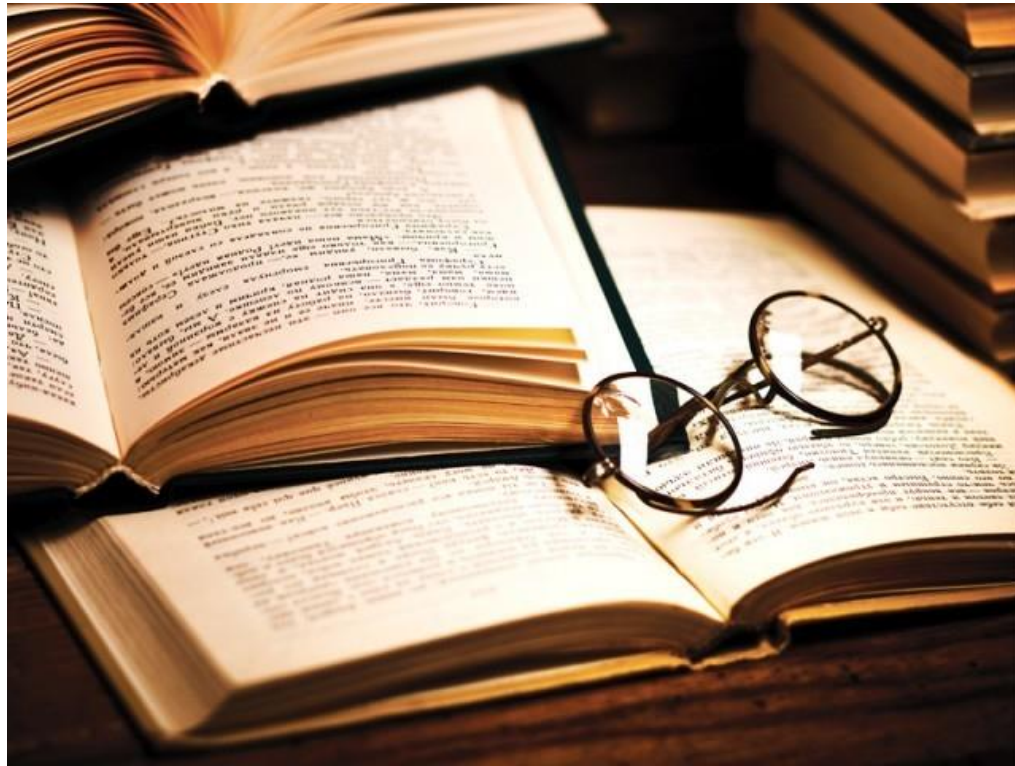
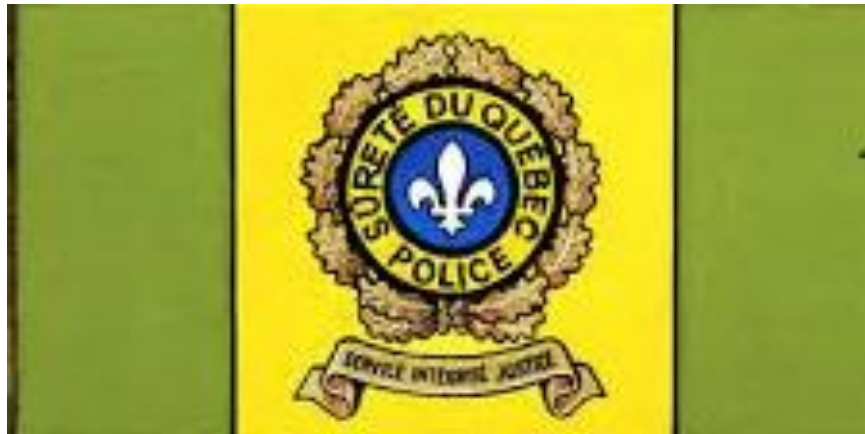


Books + Brain = Change



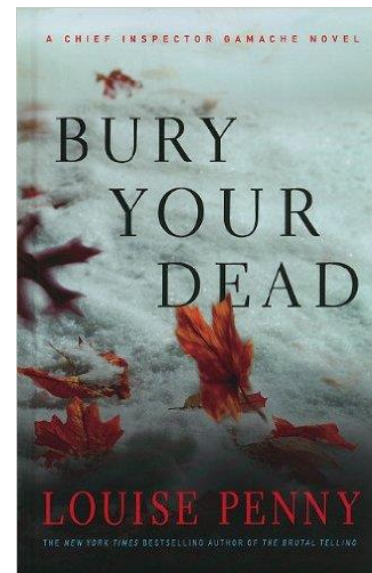
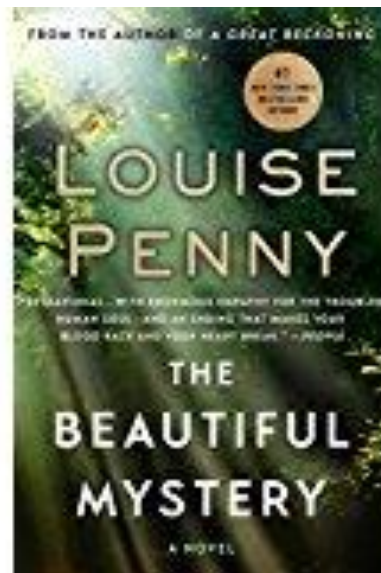
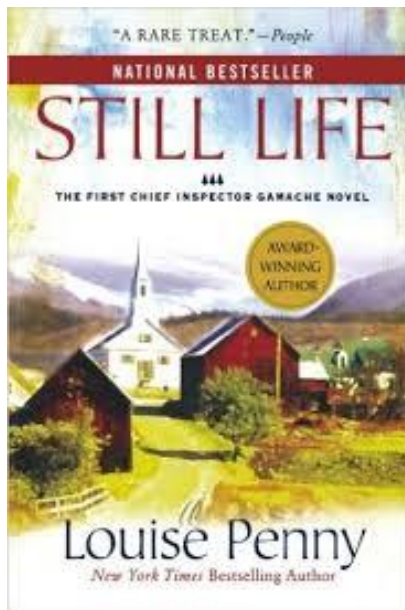
The wisdom of Chief Inspector Armande Gamache



- I don't know
- I'm sorry
- I need help
- I was wrong

Mentor or Literary Madness?

- Louise Penny & Three Pines series
- Are we changed by reading fiction?



The transformative power of fiction is supported by research

- Reading habits
- Reading & improvement of social skills



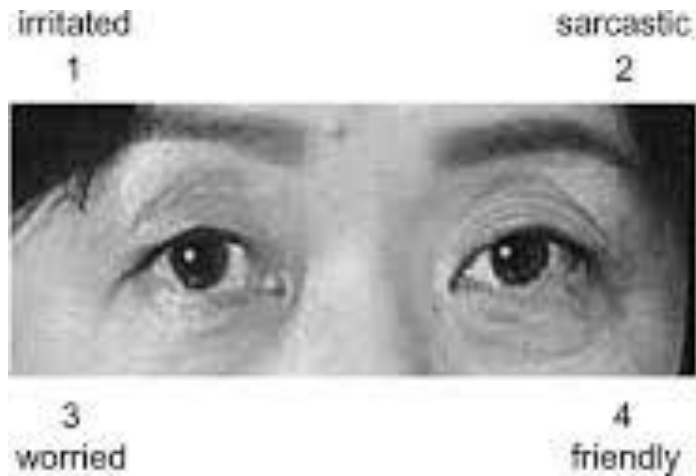
Keith Oatley

Professor emeritus of cognitive psychology
University of Toronto



“The seemingly solitary act of holing up with a book, then, is actually an exercise in human interaction.”

Reading the Mind in the Eyes Test



Fiction readers scored better than non-fiction readers

Studies

Raymond Mar

303 adults

Short story or essay from the New Yorker

Analytical reason – same results

Social reasoning – better scores by fiction readers

Keith Oatley

166 readers

Chekov – Lady with the Little Dog or a non-fiction version

Small but measurable personality changes

Gains in empathy

Lysaker

22 second and third graders

Relationally Oriented Reading

Gains in comprehension & ability to understand social situations


And ... Brain Research

Nicole Speer - 2009 ; Tara Singer – 2004



Your brain
on fiction

- The reader's brain responded as if he or she were performing the character's actions
- Prefrontal cortex & temporal cortex reacted when a character initiated a new goal
- Heightened connectivity persisted for five days!



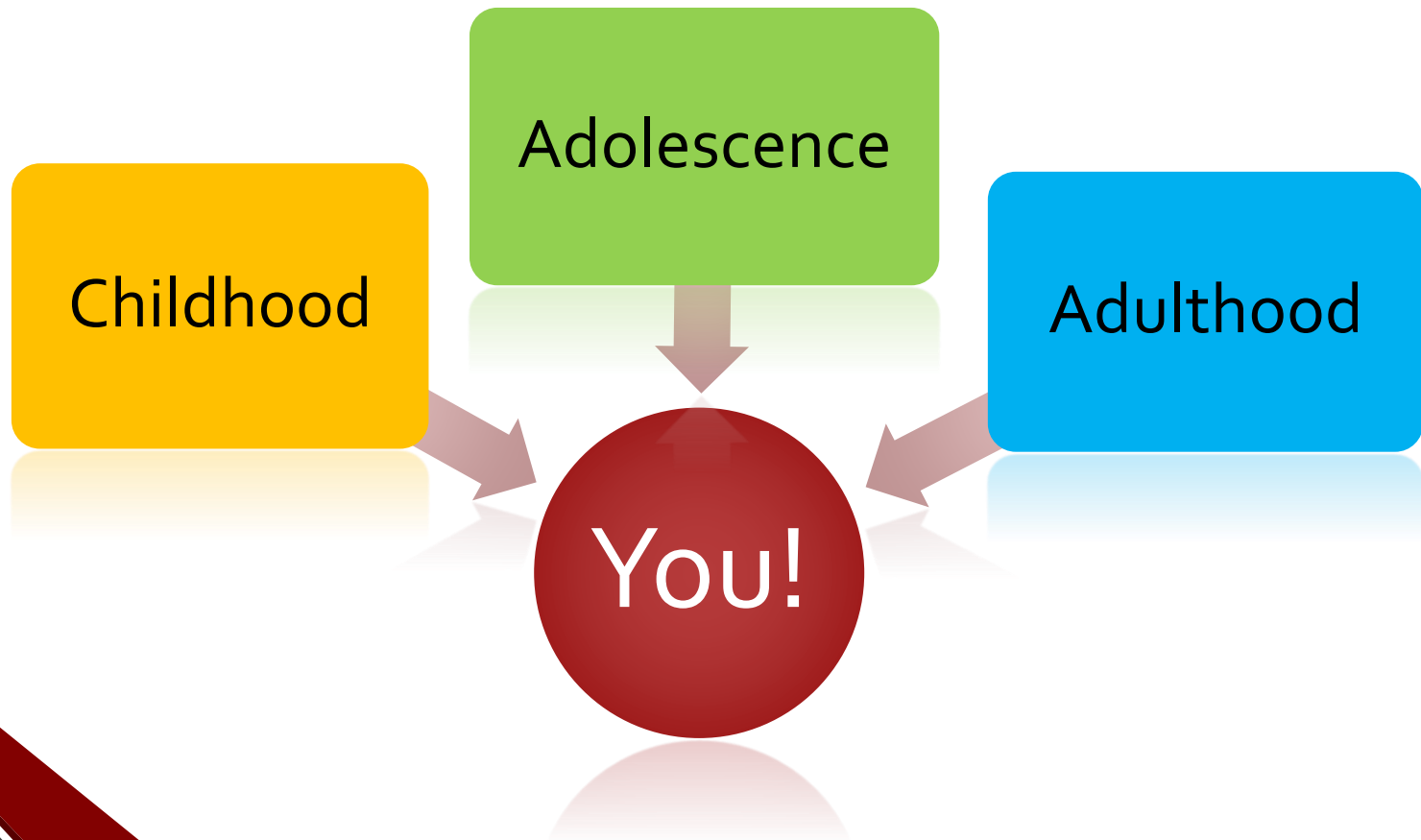
In sum!

Reading fiction develops Theory of Mind (TOM)

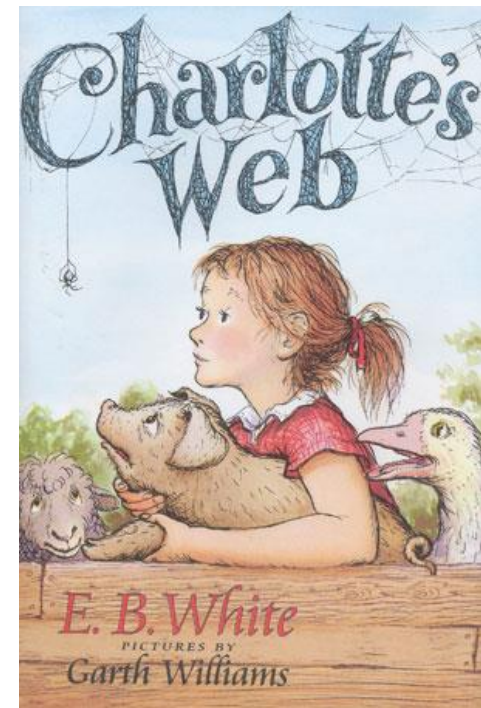
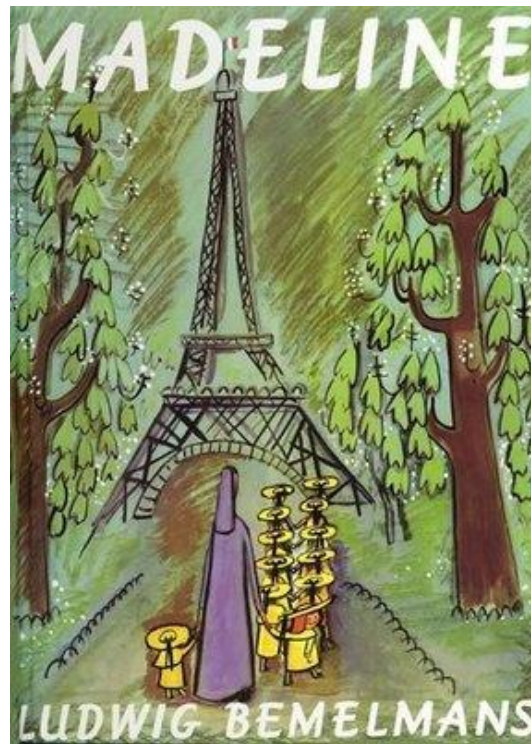
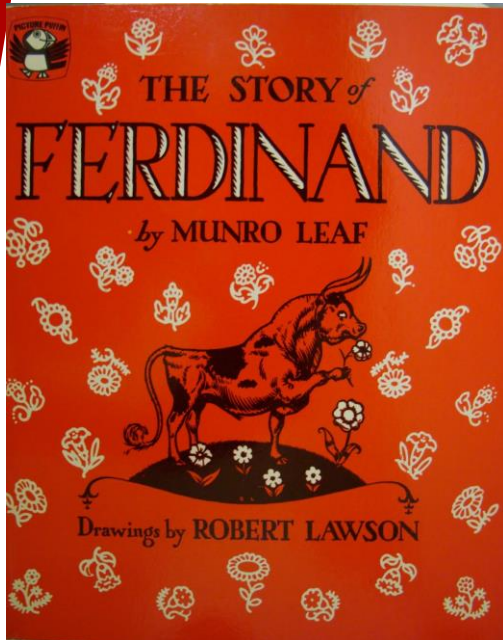
- Beliefs and intentions different from our own
- Social situations
- Selfhood

“It measurably enhances our abilities to empathize with other people and connect with something larger than ourselves.”

Across the Lifespan

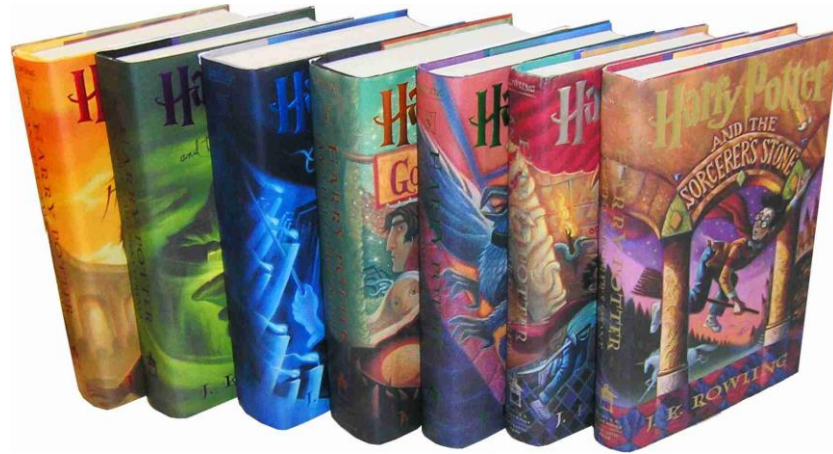


Childhood



The Harry Potter phenomenon

7 titles – 500 million copies

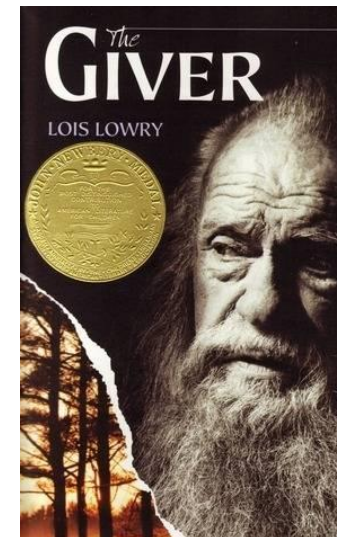
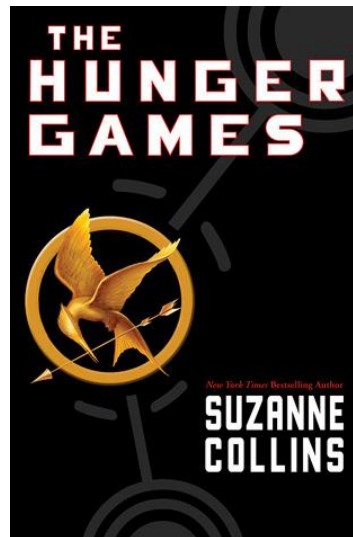
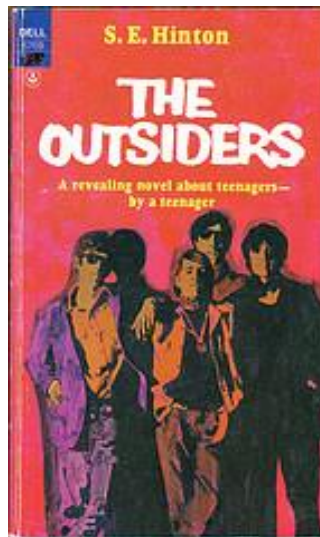


“Dumbledore’s influence on the Millennial generation is becoming clear as youth movements ... storm plazas and demand justice.”

“Although law deans do not have the magical powers with which Professor Dumbledore was blessed, he still provides an ideal role model.”

Adolescence

- Young adult literature “helps them to find role models, to make sense of the world they inhabit, to develop a personal philosophy of being ...” American Library Association
- These books “challenge us ... not only to be ourselves, but to be more interesting, inspired versions of ourselves.” Lizzie Skurnick



Into Adulthood



“I think Scout has done more for Southern womanhood than any other character in literature.” Lee Smith

“...there aren't many human beings in the world like Atticus Finch – perhaps none – but that doesn't mean that it's not worth striving to be like him.” Scott Turow

Read it Again

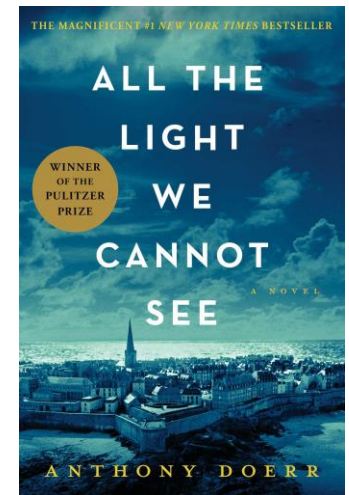
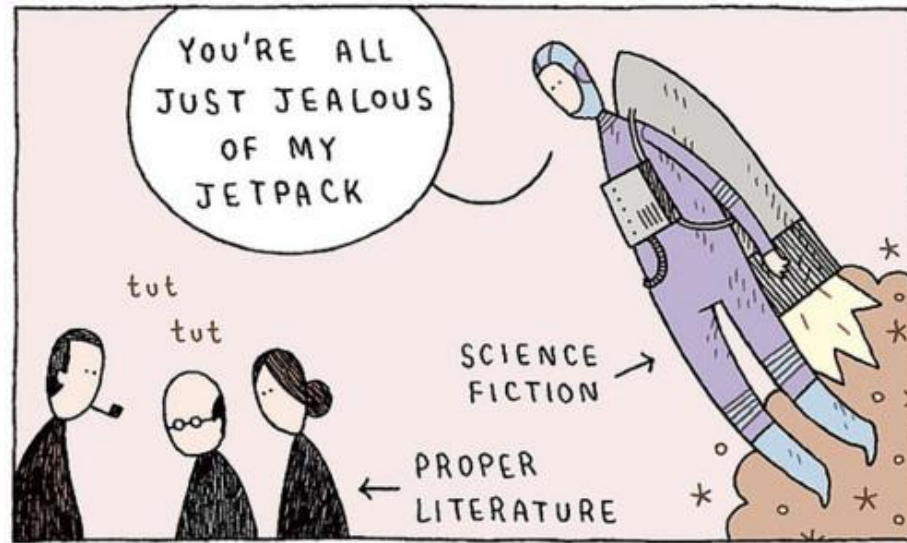
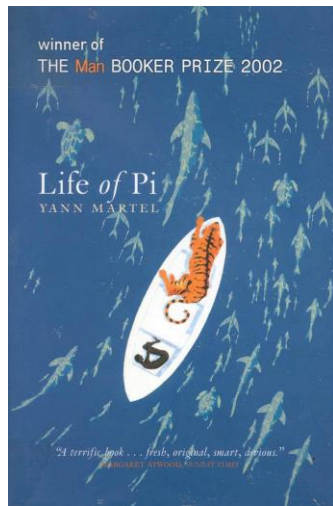
“Tell me what you read and I’ll tell you who you are is true enough but ... I’d know you better if you told me what you reread.” *Francois Mauriac*

- Which characters?
- How did they affect your beliefs, decisions, and actions?

“I’m bringing an entirely new set of experiences to these novels now and my reward is a fresh set of story lines that I missed the first time around.” Beth Kendrick

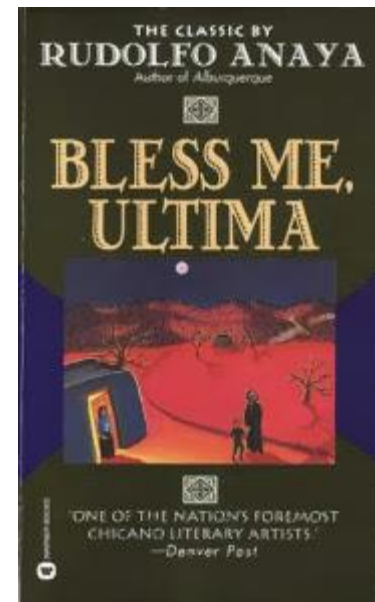
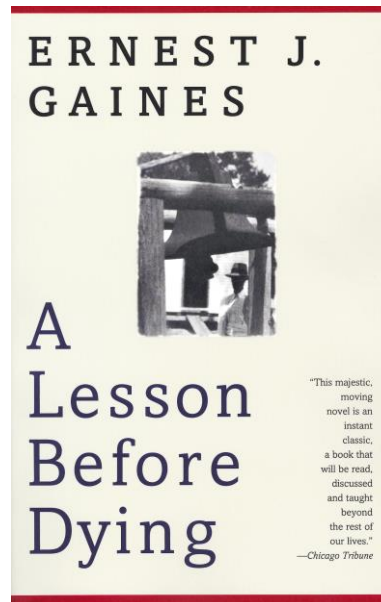
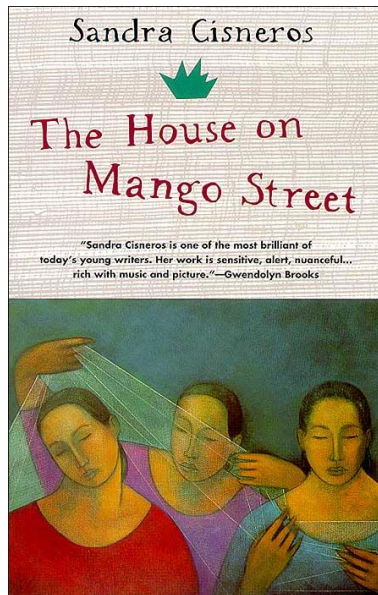
Read Deeper

Popular fiction which is more “readerly” tends to portray the world as internally consistent and predictable. It may reaffirm readers expectations and not promote ToM.



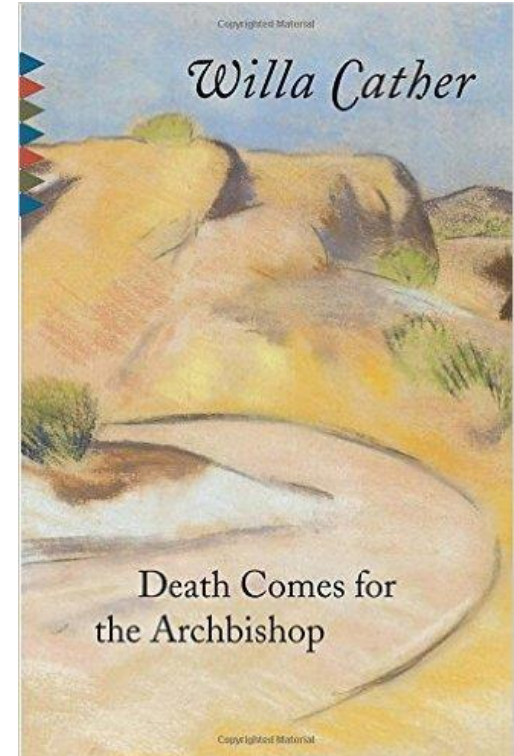
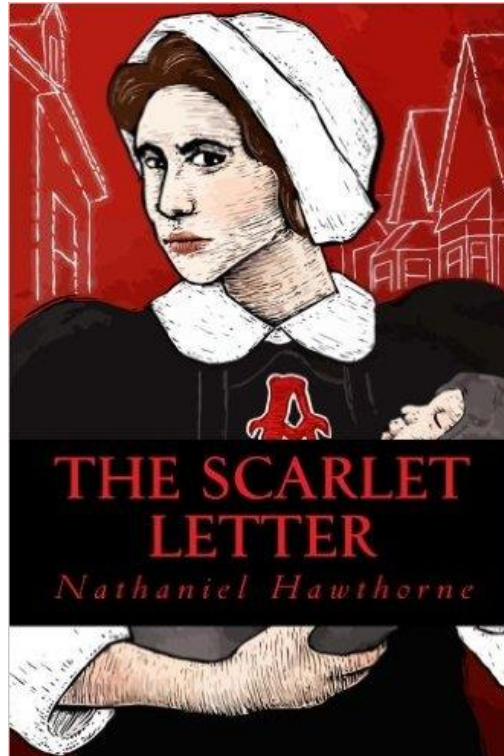
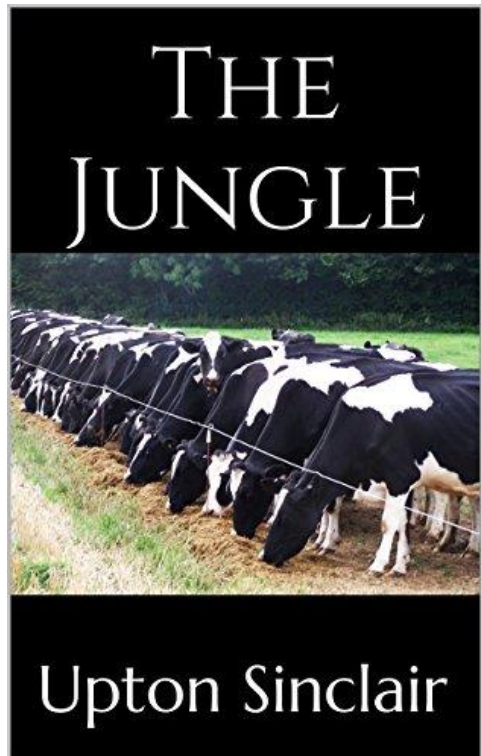
Literary fiction “prompts readers to enter a vibrant discourse with the author and her characters.”

Read Differently

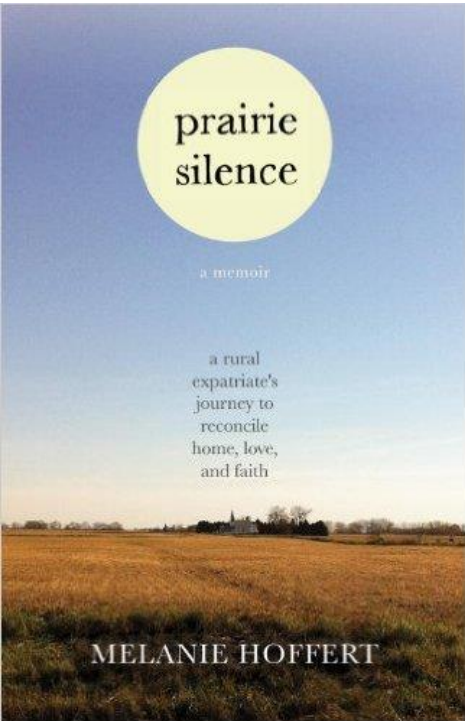
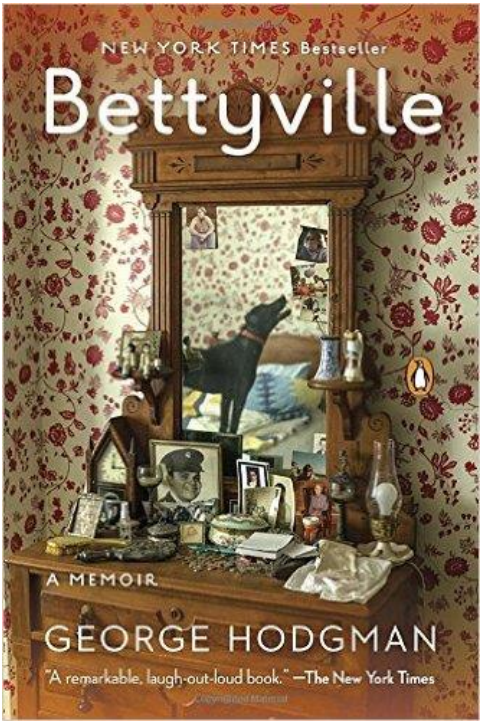
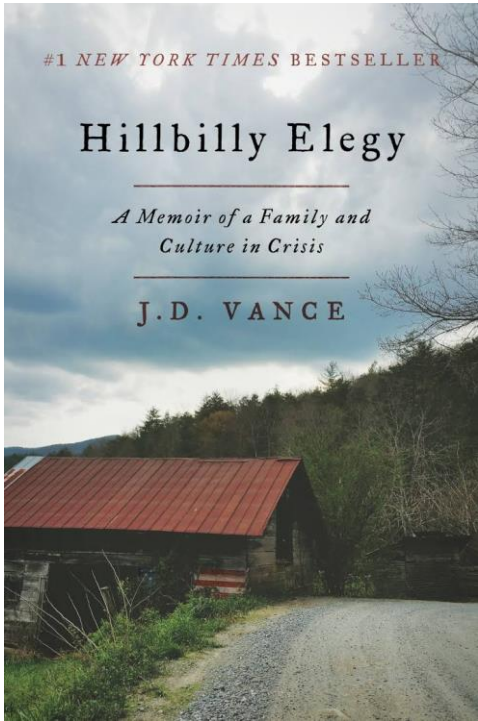


"She taught me to listen to the mystery of the groaning earth and to feel complete in the fulfillment of its time. My soul grew under her careful guidance."

Re-think the Textbook



The Memoir?



Read the book that's not for you



Ferguson Public Library book group

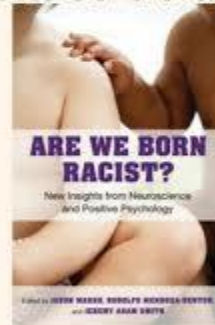
READINGS ON RACE

BOOK CLUB

Please join us to discuss issues surrounding the complex and challenging topic of race. Each month we read a new book and meet for an intelligent, engaging, and honest discussion.

All are welcomed to take part.

November 14 at 6 pm



Are we Born Racist?

by Jason Marsh and Rodolfo Mendoza-Denton

For more information or to reserve a copy of this month's selection, please contact Amy at the library at 314-521-4820.