

READING AT HOME IN FRANCE

A psycho-sociological look at youth literature, youth and their families

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Abstract: The reading and the readings of young people are at the crossroads of social and cultural mediations in which the school institution and the family share the first role. During decades, work on the reading of the young people distinguished the readings for leisure and the readings for school. Since about fifteen years, this cleavage does not correspond any more to reality. Well before the learning of the reading, the desire of reading takes its source in the exercise of the mother tongue and in the family uses of print. Reading skills come to reinforce it. The acquisition of a reading practice and the construction of a reader behaviour take place at home according to the choices of youth literature generally presented by the primary school and the beginning of secondary school. With the age of the secondary school, the reader builds two different universes of reading. One is composed of texts prescribed by the teachers and the other of readings called "for oneself". Whatever the age and skills, the dynamics of the activity of reading remains fragile. It rests on emotional investments.

Key words: family literacy practices, reading practices, reader behaviour, school literacy practices, young adults

French résumé. [Translation Laurence Pasa]

La lecture et les lectures des jeunes se situent au carrefour de médiations sociales et culturelles dans lesquelles l'institution scolaire et la famille se partagent le premier rôle. Si, pendant des décennies, les tra-

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vaux sur la lecture des jeunes ont distingué les lectures de loisir et les lectures scolaires, depuis une quinzaine d'années, ce clivage ne correspond plus à la réalité. Bien avant l'apprentissage de la lecture, le désir de lire prend sa source dans l'exercice de la langue maternelle et dans les usages familiaux de l'imprimé. Les compétences en lecture viennent le renforcer. L'acquisition d'une pratique de lecture et la construction d'une posture de lecteur s'opèrent à la maison, d'après les choix de littérature de jeunesse présentés le plus souvent par l'école primaire et le collège. À l'âge du lycée, le lecteur construit deux univers différents de lecture: l'un se compose de textes prescrits par les enseignants et l'autre de lectures dites "pour soi". Quel que soient l'âge et les compétences, la dynamique de l'activité de lecture reste fragile et étroitement liée à des investissements affectifs.

Portuguese resumo. [Translation Paulo Feytor-Pinto]

A leitura e as leituras dos jovens encontram-se no cruzamento de mediações sociais e culturais em que a instituição escolar e a família partilham o papel determinante. Durante décadas, o trabalho sobre leitura dos jovens distinguiu as leituras de entretenimento e as leituras escolares. Desde há cerca de 15 anos que esta clivagem já não corresponde à realidade. Muito antes da aprendizagem da leitura, o desejo de ler emerge do exercício da língua materna e dos usos familiares de material impresso. As competências de leitura vêm reforçá-lo. A aquisição de uma prática de leitura e a construção de um comportamento de leitor ocorrem em casa de acordo com as escolhas de literatura juvenil geralmente propostas pela escola primária e nos primeiros anos do ensino secundário. Ao chegar a este nível de ensino, o leitor constrói dois universos de leitura distintos. Um é composto pelos livros prescritos pelo professor e outro pelas leituras "para si próprio". Qualquer que sejam as idades e as competências, a dinâmica da actividade de leitura permanece frágil. Ela baseia-se em investimentos emocionais.

Polish. [Translation Elzbieta Awramiuk]

Czytanie i teksty czytane przez młodych ludzi stanowią wypadkową czynników społecznych i kulturowych, wśród których instytucja szkoły i rodzina odgrywają dominującą rolę. W poprzednich dekadach w pracach poświęconych czytaniu młodych ludzi rozróżniało się czytanie dla przyjemności i czytanie dla szkoły. Od około piętnastu lat ten podział przestał odpowiadać rzeczywistości. Przed rozpoczęciem nauki czytania, pragnienie czytania bierze swe źródło z posługiwania się językiem ojczystym i korzystania z informacji drukowanych przez rodzinę. Umiejętność czytania wzmacnia ten proces. Przyśwajanie nawyków czytelniczych i budowanie postaw czytelniczych ma miejsce w domu na podstawie wyboru młodzieżowej literatury generalnie poznawanej w szkole podstawowej i na początku szkoły średniej. Czytelnik w wieku szkoły średniej buduje dwa różne wszechświaty czytania. Na pierwszy składają się teksty zaordynowane przez nauczycieli, a na drugi – teksty wybierane samodzielnie. Bez względu na wiek i umiejętności, dynamika aktywności czytania pozostaje delikatna. Opiera się na zaangażowaniu emocjonalnym.

Greek. Περίληψη. [Translation Panatoya Papoulia-Tzelepi]

Η αναγνωστική δεξιότητα και τα αναγνώσματα των νέων ευρίσκονται στη συμβολή της κοινωνικής και πολιτισμικής διαμεσολάβησης, στην οποία ο θεσμός του σχολείου και η οικογένεια μοιράζονται τον πρώτο ρόλο. Για δεκαετίες η έρευνα για την ανάγνωση των νέων διαχώριζε τα αναγνώσματα για απόλαυση από τα αναγνώσματα για το σχολείο. Όμως, εδώ και δεκαπέντε χρόνια αυτός ο διαχωρισμός δεν ανταποκρίνεται πλέον στην πραγματικότητα. Πολύ πριν αρχίσει η εκμάθηση της ανάγνωσης, η επιθυμία για ανάγνωση πηγάζει από την χρήση της μητρικής γλώσσας και τη χρήση του έντυπου λόγου από την οικογένεια. Οι αναγνωστικές δεξιότητες έρχονται να την ενισχύσουν. Η κατάρκτηση της αναγνωστικής ικανότητας και η δόμηση των αναγνωστικών συμπεριφορών συντελείται στο σπίτι, σύμφωνα με τις επιλογές βιβλίων για παιδιά, τα οποία συνήθως παρουσιάζονται στο δημοτικό σχολείο και στην αρχή του Γυμνασίου. Στην ηλικία της δευτεροβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης, ο αναγνώστης κατασκευάζει δύο διαφορετικά αναγνωστικά σύμπαντα. Το ένα αποτελείται από κείμενα ορισμένα από τους δασκάλους και το άλλο από αναγνώσματα «για τον εαυτό μου». Όποια και αν είναι η ηλικία ή οι δεξιότητες ανάγνωσης, η δυναμική της παραμένει εύθραυστη, καθώς στηρίζεται σε συναισθηματικές επενδύσεις.

German. Zusammenfassung. [Translation Irene Pieper]

Lesepraxis und Lektüren junger Menschen sind durch gesellschaftliche und kulturelle Vermittlungsprozesse geprägt, die wiederum in erster Linie und gleichermaßen durch die Institution Schule und durch die Familie geprägt sind. Jahrzehntlang unterschieden Arbeiten zum Leseverhalten junger Menschen grund-

sätzlich nach Freizeitlektüre und Schullektüre. Seit etwa 15 Jahren entspricht diese Unterteilung nicht mehr der Realität. Lange vor dem Schriftspracherwerb speist sich die Motivation zum Lesen aus dem Gebrauch der Muttersprache und dem familiären Umgang mit Printmedien. Lesefähigkeiten verstärken diese. Die Aufnahme einer Lesepraxis und die Konstruktion einer Person als Leser geschieht zu Hause in Auseinandersetzung mit der Auswahl von Jugendliteratur, die im allgemeinen durch die Grundschule und die frühe Sekundarschule angeboten wird. In der Sekundarstufe baut der Leser zwei verschiedene Leseuniversen auf. Das eine besteht in Texten, die die Lehrenden vorgeben, das andere in Lektüren „für mich selbst“. Unabhängig von Alter und Lesefähigkeiten bleibt die Leseaktivität veränderlich. Sie beruht auf emotionalem Engagement.

Dutch. Samenvatting. [Translation Tanja Janssen]

Lezen en leesgedrag van jongeren zijn onderhevig aan sociale en culturele bemiddeling waarbij de school en het gezin een centrale rol spelen. Decennia lang werd in onderzoek naar het leesgedrag van jongeren een onderscheid gemaakt naar lezen ter ontspanning en lezen voor school. Sedert ongeveer 15 jaar weerspiegelt deze kloof niet langer de realiteit. Nog voordat kinderen leren lezen, kan een verlangen tot lezen worden opgewekt door het gebruik van de moedertaal en het gebruik van allerlei leesmateriaal binnen het gezin. Leesvaardigheden kunnen vervolgens de leesmotivatie versterken. Het verwerven van een leeshouding en leesgedrag vinden thuis plaats aan de hand van jeugdliteratuur die veelal in het basisonderwijs en aan het begin van het voortgezet onderwijs wordt aangeboden. In het voortgezet onderwijs bouwt de lezer twee verschillende leeswerelden op: een wereld bestaand uit door leraren voorgeschreven teksten en een andere wereld bestaand uit leesmateriaal dat men “voor zichzelf” leest. Ongeacht leeftijd en vaardigheden blijft de leesactiviteit kwetsbaar, berustend op emotionele investeringen.

Reading, that's to say the act of reading, and readings or that which is read are at the crossroads of social and cultural mediation. This mediation can be defined as a way to initiate the act of reading or to involve the reader in texts, both those that have already been read and those that have yet to be read (Privat, & Reuter, 1991).

During childhood and adolescence, social and cultural mediations occur mainly within educational establishments and families. In education, from primary to university, writing is a central part of learning; it is at the heart of the process of defining one's place in society and facilitates citizenship. In order to have an equal chance at integrating into French society, writing is essential for all. Doing well at school and in society is based on mastering language, usually the mother tongue and on the importance of writing (*Chiffres clés de l'enseignement des langues à l'école en Europe*, 2005). The use of writing is not, however, evenly distributed across all families and reading plays different roles in each family.

Since the 1970s, pedagogy has evolved towards using books other than just textbooks, the growing awareness of the relationship between language acquisition and reading inciting teachers to give their pupils youth literature to study. At the same time, documentation and information centres (*les Centres de documentation et d'information – CDI*) are being established in senior (*lycées*) and junior (*collèges*) high schools. Primary schools are also acquiring more libraries/documentation centres (*Bibliothèques-Centres documentaires – BCD*). These new style libraries collate literary resources, documentation and press cuttings. They offer full length texts and access to new communication technologies.

Since 1977 all children have been entitled to secondary education. The majority of this new mass public does not have books at home. School and new municipal libraries do, however, provide them, and supermarket shelves are full of youth literature.

It is within this framework, broadly outlined above, that French youth discover books and reading. They appropriate youth literature. Production and distribution of youth literature follows school growth and demographics, and the buzz around reading. What role do families play in this coming together between young people and youth literature in the different stages of psychological development from child to adolescent? What causes reading to fail for some?

Our proposal relies on two different studies. The first is composed of psychosocial studies, carried out over a period of 25 years (Robine, 2000), of young people in traditional schooling, and those in technical schools because they have not learnt to read successfully and have not done well in French classes. Children, becoming adolescents and young adults, talk about their difficulties in learning to read during their primary schooling and their lack of interest in, or even their disgust at, teaching methods for French and reading books.

Until the beginning of the 1990s, research and sociological studies on reading differentiated quite drastically between reading at school and reading for pleasure, between school textbooks and youth literature read at home. Nowadays, this distinction no longer exists.

The second study comprises observations made by children and adolescents from all socio-cultural backgrounds during psychotherapy, both individual and group (psycho-drama) sessions. In this second study, the majority of young people are having difficulty at school.

The family environment plays a decisive role during the three main stages of development from childhood to adolescence. Reading desire encouraged within the family leads to the progressive development of reading practice and reading position. At the age of senior high school, personal investment in reading can be the turning point in the construction of the self.

1. FAMILY SOURCES OF READING DESIRE

Aspiring to know how to read does not imply wanting to learn how read. A young child sees his parents reading messages and signs in the street. He wants to imitate them without the constraints of learning.

Reading desire comes from using the mother tongue and from the family's use of writing. Schooling becomes a collaboration between the child, the school and the family. If this idyllic situation does indeed exist, the reality is often its opposite.

1.1 *Use of the mother tongue*

Sounds from the mother tongue pre-exist in a child's memory. Learning to read in the mother tongue implies connecting sounds used in the family entourage with the written words in the language. It implies recognising familiar words by ear.

In the presentation of the results of a survey of illiteracy, the National Institute of Statistics (*Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques – INSEE*) highlights three cases where language is a barrier.

- The family speaks the language from their country or region of origin and the child does not come into contact with French until primary school.
- Family members speak the language of their region of origin between themselves but speak to the child in an approximative French learnt at work
- The family's mother tongue is French but they speak a popular form with different syntax and specific vocabulary.

In these three cases, the *gestalt*, the form of the phrase uttered by the family does not resemble the form of the written phrase in the school book used in class or borrowed from the library. Reading has links to language both in its specificity and as a whole, and all language has emotional links. Orality is linked first and foremost to the mother or her substitute within the family cocoon.

For thousands of children, the mother tongue and the language of books and of school are two opposing worlds.

1.2 *Writing in family use*

This can encourage or inhibit reading desire. Family life is both a community of practices and a community of speech. In families with an underprivileged cultural background, books and printed materials are materially lacking. Free press, advertising, a rarely used dictionary may be found in these families, along with a few paper-packs from the adults' own schooling and a cookbook. The child does not see anyone read at home. He is never given a book as a present. All printed material is referred to a 'books'. Bedtime rituals do not include reading or a story told by his mother or father.

Conversations never turn towards the content of a book, and only occasionally to magazines. Television is the family's main leisure activity. Sports are both watched and practised and offer the chance for shared emotion. At a young age the child is initiated into this. Books are not something of value or worth, like other aspects of 'high culture', classical music, theatre, museums etc. These families are not aware of the masses of information broadcast on television and radio about books. Reading is synonymous with schooling for the adults in the family and reminiscent of the necessary acquisition of paperbacks for their unpopular French classes. Many young labourers, those who reject reading, consider this lack of interest in reading to be inherited through the genes and say: "It's fate, at home, no one reads." For a number of young adults who attended school until the age of 19, the act of reading remains a boring exercise in translation. A young pastry chef said: "Reading is cruelty." When, in turn, they become parents, their children are likely to copy the same indifferent behaviours towards reading and academic failure.

It is against such a background of poor use of written language in the family and a poverty of emotion and grammaticality in the family language in general that many children attend their first lessons.

1.3 *Learning how to read*

At infant school or sometimes from kindergarten, children are in regular contact with youth literature. Before learning how to read, many children get to know traditional fairy tales, and illustrated tales appear on video and on television programmes. At home their attention is captivated by the audiovisual. The Little Brown Bear or the Comtesse de Ségur keep watch.

The child learns the words to picture books from the kindergarten teacher's story-telling and follows illustrations. S/he also knows how to tell a story. By playing with books, s/he believes s/he can dominate them. At the start of primary school, the child is then told: "you're big now, you're going to learn how to read." The child starts to realise that books are not so easily dominated. Deciphering them is a slow process and often baffling. S/he finds it hard to understand that learning at school leads to tests and evaluations, to rewards or punishments. On getting home, the child is told to "do your reading." Reading stops play, is restricting and curtails time for sport and television. If the mother does not support her child with school or library books, s/he cannot make progress. If learning is not expected, it cannot be retained. Many parents do not understand that learning to read does not just happen at school. Parents are quick to accuse schools when their failing child has to attend specialised medical centres. When young labourers acknowledge that learning to read was, for them, a painful experience ("terrible," they say), they are demonstrating their lack of understanding in the education process and rejection of their status as pupil.

At home, doing badly at school can cause unhappiness and can lead to being punished. In the family situation, like at school, the relationship between books and reading is therefore one of conflict. And all conflicts trigger feelings of insecurity.

In short, the way in which the family presents books and reading influences the child before s/he has even begun to learn how to read. Parents play a mediating role in reading from the start of school. Despite the gap between the language and values practised at home and the language of books and school, most pupils know how to read by the end of primary school (*cycle 3 de l'école primaire*), largely thanks to the competencies of their teachers. The psychological development of the child follows later.

2. ACQUIRING A READING POSITION

The idea of reading position goes beyond mere attitude because it encompasses a functional goal. Reading position develops gradually from a basis of competencies. Some children develop reading abilities from the age of 7 or 8, others from the age of 12, fewer still never develop any.

The media have paid a great deal of attention to the 80,000 children (14.9%) who have not mastered reading by the start of secondary school or to the 12% of young people (girls and boys) who were considered as having great difficulty with reading during the last military draft (*journée d'appel de la Défense*). These statistics show, however, the progress education is making in France. As the sociologists Baudelot and Establet claimed in 1989: "standards are rising" (Baudelot & Establet, 1989).

The reading position develops as one of a competent or weak reader depending on family attitudes towards preadolescent reading. Reading youth literature encourages engagement in reading and the personal appropriation of texts.

2.1 *Family attitudes towards preadolescent reading*

Four attitudes are apparent:

- 1) Hostility towards reading not related to school. A 22 year-old carer explains: "For my parents, reading is a waste of time. If I read, when I occasionally had a few minutes to myself, it was always in secret. Outside school, I had to help. I wasn't allowed to get my school books out. If it wasn't for study, reading didn't have any purpose at all." Reading distances girls from their traditional social roles.
- 2) Indifference. Parents never think about it. Reading only happens at school. Young people holding a professional school diploma (*brevet d'études professionnelles*) say: "I was never encouraged to read. I simply chose to do sport rather than pick up a book. I don't think it ever occurred to my mother to buy me a book." When asked, parents buy comic books like *Tintin*, *Astérix*, *Pif*.
- 3) An attitude of authoritarian restriction and condescension. Parents react to non-reading in the following way: "You ought to read a book rather than visit your friends." How many children between 10 and 12 are forced to read a specific number of pages from a specific text at a specific time?
 - Parents buy books without giving the preadolescent any choice
 - Parents interfere critically in reading choice: A young farmer complains: "My father was always nagging: read something other than your comics." His father would buy him books. "They were sort of geographical, with animals and all that, but I never read them. Mind you, they had pictures, but they didn't interest me. My mother couldn't really say anything, seeing that she never read anything."

Inventories of young people's bedrooms show the number of utilitarian books bought by parents "to help the preadolescent do well at school" which have never been read.

- 4) Attentiveness to the child's interests. In homes where at least one of the parents read, families become closer emotionally through the medium of the book.

2.2 *Youth literature at home*

The majority of girls and boys between the ages of 9 and 14-15 know the children's literature classics (Douglas, 2003) and are able to cite them in surveys. Differences between social classes are more quantitative than qualitative. When young people from a disadvantaged social background are readers, they read fewer books than those from an advantaged background. The books they read are essentially the same however. The newspapers and magazines read by the two groups are quite different, however.

By the start of secondary school, two parallel networks of reading material coexist at home and in the adolescent's bedroom: the institutional network and the spontaneous network.

The institutional network. Teachers prescribe books from the curriculum. These are compulsory texts to be studied in class. The last survey from the Ministry of Culture shows that pupils reach the end of their compulsory schooling without reading any book in its entirety (Le Goazlou, 2005). Books and documents borrowed from the municipal library or from the school's documentation centre (*CDI*) as well as books chosen by or with the family supplement them. Books from the institutional network have an educational connotation which family attitudes may lessen or reinforce. Reading them can be pleasurable but only when the young reader understands the vocabulary, phraseology, when s/he understands the characters and the episodes, when s/he can differentiate between primary and secondary plots. This is reading with effort. These novels or documentaries can therefore be seen as school interrupting family life (Beaude, Petitjean, & Privat 1996). The institutional network brings with it a large amount of cultural baggage. Names of favourite or loathed authors attract or dissuade when visiting the supermarket bookshelves or watching a television programme.

The spontaneous network. Friends, and purchases made with an adolescent's pocket money, keep this going. This is typically made up of comic books and cartoons. Reading becomes more like a collective game. Texts circulate. Reading a friend's book or comic is like a shared experience. Participating in the spontaneous network shows personal independence in the face of the institution and its constraints. Reading on the computer screen is tantamount to freedom. The family adds to this spontaneous network by providing the adolescent with printed matter not originally meant for him/her.

2.3 *Personal investment and appropriation of texts*

Reading is about generating images, sensations and feelings from a text and through words. It is participating in the emotions translated by the text. Yet there are young people with technical reading ability who are not able to create images in their heads. Their preferences tend towards orality, towards contact with an interlocutor. Entrapped in all that is material and utilitarian, they can only access the essence of literature: the symbolic.

At school age, investing in reading is a process of identification. The most prized collections portray a hero, often of the same age as the reader. Series literature, whether detective fiction or not, whether fantasy or realistic, plays on the attraction of the reader to the hero and his/her gang. The reader projects dreams, worries and plans onto the hero and the gang. The hero allows the reader to take on other roles, to change personality without risk and to try out different types of behaviour.

In short, despite the unprecedented mobilisation of teachers, the family atmosphere which either creates interest or indifference towards reading nevertheless

dominates when considering how young people engage in reading. Reading habits do not depend directly on the level of income, nor the level of education in the family. But according to the sociologist François de Singly, youngsters aged 12 whose mother has a degree are more likely to be readers than those whose mother only has a certificate of general education (*certificat de formation générale*) (de Singly, 1989, 1993).

As sociologists note, in making literature central to the reading process, the educational establishment has, in part, turned youth literature away from the role it used to play in leisure time (Lahire, 2004: 656).

3. CONSTRUCTION OF THE SELF

Even though they read less than their predecessors, the majority of today's adolescents from the end of junior high to senior high school know how to invest emotionally in reading. Their most prized leisure time is spent meeting friends and listening to music. As they try to shed past habits, their new autonomy becomes quite contradictory. For example, adolescents who used to visit their local library regularly stop going in order to leave their childhood behind. Others, however, get involved in the new public media centres which act as a place for cultural exchange, where they can meet friends (Petit, Balley, & Ladeffroux, 1996) and where they are free from school and family constraints; information centres free from restrictions and family taboos.

Just as the adolescent's body starts to change and the attitude of his/her entourage also shifts, the adolescent undergoes an identity crisis. It is difficult to move from the status of child to the status of adult. The family gives out mixed messages. No longer being sure of status creates a lot of worry: the adolescent is concerned about losing identity, about the future, about death. S/he becomes more or less aware of the need to construct a new identity. What the student requires from a text begins to change. S/he chooses books and magazines. S/he overturns teachers' advice to follow the group choices made with friends.

Let us now look at how the student changes reading behaviour according to the requirements of educational and personal motivations.

3.1 Educational motivations

Whatever the chosen path towards traditional qualifications or apprenticeship (*baccalauréat classique ou professionnel*), reading texts selected by the high school are always intellectual, designed to help students pass their examinations. In the study, *And yet they read... (Et pourtant ils lisent...)* (Baudelot, Cartier, & Detrez, 1999), pupils say they are resigned to being bored in class and to reading compulsory texts which will help them do well at school. They quote Voltaire, Flaubert, Zola, Balzac, etc.. At home they read analytically, considering characters, ideas, themes and well known hypotheses, which allows them to produce scholarly discourse on these masterpieces of classical literature. But at the same time, these students know that being a reader of such books is no longer sufficient for doing well at school, nor for doing well in French classes. For them, school work and related reading takes up too much

time and stops them from reading. Because reading means reading for oneself, for one's own reasons.

3.2 *Personal motivations*

The erudite texts imposed by school are counterbalanced by the personal texts chosen by the adolescent. Categorising these texts is not always clear cut. Reading for personal reasons, driven by the social dynamic shared with the adolescent's group of friends, can be classified into two groups as follows:

- Authors recommended by school teachers a few years previously. This shows that the books teachers suggest at junior high school are often too advanced for students and can only be read a few years later at senior high school.
- Best-sellers which the school establishment does not recognise, novels promoted by the media, titles which adults have made successful in bookstores. Stephen King is often cited by students: he is prolific and all his books have been adapted for the cinema

The adolescent student reads books at home which answer the most intimate questions (for example about violence or sexuality) which cannot be put to family. Non-readers, often technical apprentices, look for the same answers to the same questions but in magazines for adolescents or in the popular press. The reader wants texts which are at an appropriate cultural level, which have accessible vocabulary and syntax and which make reading pleasant; a relaxation which is rarely found in school books.

3.3 *Self-discovery through reading*

The adolescent can discover him/herself through the stories of others, through recognition in the characters, and constructs a personal image through theirs. S/he feels less isolated. Whatever the level of the text, material can be collected for building a close-knit world based on the social relationships described in novels and documentaries. The interaction between characters can be projected onto the reader's own environment. S/he can be freed from the real world through living the happy or sad resolutions of the plot, but nevertheless can tell an interviewer that these texts, in particular detective or romantic fiction, are quite simply that: fiction. Reading can be an attempt to understand the world and find one's place in it, to become a citizen (Petit, 2002).

To summarise, the variety of personal and school-based reasons for reading are revealed in the range of texts read and in the abundance of the interpretations which can be drawn from them, both by the body of adolescent readers and by the individual irrespective of gender. Each person's identity is constructed simultaneously by works of art and by the serial products of mass communication, by *Literature* and by sub-literature, by musical or artistic masterpieces and by industrial images, by high culture and by popular culture. Each work's own appeal changes according to the receiver.

4. CONCLUSION

From the outset of learning to the onset of adulthood, all reading, whatever its motivation, is actually a personal discovery. All writing triggers effects which challenge or question the reader's feelings.

The reader's feelings create the meaning of the texts (Robine, 2001). And these feelings are shaped by the family environment, with school acting as mediator between family, pupil and youth literature.

The same socio-emotional context can create different attitudes towards reading. Reading is always a fragile thing. A child or an adolescent can suddenly abandon reading at any stage of development, or begin to read to the benefit of emotional wellbeing.

Secondary schooling for all, mixed schooling, new educational grants and the increasing number of book offers and targeted press have not abolished social inequality as far as reading is concerned. Following family practices results in adherence to family values as well as a recognition of emotions. Reading or not reading at home remains the foundation for reading and many other forms of culture.

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