she was able to freely imagine and 'fill in'.

Reader 31 professed not to be an escape reader. Seeking direction and organization in her reading, she read historical fiction that had depth, interspersed with topical biographies and nonfiction pertinent to her career. She noted that she was purposeful and methodical in her nonfiction reading, setting aside an alert part of the day, and having in mind particular goals as she read. That she was aware that she must read nonfiction differently she considered an asset that allowed her to be a flexible reader. In all reading she read for the challenge. She was challenged by "Einstein" as was reflected in her thinking aloud protocols. For example, forty percent of her "Einstein" protocols were meta statements and misreadings. She noted that it was difficult because she wanted to absorb more. The fiction, she noted was easy, and she was able to freely infer and elaborate without difficulty. Even with the story "The Sniper" however, she had problems where a number of misreadings of technical details caused her to misinterpret the story, particularly in terms of setting. In the story "Snow" where she felt the detail was even more extraneous she skimmed over it entirely.

Finally, reader 32 is one of the readers who was extremely aware of being affected by what she reads, and who consciously sought out vicarious experiences. This was obvious in her responses to all of the passages in the study as well as in her general comments about her reading. She was a reader who formed images in her mind and constantly tried to visualize what was going on. She avoided television because it got in the way of this imagining. Noting that she had difficulty with technical material and some nonfiction, particularly insofar as they required her to adjust her speed, her personal goal throughout was to get images. Interestingly, in the "True Confession" passage she appeared to have little difficulty inferring and going beyond the information, giving mainly type 4 statements, although she noted she found it difficult to really visualize the characters the way she could in the nonfiction passage. Forty-three percent of her protocols for "Einstein" were free association which in terms of a 'criterion for understanding' satisfied this reader. What she chose to read was that which appeared most conducive to creating images and effects.

Readers who sought satisfaction in reading obviously knew what it was that they were seeking and what it was that would allow them to reach that satisfaction in an optimally pleasing situation. Readers who tended to read a lot of fiction and nonfiction either knew how to 'debug' or shift strategies, or, had idiosyncratic criteria for satisfaction so that the goal in reading nonfiction was not any different from the goal in reading fiction. A question which arises, however, is how their conscious awareness of what it is they want from books surfaces in the way they choose books.

Choosing Books

One of the 'purposeful' readers noted of her approach to titles and authors:

If someone says to me, did you read book so-and-so? I'll say 'who is the author?' Sometimes they can't remember so I think it can't have made too much of an impact if they can't remember who wrote the thing.

One might expect that metacognitive knowledge about books would be related to metacognitive experiences with different reading material. The questions that arise then are: What metacognitive knowledge do readers have about books? How do they know when they go into a book store or a library that what they choose will be satisfactory, or do they bring many books home on speculation reading only a small percentage of what actually comes into the house?

Data on the question of choosing books were elicited in a variety of ways. For example, readers had been queried on what kinds of books they liked or disliked. Readers who knew a lot about titles and authors and followed up specific authors obviously had a 'book fluency' that allowed them to accept or reject on the basis of previous associations and recollections. As well, readers were often asked how many books they took out of the library at a time and how many of these they usually read. Readers were also asked how they chose books in the library or bookstore, in what order they might read their books once they got home, and as well, whether they usually finished what they started. Responses to these questions tended to give insights into the awareness that readers had of their reading abilities or the satisfactions they were seeking.

Book Fluency

The data on 'book fluency' and indeed the very concept of 'book fluency' arose out of initial interview data when some of the readers appeared to be somewhat evasive about what it was that they actually read. For example:

I - What kinds of books do you like to read?
R - *Oh, it's very general. And I'm not surprised at that, and I don't think you will be, because I've met different groups of people, in all walks of life...*
I - When you say that you read quite generally, would you say that you have favourite authors in fiction?
R - *Not particularly.*
I - Well, you read fiction. What kind of fiction do you like to read?
R - *Well, I don't know. I don't classify my reading, it's just general. In fiction, the happenings of the day...*

In reviewing the initial interview data, the researcher noticed that some readers talked on endlessly about specific books that they had liked or disliked or authors they admired or authors they avoided, while other readers as in the example above, in the course of 90 minutes or more of interview time scarcely mentioned a single title or author.

Such an informal observation served to precipitate an analysis of the transcripts for each of the 32 readers in terms of their book fluency, wherein a count was made of the number of different titles or authors mentioned by a particular reader. Although a reader might mention Arthur Hailey's name six times in the course of the interview, it was counted only once. However, if a reader mentioned Hotel, Wheels and Arthur Hailey he would be given three counts. If a reader was asked directly whether he liked a particular author's material since it seemed to tie in with what he was discussing, a sign of recognition was not counted. If in response to Margaret Atwood's name they replied they liked The Edible Woman but not Life Before Man two counts were made.

Originally, it had also been considered feasible to count genres such as science fiction or historical romance as part of the metacognitive knowledge that readers use in choosing books. However, the descriptions seemed

infinite--police-crime, crime detective, fantasy, speculative fiction such that all terms that tended to preclude tabulation. What did get counted, however, were formula titles such as the Harlequin romance, Nick Carter's, or James Bond thrillers even though they did not signify title or author. Thus "Nancy Drew" was equated with a title such as The Thorn Birds. Specific authors were usually counted in terms of the author's last name, such as Michael Moorecook, although it became evident that some readers referred to prolific authors fondly by some form of endearment such as "*well, of course I read the Aggies*" (Agatha Christie) or the "Perrys"(Perry Mason stories by Erle Stanley Gardner).

In looking at the book fluency data, the researcher noted that awareness of title or author was not tantamount to enjoying a book since there were a number of voracious readers who appeared to have little awareness of such details. Some readers compensated, as Leavis (1932) observed, by keeping lists of titles or authors as they heard about them on television or read about them in reviews. However, others felt no need at all to compensate and in the course of the 90 minutes scarcely talked of a title or author. One reader, mentioned only one title and one author, and another mentioned two of each, while at the other end of the scale one reader mentioned 38 authors and 24 titles; another mentioned 22 authors and 31 titles. The average number of titles/authors brought up by an individual reader was 27, roughly split between titles and authors. In short voracity was not synonymous with book fluency. Although, at present, there are few comparative data on the book fluency of non-readers, it is interesting to note that eight of the readers in the pilot study who could hardly be considered 'voracious' at least were able to talk about specific titles and authors.

A number of variables appeared to intervene in terms of book fluency: the opportunity to talk to others about books; book-buying versus book-borrowing; interest in the authenticity of books and learning from materials; reading the blurbs at the beginning of the books; the range of readings; and the role of reading in the reader's life. For example one of the most 'fluent' readers was far from being the most voracious. Given that books were part of her 'identity', she spent a good deal of time in the interview discussing the difficulty of moving books, buying books, joining book clubs, and shelving books, and commented that she enjoyed the trivia that she learned in reading. While titles and authors are not necessarily 'trivia', they are nonetheless the 'snatches' with which a trivia person would become familiar. This 'fluent' reader like many of the other readers who tended to know a lot about books and authors was a book buyer. Certainly there is more at stake, financially, in remembering titles and authors when one is buying. Then too the books are usually in evidence in the house so that one can hardly avoid seeing the titles and authors more frequently.

While an absence of opportunities to talk to others about books, even if it is only 'have you read X by Y?' would by no means account for a lack of awareness about books and titles, this factor in combination with a general disinterest in facts and serious reading did tend to preclude such knowledge. If one has occasion to talk to others about books then it is more likely that one will pay attention to the title and author. However, there is the eternal chicken/egg question. Do readers not talk to others because they cannot remember what it is they read and by whom, or have they not developed such tactics because they lack reader contact? If one reads with the intention of discussion with others it is likely that one will selectively attend to different details such as the names of the character, the titles and the

author. This was confirmed by readers who often read with others in mind saying:

> *"So-and-so will like this book; I must tell her about it."*

Being interested in the authenticity of a book and the symbolic references is likely to motivate a reader to read the blurb at the beginning of the book and something about the author on the back. Titles are often chosen for their symbolic significance, and if one does not take note of the title one might also miss the full depth or range of meaning entailed in the book. Similarly the author's background is often of significance in terms of the authenticity of the book. Reading a fictionized account of Auschwitz by someone who was there or someone whose mother was there is likely to have a different type of authenticity than someone who has no personal connection whatsoever. Likewise reading a psychological study of a female character as written by a male or vice versa may affect authenticity. However, there were those people who noted that they did not read for 'obscure meanings' or were just seeking a good story such that they did not delve into authenticity.

Finally there is an aspect of range of reading that would be related to book fluency. One of the readers who revealed the least about titles or authors read nothing but 'swastika' fiction as he termed it. The content which is anything to do with World War II, was of more concern than the title or author. Similarly, those readers whose reading was limited to formula books tended not to care about title and author, for as one reader pointed out, *"if you have read one you have read them all"* so it hardly matters what the title is.

However, not all of the readers who knew little about titles or authors read entirely 'formula fiction'. One must wonder, however, how it was they came up with books to satisfy them since they appeared to know so little about titles, authors or genres. How did they choose? In looking at the borrowing patterns of two of the least fluent readers, one commonality was the amount of time they spent choosing books. One visited the library two or three times a week for 'something to do'. If he got home with a book he did not like he was able to return it immediately. His choices then were largely hit-or-miss. The other reader spent close to an hour per week choosing six books.

> *I always make it a point that if I can't stay at least three-quarters of an hour I'll make it another day. I don't like to rush in and out... They've noticed that up at the library. One time I had to rush because I had an appointment. And they said 'What happened to you? That was a fast trip!' I said 'I'm desperate; I've got to get some reading matter!'.*

This approach to choosing books contrasted sharply with the readers who must choose their books in between loads at the laundromat or wailing infants in the car. What one must consider about a reader who employs this laborious approach to choosing books is whether (a) she did not need titles or authors because she chose on some other basis or whether (b) she had to develop this compensatory 'plodding' strategy for choosing books since she could not remember titles and authors. While the aforementioned reader did occasionally choose a book she had already read, for the most part what she would read first once she was home was subject to a method:

> I - When you borrow your six books from the library how do you decide which one to read first?
> R - *Well, it's sort of like having a treat of candy, you know, as to which one I will take first. I sit here and look them over, and then I try to put them in certain categories. The real goodies I'll say 'This is a real goodie; I think I'll wait on that one!.*

I - Ah, the icing on the cake. Many people I've talked to read the goodies first.

R - *I like to save it for a rainy day -- I go according to the weather -- I can do a million things when the sun is shining, but when it's cloudy and dreary - oh to have a good book.*

Another reader whose fluency was largely limited to formula references such as Nick Carter's or Harlequin's also had a laborious approach to choosing what she would read and when. This reader, unlike the previous one tended to have a number of books on the go at once:

> *I'd read one, and then it would come to a part that was boring. Most books have a part like that. So I'd read it and then I'd hit one of the boring parts and put it down. And next I'd pick a book and I'd say 'well I don't really want to read that one right now; I think I'll read this one'. And it would go on like that. Eventually I'd get them all finished.*

When asked how she went about choosing which book she would sample first she commented:

> *I usually line them all up so I can see their backs and know what they're about, and I'll read the backs of every one. And I usually have two or three of this kind, two or three of that kind and three or four of another... I'll pick the one that I think is going to be the most interesting and I put that one aside and I'll look at the rest and line them all up...*

Another noted:

> *I look at the covers. And if it's a favourite author I'll read that one first. Like if I bring a pile and Catherine Cookson is amongst them, I'll read that. Or if it's one that I've applied for I'll read that first so somebody else can get it.*

Much of this 'fluency' with books would appear to be acquired through what Calvino (1981) has termed "circling":

> ... you open the book to page one, no, to the last page first, you want to see how long it is... You turn the book over in your hands, you scan the sentences on the back of the jacket, generic phrases that don't say a good deal...of course this circling of the book, too, this reading around it before reading inside it, is a part of the pleasure in a new book (p. 8)

A preconceived notion in the study was that book buyers, because they were investing $2.95 for a new paperback or $14.95 for a new hardcover book would be book fluent and as well, selective about what they would put their money into. Hence, they would be aware of what it was that they were looking for in a book. Although the number of book buyers in the sample was not large, this preconceived notion was not confirmed. Book buyers tended not to be more book fluent or selective in their purchasing than book borrowers, unless they did a lot of re-reading and 'cherished' their library in some way. In these cases they tended to be more serious in their approach to reading, and were more conscious of different types of books and why they liked particular genres. On the other hand, another book-buyer observes:

> *It depends on whether I'm by myself or if I'm with my boyfriend. He will usually take a long time to look for one, and so I'll take a long time too. But usually if I see a book that looks like it might be kind of good then I'll just pick it up instantly - that's how I got Maggie.*

The other insight that this reader shared related to the fact that she often had a friend read the books she bought before she did to ensure that she would like them before she invested energy and time in the reading.

Some readers who had particular titles or authors in mind were able to use the card catalogue or the request system for choosing books. Having sought out specifics, and checked the new books section in the library, they then proceeded to shelf-read. Eight readers were shelf-readers entirely, wandering up and down the shelves which were alphabetically arranged until they had selected their quota. Some were slightly methodical in the shelf-reading, in that they would choose within an alphabetical range such as A-G. The next time they went to the library they would pick up at G. The most methodical and plodding of the shelf-readers arrived home with six suitable books while others operated purely on a hit-or-miss basis often arriving home

with only two or three of eight books they actually would read. Three of these hit-or-miss readers commented that they usually choose on the basis of the mood they were in.

Texture

There is evidence that there is almost a 'subliminal' form of awareness in choosing books that might be described as an awareness of texture. While a number of readers kept lists of titles and authors that had been directly recommended through interviews and reviews, other readers made use of 'library procedures' to help them in their selection of books. In the back of each book is the borrowing card on which the borrower's number and due date is recorded. A number of readers made use of this borrowing card to make sure that they had not already read a particular book. As well three or four other readers made use of an 'indirect recommend' system on the basis of this borrowers card. In a small library such as the one sampled there was a coterie of regular patrons whose numbers are apt to recur frequently on the cards of the books one reads when there are common interests in certain genres. If the interests overlap frequently enough, just seeing the familiar number of 6021 in a book might be taken as a recommendation of that book since the tastes of that reader had been compatible with one's own earlier. This rather indirect approach to choosing books serves as a confirmation of Lesser's (1957) notion of texture:

> The influence expectations about texture exert upon selection can be inferred from our reactions to the appraisal of books made by others. No matter how highly a book is praised, and how much interest its subject matter appears to hold, we are not likely to want to read it if we feel that the taste, the general level of sensibility, of the person who recommends it is inferior to our own. In contrast, we may be willing to accept the recommendation of an admired friend even when he tells us very little about a story he has enjoyed. In part of course, this is because we know

> his interests, but in larger part I believe it is because we know the texture of his mind. Whatever he likes, we unconsciously reason will probably appeal to us also... We seek as friends people whose minds are textured as our own who, whether or not they agree with us, or even share our particular interests, understand issues as we pose them; people too, who, we believe respond with as much feeling as we do ourselves (p. 208-209).

On a number of occasions when readers were discussing their reading network, or how they went about recommending books and to whom, elements of an awareness of texture surfaced. For example in terms of the positive influence of texture several readers commented:

> *There's one old lady I know who borrows books; I'd read anything she'd read. She's got good reading habits; she knows what goes on in the world.*

> *If I like someone our tastes aren't necessarily the same but they're in about the same age bracket I am and about the same position - and we all like roughly the same type of things.*

> *I have one brother who recommends books to me. I know that I can be 100 percent sure that if he enjoyed it I will. Our tastes are very similar. And so I make a point of getting everything he recommends.*

On the other hand, there were also negative aspects of texture:

> *Well, my friend who also reads science fiction - we've learned to be wary about each other's recommendations. It's mutual; our tastes are just too different even though we're in the same genre. He started reading science fiction a lot younger than I with the type designed for adolescents, and I think he still harbours a fondness for that type of relatively mindless story. Like many he's more technology and gadget oriented where I prefer stories with a biological/social basis.*

> *I have a friend a couple of doors from me and we've been friends for years - neighborhood friends. And she will often say 'Here I've really enjoyed this and I can start it and I don't get anything out of it. But again, our interests are different. She likes sort of a political type of background and I don't... So I will take what she has, look at it, start it maybe, but then I usually don't finish it.*

> *Ken's sister would read things that I'm not interested in because they don't have enough meat; it doesn't have enough plot. I know what kind of books she reads. And we also have a good friend. I would never recommend to her whatever I'm reading. I don't know why. She is a reader. I have one of the books she loaned me - one of Washington Irving's. I couldn't finish it so I took it back.*

Two readers who were 'colleagues' in the same school provided some interesting corroborative data since they each mentioned the other as someone whose taste they did not admire in books.

> *One of the other teachers recommended a book to me and I didn't like it, and then I recommended Evergreen to her and she didn't like it. I couldn't put it down ... I started this one book she recommended by Sylvia Plath - and maybe it was the weather that affected it too but I found it a very depressing book and didn't have much time to read at that time so I could only read three or four pages at a time.*

Her colleague comments thus:

> *Having read one novel - or attempted one novel, that I liked [Sylvia Plath], she's not interested in what I'm reading. We get along well, at a very superficial level; we don't have common interests at all... What I dislike are things like The Thorn Birds and Evergreen. Just sensationalism!*

Of the writer, Arthur Hailey the former reader makes the following comments:

> *Well, I like Arthur Hailey; I've read most of his books. I've seen him on a documentary and I know he really studies up a lot on what's going on.*

The latter comments:

> *Some of the books I read I almost feel like I've read them before. Like Arthur Hailey. You get 40 pages into Hotel and you might as well have read Wheels as far as the plot goes.*

Outside of a general texture or level of sensibility, and specific genres such as science fiction or mysteries, it was often difficult for a reader to explain what it was that motivated them to pick up a book or to continue reading it, or why it was that they did not like all books in a

specific genre. One of the few articulated points in this regard, however, relates to dialogue:

> *I look for dialogue when I read a book. When I pick up a book it might sound good on the outside, then all of a sudden I'll go turning a page and it might not be. Then I might see a lot of pages with dialogue on them. I might read a couple of those because dialogue is important to me.*

Another reader noted that he avoided too much depth unless there was accompanying action. As well, he gives some indication of the awareness of texture that readers have:

> *I got a bestseller the other day and I looked at it and didn't like it. My wife read it and enjoyed it. And my friend read it and she enjoyed it. And both of their comments were 'It was good but it's not the kind of book that Mack would like' --- um The Magnum Inheritance. I thought it was going to be something on the style of Ludlum. After I'd got it home and scanned down it I could tell it wasn't going to be my kind of book... It was the general tone... there was a lot of digging in it and not too much action... Even if you've gone to get something that's a probing book - I read something not too long ago called The Judas Goat - well in that there was a lot of probing but a lot of fast action as well.*

Other readers had preferences for male authors or female authors 'just on principle' (translate: texture), and several others as previously noted avoided paperbacks.

For the most part, however, many readers had difficulty explaining why it was that they chose to read what they read, or why it was that they managed to finish some books and not others. In many ways, these apparent difficulties with explaining why it was that they read certain books serve to corroborate what Langer (1978) has to say about the 'non-thinking' hypothesis. One might have as easily asked readers why they breathed the way they breathed.

Effects of Verbal Reporting on Subsequent Cognitive Monitoring

Maring (1975) and Cramer and Blachowicz (1979) in exploring the consequences of placing teachers in situations of talking a great deal about their reading have raised the question: what effect does heightened awareness have on reading strategies and reading behaviour? Cramer and Blachowicz (1979) found that teachers who had been probed about their own reading and the reading of their students seemed to become more aware of the importance of talking about books and reading in the total process of creating readers. Seemingly, in talking about what, to a great extent, was taken for granted in their own lives served to make them aware of the absence of 'automaticity' in the lives of their students.

Blunt (1977) notes that in order to create voluntary readers, there must be many opportunities and guidance in training 'imaginative recreation':

> ...above all the teacher should talk more with his pupils about the books and magazines they read and why they choose them.
>
> It may be that we need to recognize that the full response to reading is highly charged with personal affective concerns not always allowed for in school-based activities, and consequently sometimes over-indulged in voluntary reading (p. 47).

The 14 year-olds interviewed by Thompson (1979) in terms of their responses to fiction similarly noted the importance of heightened awareness of reading in general as a component of becoming a reader:

> I would like teachers to talk over with us what books we read, and let us tell them if we think they are interesting.
>
> I think we should read more in class and then talk about it... we should sometimes pick our own books and read them in class and at home and when we have finished we should stand up and tell everybody about it (p. 11).

In the present study it had not been possible to do a follow-up of the reactions and subsequent reading behaviours of readers who in at least 12 cases had been involved in five or six hours of 'focused' conversation in terms of their reading. However, three different types of situations arose during the study which at least gave some indication of the immediate effects of 'heightened awareness': (a) at the end of the initial interview, when, in addition to the exchange of pleasantries, readers in expressing curiosity about what would happen to the data tended to make some comments about how they now felt about their own reading; (b) during the second or third interview when readers had a chance to comment on the initial focused interview in terms of their subsequent reading habits; and (c) readers would occasionally make comments during the initial interview or later interviews about a 'reading conversation' that had had some impact on their subsequent reading.

The most general type of comment in (a) was that people had never really thought much about their reading before. There appeared to be a great deal of automaticity about their reading. For some of the readers these discussions appeared to lead to startling discoveries. For example, as readers discussed how they went about choosing their books, or how they decided which books they would read first, they seemed to surprise themselves that they used the methods they did. Or they were surprised that they really did employ a method of checking to see that another reader had read the library book they were about to choose. Perhaps because so many readers did not talk to anyone else about their reading, they had somewhat of a 'solipsistic' view of their own behaviour so that they had never thought of their book selection behaviour as an issue. While it must be reiterated that many of the questions asked had been initially raised by other readers, it was interesting to note the surprise of one of the readers in terms of the questions raised:

> *Isn't it funny the questions somebody who reads would think to ask! People who don't read wouldn't think of that as a problem.*

Another reader, while willing to be in the study, expressed the view that there was little to say about her reading. It was just something she did. No one was more surprised than the reader herself when a whole hour of tape had run through and there was still a good deal to be discussed about her reading. Readers, then, were surprised that they had a point of view or an answer for questions to which they had never given conscious thought. One reader even discovered in talking about her favourite children's book that she had named her daughter after the main character.

The responses in (b) were somewhat more conscious in that they were made on the basis of active reflection in which the reader had engaged between sessions. Three of the 12 indepth readers started out the second interview with 'denials' or qualifications about what they had said the session before:

> *I really told you a lie about condensed books. I didn't remember - on the Good Housekeeping sometimes there are condensed books and occasionally I will read that because I know I would never read the book anyway...*

When the question about condensed books had been posed, what had been intended were those of the Reader's Digest variety. Only an inverterate magazine reader as was this respondent would think to make the distinction.

Another reader, upon being asked at the end of the second interview if there was anything she wanted to add noted:

> *I will think of something on the way home. Last week I thought of 50 million things on the way home. I talked to this person and that one about books and here I've been contradicting myself. I thought 'oh God I told her all those things and now I start thinking about it I realize that I do talk to other people about books. I thought 'why did I say I don't talk to people about books, because here I was talking to this person'... I found myself noticing more about what people said, if*

> *they talked about books or what they were reading. I noticed more that I talked to people about books, and right in the middle of talking to one person I said 'jeepers, we're talking about books!'*

As well, it was obvious from the kinds of references that were made during the second or third interview that most of the readers had had occasion to talk to their spouses or neighbours about the nature of the questions, and in so doing had spent more time reflecting on their reading. Occasionally, too, they would quote something that their confreres had said about reading, the nature of the study or the reading situations. One reader, for example, had a neighbour who did a great deal of reading and who took an interest in the study although she did not participate herself. Thus, her view of purpose for reading and particular writers were in the transcripts, as were her responses to two of the short stories which she had read after the respondent in the study had discussed them. In another case the wife of one of the readers had read and responded to one of the short stories, as did the husband of a third reader. Often recollections, validations and confirmations surfaced. One reader commented:

> *I was telling Phil last night about what I told you about reading under the covers with the flashlight when I was little. He said 'that's just like my little niece Cathy who is nine; they caught her last week with a bunch of adult books and a flashlight in bed.*

Interestingly, several of the indepth readers felt that the types of tasks they had been required to do such as thinking aloud, or comparing fiction and nonfiction, would serve an intellectually useful function in that they had served to help them in their reading by making them more conscious of what they did. Such readers invariably were readers who 'read to learn'.

This might help me in my reading, as in ways of looking for something more objective or maybe I'd find I could skim over different things. You never know - maybe I'll think more about what I read.

I think probably when I read tonight I might think about doing it this way (thinking aloud). Not sentence by sentence but maybe I'll stop a little more often and think back on what I've read. I think it makes you more analytical. I might get into things more deeply.

Such a response is consistent with the suggestion in Brown's (1980) research that attempts at 'debugging' on the basis of certain 'triggering responses', or a conscious awareness of the material at hand, may be related to selecting appropriate reading strategies.

Occasionally, readers made (c) comments about conversation of their reading that had some impact on their subsequent reading. For example, it was noted in passing by several readers that they found themselves attending to more details in their reading between sessions. One reader felt that she had read less during the week between reading tasks. One other reader attributed her superior 'book fluency' to a situation in university when she had been penalized for forgetting a title or author on an English examination.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this chapter has been to consider the role of conscious awareness of cognitive processes on the voluntary reading transactions of the readers in the study. The 'snapshots' of the adult readers presented in Chapter 4 have been placed into a social context, and 'cropped' for the purpose of focussing and enlarging the fiction reading process, and as well, of exploring the role of self-consciousness on the fiction reading process. While this chapter brings to a termination the metaphor of the practices of photography, there remains the necessity in Part Four of the study of

describing steps 7 and 8 of an ethnography: the development of propositions about the fiction reading process, and the readers of fiction. The ensuing section, far from being a summary or a concluding statement will serve in this ethnographic translation a culminating function in terms of considering the study as a whole, and will essentially represent a 'disengaging' from the discovering and communicating process.

PART FOUR

> ...the information we gain from the arts is indivisibly a product of the relationship between form and content - to follow L.A. Reid's (1971) usage, it is 'meaning embodied'. An adequate translation of a poem is probably another poem (Woolley, 1980/81, p. 51).

The translation has represented an alternate way of looking at reading through an ethnographic exploration of the voracious adult reader of fiction. The purpose of this last section is to give consideration to the meanings and implications emerging, both in terms of the form of the study, or the way it was conducted, as well as its content. Such a purpose might be compared to the task of the photographer Winograd who observes "I photograph to find out what something will look like when photographed" (Cited in Sontag, 1977, p. 197). The study while rich in data and seemingly 'inexhaustive' in implications for further research, is no no way definitive. It is the task in this final section, however, to synthesize and extend the speculations already raised within the translation, and as well, to 'place' the document for future research in reading.

CHAPTER 11

"MEANING EMBODIED"

OVERVIEW

The thesis of this ethnographic study of the voracious adult reader of fiction has been that it is necessary to look at the reading behaviour of a particular reader with a particular text, in the context of his life situation, and as well, the general context within which reading takes place in a particular society, in order to come to some understanding of the matrix of factors that comprise any reading event. In short, an analysis of how readers read, or the processing strategies employed, and what readers read, is likely to be incomplete without due consideration to the context of such a reading in terms of attitudes and motivations. This thesis has been generated through 'foreshadowings' extant in the general literature on reading, and through analytically inductive approaches to data collected from the verbal reports of voracious adult readers of fiction.

Over a hundred hours of direct contact time with voracious adult readers of fiction yielding several hundreds of hours of transcribing, several thousand pages of transcriptions and field notes, and infinite possibilities for analysis have served as the basis for the process of 'discovering' the meanings of the behaviour communicated thus far in the ethnographic translation. The two most important components of this discovering process have been an exploration of the use and <u>form</u> of verbal reporting as a technique of inquiry in the study of reading behaviour, and an exploration of what the data that was consciously

articulated in verbal reports, the content, reveals about what readers read, why, and with what strategies.

The way of seeing and telling as exemplified in the work of John Berger, the photojournalist, and in the practices of photography in general has served as a guide metaphorically in the translation. Woolley (1980/81) has noted that Berger's work shows how "a balance can be struck between the needs of artistic form and the greater detachment appropriate to the presentation of factual materials" (p. 57). How and why a reader comes to derive satisfaction in reading seemed in the foreshadowing to signal the presence of relationships that would not necessarily be revealed through correlational research or even multivariate analysis at this time. The ultimate aim, then, has been to seek meaning through an indepth exploration, or an 'uncovering' of new relationships, in order to gain insights and illuminations about the reading process in general, and about that reading which is engaged in voluntarily and voraciously, specifically.

Because of the exploratory nature of the study more questions have been raised than answered. Speculations about the apparent relationships have been abundant such that the study is fraught with implications for further research. The quest for universals through the technique of analytic induction has served to expose the multifaceted nature of the reading process: who the reader is, the nature of what he is reading, the strategies employed, and the context in which the reading takes place are all components of any reading event. As well, a consideration of the techniques employed in the early stages of the ethnography, in terms of the actual data collection brings to the surface the myriad of

variables to be considered in the 'form' of a study which purports to study the reader or the processes of reading.

The data collection and data analysis of the study have served to corroborate what Francis Bacon observed with regard to understanding:

> Human understanding is no dry light but receives an infusion from the will and affections (Cited in Lee, 1970, p. 7).

Both the form of eliciting data about readers, as well as the actual content of what they said and did, comprise the information to be gained from the study or the "meaning embodied". Attempts will be made in this final chapter to consider the information and implications of both form and content, as well as their interrelatedness.

On the Form of the Enquiry

In looking at the 'knowing' that has emerged with regard to the form of the study there seemed to be two major areas for concern: the conducting of ethnographic research in education in general, and the conducting of an ethnographic exploration of reading, in particular. Both concerns will be addressed in this section.

The validity of the ethnographic interview, the face-to-face contact between researcher and respondent relies to a great extent on the nature of the verbal reporting. While reading researchers such as Carey (1980), Brown (1980), Carey, Harste and Smith (1981), Guthrie (1979), Hatt (1977), Robinson (1980), Tuinmann (1977) and Vacca (1980) have all advocated the use of naturalistic enquiries, or indepth interviews with real readers, it is not surprising that procedures are only in developmental stages. The question of how it is possible to 'know'

on the basis of readers' reports about what they do silently has been of prime concern. In this translation, then, it has been incumbent on the researcher to develop and test out procedures for eliciting useful verbal reports about covert mental processes.

While a variety of verbal reporting techniques have been used in exploring the conscious awarenesses of young children, a reliance on such reports in developmental studies has been termed 'risky' by Brown (1980). With adults, on the other hand, such reports have been regarded by researchers such as Hare and Pullian (1979) recently, and by Huey (1908) and James (1890) earlier, as 'windows' on covert processes. It must be acknowledged, however, that techniques of introspection and verbal reporting have been subject to much criticism from the behaviouristic school (Bakan, 1967) on the grounds that introspective data is not public in the same way that overt behaviour is. With a renewed interest in verbal reporting techniques, particularly in that branch of cognitive psychology dealing with metacognitive behaviour, the validity of such techniques has come under new attack.

Nisbett and Wilson (1977) review evidence to suggest that there may be little direct access to one's higher order cognitive processes, although it may be that people can provide reasonably accurate accounts on the basis of social theory, or what it is that they have come to expect. Citing experimental data which would suggest that often people report verbally what observers could report as accurately, Nisbett and Bellows (1977) note:

> The criterion for 'awareness' should be instead 'verbal reports which exceed in accuracy that obtained from observers provided with a general

> description of the stimulus and r[redacted]e in question. Evenly highly accurat[redacted]eports, therefore, provide no evidence of introspective awareness of the effects of the stimuli on responses if observers can equal that level of accuracy (p. 623).

While Natsoulas (1970) and Radford (1974) have cited evidence to support both sides of the introspectionist/anti-introspectionist debate, recent research in the area of attribution theory may add further insight into the various factors involved in eliciting data about cognitive processes. In attribution theory, or the exploration of how individuals assign causality in order to make sense of their world, Langer (1978) explains that people are regarded as information processors "who continually and consciously ask what and why questions and then behave in ways that correspond to their answers" (p. 35). Langer advances a "non-thinking hypothesis" wherein he considers that much day-to-day adult existence is really run on a 'script' for social interaction, rather than on a great deal of thoughtful action about an event. He further considers that people are only likely to engage in thought when they encounter new situations for which they have no script, when a regular script must become more complex, when an old script is interrupted, when novel situations occur, or when the situation does not allow for sufficient involvement. It may be, as the novelist Virginia Woolfe observes, that "Everyday includes more non-being than being" (Cited in Langer, 1978, p. 6).

In view of the renewed interest in the research of Bartlett (1932) on scripts and schemata, it may be that there is some plausibility to the suggestion that people do run on 'idle', much of the time and seldom bring to the surface of their conscious awareness the underlying processes

of many daily activities. In view of the deeply ingrained nature of the fiction reading habit, as noted in the foreshadowing and as evidenced in the habits of the readers in the study, the question arises with regard to the utility of thought processes of readers about what they do when they read, or why they read, in an effort to come to some understanding of the reading process. That such questions arise may explain the emphasis in most metacognitive research to-date on the 'debugging' strategies employed in comprehension failure rather than the "automatic pilot" activities of smooth reading.

On the basis of the present study it would seem that what might be 'redeeming' and illuminating about verbal reports on any cognitive behaviour, whether it includes 'automatic pilot' or 'debugging' (Brown, 1980), is not so much the validity/invalidity, but rather the nature of the context in which they are used. In the present study the verbal reports were part of a triangulation design; they were one way of "knowing". White (1980) and Ericcson and Simon (1980), in looking critically at the circumstances under which the Wilson and Nisbett (1977) data was collected, provide support for the use of Denzin's (1970) principles of multiple triangulation in assessing verbal reports:

> When verbal reports are collected concurrently with other records of behaviour, it becomes possible to check the consistency of the reports with other behaviour ... It is time to abandon the careless charge of 'introspection' as a means of disparaging such data. The verbal reports describe human behaviour that is as readily interpreted as other human behaviour. To limit them when we are carrying the 'chain and transit of objective measurement' is only to mark as terra icognita areas on the map of human cognition that we know perfectly well how to survey (Ericcson and Simon, 1980, p. 247).

Introspection or verbal reports do give us information and data that

otherwise might be lost. As well, as Radford (1974) notes, verbal reports may stimulate us to ask new questions, or allow us to come to another way of knowing.

In the present study, then the verbal reports were collected from what readers said they did, and what they actually appeared to do in a variety of reading situations, as well as from what they had said after they read. For example when the reader cited in the last chapter attributed her superior recall of titles and authors to the fact that she was chastised for forgetting such details on an test in university, there is the implication that it is important for her to do the right thing, whether it is in her general day-to-day activities or her reading. She chooses books through the card catalogue in the library, she allocates different readings, either serious or more frivolous, to different parts of the day; she plans her day, in any case, so that she is never idle. When she reads a short story such as "A Summer's Reading" she notes of the protaganist George that reading for him was probably "just a status thing", and she eschews this shiftless lazy non-reader. When her 'old script is interrupted' on the thinking aloud task, she is able to carry out the task very 'accurately' attends in particular to the details of the nonfiction passage, is offended by the 'do-nothing' characters in the fiction work, and concludes that the experience of having engaged in the task is likely to improve her reading.

It is also important to consider the context in which the verbal reports were elicited. When readers were asked to introspect about their reading every attempt had been made to establish a 'collaborative' relationship. As well, the interview situations were obviously focused

in terms of the readers' reading, and every attempt was made to create an atmosphere where readers were subject to neither long silences, nor the need for hasty 'thinking on their feet'. For the indepth readers, whose consciousness about their reading had been raised or 'pushed' between sessions, opportunities always arose for them to refer to earlier points. The reading situations which were the most demanding in terms of consciousness, the thinking aloud tasks, were always left to the last session when a strong collaborative spirit had already been established. Whether adults outside 'captive' situations such as college freshman classes would freely introspect to the same degree without this context might come into question.

Attempts were made to have readers 'volunteer' information rather than just answer direct questions. While there were some readers who 'naturally' volunteered far more than others, suffice it is to say that the open-endedness of much of the initial interview and subsequent reading situations provided for a context where readers were not pressed to answer a certain way because of a limited number of choices. When the information was volunteered in a naturalistic setting (i.e. the reader's home in most cases) there was further validity achieved. For example, when a reader would say that she could read anywhere with any amount of noise, and in fact was found to be reading amidst the presence of two or three children, there was less reason to question her statement. When a reader noted that she was so overwhelmed by everything such that she never cared to go into any subject too deeply, there was evidence in her home of a multitude of books with bookmarks, book shelves with a wide range of topics, and a host of rambling volunteered statements in

the interview.

With the twelve indepth readers it was possible to tap their metacognitive knowledge (what they said they usually did in a reading experience), their metacognitive experiences (what they actually did in a reading situation), and as well to make inferences about what they appeared to be doing when they read. Other sources of data arose as a result of what other readers said about a particular reader. A pluralistic methodology (Eisner, 1981)in the ethnographic setting fostered the data source of a Moliere "Je prends mon bien ou je le trouve" or a Galton:

> ... The truth is something you go on toward and never to, and the way is filled with ingenuities and excitements. Don't take the straight and narrow path of the stodgy positivists; be gay and optimistic, like Galton and you will find yourself more toward than you had ever expected (E.G. Boring, Cited in Webb, 1978, p. 326).

Finally, an added dimension in the quest for validity was achieved through the contributions of the transcriber, as alluded to in Chapter 3. Far from being relegated to or assuming the role of "hired hand" as discussed by Roth (1966), she often acted as a distanced 'public' observer for the interpretation of the verbal reports. While it must be acknowledged that research teams, or as in the case of some ethnographies the actual collaborators might be used in a similar way, the biases as a result of a closeness to the data, or an indifference to the data in the "hired hand" context, does not balance the distancing of one who 'was almost there' but who had no vested interest in the outcome of the study. While the role of this transcriber may be regarded as unique, it would seem that as an additional, or alternate source of 'making public' one's discoveries, the use of such roles needs to be explored

further.

The implications for future research in reading in terms of methodology are clear: alternate ways of knowing can be achieved through the triangulation techniques explored in this study. It would seem that the use of such techniques is necessary in order to explore the contextual variables within which any reading transaction occurs. Exploring who reads what, why and how would seem to depend strongly on who asks the questions, what questions and how.

It has been acknowledged throughout this translation that the interactional situation between researcher and reader served to create different social contexts within which the data was elicited, and as well a variety of types of data, both quantitatively and qualitatively. For example, developing the ethnographic techniques with the university students in the pilot study, who were already well-known to the researcher, seemed to minimize the amount of time needed to facilitate a collaborative role. However, it is important to acknowledge that the aims of the pilot study were somewhat different from the actual data collection in that the cooperation of readers was sought for the purpose of designing an ethnographic study. Readers were asked how they thought others would react to different types of questions; they were asked to suggest other questions that readers might answer; they were asked more directly about how they felt about the interview situation. In short, their verbal reporting was guided in a different way, and the nature of the pilot study, as suggested elsewhere, resembled more closely the 'rigged' situations suggested by Brown (1980) for collecting metacognitive data. Thus while both situations were designed to elicit metacognitive data, the roles

and relationships were different, and it is important to explore less impressionistically the implications of these different relationships.

A second intervening variable worthy of attention in considering the roles and relationships in an ethnography concerns the use of students in the data collection. While researchers such as Brown (1980), Baker (1979) and Garner (1980) to name only a few have made use of older school students, or university students, it is important that the researcher take into consideration whose students they are. While there is usually the assumption that the researcher is external to the situation, or that the data is collected from a group of students en masse, one must consider what happens if the ethnographic respondents are the researcher's own students. Because most of the pilot study readers were students of the researcher, it is possible that there may have been inherent in that segment of the data collection shades of the traditional professor-student relationship. To what extent there was a desire to please, or a willingness to control on the part of the researcher, is uncertain. Suffice it to say that conducting an ethnographic study with one's own students is not likely to be the same as conducting a study with one's peers or with unknown individuals. Developing the print settings, then, with the students, while in itself part of the study, affected the nature of the data collected from the later respondents. For example, since few of the students were adamant about the unsuitability of the passages presented although they did express preferences, there seemed little reason to question the appropriateness of the different short stories. Ultimately, however, many of the indepth readers when presented with four fiction passages, found all of them distasteful. While it was considered

inevitable and desirable that they dislike some of them, there was not the anticipation that they would reject all of them.

In the final data collection, the sample of reader-collaborators included readers who had been former colleagues of the researcher in a school setting, former neighbour 'peers', former 'peers' who had belonged to the same parent or interest group, as well as individuals who were unknown to the researcher. While researchers such as Platt (1981) as alluded to in Chapter 4, have given some consideration to the politics of interviewing one's peers, it would seem that up to this point that there has been less consideration given to the effect that different roles and relationships might have on collecting the 'cognitive' data as in reading or problem-solving research, where there may be more at stake in terms of 'preservation of self', than in revealing one's academic leanings, as in the case of the Platt study, or adjustment to the role of principal as in the Sussman (1981) study. It must be acknowledged that significant relationships with colleagues, neighbours or one's students are likely to be characterized by meaningful dialogue about particular topics. However, focusing on a topic such as reading or problem-solving in a relationship that is not based on such shared interests does bring to the surface the need for research which will give further consideration to the relationship between form and the nature of the data.

Berger (1975) had made the following observation about his own attempts to 'come to know' his subjects in photography:

> To try to understand the experience of another, it is necessary to dismantle the world as seen from one's own place within it, and to reassemble it as seen from

> his. For example, to understand a given choice another makes, one must face in imagination the lack of choices which may confront and deny him. The well-fed are incapable of understanding the choices of the under-fed (p. 92-94).

It would now seem important to give consideration to the effect of the presence of the researcher, and the cognitive and social demands of the situation, on the world that an individual presents in his verbal reporting. In the area of reading research where reading for most individuals has been a school subject in which one's worth has already been assessed at some point, it is particularly important to make such considerations with both child and adult respondents.

The implications with regard to future considerations of the form of reading research would seem to be extensive. However, such considerations must be made in terms of their relevance to the questions that can and need to be raised about readers and reading, based on the patterns and relationships that appeared to 'emerge' in the content of the enquiry.

On the Content of the Enquiry

This study has been aimed at exploring and uncovering relationships in the processes of reading and the acquisition of the reading habit, rather than at substantiating particular hypotheses about the reading process or the reader. Statements about processes or about readers must, of necessity, be tentative. However it is possible to state with some certainty that voracious adult readers are a 'diverse' lot, not only in terms of what they read, and how they read, but also in terms of the role that reading appears to play in their lives. For some,

reading served as a 'bridge' to the world, for others it was their 'bridge' away from the world. Fiction reading might be engaged in for the purposes of mental stimulation; for others it was a 'relief from' certain forms of mental stimulation. While it can be stated also, that there was a certain diversity in terms of how readers came to be readers, there would at least seem to be a certain degree of uniformity with respect to the fact that the reading habit is well-rooted by adulthood. Most of the readers had always been readers such that there would seem to be little question that early environmental factors had a great deal of influence on their adult reading habits.

It is also possible to state with some certainty that differing sex roles would seem to be an important variable in looking at the reader and the strategies used in reading. While this is not meant to state that males and females necessarily read differently, it is meant to suggest that if males and females assume or are ascribed different roles in a society and hence find themselves in different contexts, then they are likely to regard their reading and themselves as readers in quite different 'lights'. Any debates surrounding sex differences, particularly with regard to cognitive behaviour must, of necessity, take into consideration the expectations that society imposes on males and females.

There were a number of speculations and accompanying implications about fiction reading, and readers in general, which appeared to emerge in the study. Such speculations seemed to be of two types: those related directly to educational concerns, and those related more to the theoretical concerns.

Educational Concerns

While the study has dealt primarily with those individuals who have already passed through the school system, such that in a sense it would seem as though the study has only been indirectly related to school implications, it would seem that the data from the adult readers is likely to serve as a foreshadowing in research dealing with beginning or emerging readers. These individuals, while still developing the skills of reading may simultaneously be developing the motivations and causes to read or to avoid reading. The educational implications would seem to include issues that are more basic than 'how' to teach children to read or to make them into readers, since the profiles of the readers may bring into question the social, political or intellectual desirability of a quantity and range of reading. For example, there were readers in the study who had compulsions to read to the exclusion of doing school work, establishing social relationships, attending to families or working. While their indulgences and compulsions may have been harmless, or at least superior to some other form of dependency, and would appear to fill a definite need in the life of the individual, it is difficult to avoid speculating that there may be ways that schools can facilitate a "full" education on the uses and functions of reading, in the same way that they are starting to embrace visual literacy, for the "full" use and appreciation of film, or computer literacy necessary for a "full" use and appreciation of the functions of new technologies.

The fact that readers in the study attributed little of their reading passion to schools may mean that interest in reading has to be planted and nurtured elsewhere (i.e. in the home where 'free reign'

entertainment is more likely to occur, and where the presence of reading models exist daily), or it may simply mean that up to this point schools have been less concerned with promoting a situation where students would want to read, or would feel the need to read for personal satisfaction. Many of the readers in the study reported that they had been isolated in some way as children when they developed their voracious reading patterns, either because they were an 'only' child, sickly or a member of a nomadic family. Others were much younger or much older than their siblibgs. All would seem to have taken up reading in a non-threatening situation. Schools, while not always successful, attempt to be social institutions where children are expected to learn to cooperate with others, or at least to survive in a social milieu. In many classrooms, success is rooted in being socially well-integrated, and participating, rather than in isolating one's self. As well, the school day is usually divided into a number of different periods of mathematics, gymnastics, language arts or science, often carried out in different work spaces or centers. Attentiveness for long periods of time to any one activity is seldom necessary. In any case, schools may be threatening places not only because of associated failure for some children, but also because of social and cultural differences from the home milieu. Finally, attending school is seldom a free reign experience for any individual. In short school environments, and the goals of schools, may be the antithesis of the context in which the voluntary reading habit is nurtured.

While researchers such as Holdaway (1979) have started to consider the need to 'model' the home situation in terms of beginning reading, it

would seem that there is a need for parallel research into ways of facilitating 'free reign' reading situations that would nurture the reading habit. Such situations will of necessity need to provide more than just an assigned number of minutes per day to be given over to free reading or the presence of books, although both are obviously important components. Suggestions have come from the research of Blunt (1977), Brown (1979) and Thompson (1979) that teachers need to encourage discussion about voluntary reading as a means of developing a mature literary response. While it would be premature to suggest that people who are allowed to talk about their reading are 'better' readers than those for whom reading is at times a 'clandestine' act, there is nonetheless a foreshadowing in the present data that having an attentive audience who cares to hear about one's reading may cause one to read differently, and perhaps ultimately, more broadly. Readers in the study who planned to 'share' a book or talk about it with others tended to recall more of a story. When such discussions were, in fact, a basis for social contacts, there also seemed to be the potential for a broadening and deepening of interests in both fiction and nonfiction. In view of the research on oral fluency in language development which would seem to suggest that the more talk the better, particularly in terms of making use of language in a wide variety of contexts (Tough, 1978), it would seem that there is a need for similar research into 'reading fluency' which would include the narrow 'book fluency' discussed in Chapter 10, as well as the awareness of and facility with a wide range of reading. Such a fluency is likely to come about through an exposure to the uses and functions of reading. Ultimately interest in a

variety of reading is likely to rely on opportunities for discussion, expansion, elaboration and practice in free situations. However, at this point it seems that the most that can be immediately offered is that less impressionistic research needs to be carried out on the relationships among practice in reading, practice in talking about one's reading to an attentive audience, free opportunities in which to practice, and eventual ability and desire to make use of the information read.

Implicit in the aforementioned discussion is that schools may need to consider the premium they place on different forms of reading, since in the data elicited from the readers it would seem that 'reading for the sake of reading' is not of a value in itself. Since this surfaced in the consideration of the differences between males and females in their fiction reading, it would seem necessary to attend to the inter-relatedness of sex roles, context in which reading takes place, and type of reading engaged in by the reader. The disparaging statements about the effortless-cum-useless aspects of fiction reading made by Leavis (1932) are too simplistic, and fail to account for the fact that many of the married female readers in the study had quite a different attitude to their reading compared to the males who may have been reading the same books. Such women, whose reading appeared to be escapist and of little importance to the significant others in their lives, were often apologetic and self-effacing in their discussions of their reading. The males in the study offered no apologies for their reading, and seemingly had their reading accorded some status by their families.

Many of the women had to snatch reading time from their housekeeping duties or time spent with families so that it appeared as though they were often placed in situations where their reading could hardly be 'deep'. It is possible that their life situations drove them to reading material that was entirely escapist.

In view of the fact that females read more fiction than males, and in situations which may preclude any indepth analysis or discussion, it is difficult to refrain from speculating that schools both reflect and perpetuate a 'second class' reading situation for some females. The encouragement that males and females receive in school with regard to their reading is likely to later influence the kind of reading they do, if any, and the value they, themselves, place on different forms of reading. For example, there is often the expectation expressed in language arts textbooks for teachers, in publishers suggestions and in libraries, that girls will like horse stories or Nancy Drew mysteries, and later, romances, while boys will like adventure stories and stories that reflect their interest in science subjects in which they are expected to excell. While the bias is simply that, the influence of this bias is more pervasive than might at first appear. For the reader who enjoys Star Wars, or Jules Verne, the likelihood that with encouragement such books will lead to interests in space travel, life on other planets or underwater life, is great. In short, such books could serve as 'bridges' to new areas, new interests and different types of reading. While it is unwise to overstate the case, it may be that schools encourage girls more in a 'living through' type of reading experience as described by Rosenblatt (1978), and boys

ultimately in a 'taking away' (Rosenblatt, 1978) reading experience. Either encouragement would not be bad in itself except that it is more likely that discussion will take place after a 'taking away' experience based on factual materials. Parents and teachers usually claim to be pleased that students will read at all. However, it may be that in nurturing a 'taking away' efferent experience with boys and a 'living through' aesthetic experience with girls, they are contributing to the attitude expressed by many of the female readers in the study that their reading was not important. In judging their reading ability to be 'poorer' than their husbands they may merely be reflecting the possibility that their husbands 'take away' more and that since 'taking away' is more important, those who can do it are better readers. Research into the effect of sex roles and sexist bias in schooling has already received some attention, particularly in mathematics and science education, and language arts in terms of reading failure. It would seem important to consider the role of such variables in relation to the processes and strategies employed by males and females in reading.

While this discussion has been based primarily on the data collected with fiction readers, most of whom were women, it would seem that it is now necessary to consider the nonfiction voracious reader. Parallel research needs to be undertaken with those readers whose interest in books runs to the more efferent 'taking away' material, in order to explore further the relation between antecedental and contextual variables and the processing strategies necessary to sustain the nonfiction reading habit.

Finally, in terms of educational implications it is important to consider the nature of the material read by voracious fiction readers. The almost universal response in reaction to the use of short stories in the study was negative. Readers noted that they habitually attended to something that would provide them with a 'good long read', and where they could 'get into the characters' and 'lose themselves' if they so wished. In many ways the fiction readers in the study are like the theatre goer, film buff or television addict. They willingly attend to something they have chosen voluntarily, and which will be a full experience where they can "settle in" for entertainment for an hour or two. The voracious reader would appear to have developed his attentiveness to long fiction works outside of school. For those who have not developed the attentiveness necessary to sustain interest in fiction reading, one must question the extensive use of the type of reading material that is in most of the basal readers and later anthologies, but which is seldom read by voracious fiction readers -- the short story. These short works are at best real short stories of some literary merit, and at worst and too frequently, 'passages' whose chief merit lies in their readability, patterned language or absence of sexist, racist or moralistic biases. Further research is needed to explore the necessity and means of developing and sustaining the attentiveness which voracious fiction readers in this study appeared to have, and which many school children already possess in regard to television or film.

In summary, what adult readers had to say about their early and present reading would seem to bear directly on what it is that schools

do, or fail to do in developing readers. The necessity for further research, both ethnographic and less impressionistic, has been suggested.

Theoretical Concerns

This study had been addressed to the concerns of who reads what, and why, as well as how, with the purpose of uncovering components of the reading process. Much of the foreshadowing, and ensuing 'uncoverings' of the processes involved in reading, were based on the theoretical arguments raised by Rosenblatt (1978) with regard to stance and selective attention. How readers read would seem to be related to how they approached the task. The terms 'living through' and 'taking away' are used by Rosenblatt to describe the approach and experience of reading. While Rosenblatt's concept of an organizing framework or approach has proved to be useful as a form of foreshadowing, it should be noted that on the basis of what readers said and did in regard to various reading situations, it may be necessary to revise the explanation of the relationship between stance and what readers actually do.

It would seem to be simplistic to say that in reading a fiction work the reader is most likely to attend to that which furthers the 'living through' experience, and that in nonfiction reading he selectively attends to that which is the residue or that which can be taken away. In view of the role of contextual variables in the study, and the type of recalls and strategies employed by the indepth readers, it seemed as though even if they did say that they had the expectation of 'taking away' or 'idling along' that their responses often indicated

that they did just the opposite. Often they could recall a great deal of the fiction and very little of the nonfiction. As well, they would indicate that they had really savoured the details of the fiction, but that since they did not like nonfiction they would skim through it to be finished. Sometimes a reader would find a passage interesting, entertaining and easy to recall when it was fiction. The same reader might have been anxiety-ridden about a nonfiction passage, possibly because of the expectation that they had to take something away, such that they could take nothing away. A way of coping with this expectation for some, was not to skim it to get it over with, but rather to read it word for word without attending to the connections between ideas. The end result was the same. On the other hand if the passage was fiction they could skim through it, maintaining the story line, and filling in the rest, or they could take each idea in it as it came. In either case their recall was often extensive, and related to the text.

In view of the data two points would seem to require expansion and further research with regard to stance. Because there would appear to be a strong emotive factor surrounding the expectations of readers as they come to different print settings, it was difficult to determine whether the experience for them was really a 'living through' or a 'taking away'. For example, anxiety related to an expectation that they must take away often prevented the reader from employing the necessary strategies. When they were reading something where they indicated that they felt relaxed and ready for 'free reign', it seemed as though they could more easily 'take away' information.

The data might be regarded as being 'illuminating' rather than inconsistent with what was expected. What would seem to be needed in research is an attempt to include more situational and antecendetal information in collecting reading process data. To ask a fiction reader to read and recall a nonfiction passage with the intention of making inferences about the strategies involved in nonfiction reading may only reveal that he applies a practised organizing framework inappropriately, or that he misapplies an appropriate stance. While this is not to suggest that fiction readers cannot read nonfiction, it may suggest that they read nonfiction differently than a nonfiction reader, or may only signal the role of such variables as emotion in assuming a particular stance. If many of the readers had not been overly anxious about the "Einstein" passage, perhaps they would have read it differently, and more successfully.

As well, it may be that having readers read without a reason, a situation that would seem to be somewhat alien to the voluntary reader, although not necessarily so for the poor reader in school or the adult non-reader, makes little sense. Readers would seem to be unlikely to take away everything from a passage regardless of whether they have assumed successfully an efferent or aesthetic stance; they are selective. They read to find out what will happen next in the story, or to find out who has won an election. It would seem to be necessary to look at the strategies employed by readers with material that they have voluntarily chosen, and for particular reasons, since a real reading situation which always has some cause or motivation in it. Rosenblatt (1978) in her discussions of stance would appear to have minimized the role of contextual variables, either at the time of reading or in terms

of antecedental factors. In the present study it must be acknowledged that while there was a context for the researcher, there was not necessarily a context for the reader. Readers such as the one quoted in Chapter 7 who noted that she always took away something from non-fiction when she read it because she always had a specific reason for reading it in the first place provide 'succinct' evidence. Readers were given no particular reason in the study for reading the nonfiction.

It has been acknowledged elsewhere in the study, both in the foreshadowing and in the data, that readers read for different purposes. The flexible reader, depending upon his purposes might read closely or he might skim; he might read efferently or aesthetically. There is evidence in the data to suggest that readers who read for escape tend to be unused to talking with others about their reading, are frequently self-effacing about such reading, but yet, at the same time are compelled to read more the same way. The reader whose reading is a 'bridge' to the social world may read quite differently, choose material that will allow him/her to explore social relationships in more depth, and hence be able to take away more. In short it would appear as though there is a strong interaction between the functions of reading for a particular reader and the strategies employed. Such functions would appear to be related to the social context in which the reading takes place. Thus, while every attempt was made in the present study to place real readers in real reading situations, the readers were nonetheless removed from the variables of purpose and motivation, both of which are part of the voluntary reading act. In order to build on this exploration of stance it would seem to be necessary to explore

the interrelatedness of purpose and motivations for reading, and the strategies employed in voluntary reading settings.

A second concern with regard to stance which would appear to warrant further exploration concerns the treatment of 'living through' and 'taking away' as dichotomies. Seemingly the terms might be more usefully explored in terms of a continuum. While Rosenblatt (1978) has already considered that readers might read a piece of nonfiction from an aesthetic stance, or a piece of fiction from an efferent stance, it would seem that these types of works vary in terms of the amount of efferent material. For example, while "Einstein" and "Desensitization of twentieth century man" were both regarded as nonfiction works in the study, readers tended to read the latter more holistically, or more like a short story in which they could infer and fill in gaps. However, since the nature of the task varied, with one being a thinking aloud situation and the other a free recall, it is difficult to make comparisons. Although there was some support with the probed fiction recalls that readers tended to be consistent in the kind of material they recalled, it is difficult to apply this to nonfiction. Utilizing thinking aloud or unaided recall techniques with a wider variety of passages, preferably voluntarily chosen by the reader; and in the context of antecedental information about the reader, would seem to serve as the basis for further fruitful investigation into stance and selective attention.

On the Interrelatedness of Form and Content in the Enquiry

While some discussion has already been given over to the form of

the study with implications for future ethnographic research in reading, and as well, the content of the 'discovering' process with implications, there is also the necessity of considering the implications for further research in terms of the 'indivisibility' of form and content. The fact that it seemed difficult to separate what was uncovered about readers and the way in which it was done, would seem to provide strong support for the argument raised by Rosenblatt (1978) that each reading event is made up of a 'particular' reader of a 'particular text' at a 'particular time'.

Readers in the pilot study who had not been involved in the indepth interview situation seemed less willing or able to give their impressions of a work, and more prone to recalling in a verbatim manner than those who had already become collaborators prior to the free recall situation. Readers in the final data collection who were used to playing down the significance of their own reading, or who had their reading 'played down' for them, seemed to find it more difficult to talk about the passages than those who were used to talking at great length to a willing audience. In the course of the three sessions with the indepth readers it is possible that readers were learning to get more out of their reading, particularly the reticient or self-effacing reader. It is not possible to extrapolate from the data since, as previously noted, the nature of the tasks was changed from session to session. However, it is possible that for some of the readers the opportunity to be in a situation where their comments about their reading were being solicited, and where they were allowed to get practice in talking about their reading, may have altered their reading strategies somewhat.

Moreover, from the line of questioning, which was carried out after the free recall situation but, of course, prior to the next-read-to recall situations, there was likely to be some influence.

The implications based on the apparent indivisibility of form and content would seem to signal the need for studies which take into consideration the nature of the relationship between researcher and subject on the data. Too often the apparent effects of such relationships are often considered at the end of a study, or impressionistically as the present translation exemplifies. Research studies such as the one conducted by Harste, Burke and Woodward (in press) on the nature of unaided recalls in reading as a function of whether peers or teachers elicit the data would seem to be a start in this direction. With closer attention to the relationship between form and content, there are likely to be implications for classroom instruction, not the least of which involves the notion of "teachers get what they expect".

Concluding Statement

While the data throughout have been handled largely impressionistically, there has been the suggestion in this final chapter that many of the speculations that have been raised about who becomes a reader, under what circumstances, with what materials, for what reasons, and with which strategies, might fruitfully be explored through experimental designs as well as through more naturalistic approaches. In handling the data impressionistically in a quest for universals, one must consider that there is the danger of failing to use much of the data. Turner (1953) cites the examples of the early sociologists, Cressey (1950),

Lindesmith (1947) and Angell (1936) whose data to a certain extent have been 'wasted':

> Cressey has information on the types of backgrounds his subjects came from, but because these are not universals his information has been filed away or handled impressionistically. Lindesmith likewise secured abundant information he uses only to demonstrate that absolute uniformity does not exist. Angell describes the frequent characteristics of the integrated and adaptable family, but he does not systematize the material because some aspects of it are not universals. (p. 161)

This particular study has been subject to the same inherent danger. However, the overall picture of the fiction reader is not simple, and efforts to make it so may only serve to cloud the issues. The fact that over one-third of the readers in the study had, as it was discovered, all read the same novel The Thorn Birds, for vastly different reasons, under different circumstances and inevitably in different ways should only serve to corroborate the presence of the multifaceted aspects of the reading process: the role of motivation, the nature of the bestseller, the role of external influence, and the accompanying knowing, to name only some of the variables. In short the readings of the same voluntarily chosen work varied greatly and would seem to signal the need for more descriptions of real readers reading. Thus, descriptions of the dynamics of the study, "the hundreds of decisions large and small, made while the research is (was) underway" (Becker, 1965, p. 602) have been offered in the place of apologies for the data used, and as evidence of the myriad of variables to be considered in reading research.

In the foreshadowings explored in the literature it was not always easy to determine the habits of adult readers, or the relationships

among why they read, what they read and how they read. The focus of much of the research in reading has been on children and youth; the long-term effects of schooling and methods have not yet been determined. The focus of much of the research with adult reading has led to what might be termed a 'groundswell' of interest by governments and institutions of higher learning on research in the area of adult literacy, although both of these areas of research ultimately converge on the same important questions about reading.

Studies such as that conducted by Watson (1980) "A survey of leisure reading habits of Canadian adults" or The Book of Industry Study, alluded to in Chapter 1, provide much detail about the reading habits of adults. As well, the former study attempts to consider specific implications for different groups who provide service to adult readers -- publishers, booksellers, librarians, and teachers. However, there is the acknowledgement by Watson (1980) of the inadequacies of such survey data, particularly in view of apparent inconsistencies between how readers responded on the survey, and what they apparently did with their reading. In the present study it was possible to explore in more depth what adults say they do, what they actually do in their reading, and some of the reasons for inconsistencies, through methods of triangulation. An additional form of triangulation would be to 'wed' more general survey techniques with ethnographic approaches as used in the present study, both to add validation to impressions, and to explore relationships which are not necessarily accounted for in statistical techniques. For example, in the Watson study (1980) there is a critical analysis at the end of the inadequacies of the data:

> 20/20 hindsight allows us to see better ways to collect the data which is needed, but in no case was the inadequacy of the data more important than in the consideration of leisure lifestyles. Are readers the activists we've been led to expect, or the introverted bookworms of the earlier stereotype? We still do not know ... (p. 98)

In the present study it has been possible to develop and explore the reasons for such apparent discrepancies in data from other studies. At the very least it has been possible to say "it all depends ..." and at best it has become possible to provide some insights into the relationships that would seem to be worth exploring. These new explorations arise out of the 'knowing' to which Berger (1976) alludes:

> At no time can I prove what I am saying. I can only claim that after years of observations of the subject I believe what I am saying ... reveals a significant part of the social reality of the small area in question. (p. 110)

This study, then, has been an initial exploration and the writing of it a translation of the meanings uncovered in the hours spent with the readers, the literature and subsequent discussions with readers, all within the context of personal indulgences in fiction. It is a context not unlike that described by Slatoff (1970) which does not "force us to be something other than the quite human characters we are who turned to the study of books because we liked the experience of reading them" (p. 188).

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APPENDIX A

On the translation process in the ethnographic description

The inevitable problem with which the ethnographic study is fraught arises out of the quantity of data that is collected during the field work. Not all of the data can be used, and it is incumbent on the researcher to select a central thesis or argument from the data, and organize it in some way so that it makes sense to an audience. Spradley's (1979) Developmental Research Sequence (D.R.S.) approach to the translation process in the ethnographic study proved to be useful in organizing the data. This approach is based on the assumption that "breaking a large task into smaller ones and placing these in sequence will simplify the work and improve one's performance" (p. 212), and includes a nine step sequence. While these steps were not rigidly adhered to it should be noted that they did serve to help formulate an outline for organizing the translation:

Step one: Select an audience: As Spradley observes, since all writing is an act of communication, it is important to consider the person(s) to whom one wishes to communicate the information: "the writer needs to select an audience, identify it clearly, and then keep in mind throughout the writing who that audience is" (p. 212). In writing for a dissertation committee it has been important to consider that while all will have knowledge of the ethnographic principles in general, they will need to be informed of what aspects of these principles entered into the study, and how they are relevant to the present description of voracious adult readers of fiction.

Step two: Select a thesis: In order to communicate with an audience it is necessary to have something to say. Spradley (1979) observes that there are three main sources of that "something": from the various themes that may have been discovered through the process of analytic induction; from the overall goals of an ethnography wherein one might demonstrate that there are

many more dimensions to the problem under study than might have originally been obvious - "cultural meaning systems are much more complex than we usually think" (p. 214); and from the review literature. A fourth source comes from observations and conversations that transpire long before the 'official' ethnography ever begins. For example, in the present research, one source of thesis or 'foreshadowings' came from the researcher's own experiences in voluntary fiction reading, along with the experiences of other readers and non-readers around. What people choose to read, the way they 'make sense' out of what they read, the satisfaction derived, and the degree of comprehension attained all seemed to be missing from much of the reading research. It was only then that the writings of Rosenblatt and others on the reading of literature as a reading event involving a particular reader of a particular text at a particular time became pertinent. As well, it was only then that there was a need for alternate methodologies which would allow the researcher to explore the social dimensions of reading and the contextual variables involved.

Step three: Make a list of topics and create an outline: This step involved reviewing the field notes, comparing the transcripts on many different variables, and conducting a 'quick and dirty' overview, and yielded a list of topics that would be included in the final description. Since it was impossible to include every possible topic covered, it seemed more useful to attempt to interweave those that related to the social context in which reading takes place. Such topics, in addition to an introduction and conclusion included: the degree of social involvement of the reader; 'social' biographies; escape reading; bestseller phenomena; antecedental factors of readers; the reading of 'significant others'; fiction reading as a feminist issue; attitudes toward reading; the reading of other types of material;

awareness of reading behaviour; responses to novels; responses to short stories; responses to fiction/nonfiction: a comparison; responses during the reading of fiction/nonfiction: a comparison; roles and relationships in the data collection. While this is not an exhaustive list of the topics under consideration, it will give the reader an idea of the range of pertinent topics, and as well, the need for organization.

Step four: Write a rough draft of each section: Having constructed a basic outline with the aforementioned topics in (3) it was possible to group such topics into sections.

Step five: Revise the outline and create subheadings: Essentially this step involved an ordering of ideas within each section to form a cohesive unit.

Step six: Edit the rough draft: The major form editing involved attempts to avoid redundancies and repetition since topics often fit into more than one section.

Step seven: Write the introduction and conclusion: Spradley suggests that at this point it is necessary to review the introduction and conclusion so that they 'fit' the paper. It was at this time that it seemed useful in terms of achieving cohesiveness, as well as in maintaining a flavour of McLuhanism "the medium is the message" to organize through metaphor. In this present study the writings of Berger (1972; 1975); Kushner and Norris (1980/81); Sontag (1972) and Woolley (1980/81) all helped to shape the photojournalist metaphor in this translation as a 'way of seeing'. While this step does not come directly from the developmental sequence discussed by Spradley, it is possible that it could have been included in step two in the development of a central argument or thesis: 'writing an ethnography about X as really only

a way of telling from one particular perspective in the same way that a photograph is only one person's frame of a particular event'. To be loyal to Smith's (1978) call for attention to the dynamic processes involved in an ethnography however, it should be acknowledged that the metaphor emerged in the light of some serendiptious' reading,a personal interest in alternate methods of data gathering, and data presentation, and a longstanding personal interest in the art and science of photography. These three factors were coloured by a sense throughout the data collection process that what the readers were saying or doing on tape, and with the reading materials at hand was really very much a function of when I had turned on the tape recorder (pressed the shuttle), what I had asked them to do (where I had asked them to stand or pose), their reactions to the interview (to the shooting session), etc.

As well, when Smith (1978) considered what one needs to know in order to embark upon a theory-generating observational study, he jokingly observes that he had just finished writing an educational textbook. His advice became "Go write an ed. psych. textbook, then you are ready for a classroom observational study!" (p. 331). In the same way that the truth of such advice no doubt lies in the residual questions after one has tried to synthesize many research references, it is likely that in writing any ethnographic description it is necessary to synthesize the array of personal experiences and professional concerns. It is this synthesis which appeared in the metaphors used in the present translation.

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Name
2. Age
3. Marital status
4. Educational background
5. How much time did you spend reading in the last week?
6. How often do you read? Is most of your reading for the week done in one day, every day?
   When do you usually read?
7. About how many books would you have read in the last month?
8. Would you consider that to have been a typical month? If not, how would you account for the greater or lesser amounts of reading?
9. Would you say that you read more fiction, non-fiction or equal amounts of both?
10. Why do you prefer the one over the other?
11. What kind of fiction do you generally read? Could you give me any examples of titles or authors? What are these books generally about?
12. Why do you like this kind of fiction?
13. Are there any types of fiction that you dislike: mysteries, science fiction, war stories, romance, historical, thrillers . . . If you could give me any titles or authors that would be nelpful.

14. Can you think of any reasons why you dislike any of these types of fiction?
15. Of the nonfiction what type would it be: self-help, do-it-yourself, biographies, history, science, art, sports, religious, political? Could you give me any titles or authors, or tell me what these books are generally about?
16. What is it that you like about these books?
17. Are there any types of non-fiction that you dislike? Why?
18. Has there ever been a time in your life when you read more non-fiction? Why? Or do you anticipate a time when you would likely read more? Why?
19. Do you ever read book reviews? Where do you see them?
20. Do you ever read the blurbs on the front of a book? Why or why not?
21. How often are tne books that you read best sellers?
22. How important is it to you that they be best sellers? Why?
23. When you go into a bookstore or library, where do you start in selecting your books?
24. Do you borrow more books or buy them? Why?
25. Is there any difference between the type of books you borrow and the type of books you buy? Explain.
26. If you feel tired in the evening, what would be most likely to do (other than go to bed)?

27. If you were to read, what would you best most likely to read--books, magazines, newspapers? Why?
28. Of the 3 types of reading material just mentioned would there be one that you would absolutely never read or very seldom? Why?
29. Do you subscribe to or regularly read any magazines? Which ones? Why?
30. Do you regularly read a newspaper? Why or why not?
31. Which sections of the newspaper do you regularly read? Wny? Why would you avoid certain sections?
32. Can you remember when you started reading on your own?
33. Did you borrow books from a library when you were a child? If not, where did the books come from?
34. What can you remember about your mother's reading as you were growing up? Did she do much reading? What did she read?
35. Wnat can you recall of your father's reading as you were growing up?
36. Can you recall what you read as a young child?
37. What about early adolescence? (age 12-13)
38. In high school can you remember what you read?
39. Are you aware of shifts in your reading as you were growing up? How would you account for them?
40. When you were in high school did you have a close friend who read? Explain.
41. Would you say that you read more than/less than/the same as your friend(s) in high school?

42. Did you read the same type of things as your friend(s)?
43. Did you ever have a teacher in school with whom you discussed books?
44. Can you recall any particularly pleasant experiences related to reading as you were growing up?
45. Can you recall any unpleasant experiences related to reading?
46. Would you say that you were a loner in high school, had one or two close friends, or many close friends?
47. Were you considered to be intellectually oriented in high school. Why or why not?
48. What subjects did you do best in?
49. Were there any subjects that you particularly disliked or did poorly in? Why do you think you disliked them?
50. Why did you study what you did in university?

FOR MARRIED

51. If you have any children, how many and are they still at home?
52. Would you say that you read more when your children were younger/before they were born/or now? Why?
53. What would you say were the chief interests that brought you and your spouse together?
54. Do you continue to share these interests or are there new ones?
55. About how long in a day (if ever) would you spend with your spouse just talking? What would you talk about?

56. Would you say that you read more than/about the same amount or less than your spouse?
57. Do you read the same sorts of things? Explain.
58. Would you ever have your spouse choose reading material for you? How likely would you be satisfied?
59. Would you find it difficult to choose satisfactor reading material for your spouse?
60. In your opinion who would be the better reader? Explain.
61. Do you presently have a best friend who does a lot of reading?
62. How important it is to you that your spouse also have an interest in reading?
63. Do you have a best friend who reads? How important is it to you that your best friend have an interest in reading?

UNMARRIED

51. How often would you spend chatting with a close friend for an hour or so (every day, once a week?)
52. What types of things would you talk about?
53. What interests do you and your best friend have in common?
54. Does your best friend read?
55. Do you read the same types of things?
56. Do you choose books for each other, or recommend books for each other?

57. Would you say that you were a better reader than your best friend? Why?

58. Would you read more than/less than/the same amount as your best friend?

59. If you were to marry/remarry, how important would it be to you that your spouse share your interest in reading?

60. Is it important to you that you have a friend who shares your interest in reading?

GENERAL

64. Do you do much visiting?

65. Who would you visit regularly. Neighbours, relatives, friends from work, old friends?

66. What do you chiefly talk about. What do you have in common?

67. Do you spend much time at home by yourself?

68. What do you like and dislike about being alone?

69. Could you describe a typical weekday for you?

70. Are you interested in national elections. Why or why not?

71. Have you ever written a letter to an editor/MP/MLA, etc.?

72. Have you ever given a public speech?

73. Have you ever attended a political meeting?

74. What do you like to do in your free time?

75. Are there any activities that you particularly hate to be involved in during your free time--sports, hobbies, gardening, cards?

76. Do you ever borrow or lend books? Why or why not?
77. How often do you spend talking to others about what you read?
78. Is there anyone you write to about your reading.
79. How often do you read books that your friends recommend?
80. Are there some friends whose taste in books you trust more than others? Why?
81. Why would you not respect that literary judgment of some of your friends or acquaintances?
82. Would it be a loss to you personally if the public library system closed down?
83. Do you think that people who borrow from libraries are much like yourself?
84. Was there ever a time in your life when you read much more than you do now? Why do you think you now read more/less?
85. How do you think you came to be such an avid reader?
86. Are you aware of any shifts in your tastes in reading as you get older?
87. Do you have any idea why you read what you read?
88. Considering all the books that you have read in the last year are there any that stand out in your mind as being exceptional? Why?
89. Who recommended the book to you?
90. Can you think of any books that you read in the last year that you finished but didn't particularly enjoy? Why did you finish it?

91. Can you think of any books in the last year that you started but didn't finish? Why didn't you finish it? Does this happen frequently?
92. Do you ever re-read books? Why or why not?
93. Can you think of any books that you tried to read at on point in your life unsuccessfully but later read them and enjoyed them? Why do you think you enjoyed them at another time?
94. Would you ever read condensed books? Why or why not?
95. Can you think of any books that you re-read and didn't like them the second time around?
96. Are there any material that you would read if you had nothing better to do?
97. Do you ever accidentally re-read parts of books and then suddenly realize that you've already read them. Why do you think that happens/doesn't happen?
98. Would you describe yourself as a good reader? Why?
99. Were you ever a better reader?
100. Do you read faster than many people you know?
101. How have you become aware of your relative ability as a reader? How do you know that you are better than some and not as good as others?
102. Are there any types of books that you have trouble reading?
103. Is there anything about your reading that you would like to improve?

104. Can you think of any books that you are planning to read?

105. How many books do you usually have on the go at once?

106. When you buy or borrow a number of books at once, how do you decide which one you are going to read?

107. Are there any other things that you have the urge to learn? Why?

APPENDIX C

Materials for probed fiction recalls

FREDERICK PHILIP GROVE

FREDERICK PHILIP GROVE was born of wealthy Anglo-Swedish parents in Sweden in 1871. His childhood and early youth were spent wandering among the capital cities of Europe with his mother, and from her constant association with writers and artists came Grove's desire to write. In 1887 his mother died, and in 1888 he made a journey across northern Russia and thence to the Far East. From 1889 to 1892 he was in attendance at the universities of Paris, Rome and Munich, majoring in archæology. A pleasure tour of North America in 1892 was cut short by news of his father's death and bankruptcy. The result was that the penniless young man was forced to seek employment in Toronto, where he was stranded. After various unsatisfactory jobs, he settled down to the life of a hobo for twenty years, following the harvests from Kansas to Alberta. During these twenty years he wrote a dozen realistic novels of the Canadian West, but none were published until 1927. In 1912 he became a school teacher in Manitoba, where he lived until 1929. In that year he came to Ontario, and after a year or two in Ottawa with a publishing firm settled on a farm near Simcoe, where he lived until his death on August 19, 1948.

Grove is considered by some critics to be the greatest Canadian novelist yet to emerge. In Paris he was friendly with most of the young writers of the day, and in his novels he embodies the features of French realism and, to a lesser extent, of French naturalism. He published eight novels in all: *Settlers of the Marsh* (1925); *A Search for America* (1927); *Our Daily Bread* (1928); *The Yoke of Life* (1930); *Fruits of the Earth* (1933); *Two Generations* (1939); *The Master of the Mill* (1944); and *Consider Her Ways* (1947). He also published three volumes of essays (*Over Prairie Trails*, *The Turn of the Year* and *It Needs to be Said*), his autobiography *In Search of Myself* and, in the periodicals, a number of short stories and critical essays. His short stories are not, in my opinion, the equal of his novels, for his art is of the sort which depends for its greatest effect upon the slow accumulation of detail and the gradual unfolding of tragic circumstance. In the following story several of his strongest qualities are evident: his accurate observation of natural phenomena, his painstaking transcription of every significant detail and his refusal to compromise with the temptation to contrive a comforting conclusion.

Frederick Philip Grove, a biographical and critical study by Desmond Pacey, was published in 1945. There are articles by Isabel Skelton (*The Dalhousie Review*, July, 1939), Robert Ayre (*The Canadian Forum*, 1932), G. H. Clarke (*Queen's Quarterly*, Autumn, 1946), Carleton Stanley (*The Dalhousie Review*, January, 1946) and Desmond Pacey (*Manitoba Arts Review*, Spring, 1943). E. A. McCourt's *The Canadian West in Fiction* (1949) includes a chapter on Grove. See also Kay M. Rowe (*Manitoba Arts Review*, Spring, 1949). "Snow" was the first short story to appear in the pages of *Queen's Quarterly*.

Snow

TOWARDS MORNING the blizzard had died down, though it was still far from daylight. Stars without number blazed in the dark-blue sky which presented that brilliant and uncompromising appearance always characterizing, on the northern plains of America, those nights in the dead of winter when the thermometer dips to its lowest levels.

In the west, Orion was sinking to the horizon. It was between five and six o'clock.

In the bush-fringe of the Big Marsh, sheltered by thick but bare bluffs of aspens, stood a large house, built of logs, white-washed, solid—such as a settler who is still single would put up only when he thinks of getting married. It, too, looked ice-cold, frozen in the night. Not a breath stirred where it stood; a thin thread of whitish smoke, reaching up to the level of the tree-tops, seemed to be suspended into the chimney rather than to issue from it.

Through the deep snow of the yard, newly packed, a man was fighting his way to the door. Arrived there, he knocked and knocked, first tapping with his knuckles, then hammering with his fists.

Two, three minutes passed. Then a sound awoke in the house, as of somebody stirring, getting out of bed.

The figure on the door-slab—a medium-sized, slim man in sheepskin and high rubber boots into which his trousers were tucked, with the ear-flaps of his cap pulled down—stood and waited, bent over, hands thrust into the pockets of the short coat, as if he wished to shrink into the smallest possible space so as to offer the smallest possible surface to the attack of the cold. In order to get rid of the dry, powdery snow which filled every crease of his foot-gear and trousers, he stamped his feet. His chin was drawn deep into the turned-up collar on whose points his breath had settled in the form of a thick layer of hoarfrost.

At last a bolt was withdrawn inside.

The face of a man peered out, just discernible in the starlight.

Then the door was opened; in ominous silence the figure from the outside entered, still stamping its feet.

Not a word was spoken till the door had been closed. Then a voice sounded through the cold and dreary darkness of the room.

"Redcliff hasn't come home. He went to town about noon and expected to get back by midnight. We're afraid he's lost."

The other man, quite invisible in the dark, had listened, his teeth chattering with the cold. "Are you sure he started out from town?"

"Well," the newcomer answered hesitatingly, "one of the horses came to the yard."

"One of his horses?"

"Yes. One of those he drove. The woman worked her way to my place to get help."

The owner of the house did not speak again. He went, in the dark, to the door in the rear and opened it. There, he groped about for matches and, finding them, lighted a lamp. In the room stood a big stove, a coal-stove of the self-feeder type; but the fuel used was wood. He opened the drafts and shook the grate clear of ashes; there were two big blocks of

spruce in the fire-box, smouldering away for the night. In less than a minute they blazed up.

The newcomer entered, blinking in the light of the lamp, and looked on. Before many minutes the heat from the stove began to tell.

"I'll call Bill," the owner of the house said. He was himself of medium height or only slightly above it, but of enormous breadth of shoulder: a figure built for lifting loads. By his side the other man looked small, weakly, dwarfed.

He left the room and, returning through the cold, bare hall in front, went upstairs.

A few minutes later a tall, slender, well-built youth bolted into the room where the newcomer was waiting. Bill, Carroll's hired man, was in his underwear and carried his clothes, thrown in a heap over his arm. Without loss of time, but jumping, stamping, swinging his arms, he began at once to dress.

He greeted the visitor. "Hello, Mike! What's that Abe tells me? Redcliff got lost?"

"Seems that way," said Mike listlessly.

"By gringo," Bill went on, "I shouldn't wonder. In that storm! I'd have waited in town! Wouldn't catch me going out in that kind of weather!"

"Didn't start till late in the afternoon," Mike Sobotski said in his shivering way.

"No. And didn't last long, either," Bill agreed while he shouldered into his overalls. "But while she lasted. . . ."

At this moment Abe Carroll, the owner of the farm, re-entered, with sheepskin, fur cap, and long woollen scarf on his arm. His deeply lined, striking, square face bore a settled frown while he held the inside of his sheepskin to the stove, to warm it up. Then, without saying a word, he got deliberately into it.

Mike Sobotski still stood bent over, shivering, though he had opened his coat and, on his side of the stove, was catching all the heat it afforded.

Abe, with the least motion needed to complete dressing, made for the door. In passing Bill, he flung out an elbow which

touched the young man's arm. "Come on," he said; and to the other, pointing to the stove, "Close the drafts."

A few minutes later a noise as of rearing and snorting horses in front of the house. . . .

Mike, buttoning up his coat and pulling his mitts over his hands, went out.

They mounted three unsaddled horses. Abe leading, they dashed through the new drifts in the yard and out through the gate to the road. Here, where the shelter of the bluffs screening the house was no longer effective, a light but freshening breeze from the north-west made itself felt as if fine little knives were cutting into the flesh of their faces.

Abe dug his heels into the flank of his rearing mount. The horse was unwilling to obey his guidance, for Abe wanted to leave the road and to cut across wild land to the south-west.

The darkness was still inky black, though here and there, where the slope of the drifts slanted in the right direction, starlight was dimly reflected from the snow. The drifts were six, eight, in places ten feet high; and the snow was once more crawling up their flanks, it was so light and fine. It would fill the tracks in half an hour. As the horses plunged through, the crystals dusted up in clouds, flying aloft over horses and riders.

In less than half an hour they came to a group of two little buildings, of logs, that seemed to squat on their haunches in the snow. Having entered the yard through a gate, they passed one of the buildings and made for the other, a little stable; their horses snorting, they stopped in its lee.

Mike dismounted, throwing the halter-shank of his horse to Bill. He went to the house, which stood a hundred feet or so away. The shack was even smaller than the stable, twelve by fifteen feet perhaps. From its flue-pipe a thick, white plume of smoke blew to the south-east.

Mike returned with a lantern; the other two sprang to the ground; and they opened the door to examine the horse which the woman had allowed to enter.

The horse was there, still excited, snorting at the leaping

light and shadows from the lantern, its eyes wild, its nostrils dilated. It was covered with white frost and fully harnessed, though its traces were tied up to the back-band.

"He let him go," said Mike, taking in these signs. "Must have stopped and unhitched him."

"Must have been stuck in a drift," Bill said, assenting.

"And tried to walk it," Abe added.

For a minute or so they stood silent, each following his own gloomy thoughts. Weird, luminous little clouds issued fitfully from the nostrils of the horse inside.

"I'll get the cutter," Abe said at last.

"I'll get it," Bill volunteered. "I'll take the drivers along. We'll leave the filly here in the stable."

"All right."

Bill remounted, leading Abe's horse. He disappeared into the night.

Abe and Mike, having tied the filly and the other horse in their stalls, went out, closed the door, and turned to the house.

There, by the light of a little coal-oil lamp, they saw the woman sitting at the stove, pale, shivering, her teeth achatter, trying to warm her hands which were cold with fever, and looking with lack-lustre eyes at the men as they entered.

The children were sleeping; the oldest, a girl, on the floor, wrapped in a blanket and curled up like a dog; four others in one narrow bed, with hay for a mattress, two at the head, two at the foot; the baby on, rather than in, a sort of cradle made of a wide board slung by thin ropes to the pole-roof of the shack.

The other bed was empty and unmade. The air was stifling from a night of exhalations.

"We're going to hunt for him," Mike said quietly. "We've sent for a cutter. He must have tried to walk."

The woman did not answer. She sat and shivered.

"We'll take some blankets," Mike went on. "And some whisky if you've got any in the house."

He and Abe were standing by the stove, opposite the

woman, and warming their hands, their mitts held under their armpits.

The woman pointed with a look to a home-made little cupboard nailed to the wall and apathetically turned back to the stove. Mike went, opened the door of the cupboard, took a bottle from it, and slipped it into the pocket of his sheepskin. Then he raised the blankets from the empty bed, rolled them roughly into a bundle, dropped it, and returned to the stove where, with stiff fingers, he fell to rolling a cigarette.

Thus they stood for an hour or so.

Abe's eye was fastened on the woman. He would have liked to say a word of comfort, of hope. What was there to be said?

She was the daughter of a German settler in the bush, some six or seven miles north-east of Abe's place. Her father, an oldish, unctuous, bearded man, had, some ten years ago, got tired of the hard life in the bush where work meant clearing, picking stones, and digging stumps. He had sold his homestead and bought a prairie-farm, half a section, on crop-payments, giving notes for the equipment which he needed to handle the place. He had not been able to make it a "go." His bush farm had fallen back on his hands; he had lost his all and returned to the place. He had been counting on the help of his two boys—big, strapping young fellows—who were to clear much land and to raise crops which would lift the debt. But the boys had refused to go back to the bush; they could get easy work in town. Ready money would help. But the ready money had melted away in their hands. Redcliff, the old people's son-in-law, had been their last hope. They were on the point of losing even their bush farm. Here they might perhaps still have found a refuge for their old age—though Redcliff's homestead lay on the sand-flats bordering on the marsh where the soil was thin, dreadfully thin; it drifted when the scrub-brush was cleared off. Still, with Redcliff living, this place had been a hope. What were they to do if he was gone? And this woman, hardly more than a girl, in spite of her six children!

The two tiny, square windows of the shack began to turn grey.

At last Abe, thinking he heard a sound, went to the door and stepped out. Bill was there; the horses were shaking the snow out of their pelts; one of them was pawing the ground.

Once more Abe opened the door and gave Mike a look for a signal. Mike gathered the bundle of blankets into his arms, pulled on his mitts, and came out.

Abe reached for the lines, but Bill objected.

"No. Let me drive. I found something."

And as soon as the two older men had climbed in, squeezing into the scant space on the seat, he clicked his tongue.

"Get up there!" he shouted, hitting the horses' backs with his lines. And with a leap they darted away.

Bill turned, heading back to the Carroll farm. The horses plunged, reared, snorted, and then, throwing their heads, shot along in a gallop, scattering snow-slabs right and left and throwing wing-waves of the fresh, powdery snow, especially on the lee side. Repeatedly they tried to turn into the wind, which they were cutting at right angles. But Bill plied the whip and guided them expertly.

Nothing was visible anywhere; nothing but the snow in the first grey of dawn. Then, like enormous ghosts, or like evanescent apparitions, the trees of the bluff were adumbrated behind the lingering veils of the night.

Bill turned to the south, along the straight trail which bordered Abe Carroll's farm. He kept looking out sharply to right and left. But after awhile he drew his galloping horses in.

"Whoa!" he shouted, tearing at the lines in seesaw fashion. And when the rearing horses came to a stop, excited and breathless, he added, "I've missed it." He turned.

"What is it?" Abe asked.

"The other horse," Bill answered. "It must have had the scent of our yard. It's dead . . . frozen stiff."

A few minutes later he pointed to a huge white mound on top of a drift to the left. "That's it," he said, turned the horses into the wind, and stopped.

To the right, the bluffs of the farm slowly outlined themselves in the morning greyness.

The two older men alighted and, with their hands, shovelled the snow away. There lay the horse, stiff and cold, frozen into a rock-like mass.

"Must have been here a long while," Abe said.

Mike nodded. "Five, six hours." Then he added, "Couldn't have had the smell of the yard. Unless the wind has turned."

"It has," Abe answered and pointed to a fold in the flank of the snow-drift which indicated that the present drift had been superimposed on a lower one whose longitudinal axis ran to the north-east.

For a moment longer they stood and pondered.

Then Abe went back to the cutter and reached for the lines. "I'll drive," he said.

Mike climbed in.

Abe took his bearings, looking for landmarks. They were only two or three hundred feet from his fence. That enabled him to estimate the exact direction of the breeze. He clicked his tongue. "Get up!"

And the horses, catching the infection of a dull excitement, shot away. They went straight into the desert of drifts to the west, plunging ahead without any trail, without any landmark in front to guide them.

They went for half an hour, an hour, and longer.

None of the three men said a word. Abe knew the sandflats better than any other; Abe reasoned better than they. If anyone could find the missing man, it was Abe.

Abe's thought ran thus. The horse had gone against the wind. It would never have done so without good reason; that reason could have been no other than a scent to follow. If that was so, however, it would have gone in as straight a line as it could. The sand-flats stretched away to the south-west for sixteen miles with not a settlement, not a farm but Redcliff's. If Abe managed to strike that line of scent, it must take him to the point whence the horses had started.

Clear and glaring, with an almost indifferent air, the sun rose to their left.

And suddenly they saw the wagon-box of the sleigh sticking out of the snow ahead of them.

Abe stopped, handed Bill the lines, and got out. Mike followed. Nobody said a word.

The two men dug the tongue of the vehicle out of the snow and tried it. This was part of the old, burnt-over bush land south of the sand-flats. The sleigh was tightly wedged in between several charred stumps which stuck up through the snow. That was the reason why the man had unhitched the horses and turned them loose. What else, indeed, could he have done?

The box was filled with a drift which, toward the tail-gate, was piled high, for there three bags of flour were standing on end and leaning against a barrel half-filled with small parcels the interstices between which were packed with mealy snow.

Abe waded all around the sleigh, reconnoitring; and as he did so, wading at the height of the upper-edge of the wagon-box, the snow suddenly gave way beneath him; he broke in; the drift was hollow.

A suspicion took hold of him; with a few quick reaches of his arm he demolished the roof of the drift all about.

And there, in the hollow, lay the man's body as if he were sleeping, a quiet expression, as of painless rest, on his face. His eyes were closed; a couple of bags were wrapped about his shoulders. Apparently he had not even tried to walk! Already chilled to the bone, he had given in to that desire for rest, for shelter at any price, which overcomes him who is doomed to freeze.

Without a word the two men carried him to the cutter and laid him down on the snow.

Bill, meanwhile, had unhitched the horses and was hooking them to the tongue of the sleigh. The two others looked on in silence. Four times the horses sprang, excited because Bill tried to make them pull with a sudden twist. The sleigh did not stir.



"Need an axe," Mike said at last, "to cut the stumps. We'll get the sleigh later."

Mike hitched up again and turned the cutter. The broken snow-drifts through which they had come gave the direction.

Then they laid the stiff, dead body across the floor of their vehicle, leaving the side-doors open, for it protruded both ways. They themselves climbed up on the seat and crouched down, so as not to put their feet on the corpse.

Thus they returned to Abe Carroll's farm where, still in silence, they deposited the body in the granary.

Thus done, they stood for a moment as if in doubt. Then Bill unhitched the horses and took them to the stable to feed.

"I'll tell the woman," said Mike. "Will you go tell her father?"

Abe nodded. "Wait for breakfast," he added.

It was ten o'clock; and none of them had eaten since the previous night.

On the way to Altmann's place in the bush, drifts were no obstacles to driving. Drifts lay on the marsh, on the open sand-flats.

Every minute of the time Abe, as he drove along, thought of that woman in the shack: the woman, alone, with six children, and with the knowledge that her man was dead.

Altmann's place in the bush looked the picture of peace and comfort: a large log-house of two rooms. Window-frames and doors were painted green. A place to stay with, not to leave. . . .

When Abe knocked, the woman, whom he had seen but once in his life, at the sale where they had lost their possessions, opened the door—an enormously fat woman, overflowing her clothes. The man, tall, broad, with a long, rolling beard, now grey, stood behind her, peering over her shoulder. A visit is an event in the bush!

"Come in," he said cheerfully when he saw Abe. "What a storm that was!"

Abe entered the kitchen which was also dining- and living-room. He sat down on the chair which was pushed forward

for him and looked at the two old people, who remained standing.

Suddenly, from the expression of his face, they anticipated something of his message. No use dissembling.

"Redcliff is dead," he said. "He was frozen to death last night on his way home from town."

The two old people also sat down; it looked as if their knees had given way beneath them. They stared at him, dumbly, a sudden expression of panic fright in their eyes.

"I thought you might want to go to your daughter," Abe added sympathetically.

The man's big frame seemed to shrink as he sat there. All the unctuousness and the conceit of the handsome man dwindled out of his bearing. The woman's eyes had already filled with tears.

Thus they remained for two, three minutes.

Then the woman folded her fat, pudgy hands; her head sank low on her breast; and she sobbed, "God's will be done!"

Bernard Malamud was born on April 26, 1914, in Brooklyn. He attended the College of the City of New York and received an M.A. in English from Columbia University. His first novel, The Natural, was published in 1952. Since then two more of his novels have appeared: the most recent is A New Life (1961). The Magic Barrel, the collection of stories from which "A Summer's Reading" is taken, received the National Book Award in 1959. Mr. Malamud has taught in New York City high schools and at Oregon State College. At present he lives in Vermont.

"A Summer's Reading" moves quietly, relentlessly, like the sultry days in August. The boy in the story is, like his neighbors, "wilting and listless, waiting for a breeze." And it comes: he practices an easy deception upon them. He does this to gain their smiles and their respect, the repeated and somewhat incongruous demands of his still and dull life. But his satisfaction is brief: he grows uncomfortable in his lie. When an old neighbor's kindness saves him from exposure, he comes to another realization and a new discomfort.

Bernard Malamud

Bernard Malamud's stories show great insight into the problems of everyday life, at the same time revealing a basic faith in mankind. In the following story, George, a high school dropout, wants people to like and respect him. He builds an elaborate pretense of "picking up his education" on his own, but he soon finds that pretense is not enough.

A Summer's Reading

George Stoyonovich was a neighborhood boy who had quit high school on an impulse when he was sixteen, run out of patience, and though he was ashamed everytime he went looking for a job, when people asked him if he had finished and he had to say no, he never went back to school. This summer was a hard time for jobs and he had none. Having so much time on his hands, George thought of going to summer school, but the kids in his classes would be too young. He also considered registering in a night high school, only he didn't like the idea of the teachers always telling him what to do. He felt they had not respected him. The result was he stayed off the streets and in his room most of the day. He was close to twenty and had needs with the neighborhood girls, but no money to spend, and he couldn't get more than an occasional few cents because his father was poor, and his sister Sophie, who resembled George, a tall bony girl of twenty-three, earned very little and what she had she kept for herself. Their mother was dead, and Sophie had to take care of the house.

Very early in the morning George's father got up to go to

work in a fish market. Sophie left at about eight for her long ride in the subway to a cafeteria in the Bronx. George had his coffee by himself, then hung around in the house. When the house, a five-room railroad flat[1] above a butcher store, got on his nerves he cleaned it up—mopped the floors with a wet mop and put things away. But most of the time he sat in his room. In the afternoons he listened to the ball game. Otherwise he had a couple of old copies of the *World Almanac* he had bought long ago, and he liked to read in them and also the magazines and newspapers that Sophie brought home, that had been left on the tables in the cafeteria. They were mostly picture magazines about movie stars and sports figures, also usually the *News* and *Mirror*. Sophie herself read whatever fell into her hands, although she sometimes read good books.

She once asked George what he did in his room all day and he said he read a lot too.

"Of what besides what I bring home? Do you ever read any worthwhile books?"

"Some," George answered, although he really didn't. He had tried to read a book or two that Sophie had in the house but found he was in no mood for them. Lately he couldn't stand made-up stories, they got on his nerves. He wished he had some hobby to work at—as a kid he was good in carpentry, but where could he work at it? Sometimes during the day he went for walks, but mostly he did his walking after the hot sun had gone down and it was cooler in the streets.

In the evening after supper George left the house and wandered in the neighborhood. During the sultry days some of the storekeepers and their wives sat in chairs on the thick, broken sidewalks in front of their shops, fanning themselves, and George walked past them and the guys hanging out on the candy store corner. A couple of them he had known his whole life, but nobody recognized each other. He had no place special to go, but generally, saving it till the last, he left the neighborhood and walked for blocks till he came to a darkly lit little park with benches and trees and an iron

[1] *railroad flat* an apartment having narrow rooms arranged in a line

railing, giving it a feeling of privacy. He sat on a bench here, watching the leafy trees and the flowers blooming on the inside of the railing, thinking of a better life for himself. He thought of the jobs he had had since he had quit school—delivery boy, stock clerk, runner, lately working in a factory—and he was dissatisfied with all of them. He felt he would someday like to have a good job and live in a private house with a porch, on a street with trees. He wanted to have some dough in his pocket to buy things with, and a girl to go with, so as not to be so lonely, especially on Saturday nights. He wanted people to like and respect him. He thought about these things often but mostly when he was alone at night. Around midnight he got up and drifted back to his hot and stony neighborhood.

One time while on his walk George met Mr. Cattanzara coming home very late from work. He wondered if he was drunk but then could tell he wasn't. Mr. Cattanzara, a stocky, bald-headed man who worked in a change booth on an IRT[2] station, lived on the next block after George's, above a shoe repair store. Nights, during the hot weather, he sat on his stoop in an undershirt, reading the *New York Times* in the light of the shoemaker's window. He read it from the first page to the last, then went up to sleep. And all the time he was reading the paper, his wife, a fat woman with a white face, leaned out of the window, gazing into the street, her thick white arms folded under her loose breast, on the window ledge.

Once in a while Mr. Cattanzara came home drunk, but it was a quiet drunk. He never made any trouble, only walked stiffly up the street and slowly climbed the stairs into the hall. Though drunk, he looked the same as always, except for his tight walk, the quietness, and that his eyes were wet. George liked Mr. Cattanzara because he remembered him giving him nickels to buy lemon ice with when he was a squirt. Mr. Cattanzara was a different type than those in the neighborhood. He asked different questions than the others when he met you, and he seemed to know what went on in all the news-

[2] *IRT*. New York City subway line

papers. He read them, as his fat sick wife watched from the window.

"What are you doing with yourself this summer, George?" Mr. Cattanzara asked. "I see you walkin' around at nights."

George felt embarrassed. "I like to walk."

"What are you doin' in the day now?"

"Nothing much just right now. I'm waiting for a job." Since it shamed him to admit he wasn't working, George said, "I'm staying home – but I'm reading a lot to pick up my education."

Mr. Cattanzara looked interested. He mopped his hot face with a red handkerchief.

"What are you readin'?"

George hesitated, then said, "I got a list of books in the library once, and now I'm gonna read them this summer." He felt strange and a little unhappy saying this, but he wanted Mr. Cattanzara to respect him.

"How many books are there on it?"

"I never counted them. Maybe around a hundred."

Mr. Cattanzara whistled through his teeth.

"I figure if I did that," George went on earnestly, "it would help me in my education. I don't mean the kind they give you in high school. I want to know different things than they learn there, if you know what I mean."

The change maker nodded. "Still and all, one hundred books is a pretty big load for one summer."

"It might take longer."

"After you're finished with some, maybe you and I can shoot the breeze about them?" said Mr. Cattanzara.

"When I'm finished," George answered.

Mr. Cattanzara went home and George continued on his walk. After that, though he had the urge to, George did nothing different from usual. He still took his walks at night, ending up in the little park. But one evening the shoemaker on the next block stopped George to say he was a good boy, and George figured that Mr. Cattanzara had told him all about the books he was reading. From the shoemaker it must have gone down the street, because George saw a couple of people smiling kindly at him, though nobody spoke to him personally.

He felt a little better around the neighborhood and liked it more, though not so much he would want to live in it forever. He had never exactly disliked the people in it, yet he had never liked them very much either. It was the fault of the neighborhood. To his surprise, George found out that his father and Sophie knew about his reading too. His father was too shy to say anything about it – he was never much of a talker in his whole life – but Sophie was softer to George, and she showed him in other ways she was proud of him.

As the summer went on George felt in a good mood about things. He cleaned the house every day, as a favor to Sophie, and he enjoyed the ball games more. Sophie gave him a buck a week allowance, and though it still wasn't enough and he had to use it carefully, it was a helluva lot better than just having two bits now and then. What he bought with the money – cigarettes mostly, an occasional beer or movie ticket – he got a big kick out of. Life wasn't so bad if you knew how to appreciate it. Occasionally he bought a paperback book from the newsstand, but he never got around to reading it, though he was glad to have a co[illegible]f books in his room. But he read thoroughly Sophie's magazines and newspapers. And at night was the most enjoyable time, because when he passed the storekeepers sitting outside their stores, he could tell they regarded him highly. He walked erect, and though he did not say much to them, or they to him, he could feel approval on all sides. A couple of nights he felt so good that he skipped the park at the end of the evening. He just wandered in the neighborhood, where people had known him from the time he was a kid playing punchball whenever there was a game of it going; he wandered there, then came home and got undressed for bed, feeling fine.

For a few weeks, he had talked only once with Mr. Cattanzara, and though the change maker had said nothing more about the books, asked no questions, his silence made George a little uneasy. For a while George didn't pass in front of Mr. Cattanzara's house anymore, until one night, forgetting himself, he approached it from a different direction than he usually did when he did. It was already past midnight. The street, except for one or two people, was deserted, and

George was surprised when he saw Mr. Cattanzara still reading his newspaper by the light of the street lamp overhead. His impulse was to stop at the stoop and talk to him. He wasn't sure what he wanted to say, though he felt the words would come when he began to talk; but the more he thought about it, the more the idea scared him, and he decided he'd better not. He even considered beating it home by another street, but he was too near Mr. Cattanzara, and the change maker might see him as he ran, and get annoyed. So George unobtrusively crossed the street, trying to make it seem as if he had to look in a store window on the other side, which he did, and then went on, uncomfortable at what he was doing. He feared Mr. Cattanzara would glance up from his paper and call him a dirty rat for walking on the other side of the street, but all he did was sit there, sweating through his undershirt, his bald head shining in the dim light as he read his *Times*, and upstairs his fat wife leaned out of the window, seeming to read the paper along with him. George thought she would spy him and yell out to Mr. Cattanzara, but she never moved her eyes off her husband.

George made up his mind to stay away from the change maker until he had got some of his softback books read, but when he started them and saw they were mostly story books, he lost his interest and didn't bother to finish them. He lost his interest in reading other things too. Sophie's magazines and newspapers went unread. She saw them piling up on a chair in his room and asked why he was no longer looking at them, and George told her it was because of all the other reading he had to do. Sophie said she had guessed that was it. So for most of the day, George had the radio on, turning to music when he was sick of the human voice. He kept the house fairly neat, and Sophie said nothing on the days when he neglected it. She was still kind and gave him his extra buck, though things weren't so good for him as they had been before.

But they were good enough, considering. Also his night walks invariably picked him up, no matter how bad the day was. Then one night George saw Mr. Cattanzara coming down the street toward him. George was about to turn and run but

he recognized from Mr. Cattanzara's walk that he was drunk, and if so, probably he would not even bother to notice him. So George kept on walking straight ahead until he came abreast of Mr. Cattanzara and though he felt wound up enough to pop into the sky, he was not surprised when Mr. Cattanzara passed him without a word, walking slowly, his face and body stiff. George drew a breath in relief at his narrow escape, when he heard his name called, and there stood Mr. Cattanzara at his elbow, smelling like the inside of a beer barrel. His eyes were sad as he gazed at George, and George felt so intensely uncomfortable he was tempted to shove the drunk aside and continue on his walk.

But he couldn't act that way to him, and, besides, Mr Cattanzara took a nickel out of his pants pocket and handed it to him.

"Go buy yourself a lemon ice, Georgie."

"It's not that time anymore, Mr. Cattanzara," George said. "I'm a big guy now."

"No, you ain't," said Mr. Cattanzara, to which George made no reply he could think of.

"How are all your books comin' along now?" Mr. Cattanzara asked. Though he tried to stand steady, he swayed a little.

"Fine, I guess," said George, feeling the red crawling up his face.

"You ain't sure?" The change maker smiled slyly, a way George had never seen him smile.

"Sure I'm sure. They're fine."

Though his head swayed in little arcs, Mr. Cattanzara's eyes were steady. He had small blue eyes which could hurt if you looked at them too long.

"George," he said, "name me one book on that list that you read this summer, and I will drink to your health."

"I don't want anybody drinking to me."

"Name me one so I can ask you a question on it. Who can tell, if it's a good book maybe I might wanna read it myself."

George knew he looked passable on the outside, but inside he was crumbling apart.

Unable to reply, he shut his eyes, but when – years later – he opened them, he saw that Mr. Cattanzara had, out of pity,

gone away, but in his ears he still heard the words he had said when he left: "George, don't do what I did."

The next night he was afraid to leave his room, and though Sophie argued with him he wouldn't open the door.

"What are you doing in there?" she asked.

"Nothing."

"Aren't you reading?"

"No."

She was silent a minute, then asked, "Where do you keep the books you read? I never see any in your room outside of a few cheap trashy ones."

He wouldn't tell her.

"In that case you're not worth a buck of my hard-earned money. Why should I break my back for you? Go on out, you bum, and get a job."

He stayed in his room for almost a week, except to sneak into the kitchen when nobody was home. Sophie railed at him, then begged him to come out, and his old father wept, but George wouldn't budge, though the weather was terrible and his small room stifling. He found it very hard to breathe, each breath was like drawing a flame into his lungs.

One night, unable to stand the heat anymore, he burst into the street at one A.M., a shadow of himself. He hoped to sneak to the park without being seen, but there were people all over the block, wilted and listless, waiting for a breeze. George lowered his eyes and walked, in disgrace, away from them, but before long he discovered they were still friendly to him. He figured Mr. Cattanzara hadn't told on him. Maybe when he woke up out of his drunk the next morning, he had forgotten all about meeting George. George felt his confidence slowly come back to him.

That same night a man on a street corner asked him if it was true that he had finished reading so many books, and George admitted he had. The man said it was a wonderful thing for a boy his age to read so much.

"Yeah," George said, but he felt relieved. He hoped nobody would mention the books anymore, and when, after a couple of days, he accidentally met Mr. Cattanzara again, *he* didn't, though George had the idea he was the one who had started the rumor that he had finished all the books.

One evening in the fall, George ran out of his house to the library, where he hadn't been in years. There were books all over the place, wherever he looked, and though he was struggling to control an inward trembling, he easily counted off a hundred, then sat down at a table to read.

I'm having you read several different short stories because I want to find out how different readers approach different materials. I'm interested in having you tell me what the story is about, what you thought or felt about it as you were going along, your general impressions.

I'll let you do most of the talking since the important thing is what you thougbt or felt as you were reading.

Possible Questions:

SNOW

1. What did you see as being the main events in the story?
2. Do you think the writer was trying to make a main point in the story? What? How did you arrive at this?
3. Did the ending surprise you?
4. What did you think of Mrs. Altman's final comment "God's will be done"?
5. Did you have any difficulty reading the story?
6. Did you find any of the vocabulary or language difficulty?
7. I'm going to read you a passage from the story and I'll ask you if you can recall what you were thinking about as you read it:

   "Abe's thought ran thus. The horse had gone against the wind. It would never have done so without good reason; that reason could have been no other than a scent to follow. If that was so, however, it would have gone in as straight a line as it could. The sand-flats stretched away to the sooth-west for sixteen miles with not a settlement, not a farm but Radcliff's. If Abe managed to strike that line of scent, it must take him to the point whence the horses had started."

   Do you remember reading this?

8. Did you find it difficult to keep the directions, setting straight?
9. Did you find there was too much description?
10. Did you find anything unusual about the dialogue? Was there more or less than you would normally read?
11. Did you find it difficult to keep the characters straight?
12. Did you continue to enjoy the story as you went along?
13. Can you remember any other thoughts as you went along?
14. Did you read it any differently than you would have done normally? Why?
15. If you read it again do you think you would get anything different out of it?
16. Would this be easier or more difficult than what you would normally read?
17. Did you read the blurb?
18. Have you or would you read anything by the same author?
19. Can you think of anyone who would enjoy it?
20. Can you think of anyone who would dislike it?
21. Was there anything in particular that you disliked about the story?
22. Did you see anything as being outstanding about the story?
23. Do you think the title was appropriate?

Possible Questions:

A SUMMER'S READING

1. What did you see as being the main events in the story?
2. Do you think the writer had a point to make? What was it? How did you arrive at this?
3. I'm going to read you the last few lines:

"One evening in the fall George ran out of his house to the library, where he hadn't been in years. There were books all over the place, wherever he looked, and though he was struggling to control an inward trembling, he easily counted off a hundred, then sat down at a table to read."

What were your impressions of this ending? Did it surprise you? Why did the library appear as "books all over the place" to George? Do you think George read all the books?

4. Did you have any difficulty reading the story?
5. When you started the story what did you think it was going to be about? Did you enjoy it from the beginning?
6. Did you continue to enjoy it as you went along?
7. What were your impressions of George?
8. Did you find too much dialogue?
9. Can you remember anything you were thinking about as you went along?
10. Did you read it any differently from the way you would normally read it?
11. If you read it again do you think you would get anything different out of it?
12. Would this be the type of story you would normally read? Why? What would be different?
13. Was this story any more difficult than what you would normally read? How?
14. Have you read anything by the same author?
15. Can you think of anyone who would enjoy the story more than you?
16. Can you think of anyone who wouldn't like this story?
17. Would you recommend it to anyone?

Comparison of stories

1. Did you see the stories as having anything in common?
2. Which one did you like better? Why?
3. Did you find one more difficult to read than the other? Why?
4. Which one would be closer to what you would normally read?
5. Did you read one differently from the other? Faster, slower, rereads? Why?

APPENDIX D

Materials for unaided recalls: fiction/nonfiction

It happened at the Stamford, Connecticut, railroad station. It was Sunday evening, at about ten P.M. Some two dozen persons, among them several young men in uniform, were waiting for the express to New York.

The door to the waiting room flew open. A woman, shrieking hysterically, burst into the room. She was pursued by a man just a few steps behind her. The woman screamed that the man was trying to kill her and cried out for the people to save her. I was standing nearest the door. The woman grabbed me, still shrieking. I tried to protect her behind me. The man tried to sweep me aside to get at her. He rushed at me, caught the woman's wrist with one hand, tore her loose and pulled her through the doorway. The woman fell to the ground and was dragged by the wrist just outside the waiting room. I tried to free her wrist. The man broke off, grabbed the woman's pocketbook, and fled on foot.

We carried the woman inside the waiting room, sat her down, then telephoned the police. The woman's eye was badly cut; she was moaning. I looked around the room. Except for three or four persons who now came up to her, the people in the room seemed unconcerned. The young men in uniform were still standing in the same place, chatting among themselves as before. I am not sure which was greater, the shock of the attack that had just occurred or the shock caused by the apparent detachment and

unconcern of the other people, especially the men in uniform.

The next morning, I read in the newspaper of another attack. This one was carried out in broad daylight on a young boy by a gang of teen-agers. Here, too, a number of people stood around and watched.

It would be possible, I suppose, to take the view that these are isolated instances, and that it would be a serious error to read into these cases anything beyond the fact that the bystanders were probably paralyzed by the suddenness of the violence. Yet I am not so sure. I am not sure that these instances may not actually be the product of something far deeper. What is happening, I believe, is that the natural reactions of the individual against violence are being blunted. The individual is being desensitized by living history. He is developing new reflexes and new responses that tend to slow up the moral imagination and relieve him of essential indignation over impersonal hurt. He is becoming casual about brutality. He makes his adjustments to the commonplace, and nothing is more commonplace in our age than the ease with which life can be smashed or shattered. The range of the violence sweeps from the personal to the impersonal, from the amusements of the crowd to the policies of nations. It is in the air, quite literally. It has lost the sting of surprise. We have made our peace with violence.

No idea could be more untrue than that there is no connection between what is happening in the world and the behavior of the individual. Society does not exist apart from the individual. It transfers its apprehensions or its hopes, its fatigue or its vitality, its ennui or its dreams, its sickness or its spirituality to the people who are part of it. Can the individual be expected to retain the purity of his responses, particularly a sensitivity to the fragility of life, when society itself seems to measure its worth in terms of its ability to create and possess instruments of violence that could expunge civilization as easily as . . . destroy a village? Does it have no effect on an individual to live in an age that has already known two world wars; that has seen hundreds of cities ripped apart by dynamite tumbling down from the heavens; that has witnessed whole nations stolen or destroyed; that has seen millions of people exterminated in gas chambers or other mass means; that has seen governments compete with one another to make weapons which, even in the testing, have put death into the air?

To repeat, the causative range is all the way from petty amusements to the proclamations of nations. We are horrified that teen-age boys should make or steal lethal weapons and then proceed to use them on living creatures; but where is the sense of horror or outrage at the cheapness of human life that is exploited throughout the

day or night on television? It is almost impossible to see television for fifteen minutes without seeing people beaten or shot or punched or kicked or jabbed. It is also almost impossible to pick up a newspaper without finding someone in a position of power, here or elsewhere threatening to use nuclear explosives unless someone else becomes more sensible.

The young killers don't read the newspapers, true. They don't have to. If they read at all, they read the picture-story pulps that dispense brutality as casually as a vending machine its peanuts. In any case, the heart of the matter is that the young killers do not live in the world of their own. They belong to the larger world. They may magnify and intensify the imperfections of the larger world but they do not invent them.

The desensitization of twentieth-century man is more than a danger to the common safety. It represents the loss or impairment of the noblest faculty of human life--the ability to be aware both of suffering and beauty; ability to share sorrow and create hope; the ability to think and respond beyond one's wants. There are some things we have no right ever to get used to. One of these most certainly is brutality. The other is the irrational. Both brutality and the irrational have now come together and are moving towards a dominant pattern. If the pattern is to be resisted and changed, a special effort must be made. A very special effort.

The long June twilight faded into night. Dublin lay enveloped in darkness, but for the dim light of the moon, that shone through fleecy clouds, casting a pale light as of approaching dawn over the streets and the dark waters of the Liffey. Around the beleaguered Four Courts the heavy guns roared. Here and there through the city machine guns and rifles broke the silence of the night, spasmodically, like dogs barking on lone farms. Republicans and Free Staters were waging civil war.

On a rooftop near O'Connell Bridge, a Republican sniper lay watching. Beside him lay his rifle and over his shoulders were slung a pair of field-glasses. His face was the face of a student--thin and ascetic, but his eyes had the cold gleam of the fanatic. They were deep and thoughtful, the eyes of a man, who is used to look at death.

He was eating a sandwich hungrily. He had eaten nothing since morning. He had been too excited to eat. He finished the sandwich, and taking a flask of whiskey from his pocket, he took a short draught. Then he returned the flask to his pocket. He paused for a moment, considering whether he should risk a smoke. It was dangerous. The flash might be seen in the darkness and there were enemies watching. He decided to take the risk. Placing a cigarette between his lips, he struck a match, inhaled the smoke hurriedly and put out the

light. Almost immediately, a bullet flattened itself against the parapet of the roof. The sniper took another whiff and put out the cigarette. Then he swore softly and crawled away to the left.

Cautiously he raised himself and peered over the parapet. There was a flash and a bullet whizzed over his head. He dropped immediately. He had seen the flash. It came from the opposite side of the street.

He rolled over the roof to a chimney stack in the rear, and slowly drew himself up behind it, until his eyes were level with the top of the parapet. There was nothing to be seen--just the dim outline of the opposite housetop against the blue sky. His enemy was under cover.

Just then an armoured car came across the bridge and advanced slowly up the street. It stopped on the opposite side of the street fifty yeards ahead. The sniper could hear the dull panting of the motor. His heart beat faster. It was an enemy car. He wanted to fire, but he knew it was useless. His bullets would never pierce the steel that covered the grey monster.

Then round the corner of a side street came an old woman, her head covered by a tattered shawl. She began to talk to the man in the turret of the car. She was pointing to the roof where the sniper lay. An informer.

The turret opened. A man's head and shoulders appeared, looking towards the sniper. The sniper raised

his rifle and fired. The head fell heavily on the turret wall. The woman darted toward the side street. The sniper fired again. The woman whirled round and fell with a shriek into the gutter.

Suddenly from the opposite roof a shot rang out and the sniper dropped his rifle with a curse. The rifle clattered to the roof. The sniper thought the noise would wake the dead. He stooped to pick the rifle up. He couldn't lift it. His forearm was dead. "I'm hit," he muttered.

Dropping flat on to the roof, he crawled back to the parapet. With his left hand he felt the injured right forearm. The blood was oozing through the sleeve of his coat. There was no pain--just deadened sensation, as if the arm had been cut off.

Quickly he drew his knife from his pocket, opened it on the breatwork of the parapet and ripped open the sleeve. There was a small hole where the bullet had entered. On the other side there was no hole. The bullet had lodged in the bone. It must have fractured it. He bent the arm below the wound. The arm bent back easily. He ground his teeth to overcome the pain.

Then, taking out his field dressing, he ripped open the packet with his knife. He broke the neck of the iodine bottle and let the bitter fluid drip into the wound. A paroxysm of pain swept through him. He placed

the cotton wadding over the wound and wrapped the dressing over it. He tied the end with his teeth.

Then he lay still against the parapet, and closing his eyes, he made an effort of will to overcome the pain.

In the street beneath all was still. The armoured car had retired speedily over the bridge, with the machine gunner's head hanging lifeless over the turret. The woman's corpse lay still in the gutter.

The sniper lay for a long time nursing his wounded arm and planning escape. Morning must not find him wounded on the roof. The enemy on the opposite roof covered his escape. He must kill that enemy and he could not use his rifle. He had only a revolver to do it. Then he thought of a plan.

Taking off his cap, he placed it over the muzzle of his rifle. Then he pushed the rifle slowly upwards over the parapet, until the cap was visible from the opposite side of the street. Almost immediately there was a report, and a bullet pierced the center of the cap. The sniper slanted the rifle forward. The cap slipped down into the street. Then, catching the rifle in the middle, the sniper dropped his left hand over the roof and let it hang lifelessly. After a few moments he let the rifle drop to the street. Then he sank to the roof, dragging his hand with him.

Crawling quickly to the left, he peered up at the corner of the roof. His ruse had succeeded. The other

sniper, seeing the cap and rifle fall, thought he had killed his man. He was now standing before a row of chimney pots, looking across, with his head clearly silhouetted against the western sky.

The Republican sniper smiled and lifted his revolver above the edge of the parapet. The distance was about fifty yards--a hard shot in the dim light, and his right arm was paining him like a thousand devils. He took a steady aim. His hand trembled with eagerness. Pressing his lips together, he took a deep breath through his nostrils and fired. He was almost deafened with the report and his arm shook with the recoil.

Then, when the smoke cleared, he peered across and uttered a cry of joy. His enemy had been hit. He was reeling over the parapet in his death agony. He struggled to keep his feet, but he was slowly falling forward, as if in a dream. The rifle fell from his grasp, hit the parapet, fell over, bounded off the pole of a barber's shop beneath and then cluttered on to the pavement.

Then the dying man on the roof crumpled and fell forward. The body turned over and over in space and hit the ground with a dull thud. Then it lay still.

The sniper looked at his enemy falling and he shuddered. The lust of battle died in him. He became bitten by remorse. The sweat stood out in beads on his forehead. Weakened by his wound and the long summer day

of fasting and watching on the roof, he revolted from the sight of the shattered mass of his dead enemy. His teeth chattered. He began to gibber to himself, cursing the war, cursing himself, cursing everybody.

He looked at the smoking revolver in his hand and with an oath he hurled it to the roof at his feet. The revolver went off with the concussion, and the bullet whizzed past the sniper's head. He was frightened back to his senses by the shock. His nerves steadied. The cloud of fear scattered from his mind and he laughed.

Taking the whiskey flask from his pocket, he emptied it at a draught. He felt reckless under the influence of the spirits. Then he decided to leave the roof and look for his company commander to report. Everywhere around was quiet. There was not much danger in going through the streets. He picked up his revolver and put it in his pocket. Then he crawled down through the skylight to the house underneath.

When the sniper reached the laneway on the street level, he felt a sudden curiosity as to the identity of the enemy sniper whom he had killed. He decided that he was a good shot whoever he was. He wondered if he knew him. He peered around the corner into O'Connell Street. In the upper part of the street there was heavy firing, but around here all was quiet.

The sniper darted across the street. A machine gun tore up the ground around him with a hail of bullets, but

he escaped. He threw himself face downwards beside the corpse. The machine gun stopped.

Then the sniper turned over the dead body and looked into his brother's face.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR UNAIDED RECALLS

1. Read this passage and tell me about it.
2. Read this passage and tell me about it.

After reading both passages:

1. What did you see as being similar about the two passages?
2. What did you see as being different about the two?
3. Did you find one easier to read than the other? Which one and why?
4. Would either one of the passages being something that you would normally read?
5. Where would you be likely to see the first passage? the second?
6. Can you remember what you were thinking about when you started reading the first one? the second?
7. Did you read them any differently?
8. Did you enjoy one of them more than the other? Why?
9. Did you read either one of them any differently from the way you would normally read it.
10. What are your general impressions of reading these both in the same session?
11. Was there anything you disliked about the first one? the second one?
12. Would you say that either one of them was much easier or more difficult than what you normally read?
13. Are you aware of any differences in the way you read fiction as opposed to nonfiction? Why do you think you read them differently?

APPENDIX E

Materials for thinking aloud tasks

Albert Einstein, Creator and Rebel

Albert Einstein is, of course, best known for his theory of relativity, which brought him work fame.* But with fame came a form of near-idolatry that Einstein found incomprehensible.* To his amazement, he became a living legend, a veritable folk hero, looked upon as an oracle, entertained by royalty, statesmen, and other celebrities, and treated by public and press as if he were a movie star rather than a scientist.* When, in Hollywood's glittering heyday, Chaplin took Einstein to the gala opening of his Film City Lights, the crowds surged around the limousine as much to gape at Einstein as at Chaplin.* Turning in bewilderment to his host, Einstein asked, "What does it mean?" to which the worldly-wise Chaplin bitterly replied, "Nothing."

Though fame brought its inevitable problems, it had no power to spoil Einstein;* vanity was no part of him.* He showed no trace of pomposity or exaggerated self-importance.* Journalists pestered him with irrelevancies and inanities.* Painters, sculptors, and photographers, famous and obscure, came in a steady stream to make his portrait.* Yet through it all he retained his simplicity and his sense of humor.* When a passenger on a train, not recognizing him, asked him his occupation, he ruefully replied, "I am an artists' model." Harassed by requests for his autograph, he remarked to friends that autograph hunting was the last vestige of cannibalism: people used to eat people, but now they sought symbolic pieces of them instead.* After being lionized at a social affair, he confided dolefully, "When I was young, all I wanted and expected from life was to sit quietly in some corner doing my work without the public paying attention to me.* And now see what has become of me."*

* Paused dots

Long before the public heard of him, Einstein's importance had been recognized by physicists.* His theory of relativity has two main parts, the special theory and the general.* Not till just after World War I, when eclipse observations lent confirmation to a prediction of the general theory of relativity, did word leak out to the public that something monumentous had happened in the world of science.*

Einstein came at a time of unprecedented crisis in physics.* Relativity was not the only revolutionary scientific development of the early twentieth century.* The quantum revolution developed more or less simultaneously and was even more radical than relativity.* Yet it made no such public splash and produced no such popular hero as did the latter.*

The myth arose that in the whole world only a half-dozen scientists were capable of understanding the general theory of relativity.* When Einstein first propounded the theory this may well have been no great exaggeration.* But even after dozens of authors had written articles and books explaining the theory, the myth did not die.* It has had a long life and traces of it survive even now, when according to a recent estimate the year's output of significant published articles involving the general theory of relativity is somewhere in the neighbourhood of seven hundred to a thousand.*

The myth and the eclipse observations gave the theory an aura of mystery and cosmic serenity that must have caught the fancy of a war-weary public eager to forget the guilt and horror of World War I.* Yet, even when looked at plain, the theory of relativity remains a towering achievement.* In a letter written when he has just turned fifty-one, Einstein indicated that he regarded this theory as his true lifework, and said of the other concepts that he looked on them more as Gelegenheitsarbeit-work performed as the

occasion arose.*

But the Gelegenheitsarbeit of an Einstein may not be lightly dismissed.* Max Born, who won the Nobel Prize for physics, put it well when he said that Einstein "would be one of the greatest theoretical physicists of all times even if he had not written a single line on relativity."* What of Einstein's own Nobel Prize?* Suppose we naively take the official citation at face value.* Then we may well say that he was awarded the prize primarily for part of his Gelegenheitsarbeit.* And all this in no way conflicts with the pre-eminence of his theory of relativity.*

Carl Seelig, one of Einstein's chief biographers, once wrote to him asking whether he inherited his scientific gift from his father's side and his musical from his mother's.* Einstein replied in all sincerity, "I have no special gift - I am only passionately curious.* Thus it is not a question of heredity."* In saying this Einstein was not being coy.* Rather, he was being careful.* He was responding as best he could to an ill-conceived question.* If we imagine that it referred to Einstein's scientific artistry, we read into it something that Seelig surely did not have in mind.* Implicitly the question put Einstein's music on a par with his science.* True, Einstein loved music and played the violin better than many an amateur.* But was he, in music comparable to his favourite composer, Mozart, as in science he was comparable to Newton, whom he revered?*

In science Einstein was certainly no amateur.* His talents were of thoroughly professional calibre.* To the layman the talents of an outstanding professional in any field, whether teology or forgery, can well seem awe-inspiring.* But talent is no great rarity, and by professional standards

Einstein's scientific talen and technical skill were not spectacular.* They were surpassed by those of many a competent practitioner.* In this strict sense, then, Einstein indeed had no special scientific gift.* What he did have that was special was the magic touch without which even the most passionate curiosity would be ineffectual: he had the authentic magic that transcends logic and distinguishes the genius from the mass of lesser men with greater talent.*

TRUE CONFESSION

She could remember how pleased Arleigh had been when she'd told him, soon after they'd started going together, that he reminded her of a western gunfighter, she wasn't sure who: maybe George Montgomery, certainly somebody younger than John Wayne and tougher than Audie Murphy;* he'd walked with that easy slouch, his arms not swinging much, hands never moving far from his hips, stooping a little, his eyes half shut,* and he'd drawled, wrinkling his nose, making his voice sound more casual and throaty than usual when he got angry.*

All the boys wanted that look.* But none of them could it so well as Arleigh.* Barbara thought of this now as he came into the kitchen and threw the black lunch pail, on which he had scratched his initials with a spike, on the chair nearest the door.*

He walked straighter now.* Over the past two years she had watched the tension increase in him, his body stiffen, his shoulders grow hard.* She had seen him coming to look more like his father, like her father, like all the men at the sawmill,* and transformation baffled or rather frightened her.*

He sat down and swung his chair around, away from the table.* Bending forward he unlaced his gum rubbers, then kicked them under the chair and stood up in his wool socks.* All the mill-hands wore wool socks at work in summer because the wool absorbed the sweat from their rubber-smothered feet.*

Barbara rubbed her palms on her faded jeans, shook salmon from a can onto a plate.*

"Hot, ain't it?" she said shyly.*

Every day she grew more shy with him.*

"Yeah. I guess so."*

He undid the two top buttons of his plaid shirt and pulled it over his head.* At the sink he washed himself in cold water, his eyes closed, grunting.*

"I guess every summer gits a little hotter than the one before, somehow," she said.

"Yeah." He rubbed his face briskly with a towel.* Yellow flecks of sawdust were shaken out of his hair.* Despite the scrubbing, bits of sawdust were still entangled in his two day's growth of beard.*

He put on his shirt and sat down at the table.* She filled his plate with potatoes, canned peas and salmon, hurrying because he did not like to be kept waiting for his food, and poured strong black tea into his cup.* Then she sat down opposite him.* He bent low over his plate, a slice of bread in his left hand, his right wielding the fork, his eyes focussed on nothing, his mouth to be kept full from now until he finished.*

"You have enough stuff in your lunch pail today?" she asked?*

He looked up.*

"What?"*

"You have enough stuff in your lunch pail today?" she repeated.*

"Yeah. Sure. I guess so. Why?"*

His voice was muffled and distorted, his cheeks puffed out with food.*

"Oh, no reason, especially. Jist wonerin', that's all."*

"Oh."*

He bent back to his plate, forgetting her again.*

They completed their supper in silence.* She wished he would talk to her, although she knew there was nothing to say.* He was not irritable, she knew.* His silence was matter-of-fact and masculine.* It was a silence that she had

watched expand and envelop him since he had married and gone to work in the mill.*

It means that he is a man, no longer a boy, she thought.* But she could not accept it quite, not yet.* The memory of his loud braggadocio and boisterous, insolent laughter was too fresh.* She felt something curiously similar to jealousy, as though the mill, the men with whom he worked, the whole ritual of manhood as they knew it, had somehow seduced him and robbed her.* But she pushed such thoughts away, because all deep thoughts disturbed her.* She was not equipped to control them: they distracted and confused her, and she was mortally afraid of being pretentious or over-imaginative, what she believed to be "odd" or "queer" or "foolish".*

He finished eating, cleaned his plate out with bread, and crossed the floor in his socks, loosening the belt of his denim pants and patting his belly.* While she washed the dishes and cleaned the oil cloth table covering, brushing crumbs onto the floor to be swept up later, he lay on the couch smoking a handrolled cigarette, staring sightlessly at the smoke as it curled up toward the ceiling.*

"How was everthin' at the mill today," she prodded him, resenting the complacency with which he withdrew from her.*

"Same as it allus is, I guess," he said, not sullenly but as if the question were meaningless and unnecessary.*

Not George Montgomery, she thought.* Maybe it was Myron Healy.* He's the fellow who always gets killed.* He's gotten killed whenever I've seen him in the movies, every single time.*

"Arleigh," she said suddenly.*

"Yeah?"*

"Mebbe we could go to the movies in town this Saturday night.* I hear

they're showin' a real good movie."*

"Mebbe."*

"You mean we'n go?" Her voice became tense with eagerness and excitement.*

"I dunno, Barb. Movies are kinda kid stuff, ain't they?* I mean a man works all week he wants to kinda see the boys, you know--have a few beers.* You know how it is, Barb."*

"Yeah." Her excitement died.*

"Mebbe we'n go. We'll see what happens between now and then. O.K.?"*

"Yeah."*

Her work done she took a magazine from the shelf which held the radio and sat down at the table again.* The first story was entitled I Couldn't Help Loving Him.* Opposite the title there was a photograph of a man and a girl locked in one another's arms, his mouth crushing hers.* They were standing under a street light in the city and the man wore a suit, the girl a beautiful white dress, its neck cut low, his trenchcoat thrown over her shoulders.*

She glanced at Arleigh.* Already he had fallen asleep.*

She began to read, her lips moving tenderly.*

Practice fiction passage for thinking aloud

Mr. Martin bought the pack of Camels on Monday night in the most crowded cigar store on Broadway. It was theater time and seven or eight men were buying cigarettes. The clerk didn't even glance at Mr. Martin, who put the pack in his overcoat pocket and went out. If any of the staff at F & S had seen him buy the cigarettes, they would have been astonished, for it was generally known that Mr. Martin did not smoke and never had. No one saw him.

It was just a week to the day since Mr. Martin had decided to rub out Mrs. Ulgine Barrows. The term "rub out" pleased him because it suggested nothing more than the correction of an error--in this case an error of Mr. Fitweiler. Mr. Martin had spent each night of the past week working out his plan and examining it. As he walked home now, he went over it again. For the hundredth time he resented the element of imprecision, the margin of guesswork that entered into the business. The project as he had worked it out was casual and bold, the risks were considerable. Something might go wrong anywhere along the line. And therein lay the cunning of his scheme. No one would ever see in it the cautious, painstaking hand of Erwin Martin, head of the filing department at F & S, of whom Mr. Fitweiler had once said, "Man is fallible but Martin isn't." No one would see his hand, that is, unless it were caught in the act.

Practice nonfiction passage for thinking aloud

Two million years ago a world full of runners wasn't an extraordinary thing. Running was the best way to get around, find food, escape from one's enemies, and welcome one's friends. Today, some Australian aborigines still run to secure the basic necessities of life. They chase a kangaroo mile after mile for days - running, walking, then running again until the kangaroo is too exhausted to go any farther. Then they kill it for food and carry their catch back the way they came - running and walking, mile after mile, until they arrive again at their home camp.

That's what you call endurance. There are a few other peoples scattered through the mountain regions of Pakistan, Ecuador, and the U.S.S.R. who have that kind of stamina and lead similar lives. They use their bodies vigorously every day, in everything they do. It's a simpler life than the one we are accustomed to, but one that is much more physically active than that of people working in our technological society. They live out an existence we call "primitive," but, for the most part, they live 20 or 30 years longer than the average sedentary worker in more "advanced" societies where machinery is certainly labor-saving, but hardly life-saving. Many of these "primitive" peoples reach ages of 100 years and more, vigorous to the end.

Today's runners are, in a way, 20th-century primitives of this sort. They've come to see the simple logic of the body, what makes it work and what makes it wither. So they've gotten out of their cars and up from their easy chairs and away from the TV sets anf off the bar stools and begun to connect with sidewalks and roads, grasslands and paths, wind, sunchine, and rain. As Dr. George Sheehan, heart specialist, runner, and prominent writer on running says: "For every runner who tours the world running marathons, there are thousands who run to hear

the leaves and listen to rain and look [redacted] the day when it is all suddenly as easy as a bird in flight."

APPENDIX F

Excerpts from interview and reading situations

Reader 1 Initial interview

Do you buy most of your books, or do you borrow?

I belong to the Literary Guild, the Book of the Month Club, and I get books from them. I don't often go to the library. A very neat little place that I've started going to in the last couple of years is the little bookstore on John St. that carries secondhand books and almost anything. I hate to go out and pay $2.25 for a paperback....And throwing out a book to me is like cutting off one of your limbs. I find it very very difficult to-- ... in the sunroom when you came in, there are three dozen book shelves and those are loaded with books. And I have bookshelves in the family room, I have bookshelves in the spare bedroom, up in the playroom--there is a big built-in cupboard, and that is just crammed with children's books, which were mine when--like I say, I can't throw out a book! So I have all my books from when I was a kid, plus the ones my children have got--...boxes in the attic!...When we moved from Ontario to Nova Scotia, the movers came in and he said, "Mrs Anderson, I might give you a tip, that if you got rid of your magazines and paperbacks, the move won't be as costly." And I looked at him and said, "Get rid of my paperbacks??!!" God Forbid! So my husband came down three months before I did, and I just packed up boxes of them and brought them down...I don't even throw out my decorating magazines!

About how much time a day would you spend reading? Do you have a regular time that you read?

No, but I can certainly go through stages of getting up in the morning, getting my kids off to school, making my breakfast, taking it to bed, and laying in bed eating my breakfast and reading. Even though it is a large house, I can do my housework, my kids are away all day long, so I--I would

think nothing of sitting up till four o'clock in the morning to read a book. And I've gone through stages when I've rushed through my housework so I can spend a whole day. And I almost begrudge having to get up and make dinner because it takes away from my time reading. But I do it... my family will start to complain. My mother and father and husband have an expression, "Don't bother talking to Liz; she's got her nose in a book." And I'm just oblivious to anything anybody says when I'm reading. So I sit down and read almost--I enjoy reading during the day as much as I have time, and in the evening I may go to--I went through a stage when we were living in Toronto, and I did this for approximately two and half to three months--as soon as the dinner dishes were done at night and my kids were bathed and in their pyjamas, I'd have a bath and get into my pyjamas and go to bed--and I was usually in bed by 6:30 at night, and I would read until about twelve. And I can probably go through--we're talking about paperbacks--maybe a 500 page paperback, I can go through that in probably a day and a half. I read very quickly.

So you probably read five or six books a week or--depending on size--

Yes, or the time of year, yes. I have gone through stages when I read five or six books a week...Yes, I know that is a lot of reading.

Reader 20 Initial interview

In the line of fiction now--you mentioned that you sort of go through phases. What phase are you in right now?

Well, I'm now in a smattering. I'm not into any one particular author. The last time I was at the library, I went in and I really didn't know--I was looking for something by James--the English mystery writer. P.D. or something. And I found one of hers--I'm becoming quite interested in

hers and I suspect I will read--she must have written more than one; this is the first one I've heard about. And I will read it, and look for more. But I just sort of went around and looked to see if there was anything new and different.

Now as you're looking around, what kind--would they be chiefly mysteries right now--

No, no. Not necessarily. I just--I always bring home a mystery. I never read mysteries until I was married, but George's fiction is detective, and I got hooked on it. Now I read more than he does.

Do you pick them out for him too?

For the both of us. When I look, and when he goes, he often will pick out for me as well as himself. My type is more 'women's book' and I think likely the librarians wonder what he's bringing home because they're not his type.

What kinds--would it be non-mysteries then--

Yes. He would pick out non-mysteries for me, but when he picks out the mysteries it's usually for both of us. And I do the same.

Do you like romances, historical romances--

Historical romances, but not romances per se, I'm not...how can I describe it? It must have--um...one of my problems is when I grope for a word it often escapes me. It must have a real plot to it--

Some complexity

Yes. I have read two of the pocket book romances, to see what they were like, and I felt that, you know, I couldn't take it, you know!

Yes, you've read one, you've read them all.

You know, you knew them all, and it was just nurse meets doctor falls in love sort of thing. Well, that isn't for me. I need something with some plot. And I suppose when I was discussing it with Andrew, when he felt

that I wasted so much time here on fiction, where I read so many nonfiction from which I learned, but I responded that it was strictly for enjoyment, but I've never yet read fiction that I haven't learned something in reading it. Maybe it was only a new word in my vocabulary, or maybe it was some place I've never visited, you know, but I always gained some knowledge.

Reader 32 From probed recall of "Snow"

What did you see the story as being about?

Well, it was a bleak, cold wint--the way it made me feel was just desolate. I didn't really get off on it that much. I'm sure his big books must be better...Well, Ray asked me this morning what I thought of it, and I said, "If I couldn't walk, I'd read it only if it was within arm's reach." (Laughter)

Just what life must be like, just to survive. Out west. It's a big part of life, just to go to a store. I don't think I could stand anything like that; like I say, it made me feel bleak. I didn't particularly like it. The descriptions of the place were pretty good. The only thing I didn't like was the narrator. He never said what he thought about anything, it was just all description and objects; he didn't put any thought into it. Actually, the part about him was more interesting than the story. (Laughter) It was. And the resignation of the family, the resignation of her parents--just that what they accepted it, that's the way it is. He was stupid; he should have stayed home. If I was out there I'd listen for a weather report at least; it doesn't make sense.

What did you see as being the main events in the story?

Well, I guess the main thing that interested me the most was the description the way he lived, the man who died, his wife and six kids, you know, one

hung from the ceiling on a board, and four others stuffed into a bed full of hay, and one sleeping on the floor--well, what a way to live! It's incredible. I guess the description of that was about the most interesting part of the story.

Do you think the writer was trying to make some sort of point?

Well, if he was, it bypassed me. Like I said, the only point that I would say I really got out of it was to picture myself in a situation like that. It was depressing. A depressing little story. Maybe he meant it to be.

I take it you didn't enjoy reading this story?

No, not particularly.

Was it right from the beginning that you disliked it?

No, the beginning was pretty good. I liked it until--right up until he opened the dooe to the sister (?) visitor.

You liked that description?

Yeah. I could picture that part of it.

Can you remember any other things you were thinking about as you were reading it?

No. I guess I just pictured it in my mind as I read it. Just...myself as if I was watching it happen.

Is that something you usually do when you read, sort of imagine you were watching this?

Yeah.

What did you think of the ending of that story?

Well, it's probably--he could--he cut it off there. He probably could have included a little bit more about the family, what happened to the kids. Here they were stuck way out in the middle of nowhere, in all this ice and snow and--forgotten. Really.

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Did the ending surprise you?

No, it didn't. Not a bit. Because of the way the story was written, it was just logical ending for that story.

You had assumed earlier on in thestory that Redcliffe would be found dead?

Uh huh. Well, he pretty well had to be. One horse got away, and the other horse they found dead.

Did you have any difficulty reading that particular story? Did you find it difficult to follow?

Yeah. The part that I had to read over again, to try to get some of the names straightened out. It didn't mention any names until you had them all together in a bunch, and then you had to read--in order to figure out who was who, you had to go back and read the description of what they were wearing and put it together with the names.

You found that confusing?

A little bit...That annoyed me. It annoyed me that I had to go back and figure it out.

Why do you think the writer might have done that?

Probably make you read it over again. Something had to...Another part that annoyed me: the man who came to the door and stood there on the doorslab --that was quite interesting too, because usually they say "doorstep", right? Well they had--must have been a rock, I imagine. Anyway. And he stood there--he had a sheepskin jacket on and <u>rubber boots</u>! Now who wears just plain rubber boots in temperatures like that? That is not--you can't even wear rubber boots in the winter around here! You have to have something better than that.

APPENDIX G

Field note excerpts

Reader 13

(after session 1)

Seemed to be really up on titles and authors; had a mental list of books he planned to read in the future. Claimed to read purely for escape; absolutely never reads nonfiction. A bit proud of it in fact...

(after session 2)

Had amazing recall of facts, details such as characters' names. Hated "Snow"; could see no point at all to the description. Had read the blurb and disagreed with the point that Grove was one of Canada's leading authors. Claimed to hate short stories but did seem tickled with "The Sniper". Tended to be rather pragmatic in his approach to "Desensitization" - 'if you get involved the law is usually against you'...

(after session 3)

Plays the stock market. Had made extensive notes on "A Summer's Reading" which he read aloud to me after his recall. Hates female writers. A bit competitive in his reading. Tries to get the new books at the library before _____ (Reader 25). Also commented on a 'chap out in Black Cove' who requests absolutely anything and everything at the library (Reader 12)...

APPENDIX H

Examples of transcriber asides

Reader 9

Do you ever read condensed books?

No! I hate them! (I'm surprised. Given her dislike for description I was predicting she'd like them. K.)

(At the end of the interview).

She seems a bit colourless. I feel guilty about saying that, because of the difficulties life has obviously dealt her, but in comparison to (reader 24), for example who is probably twice her age and seems more alive, alert and aware, she is colourless.

Reader 16

What is the rock bottom material you would read, if you had nothing better to do?

I'd read practically anything, if I didn't have something special to read. But I hope I never get to that point.

(I've just been hit by an interesting thought. If I were desperate and had to choose among an assortment of things I would never normally read, I'd take nonfiction before fiction - the reverse of my normal reading pattern. It's probably because it's almost impossible to get 'into' a story I intensely dislike. Factual material, on the other hand, you just absorb, you don't try to project yourself into the situation. K.)

Reader 17

You've read Child of the Morning. Does it have the research background that you are seeking?

Well, as I say, if it's well done, then I'll accept it. I think it's this acceptance thing, and the authority, that bothers me. Which is why I can't really get into science fiction. There is no authority, is there? (Depends on what you mean by 'authority'. It's facts of science rather than facts of history, and there is more extrapolation, probably, but a good science fiction story requires the same careful research as a historical tale.K.) I mean, no one has been out there and come back. It's not that I'm not imaginative; it's just that I'm reading the meanderings of somebody else's imagination, without any authority to back it. (I don't agree. I think the two - historical and science fiction - are in that respect quite comparable. No writer of a historical novel has been back there either! In a good story of either genre you're researching known facts, historical or scientific and extrapolating. The difference is that one looks back and the other looks ahead.K.)

Reader 26

(aside following the interview)

It would be interesting to do a follow-up on her in ten or fifteen years. My feeling is that her taste is still very immature. She may in time outgrow her taste for Harlequins as she has for the Hardy boys, and graduate to less simplistic, more adult reading, both in ordinary and in science fiction. You might be interested in what my Reader's Guide of Science Fiction says about Michael Moorcock (one of reader 26's favourite writers:...) I've read only one of his books, and found it too juvenile for my taste today. At her age I would have loved it...

Reader 31

(Comparing "The Sniper" and "Desensitization of Twentieth Century Man")

Well, they're both sad stories but one is up-to-date in time and one is farther back, but I think the first story is just saying that this kind of thing, you know, man's inhumanity to man, has been going on for a long time. Oh I see it says Dublin, so it was in Ireland! It wasn't in the States. (Am I remembering correctly that she claims she never normally rereads because she'd get nothing new the second time?)