Identification: Problem or opportunity?

Oskar Brusewitz
C-UPPSATS
Handledare: Kristina Hildebrand
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Introduction

According to George Yule the optimal age for learning is between ten and sixteen years old.\textsuperscript{1} However, there are different barriers which hinder student learning, for example unwillingness. These barriers are called affective factors. Affective factors are emotional reactions, for example a lack of empathy for characters or cultures in texts. Yule states that some of these affective factors contribute to the presumed downfall of students’ learning.\textsuperscript{2} I would argue that these barriers can be overcome by identification through fiction.

Identification through fiction is in my opinion an important reason why students read. Keith Oatley (1994) presents different factors of identification that I aim to present in my essay in order to strengthen my arguments. His work is also one of the reasons that I chose this particular topic for my essay.

My essay will show available identification factors in two different texts. I will show that there are different strategies that can be used for identification, specifically in the novels \textit{Neverwhere} and \textit{The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe}. I chose the two novels because they are in my opinion applicable to what young adults experience growing up. Another aspect is that the two novels are similar because they are fantasy novels and the characters in them undertake different quests. The quests can be linked to for example the social environment in a classroom or going through different stages during young adulthood.

\textsuperscript{1} Yule George, \textit{The study of Language}, Fourth edition, 2011, Cambridge University Press, New York. 188
\textsuperscript{2} Yule, 189
Emotions and identification in literature

We experience different emotions when reading texts, for example sadness or happiness. These emotions differ from person to person because individuals have different memories and patterns according to which they respond to texts. These patterns evoke emotions to which we can connect. Keith Oatley (1994) presents a theory of identification when reading: he writes about adopting character’s goals, creating imaginary worlds, interpreting something which the author wrote, identifying with it, and integrating different elements creating a more complete experience.³ An event in a novel might trigger certain reactions in a reader, for example anger or fear, and these emotions often occur together with physical reactions such as the heart beating faster or crying. According to Oatley, emotions connected to tears when reading are often identical to emotions which bring forth tears in real life.⁴ However, in real life readers have the ability to stand outside an author’s work and choose to enter it. When the readers have entered a world they interact with the text and the author.

Oatley proposes that the feelings are our own, but the text which the author has created is simulated. He writes about the process when the readers connect with the text, and when it creates connections to our own feelings, for example through our understanding of the characters.⁵ Oatley suggests identification as a core to simulation, meaning that the readers appropriate the events of a character as their own using their own experiences.⁶

_Neverwhere_ and _The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe_ use emotions as connectors for the readers. This is illustrated in the following example in _Neverwhere._

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⁴ Oatley, 54
⁵ Oatley, 66-69
⁶ Oatley, 66
Jessica looked down at him, nervous and puzzled. “We’re going to be late,” she pointed out.

“She’s hurt”

Jessica looked back at the girl on the sidewalk. Priorities: Richard had no priorities.

“Richard. We’re going to be late. Someone else will be along; someone else will help her.”

The girl’s face was crusted with dirt, and her clothes were wet with blood. “She’s hurt,” he said, simply. There was an expression in his face that Jessica hadn’t seen before.7

Richard saves the girl lying on the ground. This could evoke an emotion of admiration in the reader. The reader believes that Richard is a hero, helping the girl. Jessica could evoke negative emotions such as anger.

In *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, similar reactions may be evoked:

And now we come to one of the nastiest things in this story. Up to that moment Edmund had been feeling sick, and sulky, and annoyed with Lucy for being right, but he hadn’t made up his mind what to do. When Peter suddenly asked him the question he decided all at once to do the meanest and most spiteful thing he could think of. He decided to let Lucy down.

“Tell us Ed,” said Susan.

And Edmund gave a very superiour look as if he were far older than Lucy (There was only really a year’s difference) and then the little snigger said,

“Oh, yes, Lucy and I have been playing- pretending that all her story about a country in the wardrobe is true. Just for fun, of course. There’s nothing there really.”8

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Edmund is told to tell the truth about travelling to Narnia; instead he lies to Lucy, Susan and Peter. This situation creates anger against Edmund and compassion for Lucy. The quotations show how important connectors are in order to create simulations which run on the readers’ minds. This might evoke situations where readers are able to extend their own experiences and recognize what Lucy is feeling. We also feel anger against Jessica in Neverwhere and Edmund in Narnia due to the fact that they behave badly. We extend our own feelings inside the book adopting the characters’ goals and beliefs.9

Readers External Membrane

The text uses different modes of experience in order to evoke the readers’ emotions. Texts often use many different modes of experience which are meant to create a sense of being inside the text. This Oatley refers to as an external membrane. An external membrane is best explained as keeping the outside world and the inside world apart. In a fictional text the readers’ outside world is the real world and the inside world is the fictional world. Texts sometime allow the readers to connect with both worlds at the same time.10 Outside the external membrane we have mental schematas, such as our knowledge about what set fixtures like a classroom or a pharmacy look like.11 These set fixtures are used in texts and might trigger certain emotions; hence in the classroom, they are a possible discussion subject: for example, does a pharmacy or a grocery store work the same way in England as it does in Sweden? This can evoke feelings of recognition.

9 Oatley, 66
10 Oatley 54-56
11 Yule, 150
Mental schemata and solutions in texts

Oatley describes a dual event in fictional texts, one which he calls event structure and one called discourse structure. Event structures are the happenings in a fictional text. Discourse structures are the events that occur in a particular order. When reading a fictional text, there is a mix of plot events which might occur but they are selected in a particular order by the author. The plot is, according to Oatley, almost always combined with another element, for example identification. In fictional texts, it is often the plot which invokes the mental schema. If the plot leaves unresolved issues in the text this creates emotions, for example excitement or frustration. The incompleteness of a text induces the reader look for solutions connected to the plot. The solutions are added to the mental schemata until they are resolved. When the solutions are added in order to create relief and comfort, it is called assimilation.

In certain fictional texts the narrator speaks directly to the reader. The narrator of the Lion, the Witch and the wardrobe speaks directly to the reader at various points in the text.

You couldn’t have found a robin with a redder chest or a brighter eye.

Dryads and naiads which they used to be call in our world.

I hope no one who reads this book has been quite as miserable as Susan and Lucy were that night; but if you have been – if you’ve been up all night and cried till you have no more tears left in you – you will know that there comes in the end a sort of quietness.

You feel as if nothing is ever going to happen again.

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12 Oatley, 57
13 Oatley, 58
14 Oatley, 57
15 Lewis, 68
16 Lewis, 137
17 Lewis, 171
The narrator tells the reader his own thoughts about certain situations in the book, emphasizing that it is a fictional story. The narrator emphasizes these situations which allows the readers to connect to the outside world and the inside world simultaneously.\(^{18}\) It is to be said that some texts have more than one inside world.

Farah Mendlesohn (2008) writes about primary and secondary worlds. The primary world is the first fictional world and the secondary world is the second fictional world. The text explains events that happen both in the outside world and the secondary world which enables connections between all the four worlds.\(^{19}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outside world</th>
<th>Inside world</th>
<th>Primary world</th>
<th>Secondary world</th>
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<td>The real world</td>
<td>The real fictional world</td>
<td>The first fictional world</td>
<td>The second fictional world inside the text</td>
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Figure 1.

Figure 1 present the connections between the four worlds and most likely the inside world and the primary world are the same.

**Readers Internal Membrane**

A story has certain individuals and settings which we can relate to. Often books are like the outside-world but with certain distinctions such as for example their own history.\(^{20}\) The distinctions are experienced in three different ways. These are sympathy, memories and identification. Sympathy means that we connect with the characters in a fictional text which encourages us to extend our own experience. The readers connect to the characters and feel

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\(^{18}\) Oatley, 62

\(^{19}\) farahsf.com/

\(^{20}\) Oatley, 61
what they are feeling. Oatley presents this as a mental link to the character. Oatley also claims that readers have special abilities which the characters in a fictional text do not, the ability to move within the membrane and outside of it. This unique quality allows the reader to feel what the fictional characters are feeling but there is also a possibility that if they do not agree or cope with the events in the text to just put the book down. Memories are used to identify with a text for example *Romeo and Juliet*. Oatley argues that if people watch a film or a play, for example *Romeo and Juliet*, and they feel the love and difficult tasks which Romeo and Juliet had to overcome, it is most certainly based on their own memories of love.

Identification is, according to Oatley, ideally seen as simulation. *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* and *Neverwhere* evoke certain parts that I relate to: for example, I feel a strong connection to Peter in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* due to the fact that he is a strong, courageous man and he always looks after his brother and sisters. *Neverwhere* might not be as easy because of the protagonist’s changes in character. Richard Mayhew is, in the first chapters, very much like Peter in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* because he stands up for his beliefs and saves Door from death. However, he changes because he is dependent on others to survive in London Below and this creates a double character: one that is heroic and one that is not. Initially, Richard is mostly incapable of standing up to anyone, especially Jessica, but in the scene when Richard saves Door from certain death, admiration towards his heroic side is awakened. This is related to simulation in the sense that readers are able to identify with for example Richard. Readers simulate feelings when reading a text which they can relate to and connect to in some way.

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21 Oatley, 61
22 Oatley, 62
23 Oatley, 63
24 Oatley, 67
Mendlesohns Categories of fantasy

In addition to her definition primary and secondary worlds, Mendlesohn writes about different kinds of fantasy. She presents four different kinds: portal fantasy, the intrusive, immersive fantasy and estranged fantasy. Portal fantasy is when characters move through a portal to another world, often through some kind of door. Intrusive fantasy is when something odd, fantastic or not seen as normal enter our world. Immersive fantasy is when the world is different from our own world from the beginning of the novel. One does not enter into it as in a portal fantasy. Estranged fantasy is when fantastic or odd things in our world are seen as completely normal. Fantasy novels mainly use one of these four categories. However, Mendlesohn points that there is the possibility that a cross-section can be made when two categories mix with each other. The author might have chosen to use one of these categories but a second one might have been inadvertent.

Discussion

*Neverwhere* and *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardobe* are both portal fantasies. The next quotation show the portal part of the book in *Neverwhere*, when Richard moves from London above to London below.

His guide shushed him to silence. They reached another door set in a wall the man rapped on it rhythmically. There was a pause, and then the door swung open. For a moment, Richard was blinded by the sudden light. He was standing in a huge, vaulted
room, an underground hall, filled with firelight and smoke. Small fires burned around the room. Shadowy people stood by the flames, roasting small animals on spits. People scurried from fire to fire. It reminded him of Hell- or rather, the way that he had thought of Hell- as a schoolboy. The smoke irritated his lungs, and he coughed. A hundred eyes turned, then, and stared at him; a hundred eyes, unblinking and unfriendly.  

The quotation illustrates the portal part of the novel. Walking through that door lets the protagonist enter into a parallel world. I wrote a letter to Neil Gaiman which I have enclosed in the next lines.

    Dear Neil,

I read Neverwhere a few months ago. Last week I read a piece of work made by Farrah Mendlesohn (I am not sure that you are aware of her work). She writes a great deal about fantasy and particularly about fantasy subgenres e.g. Portal fantasies. What struck me was that Door in Neverwhere seems to be a symbol of a portal of some kind? She is called Door, her main purpose in the book is to open doors etcetera. My question is simply, is this the case?

Is it somewhat a playful ironic message to the whole fantasy genre?

Best regards

Oskar

I did not receive a reply. In my opinion, it is probable that Door is a symbol of a door.

    “Well now you’ve got the key,” said Door. “And I have you,” said the angel. “You’re the opener. Without you the key is useless. Open the door for me.”

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28 Gaiman, 68
29 Gaiman, 325
The quotation shows that Door is a symbol of a portal; it is arguable that she holds the key to Richard’s fate as well. In the end of the novel there is a quote which states:

Instead she said, “Are you ready?” He nodded. “Have you got the key?” He put down his bag and rummaged in his back pocket with his good hand. He took out the key and handed it to her. She held it out in front of her, as if it were being inserted in an imaginary door. “Okay,” she said. “Just walk. Don’t look back.” He began walking down a small hill, away from the blue waters of the Thames. A gray gull swooped past. At the bottom of the hill, he looked back. She stood at the top of the hill, silhouetted by the rising sun. Her cheeks were glistening. The orange sunlight gleamed on the key. Door turned it, with one decisive motion.30

The quotation implies that Door was the one who held the key to Richard’s fate. She could have chosen not to send him back to London Above.

It released her chin and stroked her face with long, white fingers, and it said, “your family can open doors. They can create doors where there were no doors. They can unlock doors that are locked. Open doors that were never meant to be opened.”31

This quotation strengthens the impression that Door is a key-opener and it is also applicable to what I previously wrote about her being the key to Richard’s fate.

In The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe the portal is a wardrobe. This quotation shows the meeting of the two parallel worlds in the Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe:

And then she saw that there was a light ahead of her; not a few inches away where the back of the wardrobe ought to have been, but a long way off. Something cold and soft was falling on her.32

30 Gaiman, 348-349
31 Gaiman, 323
The portal in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* is first reached by Lucy, one of the protagonists.33

“This must be a simply enormous wardrobe!” thought Lucy, going still further in and pushing the soft folds of the coats aside to make room for her. Then she noticed that there was something crunching under her feet. “I wonder is that more mothballs” she thought, stooping down to feel it with her hand. But instead of feeling the hard, smooth wood of the floor of the wardrobe, she felt something soft and powdery and extremely cold. “This is very queer,” she said, and went on a step or two further. Next moment she found that what was rubbing against her face and hands was no longer soft fur but something hard and rough and even prickly. “Why, it is just like branches of trees!” exclaimed Lucy. And then she saw that there was a light ahead of her; not a few inches away where the back of the wardrobe ought to have been, but a long way off.34

The novel uses a portal in order to gain access to the secondary world, other than that Narnia does not have any connection to the primary world. Narnia is a closed world since it works autonomously. We also see that this novel is a circular kind of fantasy, where the characters venture inside the secondary world but in the end they come back to the primary world.35

And the next moment they all came tumbling out of a wardrobe door into the empty room, and they were no longer Kings and Queens in their hunting array but just Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy in their old clothes.36

32 Lewis, 14
33 farahsf.com/
34 Lewis, 14
35 farahsf.com/
36 Lewis, 202
They have ventured into a secondary world and after a few years all grown up they travel back to the primary world. There are implications in the book that the circular journey is continued:

“No”, he said, “I don’t think it will be any good trying to go back through the wardrobe door to get the coats. You won’t get into Narnia again by that route. Nor would the coats be much use by now if you did! Eh! What’s that? Yes, of course you’ll get back to Narnia again some day”.  

The professor tells the children that they cannot get into Narnia using the same route twice; this implies that they will venture to Narnia again and that the circular kind of the fictional story is continued.

According to Mendlesohn, an estranged fantasy is when our world is made to seem strange and fantastic, and fantastic things seem normal. This part of the fantasy occurs in *Neverwhere* when Richard comes across the tube stations.

Richard suppressed the urge to put an arm around her. “And where would that be?” he asked. She turned to him, pushed the hair from her eyes, and told him. “Knightsbridge,” repeated Richard, and he began to chuckle, gently. The girl turned away. “See?” She said. “I said you’d laugh.”

He was, he realized, deeply, pathetically scared of the bridge itself. “Do we have to go across it?” he asked. “Can’t we get to the market some other way?” They paused at the base of the bridge.

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37 Lewis, 203
38 Gaiman, 92-93
39 Gaiman, 100
What before was a familiar world to him is now seen as strange upon his arrival at the tube station. The world which seemed strange to him before is now considered to be the normal world, for example in London Below, Knightsbridge is actually a bridge, not a tube station, being called Night’s Bridge without the K. If the reader has not been to London, it is difficult to understand the part with the tube stations as well as the part with an estranged fantasy. It becomes a clearer in the next quotation.

“The Earl’s Court train should be coming through here in about half an hour.” “Earl’s Court Station isn’t on the Central Line,” pointed out Richard. The marquis stared at Richard, openly amused. “What a refreshing mind you have, young man,” he said. “There is really quite nothing like total ignorance, is there?” […] “This should be the Earl’s Court train. Stand behind me here you three.” […] Earl’s Court, thought Richard. Of Course. And then he began to wonder whether there was a baron in Barons Court Tube station, or a raven in Ravenscourt or…

In this quotation Richard reflects on the names of the tube stations and it creates a stronger feeling about what an estranged fantasy is and what the tube stations’ purpose is. There are tube stations in Neverwhere which exist in real-life London. If I were to travel to London, I would be able to visit Earl’s Court or Knightsbridge. Neverwhere uses these names to create settings in the book which we normally would not think about when visiting Earl’s Court. The quotation on page twelve shows that Earl’s Court in fact is a Court with an Earl. Neil Gaiman plays with the names of the tube stations and creates the estranged fantasy setting, using the names to create a mystique which implies that the tube stations in our world are seen as strange.

Neverwhere is an open world kind of fantasy: the characters are able to travel between both the primary and the secondary world. When Richard meets Door he
automatically becomes a member of London Below. In doing so, he is not able to communicate with anyone in London Above; even his credit-cards do not function.

“"My desk, where are they taking it?" Sylvia stared at him, gently puzzled. “And you are...?” I don't need this shit, thought Richard. “Richard,” he said, sarcastically. “Richard Mayhew.” “Ah,” said Sylvia. Then her attention slid off Richard, like water off an oiled duck, and she said, “No, not over there. For heaven’s sakes,” to the removal men, and hurried after them as they carried off Richard’s desk.41

The quotation demonstrates that when Richard comes to work on the Monday after meeting Door, nobody recognizes or talks to him. He is able to move in London Above, but it is not until he travels to London Below that he is able to speak to anyone. Door in London Below has the ability to send him back to London Above, acting as a portal between the primary and secondary worlds.

*Neverwhere* connects both the primary and secondary world. This can be seen in that characters are able to move through both worlds simultaneously. The following quotations demonstrate Vandemar and Mr.Croup moving in both worlds at the same time. The quotation below shows the part when they move in London Above.

“I am impressed. What brain, Mister Vandemar. Keen and incisive isn’t the half of it. Some of us are so sharp," he said as he leaned in closer to Richard, went up on tiptoes into Richard’s face, “we could just cut ourselves.” Richard took an involuntary step backwards. “Can we come inside?” asked Mr.Croup.42

The next quotation shows a part where Vandemar and Mr.Croup move in London Below.

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41 Gaiman, 59
42 Gaiman, 33
The table, the leg of which Mr. Vandemar was holding tightly, flew through the air and jammed in the open doorway. Mr. Croup and Mr. Vandemar were dangling out of the door. Mr. Croup, who was clinging, quite literally, to Mr. Vandemar’s coattails, took a deep breath and began slowly to clamber, hand over hand, up Mr. Vandemar’s back. The table creaked. Mr. Croup looked at Door, and he smiled like a fox. “I killed your family,” said Mr. Croup. “Not him. And now I’m—finally—going to finish the…” It was at that moment that the fabric of Mr. Vandemar’s dark suit gave way. Mr. Croup tumbled, screaming, into the void.\(^{43}\)

These quotations show that the characters in Neverwhere are able to move in both worlds.\(^ {44}\)

As we have seen, Oatley quotes from Goffman’s theory about an external membrane, where readers are able to keep the outside world and the inside world apart.\(^ {45}\) In *the Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, however, we enter a world where there is another layer. We enter from our own world into the fictional world, and then in the fictional world we enter a parallel world. One could almost suggest that we have a parallel world membrane. If we call it the parallel world membrane, it could be illustrated in the following way. First, the external membrane consists of two layers.

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Outside world

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inside world
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\(^{43}\) Gaiman, 330
\(^{44}\) farahsf.com/
\(^{45}\) Oatley, 54-56
Then, I would argue that a third layer is possible and the result of this would be.

Outside world

\[\downarrow\]

inside world

\[\downarrow\]

Parallel world

The ability to move both inside and outside of the membrane is something which is intended only for the readers of a fictional text. If objects in a fictional text are not agreeable or even horrifying, readers have the ability to put the text down and move outside the membrane into the real world. I would add to this, that the parallel world membrane allows the readers to connect on a deeper level and also extend their own experience. In the parallel world membrane, if they feel that something is horrifying or not agreeable, they are able to move outside the parallel world membrane into the fictional world. If they are not satisfied they have the ability to move outside the fictional membrane into the real world.

**The texts in the classroom**

Students could identify with *Neverwhere* and *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* through for example identification with the characters or the emotions created when reading the texts.\(^{46}\) These different characters have different traits which might appeal to the readers. If we are able to adopt feelings, or actions, which the protagonists use, we

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\(^{46}\) Oatley, 54-69
are able to identify with them using simulation. We use experience to extend our own knowledge and then we use simulation to deepen our own understanding of the text. One might argue that we add the depth of our new understanding to our previous schema and this increases our extended understanding.47

Different factors in a fictional text evoke students’ mental schemata. These schemata are applicable to what Mann, McKeachie and Svinicki write about learning and strategies concerning reading. McKeachie and Svinicki emphasize the teachers’ role, whilst Mann emphasizes the students’ role.4849 In the text, I have presented different quotations that emphasize connectors between the reader and the fictional text. In general these connectors seem to be important when students read. Since students tend to identify with factors from their own experience, teachers need to create situations which connect to that former experience. If we connect to that former experience students could identify with the fictional texts on a deeper level. If teachers create situations from different parts of fictional texts and then teach the students how to analyze them, it might create an understanding of how to read and what to look for in a text. If teachers teach them what to look for in fictional texts, they are able to identify their own identification factors.

What or who they identify with in a text, whether it is the plot or a character, in a classroom environment it is important as a teacher to create situations, for example Peer learning, where students benefit from each other’s experience which in the long run creates mutual understanding, learning and identification.50 If teachers provide the tools for learning, students can benefit from each other’s experiences and connect to their friends’ identification factors. There is also the possibility of tutoring each other.51

47 Oatley, 66
48 McKeachie, W and Svinicki, M. Reading as Active Learning, Teaching Tips, 2006: 31-34
49 Mann, R. The Teacher’s Role in Experiential Learning, Teaching Tips, 2006: 279-286
50 McKeachie, W and Svinicki, M. Active Learning: Cooperative, Collaborative and Peer Learning, Teaching Tips, 2006: 214-216
51 McKeachie, and Svinicki, Active Learning 2006: 214-216
Neverwhere and The Lion, the witch and the Wardrobe are stories which contain young adults and persons who are of age, but not grown up. They could be called coming of age stories, a term which is easier for students to identify with. The identification is easier due to the content of character development. The characters develop through the texts and in the end they have made a journey both psychologically and, sometimes, geographically. A coming of age story is about growing up; for example, in Neverwhere Door is seen as a young girl. The relationship between her and Richard is almost sibling-like.

They cleaned out the cut—which was much less severe than Richard remembered it from the night before—and bandaged it up, and the girl did her very best not to wince in the process. And Richard found himself wondering how old she was, and what she looked like under the grime, and why she was living in the streets and—\(^{52}\)

Since Richard sees Door as a young girl students can easily identify with Door. She has to make her own way through London Below; she is forced to grow up. Richard also makes his journey through London below and grows up. In the end he realizes his mistakes and grows psychologically.

The Lion, the witch and the Wardrobe is also a coming of age story.

“Tell us Ed,” said Susan.
And Edmund gave a very superiour look as if he were far older than Lucy (There was only really a year’s difference) and then the little snigger and said, “Oh, yes, Lucy and I have been playing- pretending that all her story about a country in the wardrobe is true. Just for fun, of course. There’s nothing there really.\(^{53}\)
In this quotation there are certain key-factors, which might or might not be interpreted as a coming of age story, depending on the reader. When Edmund gives Lucy a superior look, it can be considered as childish and implies that Edmund is not as old as he wants us to believe. The part where he talks about Lucy and him playing and pretending can also be considered a childish act and probably not something that older people would do. Lucy and Edmund develop during their journey and grow both psychologically and physically.

**Teacher strategies**

There are different teacher strategies concerning reading and motivating students, for example asking questions about their book, writing a short text, or announcing a quiz. Wilbert McKeachie and Marilla Svinicki propose these strategies to motivate students regarding reading. They imply that students do not often see the importance of reading because reading is often independent and not interdependent on the rest of the course. Their first strategy consists of asking the students questions about a particular assignment or task which they had to read for class. At the beginning of the class some sort of interaction which directly connects to the text in question is needed. Another question might be what the students thought about or what the text’s intentions were. A second strategy is to have the students write a short text about the text. Two or three questions might be sufficient for writing a short text. McKeachie and Svinickis’ third and last strategy is to announce a quiz, which might help the students’ motivational issues. When constructing questions, it is important to remember that questions about facts are often not as effective as more comprehensive questions which overall add up to the students learning more.

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54 McKeachie and Svinicki 31
55 McKeachie and Svinicki, 32
Neverwhere has a large number of quotations which are good for working with either one of these strategies, for example the one with Earl’s Court. I have previously used the quotation about Earl’s Court on page twelve but it contains many good connectors with which the students might identify. The quotation is effective because it has the ability to open up the students’ imagination, and also, as a teacher, you are able to connect reading a fictive text to other goals in the curriculum, such as learning about an English environment. It is easy to connect Earl’s Court station to the London Tube Station network. Teachers could use the London Tube Station network as a starting task either for writing, talking, or researching London.

The questions asked need to be planned carefully and provoke the students to think about what it is they are reading. McKeachie and Svinicki imply that a good way to influence how the students read is simply to tell them why the text has been chosen and how they should read it. Students learn in different ways and if teachers give instructions which help the students understand the text from their learning perspective, their learning increases. This is a teacher-controlled environment, but it all depends on what the teacher wants the students to learn. As McKeachie and Svinicki imply, the questions have to be planned carefully because it is important that they provoke the students’ thinking about actual texts. If the goal of the lesson is to think about an actual text and respond to it, both Neverwhere and The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe have parts which fit perfectly. I am aware that I have used this quotation before in this text, but it is a good quotation in order to let the students identify the problem quickly, for example Edmund letting Lucy down and lying to Peter and Susan.

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56 McKeachie and Svinicki, 34  
57 McKeachie and Svinicki, 33
“Tell us Ed,” said Susan. And Edmund gave a very superiour look as if he were far older than Lucy (There was only really a year’s difference) and then the little snigger and said, “Oh, yes, Lucy and I have been playing- pretending that all her story about a country in the wardrobe is true. Just for fun, of course. There’s nothing there really.”

The quotation from the *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* points to different identification factors for example anger. There is also the possibility to create questions around the quotation by having the students thinking about it. The quotation is useful since it presents many varieties of teaching situations. There is also the possibility to write a text, have a discussion, and have a debate, which depends on the given situation and the main purpose of the lesson.

*Neverwhere* has some quotations which function in a learning environment.

Jessica looked down at him, nervous and puzzled. “We’re going to be late,” she pointed out. “She’s hurt” Jessica looked back at the girl on the sidewalk. Priorities: Richard had no priorities. “Richard. We’re going to be late. Someone else will be along; someone else will help her.” The girl’s face was crusted with dirt, and her clothes were wet with blood. “She’s hurt,” he said, simply. There was an expression in his face that Jessica hadn’t seen before.

This quotation is also effective to use in a classroom situation since it uses many of the identification factors for example connectors like anger. If the teachers’ are able to control that emotion and plans the questions carefully, they allow the students, without leading them, to deepen their own knowledge and think about the text which was given to them.

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58 Lewis, 52
59 Gaiman, 24
Positive and negative influences of experiential learning

Richard Mann writes about experiential learning and the positive and negative influences of it. Experiential learning intends to create situations for the students with which they can identify, involving situations where they are able to use their own beliefs and thoughts with the teacher’s intended activity. They mix these two parts which leads to learning on a higher level. The basic foundation of experiential learning is that it originates in the students’ experiences. Through experience, perception, cognition, and behavior, experiential learning creates another perspective which can be used in combination with more traditional theories for example Behaviorism. Individuals gain knowledge through transformation of experience amongst others.

Dewey describes learning as an experience which is unique for each person. The uniqueness is the element which makes us contribute different thoughts and ideas to different situations. Dewey also writes that the inner self and the exploration of our inner selves is the foundation of experiential learning. He claims that the individual self is not set by modern scientific rules, instead the inner self adds something at the individual’s command, for example events which are not experienced by anyone else. These events are then used to contribute information about certain schemata which are not in a perfect order. The schemata are formed through a highly individual process which is called experiential learning. These schemata or events are connectable to what Oatley wrote about readers’ internal/external membrane and mental schemas and solutions in texts. Every individual has different

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60 “The Teacher’s Role in Experiential Learning” by Richard D Mann, Teaching Tips, 2006: 278-287
63 Dewey, 158-160
64 Oatley, 54-66
approaches and connectors when reading a text therefore our uniqueness creates situations in a classroom which all the other students can benefit from.

**Peer Learning**

Peer learning is when students learn from each other. They read, talk and develop their skills together. The platform which they meet on is mutual, which means they are equals. There is no teacher telling them what is right and wrong. A positive effect of peer learning is that drop-out rates are lower than usual since the peers rely on each other. Peer learning requires students alternating between listening, talking, summarizing, and writing, which mean that students get the chance to develop their own skills in their own setting.\(^{65}\) All of the quotations which I have presented in this text are useful for peer-learning.

**Student strategies**

When the purpose is reading as identification, it is important for students to have certain tools of development. The teacher can provide the tools for them, but in the end they themselves have to produce something. There are different ways of cooperative learning which imply that students learn better from each other.\(^{66}\)

Peers tutoring each other lead to higher understanding because the students are more involved in the process. The learning cell provides a certain turn taking system. The students prepare an assignment given to them and write questions. In class, they are divided into pairs and take turns asking questions about the assignment. The teacher walks around to help and correct them. The Syndicate and Jigsaw method consists of the class divided into groups. In groups, the students divide the reading material amongst each other. Every syndicate receives

\(^{65}\) McKeachie and Svinicki *Active Learning*, 218  
\(^{66}\) McKeachie and Svinicki *Active Learning*, 215
an assignment. The points they find in the texts are then discussed in small groups during class. The finishing touch is when they have a written or oral presentation to the class as a whole.67 This means that the students do not need to read a whole text; instead there is the possibility of dividing the work into smaller groups which concludes in a written or oral presentation. Dividing the work amongst the groups is a beneficial idea because some students might not identify with the text at all, and instead of reading a whole text they are able to read a smaller section and still gain the same knowledge as the other students. If they read a smaller section of the text, they are still contributing to the group’s work. Everyone has to contribute in order to complete the assignment. There are a few aspects which need to be considered when student only read a smaller section; for example, do they contribute to the group’s work or are they just avoiding reading due to different factors. However, if the students do not identify with any part of the text, it is probably harder for them to read the whole part.

Conclusion

Students learn and identify with fiction in different ways. Their former experiences mark the ability to identify with texts. My essay has illustrated different factors of identification and also different learning methods which students can apply, in order to deepen their own understanding and identification. I chose two fantasy novels and compared them with each other. I compared them because they include different identification factors. I also demonstrated how these factors are applicable to learning.

My study reveals that the two novels probably would work well in a classroom environment regarding identification. The texts are useful in creating tasks for the students to work with writing, reading, speaking, or listening. I have not carried out any field research, an

67 McKeachie and Marilla Svinicki, *Active Learning*, 216-218
aspect which could be investigated further in future research regarding identification in literature.
References:


McKeachie, W and Svinicki, M. “Reading as Active Learning”, *Teaching Tips*, 2006: 30-34. Print

