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The Pleasure of Text - Where Does it Come From? : Children's Responses to Literature

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**The Pleasure of Text ~ Where Does
it Come From?
Children's Responses to Literature.**

BY

Sharon Cooney

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the
Award of
Bachelor of Education with Honours
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“The Pleasure Of Text ~ Where Does It Come From? Children’s Responses To Literature.”

Abstract

Too often, literature is viewed, presented and used as a mere tool for conveying information in the primary school classroom. A ‘functional’ approach to literature is not sufficient as it denies students opportunities to experience the range of responses evoked by literature and the element of pleasure that can be derived from the reading experience. This study examines reader response theory as a means for building enjoyment of literature for its own sake. The literary responses of four primary school children were interpreted to ascertain the pleasure derived from the literary experience and will be presented in case study form. The elements of excitement, adventure and humour were confirmed as prevailing themes contributing to these students’ literary satisfaction and pleasure.

Declaration

I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief :

- (i) incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education ;
- (ii) contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text ; or
- (iii) contain any defamatory material.

A black rectangular box redacting the signature of Sharon Cooney.

Signed : Sharon Cooney

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Chapter 1.

Introduction and Review of Literature

The Curriculum Framework (Curriculum Council, Western Australia, 1997), which will provide directions for teaching and learning over the next ten years in Western Australia, points to two uses of literature in the middle school classroom. First, to develop literacy ; secondly, to develop students' capacity to respond to literary texts with enjoyment, insight, understanding and awareness of their literary value.(p.75) The implementation of literature in the classroom should then support this twofold perception of children's literature and its implications for students. Wendy Saul (1990) sums up the issue to be explored in this dissertation when she writes,

Although children's literature has clearly come to play a more central role in the schools, there is still significant disagreement on how literary texts should be used. Kenneth Goodman, in his article on 'The Basalization of Children's Books', provides stunning examples of the way basal readers have cut, recast and otherwise adulterated children's literature to meet curricular goals. Even when stories and books are used in their entirety, divergent conceptual stances call for contrasting approaches to the literature. Anita Silvey of 'The Horn Book Magazine' ... (has) warned that this instrumental view of literature - What can it be used to teach? - is an affront to both readers and books and will finally serve neither's interest.

(p.200.)

The element of enjoying a text and escaping to a fictitious 'world' has been lost in the use of literature in the primary school classroom. This becomes evident in the Curriculum Framework (Curriculum Council, Western Australia, 1997) with the following two sentences, upon the use of literature in the classroom (placed together in a single paragraph),

"Students read a wide range of materials including signs, billboards, notes, messages, memos, instructions, reports, informational texts, newspapers, magazines, CD - ROMs and other electronic texts. They read a wide variety of creative and imaginative writing, including myths, legends, fables, fairy stories, biographies, autobiographies, novels, stories, poetry, drama and picture books."

(p.83)

Many teachers are using the first group of materials and the second of literary works in the same manner and for identical purposes, to develop literacy skills. These and other texts are employed primarily for the development of students' understanding and use of language.

This practice is problematic in that it compromises the opportunities afforded to students to

read simply for pleasure and enjoyment. Butler and Turbill (1984) maintain that:

“By using literature and a variety of other reading materials in a child’s environment as models, teachers can help children ‘read like a writer’. Thus may children discover the many conventions and use them accordingly.”

(p. 24)

Literature can therefore be employed as a means by which students may attain competence in identifying and using literary concepts.

Literature, for many theorists, text book writers and classroom practitioners has become the hand maiden of literacy. The Curriculum Framework (Curriculum Council, Western Australia, 1997) comments on this role, asserting that :

Students achieve the outcomes of English, becoming more proficient users of language and learning about language, through the experience and study of a wide range of texts... Texts are the vehicles by which the outcomes are achieved.

(p.85)

Holdaway (1979) supports this notion of literature forming the basis and foundation for literacy learning. He implies that literacy learning, like the acquisition of oral language, arises from modelling of reading and textual experiences.

“If we wished to identify clear examples of learning theory in action, we could find no better instances than are thrown up universally in the homes of language learning infants... Mothers make use of the close proximity they enjoy with their infants by talking to them as if they could understand - and in a fundamental sense they do... All the family start modelling a small range of central words with a special, slow and affectionate intonation...”

(The Foundations of Literacy. p. 21.)

A multitude of reading strategies such as Shared Book Experience (Holdaway, 1979), Directed Silent Reading (Sloan & Latham), and Text Innovation (Butler & Turbill, 1984) reflect the perversion of literature to solely develop literacy skills.

It is important for children to develop the skill and habit of reading. Most of the current reading schemes such as ‘Bookshelf’, ‘Southern Cross’, ‘Excellence In Reading Skills’ and ‘Read Well’ engage what they term ‘real books’ as a means of developing children’s literacy skills. This approach to the development of literacy is grounded in the conviction that the story is a basic act of the human mind. Barbara Hardy maintains this belief that:

narrative... is not to be regarded as an aesthetic invention used by artists to control, manipulate and order experience, but as a primary act of mind transferred to art from life. The novel merely heightens, isolates and analyses the narrative motions of human consciousness.

(Hardy in Barton, Meek & Warlow, 1977.p.146)

However, what seems to have happened in this rush to use literature to foster skills of literacy, is that the “pleasure of text”, a notion expounded by Barthes (1990); the enjoyment of the “secondary world” (Tolkein, 1977); “getting into the story” (Warlow, 1977); increased awareness of self (Burnett, 1977); and understanding of others have been overlooked or forfeited. This is an unfortunate state of affairs for those students being denied literary satisfaction for its own sake. As Barthes (1990) comments,

the pleasure of the text is not certain; nothing says that this same text will please us a second time.

(The Pleasure of the Text. p. 52.)

He attests that the ‘pleasure of the text’ is affiliated with the notion of culture within a text. He states that “the more culture, the greater, more diverse, the pleasure will be.” (p. 51.) Barthes also clarifies his view that a text does not have to recount pleasurable experiences, characters or images in order to bring about pleasurable reading experiences for the reader. He expresses a belief that we have become less able to engage in the ‘pleasure of the text’ because we “lack subtlety”. He conveys a belief that the “scientific” approach being applied to reading, by its very nature, denies readers the “subtlety” required to experience such “textual pleasure”

“It is not only the inevitably metalinguistic nature of all institutional research which hampers the writing of textual pleasure, it is also today that we are incapable of conceiving a true science of becoming... We are not *subtle* enough to perceive that probably *absolute flow of becoming*; the *permanent* exists only thanks to our coarse organs which reduce and lead things to shared premises of vulgarity, whereas nothing exists in this form.”

(Barthes, R. 1990. The Pleasure of the Text. p. 59- 60.)

Barthes acknowledges that pleasure “is not an attribute of either product or production” (p. 63), but an individual entity for each reader, based upon their interpretation of, and responses to, a text.

It is in light of this predicament that the second use of literature as stated by the Curriculum Framework (Curriculum Council, Western Australia, 1997) becomes important. The learning outcomes state that students not only read to obtain information but also

“for enjoyment and as a means of reflecting upon experience.”

(p. 83)

It points to the significance of teaching children to respond to literature as a creative art in a variety of ways and to develop the capacity to reflect on their own responses.

“Students should be encouraged to respond to their listening, viewing and reading in more extended and considered ways. They are taught how to explain and justify their responses to texts in more formal ways, both orally and in writing... They are encouraged to consider the possible effects on their response to a text produced in alternative ways.”

(p. 89)

Reading and responding to literature should be recognized as an art providing “major means of personal creativity, satisfaction and pleasure... allow[ing] the opportunity for self expression and the use of the imagination.” (p. 43.) To engage children in such practices can not only impart satisfaction but also instill a “basis for lifelong enjoyment.” (p. 43.)

Encouraging students to become aware of their responses to literature fosters a number of skills while contributing to the holistic development of the child. As Saxby and Winch (1987) state:

If literature has integrity - that is, if it explores, orders and illuminates the human experience, its heights and depths, its pain and pleasure aesthetically, and potentially and according to the creator’s genuinely felt response - the end product becomes an image of life, a metaphor for living.

(p. 4)

The Curriculum Framework (Curriculum Council, Western Australia, 1997) supports this exploration and evaluation in responding to literature.

“Students describe and judge what they see and feel and use more formal processes to describe, analyze, interpret and evaluate their experiences... Students’ judgments about art works reflect their personal responses and interpretations.”

(p. 48)

The metaphor expounded by Paul Hazard in Books, Children and Men,

“Give us books, say the children, give us wings”

(p. 4)

still rings true, particularly in terms of providing not only pleasure but also a lifelong skill and escape, not from the ‘real’ world but simply to a secondary world for the purpose of clarification. The Plowden Report, cited by Saxby and Winch (1987), although written over thirty years ago, has much to offer in this domain.

“It is through story... that children grope for the meaning of the experiences that have already overtaken them, savour again their pleasures and reconcile themselves to their own inconsistencies and those of others. As they ‘try on’ first one story book character, then another, imagination and sympathy, the power to enter into another personality and situation, which is a characteristic of childhood and a fundamental condition for good social relationships, is preserved and nurtured. It is also through literature that children feel forward to the experiences, the hopes and fears that await them in adult life. As children (read) they may be choosing their future and the values that will dominate it.”

(p.5)

It is clear that literature possesses a greater value than being used only for the teaching of literacy. As Lukens (1990) comments in his text A Critical Handbook of Children’s Literature, we as adults read literature primarily for recreational purposes. Why then should children be denied such opportunities?

“We choose literature that promises entertainment, and sometimes, escape. If other discoveries come to us too, we are pleased and doubly rewarded. However, our first motive for reading a novel or poem is pleasure.”

(p.4)

Several recent educational theorists have argued strongly for the significance of developing literary responses rather than simply using literature to teach literacy or to critique society. Nodelman’s (1992) text The Pleasures of Children’s Literature, discusses this issue by making the point that as adults, we read for pleasure, yet expect our students to read only for educational purposes. Unfortunately, losing sight of this notion is detrimental to students and their potential for not only enjoying literature for its own sake but also their development of sophisticated response to literature.

“I believe, and would like children to know that experiencing literature, and thinking and talking about the experience of it, are pleasures requiring no justification other than the fact that they exist... The assumption that childhood is a time in which all things must be educational is dangerous... If we provide

children with books that entertain only in order to teach, we will deprive them of much of the real pleasure of literature.”

(p.39)

Nodelman (1992) identifies, in his text, a number of what he deems to be the “pleasures of literature”. (p. 11) His extensive list incorporates pleasures emanating from the textual features themselves such as the words, plot, subject matter, language patterns and genres. He also discusses the pleasures that arise from the mental images and ideas that are evoked by a text, the experience of identifying with fictional characters, engaging with a text or experiencing and understanding our responses to the text. He then states that all of these pleasures are encapsulated in the one, basic pleasure - “the act of entering into communicative acts with others”. (p. 12) Nodelman equates pleasure with one’s responses to a text, even though the pleasure may adopt many, many forms. He comments also upon the tendency for parents and teachers to constantly view any interaction with children as a formal learning experience and in terms of educational outcomes.

“An attitude of this sort leads to an evaluation of books in which the main consideration is what they might teach and how they might affect a young reader’s future.”

(1992, p. 33.)

Unsworth (1993) touches upon the question of what students are looking for in their reading in his text about the social construction of literacy and current literacy practices - Literacy Learning and Teaching. (p.62) In response to this question, he outlines six features that he believes epitomize what children are searching for in their reading. These elements are that of “plot”, “character”, “multiculturalism”, “time and place”, “theme” and “humour”. (p. 62 - 69.) Within the realm of plot, Unsworth states that children are looking for a story which captivates and excites them. The elements of “adventuring” and “conflict” (p.63) are imperative to providing such a plot. He asserts that children require “complex, fully rounded” (p.64) characters to challenge them and “diverse, multifaceted” (p.65) characters and settings to reflect the diversity of our modern society. In relation to the element of “time and place” (p. 65), Unsworth expresses a need for a specific sense of place and time in order for children to find “universal implications” within a text. (p. 65) Socially relevant, wide ranging and complex themes are presented as preferable in children’s literature as is the

crucial (but multifaceted) component of humour - which Unsworth believes to be desired by all readers. These six elements will be broached later in discussing the responses of the students in this study.

The notion of children's reading preferences and the origins of their literary pleasures is a topic which was also at the centre of a national survey conducted by Angus and Robertson Bookworld and reported on in the West Australian newspaper May 20, 1999. The study endeavoured to gain some insight into students' reading preferences and practices and involved 17, 000 five to twelve year olds across Australia. The culmination of this study was the formulation of the 'Angus and Robertson Bookworld Aussie Kids Top 100'. This is a list of the 100 most favoured books according to the responses of the children surveyed. The results of this survey will be further discussed in relation to the findings of this study.

Consequential to the study of children's responses to literature in this dissertation, Rhodes & Shanklin (1993) cite Rosenblatt's distinction between two different kinds of reading - "aesthetic" and "efferent". Aesthetic reading is that which we undertake simply for pleasure. This type of reading is also characterized by being "open to a variety of reader interpretations", entertaining and yet simultaneously conveying a "serious message". (p.152) The second variety of reading, efferent reading, is engaged in "to get things done". It is often informational and conducted "in relationship to jobs". (p.152) The point of this distinction in reading types is that readers employ disparate strategies to approach comprehension of what they are reading dependent upon the purpose for reading. Therefore, if students are required to read for a specific educational outcome, then they are being denied the opportunity to engage in the strategies conducive to pleasurable reading. Anstey & Bull (1996) further explore this concept in the text The Literacy Labyrinth and term the reading types "pragmatic practice" and "aesthetic practice". When discussing the aesthetic form of reading, Anstey and Bull (1996, p. 200) refer to 'literacy and imagination' and 'literacy and response' as the major components of reading aesthetically. In relation to response and literature, they allude to a developmental model of response formed by Jack Thomson (1987) which can be employed to aid in developing students' responses to literature - but only for aesthetic motives.

Among the best of the advocates for pleasurable literary interactions is Jack Thomson's Understanding Teenagers Reading (1987). In his text, Thomson identifies six developmental stages that his research indicates, as a taxonomy. This "Developmental Model of Reader - Response to Literature" describes different "degrees of intensity, sophistication of response, and reading strategies" as outlined in *Fig 1.* below. The model itself arose from Thomson's research which was predominantly based on the reader response theory of Iser (1978). Wolfgang Iser's theory regarding the reading process and reader response is based upon reading as an 'experience' in which readers are "active performers who bring texts to life in their minds" (1987, p. 112). A fundamental concept underpinning his view is the notion of the 'implied reader' - a construct "assembled by the reader from the textual details" (1987, p.112). The implied reader is the kind of reader that the real reader is invited by the implied author to become so as to participate in the production of the text's meaning.

In his study, designed to explore what secondary students read, why they read (or don't) and the processes involved, Thomson (1987) perceived that teenage readers are

absorbed in the text first, through the trusting relationship created by the tone of the implied author and / or the excitement of the narrative itself, and are then more likely to be prepared to make the effort to engage in the complex interpretative operations that are involved in becoming the text's implied readers.

(p.114)

Thomson's study was conducted with year eight and ten students from two State high schools in Bathurst, NSW. The data was collected in both 1978 and 1984. Initially, all students completed written questionnaires concerning what they read and why. Their English teachers also completed questionnaires pertaining to their purposes and strategies in teaching literature. Five percent of these students were involved in individual interviews focused upon how the students read and their definitions of reading development or evidence of such, (which were transcribed). Analysis of the data suggested, firstly, that the children were spending very little of their leisure time engaged in reading, opting instead for more "mentally passive" pursuits and that the time spent voluntarily reading decreased as the students got older. In regards to reading preferences, romantic novels and those concerning adolescent issues were popular with the girls, and action literature was sought by the male students. The primary criticisms that emerged concerned 'boredom', 'lack of

choice of class texts’ and ‘purposelessness of routine written exercises’. Rudimentary to the dissatisfaction of the students was a failure to associate reading with enjoyment or pleasure.

The culmination of Thomson’s study is the assertion that in order to overcome and combat the negative reading behaviour and perceptions of students, teachers require effective planning and programming aids / techniques. To effectively facilitate students’ reading, we must recognise the need for and implement an effective model of reading development. In this way, literature is more accurately conveyed to students, eliminating the frustrations of mismatching abilities, interests and motivation to read texts. As a consequence of his study, Thomson formulated the following developmental model, which I believe can be aptly applied to primary school students and their responses to literature.

<i>Process Stages</i>	<i>Process Strategies</i>
Stage 1: Unreflective interest in action	a. Rudimentary mental images (stereotypes from film and television.) b. Predicting what might happen next in the short term.
Stage 2: Empathizing	c. Mental images of affect. d. Expectations about characters.
Stage 3: Analogising	e. Drawing on the repertoire of personal experiences, making connections between characters and one’s own life.
Stage 4: Reflecting on the significance of events (theme) and behaviour (distanced evaluation of characters)	f. Generating expectations about alternative possible long term outcomes. g. Interrogating the text, filling in gaps. h. Formulating puzzles, enigmas, accepting hermeneutic challenges.
Stage 5: Reviewing the whole work as the author’s creation	i. Drawing on literary and cultural repertoires. j. Interrogating the text to match the author’s representation with one’s own. k. Recognition of implied author.
Stage 6: Consciously considered relationship with the author, recognition of textual ideology, and understanding of self (identity theme) and of one’s own reading process	l. Recognition of implied reader in the text, and the relationship between implied reader and implied author. m. Reflexiveness, leading to understanding of textual ideology, personal identity and one’s own reading process.

Fig. 1 : Thomson’s Developmental Model Of Reader Response.
(Understanding Teenager’s Reading, 1987.p. 360.)

The six stages of Thomson's model, which emerged from the reading behaviour of the students in his study, are progressive and depict the processes of literary development which he believes that readers experience. As Thomson (1987) states,

the kind of satisfaction readers experience are ordered in successive stages of increasing complexity of responses... and are cumulative.

(p. 177.)

He also outlined specific reading strategies identifiable at each developmental stage of the model. In the initial stage of 'Unreflective interest in action', readers at this level enjoy stories with simplistic plots and characters. Their interest does not go beyond the actions which the characters are engaged in and is based on stereotypes. Readers at this stage require continual excitement and action to captivate them and are disinterested in "hermeneutic puzzles" or subtleties of motivation". (p. 178.) They do anticipate in relation to short term events. At the second stage of 'Empathizing' readers have a deeper interest in the characters and in their feelings, motivations and thoughts. Their expectations are more developed in that they implicate predictions about characters' feelings as well as simple actions. Readers responding at the third stage of 'Analogising' move beyond the aforementioned reading behaviours to also draw parallels or connections between their own lives and what they are reading. They discern personal implications for themselves from events taking place within the text. At the fourth stage within the model, 'Reflecting on the significance of events and behaviour', readers are (as the title implies) responding in a more reflective manner. They have begun the process of "decentring" which involves considering events and behaviour from a perspective outside that of your own and your own experience. Readers at this stage are able to 'step back' to view the text in a more detached fashion without sacrificing any involvement in the text. They have begun filling in gaps and "entertaining a range of long term outcomes". (p. 179) The fifth stage of the model 'Reviewing the whole work as the author's creation' would involve recognition of the author as the constructor of the text and consideration of the differences / similarities existing between the world view that the author is presenting and one's own view. Reader response at the final stage in the model 'Consciously considered relationship with the author, recognition of textual ideology and understanding of self and of one's own reading

process' entails a rather sophisticated awareness of the "textual functions of implied author and implied reader - and the relationship between them". (p. 179) Readers at this stage would be exploring the ideological implications of a text, examining their own identities as a reader and considering their own reading processes. The final two stages of Thomson's (1987) model are clearly indicative of highly developed degrees of reader response. One would not anticipate sophisticated response at either of these levels when considering the responses of primary school children.

This model clearly demonstrates the stage of reading development achieved by students based upon the behaviour they exhibit during a literary experience. With this insight, one may also attempt to implement strategies to aid children in progressing from stage to stage, and developing their responses to literature. The stage at which a student is responding to literature will affect the level and / or type of pleasure attained from his or her reading. As Rosenblatt (1968) asserts,

the teacher seeks to aid the discovery of the satisfaction of literature (by)
improving the individual's capacity to evoke meaning from the text by leading
them to reflect self critically on this process.

(p.12)

A pivotal goal in the primary school literacy program should be not only to develop mere 'functional' literacy but also to cultivate the response skills necessary to fully experience the 'pleasure of the text'. My research aims to demonstrate the value of developing children's responses to literature by using the framework outlined by Thomson (1987), and to show how responses to literature as a creative art form develop in sophistication.

Chapter 2.

Research Questions

The research questions directing and underpinning my study are ~

- Based upon the students' behaviour during (and upon reflection of) the literary experiences, at what process stages is each of the children responding according to Thomson's (1987) Developmental Model of Reader Response to Literature?
- What elements of the text are instrumental in producing these responses?

These questions were designed to facilitate the investigation of what it was that children found pleasurable about the literary experience; and to analyze the observed reading behaviours and responses. The questions stated possess the four essential characteristics that Fraenkel & Wallen (1993) list as exemplifying "good research questions". These are feasibility, clarity, significance and ethical accountability. In accordance with Fraenkel & Wallen (1993), the aim of these was to investigate the relationship existing between the students' responses to literature and the pleasure they perceived themselves (or demonstrated) to be deriving from the reading.

Chapter 3.

Methodology

In response to the two fundamental research questions pertaining to children's responses to literature, a qualitative (case) study of a group of students was carried out. Four 'keen readers' (two male and two female) from the same Year five class were selected and the data was obtained through literary sessions, supported by a questionnaire and interviews.

A pre entry questionnaire was administered to the whole class to ascertain the nature of the students' reading habits, interests and perceptions (See Appendix p.1 & 2). The information obtained from this questionnaire was reviewed and sorted, with particular emphasis upon the questions pertaining to the students' reading habits, preferences, interests, dislikes and desires to discuss their reading. This information was then used in conjunction with the class teacher to aid in selecting the students, developing the sessions and selecting the books to be read and discussed. Two girls - Emma and Amy, and two boys - Kevin and Greg, were chosen to participate in the sessions. These students were chosen on the basis of their interests and reading behaviours, as well as with a deliberate consideration of maintaining a gender balance within the group. Before beginning the study, permission from the school principal, class teacher, parents and students was obtained. This was accomplished via letters of disclosure and permission slips (Appendix p.3).

The initial literary interactions adopted the format of a 'reading group' run once a week, for three weeks during the students' fourth term. During these (audio taped) sessions we read and examined three picture books designed to challenge older readers,

- How To Live Forever by Colin Thompson;
- Grandad's Gifts by Peter Gouldthorpe and Paul Jennings; and
- The Coming of the Surfman by Peter Collington.

Picture books were used in the sessions due to time restrictions and also because they are a rich source of discussion and engagement in the text. They appeared to be more appropriate to the group situation which was to be instituted. As Michaels & Walsh (1990) assert,

the picture book... is also a very effective tool in the learning process, as it provides suitable contexts for the exploration of reflection upon learning. Picture books slow down the reading process so that students are able to become reflective, in the way that Jack Thomson (1987) advocates in his study *Understanding Teenagers Reading*.

(p. 1)

The particular texts to be read were chosen after consulting various guides to children's literature and reading a variety of picture books designed to challenge older readers. The texts chosen concerned different subject matter, formats and tones and appeared appropriate to the students' interests and reading preferences. We engaged in discussion concerning the books and the experiences, as well as discussing general literature issues.

During the sessions, the tone was kept fairly informal and relaxed. The students sat with myself on a rug outdoors and where possible had a copy of the text each. In the initial session, the reading of the picture book occurred in the group context with a single copy of the text read by myself. In the following weeks, multiple copies of the 'designated' text were available to the students for individual reading of the one picture book. The sessions commenced with a 'pre reading' discussion of the picture book's cover, title and other features. The students were involved in prediction exercises followed by reading the text. Upon reading the text, we engaged in discussion pertaining to the specific text and then moved to more general discussions regarding the reading process, students' reading practices, roles and responses. The fourth and final session adopted the format of individual interviews in order to gain a more personal and individualized insight to the students' literary perceptions and also to clarify any information obtained in the group sessions.

Analysis of the data related to the two research questions. Discussion and interviews were used to address students' pleasure in the text and its determinants. The group sessions and individual interviews were transcribed in order to classify the students' responses. Analysis involved annotating and marking the transcripts to distinguish each students' individual responses and contributions. The transcripts were then divided into stages of response using Thomson's (1987) 'Developmental Model of Reader - Response to Literature' to ascertain the developmental stages of the students and the nature of their responses. Once the

students' responses had been classified according to the stage that they indicated, they were further divided into individual students' response at each stage. These classifications were then verified by the project supervisor. This process was aimed at eliminating the presence or influence of any biases or assumptions.

Also incorporated in the data analysis stage was the initial pre entry questionnaire. Once the students' responses were analyzed according to the reader response model, additional interpretation of the four students' responses in the pre entry questionnaire was considered to make some observations regarding the students' interests, preferences, backgrounds and the levels at which they are responding, particularly in regard to the specific texts. This provided some supplementary information into the origins of students' literary pleasure as well as assisting the selection of the four participants. All of this information was then collated and employed to form the four individual case studies encapsulating each students' level of response and demonstrated reading behaviour. The pre entry questionnaires were also analysed to ascertain a general sense of the class' responses and reported upon.

Borg, W., & Gall, M. (1989) write that

the case study, in its simplest form, involves an investigator who makes a detailed examination of a single subject or group or phenomenon.

(Educational Research : An Introduction. p. 202.)

I believe that this basic process describes the research undertaken in this study. The pivotal focus was a group of primary school students and their responses to literature. The small group situation, in contrast to a whole class or wider study, enabled a more detailed investigation and generated responses of a 'deeper' or increasingly insightful nature.

The methods of data collection used in this research project are similar to with those which

Best, J., & Kahn (1993) describe as constituting the case study 'model'. They include

- 1.Observation by the researcher or his or her informants of physical characteristics, social qualities or behaviour.
- 2.Interviews with the subject(s), relatives, friends, teachers, counsellors, and others.
- 3.Questionnaires, opinionnaires, psychological tests and inventories.
- 4.Recorded data from newspapers, schools, courts, clinics, government agencies,

or other sources.

(Research In Education, p. 192.)

These four techniques were employed at various stages throughout the study. Some of the common problems pertaining to the case study approach to research include subjective bias, generalizability, reliability and validity. Being a qualitative method, one cannot overtly secure or facilitate the elimination of any extraneous factors, variables or influences.

Reliability of the case study eludes accurate experimental controls, but can be instituted on a different dimension. Burns(1997) states that

reliability in case studies is more focused on dependability that the results make sense and are agreed on by all concerned.

(Introduction To Research Methods, 3rd Ed. p. 382.)

This form of reliability was ensured by means of triangulation of the data (with the project supervisor and subjects' classroom teacher), explicit reporting of any personal biases that may be exerting influence upon the data collection and analysis, extensive documentation and concrete representation of the sessions, interviews and questionnaires conducted. These techniques also augment the validity of the study in conjunction with utilizing multiple sources and verification of the procedural elements concerning the research project.

Chapter 4.

Results of the Pre Entry Questionnaire

The pre entry questionnaire (see Appendix pp. 1 - 2) was administered to the entire year five class, prior to the literary sessions. The respondents consisted of fourteen girls and eleven boys. The students' responses will be analysed as one group of twenty five.

The questionnaire requested information about the students' interests, reading practices and preferences. It initially asked for the students' names and ages. All but one of the students were ten years old, with the exception being eleven years old. The students were requested to state their favourite subject(s) at school. In response to this, sixteen of the students nominated reading, with maths and art or phys ed also featuring prominently.

When questioned as to some of their interests and hobbies, a large number of the students' responses focused upon sports, including swimming, gymnastics, netball, running, calisthenics, hockey, ballet, football, soccer, water polo, tee ball, and tennis. Reading was mentioned by three of the students, other responses including shopping, stamp collecting, Barbies, collecting Cabbage Patch Kids, pets, train sets, Nintendo 64, boating, television and musical instruments such as the piano and violin.

When asked why they liked these things the majority of the students (15) incorporated "fun" into their reply. "Being good" at the activity, "involvement", "amusement", "fitness", "relieving boredom" and the opportunity to "run around" and "be active" were also popular responses. "Making friends" was listed by one of the students' as was "cute and funny" in relation to pets. One boy whose interests included boating stated that he was "brought up on them".

When questioned as to whether or not they liked to read, sixteen of the students responded 'yes', three responded negatively stating 'no' and six wrote 'sort of' and 'sometimes'. In

general, the responses were positive with three students in all attesting that they did not like to read.

<i>STUDENTS</i>	<i>YES</i>	<i>NO</i>	<i>SORT OF / SOMETIMES</i>
25	16	3	6

Table 1.2 : Responses to the question “do you like reading?” on the pre entry questionnaire.

When questioned further as to the sort of books that they most liked to read, the responses were varied and incorporated genres of texts, authors and book titles. The most prevalent responses from the students included Emily Roddas and her Teen Power inc. series, Morris Gleitzman, Roald Dahl, the Redwall series, Star Wars, Brian Jacques and adventure type texts. Also mentioned were Lord of the Rings, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, The Hobbit, Oddbodz and Famous Five books. Some favoured authors were also Paul Jennings, Enid Blyton and texts that incorporated mysteries; puzzle; fantasy; crime; ballet; science fiction; action and short stories.

The subsequent question inquired as to why the students enjoyed these books. The bulk of the students registered excitement as the prime motivation as well as humour, fun and interest. Some of the lesser responses comprised of challenging, spooky, puzzling, adventure, mystery, easy, sad, thick and ‘don’t want to put them down’. Two students didn’t know why they enjoyed the books they did.

The students were then asked “what sort of books don’t you like?”. The responses were again diverse and ranged from baby books to fat, thick or long, long ones. Other dislikes were war books, Jon Marsden, Emily Roddas (boring), boring, unadventurous, and scary texts. One girl responded that she had no dislikes. Some of the males expressed a distaste for romantic texts, fairy tales, ‘girl’ books and the Goosebumps series.

In answer to the question ‘how often do you read?’, the students responded with answers such as everyday, every night, once a day, “over one (and two) hundred pages a week”, one

hour every day and as much as I can. The responses demonstrated frequent reading practices.

Differences occurred in response to the question “is most of your reading done at home or at school?”. The majority of girls said that the bulk of their reading was done at school, a moderate number stated school and three girls believed they did an even amount of reading in both places. The boys responded as doing the extent of their reading at home, some in both places and two boys read more at school.

In relation to the students’ school library borrowing practices, the majority of students (13) stated that they borrowed once a week, five said that they borrowed infrequently and five said that they borrowed two to three times or more weekly. Two boys did not borrow from the library, purchasing their own reading material.

These results indicate quite enthusiastic attitudes towards literature and reading and positive, frequent reading practices. The students, in general, expressed a desire for excitement, adventure, interest and humour in texts. They conveyed through the questionnaire, a comprehensive appreciation of fun and mystery in literature also. They had favourite genres, authors and books that incorporated both literary classics such as ‘The Hobbit’ and current authors or series. The respondents were wary of boring and long books that did not possess the elements of fun or adventure.

From these questionnaires, the four cases students were selected. This process involved reading the students’ responses and eliminating, first, those students that expressed a dislike of, or disinterest in reading. From those remaining questionnaires, the students who demonstrated an enthusiasm for reading and discussing their reading were chosen. This small group was then further restricted to the final four students, with a conscious effort to maintain a gender balance within the group. Those students finally selected displayed the potential to openly discuss texts and reading, were very positive towards reading and literature in their responses, and were students who appeared rather articulate in expressing their interests, reading practices, preferences and dislikes.

Case Study 1.

Kevin - Seeking Adventure.

Lukens (1990) affirms that people select, and read, literature fundamentally in pursuit of pleasure and, at times, an escape from the reality of life. Kevin (a pseudonym), an eleven year old ardent reader, is in pursuit of adventure. This quest for action and excitement is described by Kevin as the primary motivation for his reading and the principal source of any literary pleasure or satisfaction encountered in his literary interactions.

KEVIN : I like them because it just gives more adventure.

KEVIN : ... because they're adventurous. (Transcript 4, Appendix page 25)

PRE ENTRY QUESTIONNAIRE.

In response to the initial whole class survey administered prior to selecting the case study students and conducting the literary sessions, Kevin expressed a keen interest in reading. He described reading as one of his favourite 'subjects' at school, a preferred past time and one of his strengths. He indicated a preference for the 'Redwall' series of young adult novels written by Brian Jacques. These can be described as fantasy/action type texts maintaining rather sophisticated language and colorful imagery. Kevin expressed an appreciation for the adventurous element inherent in these books.

QUESTIONNAIRE : Why do you like them?

KEVIN : Because they're 'adventurest'(sic).

He expressed an aversion to "boring" books and revealed frequent reading habits, with most of his reading being accomplished at home. This disclosure actually contrasts with Thomson's (1987) observation that students were spending very little amounts of their leisure time engaged in reading for pleasure. Kevin also described his library borrowing habits as frequent. Borrowing "often" from the school library and "a lot" from libraries other than that at school. He also indicated that he enjoys discussing his reading (and books) with others, in particular his friends, to acquaint them with positive or negative experiences with books and to share opinions.

GENERAL BEHAVIOURS OBSERVED (DURING THE LITERARY SESSIONS).

Throughout the literary interactions Kevin maintained a generally high interest level and responded positively to the 'reading group' context. He seemed at ease conversing with the other students in the group and even articulating his ideas. However, he occasionally displayed a lack of confidence in himself and his reading ability. On several occasions he referred to the other students to question their thoughts or confirm his conceptions or predictions.

KEVIN : Do they have the book?

AMY : They might. (T 1, A 6)

KEVIN : Well, they moved house, they're in their Grandad's old house and - are they?

AMY : Yes. (T 2, A 15)

If challenged about an idea he occasionally withdrew his contribution, opting to remain reticent and allow others to confer on their ideas, rather than substantiating or advocating his own.

Kevin was rather attentive to the illustrations in the picture books used during the sessions.

KEVIN : Ooh, there's a big lake. (T 1, A 5)

KEVIN : They look funny, like they're from China. (T 1, A 6)

KEVIN : 'Cause it's all white it might be the moon. (T 1, A 8)

He was constantly drawing attention to the detail or humour apparent in these. He also referred to the illustrator at one point, commenting :

KEVIN : It's good how the illustrator got these different shades. (T 3, A 21)

Kevin was also discerning of a variety of details relative to the characters and plot elements described in the texts. These keen observations were then manipulated to form a number of conclusions or inferences, as will be evident upon further analysis of his responses. Despite manifesting some minor insecurities, Kevin fulfilled a pivotal role in his contributions to the reading sessions. He was enthusiastic, cooperative and often contributed a number of highly insightful textual responses and considerations.

LITERARY RESPONSES ANALYSED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THOMSON'S DEVELOPMENTAL MODEL OF READER RESPONSE.

Kevin manifested behaviours and literary responses that exemplified facets of each of the six stages identified by Thomson in his "Developmental Model of Reader Response" (1987). Despite being a developmental model, in which the initial stages constitute a basis upon which further development is established and attained, the fact that Kevin displayed responses indicative of the sixth and final level, does not suggest that this student is responding to literature at the highest possible degree of sophistication. This is due to the fact that each of the stages can be manifested at varying degrees of refinement. Rather, he has shown an element of this stage to a minor degree by considering the author and his own reading process, but not to a developed level of responsiveness. This notion is broached in Thomson's (1987) text Understanding Teenagers Reading : Reading Processes and the Teaching Of Literature in reference to the three main processes described by Harding (1967) and underpinning the developmental model proposed by Thomson.

"[They] are not successive stages of practised response to fiction. They can all occur in simple and rudimentary or in developed and subtle form."

(Thomson, 1987.p. 143)

The six stages of reader response pivotal to the data analysis and satisfaction of the research questions sustaining this study, are not to be perceived as precise consecutive levels occurring in isolation or distinct sequential order. They are interdependent but can be manifested at varying degrees of interpretation. In particular, with primary school aged children it is unfeasible to attribute a stage of development to occasional indicative behaviours or to anticipate highly developed responses beyond the third and fourth stages of analysing and reflecting. Thomson states that

the development of a mature response to literature involves a progressive movement from close emotional involvement to more distanced reflective detachment, and from an interest in self to an interest in other people and the human condition.

(1978, p.153.)

This implicates moving beyond a concern only for self and learning to surpass our own egocentricity. To expect such a feat on the part of ten and eleven year old children is

impractical and irrational. Consequently, evidence of reader response in the final two stages of Thomson's (1987) model would presumably exist only to a minor degree.

Kevin's development of reader response can be classified as response to the relevant literature primarily from the stance of Thomson's third stage - 'Analogising' and the fourth stage - 'Reflecting On The Significance Of Events and Behaviour'. This view is supported by the data which indicates that the predominant nature of Kevin's interaction with the text involved scrutiny of the text, extensive forecasts regarding possible outcomes and 'problem solving' type approaches to reflecting upon the text and the characters within. This level of response does suggest inclination towards decentring processes and initial gestures of detachment directing deeper understanding of the text. In this way, Kevin demonstrated the emergence of looking beyond himself to regard the text from a more detached perspective. Kevin exhibited a proportion of mature responses which establish him as a developing reader.

Kevin's enthusiasm for excitement and adventure portrayed in texts could be construed in its most basic form as embodying the initial stage of 'Unreflective Interest In Action' through satisfaction arising from action, suspense and "wish fulfillment".

(Thomson, 1983, p. 185)

KEVIN : I like them because it just gives more adventure. (T 4, A 25)

Kevin's enthusiasm for adventure transcends this unreflective interest only in regard to characters. He demonstrated a concern for the characters' emotions and reasoning, contemplated their personalities and actions as individual people.

KEVIN : The surfman was quiet, he didn't talk. He was trying to split up the groups, he was nice. The boy felt sorry for the surfman sometimes. (T 3, A 22)

These affective comments are in fact all judgments which illustrate Kevin's regard for the characters - beyond simple observation and encompassing a reflective interaction with text. Characteristic of this initial stage is ignorance or apparent endorsement of stereotypes either candidly expressed or subtly implied in a text. Kevin did demonstrate a stereotypical view of traditional family structure and roles, commenting :

KEVIN : There's his Dad, sitting in front of the t.v. watching football. (T 1, A 10)

This was a presumption made from the accompanying illustrations which depicted the male figure seated in the lounge room. Despite this stereotypical view Kevin's comprehension of, and responses to the text exceed those representative of a child accomplishing or persisting at this level of development. His many short term predictions relating to outcomes, character behaviours and affective elements were highly refined and often confirmed or modified by Kevin.

KEVIN : I think he might go into their backyard and make a little cubby with them - so he can treasure them. (T 2, A 13)

KEVIN : The cover made it look like a different story. It made it look like the Grandad was dead, and those were his gifts that the boy is carrying. (T 2, 15)

The second of Thomson's (1987) stages - "Empathising" is another in which Kevin displayed a number of responses. These are also of a highly developed nature which indicates that his development of response is moving beyond this stage also. Thomson associates sophistication of this responsive stage with "developed psychological understanding" of the characters, implying that the greater the level of psychological understanding the more "imaginative sympathy" will be experienced. Kevin's manifestation of this 'empathy' is evident in his emotional involvement with the characters, hypothesizing of prospects relating to characters' inspirations and emotive responses. He expresses an interest not only in the course of action within the text, but also the effect that this has upon the characters.

KEVIN : He might be like somebody new and nobody likes him so they won't let him use the ocean. (T 3, A 18)

KEVIN : Maybe she doesn't like cruelty to animals. (T 2, A 13)

KEVIN : 'Cause then he'll turn out like him, and then, now, he realises that he won't be able to do old things like, he won't be able to drink, or smoke...or shave a bad word into his head! Or be famous. (T 1, A 7)

These textual responses can be perceived as the foundation from which students may be moved to higher levels of response as they are the initial step to exploring interests other than self and consideration of external entities.

Kevin displayed the third of Thomson's stages in both a rudimentary and slightly more sophisticated fashion, indicating scope for further development pertaining to "Analogising".

While his responses to the text were abundant with references to personal experiences and affiliations :

KEVIN : Then he can go into nightclubs and stuff. (T 1, A 7)

KEVIN : I have a lemon tree. (T 2, A 14)

KEVIN : He looks like Frank Sinatra 'cause his eyes are really blue. (T 2, A 15)

KEVIN : There's no gangs at our school, but at Mt. Lawley High there is... (T 3, A 21)

these were frequently at an elementary level. Kevin was continually verbalising existing connections between the text and any of his comparable personal experiences. A number of these can be attributed to influences from the media or possibly from older children.

KEVIN : There's a Dragon group, the Dragon Lords. They killed somebody outside Timezone. (T 3, A 21)

He fashioned numerous links to various movies and books, efficiently identifying the discrepancies between them.

KEVIN : This reminds me of Ants - the movie. 'Cause it's set like they're all little, and it's all little people... And like in this it's in a book, but in Ants it's like in here. (Gesturing around the oval.) (T 1, A 10)

Some responses of a more highly evolved nature extended to include enhanced bonds with the characters as people and achieve effects upon both the reader and their active involvement with the text. When questioned as to whether his feelings were consistent with the characters' when reading, Kevin replied :

KEVIN : Usually the same as the character's in the book. Like in Grandad's Gifts he tries to open the cupboard when his Grandad doesn't want him to - or anybody doesn't want him to. And I wanted him to, and I would've as well. (T 4, A 25)

In this statement, Kevin is actually referring to the course of action undertaken by the character rather than their feelings and embodies more of an empathic response than analysing. As Thomson (1987) observes there does exist a distinction between the levels of response at this stage.

It is important to distinguish between the students who draw on personal experience to inform their understanding of fiction, and students who, as well, go on to derive implications for their own lives from their reading.

(p. 198.)

The bulk of Kevin's responses and references to personal experiences personify the first function of informing his textual understanding. A small proportion of his allusions do demonstrate an emerging capacity to engage in the process of drawing analogies from the

text to ascertain a heightened awareness of himself and his life. However, these are the result of explicit questioning concerning the author's message to the reader.

KEVIN : Don't cut down trees for no reason, 'cause you might need them for something.
(T 2, A 16)

KEVIN : Don't try to live forever, 'cause then you can do stuff that you really want to do.
(T 1, A 12)

KEVIN : Don't get stuck between two things, like the hammers and the nails. (T 3, A 23)

None of these replies demonstrate Kevin drawing analogies from the text to discover something regarding himself. This attests to Kevin's range for further development within this stage and presentation of primarily elementary levels of response at this third level.

I believe that Thomson's (1983) fourth stage of 'Reflecting on the Significance of Events and Behaviour', is the one for which Kevin has exhibited the most capacity. However, due to his relatively young age, the responses (pertaining to this stage)procured from Kevin are nevertheless much less sophisticated than those of a more mature student wholly fulfilling this phase. The satisfaction realized by Kevin as a result of engaging in reading (and reading processes) is deemed by myself to partially emanate from an involvement in the reading behaviours and responses that exemplify a fulfillment of this stage - however elementary. I don't believe that Kevin has fully acquired the understandings identified by Thomson (1983) as exemplifying this stage :

“see[ing] literature as making complex statements about the human condition and recognise[ing] that these statements can only be understood by considering literary works as wholes.”

(p.203)

but has demonstrated responses indicative of a developing awareness of these perceptions. Kevin effectively generated expectations about alternative possible long term outcomes on a number of occasions.

KEVIN : 'Cause then he'll turn out like him, and then, now, he realises that he won't be able to do old things like, he won't be able to drink, or smoke...or shave a bad word into his head! Or be famous. (T 1, A 7)

KEVIN : Maybe if he dies or goes somewhere, the kid can take over. Then he'll know what to do.(T 3, A 20)

In these instances, Kevin has surpassed the simple short term predictions characteristic of the first stage of Thomson's (1987) model, to create predictions more long term in nature.

He also demonstrated recognition of these and modification of his ideas / responses where necessary.

KEVIN : The cover made it look like a different story. It made it look like the Grandad was dead, and those were his gifts that the boy is carrying. (T 2, A 15)

This statement during reading is evidence that Kevin was reflecting upon his earlier prediction and modifying his expectations accordingly. Kevin appeared to enjoy interrogating the text and filling gaps during and after reading. Even if only at a rudimentary degree, this behaviour was consistently displayed by Kevin.

KEVIN : Why would somebody want to live in a book? (T 1, A 5)

KEVIN : This must be somewhere else 'cause this is Earth. (Pointing.) (T 1, A 8)

KEVIN : 'Cause it's all white it might be the moon. (T 1, A 8)

KEVIN : He (the author) must live in W.A or something because it says 'Quokka'. Or he must have gone to Rottnest. They only live in Rottnest. (T 1, A 10)

KEVIN : Well, because his gifts were his eyes, that's why the fox had them. Because you can't bring the person back alive. (T 2, A 15)

KEVIN : At the end the fox's eyes were bright blue, same colour as his Grandad's. (T 2, A 15)

KEVIN : But wouldn't the water go everywhere? (T 3, A 19)

KEVIN : Why didn't he like ban them for two weeks so they learnt their lesson then let them back on? And why didn't anybody else use it? Why just those two gangs? (T 3, A 21)

Kevin legitimately questioned the texts, made (often subtle) linkages throughout the texts and contrived numerous insightful inferences and conclusions. Some of Kevin's questions of the text do exhibit an element of dissatisfaction of the text, particularly with 'The Coming Of The Surfman' where Kevin questions the surfman's actions, the whole concept of the wave machine and the community in which the book is set. However, on whole, I believe the bulk of Kevin's responses at this stage represent a source of enjoyment in resolving queries of the text and interpreting significant events or characters' behaviour.

In relation to the fifth stage of Thomson's (1983) Developmental Model of Reader Response, 'Reviewing the Work as the Whole Author's Creation', I do not consider Kevin to have attained (or demonstrated achievement of) this stage of literary response. However, he has shown suggestion of responding in accordance with the strategies exemplary of this stage - without any understanding of the notions that underpin them. In the most basic form, Kevin did draw on his immature literary repertoire and recognise the text as an author's

creation. This was executed without appreciating the implications the presence of an author possesses for the text, the reader and their interpretations of the text. Those responses indicating a simplistic realization of this stage are primarily grounded in statements simply referring to and acknowledging the existence of the author:

KEVIN : Yeah, in Grandad's Gifts, the boy is Paul Jennings. Because he keeps saying "I", "I have". (T 4, A 26)

KEVIN : He (the author) must live in W.A. or something because it says "Quokka"... (T 1, A 10)

KEVIN : He likes fantasy (the author)...I'd ask him to draw me something. (T 1, A 11)

KEVIN : It's good how the illustrator got different shades. (T 3, A 21)

Kevin perceives the main character to be a representation of the author by the use of first person tense throughout the story. He has demonstrated some understanding that an author's personal experiences will impress upon the text, noting that in order for a text to contain reference to quokkas the author must have certain knowledge pertaining to these native Western Australian animals.

It is unlikely that Kevin is responding at the sixth level of Thomson's (1983) reader response model - 'Consciously Considered Relationship with the Author, Recognition of Textual Ideology, and Understanding of Self and of One's Own Reading Process'. He is by no means achieving this stage, however, has presented a small number of responses within this domain. Once more, they are of a basic nature. He discussed what he deemed to be the easiest book to read, the use of pictures in texts and things he would say to the author.

KEVIN : Probably How To Live Forever because it doesn't have many words in it and it's nice and easy to read. It's got lots of pictures in it. (T 4, A 27)

KEVIN : It sort of tells the story more. (Use of pictures.) (T 4, A 27)

KEVIN : It's pretty hard to understand. 'Cause you have to work it out, like why they would want to hide the book and stuff. (T 1, A 12)

KEVIN : If a year 1 read it, they wouldn't understand it. (T 2, A 16)

These type of responses denote a consideration of what makes reading easy or difficult and the significance of some features of the text for the reader. The following was a statement in reply to the question - "Do you ever find yourself thinking or saying things to yourself about the author?"

KEVIN : Yeah, in The Coming Of The Surfman maybe he should have come back or maybe he should have stopped, so that if it broke down he should have just stopped and

not done it until they learnt their lesson. (T 4, A 26)

When questioned as to whether or not he agreed with the author's assertions, Kevin often agreed with what he perceived to be the perspective of the author, but also stated :

KEVIN : I reckon it's better for somebody to find out things for themselves. (T 1, A 12)

Kevin did not reflect on his interpretations in relation to anyone else's, his reading processes, nor did he consider the ideology of the texts read. These behaviours are not to be expected of a reader his age or maturity without specific guidance and explicit development of reader response.

As previously asserted, Kevin's manifestation of each of Thomson's (1983) stages of 'Developmental Reader Response to Literature' to varying degrees, does not indicate that he is reading at the most advanced level of responsiveness. Rather, he has demonstrated a competence in responding at the initial two levels ('Unreflective Interest In Action' and 'Empathizing') and surpassed these to exhibit developing responses in the third and fourth stages of 'Analogising' and 'Reflecting On The Significance Of Events And Behaviour'. The responses acquired that befit the fifth and sixth stages of the model are reasonably unrefined and immature representations, therefore, not representative of developed responses at this level.

Case Study 2.
Greg - Reality Vs Fiction

Greg is a ten year old reader who is seeking an effective balance between reality and fiction. He wishes to engage his imagination when reading but also retain a precision and sincerity associated with basis in fact. Greg's literary satisfaction arises from such unification within the one text.

PRE ENTRY QUESTIONNAIRE.

Via the pre entry questionnaire conducted with the entire class prior to commencing the reading sessions, Greg identified reading as one of his interests and hobbies and a favoured subject at school alongside mathematics and science. He expressed an enthusiastic attitude towards reading, responding in writing with - "Yes! Can I read another book?" and describing this pastime as "fun". He initially stated a preference for adventure, action and mystery books but altered his response to include all books excluding "romance and girl books". Greg could not articulate his reasons for enjoying the aforementioned book types, responding to the question "Why do you enjoy these books?" with "I don't no (sic)".

Greg asserted that he read "all week", with an equal proportion of his reading being executed at home and at school. He responded that he purchases all of his own books and never borrows from the school or other libraries. However, library practices at his school mean that Greg is obliged to engage in library book borrowing at some time. Greg indicated that he occasionally enjoys discussing the books he has read, primarily with his parents, family and friends.

GENERAL BEHAVIOURS OBSERVED (DURING THE LITERARY SESSIONS).

During the literary sessions Greg appeared rather detached and conveyed a disinterested attitude towards the texts and the sessions. This is not likely to be attributed to shyness as on a number of occasions, and socially, Greg was quite boisterous and demonstrated a

confident manner. His responses were assured, yet indifferent - many conveying disinterest or sarcasm in tone and body language.

GREG : They probably rot. (T 1, A 4)

GREG : Yeah, I live forever. (T 1, A 9)

GREG : Maybe he's trying to find a new Dad for his Mum. He murdered his other Dad!
(T 3, A 22)

A small number of Greg's responses were rather insightful but it appeared that he did not apply a great deal of effort or contemplation in his responses to the text. He effectively interacted with the other students but was at times disparaging of others' contributions:

GREG : They don't. (T 3, A 19)

GREG : Doubt it! (T 3, A 21)

GREG : No - not them. The Inglewood Gang. (T 3, A 21)

GREG : No! These people. (T 1, A 5)

GREG : No! (T 1, A 9)

Greg was continuously questioning others' responses and the text. He also responded to the illustrations within the text,

GREG : If he's a surfer wouldn't he get a tan? (T 3, A 18)

GREG : What is that big thing? (T 3, A 18)

GREG : And he's wearing all surf gear... He looks like a lifesaver. (T 3, A 18)

GREG : That's the only colourful thing. (T 3, A 21)

GREG : This picture reminded me of that front area, the scaffolding in front of school.
(T 3, A 21)

and also made reference to the illustrator, commenting :

GREG : And he used shadows a lot so you knew they were there. (T 3, A 21)

Greg often portrayed an attitude of apathy towards the literature, nevertheless, he imparted a number of responses that transcended this disinterest to reveal instances of insight and reflective thought. I believe this student had more potential for responding to literature than was demonstrated in the sessions. However, analysis of the data can only cover the exhibited behaviours and literary responses.

LITERARY RESPONSES ANALYSED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THOMSON'S DEVELOPMENTAL MODEL OF READER RESPONSE.

Based upon the behaviour and responses evident during the sessions, I believe that Greg's contributions are predominantly indicative of developed response at the first and second stages of Thomson's (1983) 'Developmental Model of Reader Response' - 'Unreflective Interest in Action' and 'Empathizing'. Upon initial consideration, it would seem that Greg has not advanced past the inaugural stage in the model as he represents a very detached observer type role when reading.

GREG : Like a movie, I'm watching it. (T 4, A 30)

GREG : Well, I didn't really think what was going to happen, I just sort of followed the story. (T 4, A 30)

However, upon further examination of the data, it becomes apparent that Greg has exhibited to varying degrees a number of the other stages - however subconsciously.

GREG : I don't really have feelings, I just read it and see it in my mind. (T 4, A 30)

This assertion in fact contradicts a number of his responses characterizing mental images of affect and expectations about various characters. Greg does not appear to have developed a great deal of self awareness regarding his literary responses. Some of the responses that counter Greg's claims of ignorance include those that reveal consideration of possible outcomes, the characters and affective reflections.

GREG : What if he died and they didn't know? (T 1, A 6)

GREG : He reminds me of the surfer - I can't remember his name. (T 3, A 22)

GREG : He's a grumpy guts. (T 3, A 22)

GREG: (They were included) 'cause they were guarding the Chinese books. (T 1, A 11)

Thomson (1987) describes the satisfaction procured by readers responding at his initial stage of 'Unreflective Interest in Action' to emanate from

the excitement of continuous action, spectacle and suspense. They tend to see characters merely as objects in the action playing out stereotyped roles, and thus they show little interest in, or imaginative insight into, their feelings and motivations.
(p. 185)

This description does appear to describe Greg's behaviour during the sessions and many of his textual responses - particularly his own understanding of his responses. Greg's

aforementioned attention to the illustrations and appearance of the characters also reflects the notion of rudimentary images as a focal reading response associated with Thomson's first stage.

GREG : I don't really have feelings , I just read it and see it in my mind. (T 4, A 30)

GREG : He's wearing all surf gear. (T 3, A 18)

GREG : He's got no teeth. (T 1, A 10)

Greg perceives himself as a detached onlooker when reading, likened by him to the act of watching a movie. However, even when viewing a film, we engage with the characters, plot and at a further level - the film's creators. It is difficult to read in a distinctly removed manner, as will become evident in further discussion of Greg's literary responses. Greg also supported Thomson's assertion that readers responding at the initial stage view the characters within a text as executing "stereotyped roles". He questioned the family structure depicted in How To Live Forever and also commented upon the living standards of the surfman in The Coming Of The Surfman -deeming them inadequate.

GREG : Where's his Mum? (T 1, A 10)

GREG : Is that his home? ... It's not a very good home. (T 3, A 20)

Greg often engaged in short term predictions pertaining to the text, incorporating the title, text cover and illustrations to assist in his predictions. A number of his predictions were of a 'negative' nature, in a way foreboding or anticipating danger/evil.

GREG : He goes into the cupboard and steals gifts. (T 2, A 13)

GREG : Bad stuff. Evil stuff. (T 2, A 13)

GREG : They probably rot. (T 1, A 4)

GREG : He'll be caught between time, forward and backward. (T 1, A 7)

GREG : Then he owns the store, and bans them from coming in. If they do he shoots them!
He shoots the gangs - the kid, if they go on the wave machine. (T 3, A 20)

I believe that a number of Greg's short term predictions reflect the variety of texts that he enjoys reading - fantasy and adventure type texts such as 'Talent' by . Despite making numerous short term predictions during the literary sessions, when questioned as to the difficulty in making predictions during the sessions Greg claimed not to have thought about the short term predictions within the text.

GREG : No. Well, I didn't really think what was going to happen. I just sort of followed the story. It would have been sort of easy. I don't know why. (T 4, A 30)

However, when queried about what devices could be used to aid short term prediction, Greg replied :

GREG : Just like things that happened before and things that happened then and just put them together. (T 4, A 30)

I believe that this response displays a capacity for forming meaningful predictions (which were often correct - but more importantly always feasible possibilities) and a progression towards Thomson's further stage of 'Reflecting on the Significance of Events and Behaviour' - at an immature level. Some of Greg's predictions were quite perceptive and manifested his consideration of past and present elements of the texts in predicting short term outcomes. Greg was able to effectively hypothesize as to the significance of the unusually located surf store and use this to predict the construction of a manufactured surf facility.

GREG : Because they make an artificial surf place. (T 3, A 19)

Greg also demonstrated an example of what Lee, D (1979) describes as the "sampling, predicting, confirming process" which constitutes reading. This process involves the sampling of relevant and significant language and events and utilizing these to make short term predictions. The final component involves the reader evaluating their own predictions and either confirming or reassessing their estimations.

GREG : Yeah, it's going to turn into a surf place. (T 3, A 19)

In relation to Thomson's second stage of 'Empathizing', Greg displayed limited responses indicative of mental images of affect and expectations about characters as typified by this stage. Again, this observed reading behaviour is contradicted by Greg in the interview context.

GREG : I don't really have feelings, I just read it and see it in my mind. (T 4, A 30)

When questioned as to whether his feelings when reading are often aligned with or different from the characters', Greg maintained that he does not become affectively involved in the experiences of the characters. However, a number of his responses during the literary sessions attest to an elementary realization of Thomson's empathizing stage.

Thomson (1987) comments that

readers whose empathy is developed have more understanding of the emotions experienced by both themselves and the characters they sympathize with.

(p.195)

I do not believe that Greg has a developed sense of empathy, particularly as he is rather unconscious of his own feelings. His responses that actualize empathy do so in a very rudimentary fashion.

“Merely to react to the predicament of the character (for instance with pity or joy for him or her) is the elementary form of empathising... readers are beginning to decentre... fundamentally readers are emotionally involved.”

(Thomson, J. (1987). Understanding Teenagers Reading. p. 194.)

Greg did respond emotionally and sympathetically on a number of occasions, but not in a highly reflective or considerate manner.

GREG : What if he died and they didn't know? (T 1, A 6)

GREG : (Shane is) interested, no, like curious. (T 2, A 15)

GREG : Well, the surfman's very quiet... He's a grumpy guts. (T 3, A 22)

Considering a character's personality traits or expressing sympathy for their circumstance does not embody empathy and particularly not in a developed fashion. Greg did verbalise some expectations about the characters within the texts, but did not generate many regarding their feelings.

GREG : But he won't break it. (T 1, A 6)

GREG : Now if the Nail gang came along, they would beat him up because he's in the Hammer head thing. (T 3, A 18)

GREG : Maybe he (the surfman) had that idea in the first place. (T 3, A 23)

Greg was able to engender expectations regarding the surfman's motives in The Coming Of The Surfman, in particular pertaining to his motivation for opening the surf store and artificial surf facility in a non coastal region.

GREG : And he would get more money here and be really rich. (T 3, A 22)

GREG : Yeah, 'cause the surfman was trying to get business... (T 3, A 23)

Despite these responses and Greg's statement in the interview session about the appeal of characters,

GREG : Their personality and how they express themselves. (T 4, A 30)

I believe that he does not fulfil this stage as he did not demonstrate an emphasis upon the character's feelings and motivations as a focal point of reading interest, response or satisfaction.

In regard to his third stage of 'Analysing', Thomson (1987) states that

it is important that we distinguish between students who draw on personal experience to inform their understanding of fiction, and students who, as well, go on to derive implications for their own lives from their reading.

(p. 198)

I believe that Greg did not illustrate a capacity to draw analogies from the texts to enhance or "gain a heightened awareness of himself" (p. 199). When questioned as to whether he had ever learnt anything about the world or himself from his reading, Greg asserted that he had not.

GREG : No. I can't recall anything. (T 4, A 31)

GREG : No, I just like to read. (T 4, A 31)

Once more, Greg has demonstrated his lack of self reflection and awareness of response when reading. He did, at times and in a basic fashion, draw upon his repertoire of personal experiences when reading and made some minor associations between the characters and his own life.

GREG : I have a cupboard at home. (T 2, A 14)

GREG : I've got lots of, we grow lots of vegetables. (T 2, A 14)

GREG : This picture reminded me of the front area, the scaffolding in front of our school.
(T 3, A 21)

These focus upon the environmental elements in the text rather than on character's feelings or even the plot of the text.

GREG : He should've got in the red file! (T 2, A 15)

GREG : I think I remember from 'Around The Twist'... This was on 'Around The Twist' - remember? (T 2, A 13)

GREG : Jaws! (T 3, A 21)

These illustrations are not sophisticated enough to indicate response at Thomson's third stage. The connections formed by Greg were only surface observations and utilized only to inform his understanding of the texts, rather than to heighten his own life, self understanding or relationships.

Greg appeared to enjoy questioning the text (and other's responses), filling in gaps and the challenge of solving puzzles. Whilst I do not maintain that Greg was responding at Thomson's fourth stage of 'Reflecting on the Significance of Events (Themes) and

Behaviour (Distanced Evaluation of Characters)', I do believe that this nature of response poses the most potential and satisfaction for Greg. He did not respond to the texts with the depth, reflection, consideration and metacognition necessary to satisfy this complex stage. Nonetheless, Greg did exhibit reading behaviours that indicated the potential to achieve this stage with development and greater contemplation of the affective elements of texts and the characters within - a formidable achievement for a ten year old boy.

Greg generated some possible long term outcomes,

GREG : He'll be caught between time, forward and backward. (T 1, A 7)

GREG : They probably rot. (T 1, A 4)

but did not consider the long term significance of various occurrences within the text or characters' actions. Greg was consistently posing questions of the text and the other children but did not demonstrate a great awareness of the frequency with which he interrogated the text when asked in the interview.

GREG : Sometimes (I ask questions of the book). Like in Grandad's Gifts he just closed the door and the thing could've just walked out - if it had its leg bones. (T 4, A 31)

Greg's questioning ranged from simple questions to clarify the story line or aid his comprehension of the text :

GREG : Where's his Mum? (T 1, A 10)

GREG : What is that big thing? (T 3, A 18)

GREG : Is that his home? (T 3, A 20)

to those discussing and theorizing possible occurrences / outcomes of actions and events:

GREG : Wouldn't they find it? (T 1, A 5)

GREG : I know, but wouldn't the people who live there find it? (T 1, A 5)

GREG : What if he died and they didn't know? (T 1, A 6)

GREG : But what if they had a battle? (T 3, A 18)

GREG : But then there'll be too many people. They'll be bumping into each other. What if there was somebody standing there? (T 3, A 19)

to queries regarding the logistics of components of the texts or characters' actions.

GREG : Wouldn't the rubber tyres just start to fall away after a while? They'd be all mushy. (T 3, A 20)

GREG : How come that one is still good? (T 3, A 20)

GREG : Why didn't he put in a security system? (T 3, A 21)

I believe that Greg's need for realism :

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I believe that Greg's need for realism :

GREG : Have good imagination, but still realistic. (T 4, A 31)

accompanying some fantasy elements results in his questioning of the text and filling gaps - in order to achieve the desired balance between imagination and reality. He requires a semblance of reality amidst the fictitious work and uses things such as appropriate appearances and plausible explanations to procure this equilibrium.

Greg also appeared to derive satisfaction in answering his own questions and 'solving' puzzles and challenges. He demonstrated quite a capacity for doing so.

GREG : (The four men were included in the story) 'cause they were guarding the Chinese books... and they've said nobody should ever read this... They might have read just a quarter of the book and they're just staying at that age. (T 1, A 11)

GREG : Maybe it was a special fox... I reckon it was cursed (the lemon tree) because the fox didn't want to die, and Grandad killed him... That was his grave... All the lemons were on the fox's tree were all parts of his body... And the Grandad's eyes were the only things that really worked in his body. (T 2, A 16)

GREG : There was probably too many other people down at the beach places, he wouldn't have got very good business... And he would get more money here and be really rich. (T 3, A 22)

A number of his perceptions were insightful and reflected an intelligent mind and aptitude for developing his literary response (and satisfaction). Greg recognized the significance of the eyes within the text Grandad's Gifts and verbalized the abstract relationship between the fox and Grandad. He reflected upon the significance of the Surfman's behaviour and actions in The Coming Of The Surfman and the purport of the Chinese men in How To Live Forever.

These insights, however elementary, precede the accomplishment of Thomson's fifth stage (1987) of 'Reviewing the Whole Work as the Author's Creation'. Thomson (1987, p. 210) asserted that he believed that very few students in his study were responding wholly at this level. Therefore, it is impractical to anticipate that these four ten year old students would be responding to such a degree, particularly a student such as Greg who has not demonstrated a great facility to consciously consider his responses. However, this is not to say that he did not illustrate glimpses of undeveloped responses - rudimentary manifestations of drawing on literary and cultural repertoires, interrogating the text to match the author's representation with his own and recognition of implied author. Greg did portray some

understanding of the author's position and the reality that a text is the creation of the author. He was always conscious of each text's author and considered other works by the same author.

GREG : This book reminds me of the book that came before this. It was the same person that did it. It's "How To Get ... - Something". (T 1, A 9)

GREG : Well, Paul Jennings did 'Around The Twist' (television) and he did this. (T 2, A 14)

Greg also made comparisons based upon his literary repertoire, comparing a television version of the story to the book.

GREG : The main character was a girl instead. (T 2, A 14)

He believed that due to the first person point of view utilized within the second and third texts, that the author was in fact the main character in the story. However, he maintained this idea with How To Live Forever, despite it being written in third person point of view.

GREG : The author was that kid. (T 2, A 16)

GREG : Yeah, like Peter Collington would be the surfman, Colin Thompson would have been the person who was looking for the book and Paul Jennings would've been Peter. He was interested and that. (T 4, A 31)

Greg also demonstrated recognition of the book's illustrator, commenting upon his motives and technique.

GREG : 'Cause he wants it to be nice. (T 3, A 21)

GREG : And he used shadows a lot so you knew they were there. (T 3, A 21)

When questioned regarding what type of person the author was Greg did not comment and when asked about why the author included information about the boy's Dad in The Coming of the Surfman, he stated :

GREG : So he could put a few more words in. (T 3, A 23)

GREG : To tell you about his life. And it will also tell you about the surfman. (T 3, A 23)

Greg's initial response was quite cynical but was amended to express a more thoughtful opinion and consideration of the author's motive. Greg did, through these responses, demonstrate very rudimentary illustrations of Thomson's fifth stage, but by no means exhibit a recognition of "the social convention by means of which authors present evaluations of human experience." (Thomson, J. 1987, p. 222.)

These few illustrations of response appropriate to the higher stages of Thomson's (1987) Developmental Model of Reader Response are again evident for the final stage of

‘Consciously Considered Relationship With the Author, Recognition of Textual Ideology, and Understanding of Self and of One’s Own Reading Processes’ but once more in no way indicate that the student is responding at this level. The responses themselves are of a highly elementary variety and do not reflect considered response to the literary work as a construct or contemplation of the personal significance of his interpretations of this construct.

Thomson (1987) describes his sixth stage as more of an extension of the fifth stage of the model than a distinct stage in its own right. Greg displayed immature responses at this level when questioned about the author’s motives in writing the text or when considering who the author wrote the text for.

GREG : Children. (T 1, A 11)

GREG : Yeah, little three year olds couldn’t understand it. So, probably aimed for about thirteen. (T 1, A 12)

GREG : Adventurous people. (T 2, A 16)

GREG : Some old people wouldn’t (like it). (T 2, A 16)

When asked what the author was attempting to convey to the reader, Greg often didn’t respond or relayed what he perceived as the ‘moral’ of the story.

GREG : Oh, that there’s always something bad about good things... And good things always have a bad point. (T 1, A 12)

GREG : Read the book! (T 2, A 16)

GREG : Don’t catch animals otherwise they curse you. (T 2, A 16)

GREG : Listen to people - and gangs are bad... Don’t join two gangs. (T 3, A 23)

These are very much surface observations or perceptions showing very little depth or insight into the author’s significance upon the literary work. When questioned as to whether he agreed with what he believed the author to be saying, Greg replied

GREG : Yes, I agree. If you used too much (good things). (T 3, A 23)

When questioned about his favourite authors and why they are his favourite, Greg was very vague but did refer to his need for both imagination and realism.

GREG : I can’t remember his name, someone Michaels, or something. He wrote ‘Talent’ and these two or three other books. (T 4, A 31)

GREG : I don’t know. They just write good books. Have good imagination but still realistic. (T 4, A 31)

GREG : ...I like a chapter book with a picture like every fifty pages. Because then you get to see what the landscape’s like but still let your imagination be more precise. (T 4, A 31)

Greg went on to describe his favourite part of the book ‘Talent’ and concluded with

GREG : I don't know why it is my favourite though. (T 4, A 32)

Greg did not consider what his own responses revealed or how they informed his understanding of self ('identity theme') or his reading processes.

Greg, despite responding only at a developed degree in Thomson's initial stage of 'Unreflective Interest in Action', possesses the potential to respond with greater self awareness and depth with development. He demonstrated an enthusiasm for questioning the text, filling in gaps and formulating puzzles when reading. I believe that although Thomson's (1987) initial stage was the only one that Greg can be said to have achieved to a developed level, he exhibited the capacity to fulfil further stages of the model - with greater reading and reflection upon the processes involved. Thomson (1987) states that

"poor readers can't make the book mean : no voices speak to them, no meanings match in with the meanings they already possess..."

(Understanding Teenagers Reading p. 226)

I do not believe that this applies to Greg. He is constructing meaning during reading - however basically, but is not yet considering the significance of this process for the text, the author or his own self understanding. I also think that Greg experienced some difficulty in verbally expressing / articulating his responses to the text - primarily as a result of his inhibited self awareness.

Case Study 3.

Amy - Excitement With Humour

Amy is a friendly ten year old reader who is simply in pursuit of fun. She is an eager reader who procures her literary satisfaction from engagement with a text, suspense and excitement.

AMY : It's very exciting and you don't know what's going to happen next. (T 4, A 34)

PRE ENTRY QUESTIONNAIRE :

In the pre entry questionnaire administered prior to conducting the literary sessions, Amy did not initially nominate reading as one of her favourite subjects at school, instead naming 'maths' and 'spelling'. She did later respond positively to the question asking whether or not she liked reading. Amy also expressed an interest in netball "because it's a fun sport and you make lots of friends". This reply (as well as her behaviour during the sessions) demonstrates Amy's friendliness and fun loving qualities.

Amy stated that she most liked to read "adventure and sometimes fantasy" books, enjoying them because of the humour and excitement in them. "Because their (sic) sometimes funny and always exciting". She expressed an aversion to scary texts "because they always exaggerate". Amy wrote that she reads two books a day and that this reading occurs both at school and at home - but primarily at home. She responded that she does not borrow books from the school library very often and usually reads books from home. Amy also stated that she borrows books from other libraries "whenever I go there". Amy replied that she does like to talk about the books that she has read, "usually to my friends because their (sic) exciting".

GENERAL BEHAVIOURS OBSERVED (DURING THE SESSIONS) :

During the three literary sessions and interview, Amy was relatively quiet spoken, but

nonetheless contributed readily and on occasions explained or defended the merit of her responses to the other students with confidence. She addressed the whole group when speaking, was rather observant and appeared very enthusiastic. Amy carefully thought about her responses, considered others' responses and often built upon or elaborated those of others.

EMMA : Behind, like, see how they have all different shelves, like behind all those books.

AMY : You know how you can push back some walls and it leads into different rooms.

(T 1, A 5)

AMY : Nobody lives in libraries.

GREG : No, these people.

AMY : Um, yeah, they might. (T 1, A 5)

EMMA : Oh, maybe he might've lived forever. 'Cause if he's the ancient child that means that it's old.

AMY : Maybe they're not living forever there, and they're living forever somewhere else.

(T 1, A 7)

Amy's demeanour and responses reflected her considerate disposition, positive nature and values.

AMY : It should be for everyone. (T 3, A 21)

AMY : That's not nice. (T 1, A 6)

She demonstrated an obvious enjoyment of texts and frequent reading habits in numerous responses and her general behaviour. Amy was very open to possibilities, experimenting with predictions and prospects. She appeared rather sensitive to the feelings and predicaments of characters, while also questioning the text.

LITERARY RESPONSES ANALYSED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THOMSON'S DEVELOPMENTAL MODEL OF READER RESPONSE.

Upon analysis of Amy's literary responses and contributions, I consider her to have demonstrated developed response at the initial and second of Thomson's (1987) stages of reader response ('Unreflective Interest in Action' and 'Empathizing'). She also manifested, to a lesser degree, responses denotative of the further stages within the model.

In relation to the inaugural stage of 'Unreflective Interest in Action', Amy fulfilled (and surpassed) the capacity to attend to the rudimentary mental images within the text and generate short term predictions. She did attest to securing literary satisfaction from the elements of continuous action, suspense and excitement within a text, entities that are characteristic of response at Thomson's initial stage.

AMY : ...very exciting stories where you don't know what's going to happen next.
(T 4, A 32)

AMY : ...because it's very exciting and you don't know what's going to happen next.
(T 4, A 34)

This recurrence of excitement and suspense as positive attributes attests to the significance of these elements for Amy. She also made some comments or observations which were of a surface or shallow nature, primarily related to illustrations within the text though.

AMY : It's all dark. (T 3, A 21)

AMY : He's standing on a plank. (T 1, A 6)

AMY : There's a car there. (T 1, A 6)

AMY : They're all bowing to him and then they... (T 1, A 6)

AMY : There's a little aeroplane. (T 1, A 7)

However, the bulk of these observations were actually succeeded by more insightful reflections upon the significance of the observed item.

AMY : They're all bowing to him and then they... (T 1, A 6)

AMY : That's why they are in front of the Chinese books. (T 1, A 6)

I believe that Amy transcended the immature inclination to view the text's characters merely as objects executing stereotyped roles and disregard their feelings, motivations and emotional responses. Rather, she was quite cognizant of the emotional dimension accompanying the characters and did not demonstrate a great regard for stereotypes.

Amy made numerous short term predictions prior to and during reading. She often contributed a number of possibilities and was continuously augmenting her contributions and considering those of others.

AMY : Behind another book.

KEVIN : They might have clues around the place that tells you where to go.

AMY : Maybe if he goes into a hole there might be secret passageway. (T 1, A 5)

Amy was invariably verbalizing her thoughts and predictions, continuously speaking her mind .

AMY : In a secret room. (T 1, A 5)

AMY : I reckon that his Grandfather has died. His Grandfather's died and he's got all the gifts...No, like from the will. (T 2, A 13)

AMY : A ghost. (T 2, A 13)

AMY : A surfboard store? (T 3, A 18)

AMY : I think maybe he could build something artificial...It could be a wave pool - that's an artificial thing. (T 3, A 19)

These comments weren't explicitly directed at anyone or in response to questions, but simply examples of Amy thinking aloud. Her predictions were carefully thought about and reflected consideration of a number of factors including attending to the text and illustrations, recalling past significant events and also employing an understanding of literary conventions. This is a further illustration that Amy has exceeded this first stage because Thomson (1987) states that students responding at the first stage, primarily due to lack of reading experience and satisfaction, "have little understanding of literary conventions". Amy conveyed a fairly extensive literary repertoire, which she exploited to foster her understanding of the texts discussed.

AMY : In all stories, the person who's searching for something has to find it, except if they're the bad guys. (T 1, A 9)

AMY : In usual stories, they put the boy's family in it. (T 3, A 11)

AMY : It usually tells you on the book. (T 1, A 12)

AMY : ...because it's more of a fairy tale and like it's things that couldn't really happen. (T 4, A 32)

Despite the vast generalisations Amy made and the undefined nature of some of these generalisations, it is apparent that Amy is incorporating her literary repertoire in order to construct meaning from these texts. When questioned as to what she uses to assist in making predictions, Amy too acknowledged her application of other texts.

AMY : Maybe if I've read similar books. (T 4, A 32)

This notion will be discussed further in relation to Thomson's (1987) fifth stage of 'Reviewing the Whole Work as the Author's Creation'.

I believe that Amy demonstrated an aptitude for perceiving the affective domains of the characters within the texts and surmounting mere sympathetic onlooking (the most

fundamental expression of Thomson's second stage) to empathise with the feelings and motivations of characters. She responded in a rather developed manner representative of Thomson's (1987) second stage of reader response - 'Empathizing'. Amy appeared rather attuned to the circumstances of characters and discerning in her estimation / appreciation of them.

AMY : She wouldn't want to wear a dead animal. (T 2, A 13)

AMY : Maybe the only thing to remind him of her, like, maybe the Grandma died.
(T 2, A 14)

Amy was able to empathize with the feelings of the Grandmother discussed in Grandad's Gifts as well as the Grandfather - and the emotional significance of the fur stole. She even applied this sensitivity to inanimate articles within the text.

AMY : Maybe, it's like the books are expressing what's in them. (T 1, A 4)

When asked to describe the pivotal character in the story Grandad's Gifts, Amy further demonstrated her ability to imagine and understand how characters are feeling without having to feel the same way herself.

AMY : Adventurous... Well, he broke his promise. He was just determined to see what was in the cupboard. He wasn't going to give up. (T 2, A 15)

Despite recognizing that Shane's character had been disobedient and had broken his promise, Amy was capable of moving beyond this to achieve an understanding of his feelings and motivation while maintaining her disparaging opinion of his broken promise. She also attempted to procure a perception of the surferman's affective thoughts and motivation in The Coming of the Surferman.

AMY : I think he was trying to stop them fighting and he went away when they started fighting. (T 3, A 20)

This was followed with the evaluative comment,

AMY : I like him. (T 3, A 20)

Amy expressed a liking for the surferman and when questioned about the appealing aspects of characters she, again, referred to her penchant for humour, adventure and excitement.

AMY : If they're funny, or adventurous and like excitement, exciting. I like most characters though. (T 4, A 32)

She also discussed some expectations about the stories' characters, something she was capable of due to her sensitivity and established affinity with some characters.

AMY : She wouldn't want to wear a dead animal. (T 2, A 13)
 AMY : You expect the surfman to come back and fix it, but he didn't. (T 4, A 32)
 AMY : They might. (T 1, A 5)
 AMY : He can be famous - just not in the same way. No, he wants to be older. (T 1, A 7)
 AMY : ...the boy might've let them read it. But they might have wanted to. (T 1, A 11)
 AMY : He heard about the gangs and wanted to pull them apart. (T 3, A 22)

Amy often attempted to describe what the characters may have been feeling and their motivations / reasoning for their actions. She was able to surpass mere comprehension of their actions to question, consider and empathise with their reasons and the effects or consequences of their behaviour. As Thomson (1987, p.198) describes this as a major source of interest for the student responding at this level - as Amy was.

When questioned as to whether she draws parallels between her own life and the texts she reads, Amy replied,

AMY : No, not really. Sometimes, not really in any of these books. (T 4, A 33)

This statement corresponds with my conception of Amy's response at Thomson's (1987) third stage of 'Analogising'. I believe that despite being emotionally drawn to the characters, she did not demonstrate, during the literary sessions, recognition of similarities (or disimilarities) between the character's experiences and those of her own. As Thomson (1987) affirms,

many readers at the level of *empathizing* relate their personal experiences to the behaviour of fictional characters in order to better understand these characters, but they do not engage in the reverse process of drawing analogies from fiction to gain a heightened awareness of themselves and their lives.

(Understanding Teenagers Reading. p.199.)

This assertion is descriptive Amy's position, in that she has exhibited some evidence of drawing upon her repertoire of personal experiences and making connections, but not to the level of utilizing these to consciously enhance her own self awareness or life.

AMY : You know in 'Get Smart' they put it in the shoe boxes. (T 1, A 5)

AMY : There's a group fighting at the moment, the Coffin Cheaters and I can't remember the other ones. The bikie gangs. (T 3, A 21)

These connections to Amy's own experience and those of the text's characters are quite superficial and indicate little depth or analogizing. During the sessions, Amy appeared to view the texts as imaginary works which bear little semblance to reality and, therefore,

irrelevant to her own life.

AMY : It's imaginary. (T 1, A 5)

AMY : Nobody lives in libraries. (T 1, A 5)

When asked about whether she had learnt anything from her reading, Amy's reply conveyed the notion that highly fictitious texts - quite detached from reality - had less scope for 'teaching' the reader than more 'realistic' texts.

AMY : Yeah, some books. Like the more realistic books teach you about the world at the moment. Fiction and usually some of the newer authors. (T 4, A 33)

Amy alluded to the significance of recent authors and stated that she had "not really" learnt anything about herself from a book. As she is so sensitive to the character's emotions and circumstances, I believe that Amy may have at some time taken something away from her reading, but is not consciously aware of this notion as yet. Thomson (1987) states that children responding at the stage of 'Analogising' have a greater understanding of literary conventions, using the example of happy endings. A student responding at this level is aware that a happy ending is not always appropriate to some stories and the reality of not just a 'happy' ending, but a fitting and satisfying conclusion.

Amy's response to a question regarding happy endings, further substantiates my belief that she is not yet responding at this level.

AMY : Yeah, 'cause everything just works out, it makes you feel good. (T 4, A 32)

Despite barely manifesting any representation of Thomson's (1987) third stage, Amy exhibited augmented capacity for response at his fourth stage of reader response - 'Reflecting on the Significance of Events and Behaviour'. She demonstrated a competent use of textual and pictorial cues to assist her understanding of, and interrogation of, the texts, engaged in long term hypothesizing and appeared to enjoy resolving puzzles and challenges presented by the text. However, I do not feel that Amy was responding in a developed representation of this stage, but that she did exhibit some responses indicative of unsophisticated response at this stage.

Amy did generate some expectations about long term possibilities and outcomes, however unrefined they may be.

AMY : Maybe, it's like, maybe, the books are sort of expressing what's in them. (T 1, A 4)

AMY : Maybe they're not living forever there, and they're living forever somewhere else.
(T 1, A 7)

AMY : He can be famous, just not in the same way. (T 1, A 7)

AMY : In all stories the person who's searching for something has to find it, except if they're the bad guys.(T 1, A 9)

She also expressed an aptitude for interrogating the text and filling in gaps and appeared to gain a sense of satisfaction from engaging in these processes. As mentioned previously, Amy used the text and illustrations to assist and support her in this process.

AMY : The book actually doesn't say that you're not gonna age, it just says how to live forever. Doesn't mean you're not going to age. (T 1, A 6)

AMY : The actual thing is made out of books. That's going to fall, there's nothing supporting it. (T 1, A 8)

AMY : Here it sort of explains what he looks like. Like it explains he's a little bit young but old. (T 1, A 10)

AMY : Yeah, 'cause it said that he had smooth skin, but sort of more like old. (T 1, A 10)

AMY : ... It tells you that they're standing on one leg. They sort of look like old, white hair.
(T 1, A 10)

AMY : Because he's going to smash it, see in the shadow. (T 3, A 20)

Attending to and using textual and pictorial cues, Amy attempted to fill in gaps, consider the significance of events or actions and enhance her own understanding of the text. She recognised the significance of the gang names in The Coming of the Surfman.

AMY : Because hammers and nails go together. (T 3, A 21)

AMY : Nails are opposite to hammers, and hammers are opposite to nails. (T 3, A 22)

Amy was able to distinguish the juxtapositioning of the conflicting gangs' names and attempt to verbalize it.

Amy's greatest manifestation of subtle behaviours at this stage of response emerged in her questioning of the texts. She was continuously formulating questions of the text and appeared to enjoy the mental stimulation and challenges presented to her by the texts.

AMY : You know how he opened the cupboard and he was annoyed how he opened the cupboard? Why didn't he just lock it again? (T 2, A 14)

AMY : Why do they shred the lemon trees? And don't you think the Dad would've noticed that the lemons were going? (T 2, A 15)

AMY : Why can't he use the pool? (T 3, A 19)

AMY : Why doesn't anyone else ride? Why was it only the gangs? (T 3, A 21)

AMY : Why would you want to? (T 1, A 8)

Amy questioned numerous aspects of the texts including the events, characters' behaviour, the logistics of some of the events and possibilities. Some of her questions arose from her relationships with some of the characters and her expectations of them.

She also verbalized her thoughts when manipulating the feasibility of some of her own (and others) predictions and hypotheses. Amy went further than making suggestions to actually think them through.

AMY : In day, the library's on Earth, but in night it goes, like, into another world.

EMMA : Could be on the moon! Pluto! Sailing around the Milky Way.

AMY : I don't think you would see Pluto from, I mean Earth from Pluto.

AMY : You wouldn't even see it. (T 1, A 8)

When asked about her questioning of the text, Amy was aware that she posed questions of the text, but in an immature manner, expressed the belief that all of her questions are usually answered or satisfied by the text.

AMY : Yeah, sometimes. But you usually find them out later. Like in 'Grandad's Gifts' why didn't he just lock the cupboard - because he wanted to help the fox. (T 4, A 33)

Amy did not recognize that some puzzles within the text or questions arising from the text may remain unresolved, as is the very nature of fiction.

In relation to Thomson's (1987) fifth stage of 'Reviewing the Whole Work as the Author's Creation', again, Amy can be perceived as exhibiting some responses indicative of this stage but not as actually responding to the literature at this level. Amy did demonstrate, to some degree, the incorporation of her literary and cultural repertoires and a recognition of implied author. She also displayed potential for interrogating the text to equate the author's representation of her own. This latter aspect was prevalent when Amy questioned the text in a manner that suggested questions of the author's creation rather than the actual text.

AMY : Why do they shred the lemon trees? And don't you think the Dad would've noticed that the lemons were going? (T 2, A 15)

I believe that this question actually interrogates the author's representation of the story line and the author's ignorance of the father's capability to detect what was happening.

Amy's responses indicated an awareness of the author as the text's creator and also

portrayed some generalizations regarding texts or stories. Amy also considered the author as a person - their feelings and personality traits based upon reading their text. However, all of these behaviours were of a very subtle nature and rather immature level of attainment. Amy appeared to view books as flexible entities, open to interpretation and imagination.

AMY : It's a book. You can imagine things. You can change things. (T 1, A 8)

She believes that despite the numerous realities being depicted in the texts that they are still very much manoeuvrable by the reader. Amy made references to other texts she had read as well as many generalizations (however inaccurate) about texts.

AMY : Well, this book is like another book that I've read and it hasn't got much writing. It's got like little people and houses and stuff. (T 1, A 9)

AMY : In usual stories, they put in the boy's family. They usually introduce the family as part of the characters. (T 1, A 11)

AMY : In all stories, the person who's searching for something has to find it, except if they're the bad guys... I've read books where I can tell what's going to happen fifty pages from the end. (T 1, A 9)

All of these comments are based upon Amy's literary repertoire. She compared the text to a similar one she had read, making comparisons based upon the illustrations, characters, setting and amount of text. She expressed some generalizations and expectations of texts which she had arrived at as a result of her reading and the patterns she had observed. Amy expressed (in substance and tone) a dissatisfaction with predictability and texts where she "can tell what's going to happen fifty pages from the end". This irritation is an initial step in recognizing the author as a fallible human being.

In considering the authors of the texts, Amy believed that Colin Thompson, the author of How To Live Forever, was

AMY : Interesting, creative...He'd be very interesting. (T 1, A 11)

She thought that Peter Collington included the information about the boy's Dad in The Coming of the Surfman to incorporate the notion of the Surfman substituting as the boy's father figure.

AMY : Because his Dad was like the Surfman. (T 3, A 23)

At times, I think Amy could not articulate exactly some of her rather sophisticated thoughts and responses, such as in this instance. She has portrayed some conceptions of response denoting the fifth stage of reader response, but has by no means fulfilled it - or that above it.

The final stage of 'Consciously Considered Relationship With the author, Recognition of Textual Ideology and Understanding of Self (Identity Theme) and of One's Own Reading Process' also eluded Amy - as anticipated. Some responses fitting of this stage, but not demonstrative of response at this level, include unrefined recognition of implied reader - and their relationship with the implied author as well as metacognition regarding Amy's own reading processes and responses. She did consider, when questioned, the type of person the author was writing for and what it was the author was trying to convey to this person.

AMY : Yeah, in hospital. Like in hospital - How To Live Forever. (T 1, A 12)

AMY : Maybe children about our age. (T 1, A 12)

AMY : For six and over. (T 2, A 16)

Amy's initial response is an example of her wit and humour, while the other two illustrate the way in which she attended to age when responding to the question. This indicates a very undeveloped sense of implied reader. However, there was an occasion in which Amy went beyond this to incorporate the appeal (or dissatisfaction) that the book might retain for some readers.

AMY : Some people would want more excitement. (T 2, A 16)

This statement may also relate to Amy's own desire for excitement and her discontentment with the text. Amy stated that her favourite author was Elizabeth Honey, expressing admiration of her writing style and gratification of Amy's appetite for excitement and suspense.

AMY : She writes well, she writes very exciting stories where you don't know what's going to happen next. (T 4, A 34)

Amy has demonstrated a great sensitivity and depth of feeling in relation to her reading and associated responses. This may be attributed to her very nature and personality or to her frequent reading habits. She embodied notions of developed literary response at Thomson's (1987) initial and second stages of 'Unreflective Interest in Action' and 'Empathizing', in particular displaying considerable potential for utilizing her emotional capabilities to drive response at further stages. Amy needs to gain an increased awareness of self and of the connections between herself and those characters to whom she is so empathic in order to accomplish those strategies distinctive of the higher stages within the model.

Case Study 4.

Emma - A Combination of Happiness, Mystery & Adventure.

Emma is a ten year old reader who gains literary satisfaction from a number of text elements and on a number of levels. She has a partiality for mystery and adventure within a text but remains at a stage where the bulk of her gratification arises from happy books, happy feelings and happy endings.

PRE ENTRY QUESTIONNAIRE :

Emma's written responses on the pre entry questionnaire were fairly brief in comparison to her responses during the sessions, but portrayed an unmistakable interest and joy in reading. Emma responded that her favourite subjects at school were maths and reading. She also stated an interest in swimming, running and calisthenics - representing a very active lifestyle, stating that she enjoyed these activities because they are "all fun. You get wet and fit". In reply to the question asking whether she liked to read, Emma wrote "yes, very much". This enthusiastic response was followed by a preference for adventure stories due to the inherent excitement - "because they are exciting". When questioned about the sort of books she didn't like, Emma responded "none". These responses indicate a positive and enthused attitude towards reading and literature. However, they are also slightly vague and do not illustrate the reflection revealed in her responses during the sessions. For example, Emma stated that there were no books she disliked, yet later identified some undesired features of texts.

Emma stated that she read as "much as I can" and that she did an even amount of reading at home and at school. She attested to frequent library borrowing habits, borrowing twice a week from the school library and from other libraries on the weekend. Emma wrote that she does like to talk about the books she has read, citing her Mum and Dad as the people to whom she likes to talk to.

GENERAL BEHAVIOUR OBSERVED (DURING THE SESSIONS) :

Emma appeared quite confident and spoke eloquently and clearly during the literary sessions and final interview. She contributed easily to the group's discussions and was both enthusiastic and attentive towards the texts used. Emma conversed freely with the other students and worked well with them, at times collaborating with others to refine and build upon both her own and others' responses.

EMMA : Yeah, like behind all those books.

GREG : Wouldn't they find it?

EMMA : No, 'cause they wouldn't take every book out.

AMY : ... Um, yeah, they might.

EMMA : They probably would because they go behind there. (T 1, A 5)

Emma was considerate of other peoples' responses, listening and questioning them where appropriate.

EMMA : What do you mean? What do you mean 'what happens'? (T 1, A 8)

Emma made numerous predictions before and during reading. She was very open minded and welcoming of various possibilities and circumstances. Emma was not apprehensive about 'trying out' or entertaining several possibilities or suggestions. She was able to relate to many of the texts on a number of levels, relating the texts to television or media stereotypes / characters and verbalizing similarities between her own circumstances or environment and those portrayed in the text. Emma demonstrated a well developed vocabulary and command of language and language conventions. She was familiar with the terms 'immortality' and quail' and was capable of explaining them to her peers. She also used the language in the text to reinforce her ideas and employed a number of adages in her speech.

EMMA : Oh, he might've lived forever. 'Cause if he's the ancient that means that it's old.
(T 1, A 7)

EMMA : Never judge a book by it's cover. (T 2, A 15)

EMMA : Yeah, curious[ity] killed the cat. (T 2, A 15)

Emma appeared to approach each of the texts in a manner akin to that of solving a mystery.

She was highly attentive of the text, illustrations and details. She appeared to clearly establish the relationships existing in the text and consider the characters and their motives extensively. Emma's responses suggested that she was very sensitive to the characters and the text and was conscious of the affective realms entwined in each character.

LITERARY RESPONSES ANALYSED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THOMSON'S DEVELOPMENTAL MODEL OF READER RESPONSE.

Upon initial contemplation of Emma's literary responses it may be possible to receive the impression that she is merely responding at Thomson's initial stage of reader response. However, upon further reflection it becomes apparent that Emma has actually demonstrated a somewhat complex variety of responses that do not imply response solely at one particular stage. Rather, she has portrayed glimmerings of moderately sophisticated responses right up to Thomson's fourth stage of response. However, due to her relative immaturity and still limited literary repertoire, Emma cannot be perceived as responding at these elevated levels. Instead, it can be ascertained that Emma has attained developed response at Thomson's second stage and has demonstrated the foundations for refined response at the third and fourth stages of the model.

In regard to her manifestation of Thomson's (1987) inaugural stage of 'Unreflective Interest in Action', Emma has actualized the aspects of short term prediction and, in particular, attending to rudimentary mental images in relation to stereotypes from film and television. Emma made a range of predictions concerning short term outcomes prior to and during reading. These included predictions about the setting, plot and characters of the stories as well as the significance of items illustrated or discussed in the texts.

EMMA : Maybe if he goes right in. (T 1, A 5)

EMMA : They might be Grandad's old toys. (T 2, A 13)

EMMA : He could surf down the hills and make new skateboards to put wheels on.
(T 3, A 19)

EMMA : He may be a ghost. (T 3, A 18)

Emma used the illustrations extensively to assist and inform her predictions and suggestions, using both the cover illustration and subsequent pictures to enhance her own understanding

and contributions.

TEACHER : What could be in the cupboard?

EMMA : All the gifts on the front of the book. (T 2, A 13)

EMMA : I think of what's happened so far and I try to look for clues, like in the pictures and stuff if it's a picture book. That's how I try to work it out. (T 4, A 27)

Emma made some elementary superficial observations that also characterize Thomson's (1987) first stage. She made some comments or observations which portray a rather unsophisticated onlooker type role and do not do justice to her capacity to respond on a more astute level.

EMMA : I think that's the thing where the ladder goes around. (T 1, A 5)

EMMA : There's the old men. (T 1, A 6)

EMMA : There's a little book as their house. That's a sky. (T 1, A 7)

EMMA : If you look closely at this T.V. you can see a naked lady. (T 1, A 11)

EMMA : He's patching up all the boards. (T 3, A 18)

EMMA : Yeah, look at him, he's in a bathing suit. (T 3, A 18)

These comments depict a passive response to the text and are primarily grounded in attention to the illustrations. Emma also made many references to film and television entities and stereotypes during the literary sessions. She related events and characters to those from television or film and verbalized some parallels between the texts and these images.

EMMA : The store is his home. Lots of people live in shops. (T 3, A 20)

EMMA : Wake up Jeff! (T 1, A 6)

EMMA : Hercules! (T 1, A 7)

EMMA : I heard it off Hercules. ('Immortality') (T 1, A 9)

EMMA : Yeah, 'Round The Twist'. It was like a movie. This was better though, reading the book. (T 2, A 14)

AMY : It's all dark.

EMMA : Yeah, it's an American city. (T 3, A 21)

EMMA : (The illustrations) were too dull...Because it was in an American city. (T 3, A 23)

Emma conveyed in these responses, not only references to television characters such as 'The Wiggles' and 'Hercules' but also some of the stereotypes that she has acquired from the media. Her assertion that "lots of people live in shops" may have been procured from television as with the notion that American cities are dark. Emma believed that the grey, dull buildings and streets illustrated in the text 'The Coming of the Surfman' were indicative of an American setting.

Despite some low level responses of the first stage in Thomson's model, Emma has surpassed this degree of response to demonstrate imaginative insight into the characters' experiences, feelings and motivations, rather than view them as mere objects in the action executing stereotyped roles. In doing so, Emma displayed responses that denote Thomson's (1987) second stage of 'Empathizing'. She exhibited both mental images of affect and expectations about characters. She appeared rather attuned to the feelings and affective considerations of the characters within each text, becoming quite involved on this level.

EMMA : Because she doesn't like dead animals. (T 2, A 13)

EMMA : Because he was really sad that the Grandma didn't like it. (T 2, A 14)

EMMA : The boy is, he like, misses his Dad. (T 3, A 22)

EMMA : He was touching. (T 3, A 22)

Emma was capable of propelling herself into the situation imaginatively and to both sympathize and empathize with the characters' experience and emotions. Her final comment also portrayed her ability to grasp and verbalize the emotional effect that a character exerts on her as the reader, reacting not only with the character but also to the character. This notion is described by Harding (as cited by Thomson, 1987) as depicting a more complex observer as opposed to an onlooker.

"The onlooker not only enters into the experience of the participants (characters) but also contemplates them as fellow beings... The more complex observer imagines something of what the participant is experiencing and then reacts *to* him."

(Understanding Teenagers Reading. p.193.)

Emma also generated some expectations about characters based upon the relationship that she had established as an empathizing observer / party to the text. These ranged from simplistic expectations about actions to more sophisticated and reflective expectations concerning motives and feelings.

EMMA : They wouldn't take every book out. (T 1, A 5)

EMMA : They probably would because they go behind there. (T 1, A 5)

EMMA : Yes, he'll try and read it really fast, 'cause he said he couldn't read it fast enough.
(T 1, A 7)

EMMA : He may be a ghost. (T 3, A18)

EMMA : That might be his old Dad who came from heaven or hell or whatever. (T 2, A 20)

EMMA : If he was near the Hammer one he would wear the red one and if he was near the nails he would wear his blue one. (T 3, A 18)

These expectations are grounded in hypotheses about the characters' actions. Emma has drawn upon the information she has gained about the characters from the text as well as her own interpretations of them to arrive at conclusions regarding their possible behaviours or identity.

EMMA : Well, you can guess that they'd probably be worried about him. (T 1, A 11)

EMMA : They probably wanted to... They probably took him to see the ancient child so he wouldn't turn out that way. (T 1, A 11)

EMMA : Because maybe he really liked them. (T 2, A 15)

EMMA : If they had a battle, I reckon he'd stay out of it. (T 3, A 18)

EMMA : Maybe he'll ban them 'cause they keep on fighting and only let other people on it. (T 3, A 20)

EMMA : He might, just to let them learn their lesson. (T 3, A 20)

These expectations are slightly more indicative of considered introspection regarding the characters' feelings, motivations and resulting actions. These responses exhibit Emma's capacity to enter into the experience of the characters and form affective relationships with them. She attests to an empathetic satisfaction in literature stating she enjoys "a bit of excitement and if it's just a bit scary, just a little bit. Or it's got a sad bit in it, anything to do with feelings or anything." I believe that Emma's demonstrated aptitude for appreciating and understanding the emotions experienced by the characters and herself indicates her potential to 'decentre' and surpass an egocentric reader role. This is the very foundation for developing sophisticated responses at the higher levels of Thomson's model.

During the sessions, Emma demonstrated the ability to draw upon her repertoire of personal experiences and formulate parallels between the characters' and her own life. She made copious references to her own circumstances, to personal media influences, family structure and physical environment. Despite this, she cannot be regarded as having manifested developed responses at Thomson's third stage of 'Analogising'. The reason for this being that Emma's responses did not suggest that she had transcended utilizing her personal experiences only to inform her understanding of the texts. She did not appear to have progressed to the achievement of deriving implications for her own life from the texts.

Emma embodied this third stage of 'Analogizing' only in an elementary form as she

engaged her personal experiences to enhance her understanding of, and relationship with, the characters but did not engage in

the reverse process of drawing analogies from fiction to gain a heightened awareness of themselves and their lives.

(Thomson, 1987.p.199.)

When questioned, or impromptu, Emma mentioned a number of parallels that she observed between the characters' and her own life. Some of these related to the physical environment or experiences in the text.

EMMA : We've got security. (T 1, A 5)

EMMA : I've searched for a pair of socks and couldn't find them. (T 1, A 9)

EMMA : The trees in my backyard have been cut down. (T 2, A 14)

These are rather superficial links that Emma made, likening the elusive text in How To Live Forever to a lost pair of socks and concerning physical entities such as security systems and trees rather than the characters' feelings or motivations.

EMMA : My mother worries about me. Like the mother did about... (T 1, A 9)

Emma related some of the illustrations or notions introduced in the texts to her own circumstances in order to enhance her understanding of the book and the concept at hand.

EMMA : They're tanks. You can find them when you go near, if you're going to Rottnest, if you're driving down the road to go to the ferry. (T 3, A 18)

EMMA : Yeah, but what about Alice Springs - that's probably five days. (T 3, A 22)

Emma utilized familiar conceptions and notions of distance, time and objects to heighten her comprehension of, and involvement with, the texts - but did not transcend this to gain any insight about herself or her life from these connections. She demonstrated an ability to place herself in the situation depicted in the texts and consider what her own actions would be.

EMMA : I'd read most of the time. (T 3, A 24)

I believe that this response indicates a subtle advance towards fulfilling the remaining facets of Thomson's third stage, which with development could be achieved as a natural progression from Emma's developed sense of empathy for characters.

Emma supported the notion that she is responding at a very elementary level of the 'Analysing' stage when questioned during the individual interview. When asked about the feelings she experiences during reading, and if they were aligned with the characters in the

texts she commented upon being able to better engage in the character's experience and emotions when she can discern associations between the characters' lives and her own.

EMMA : They are sometimes the same and sometimes different. It depends what the story is. If they sort of had the same life as me, I would probably feel the same, but if they didn't... (T 4, A 28)

When questioned as to whether she consciously made connections between her own life and those depicted in the texts, Emma replied positively but also displayed an emphasis upon physical and environmental considerations rather than those of an affective nature.

EMMA : Yes. I try and think, like, I've got a messy backyard like that! It's sort of the same. (T 4, A 28)

Her ignorance of the significance of texts for self understanding and developmental was also demonstrated when queried about anything she may have learnt about the world or herself from a text.

EMMA : Yeah, reading atlases and things like that. When I read these 'Wally' books, well, they teach you about space and all that, all the countries and islands. (T 4, A 28)

EMMA : Yeah, from my baby album! They [parents] put lots of stuff like, and I've still got one of them now. They do one every year. (T 4, A 28)

Emma, again, exhibits a lack of awareness regarding the personal implications and self development possibilities rendered to the sophisticated reader. She referred to the understandings she believes to be inherent in informational texts and photo albums, once more grounded in physical and environmental factors. Her satisfaction from happy endings in general is an indication that she has some understanding of literary conventions but has not yet reached a level where she is concerned with the appropriateness of the conclusion in relation to the story. Rather, she is absorbed in the happy feelings she experiences as a result of a happy (rather than fitting) conclusion to a text.

EMMA : Yes. My favourite books are probably fairy tales because they nearly always have happy endings. It just makes me feel happy...and happy's good. (T 4, A 27)

In keeping with Emma's mystery solving approach to the texts, she was highly attentive to detail and to the text and illustrations. This keen observation lead to numerous responses that both reflected upon and questioned the significance of events and behaviour - characteristics of Thomson's (1987) fourth stage of reader response. However, Emma was not engaging in these predictions, questions and puzzles in relation to the complex

statements being made about the human condition, but in terms of better comprehending the text and 'solving the mystery'. Emma does view the text as a whole - but not as a construction expressing assertions about society - rather as a whole mystery to be unravelled.

In relation to Thomson's (1987) reader response stage of 'Reflecting on the Significance of Events (Theme) and Behaviour (Distanced Evaluation of Characters)', Emma did manifest a number of the strategies associated with this stage - simply to an unsophisticated level and for the purpose of comprehension rather than self discovery or evaluation. She generated long term expectations about outcomes and about the characters in the texts.

EMMA : Oh, maybe he might've lived forever. 'Cause if he's ancient that means he's old.
(T 1, A 7)

EMMA : Because then he'll turn out like him. And be frozen. (T 1, A7)

EMMA : He would have turned out like that boy. (T 1, A7)

EMMA : Or maybe he'll ban them 'cause they keep on fighting and only let other people on it. (T 3, A 20)

EMMA : That might be his old Dad who came from heaven or hell or whatever. (T 3, A 20)

These expectations demonstrate Emma's knowledge of the plot and textual clues to inform her predictions and anticipations. She also capitalized upon her empathy for the characters in order to gain insight into their motives and emotions.

EMMA : Because maybe they want to live forever. (T 1, A 4)

EMMA : Because maybe he really liked them. (T 2, A 15)

EMMA : They probably wanted to, so that he wouldn't turn old, they took him to see the Ancient child so he wouldn't turn out that way. (T 1, A 11)

Emma questioned the text frequently and answered the majority of her own and others questions during reading.

EMMA : For beginners? (T 1, A 6)

EMMA : Isn't there a river around there? (T 3, A 19)

EMMA : How come there's F books and C books and P books? (T 1, A 8)

EMMA : Where's the book going to be? Do they find it? (T 1, A 8)

EMMA : Smooth? (T 1, A 10)

The bulk of Emma's questions converged upon the illustrations within the texts and attempts to ascertain the significance of certain elements in the 'mystery'. She also questioned the other students in the group and was quite confident in her manner.

EMMA : What do you mean? What do you mean 'what happens'? (T 1, A 8)

EMMA : Did you realise that the surf shop is the brightest shop? (T 3, A 21)

Emma particularly appeared to enjoy the intellectual challenge of the puzzles and gaps that the texts offered. She verbalized a number of her thought processes in the quest to 'solve' the mystery of each text and made some insightful observations and connections during reading.

EMMA : But, there's no gravity in space. (T 1, A 8)

EMMA : It's got his Grandad's eyes. It had the bluest eyes and it said that was on the photo. (T 2, A 14)

EMMA : Maybe it was cursed by the fox... The two lemons that were left were the fox's eyes. (T 2, A 16)

EMMA : They're sort of taking over it. And they're the ones who started bashing it and then like leaving it. (T 3, A 20)

EMMA : Of course the Hammers would have been more powerful, 'cause you know, hammers hit nails... Because hammers are the more powerful... Both are dangerous - nails can go right through your hand. (T 3, A 22)

Emma was appreciative of the significance of the lemons in Grandad's Gifts and the gang names in The Coming of the Surfinan, two quite sophisticated and abstract notions. She also expressed some questions that she believed could have been resolved or attended to in the texts.

EMMA : In the 'Coming of the Surfinan' I reckon they could've said more like if the surfinan really did come back and if the boy would be able to fix the wave machine. 'How to Live Forever' they should've said a bit more like if his parents came looking for him. (T 4, A 28)

Emma appears to want the 'mystery' to be tied up and resolved neatly by the conclusion of the book as these questions basically display a dissatisfaction with the conclusions of the two texts that did not have a definite ending. When further questioned about the questions she asks of texts, Emma corroborated her 'mystery solving' approach to reading.

EMMA : Yeah, like in 'Teen Power Inc.', Emily Rodda's, they're mysteries. You have to solve the mystery like, just an example, you have to say, why is the bomber bombing Ravenshill in like 'This Old Man He Played One, He Played Nick Nack On My Drum', like he was bombing the drum place. (T 4, A 29)

As a consequence of her reading manner, I believe that this stage possesses great potential for heightening Emma's literary satisfaction when acquired at a mature degree. She needs to move beyond involvement in texts for the texts' sake and progress to procure from her reading personal significance and implications - both in relation to 'Analogising' and

‘Reflecting on the Significance of Events (Theme) and Behaviour (Distanced valuation of Behaviour)’.

It is my belief that Emma does not yet possess the literary repertoire or awareness of literary conventions to sanction moderate response at either of Thomson’s (1987) final stages - ‘Reviewing the Whole Work as the Author’s Creation’ or ‘Consciously Considered Relationship With the Author, Recognition of Textual Ideology, and Understanding of Self (Identity Theme) and of One’s Own Reading Process’. She has not demonstrated developed recognition of the author’s role as an infallible person depicting the human condition according to their interpretations. Emma also did not exhibit any indications of self reflection and consideration of her own responses to the text.

In relation to Thomson’s (1987) fifth stage of developmental reader response, Emma did display glimpses and very simplistic responses representative of this stage. She occasionally drew upon her literary and cultural repertoire - however limited it may be - and illustrated some recognition of the author as the text’s creator.

EMMA : Yeah, ‘Round The Twist’. It was like a movie. This was better though, reading the book. (T 2, A 14)

EMMA : I’ve read millions of books with surfing. My brother did this project on surfing at the beach and I just went and there’s a book where they go surfing and people drown and stuff. It’s for beach safety. (T 3, A 21)

These comments concern literature or media influences that Emma viewed as being similar to or bearing relevance to the texts read during the sessions. In Grandad’s Gifts the plot was comparable to a television show Emma had viewed and the subject matter of ‘The Coming of the Surferman’ reminded her of a selection of surfing books she had read. However, it did not appear that Emma used these former literary experiences to enhance the ones at hand, as is illustrative of sophisticated responses at Thomson’s (1987) fifth stage.

When questioned about the authors as people and about their intention in writing the texts, Emma seemed to confuse the author with the illustrator,

EMMA : A really cheery person who loves drawing (T 1, A 11)

attending to the illustrations to draw conclusions about the author's personality. She hypothesised as to some of the things that she believed the authors to be conveying in the texts.

EMMA : Try and keep your promise, try. (T 2, A 16)

EMMA : Take care of animals otherwise they curse you. (T 2, A 16)

EMMA : Wherever this is it's a boring place! Don't join gangs. (T 3, A 23)

These sort of themes that Emma perceives the author to be imparting are rather superficial and do not go beyond the basic plot outlined in each text. When questioned about the author's role within the text and what they bring to the text, Emma related this to her father's writing and to the elements of reality that are included in fictional works rather than the ideological influences that affect the author's representation of reality and the world.

EMMA : Sometimes they use their own name as the person in the book. Like, my Dad is writing a book now. And he's writing about a man's life and he's also putting in stuff about his own life as well. (T 4, A 29)

This is a rather immature perception of the author's position and does not attest to the significance of the author's background and culture upon the text - and the reader.

Thomson's (1987) sixth stage of reader response involves sophisticated notions of the relationship existing between the implied author and the implied reader and self understanding of one's own reading processes. These conceptions exceed Emma's capabilities and literary response, but do not completely elude her. She did articulate her reasons for favouring Emily Rodda as an author and her favourite texts.

EMMA : I just love the books she writes, there's a whole series of them and they're just so adventurous. You have to find out what's coming next. (T 4, A 29)

EMMA : Emily Rodda's, the one in 'The Secret of Banyon Bay', my favourite bit was when they, the old people, were actually cops and they wiped off all their make up and it was really funny and they drew wrinkles and everything. It was just really funny 'cause it stops half way through the page and on the next page there's a small picture. It's just really funny. (T 4, A 29)

Emma was able to articulate an occasion where she found herself speaking to the author.

EMMA : Yeah, like in one of, this book from Paul Jennings I didn't really think the crocodile should've done what he did. Because it wasn't a very good idea. Like, it didn't really fit the story. (T 4, A 29)

This is a crude example of Emma consciously considering the author's representation and refuting it. She also speculated as to the type of reader that the book was intended for.

EMMA : For people who have moved house. (T 2, A 16)

EMMA : Six at least. About eight to fifteen [years old]. (T 2, A 16)

EMMA : People who like animals. (T 2, A 16)

However, these responses are quite superficial and immature. Basically, Emma believed that the texts were intended for people with an interest in the subject matter or a particular age bracket. She did make one comment that displayed an affective consideration of the texts influence upon the reader's feelings.

EMMA : If somebody's sad this book could cheer them up. (T 1, A 12)

Thomson (1987) states that

unsuccessful readers have not learned that the authors play with readers' expectations, deliberately withholding information to stimulate speculation, reflection, deduction and gap filling...[seeing it as] an indication of their own incompetence rather than a challenge or spur to their own mental activity.

(Understanding Teenagers Reading.p.227.)

Emma, despite not explicitly demonstrating developed response at the higher stages of Thomson's (1987) developmental model of reader response, did illustrate a penchant for the textual elements such as suspense and gaps, and for 'solving the mystery' that is the text. She appeared to derive a great deal of satisfaction from these processes, however, also obtains satisfaction from the more immature sources of happy endings, humour and the illustrations within the text.

EMMA : I nearly liked everything, except when he opened the cupboard and he had the thing right there, he looked funny. It was a silly picture. (T 2, A 17)

EMMA : I didn't like it much. Well, I did. I just didn't like the illustrations because they were too dull. (T 3, A 23)

A great deal of Emma's literary satisfaction was derived directly and indirectly from the illustrations accompanying the text. They were often a focal point for her and her literary responses. I believe that this focus, whilst enhancing her comprehension of the text may be impeding her deeper involvement and self reflection / understanding processes.

Chapter 5.

Discussion

The four case studies, collectively, indicate the students' desire for excitement, suspense, adventure and humour within a text. They illustrate that these four students were also responding to the texts at rather sophisticated levels - in relation to their own maturity and the complexity of Thomson's (1987) 'Model of Reader Response to Literature' which was formulated in regard to teenage readers. All of the students transcended the initial stage of 'Unreflective Interest in Action' to demonstrate responses indicative of, at very least, immature empathy and analogy towards the texts and characters. Emma was highly tuned in to the character's emotions and motives, Amy very insightful and Kevin reflective of the significance of behaviour and actions. Greg exhibited the most undeveloped manifestation of Thomson's (1987) stages, however, did demonstrate potential for response at the higher levels given experience and appropriate reading strategies. These students appeared to derive pleasure from reflecting (however immaturely) upon the text and establishing relationships (on a variety of grounds) with the characters in the texts. They did not read without reflection or consideration of the plot, characters and possibilities within each text. Even Greg who attested to unreflective reading practices, contradicted this notion in the nature of his literary responses.

In discussing the results, I propose to address the second research question underpinning this study which examines those elements of the text which proved instrumental in producing the four students' responses: what elements of the text(s) are instrumental in producing these responses?

A number of recurrent themes emerged from the students' literary responses, particularly those pertaining to the features that the children were seeking from a text and those that effected their literary satisfaction. In a general sense, the students asserted a desire for excitement, adventure, humour, mystery, realism and happiness within the texts they read. These can be viewed as the primary determinants of stimulating and gratifying literary

interactions or experiences for these particular students. The students expressed a desire to be challenged and mentally aroused by the texts. They did not wish to maintain a passive reader role, but sought to become actively engaged in the ventures depicted in their reading.

These conclusions derived from my analysis of the case studies responses are in stead with the results of a national survey of 17,000 five to twelve year old Australian children concerning their reading preferences. The survey culminated in the composition of the 'Angus and Robertson Bookworld Aussie Kids Top 100'. A copy of this list and two accompanying articles appeared in the West Australian newspaper on Thursday, May 20 1999. A number of the authors and texts referred to by the students in this study feature on the list. Authors such as Paul Jennings, Morris Gleitzman, John Marsden, Elizabeth Honey, Emily Rodda and Brian Jacques appear on the list repeatedly and were among those admired and preferred by the case study students. The attributes of these texts that earned them their status on the list are described in the article as being "gripping stories, recognisable characters and larger than life tales". In a further article, the students interviewed also cited humour and excitement.

A year five teacher quoted in the article maintained that

the children were attracted to short and snappy writing using colloquial language and particularly liked books with short stories.

(The West Australian, Thursday May 20, 1999.p. 9)

These assertions are in keeping with the views expressed in both the whole class pre entry questionnaire and the literary sessions with the four case study students. The students appeared to gain satisfaction from excitement, suspense, rapidly moving stories and succinct writing.

Len Unsworth (1993) outlines six features that he believes children look for in their reading: plot, character, multiculturalism, time and place, theme and humour. My findings relating to what the case study students pursued in their reading will be discussed in association with these. Unsworth (1993) comments upon the disillusionment that students encounter when confronted with "hackneyed predictable plots" (p.63). These he believes are suitable only for the inexperienced or hesitant reader. The four students involved in this study are beyond

this early reading stage and endeavour to engage with unpredictable and original texts or storylines. The students continuously cited excitement and adventure (which are constructed by the plot in the story) as the principal factors in their literary satisfaction.

“Most plots for children involve some form of adventure: adventuring, or going forth on a journey... Adventuring almost always involves danger and things going wrong, a state of disequilibrium to which stability needs to be restored.”

(Unsworth, L. 1993. Literacy Learning and Teaching. p. 63.)

I believe that this ‘disequilibrium’ is a state from which a great deal of the students’ literary involvement and gratification arose. They all enjoyed the challenges posed by the text, the prediction process and subsequent resolution of the conflict. As Unsworth (1993) articulates

a see - sawing unresolved conflict develops tension which can also be graphed as the action rises and falls; and often the conflict arises out of a mystery... Children need action in their stories.

(p. 63.)

This need for action and the manner in which it is accomplished resembles the sentiments that these students expressed. Kevin was in search of continuous excitement within a story, Greg an imaginative, fast moving outlet, Amy a complex, unpredictable and challenging plot and Emma excitement - in particular arising from mystery. Nodelman (1992) defines the manner in which a “well constructed plot captures and maintains our attention until the story comes to an end” as being “pleasurable suspense” (p.64) - because we can’t figure out what will occur next.

The second of Unsworth’s (1993) characteristics sought by children in their reading is that of ‘character’. This factor is highly applicable particularly to Amy and Emma who were notably sensitive to, and formed relationships with, the characters encountered in the texts. However, each student in their own way procured part of their literary satisfaction from involvement with the characters. Kevin enjoyed the manner in which characters could take risks and enact his fantasies, subsequently involving him in these realistically unattainable incidents. Greg did not engage so actively with the characters but did derive some gratification from a detached observation of their position within the exciting plot. Amy gleaned satisfaction from her deep involvement with the characters and the relationships she established with them. She enjoyed generating expectations about the characters and the feelings which they evoked in her. Emma was even more attuned to the characters’

emotions and motives and this element was a great source of her pleasure within the text. As Nodelman describes in his text The Pleasures of Children's Literature,

we can use our knowledge of the way people usually behave to guess further into their characters' motivations, their past and even what they might do after the story.

(1992, p.62)

This is a process from which Emma gained fulfillment and furthered her 'mystery solving' approach to the texts. However, this was most effectively facilitated when the characters' circumstances were aligned to Emma's own. Vandergrift (1980) comments upon this, stating that

children especially seem to have a very personal relationship with literary characters. Most child readers demand characters with whom they can identify. A well developed character gives a stance from which they can proceed through the story world.

(Child and Story : The Literary Connection, p. 109)

This statement applies not only to Emma, but also to Kevin and Amy who, likewise, utilized the characters within the texts as the vehicle by which they could actively venture through the story and respond accordingly.

The third of Unsworth's (1993) elements that children seek in their reading is that of 'Multiculturalism'. This is a notion that I do not believe to be applicable as the texts incorporated into this study did not reflect a great diversity of cultures in either the characters or the substance. The students did bring to the sessions a sense of cultural awareness and Emma upheld a preconceived notion that American cities were dull and dark with Greg adding the presence of dumpsters to the image. However, the factor of multiculturalism did not execute a pivotal role in the literary sessions or the students' literary responses.

For Greg, Unsworth's (1993) fourth constituent of 'Time and Place' was of great significance and a contributing factor in his attainment of literary satisfaction. As my second case study illustrates, Greg was seeking an effective balance between reality and fiction and the notion of setting was integral in instituting the impression of realism. This occurred through the establishment of time frames and authentic settings (not necessarily genuine

locations but ones that could be related to). Greg paid a great deal of attention to the settings depicted in the texts and often associated them with areas and locations familiar to him. This component of the texts was obviously integral to his understanding and appreciation of the texts, which in turn lead to pleasurable literary interactions. Emma also demonstrated a regard for the setting - primarily demonstrating this through her attention to the illustrations within the texts. She also proceeded to explore the setting and associated details in relation to what these elements could tell her about the characters and the plot. For Kevin and Amy this concept of 'Time and Place' did not appear so significant in determining or influencing their responses to the texts or their subsequent literary satisfaction. They did not refer to the time factor when responding to the texts. However, Vandergrift (1980) cites Elizabeth Ann Parker as reflecting that

without the passage of time in the story, there could be no development of concern for the story's characters, no development of the mystery in which story tension is created and resolved.

(Child and Story : The literary Connection, p. 120)

Therefore, Kevin, Amy and Emma were also (indirectly) reliant upon this notion in procuring their satisfaction from their involvement with the story's characters and the mystery element of the texts.

The fifth component expounded by Unsworth (1993) as desired by child readers is 'Theme'. This is a concept encompassing many complex and sophisticated notions which may have eluded the case students - at least to a developed degree. I believe that this element may have been that which prevented the students from attaining developed responses at the higher stages of literary response. Unsworth (1993) presents 'theme' as

the interaction of plot, setting and character... the idea or ideas produced by the experience being explored by the author.

(Literacy Learning and Teaching, p. 67)

Similarly, Nodelman (1992, p.64) describes 'theme' as "meanings" or the "author's message or purpose". Due to this implied understanding of the author's role in producing the text and the establishment of an intricate relationship with the author, I do not think that this element was instrumental in procuring any of the students' literary satisfaction. In fact, I

believe that this element (and their immature manipulation of it) actually impeded their responses and succeeding literary pleasure. Nodelman (1992) states that

unfortunately many readers approach texts with the idea that their themes or messages can be easily identified and stated in a few words.

(The Pleasures of Children's Literature. p.65)

This is the misconception that the students held; they attempted to concisely state in a single phrase the complex entities and interpretations of the human condition that were being conveyed by the author. Despite a couple of insightful comments, I believe that the students adopted a surface approach to this task and did not conceive the abstract notions involved.

Nodelman (1992) continues, to note that

reading in this way directs attention away from the more immediate pleasures of a text... and therefore from other, deeper kinds of meaning the text might imply.

(The Pleasures of Children's Literature. p. 65)

It is for this reason that the case students process of 'reading for the theme' may have hampered them from attaining a deeper understanding of the author's purpose and complicated messages.

The final factor described by Unsworth (1993) is one that appealed to all of the case students, in particular Emma. The element of humour did appear to be a contributing ingredient in the students' attainment of literary pleasure. Humour is a universal concept and is one that children all delight in. The definition of and sources of humour are not static or well defined. They are individual and evolving, but are described by Unsworth (1993, p.69) as including "exaggeration, incongruity, surprise, ridicule, defiance, the absurd". The case students in particular delighted in the 'surprise', 'absurd' and 'defiance' forms of humour during the literary sessions. This can be attributed both to the students' literary responses and also the actual texts utilized during the sessions. None of the texts was overtly humorous, but the students did detect and enjoy the elements of humour that were present. They also appeared to perceive and appreciate any humorous notions of irony and sarcasm in the texts. The 'absurdity' of the setting and concept relayed in How To Live Forever, via both the story line and illustrations, were some of this text's most appealing features and the source of much discussion during the initial literary session. The children, particularly Emma and Kevin, also attested to looking for humour in the general texts they read. Kevin

stated that he chose texts based upon the degree of interest, adventure and humour conveyed in the blurb. Emma's favourite piece of text was chosen due to the humour inherent in the scene being conveyed by Emily Rodda and the humorous accompanying illustration.

It is also to be noted that a further element of the text, from which the case study students appeared to derive both heightened understanding and pleasure, is that of the illustrations. As Michaels & Walsh (1990) state, when reading picture books :

the pictures themselves need to be 'read' involving close and careful observation and refining of these observations.

(p. 1)

These four students were certainly engaged by the illustrations accompanying the text and, particularly Kevin and Amy, depicted this process of attending to the pictorial details and close observation of the illustrations. The illustrations added a further dimension to the students' reading behaviour and responses. This element of illustrations can be perceived as another feature of the texts which rendered literary satisfaction and 'pleasure of the text' for these students. It is a feature that was instrumental in establishing the setting and tone of each text and conveying a number of themes that could not be expended by print alone.

"Reading pictures is just as complex, perhaps more complex, than reading print: it can also be just as rewarding as reading print. When the two symbolic systems work together the satisfaction, enjoyment and stimulation is more than doubled."

(Michaels, W., & Walsh, M. 1990. p. 3)

Nodelman (1992, p11) outlines a number of what he attest to be the "pleasures of literature". These are far reaching and include the pleasure of "words themselves", "story", "formula", "newness", "structure", "understanding", "seeing through literature", "getting insight into history and culture", and "developing a deeper understanding of our responses". However, those "pleasures" that I believe the case students were, generally, deriving from the texts comprise of

the pleasure of making use of our repertoire of knowledge and our strategies of comprehension; of the pictures and ideas that the words of texts evoke; of finding mirrors for ourselves - of identifying with fictional characters; and of stepping outside of ourselves at least imaginatively and experiencing the lives and thoughts of different people.

(p. 11-12)

These “pleasures” embody the components of the texts and reading process that presented these students with literary enjoyment for its own sake. The students enjoyed engaging their minds in comprehending the text literally and also at higher levels of thought. They were captured by the exciting images both evident in, and evoked by, the texts and disparities and similarities of the characters depicted. The students gained pleasure from their observation of, or involvement with, the characters and their adventures, actions and circumstances.

It is through Thomson’s (1987) Developmental Model of Reader Response that we can ascertain the level and nature of students’ responses to literature and gain insight into the determinants of such ‘pleasures of the text’. Thomson’s (1987) response model proved highly effective in identifying the stages at which each of the case study students was responding to the texts and indicated scope for reading development. From these sort of indications, we (as educators) can decide the type of strategies which may heighten students’ literary pleasure. With understanding of the level at which a student is responding to, and deriving pleasure from, texts it is possible to ascertain an outset for developing their textual responses. Texts, strategies and a reading environment appropriate to what students equate with pleasurable literary experiences can be instituted and contrived to develop their responses.

Chapter 6.

Limitations of Interpretation

As with any study there are some factors which, upon reflection, may have been manipulated differently in order to achieve a more accurate or representative result. In this section I wish to discuss the possible impediments to this study.

The initial consideration is the model underpinning the analysis of the students' literary responses - Thomson's (1987) 'Developmental Model of Reader Response to Literature'. This model emerged from the reading behaviour that Thomson observed when conducting his study with a group of 51 secondary students. He states that he offers this model

as a likely approximation to the reality of the processes of literary development that all readers experience.

(p.173)

This model arose from the responses of high school students and I believe, may have illustrated notions of response that were overly mature for use with primary school aged students. The case students involved in this study were all ten years of age and did not demonstrate developed responses past the third stage featured in the model. However, due to the varying degrees of intensity and sophistication of response, Thomson's (1987) model proved adaptable and was demonstrated at all stages - simply in diverse levels of development. This model proved to be an effective source for data analysis and comparison and revealed a continuum of development underlying the hierarchy established by Thomson. These four primary school children were seen to accomplish the six levels of response, but in less sophisticated ways than exhibited by the secondary students discussed in Thomson's study..

The pre entry questionnaire administered to the whole year five class prior to conducting the literary sessions was effectual in providing an overview of the students' attitudes towards reading, texts and discussing their reading. However, I believe that the questionnaire should have incorporated a question regarding the students' favourite authors as the 'Angus and Robertson' survey (1999, The West Australian, p. 9)) indicated that "children tended to have

favourite authors rather than favourite books.” For the purpose of analysis, the questionnaire could also have included some rating scale or multiple choice type questions. These would have limited the range of written responses and enhanced the analysis and sorting of students’ responses.

Prior to conducting the literary sessions, a number of key questions were formulated with reference to those utilized by Thomson (1987), intended to probe the students’ response at varying stages of the reader response model and the individual texts to be read. These questions were very valuable, however the informal questioning technique used during the literary sessions proved less proficient. This may be attributed to the inexperience of the interviewer, the emphasis upon the predetermined questions and the time restrictions involved with the students’ school timetable. There are a few instances where more effective questioning would have elaborated upon the students’ responses or drawn further discourse regarding certain elements of the texts. At times, encouragement for the students’ to elaborate upon or explain their responses would have greatly enhanced the data and subsequent analysis.

I also believe that greater consultation with the classroom teacher prior to the sessions and during analysis of the data may have assisted the process and reinforced the significant results obtained. He may have been capable of contributing a further dimension to the students’ responses through his own observations. However, the results reported in this study are all based upon the behaviours and responses demonstrated by the students during the three literary sessions and the final individual interviews. To incorporate commentary external to these conditions may also have diminished the study’s validity.

A further issue limiting the interpretation of this study was the purely aesthetic and therefore, subjective, nature of the topic at hand. Reading is not a one way street, but rather a two way interactive process between the reader and the text. There are numerous external influences encroaching upon each one. The students’ own semantic, syntactic and graphophonic background comes into play, and cannot be documented or even ascertained.

The texts themselves would have been a further factor eluding regulation, as would the group dynamics and the environment in which the sessions were conducted.

Despite these factors, I believe that the outcomes of this study are an accurate portrayal of the students' literary responses and subsequent motivations. The data collection procedures and analysis were conducted to a high standard of professional and ethical principles.

Chapter 7.

Conclusions

It is apparent that the frequent themes that continually arose during the literary sessions and the final interview were those of excitement, adventure and humour. These three were common sources of pleasure and literary satisfaction for all four of the students in addition to the further, more individualized notions of mystery, suspense, realism and happiness. These attributes are evident in literature by way of the plot, characters, writing style and language. It is doubtful that there exists one true formula for composing pleasurable children's literature. However, an understanding of the elements sought by children and instrumental in generating pleasurable literary experiences for them can be of great benefit to writers, educators, parents and students alike. As Nodelman (1992) states,

If we are going to recommend works of literature for children and to children, we should base our recommendations on the aspects of reading that make committed readers want to and like to read.

(The Pleasures of Children's Literature, p. 11.)

The implications then, of this study, are grounded in the significance of students' contributions and notions of what stimulates pleasurable literary experiences. In establishing what it was that (these particular) children correlated with pleasurable literary experiences for their own intrinsic merits, we have gained insight which can be harnessed in our teaching strategies, portrayal of literature, our recommendations and approaches across the curriculum. The textual meanings that were constructed by the students provided some insight into those factors exerting influences upon their attitudes and responses to literature. Educators should aim to foster positive attitudes and reading practices and may do so by referring to the elements shaping these perceptions and responses. In addition, if it is possible to determine ways of enhancing students' literary responses and interactions (for intrinsic means), we may heighten the pleasure secured in the reading process.

It would be of great value to further develop our knowledge pertaining to the understanding

and fostering of pleasurable literary experiences. Possible future research in this domain could incorporate a far wider and in depth study than was conducted in this instance. Due to the nature of this study, time restrictions and the relative inexperience of the researcher, there are a number of covert issues that remain as well as questions actually raised by this study. A study, still concerning the response of primary school aged children, involving response to novels and a variety of other text types would be of merit. In addition, a study of greater duration and involving a large number of literary interactions and discussions would be beneficial. It would be of great interest and value to further explore the notions of students' literary responses, Thomson's (1987) 'Developmental Model of Reader Response to Literature' and the 'pleasure of the text'.

In conclusion, as teachers it is imperative to recognise the significance of students' own opinions and contributions, particularly in relation to their reading and the determinants of their literary satisfaction. It is important to allow students the scope to express their literary views, develop a taste for literature and read simply for the sake of reading and enjoying interaction with a text and author. The distinction between aesthetic and efferent reading should not be ignored, but reflected in teaching strategies and classroom literary interactions. Discussion of texts should be encouraged and nourished without an emphasis upon specific tangible educational outcomes. Teacher modeling of pleasurable reading practices, discussion of texts and intrinsic literary satisfaction can be important in developing these responses in students. Thomson's (1987) model can be used by teachers to identify students' level of response and strive towards attaining higher levels of response, and therefore, literary satisfaction. There is no prescribed formula for developing pleasurable reading experiences for students, but a number of factors which hold a pivotal role in determining the 'pleasure of the text' experienced by students.

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Appendices

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CONFIDENTIAL *A Small Questionnaire...*

Please answer the following questions

Name :

Age :

What is your favourite subject(s) at school :
.....

What are some of your interests and hobbies?
.....

Why do you like these things?.....
.....

Do you like to read?.....

If so, what sort of books do you most like to read?
.....
.....

Why do you enjoy these books?.....
.....

What sort of books don't you like?.....

.....

How often do you read?.....

Is most of your reading done at home or at school?.....

How often do you borrow books from the school library?

.....

How often do you borrow books from other libraries?

.....

Do you like to talk about the various books you have read?

.....

If so, why, and to whom do you like to talk to about the books?

.....

.....

Thank you very much for your time and cooperation.

Have a nice day!

4th November 1998

Dear Parent,

I am an Edith Cowan University student currently completing my Bachelor of Education (with Honours).

For my proposed honours thesis titled *'The Pleasure Of Text - Where Does It Come From?'*, I aim to meet with a small group of year five students once a week over a four week period.

During the weekly sessions we will be reading children's picture books, discussing these and any general literature issues. Confidentiality of the school, staff and students is assured. Pseudonyms

I would greatly appreciate your permission for _____ to attend these four sessions and contribute to my research project.

If you wish to contact me regarding this matter please feel free to ring me on 92765190.

Thanking you,

Sharon Cooney.

.....

I do / do not grant permission for _____ to attend the four sessions and participate in the discussions concerning children's literature.

Signed Date

Transcripts ~ Session 1.

30th Nov. 10.50 am. Informal, group sitting on rug outdoors on school grounds.

Text ~ 'How To Live Forever By Colin Thompson.

Me : Miss Cooney

K : Kevin G : Greg E : Emma A : Amy

Introductions ~

Me : My name is Miss Cooney, I am twenty years old and enjoy reading because it helps me relax and I get to experience things I may not in life.

K : Hi, I'm Kris. I'm ten years old. I like reading 'cause it's just something you can do in your spare time.

G : Hello. I'm Guy and I'm ten years old, and reading's ... fun!

E : Hi. I'm Ellice and I like reading because ... I just do !

A : Hi, I'm Anna. I like reading 'cause... I'm ten years old... I like reading because - it' full of adventure.

Reading the text ~

Me : Pg 1, 2

Why would somebody want to take the book and hide the card?

K : Because they want to live.

G : I know this story!

E : Because it's how to live forever, that's why.

A : So nobody finds out about it.

Me : Why wouldn't you want anybody to find out about it?

G : I know! I've read the book!

E : Because maybe they want to live forever... So not everyone can live forever.

K : So everybody knows what it's like to die.

A : Don't know.

Me : Pg 3

A : Maybe it's like, maybe, the books are sort of expressing what's in them.

K : Maybe the books live forever.

G : They probably rot.

E : See, the people inside could live forever. 'Cause they might've read it and they're the

only ones that know what happens.

A : They could just write the book out again.

Me : Do you think this sort of thing happens in your library at night?

All : No! Nuh!

Me : Why not?

A : Because it's imaginary.

E : Then, we've got security.

K : Why would somebody want to live in a book?

Me : Pg 4

Where do you think he might find the book?

E : Maybe, if he goes right in.

A : Behind another book.

K : They might have clues around the place that tells you where to go.

A : Maybe if he goes into, like, the hole there might be a secret passageway.

Me : If you hid a book in the library where would you put it?

K : Underground.

A : In a secret room.

G : I'd hide it in another book.

E : But, remember lots of people read the books.

A : You know in 'Get Smart' they put it in the shoe boxes.

E : Behind, like, see how they have all the different shelves, like behind all those books.

A : You know how you can push back some walls and it leads into different rooms.

E : Yeah, like behind all those books.

G : Wouldn't they find it?

E : No, 'cause they wouldn't take every book out.

G : I know, but wouldn't the people who live there find it?

A : Nobody lives in libraries.

G : No, these people.

A : Um, yeah, they might.

E : They probably would because they go behind there.

Me : Good. Pg 5

K : Ooh, there's a big lake.

E : I think that's the thing where the ladder goes around. (Pointing)

A : He's standing on a plank.

G : But he won't break it.

Me : Pg 6

G : What if he died and they didn't know?

A : That's not nice.

Me : Pg 7,8

A : The book actually doesn't say that you're not gonna age, it just says how to live forever.

Doesn't mean you're not going to age.

E : You might just keep growing.

G : Then you disintegrate.

Me : Why do you think these four men are so old if they have the book?

E : Because they keep on growing older and older and older.

K : Do they have the book?

A : They might.

Me : Pg 9

E : Wake up Jeff!!

A : There's a car there.

G : No, but if you live forever...

E : There's the old men.

K : Are they the old men?

E : Yeah.

A : They're all bowing to him and then they...

K : They look funny, like they're from China.

E : They are, they're Chinese men.

A : That's why they are in front of Chinese books.

Me : Pg 10

A : Where is it? Oh, he has it.

E : For beginners?

Me : Immortality. Does anybody know what immortality means?

A : Like, when you can't die?

G : Immortal.

E : Hercules!

Me : Pg 11

K : 'Cause if they're so old, then they are going to live forever.

A : I know, they found the book when they were old.

Me : Pg 11 Cont.

A : Is that where they live?

E : There's a little book as their house. That's a sky.

A : There's a little aeroplane.

K : No, that's the reflection.

A : No, it's an aeroplane.

Me : Pg 12

G : Yup.

A : Ancient Child.

E : Oh, maybe he might've lived forever. 'Cause if he's the ancient that means that it's old.

A : Maybe they're not living forever there, and they're living forever somewhere else.

K : Have you read this before?

G : I know the ending.

Me : Pg 13

E : See, he's so old that's why he's going to live forever.

K : No, he turned to stone...

Me : Pg 13 Cont.

Why mustn't Peter read the book?

E : Because then he'll turn out like him. And be frozen.

G : He'll be caught between time, forward and backward.

Me : Do you think he will read it?

E : Yes, he'll try and read it really fast, 'cause he said he couldn't read it fast enough.

G : Nuh, but I don't know why.

K : 'Cause then he'll turn out like him, and then, now, he realises that he won't be able to do old things like, he won't be able to drink, or smoke.. or shave a bad word into his head!

Or be famous.

A : He can be famous, just not in the same way. No, he wants to be able to be older.

K : Then he can go into nightclubs and stuff.

G : That's fun.

Me : Do you not have fun when you're ten?

K : No, it's just that you can't go anywhere good.

G : Can't go to nightclubs and stuff.

A : Why would you want to?

K : No, it's like - you can't have a job, can't organise ..., can't live by yourself.

Me : Pg 14

K : This must be somewhere else 'cause this is Earth. (Pointing)

E : They're in a book. They'd still be on Earth.

A : In day, the library's on Earth, but in night it goes, like, into another world.

E : Could be on the moon! Pluto! Sailing around the Milky Way.

A : I don't think you would see Pluto from, I mean Earth, from Pluto.

K : Yeah, you've gotta be somewhere close.

A : You wouldn't even see it.

K : 'Cause it's all white it might be the moon.

Me : Pg 15

E : How come there's F books and C books and P books?

A : The actual thing is made out of books. That's going to fall, there's nothing supporting it.

Me : Pg 16

K : See, I told you it was in another world.

E : But, there's no gravity in space.

G : It's a book.

A : It's a book, you can imagine things. You can change things.

After Reading ~

Me : Back to our first question, what was happening in your head while you were listening?

Did any questions come into your head?

G : Nuh.

A : What's going to happen?

E : Yeah, like where's the book going to be? Do they find it? Or anything.

A : It's just so obvious what happens.

E : What do you mean? What do you mean "what happens"?

A : In all stories the person who's searching for something has to find it, except if they're the bad guys. ...I've read books where I can tell what's going to happen fifty pages from the end.

Me : Are there any things in your life which are similar to some of the things happening to the characters in the story?

G : Yeah, I live forever.

E : Miss, I've searched for a pair of socks and couldn't find them.

K : I want to go to never never land and never grow up.

Me : Why is that Kris?

K : Oh, no, I do want to grow up, but I want to go to never never land 'cause it'd be fun.

G : Yeah, then they have nightclubs and stuff. And pubs, that kids can go to.

Me : Is there anything else in your lives that are similar to anything in the story?

G : Nuh.

E : Yeah, my Mother worries about me! Like the mother did about...

A : I like the illustrations.

Me : Were you reminded of any other books you have read?

(Students volunteering titles shown on book spines on the cover and pages of the text -
Back to The Future, The Time Machine, 20000 Leeks Under The Sea...)

A : Well, this book is like another book that I've read and it hasn't got much writing. It's got like little people and houses and stuff.

G : This book reminds me of the book that came before this. It was the same person that did it. It's "How To Get To Something".

K : How to get to never never land?

G : No!

Me : What about the word 'immortality'? Have you read any other books with that word in it?

G : No, we just heard it.

E : I heard it off Hercules.

A : I don't know how I heard it, I just knew it.

Me : If you had to draw some of the characters or setting in the story, what would you draw?

E : Onion man! I'd draw Onion man.

Me : If you were drawing Peter, how would you draw him?

E : Brown hair, about ten years old.

A : Skinny.

K : I'd draw this guy. Look him - (Pointing to Ancient Child)

Me : Yes? How?

K : I'd draw all cobwebs off him and all old. It's got about falling apart.

G : He's got no teeth!

A : Here it sort of explains what he looks like. Like it explains he's a little bit young but old.

K : In old fashioned clothes.

A : Yeah, 'cause it said that he had smooth skin, but like sort of more like old.

K : I'd do him all crumbled.

G : It looked all crunched up but when you touched it, it was like ...

E : Smooth?

K : This reminds me of Ants - the movie. 'Cause it's set like they're all little, and it's all little people.

A : Yeah.

K : And like in this it's in a book, but in Ants it's like in here (gesturing around the oval).

A : I know who I'd draw, I'd draw the Chinese men because it tells you that they're standing on one leg. They sort of look like old, white hair. And then I'd draw them with one of those big hats like you see in China.

K : What's a quail?

E : It's a bird.

K : He must live in W.A. or something because it says "Quokka". Or he must have gone to Rottnest. They only live on Rottnest ... And some bad people were kicking them around and killing them.

G : And one of them attacked my Aunty.

K : They play quokka soccer which isn't nice.

Me : What do you think would've happened if Peter had read the book?

E : He would have turned out to be like that boy.

A : Yeah, the Ancient Child.

K : It didn't mention anything about his Dad, did they?

A & E : Yeah. They did.

G : (Reading) A serious girl called Lucy and...

K : There's his Dad, sitting in front of the T.V. watching football.

G : Where's his Mum?

K : Probably there with him.

Me : Why do you think they included things about his family? What did they have to do with the story?

E : Well, you can guess that they'd probably be worried about him.

A : In usual stories, they put in the boy's family in it. They usually introduce the family as part of the characters?

Me : If you had the chance to read the book, would you do it?

K : No, I wouldn't.

E : If you look closely at this T.V. you can see a naked lady.

E : Only if I knew I was a really fast reader.

Me : Why do you think the four old men were included in the story? What was the point of having them in it?

G : 'Cause they were guarding the Chinese books.

K : They might have been his four uncles and they might not have helped him and now they're trying to help him and cheer him up.

E : They probably wanted to, so that he wouldn't turn old, they probably took him to see the Ancient Child so he wouldn't turn out that way.

G : We're talking why, though.

E : They might be the only ones that have read it, but they only looked at it.

A : Maybe they were ones that have read part of the story.

G : And they've said nobody should ever read this.

A : That's why they're so old, they might've read, the boy might've let them read it. But they might have wanted to. They might have read it a little while ago, so that's why

they're not so old - yet.

G : They might have read just a quarter of the book and they're just staying at that age.

Me : What sort of a person do you think the author is? What would they be like to talk to?

E : A really cheery person who loves drawing.

A : Interesting. Creative.

K : He likes fantasy.

A : He'd be very interesting.

K : I'd ask him to draw me something.

Me : What sort of a person do you think the book is for? Who do you think the author was writing for?

G : Children.

A : It usually tells you on the book!

E : If somebody's sad this book could sort of cheer them up.

A : Yeah, in hospital. Like in hospital - how to live forever.

A : Maybe, children about our age.

K : Yeah, it's pretty hard to understand. 'Cause you have to work it out, like, why they would want to hide the book and stuff.

G : Yeah, little three year olds couldn't understand it. So, probably aimed for about thirteen.

E : This could be a book for even like six and over because it's like...

Me : What do you think the author is trying to say to the reader?

K : Um, don't try to live forever, 'cause it might turn out, like 'cause then you can do stuff that you really want to do.

G : Oh, that there's always something bad about good things.

K : Yeah, something that you want to do isn't always good.

E : Except lollies. But there is something bad, because if you eat too many you will get sick.

G : And good things always have a bad point.

E : Even being nice, because they might even tease you if you're nice.

A : You can be too nice.

Me : Do you agree with what the author is trying to say?

A : Yeah, I do.

K : I reckon it's better for somebody to find out things for themselves.

E : But if it's something bad you should tell them.

Transcripts ~ Session 2.

3rd Dec. 1.10pm. Informal, group sitting on rug outdoors on school grounds.

Text ~ Grandad's Gifts By Paul Jennings & Peter Gouldthorpe.

Prior to Reading ~

Me : What do you think this might be about?

G : He goes into the cupboard and steals gifts.

E : They might be the Grandad's old toys.

K : I think he might go into their backyard and make a little cubby with them - so he can treasure them.

A : I reckon that his Grandfather has died. His grandfather's died and he's got all the gifts.

E : That's what I said. In the box.

A : No, like from the will.

During Reading ~

Pg 1.

Me : What could be in the cupboard?

G : Bad stuff. Evil things.

E : All the gifts on the front of the book.

K : Something that his Grandad didn't want anybody else to see so he hid them away so nobody else would see them.

A : Yeah, what Kris said.

Pg 2.

Pg 3.

Pg 4.

Pg 5.

Pg 6.

Me : What could be behind the door?

A : A ghost.

G : I think I remember from 'Round The Twist'.

Pg7.

Me : Why do you think Grandma wouldn't wear it?

E : Because she doesn't like dead animals.

K : Maybe she doesn't like cruelty to animals.

A : She wouldn't want to wear a dead animal.

Pg 7. Cont.

Pg 8.

Me : Why did he lock it in the cupboard?

E : Because he was really sad that the Grandma didn't like it.

A : Maybe it was the only thing to remind him of her, like, maybe the Grandma died.

G : Maybe it was a special fox.

Pg 9.

Pg 10.

Pg 11.

Pg 12.

Pg 13.

Pg 14.

Pg 15.

E : It's got his Grandad's eyes. It had the bluest eyes and it said that was on the photo.

G : This was on "Around The Twist" - remember?

K : Yeah.

G : Well, Paul Jennings did "Around The Twist" - and he did this.

A : You know how he opened the cupboard, and he was annoyed how he opened the cupboard. Why didn't he just lock it again?

After Reading ~

Me : What was happening in your head while we were reading? Did you have any questions?

E : I thought this is, like, a good story.

G : No.

Me : Was there anything in the story that was similar to your own life? Characters? Setting? Storyline?

G : I have a cupboard at home!

E : The trees in my backyard have been cut down.

K : I have a lemon tree.

G : I've got lots of, we grow lots of vegetables.

Me : Did this book remind you any others that you have read? How?

E : Yeah - "Round The Twist." It was like a movie. This was better though, reading the book.

G : The main character was a girl instead.

K : And Dad didn't shred the trees these two boys did.

G : Yeah.

A : Why do they shred the lemon trees? And don't you think that the Dad would've noticed that the lemons were going?

K : The cover made it look like a different story. It made it look like the Grandad was dead, and those were his gifts that the boy is carrying.

E : Never judge a book by its cover.

Me : Why do you think it was called 'Grandad's Gifts'?

K : Well, because his gifts were his eyes, that's why the fox had them. Because you can't bring the person back alive.

Me : If you were to describe to someone the people or the places in the story, how would you do it?

K : Well, they moved house, they're in their Grandad's old house and, are they?

A : Yes.

K : And, it's like in the country and stuff.

Me : How would you describe the main character - Shane?

A : Adventurous.

G : Interested, no, like - curious.

E : Yeah, curious killed the cat!

A : Well, he broke his promise. He was just determined to see what was in the cupboard. He wasn't going to give up.

G : He should have got in the red file!!

Me : Why did Dad say that Grandad's eyes were very blue? Did that relate to anything else in the story?

E : Because maybe he really liked them. He tried to exchange eyes.

A : Maybe he knew about the fox.

K : He looks like Frank Sinatra 'cause his eyes are really blue.

K : At the end the fox's eyes were bright blue, same colour as his Grandad's.

Me : Why do you think the lemon tree on Grandad's grave didn't grow very well?

G : Grandad wasn't hung up on a peg!

A : It wasn't very good soil.

E : Maybe it was cursed by the fox.

G : I reckon it was cursed because the fox didn't want to die, and Grandad killed him.

E : The two lemons that were left were the fox's eyes.

K : The fox had his own tree and so did Grandad.

G : That was his grave.

G : All the lemons were on the fox's tree were all parts of his body.

K : And they made him come back to life.

G : And the Grandad's eyes were the only things that really worked in his body!

Me : What do you think the author was trying to say to the reader in this book?

G : Read the book!

A : Keep your promises.

E : Yeah, try and keep your promise, try.

E : Take care of animals, like, try not to hurt them.

G : Don't catch animals otherwise they curse you.

K : Don't cut down trees for no reason, 'cause you might need them for something.

Me : Was the author speaking through any of the characters in the story?

G : He was that kid.

K : Yeah, 'cause it kept on saying "I".

Me : What kind of reader do you think the author wrote this book for?

K : For people that can understand it, if a year 1 read it, they wouldn't understand.

E : For people who have moved house.

A : For six and over.

K : People our age.

E : Six at the least. About eight to fifteen.

K : Maybe adults.

G : Adventurous people.

E : People who like animals.

A : Some people would want more excitement.

G : Some old people wouldn't.

Me : Do you agree with what the author is trying to say?

E : I do, I don't know why. I just do.

Me : What did you like about this book?

K : It was good that he helped the fox and he did something that was good. It was good that the fox got his eyes back. A happy ending.

E : I liked nearly everything, except when he opened the cupboard and he had the thing right there, he looked funny. It was a silly picture.

A : He looks like he's being frightened by the ghost!

K : This bit is like 'Indian In The Cupboard', how he lifts up the floorboard there.

Transcripts ~ Session 3

7th Dec. 10.50am. Informal group sitting around table on school groups.

Text ~ The Coming of The Surfman. By Peter Collington.

Prior to Reading ~

Me : What do you think this book might be about?

K : I think that he might be like somebody new and nobody likes him so they won't let him use the ocean.

G : If he's a surfer wouldn't he get a tan?

E : He may be a ghost.

A : He's got indented face features.

E : The surfman is - coming! A person on a boogie board.

G : What is that big thing?

E : They're tanks, that you can find them when you go near, if you're going to Rottneft if you're driving down the road to go to the ferry.

During Reading ~

G : Now, if the Nail gang came along, they would beat him up because he's in the Hammer head thing.

K : Yeah, but they wouldn't know 'cause he probably wouldn't wear his bandanna.

E : If he was near the Hammer one he would wear the red one and if he was near the nails he would wear his blue one.

G : But what if they had a battle?

E : If they had a battle I reckon he'd stay out of it.

A : I would.

G : Sunglasses?

Me : What sort of a store do you think it might be?

A : A surfboard store.

E : He's patching up all the boards.

G : And he's wearing all surf gear.

E : Yeah, look at him, he's in bathing suit.

G : He looks like a lifesaver.

A : In the red and yellow.

E : In the red bandanna he looks like he's in one of the gangs.

K : Do you know what I'd do, because he's got a red and a blue bandanna, I'd put them together and have a purple gang.

Me : Why do you think someone would open a surfing supplies store in such a place?

K : They could surf down the hill.

G : Because they make an artificial surf place.

K : 'Cause like I said, maybe he might surf in the tanks.

E : He could surf down the hills and make new skateboards to put wheels on it.

A : I think he could maybe build something artificial.

E : Isn't there a river around there?

A : It could be a wave pool - that's an artificial thing.

K : Triathlon?

G : Surf competitions?

G : Yeah, it's going to turn into a surf place.

K : Into a wave pool or something.

Me : What do you think he was doing over at the factory?

G : Trying to make the pool.

K : Probably making the surf place.

All : Wow! Wicked!

K : Yeah, but wouldn't the water go everywhere?

G : But then there'll be too many people. They'll be bumping into each other. What if there was somebody standing there?

K : But how do they get all the water back up there?

G : They don't.

A : Suck it up the pipes.

G : No they just get all new water.

K : I suppose they might be able to suck it up, with the pump.

E : Buy a surfboard.

G : And they have to train.

A : Why can't he use the pool?

G : He could go in if he wanted. He'd be allowed.

A : It should be everyone.

E : They're sort of taking over it. And they're the ones who started bashing it and then like leaving it.

G : Wouldn't the rubber tyres just start to fall away after a while? They'd be all mushy.

Me : Why do you think the Surfman would want the boy to watch and listen when he was fixing the wave machine?

A : So he knew how to do it.

K : Maybe if he dies or goes somewhere, the kid can take over. Then he'll know what to do.

G : Then he can kick the two gangs out - and burn them.

E : That might be his old Dad who came from heaven or hell or whatever.

K : In case he gets really sick and can't get up to fix it.

G : How come that one is still good?

A : Because he's going to smash it, see in the shadow.

G : Is that his home?

E : The store is his home. Lots of people live in their shops.

G : It's not a very good home.

A : Maybe the surfman was trying to stop them fighting each other.

G : Maybe he paid them to wreck it.

E : Or maybe he'll ban them 'cause they keep on fighting and only let other people on it.

G : Then he owns the store, and bans them from coming in. If they do he shoots them! He shoots the gangs - the kid, if they go on the wave machine.

Me : Do you think the surfman will come back to fix the wave machine?

All : No!

K : I think he will actually, yep.

E : He might, just to let them learn their lesson.

K : Maybe he went to get some more repairs or something.

G : Yeah, more stuff.

K : To make it bigger. To make it bigger so one group can use it and the other can.

A : I think he was trying to stop them fighting and he went away when they started fighting again.

G : Make them... you have to share. Teach them a lesson to share or you'll go crying!

After Reading ~

Me : What was happening in your head while you were listening to the story? Did you have any questions?

G : Why didn't he put in a security system?

A : Why doesn't anyone else ride? Why was it only the gangs?

K : Why didn't he like ban them for two weeks so they learnt their lesson then let them back on? And why didn't anybody else use it? Why just those two gangs?

E : Maybe they're the only kids in that place in the story.

G : Doubt it!

A : It's all dark.

G : That's the only colourful thing.

E : Yeah, it's an American city

Me : Was there anything in the book that was similar to your life?

K : There's no gangs at our school, but at Mt. Lawley High there is.

G : There is in our suburb. There's this gang and they go around stealing from the shops.

K : ABC - After Bedtime Crime.

G : No, not them - the Inglewood gang. The Eden Hill people.

A : There's a group that are fighting at the moment, the Coffin Cheaters and I can't remember the other ones. The bikie gangs.

K : There's a dragon group, the dragon lords. They killed somebody outside Timezone.

G : Adam would know some, 'cause his sister is friends with one of the gangs or something.

E : Did you realise that the surf shop is the brightest shop?

G : 'Cause he wants it to be nice.

K : It's good how the illustrator got different shades.

G : And he used shadows a lot so you knew they were there.

E : Of course the Hammers would have been more powerful, 'cause you know, hammers hit nails.

Me : Did this book remind you of any others you have read?

G : This picture reminded me of that front area, the scaffolding in front of school.

E : I've read millions of books with surfing. My brother did this project on surfing at the beach and I just went and there's a book where they go surfing and people drown and

stuff. It's for beach safety.

G : Jaws!

Me : Why do you think the two gangs were called the Hammers and the Nails?

E : 'Cause the hammers are the more powerful.

A : Because hammers and nails go together.

K : Because they've got something in common, but the two gangs hate each other.

A : Nails are opposite to hammers, and hammers are opposite to nails.

G : Because they both can hurt you.

E : Both dangerous, nails can go right through your hand.

G : And hammers can hit you!

Me : Why do you think the surfman built the wave machine?

K : So they would buy stuff from the store.

E : So he'd make money.

G : 'Cause there's no surf things around there, so everybody could get a chance.

K : Because they have to drive a two day drive to the beach, so...

E : Yeah, but what about Alice Springs - that's probably five days.

G : There was probably too many other people down at the beach places, he wouldn't have got very good business.

E : This could be set in America.

K : Because there would have been a lot more surf stores at the beach.

G : And he would get more money here and be really rich.

K : He wanted money.

A : Because he heard about the gangs and wanted to pull them apart, well, stop them fighting.

Me : Do you like the surfman? Does he remind you of anybody you know, like he reminded the main character of his Dad?

G : He reminds me of the surfer, I can't remember his name.

A : I like him.

K : The kid reminded me of this kid in our class called Matt, he really likes surfing.

E : Yeah.

Me : How would you describe the characters in the story? Appearances? Personalities?

G : Well, the surfman's very quiet.

E : The boy is, he like, he misses his Dad.

G : He's a grumpy guts. Maybe he's trying to find a new Dad for his Mum. He murdered his other Dad!

K : The surfman was quiet, he didn't talk. He was trying to split up the groups, he was nice.
The boy felt sorry for the surfman some times.

E : He was touching.

G : Yeah, 'cause the surfman was trying to get business, but nobody would come because there was no surf.

A : So he decided to build the wave pool.

G : Maybe he had that idea in the first place.

Me : Why do you think the author included the things about the boy's Dad?

A : Because his Dad was like the surfman.

K : Yeah.

A : Maybe his Dad was the Surfman.

E : Maybe, up in heaven he's gone to Earth to teach him how to do the surf thing.

G : So he could put a few more words in.

A : Yeah, to take up space.

K : They tell you about his Dad and what he was like. He was really nice like the surfman.

G : To tell you about his life. And it will also tell you about the surfman.

E : He has to listen when people do stuff.

A : He has to listen because he may not get that opportunity again.

Me : What do you think the author was trying to say to the readers?

G : Listen to people - and gangs are bad.

E : Wherever this is, it is a boring place. Don't join gangs.

G : Don't join two gangs.

K : Don't be forced to do anything, fight back.

Me : Do you agree or disagree with these things?

G : Yes, I agree.

A : I know, don't get stuck in bad things.

K : Don't get stuck between two things, like the hammers and the nails.

E : How about every good thing has a bad thing to it. Like the wave machine, it kept on breaking down.

G : If you used it too much.

Me : What were some of the things you liked about the book?

K : It was good fun. Well, he did something for the community.

E : Because with the two gangs and that.

E : I didn't like it much, well, I did, I just didn't like the illustrations because they were too dull.

A : But that was good.

E : Because it was in an American city.

G : Where there are people in dumpsters and stuff.

K : The surfman brought colour into the community.

G : And he made the people happy. Before they were sad and they didn't have any leisure.

E : I'd read most of the time.

Transcripts ~ Session 4.

Wed. 9th Dec. 8.50am. Individual interviews, students seated across table from interviewer. All three texts on table.

Me : When you look at a book, what appeals to you? What makes you choose a book?

K : Firstly because of the cover and then when I read the blurb, it just sounds like an interesting book to read... Colourful covers and it looks adventurous and like something funny might happen.

Me : When we were reading the three books in our group was it hard to work out what was going to happen? Why?

K : Yeah, because on the cover it looks different to what's going to happen. Not any one especially.

Me : What do you use to help you work out what is going to happen?

K : Well, I just think of what's going to happen. What might happen and what might not happen.

Me : When you are reading, where do you feel you are in relation to the characters?

K : Usually watching them. Not right in the story.

Me : Do you like happy endings? Such as? Why?

K : Yeah, sometimes. It just finishes the story. If it's a bad ending there might be a second to it. I can't really think of an example because all the ones I've read are series, they keep going.

Me : What appeals to you about the characters in a book you are reading?

K : They're funny, they do things that they shouldn't do. Like get into things they shouldn't. I like them because it just gives more adventure.

Me : Did the characters in any of these books do anything that you didn't expect?

K : Yeah. The man in 'The Coming Of The Surfman' he made a wave machine, I didn't expect. And in 'How To Live Forever' he hid the book and it was a young boy and he was made of stone, turned into stone.

Me : Were they realistic?

K : Sort of, yeah. Not really in 'How To Live Forever' because I don't think you could turn to stone. The others are because they're the things that really happen, like, his Grandad might not want him to touch his stuff inside the cupboard.

Me : Would you remember any of these characters in a year's time?

K : Yeah, probably the boy in 'Grandad's Gifts' and the old boy in 'How To Live Forever'.

Me : What feelings do you have when reading? Are they the same as the character's or quite different?

K : Usually the same as the character's in the book. Like, in Grandad's Gifts he tries to open the cupboard when his Grandad doesn't want him to - or anybody doesn't want him to. And I wanted him to, and I would've as well.

Me : When reading, do you think about any things that are similar or different between your life and what you are reading?

K : No. Not really. Maybe in "Grandad's Gifts" I'd want to open the cupboard too.

Me : Have you learnt anything important about the world you live in from your reading?

K : Yeah, like, don't judge a book by it's cover 'cause it might be good and you should always read the blurb, otherwise you won't get to know what it's about. And don't join gangs and stuff and , yeah.

Me : Have you ever learnt anything about yourself from a book?

K : No, not really.

Me : Could the author of any of these books said more? What would've happened?

K : Well, maybe in the 'Coming Of The Surfman' the surfman might have come back and helped them and said that's what you get if you keep fighting.

Me : Do you sometimes find yourself asking questions of the book? Such as?

K : Yeah, what's going to happen next. Like, will he open the closet in 'Grandad's Gifts'? What will the end turn out like? Will it be a happy or a sad ending?

Me : Do you think the authors of books are actually any of the characters in them?

K : Yeah, in 'Grandad's Gifts', the boy is Paul Jennings. Because he keeps saying "I", "I have."

Me : Do you ever reject a book or stop reading because of the way a book is written?

K : No.

Me : Who is your favourite author?

K : Probably Brian Jacques and John Marsden.

Me : Why do you think this is? What do you like about them?

K : Brian Jacques writes tales about mices and they hunt and they fight. John Marsden

writes a series called 'Tomorrow When The World Began', it's about some kids who go out on camp and when they come back the city has been invaded by a war, so there's a about seven books to that.

Me : Do you ever find yourself thinking or saying things to yourself about the author?

K : Yeah, in the 'Coming Of The Surfman' maybe he should have come back or maybe he should have stopped, so that if it broke down he should have just stopped and not done it until they learnt their lesson.

Me : Which of these books was the easiest to read? Why?

K : Probably, 'How To Live Forever', because it doesn't have very many words in it and it's nice and easy to read. It's got lots of pictures in it.

Me : Do you think that the use of pictures in these books influences reading? How?

K : Yeah, it sort of tells the story more.

Me : Do you get any pleasure out of reading? Think about some of your favourite books which parts did you like most? Why?

K : Yeah, it's just something that you can do in your spare time. And you can just see what happens and just see how much adventure is in it, then you can tell somebody else how good the book is... In 'Tomorrow When The World Began' probably when they come back and find that their city has been destroyed. Because it's like a surprise and then something else will happen, and they will try to find who stole it. In 'Redwall' they're always fighting so they're trying to keep away from it and they live in funny places like moss flower.



Me : When you look at a book, what appeals to you? What makes you choose a book?

E : Well, I always sort of have a look inside a book and read a bit before I actually start reading the whole book. I like a bit of excitement and if it's just a bit scary, just a little bit. Or it's got a bit of a sad bit in it, anything to do with feelings or anything. I just like every book except the really sick ones.

Me : When we were reading the three books in our group was it hard to work out what was going to happen?

E : In 'Grandad's Gifts' it was because it was sort of hard to find out what was going to be in the cupboard like there might have been, maybe, some old gold or an old family

treasure or something. That's why they didn't want to open it. I had no idea what he was doing with the old factory in 'The Coming of the Surfman'. And 'How To Live Forever', I could sort of go along with that one.

Me : What do you use to help you work out what is going to happen?

E : I think of what's happened so far and I try to look for clues, like in the pictures and stuff if it's a picture book. That's how I try to work it out.

Me : While you are reading, where do you feel you are in relation to the characters?

E : In special books if it's sort of the same with the life that I live I can be right in the story. But if it's sort of, they have nothing to do with me I just follow the story and just go along with it.

Me : Do you like happy endings? Such as? Why?

E : Yes. My favourite books are probably fairy tales because they nearly always have happy endings. It just makes me feel happy... and happy's good.

Me : What appeals to you about characters in a book you are reading?

E : If they have lots of curiosity and like to get mystery.

Me : Did the characters in any of these books do anything that you didn't expect?

E : Well, the surfman in 'Coming of The Surfman', I had no idea what he was going to do. But in 'How to Live Forever' I could sort of see he was going to end up finding the book. When he saw the child I didn't really think he would read the book.

Me : Were they realistic?

E : Well, yeah. In the 'Coming of the Surfman' I reckon the boy who didn't really want to join the gangs I thought he was sort of realistic. And in 'Grandad's Gifts', I reckon the boy and his parents and all that were real as well. I knew 'How to Live Forever' wasn't going to be realistic, it didn't feel realistic because of the books and they live in the books.

Me : Would you remember any of these characters in a year's time?

E : If I really like the book then I usually remember, but if I don't really like them I don't. I think I would remember these.



Me : What feelings do you have when reading? Are they the same as the character's or quite

different?

E : They are sometimes same and sometimes different. It depends what the story is. If they sort of had the same life as me, I would feel probably the same, but if they didn't...

Me : When reading, do you think about any things that are similar or different between your life and what you are reading?

E : Yes. I try and think, like, I've got a messy backyard like that! It's sort of the same.

Me : Have you learnt anything important about the world you live in from your reading?

E : Yeah, reading atlases and things like that. When I read these 'Wally' books, well, they teach you about space and all that, all the countries and islands.

Me : Have you ever learnt anything about yourself from a book?

E : Yeah, from my baby album! They put lots of stuff like, and I've still got one of them now. They do one every year.

Me : Could the author of any of these books said more? What would've happened?

E : Well, in the 'Coming of the Surfman' I reckon they could've said more like if the Surfman did really come back and if the boy would be able to fix the wave machine. 'Grandad's Gifts' was probably good, all together they've said as much as they could. 'How To Live Forever' like they should've said a bit more like if his parents come looking for him. He could do that or something.

Me : Do you sometimes find yourself asking questions of the book? Such as?

E : Yeah, like in 'Teen Power Inc', Emily Rodda's, they're mysteries. You have to solve the mystery like, just an example, you have to say why is the bomber bombing Ravenshill in like 'This Old Man He Played One' - he played nick nack on my drum, like he was bombing the drum place.

Me : Do you think the authors of books are actually any of the characters in them?

E : No. Well, in some books maybe. Sometimes they use their own name as the person in the book. Like, my Dad is writing a book now. And he's writing about a man's life and he's also putting stuff about his own life as well.

Me : Do you ever reject a book or stop reading because of the way a book is written?

E : Yes, I have - once. It was sort of a bit mushy. There was like too much kissing, especially in one bit and the rest was just not nice.

Me : Who is your favourite author?

E: Emily Roddas.

Me : Why do you think this is? What do you like about them?

E: I just love the books she writes, there's a whole series of them and they're just so adventurous. You have to find out what's coming next.

Me : Do you ever find yourself thinking or saying things to yourself about the author?

E: Yeah, like in one of, this book from Paul Jennings I didn't really think the crocodile should've done what he did. Because it wasn't a very good idea. Like, it didn't really fit in the story.

Me : Which of these books was the easiest to read? Why?

E: Probably 'Grandad's Gifts'. The story was quite nice and the words were really nice words and there wasn't anything too long to say or anything.

Me : Do you think that the use of pictures in these books influences reading? How?

E : Yes, it sort of explains what he's doing if you don't understand. And the picture might tell you what he's doing if you can't understand.

Me : Do you get any pleasure out of reading? Think about some of you favourite books, which parts did you like most? Why?

E : Yes, a lot. Well, if it's sort of a bit sad, I just keep reading to see if it turns out happy. But I just do it when I'm bored or have any spare time. Emily Roddas, the one in 'The Secret of Banyon Bay', my favourite bit was when they, the old people, were actually cops and they wiped off all their make up and it was really funny and they drew wrinkles and everything. It was just really funny 'cause it stops half way through the page and on the next page there's a small picture. It's just really funny.



Me : When you look at a book, what appeals to you? What makes you choose a book?

G : The way it is presented. I don't know. I just sort of have a skip through it.

Me : When we were reading the three books in our group was it hard to work out what was going to happen?

G : No. Well, I didn't really think what was going to happen, I just sort of followed the story. It would've been sort of easy. I don't know why.

Me : What do you use to help you work out what is going to happen?

G : Just like things that happened before and things that happened then and just put them together.

Me : While you are reading, where do you feel you are in relation to the characters?

G : Like a movie. I'm watching it.

Me : Do you like happy endings? Such as? Why?

G: Sometimes. 'Grandad's Gifts'. I don't know, it brings joy to people.

Me : What appeals to you about characters in a book you are reading?

G : Their personality and how they express themselves.

Me : Did the characters in any of these books do anything that you didn't expect?

G : No.

Me : Were they realistic?

G : Yeah, some of them were. With 'Grandad's Gifts' some of it was, but not all of it. Like, people move house and then they get sad.. But the fox wasn't.

Me : Would you remember any of these characters in a year's time?

G : Yeah, probably from 'How To Live Forever' because I liked the book and it glued in my mind. And maybe from 'Grandad's Gifts'.

Me : What feelings do you have when reading? Are they the same as the character's or quite different?

G : I don't really have feelings, I just read it and see it in my mind.

Me : When reading, do you think about any things that are similar or different between your life and what you are reading?

G : No.

Me : Have you learnt anything important about the world you live in from your reading?

G : No. I can't recall anything.

Me : Have you ever learnt anything about yourself from a book?

G : No, I just like to read.

Me : Could the author of any of these books said more? What would've happened?

G : Hmm, no, they were good the way they were.

Me : Do you sometimes find yourself asking questions of the book? Such as?

G: Sometimes. Like in 'Grandad's Gifts' he just closed the door and the thing could've just walked out - if it had its leg bones.

Me : Do you think the authors of books are actually any of the characters in them?

G : Yeah, like Peter Collington would be the surfman, Colin Thompson would have been the person who was looking for the book and Paul Jennings would've been Peter. He was interested and that.

Me : Do you ever reject a book or stop reading because of the way a book is written?

G : Yeah, well it was this book, I can't remember the name. It was about this kid and they had like a colony in the desert, they had like caravans and stuff. And he found this big spaceship thing, there was like this crystal thing that he had heard about. It was just really strange. I just didn't understand it.

Me : Who is your favourite author?

G : I can't remember his name, someone Michaels, or something. He wrote 'Talent' and these other two or three books.

Me : Why do you think this is? What do you like about them?

G : I don't know. They just write good books. Have good imagination, but still realistic.

Me : Do you ever find yourself thinking or saying things to yourself about the author?

G : No.

Me : Which of these books was the easiest to read? Why?

G : To understand? The easiest would've been probably 'How To Live Forever'. It didn't have any real basic things, it had like a plot but you just sort of drifted through it. It didn't have like days and that.

Me : Do you think that the use of pictures in these books influences reading? How?

G : Yeah, but not too many pictures. I like a chapter book with a picture like every fifty pages. Because then you can get to see what the landscape's like but still let your imagination be more precise.

Me : Do you get any pleasure out of reading? Think about some of your favourite books, which parts did you like most? Why?

G : Yes, it's just fun. Well, in a book called 'Talent' these aliens came but nobody ever saw them. You go to these people and you have to have a pass to go out at night. Like the whole world changed and stuff. And so this girl she tried to get her brother back and she went to this camp where they did all like these maths quizzes and if you got something wrong, they would like electrocute them and did all this stuff. My favourite part was

when, at the end, they went into this chamber thing and this guy did tests on them and when it was over they all joined hands. Their souls went out and drifted away and they met the outsiders and then they went back in their bodies. I don't know why it is my favourite though.



Me : When you look at a book, what appeals to you? What makes you choose a book?

A : Sometimes it's author, maybe sometimes it looks interesting. Sometimes the name attracts me, like 'Cockroach Symphony'. Sometimes title or author.

Me : When we were reading the three books in our group was it hard to work out what was going to happen?

A : When we got right to the end it was easy! No, in some it was hard. In 'Grandad's Gifts' it wasn't that hard but in 'The Coming of the Surfman' you didn't really know what was going to happen.

Me : What do you use to help you work out what is going to happen?

A : Maybe if I've read similar books.

Me : While you are reading, where do you feel you are in relation to the characters?

A : Right in the story with them. Not every book but in most books you just like feel you're in them.

Me : Do you like happy endings? Such as? Why?

A : Yeah, 'cause everything just works out, it makes you feel good.

Me : What appeals to you about characters in a book you are reading?

A : If they're funny, or adventurous and like excitement, exciting. Like most characters though.

Me : Did the characters in any of these books do anything that you didn't expect?

A : No, not really. You expect the surfman to come back and fix it, but he didn't.

Me : Were they realistic?

A : Yeah, not really all of them. Not the boy in 'How To Live Forever' because it's more of a fairy tale and like it's things that couldn't really happen..

Me : Would you remember any of these characters in a year's time?

A : Probably, probably the surfman because it's very distinct and everything.

Me : What feelings do you have when reading? Are they the same as the character's or quite

different?

A : Quite different sometimes, but sometimes very similar. Similar when they like adventure and likes to do things.

Me : When reading, do you think about any things that are similar or different between your life and what you are reading?

A : No, not really. Sometimes. Not really in any of these books.

Me : Have you learnt anything important about the world you live in from your reading?

A : Yeah, some books. Like the more realistic books teach you about the world at the moment. Fiction and usually some of the newer authors.

Me : Have you ever learnt anything about yourself from a book?

A : Not really.

Me : Could the author of any of these books said more? What would've happened?

A : Yeah, they could've said more. Like in 'Grandad's Gifts', I can't really think what now.

Me : Do you sometimes find yourself asking questions of the book? Such as?

A : Yeah, sometimes. But you usually find them out later. Like in 'Grandad's Gifts' why didn't he just lock the cupboard, because he wanted to help the fox.

Me : Do you think the authors of books are actually any of the characters in them?

A : Sometimes. In Elizabeth Honey's that's 'Forty Five Forty Seven Something Street' the author was in it.

Me : Do you ever reject a book or stop reading because of the way a book is written?

A : Yes, I think it was I didn't like, it sort of started off too gory, so I didn't read it.

Me : Who is your favourite author?

A : Elizabeth Honey.

Me : Why do you think this is? What do you like about them?

A : She writes well, she writes very exciting stories where you don't know what's going to happen next.

Me : Do you ever find yourself thinking or saying things to yourself about the author?

A : Not really.

Me : Which of these books was the easiest to read? Why?

A : 'How To Live Forever' probably, I don't know why. It's really just the easiest. If it's got something that interests you and easy words.

Me : Do you think that the use of pictures in these books influences reading? How?

A : Yes, you become more interested in it, you can look at the pictures. And if the pictures are interesting you will continue to read. Sometimes they help to tell the story.

Me : Do you get any pleasure out of reading? Think about some of you favourite books, which parts did you like most? Why?

A : Yes. Probably the bit in Elizabeth Honey's book where the boys are trying to stop the neighbours because it's very exciting and you don't know what's going to happen next.