A World with Two Moons: An Analysis of Reader Identification

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Abstract

Utilizing Kenneth Burke's theory of Identitification, this study seeks to understand if readers of a literary work of fiction were or were not able to identify with it according to the way Burke describes identification. The study uses Paul J. Watson's *Protect: A World's Fight Against Evil* as the literary work upon which qualitative surveys were conducted. Five general respondents and two expert readers took the survey, which asked questions regarding the novel. Through analysis and the comparing and contrasting of these respondents' answers, conclusions were reached in regards to whether or not identification occurred between the readers and the novel and whether or not readers identified with the author's intended central theme.

Key Words: Identification, Burke, novel, survey, and qualitative.

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Table of Contents

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

A 2002 survey asked a nationally representative sample of 17,000 adults if they had read any

novels, short stories, plays, or poetry in their leisure time during the previous year. The survey

revealed that more than half, or nearly 90 million people, responded no (Manzo, 2004, p. 16).

Though this percentage might seem high, I propose that this would not be so if, before reading a

text, people knew that they were likely to identify with the text when confronting it. The

problem, however, is not how to get more adults to read, but to discover if they understood and

made an emotional connection with any of the themes of the literature they read. In essence, I

am attempting to answer if or not readers of fiction are able to identify with the themes presented

within the stories.

There has been much study on readers' responses to literature. A study conducted by

Galda and Beach (2001) involved classroom implementation of readers' responses to literature.

Another study (Oatley, 1995) dealt with how some emotions occur as readers come across a text,

noting that more emotions arise if readers enter the story's world.

There are few studies that relate to how themes within fictitious works can affect readers.

In his article, *Infected by Evil* (2005), James Harold stated that people could be influenced by

fiction in terms of morality, even if they do not realize it all the time. Darcia Narvaez (2004)

continued this study of themes and reader response when discussing how stories with moral

themes do not necessarily build children's abilities to write moral stories. Amie L. Thomasson

(2003) discussed the nature of fictional characters in literature, concluding that it does not make

a lot of sense to deny the existence of fictional characters. In studying *The Epic of Gilgamesh*,

Liesbeth Altes (2007) concluded that narrative fiction presents ways to make sense of the world as we know it and of human experience.

Despite the research on reader response, fictional themes, and fictional works, there is little research on readers' abilities to identify, that is, make an emotional connection, with the central themes within works of fiction. For example, though there are many studies involved with reader response in the classroom, these studies overlook whether or not students are able to identify with the text. Due to this deficiency, I will conduct my study of readers' responses to my fantasy/science fiction novel, *Protect: A World's Fight Against Evil*, which was released July 21, 2009. I will henceforth refer to this book as *Protect*. It should also be noted that this will be the first study analyzing this particular novel.

By addressing and accommodating this deficiency, this study will add to the body of literature and scholarly research done in the examination of text and the reader. This study will employ Burke's theory of Identification by analyzing a fictional, action/adventure work of literature.

A study of reader identification with the central theme in a work of fiction is important for three primary reasons. First, authors and editors of fiction are likely to benefit from this study. An editor can be defined as the person assigned to an author who aids in the grammatical and conceptual elements of a published work. If authors and editors are able to know if their readers are likely to grasp the themes incorporated within their stories, they might better be able to determine the degree to which they should emphasize certain themes. Though I will be using *Protect* as the study's chief example of fiction, the results of this study might show authors and editors how they might adjust certain elements of their stories that may be similar to mine, therefore allowing their readers to better identify with their stories' theme(s). Second, aspiring

authors and editors are likely to benefit due to the fact that this study will reveal what elements do and do not work when attempting to get readers to identify with their stories, thereby helping them refine their skills before beginning their careers. Third, Burke's theory of Identification has rarely, if ever, been applied to the study of fictional works, rather being studied for its ontological uses as discussed by Crable (2000) or its uses regarding war commentary as noted by Weiser (2007). However, there are studies, such as the 2007 dissertation of Barbara M. Whitehead, in which identification has been studied in relation to a fictional work.

Due to these deficiencies, the purpose of this qualitative study will be to discover how Kenneth Burke's theory of Identification can be used in terms of readers and a literary work and to determine if readers identified with the central theme of doing what is morally right despite adversity as found in the novel, *Protect*.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to reach a conclusion regarding whether or not readers identified with the central theme of *Protect*, it is necessary to examine studies related to my study's topic. This review of the literature studied is broken down into four parts: Reader Response, which examines how readers respond to literature, Reader Response in Relation to Themes, which focuses on how readers respond to themes in literary works, Studies of Fictional Works, which gives an overview of how various fictional texts and films have been studied, and Identification, the theory by Kenneth Burke that will be used in this study. The literature reviewed provides insight into how these topics have been studied and illuminates a primary deficiency that my study will address.

Reader Response

When dealing with a novel whose themes might vary from reader to reader, there is a need to understand how reader response has been studied in order to identify deficiencies in literature that my study can address. There has been much study in regards to readers' responses to literature in general, especially in a classroom setting. A study conducted by Galda and Beach (2001) involved classroom implementation of reader response activities and on readers' responses to literature, concluding that teachers needed to create opportunities for students to read and respond in front of others in order to help them make sense of texts. Another study of reader response conducted in a classroom setting involved text rendering and silence following oral readings. For text renderings—responding to oral readings by saying remembered words or phrases—the authors argued that it forces "students to prolong their initial responses to texts and opens initial response to the influence of other readers" (Robertson, 1990, p. 80). As identified by Rosenblatt (1982), there is a difference between reading for cognitive purposes versus reading

for aesthetic purposes. Rosenblatt wrote that schools tend to emphasize the former and neglect the latter, despite the fact that children first experience language aesthetically. He concluded that reading in schools should emphasize both types. By including and examining studies involved in the classroom with reader response in my study, the relevance of this study is reinforced in that it also deals with reader response, only in regards to identification with a fictional piece of literature.

When readers respond to texts, the response is emotional. In order to understand this emotional response and how readers identify with texts, it is beneficial to review past studies on emotional responses audiences experience regarding fictional works. One such study (Miall, 1995) focused on neurological research dealing with how anticipation and feeling are strong components when it comes to the process of reading, noting how texts can arouse feelings within individuals. Another study (Oatley, 1995) dealt with how some emotions occur as readers come across a text, noting that more emotions arise if readers enter the story's world. Emotions in this case arise when the reader responds to the characters out of personal emotional memories and by identifying with the characters. Kneepkens and Zwaan (1995), through their focus of emotional and cognitive aspects of text and using text models to discuss emotions' role on the basis of these models, added to the research that showed that emotions play a role in the minds of readers when reading a text. In a study conducted by Gensbacher, Goldsmith, and Robertson (1992), subjects read stories that described actions occurring within a story, followed by reading a target sentence containing an emotion word that either matched or mismatched the emotional state implied by the story. When the mismatched words were perceived to be the opposite states implied by the stories, the sentences were read slower. In the next experiment, target sentences were read slower when the mismatched words appeared to be equal to the implied emotional state. Gygax,

Oakhill, and Gamham argued in 2003 that emotional conclusions regarding characters in literary works are not as specific as once was thought. In their experiments, the authors found that, through subjects reading various stories, some participants found several emotions consistent within the stories while others took longer to read those sentences that contained emotions that were inconsistent in the stories. Their results suggested that the emotions readers experience from stories are too many to discover a specific emotion gained from reading. Dijkstra, Zwaan, Graesser, and Magilano (1995) focused on character emotions, which occur in the fictional world and reader emotions, which occur in the real world. They discussed how relationships between emotions and other story aspects were enhanced or suppressed by "imagery, pragmatic intent, plausibility, literary devices, dialogue, and importance." These studies reveal the extent of and processes involved with emotional responses to texts.

An article by S. H. Tan (1995), discussed how films presented audiences with the illusion that they were physically in the fictional worlds of films, witnessing the events taking place, though they were not actually there. Audiences' emotions toward a particular film were merely a response to the predicament of not truly being able to be in the fictional world. Tan proposed that interest and sympathy were the primary emotions when it comes to audiences viewing movies, with the film's ability to control viewers' perceptions of what was happening in the film, guiding their attitudes and emotions toward particular characters and events. Konijn and Hoorn (2005) presented a theory explaining how readers of fiction and movie viewers established relationships with fictional characters. This perceiving and experiencing fictional characters theory addressed both the moods, feelings, and attitudes related to fictional characters. Through the use of models, methods, measurements, and groups, the authors concluded different aspects of engagement determined the final perceptions people have to fictional characters. This study

reveals that people can engage with fictional worlds. A key part that makes up the stories found in these fictional worlds are the stories' themes.

One of the most well known of contemporary fictional works is the first film in the *Star Wars* saga. Author Steven J. Corvi writes, "*Star Wars* appeals to the American's optimistic appraisal of a future in which societal influences may make them stray from the good side of the Force, but in the end, most people are inherently good, and anything is possible with self-determination…these simple films with a simple message reshaped filmmaking, for better or for worse" (Corvi, 2005, p. 963). He goes on to write, "everyone seeks a film that defines his or her generation, and for many, *Star Wars*, was that film" (Corvi, 2005, p. 962). These themes, therefore, aided in the impact the film had on audiences.

Reader Response in Relation to Themes

When focusing on a work's central theme, we must understand the role themes play when affecting readers. In his article, *Infected by Evil* (2005), James Harold stated that people could be influenced by fiction in terms of morality, even if they do not realize it all the time. Since morals within stories relate to their themes, this argument could be applied when referencing themes, such as those found in *Protect*. However, Harold admitted that his arguments do not prove a clear link between works of fiction and specific changes in the audience, but rather they reveal complex and interesting features of the moral psychology of fiction. In particular, they showed that some of the worries concerning the dangers of art should not be lightly dismissed.

Darcia Narvaez (2004) continued this study of themes and reader response when discussing how stories with moral themes do not necessarily build children's abilities to write moral stories. This is because research in text comprehension indicates that there are differences in the way readers perceive the same stories because of variations in reading skills and

knowledge of the story's background. The second finding that Narvaez discovered is that moral

arguments are perceived differently due to how readers' morals have developed throughout his

or her lifetime. Lastly, Narvaez discovered that children do not take away moral themes the way

the author had originally intended. Though the children often said what they thought the theme

was when asked, their selection was often "wrong" from the perspective of the author. This was

because, "research indicates that if the reader lacks the knowledge (the appropriate schemas)

requisite for interpreting the stimuli, the reader will misunderstand, misinterpret, or distort the

stimulus according to the (incorrect) schemas that were activated when reading" (Narvaez, 2004,

pp. 163-164). In conclusion, Narvaez listed several things: "reading is active, readers 'get'

different information from a text based on their background, readers do not necessarily 'get' the

information or message the author intends, themes can be constructed by the reader but not

automatically or easily, and moral messages are a special kind of theme the reader puts together

that are influenced by reading skills and moral development." This study reveals that readers

often come up with themes other than those that the author intends, which shows me that

variations in what readers may consider the central theme of *Protect* are to be expected, and the

responses must therefore be organized in such a way that accommodates for these variations of

answers.

Many of the themes found in *Protect* could be considered universal. When studying how

children interpreted universal themes in Hispanic-American stories, Peggy S. Rice found that

"one cannot assume that a reader will respond to multi-cultural literature with universal themes

in a manner that enables him/her to make connections with the other culture" and "it is important

not to assume that children will identify with the universal experiences portrayed by characters in

multicultural stories with universal themes" (Rice, 2005, p. 357).

In discussing adolescents' interpretation of the theme of "confronting, overcoming and challenging racism" in Mildred Taylor's 1976 novel *Roll of Thunder Hear my Cry*, Wanda Brooks and Gary Hampton discovered that their interpretations were influenced in part by "the text's depiction of racism." Therefore, the theme was interpreted based on how certain elements were depicted. This study shows that interpretations are likely to be influenced by how elements surrounding the central theme of *Protect* are depicted.

Studies of Fictional Works

If a study of one particular work of fiction is to be conducted, reviewing how other fictional works have been studied is beneficial in order to determine what allows my study to address deficiencies in previous studies. There have been several articles studying various fictional works. Kevin Warwick (2009) studied W. Ross Ashby's philosophy and its relationship to *The Matrix*. Warwick wrote that over the years, Ashby drew numerous philosophical conclusions on the nature of human intelligence and artificial intelligence and the thinking ability of computers, making a comparison between Ashby's writings and the concept of *The Matrix*. Ashby clearly identified with this fictional work, showing that identification with a fictional work is possible.

George Wilson (2006), when writing about the Dionysian revival of American fiction in the sixties, discovered that films might be characterized by how most of the shots in movies provide the audience with objective views of fictional worlds, similar to how authors of fictional works provide the reader with objective views of their fictional settings. By pointing this out, we can see that views within fictional works, which could include themes, are guided and displayed by the creator of that fictional work. In studying *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, Liesbeth Altes (2007) concluded that narrative fiction presents ways to make sense of the world as we know it and of

human experience; narratives also allow people to explore alternative values through representing their imaginative situations. Altes showed that narrative structure sets the stage of pursuing values. This study presents that people have the potential to identify with themes through exploring their own personal values as well as presenting a basis on which to make sense of their world.

Beatrice Batson (1984), when writing about John Bunyan, author of *Pilgrim's Progress*, states, "Bunyan thinks of allegory as a persuasive way of making important matters known through figurative expression." She goes on to write, "Bunyan used the word 'allegory' to refer to a word setting forth one thing by another primarily through an extended central metaphor." Her study of the work reveals how Bunyan used his craft when communicating complex theological concepts. Bunyan, in essence, used allegory to connect with readers.

Other studies have been conducted not on specific fictional works, but on fictional works in general. Amie L. Thomasson (2003) discussed the nature of fictional characters in literature, concluding that it does not make a lot of sense to deny the existence of fictional characters. She then wrote that the role of certain literary beliefs and practices explained why non-revisionary theories of fiction would fail to answer certain questions about fictional characters. She concluded by stating that once we understand that fictional characters are abstract cultural creations similar to marriages, laws, and stories, then we will discover that having fictional characters is a lot less scary than some people might suspect. Included with fictional characters, comes the concept of the audience identifying with them and their worlds.

Rick Busselle and Helena Bilandzic (2008) write further on the notion of people identifying with fictional worlds. They write, "There are interpretations of identification that are contingent on the actual or wishful similarity of a character to the reader, or on a reader's liking

of a character (Liebes & Katz, 1990), that involve the reader or viewer giving up his or her own identity and momentarily confusing identities (Zillmann, 1994)." They go on to quote Cohen (2001) who defines identification as "a process that consists of increasing loss of self-awareness and its temporary replacement with heightened emotional and cognitive connections with a character" (p. 251).

In regards to this concept of identification, Kenneth Burke (1950) writes that identification is "any of the wide variety of means by which an author may establish a shared sense of values, attitudes, and interests with his readers." Burke built an entire theory around identification, and scholars throughout the decades have studied his theory. Therefore, the logical next step in studying reader's responses to fictional works will be to use Burke's theory of identification.

Identification

Burke (1941) wrote, "Words are aspects of a much wider communicative context, most of which is not verbal at all." Part of this wide communicative context is the concept of identification. In order to understand identification, let us look at how authors have studied the subject, as well as look at Burke's own words.

Mark E. Huglen (2004) writes, "Burke's teachings not only associate with but also helped forge the way for the prevailing assumptions of the field in communication and rhetoric." One of these assumptions came from Burke's Identification by Gary C. Woodward. Huglen quotes Woodward (2003) when writing about four types of identification: Associative Identification, which "speaks to the essential task of the communicator to engage an audience: to bring them into a story and make them care about the unfolding drama" (p. 50); "Admiring Identification: The actions of the hero are exemplary for a particular community—the perfect hero" (p. 49); "Sympathetic Identification: There is a solidarity with the character or suffering personality. We

place ourselves in the position of the hero" (p. 49); and "Cathartic Identification" (p. 49) which "suggests that characters may provide individuals with models for some form of personal transformative change: perhaps the most potent effect strong identifications can produce" (p. 50).

Bernard L. Brock writes, "For Burke, identification is the 'key term' instrumental to understanding rhetoric, and he defines identification as a simultaneous unity and division"(Brock, 1985, pp. 95-96). In regards to using identification to understand rhetoric, Burke (2006) noted that identification is of great importance as a rhetorical device. When discussing a work of fiction, it is logical that there be some rhetorical value within the theory being discussed, in this case the theory of Identification.

Burke describes his Identification theory as "one's material and mental ways of placing oneself as a person in the groups and movements"(Burke, 1973, 227). Therefore, for identification to occur, a reader must be mentally placed in the author's fictional world. Burke (1969) writes, "Identification is affirmed with earnestness precisely because there is division. Identification is compensatory to division. If men were not apart from one another, there would be no need for the rhetorician to proclaim their unity." Initially there will be division between the author and reader. This creates an opportunity for identification if the author can find a way to overcome the division, thereby establishing identification.

In *A Rhetoric of Motives* (1950), Burke seems to infer that persuasion is necessary in order for identification to exist. He illustrates this by writing, "You persuade a man only insofar as you can talk his language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, idea, *identifying* your ways with his." Therefore, an author who wishes to persuade a reader to fully embrace his or her fictional world must identify with a reader to a certain extent. In order to create identification, the author must act as an entity in the reader's mind, connecting with the reader's

identity. This is because, as Burke (1950) writes, an entity's identity could be considered to be "its uniqueness as an entity in itself and by itself." When writing of the strategy behind Burke's Identification, Akira Sanbonmatsu states, "The process of establishing a common, interest, value, or form with others through the use of symbols is the strategy of identification"(Sanbonmatsu, 1971, p. 36).

Central to the theory of Identification is the idea of consubstantiality. Thomas B. Harte writes, "To identify with someone, says Burke, is to become 'consubstantial' with him. When one person is identified with another he is 'substantially one' with a person other than himself when they share the same substance" (Harte, 1977, p. 65). Dennis G. Day (1960) writes, "Any sensation, concept, image, idea, or attitude which we use to identify 'substance' Burke calls a 'property.' And when two 'substances' share in a common 'property' they are said to be 'consubstantial.'" The relationship between an author and reader sharing the same literary world exemplifies consubstantiality. Burke writes, "In being identified with B, A is 'substantially one' with a person other than himself. Yet at the same time he remains unique, an individual locus of motives. Thus he is both joined and separate, at once a distinct substance and consubstantial with another" (Burke, 1962, p. 21). In her 2007 dissertation, Moria E. Phillips reinforces this idea when she defines Burke's Identification as "the process by which groups are connected by means of a shared concept" (Phillips, 2007, p. iv).

In Burke's 1966 work, *Language as Symbolic Action*, he writes "we spontaneously identify ourselves with family, nation, political or cultural cause, church, and so on." This study, however, will refer to the concept of identifying with something in regards to readers with a novel. However, "As Burke infers in relation to literature, since a perfect artistic situation is only an ideal to be striven for but never achieved…between artist, reader and audience, complete

identification is prohibited" (Smith, p. 73). Despite of this, it could be said that identification, at least in part, is possible.

  In conclusion, though the research of reader response and of fictional works is vast, there is little research on readers' Identification with fictional literature. Due to this deficiency, I will conduct my study of readers' responses to *Protect*.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

According to John W. Creswell, the process of qualitative research "involves emerging questions and procedures; collecting data in the participants' setting; analyzing the data inductively, building from particulars to general themes; and making interpretations of the meaning of the data" (Creswell, 2009, p. 232). Each of these requirements of qualitative research was fulfilled in this study. Due to the fact that I was conducting the study, I was writing from a first-person perspective.

The study's central question asked was "Can readers identify with the theme of doing what is morally right despite adversity, as found in *Protect*?" Due to the deficiency stated earlier, I determined whether or not Burke's theory of Identification could or could not be applied to a fictional work of literature. As quoted earlier from *A Rhetoric of Motives*, Burke applied Identification as a means of persuasion. In the past, the theory has been studied for its rhetorical value, its contribution to sociolinguistics, and, among other studies, its aid in studying viewer's reactions to films. I was not claiming that no study had ever been conducted in regards to Burke's Identification and a fictional work of literature, but I was proposing that this is an underdeveloped area of research, and as such, it was worth studying.

It should be noted that I am the author of this novel and therefore, I had a bias toward the novel. I understand what my central theme is and therefore I believed the theme would be clear to readers. I would, however, not attempt to lure my population into reaching a conclusion that I hoped they would find regarding the central theme of *Protect*. Though I believed identification with this novel is certainly attainable by readers, I would not intentionally attempt to twist the answers into something that they were not.

The rationale for studying *Protect*, as opposed to other fictional literary works was twofold: (1) I am the author, therefore I had a thorough understanding of the novel's central theme, and (2) the novel is a work of fiction, and thus it provided an adequate example of how Burke's theory could be applied to a literary work of fiction.

Once I stated the results of my study, I described how the outcome might be compared with Burke's theory of Identification and the general literature on the topic of reader identification with novels. In order to gather the resulting information, I used surveys as my primary method for collecting information. According to Em Griffin, "surveys are undoubtedly the best known and most widely used technique [for relying] on self-report data to discover who people are" (Griffin, 2006, p. 16). Surveys also provided ease and convenience for both myself and the readers being questioned. On the digital survey was a questionnaire. In support of the use of a questionnaire, Smyth et al. (2009) wrote, "respondents actively utilize the visual aspects of the questionnaire to guide them in the answering process."

My participants consisted of people, 18 of years or older, who read the novel and two expert readers, who also read the novel. The expert readers were professors at a mid-sized, mid-Atlantic private university. The number of other participants was determined on how many people decide to participate. In order to answer the questions, participants were required to have read the novel, and needed to be able to use a computer with Internet access.

Within *Protect*, I listed the Web site "www.ProtectNovel.com" below my name and the copyright information, thus directing readers to that particular site. The site address also appeared in the product information section on many Web sites that sold the novel, as well as in various interviews, which included radio, video, and print. Several of these interviews could be found through accessing www.ProtectNovel.com. It is from this site where I had a link to the

site www.surveymonkey.com, where I asked participants to fill out an anonymous survey for educational purposes, using multiple-choice and open-ended questions. Smyth et al. (2009) wrote, "Evidence suggests that web surveys produce higher quality answers to open-ended questions than do paper modes." Using SurveyMonkey's Web site editing program, I created multiple-choice questions to determine the demographics of participants and open-ended questions to determine whether readers were or were not able to identify with the novel's central theme. I used SurveyMonkey because, according to R. R. Evans et al. (2009), "SurveyMonkey.com offers a convenient, user-friendly interface to create and administer surveys free of charge under a certain volume of responses per month," and the "Types of items that can be created in SurveyMonkey.com range from multiple-choice responses…to open-ended text-based formats."

Through the use of multiple-choice questions, I determined what specific groups of people were identifying with certain themes and characters. The answers obtained from these questions allowed my study to be more thorough, because the questions asked determined participant's gender, race, and age.

By having open-ended questions, I allowed for discussion to take place. Smyth et al. (2009) stated that their findings "suggest that open-ended questions may re-emerge in web self-administered surveys as an effective format for collecting thick, rich, descriptive information from respondents" and that "high quality responses to open-ended questions are obtainable in web surveys." After each question, there was a text box where participants could fill in their answers.

Preceding the questions was a basic definition of identification, taken from Burke's writings, so that participants had at least an elementary knowledge of the word's context. This

allowed me to incorporate the use of the word in my questions. In order to hide bias, I preceded the questions by giving a brief but thorough explanation of why the survey existed. In addition, I encouraged participants to remain honest for the sake of my research, asking those who had not read the novel to avoid taking the survey. In their study, Smyth et al. (2009) found that "providing clarifying and motivating instructions, was effective at improving response quality among all respondents." Despite my aim to be unbiased, participants were likely to have found some bias in the work due to my role in the study. I let my bias be known to the reader in the text preceding the questions. According to Creswell, clarifying this bias "creates an open and honest narrative that will resonate well with readers" (Creswell, 2009, p. 192). Given the number of questions, I postulated that the survey should not take more than 20 minutes, and I let this be known before asking the questions.

To reiterate, Burke says identification is "one's material and mental ways of placing oneself as a person in the groups and movements"(Burke, 1973, 227). Therefore, one of the questions asked the reader whether he or she felt as though the author did or did not identify with them on any level. As stated before, in *A Rhetoric of Motives* (1950), Burke wrote, "You persuade a man only insofar as you can talk his language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, idea, *identifying* your ways with his (emphasis added)." Characters in stories, though fictional, are able to fulfill this role of identification due to how their actions and words are what participants will or will not identify with when reading a novel. In addition, themes are closely related to the characters in which they are based around, therefore I asked a question that invited the reader to discuss if he or she did or did not identify with a character or characters, and if so, which ones. Themes are also closely related to the individual events that together make up a story. Because of this, I asked participants a question regarding which specific event or events,

if any, did they identify with in the novel. Through answering the three aforementioned questions, participants were better able to understand if identification ever occurred between them and the text.

It was important that the participants were individualistic in their answers in order to provide accurate results. Therefore I asked questions that required specific answers based on who was taking the survey. Two example questions of this nature were, "Please explain what you considered the main theme(s) of the novel to be" and "Did you did or did you not relate with any of the novel's theme(s)? Please explain." Given the writing of the word "theme(s)," it was implied that there might be several themes that the reader could have noticed in the novel. Following the questions, I thanked the participants once again for being involved with the study.

I then used the process of coding, which, according to Creswell, involves "organizing the material into chunks or segments of text in order to develop a general meaning of each segment" (Creswell, 2009, p. 227). Coding the information helped me to organize the responses in order to draw conclusions from each question asked. Each question had its own section of text related to that question's answers. I used, as Creswell notes, the traditional approach to coding by allowing the codes to emerge during the analysis; I did not begin coding until each question had been answered. Questions were listed as headings above each answer prescribed in order allow the study to be more easily and efficiently read. One of the ways I tried to compensate for my bias was via the use of a second coder to confirm/disconfirm the information by coding. I compared and contrasted the information I coded with my colleague's information, allowing me to determine whether my results were more or less biased toward what I hoped the results would be.

My hope was that the information supplied to me via these surveys would lead to general

conclusions as to (1) what most readers considered the main theme or themes of the novel to be, (2) if readers were able to identify with what they considered the novel's main theme or themes to be, (3) why they did or did not identify with that theme or themes, and (4) how Burke's theory of Identification could be applied to a literary work of fiction. The information in turn might be able to be applied to other completed novels from other authors, thus aiding in its relevancy as a study. The information may also be used when discussing Burke's Identification and its applicable uses.

For those readers who did not identify with the themes of the novel, the answers collected provided insight as to why they did not, therefore giving me a better look at what elements, if any, could have or should have been altered in order to provide those readers with the ability to identify with the novel. These answers might also show authors of other novels how they might adjust certain elements that may be similar to mine in their stories, therefore allowing their readers to better identify with their stories' theme(s). In terms of Burke's Identification, if readers were able to identify with the novel, then it would be a basis for future research that applied Identification to studying a literary work of fiction. The results would either support or negate whether Identification could be applied in such a way, thereby adding to studies of Identitification and/or other Burkean theories.

Questionnaire

As stated before, the online survey will use multiple-choice and open-ended questions. These will make up the questionnaire. Preceding the questions will be an introduction setting up the survey.

Directions

The following survey is for academic purposes only. We ask that those who haven't read *Protect* by Paul J. Watson, and those who aren't between the ages of 18 and 65 to avoid taking the survey.

Please answer the following questions as honestly as possible. It should not take more than twenty minutes to complete.

Thank you for your willingness to be a part of this study.

Multiple-Choice Questions

1. What is your gender?

    a. Male

    b. Female

2. With which ethnic group do you most identify?

    a. American Indian or Alaskan Native

    b. Hispanic or Latino

    c. Black or African American

    d. Asian or Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

    e. White

    f. Other

3. What is your age range?

    a. 18-24

    b. 25-30

    c. 31-40

    d. 41-50

    e. 50-65

Open-Ended Questions

The following are the open-ended questions that will be included in the survey. To reiterate, there will be a text box below each question for the participant to fill in.

1. Which character(s) did you like best?

2. Please explain why you liked this character(s).

3. Which character(s) did you not like?

4. Please explain why you did not like this character(s).

5. Please discuss your favorite part(s) of the story.

6. Please explain what you did not like about the story.

7. Please explain what you think the message(s) of the book was.

Thanks again for your participation in this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Reporting and Analyzing the Responses

The following is a report and analysis of the responses collected in the surveys. It is broken down into three sections: General Respondents, Expert Reader A, and Expert Reader B. The reason why general respondents will be separated from expert readers is because the general respondents give a clearer idea of how most readers perceived the novel in that they participated at random and anonymously. Expert readers were used in order to provide a professional opinion based on their understanding of the text, thereby aiding in the validation of this study.

Demographics of General Respondents

It appears as though two people clicked on the survey but skipped every question. Because of this, I will only be discussing the answers provided by the five individuals who took the survey. The following is the demographics information provided:

Gender: 80% of respondents (4) answered male while 20% (1) answered female.

Ethnicity: 80% (4) said White and 20% (1) said Hispanic or Latino.

Age: 20% (1) was between the ages of 18 and 24, 40% (2) were between the ages of 25 and 30, and 40% (2) were between the ages of 50 and 65.

In order to adequately break apart the responses for analysis of the following questions, each of the five respondents will be broken down by letters: A, B, C, D, and E.

Respondent A

Open-Ended Question #1: Which character(s) did you like best? Relm

Open-Ended Question #2: Please explain why you liked this character(s). This respondent said Relm was noble, humble, reluctant, and courageous.

Open-Ended Question #3: Which character(s) did you not like? The bad guys

Open-Ended Question #4: Please explain why you did not like this character(s). The respondent wrote, "All the obvious reasons."

Open-Ended Question #5: Please discuss your favorite part(s) of the story. This respondent, in addition to mentioning the battle scenes, noted the heroes' quest to save the planet,

Open-Ended Question #6: Please explain what you did not like about the story. Nothing

Open-Ended Question #7: Please explain what you think the message(s) of the book was. The respondent wrote, "That there is always and forever a Savior no matter how dark things get."

Respondent B

Open-Ended Question #1: Which character(s) did you like best? Relm; Lepo; Mediator

Open-Ended Question #2: Please explain why you liked this character(s). This respondent enjoyed the interactions of Relm and Lepo. The respondent also referred to Mediator as "the true hero."

Open-Ended Question #3: Which character(s) did you not like? None

Open-Ended Question #4: Please explain why you did not like this character(s). No reply

Open-Ended Question #5: Please discuss your favorite part(s) of the story. This respondent, in addition to the battles, noted the introduction of the character Mediator.

Open-Ended Question #6: Please explain what you did not like about the story. Nothing

Open-Ended Question #7: Please explain what you think the message(s) of the book was.

The respondent wrote, "That there is hope and ultimately that mankind is in desperate need of a savior."

Respondent C

Open-Ended Question #1: Which character(s) did you like best? Anarelia

Open-Ended Question #2: Please explain why you liked this character(s). The respondent wrote, "Because since the beginning she believe that Relm was the protector and helped him during the battle."

Open-Ended Question #3: Which character(s) did you not like? Kiros

Open-Ended Question #4: Please explain why you did not like this character(s). No reply

Open-Ended Question #5: Please discuss your favorite part(s) of the story. No reply

Open-Ended Question #6: Please explain what you did not like about the story. No reply

Open-Ended Question #7: Please explain what you think the message(s) of the book was. No reply

Respondent D

Open-Ended Question #1: Which character(s) did you like best? Relm; Lepo

Open-Ended Question #2: Please explain why you liked this character(s). The respondent said they "could identify with Relm's struggle to 'find himself.'" For Lepo, the respondent wrote that he or she was "amused by Lepo's laid back personality that seemed to get him in trouble." The respondent also remarked on how he or she enjoyed the interactions between Relm and Lepo.

Open-Ended Question #3: Which character(s) did you not like? The respondent wrote, "It would be easy to say I didn't like the Devastator, but there were enough twists and turns in the plot regarding him that even he kept me intrigued."

Open-Ended Question #4: Please explain why you did not like this character(s). No reply

Open-Ended Question #5: Please discuss your favorite part(s) of the story. The respondent listed the friendships between the main characters as well as the battle scenes.

Open-Ended Question #6: Please explain what you did not like about the story. Nothing

Open-Ended Question #7: Please explain what you think the message(s) of the book was. The respondent wrote, "You need your friends. Our lives can take paths we never imagined but if we continue to seek the higher way, it always works out in the end."

Respondent E

Open-Ended Question #1: Which character(s) did you like best? Dengol

Open-Ended Question #2: Please explain why you liked this character(s). The respondent noted that he or she enjoyed the character's back-story and how Dengol met the other characters. The respondent also commented on how Dengol "was interesting and added some humor."

Open-Ended Question #3: Which character(s) did you not like? Prince Radolen

Open-Ended Question #4: Please explain why you did not like this character(s). The respondent wrote that he or she thought the character was selfish.

Open-Ended Question #5: Please discuss your favorite part(s) of the story. The respondent mentioned the surprise ending and the novel's history and cultures.

Open-Ended Question #6: Please explain what you did not like about the story. This respondent wrote that some of the abilities and actions of the characters were, to some extent, unbelievable.

Open-Ended Question #7: Please explain what you think the message(s) of the book was.

The respondent wrote, "Things are not always what they seem. Conquering your fear and fulfilling your destiny requires taking steps of faith."

Expert Reader A: English Professor

This expert reader was a White male between the ages of 25 and 30.

Open-Ended Question #1: Which character(s) did you like best? Lepo and Anarelia

Open-Ended Question #2: Please explain why you liked this character(s).

This expert reader thought that Lepo was the strongest character because "he had the most personality and the most stable character traits." The expert reader then gave examples to illustrate his point.

The other character the expert reader thought was strong was Anarelia. He wrote that she "knew her place in the story and believed it wholeheartedly. She did not waiver, even when stricken with terrible nightmares. She did what was necessary in rallying the group together and was the real reason the treaties were created."

Open-Ended Question #3: Which character(s) did you not like? Relm and Kiros

Open-Ended Question #4: Please explain why you did not like this character(s).

This reader felt as though Relm doubted far too often. The expert reader then gave an example illustrating his views regarding the character's doubt. Following this, he wrote that due to Relm's constant doubting of his abilities, "I was confused as to why the other characters followed Relm as they did."

The expert reader also did not like Kiros, believing him to be a character that merely threatened yet never acted. An illustration for this point was given when he wrote that Kiros should have killed Relm when he had the chance.

Open-Ended Question #5: Please discuss your favorite part(s) of the story.

This expert reader liked the varied lands and characters throughout the story. He also enjoyed some of the world's history but complained that certain aspects were not fully explained.

Open-Ended Question #6: Please explain what you did not like about the story.

There were several parts of the story that this expert reader did not like. The amount of coincidences in the story was mentioned, as well as the ease in which characters got out of tough situations. This expert reader stated that at times, the characters seemed to "fall into the answer."

The battles were also mentioned as being too detailed and slowing down the pace. It is also mentioned that the characters trusted each other far too easily and that there should have been more division among the characters.

Open-Ended Question #7: Please explain what you think the message(s) of the book was.

The expert reader thought the message was that good will always triumph over evil. This is not what was intended as the central theme, but the idea that was intended of doing what is morally right despite adversity fits into something that is considered "good," a word that this expert reader used. Despite this, this expert reader did not ascertain the central message though the message he did state is certainly not unfounded.

Expert Reader B: Communications Professor

This expert reader was a White male between the ages of 50 and 65.

Open-Ended Question #1: Which character(s) did you like best? Relm

Open-Ended Question #2: Please explain why you liked this character(s).

This reader thought that Relm had both humility and valor.

Open-Ended Question #3: Which character(s) did you not like? Kiros

Open-Ended Question #4: Please explain why you did not like this character(s).

Due to the evil nature of the antagonist, this expert reader did not like Kiros.

Open-Ended Question #5: Please discuss your favorite part(s) of the story.

This expert reader answered this question by mentioning the battle scenes.

Open-Ended Question #6: Please explain what you did not like about the story.

This expert reader felt as though the dialogue, while mostly good, was a tad contrived at times.

Open-Ended Question #7: Please explain what you think the message(s) of the book was.

The following is this expert reader's response to the question: "That we as believers are in a battle over truth and life and liberty, and that if we expect things to improve, we must <u>fight</u>!" This is perhaps the closest out of the surveys that a respondent came to the intended central theme of doing what is morally right, i.e. good despite adversity, i.e. evil. Though worded differently, the expert reader essentially restates the intended central theme when he notes that fighting is required for improvement.

<u>**Comparing and Contrasting General Readers' Answers**</u>

Favorite Character(s)

As noted earlier, Respondents A, B, and D listed Relm. Respondent B also listed Mediator, Respondent C listed Anarelia, and Respondent E listed Dengol. Respondents B and D both listed Relm and Lepo, but the reasons why vary to some degree, indicating that respondents individually pulled from what he or she liked about the characters.

Favorite Part(s)

Respondents A, B, and D listed the battle scenes. The remaining answers contrast one another. Once again, mental placement involved in identification seems to have occurred due to the variety of answers that are given. This shows that, drawing from his or her own recollections

of reading the scenes, respondents were able to recall different parts that were individually catalogued in his or her mind.

Least Favorite Character(s)

There are two sets of comparisons to be drawn from this answer. The two who answered "none," and the two that answered something to the effect of "the villains." To examine the first set, we could say that identification occurred, and thus the respondents were so fully engaged in the fictional world that they had no complaints regarding the world's populace. This, however, could also mean that they were so disconnected from the world that they could not recall anything about the characters, and thus had no character to dislike. For the second set of comparisons, it can be said that identification did occur because the readers identified with the heroes and thus wanted the heroes to succeed against the villains.

Perhaps the greatest example of identification occurring comes not from the comparisons in this answer but from one of the contrasts. Respondent E, who wrote "Prince Radolen," gave a reason why he or she did not like this character. The reason is because the respondent did not like the selfish actions of the character, thus showing that this respondent was mentally placed in the world and therefore did not like a character due to that character's actions or lack thereof.

Least Favorite Part(s)

To reiterate, Respondents A, B, and D wrote that there was nothing they did not like about the story. Respondent E wrote that some of the abilities and actions of the characters were, to some extent, unbelievable. This infers that there were aspects and instances in which the reader felt out of touch with the characters.

Perceived Message(s)

The following are the responses from those who answered:

A. "That there is always and forever a Savior no matter how dark things get."

B. "That there is hope and ultimately that mankind is in desperate need of a savior."

D. "You need your friends. Our lives can take paths we never imagined but if we continue to seek the higher way, it always works out in the end."

E. "Things are not always what they seem. Conquering your fear and fulfilling your destiny requires taking steps of faith."

The variety of answers shows that the respondents, who seem to have identified with some sort of message in the work, individually gave his or her own interpretation. Thus, each was mentally placed in the novel to a certain extent. We can infer that Respondents A and B care about man's need for a Savior, Respondent D cares about man's need for friendship, and Respondent E cares about man's need to conquer fear and fulfill his destiny through faith. Despite this, no respondent ascertained the intended central theme.

Comparing and Contrasting Expert Readers' Answers

Favorite Character(s)

Expert Reader A listed Lepo and Anarelia. Expert Reader B listed Relm.

Favorite Part(s)

There were no similarities between the expert readers regarding their favorite part(s).

Least Favorite Character(s)

Expert Reader A listed Relm and Kiros. Expert Reader B listed Kiros. Though each expert reader disliked Kiros, the reasons for doing so are different. However, as mentioned earlier, it does appear that identification did occur with Expert Reader B and could have occurred with Expert Reader A. It appears that Expert Reader A experienced disconnection in regards to both Kiros and Relm.

Least Favorite Part(s)

To reiterate, Expert Reader A mentioned the slowing of the story's pace, the amount of coincidences, and the trustfulness of the characters. Expert Reader B answered this question by writing that the dialogue, while mostly good, was a tad contrived at times. There were no comparisons to be listed between the expert readers in regards to their answers to this question.

Perceived Message(s)

Though each expert reader gave a different answer, there is a significant similarity in them both: that of good conquering evil. Both expert readers seem to have experienced identification with a message in the novel, with Expert Reader B coming closer than Expert Reader A to ascertaining the message the author intended.

Comparing and Contrasting the Answers of General Readers and Expert Readers

Favorite Character(s)

Expert Reader A agreed with respondents B, C, and D. Expert Reader B agreed with Respondents A, B, and D. No expert reader agreed with Respondent E.

Expert Reader B agreed with Respondent A in regards to Relm being humble and brave. Expert Reader A agreed with Respondent D in regards to Lepo's personality. Expert Reader A also agreed with Respondent C by noting the character of Anarelia's helpfulness and belief.

Favorite Part(s)

Expert Reader B agreed in part with respondents A, B, and D. Expert Reader A agreed in part with Respondent E. This agreement reinforces what was proposed earlier in regards to identification having taken place out of the battle scenes and the history of the novel's world.

The differences occur when Expert Reader B mentioned how he enjoyed the varied lands and characters. It could be said that Expert Reader B identified with these aspects in the novel more than other respondents because of what he listed.

Least Favorite Character(s)

Respondents A and C agreed with the expert readers in their disliking of Kiros. The differences arise when Expert Reader A also lists Relm, which none of the general respondents did. It appears as though Respondents A and C, along with Expert Reader B, disliked Kiros because the character was a villain and sought to harm the heroes, not because they did not like how the character was portrayed, as seems to be the case with Expert Reader A. Respondents E wrote Prince Radolen due to a similar reason as Respondents A and C and Expert Reader B— that of not liking how the character treated the heroes.

Least Favorite Part(s)

The expert readers and the general respondents did not agree with their least favorite parts. In fact, while Expert Reader A listed battle scenes for this question, Expert Reader B

listed the battles as one of his favorite parts. Expert Reader B also listed much more than Expert Reader A for this section.

Perceived Message(s)

The perceived message by the expert readers and general respondents is ultimately different. There is however, the idea of good conquering evil that is present to some degree in each of the answers. This shows that identification occurred to some degree with the readers in that the novel spoke their language in terms of the ideals they hold, mainly good overcoming evil.

<u>**Identification**</u>

To restate, Respondent A said Relm was noble, humble, reluctant, and courageous. Expert Reader B also noted Relm's humility and valor. Respondent C said that they liked Anarelia because of her belief in Relm as well as her helpfulness. Expert Reader A also liked Anarelia's unwavering spirit. Based on these answers, we can infer that all of these aspects of the characters are admirable to these respondents, thus prompting them to give such answers. Since these aspects are made to be admirable by the work's creator, it could be said that these readers experienced a degree of consubstantiality with the author. This explains why identification occurred in these readers. This also illustrates Woodward's example of Admiring Identification in that the actions of the heroes were exemplary to the readers. Respondent B wrote that he or she thought that Mediator, the Christ-like figure of the story and Relm's chief mentor was "the true hero." Because this character is allegorical of Jesus Christ, it can be said that this respondent, at the very least, admires Christ. This explains how identification took place in this

instance, in that the respondent's fondness of Christ was projected onto Mediator, thus resulting in a fondness of the character.

Respondents A, B, and D, as well as Expert Reader B listed that they enjoyed the battle scenes. For battles to be enjoyable, there must be an engagement, both mentally and emotionally. Mentally, so that the reader is aware of what is going on, and emotionally, so that the reader cares about what is at stake. To restate, Burke says that for identification is one's way of being mentally placed as a person in the groups. In this case, it is the author being placed among the readers. It seems as though this happened to a certain extent with these readers. Also, this highlights Woodward's reference to Associative Identification, which brings audiences into a story and makes them care about what is happening.

Respondents B and D mentioned that they liked the interaction between Relm and Lepo indicating that friendship is important to these respondents. Respondent D also noted that they were amused by Lepo's laid-back personality, which could mean that this type of person appeals to the respondent. Burke states that to persuade a man, you must be able to "talk his language." In the case of these respondents, it is likely these respondents would not have enjoyed the characters' interactions and it is also likely that Respondent D would not have enjoyed Lepo's personality had the characters not been speaking the language of these readers to some degree. Thus, we can ascertain that identification occurred to some extent with these readers in regards to these characters.

Respondent D wrote they "could identify with Relm's struggle to 'find himself.'" It can therefore be said that this respondent underwent a similar struggle for self-actualization as the protagonist, though obviously in a different setting and context. As noted earlier, Burke discusses that identification occurs out of persuasion, and persuasion occurs out of identifying

one's ways with another. In this case, identification occurred because the reader could identify

his or her ways with the ways of the protagonist. This also points to two types of identification

that Woodward mentions: (1) Sympathetic Identification in that the respondent seemed to place

himself or herself in the position of the hero and (2) Cathartic Identification in that Relm may

have provided this respondent with a model for some form of personal transformative change.

This latter type is based on how the respondent related to Relm's personal journey of self-

discovery, and therefore may have discovered a way to improve his or her own journey of self-

actualization.

As stated earlier, Respondent A enjoyed the heroes' quest to save the planet, and

Respondent E liked the novel's history and culture. In both cases, it is inferred that these

respondents cared about what was happening to the characters and the world they inhabit, once

again relating to Woodward's Associative Identification. Because of this, and the fact that the

author was placed among the readers to the degree that caring responses could be elicited, we

can see why identification took place in these instances with these respondents.

<u>Disconnect</u>

Respondent E believed some of the abilities and actions of the characters were, to some

extent, unbelievable. This shows that there is a degree of disconnect experienced in the novel, in

that these unbelievable aspects of the work may have taken the respondent's mind away from the

author's world. A reader's mind must continually be fixed in the world while reading in order to

prevent disconnect from happening. In this case, we can see why identification did not occur

with this respondent.

Expert Reader A appeared to be experiencing a certain amount of disconnect. Due to the slowing of pace, the amount of coincidences, and the trustfulness of the characters, this expert reader seemed to be mentally taken out of the story, thus amounting to a degree of disconnect between the reader and the novel. Also, due to Relm's doubting and how Kiros did not do what the expert reader felt he should have done, it seems as though the expert reader experienced a large degree of disconnect with these two characters. Due to these reasons, we can see how there was a lack of identification with this expert reader.

Expert Reader B believed the dialogue to be a bit contrived at times. This shows why a degree of disconnect was experienced between the reader and the work, given that the contrived language did not speak the expert reader's language.

Conclusions

Based on the analysis of the answers, it can be concluded that each reader experienced a degree of identification with the novel, and the reasons for doing so vary by respondents depending on characters, events, or other aspects of the novel. Taking the answers as a whole, Expert Reader A experienced disconnect more often than Expert Reader B, due to reasons already mentioned. Given the aforementioned information, we can see how Expert Reader B experienced identification as often as Respondents A, B, and D.

It is possible that Respondent B exuded identification as often as that of that A, C, D, and E based on his or her answer as to the question regarding least favorite character(s). In fact, the answers reveal no visible disconnect occurring with Respondents A, C, B, and D, but disconnect occurring with Respondent E. This is not to say that no disconnect occurred at all with Respondents A, B, C, and D, but rather, disconnect was less often in these respondents than the others.

The results of this study prove how Burke's theory of Identification can be applied in regards to a reader and a literary work of fiction. The results also show that no respondents were able to ascertain the exact theme that the author intended.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study has made it clear that there are multiple ways in which it can be improved. The following are recommendations in which this can be done. While not exhaustive, the suggestions given highlight some of the primary ways in which a study such as this might be done better. Despite the suggestions, it is recommended that the approach remain the same: that of discovering how Burke's theory of Identification can be applied to a reader and a literary work of fiction.

The first suggestion is to study identification using a more popular novel so as to attract a wide audience for the surveys. If the novel is more popular, it is likely that more people will take it. If a more popular work was used, it seems more likely to bring in more people to participate in the survey. It is also likely that a more popular work would have its own Web site, and thus attract more users to its site. It is from here where a link to the survey could be placed. It is believed that the more participants in the survey, the more thorough and valid the study becomes. Also, advertising for the survey could be done on a variety of Web sites and the use of viral advertisements regarding the survey could also be employed. Once the survey has been taken, it is recommended that a digital coupon be available from the publisher for a discounted book, giving respondents an incentive to complete the survey.

The second would be to extend the amount of time the survey could be taken. The survey for this study was only left up for twenty days, due to time constraints in that this thesis had to be completed by a certain date due to it being for a masters program. Also, because I was learning the process of how to write a thesis, there was much discussion that had be done within a certain

amount of time with the chair of my thesis, which required meetings and revisions, thereby causing time leading up to the surveys to be constrained. This in turn meant that, in order to be completed on time, the surveys could only be left online for twenty days. Having a longer time span may attract more respondents, thus increasing the amount of information that can be collected and analyzed. A recommended length of time would be four to six months, to allow for advertisements to reach potential participants.

Third, more expert readers from a variety of professions (i.e. authors, editors, professors) should be sought out so that this portion of the study can be improved. It would be preferable if expert readers were involved somehow in professional writing-oriented professions, thus aiding in the validation of the results collected from them. It would also be preferred if expert readers had a love of the genre that the novel would fall under in order to eliminate any bias towards the work based on its genre.

Fourth, it is suggested to disregard the parts of the study regarding the author's central theme. It is recommended that the focus not be on whether readers did nor did not identify with the author's intended central theme, but focus on whether or not readers identified with the novel in terms of character(s), plot, and/or setting. Therefore, the study would leave out mentioning what the author had intended and allow readers to discover which of these three subjects they did or did not identify with and how this occurred.

Fifth, using the aforementioned suggestions, it is recommended to employ the use of two novels with two separate surveys. Comparing and contrasting the results would lead to a greater understanding of how identification works in regards to readers and literary texts. This is

reminiscent to Elisa Warford's 2006 dissertation in which she utilized four popular novels when discussing Burke's Identification.

Sixth, in addition to using surveys, it is recommended that two separate focus groups be conducted for the readers of the two novels. These focus groups should be filmed, with the answers being compared to those of the written surveys. This adds an interesting variable to the study in that there are pros and cons to both digital, anonymous surveys and filmed focus groups. Thus using the two will help to balance out the study so that the most accurate information may be collected and analyzed. It is recommended that national conferences be located in which to perform the focus groups and supply surveys. These national conferences would need to be based around the love of the genre that the novels incorporate. Doing so may help provide more responses for analysis.

Seventh, the digital surveys should incorporate more multiple-choice questions. For instance, various themes and characters should be listed so that each respondent has to choose from the given choices. Therefore, once the answers have been obtained, participants responses can more clearly be analyzed in terms of similarities and differences. To illustrate, consider that when asked which character(s) respondents did not like, one respondent listed "Prince Radolen" while another simply listed "the bad guys." If this change in the survey was implemented, a specific name, such as "Kiros," would have been listed rather than a vague allusion to the novel's villains. Therefore, the answer could be contrasted and compared with those who wrote "Kiros" versus those who did not.

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