



Reading as Therapy: What Contemporary Fiction Does for Middle-Class Americans

By Timothy Aubry

Download now

Read Online ➔

Reading as Therapy: What Contemporary Fiction Does for Middle-Class Americans By Timothy Aubry

Why do Americans read contemporary fiction? This question seems simple, but is it? Do Americans read for the purpose of aesthetic appreciation? To satisfy their own insatiable intellectual curiosities? While other forms of media have come to monopolize consumers' leisure time, in the past two decades book clubs have proliferated, Amazon has sponsored thriving online discussions, Oprah Winfrey has inspired millions of viewers to read both contemporary works and classics, and novels have retained their devoted following within middlebrow communities.

In *Reading as Therapy*, Timothy Aubry argues that contemporary fiction serves primarily as a therapeutic tool for lonely, dissatisfied middle-class American readers, one that validates their own private dysfunctions while supporting elusive communities of strangers unified by shared feelings. Aubry persuasively makes the case that contemporary literature's persistent appeal depends upon its capacity to perform a therapeutic function.

Aubry traces the growth and proliferation of psychological concepts focused on the subjective interior within mainstream, middle-class society and the impact this has had on contemporary fiction. The prevailing tendency among academic critics has been to decry the personal emphasis of contemporary fiction as complicit with the rise of a narcissistic culture, the ascendancy of liberal individualism, and the breakdown of public life. *Reading as Therapy*, by contrast, underscores the varied ideological effects that therapeutic culture can foster.

To uncover the many unpredictable ways in which contemporary literature

answers the psychological needs of its readers, Aubry considers several different venues of reader-response—including Oprah’s Book Club and Amazon customer reviews—the promotional strategies of publishing houses, and a variety of contemporary texts, ranging from Khaled Hosseini’s *The Kite Runner* to Anita Shreve’s *The Pilot’s Wife* to David Foster Wallace’s *Infinite Jest*. He concludes that, in the face of an atomistic social landscape, contemporary fiction gives readers a therapeutic vocabulary that both reinforces the private sphere and creates surprising forms of sympathy and solidarity among strangers.

 [Download Reading as Therapy: What Contemporary Fiction Does ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Reading as Therapy: What Contemporary Fiction Do ...pdf](#)

Reading as Therapy: What Contemporary Fiction Does for Middle-Class Americans

By Timothy Aubry

Reading as Therapy: What Contemporary Fiction Does for Middle-Class Americans By Timothy Aubry

Why do Americans read contemporary fiction? This question seems simple, but is it? Do Americans read for the purpose of aesthetic appreciation? To satisfy their own insatiable intellectual curiosities? While other forms of media have come to monopolize consumers' leisure time, in the past two decades book clubs have proliferated, Amazon has sponsored thriving online discussions, Oprah Winfrey has inspired millions of viewers to read both contemporary works and classics, and novels have retained their devoted following within middlebrow communities.

In *Reading as Therapy*, Timothy Aubry argues that contemporary fiction serves primarily as a therapeutic tool for lonely, dissatisfied middle-class American readers, one that validates their own private dysfunctions while supporting elusive communities of strangers unified by shared feelings. Aubry persuasively makes the case that contemporary literature's persistent appeal depends upon its capacity to perform a therapeutic function.

Aubry traces the growth and proliferation of psychological concepts focused on the subjective interior within mainstream, middle-class society and the impact this has had on contemporary fiction. The prevailing tendency among academic critics has been to decry the personal emphasis of contemporary fiction as complicit with the rise of a narcissistic culture, the ascendancy of liberal individualism, and the breakdown of public life. *Reading as Therapy*, by contrast, underscores the varied ideological effects that therapeutic culture can foster.

To uncover the many unpredictable ways in which contemporary literature answers the psychological needs of its readers, Aubry considers several different venues of reader-response—including Oprah's Book Club and Amazon customer reviews—the promotional strategies of publishing houses, and a variety of contemporary texts, ranging from Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* to Anita Shreve's *The Pilot's Wife* to David Foster Wallace's *Infinite Jest*. He concludes that, in the face of an atomistic social landscape, contemporary fiction gives readers a therapeutic vocabulary that both reinforces the private sphere and creates surprising forms of sympathy and solidarity among strangers.

Reading as Therapy: What Contemporary Fiction Does for Middle-Class Americans By Timothy

Aubry Bibliography

- Rank: #1981245 in eBooks
- Published on: 2006-05-01
- Released on: 2006-05-01
- Format: Kindle eBook

 [Download Reading as Therapy: What Contemporary Fiction Does ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Reading as Therapy: What Contemporary Fiction Do ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Reading as Therapy: What Contemporary Fiction Does for Middle-Class Americans By Timothy Aubry

Editorial Review

Review

“Is literature a form of therapy? Should it be? Tim Aubry takes the familiar complaint about literature’s therapeutic uses and patiently unfolds their hidden complexities in this lucid and eloquent book. Combining intellectual generosity with critical acumen, his argument offers fresh insight into contemporary fiction, middlebrow culture, and larger questions of how and why we read.”—Rita Felski, author, *Uses of Literature*

“*Therapy* and the *therapeutic*: as soon as one has laid these loaded terms alongside recent literary history, their explanatory value becomes self-evident, and Tim Aubry deserves credit simply for staging this encounter. And yet, such is the force of his readings of some of the exemplary texts of our therapeutic postmodernity, this initial insight keeps on giving, yielding surprise after surprise. As I approached the end of this highly readable, unpretentiously learned text, I was asking myself if the author hadn’t in fact ‘broken the code’ of contemporary American literature, or at least one of them.”—Mark McGurl, author, *The Program Era*

“This lively and intelligent study makes a timely contribution to a well-worn subfield of American studies: the intellectual defense of middlebrow culture. With a sharp sense of irony, Tim Aubry asks how fiction is

used for therapeutic or self-help purposes by contemporary American readers. The paradox is that part of what distinguishes middlebrow audiences from academics like himself is their respect for literature, but Aubry's own close readings of the works of contemporary writers are always sensitive and nuanced."—Leah Price, author, *The Anthology and the Rise of the Novel*

About the Author

Timothy Aubry is an associate professor of English at Baruch College, where he specializes in twentieth-century American literature, contemporary fiction, modernism, feminism, and popular culture.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Stephanie Rodriguez:

Do you one of people who can't read gratifying if the sentence chained from the straightway, hold on guys this aren't like that. This Reading as Therapy: What Contemporary Fiction Does for Middle-Class Americans book is readable through you who hate the straight word style. You will find the information here are arrange for enjoyable examining experience without leaving actually decrease the knowledge that want to offer to you. The writer regarding Reading as Therapy: What Contemporary Fiction Does for Middle-Class Americans content conveys the idea easily to understand by many people. The printed and e-book are not different in the information but it just different by means of it. So , do you continue to thinking Reading as Therapy: What Contemporary Fiction Does for Middle-Class Americans is not loveable to be your top list reading book?

John Stanley:

Spent a free the perfect time to be fun activity to accomplish! A lot of people spent their spare time with their family, or their very own friends. Usually they doing activity like watching television, gonna beach, or picnic from the park. They actually doing same task every week. Do you feel it? Do you need to something

different to fill your current free time/ holiday? Can be reading a book may be option to fill your totally free time/ holiday. The first thing you ask may be what kinds of e-book that you should read. If you want to consider look for book, may be the e-book untitled Reading as Therapy: What Contemporary Fiction Does for Middle-Class Americans can be fine book to read. May be it can be best activity to you.

Lloyd Lake:

Do you have something that you prefer such as book? The e-book lovers usually prefer to opt for book like comic, brief story and the biggest the first is novel. Now, why not striving Reading as Therapy: What Contemporary Fiction Does for Middle-Class Americans that give your pleasure preference will be satisfied by means of reading this book. Reading habit all over the world can be said as the way for people to know world far better then how they react in the direction of the world. It can't be claimed constantly that reading practice only for the geeky man or woman but for all of you who wants to be success person. So , for every you who want to start reading as your good habit, you may pick Reading as Therapy: What Contemporary Fiction Does for Middle-Class Americans become your personal starter.

Ryan Strausbaugh:

Your reading 6th sense will not betray an individual, why because this Reading as Therapy: What Contemporary Fiction Does for Middle-Class Americans book written by well-known writer whose to say well how to make book that could be understand by anyone who all read the book. Written within good manner for you, dripping every ideas and composing skill only for eliminate your current hunger then you still uncertainty Reading as Therapy: What Contemporary Fiction Does for Middle-Class Americans as good book not merely by the cover but also by content. This is one e-book that can break don't judge book by its handle, so do you still needing a different sixth sense to pick that!? Oh come on your studying sixth sense already told you so why you have to listening to yet another sixth sense.

Download and Read Online Reading as Therapy: What Contemporary Fiction Does for Middle-Class Americans By Timothy Aubry #GXOCI6BMVQ0

Read Reading as Therapy: What Contemporary Fiction Does for Middle-Class Americans By Timothy Aubry for online ebook

Reading as Therapy: What Contemporary Fiction Does for Middle-Class Americans By Timothy Aubry Free PDF d0wnl0ad, audio books, books to read, good books to read, cheap books, good books, online books, books online, book reviews epub, read books online, books to read online, online library, greatbooks to read, PDF best books to read, top books to read Reading as Therapy: What Contemporary Fiction Does for Middle-Class Americans By Timothy Aubry books to read online.

Online Reading as Therapy: What Contemporary Fiction Does for Middle-Class Americans By Timothy Aubry ebook PDF download

Reading as Therapy: What Contemporary Fiction Does for Middle-Class Americans By Timothy Aubry Doc

Reading as Therapy: What Contemporary Fiction Does for Middle-Class Americans By Timothy Aubry Mobipocket

Reading as Therapy: What Contemporary Fiction Does for Middle-Class Americans By Timothy Aubry EPub

GXOCI6BMVQ0: Reading as Therapy: What Contemporary Fiction Does for Middle-Class Americans By Timothy Aubry