Exploring the digital heritage of reading: the READ-IT project

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Funding agencies

CULTURAL HERITAGE
A CHALLENGE FOR EUROPE

ANR
Arts & Humanities Research Council

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION,
YOUTH AND SPORTS

NWO
Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research
Supported by

DARIAH-EU

CLARIN
Common Language Resources and Technology Infrastructure
Research questions about reading

Knowledge has significantly increased about the « what », the « when » and the « where »

Two resisting questions still remain:

Why?
How?
What kind of transaction does there exist between a reader and a text?

What role does the environment play in this transaction?

Is it possible to list and model the emotions caused by reading?

Have these emotions changed throughout time and space in Europe?

Is it possible to sketch out the portrait of the « European reader »?
Considering the act of reading as an individual experience
A problem:

Reading is a mental activity that leaves no direct trace!
Reading experience
Reading situation

• Experience (report) // Situation (representation)
• Readers and texts (what) // circumstances (how)

Reading experience/situation = testimony (trace) that provides at least one piece of information regarding the what and one piece of information regarding the how
Reading experience/situation

WHAT

HOW
2 directions

• Identifying and describing reading experiences/situations.

• Connecting reading experiences/situations with their context.
Sources

- Textual sources
- Images: paintings, photographs, drawings, engravings ...
- Audio: recordings (transcribed)
- Digital-born content: blogs, social networks
Sources

- Public domain or CC-like
- Already digitized
- FAIR principles compliant
- Languages: English, French, German, Dutch, Italian, Czech
- 18th – 21st century
richness to the story that excited one and made one feel, ooh, there are more things to explore, and I think one found that throughout the whole of that sequence, *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, to discover that John Mandeville had written that this was the, the, later, to discover that these were stories that people in the Middle Ages, he was playing around with stories that already existed. I, I, for me that’s, that’s always been an interest and an, an important part of what makes a book really good.

*And you said you were reading that in Italy, was it?*

Yes.

*On holiday with family.*

With family, yes.

*Em, and you read it a chapter at a time. And do you remember anything about the actual book, the cover, the smell, anything?*

No, I don’t remember. It would have been, it would have been the absolute, ah, you, it would have been the hardback edition with [Pauline Baines 00.10.27] because, as far as I know, this would have been ’57, ’58, I don’t know, I can’t remember when it was published, but it must have been very soon after, so I mean, I’d have to look up and find out, but as far as I know, this, it would be very close to its original publication date and paperbacks didn’t really exist, so, not as such, so, well, a little bit, but it would be, it would have been the hardback edition.

*And do you remember how it made you feel, reading it? Excited or ... ?*

Yes, you were opening a door, just to go into another world, which I always have loved. I, I mean that’s, I wasn’t terribly keen on the present day [laughter] generally, but it’s this, just completely going into another world and living ...
What
richness to the story that excited one and made one feel, ooh, there are more things to explore, and I think one found that throughout the whole of that sequence, The Voyage of the Dawn Treader, to discover that John Mandeville had written that this was the, the, later, to discover that these were stories that people in the Middle Ages, he was playing around with stories that already existed. I, I, for me that's, that's always been an interest and an, an important part of what makes a book really good.

And you said you were reading that in Italy, was it?

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Where
On holiday with family.

How
With family, yes.

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When
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Results
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Source: Mary Cassatt, Nurse reading to a little girl, 1895, NY, Metropolitan Museum of Art
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Standards involved

- Semantic web (RDF, SPARQL, SKOS)
- TEI
- FRBRoo
And cultural institutions?

Strong need for curated digital collections

- Populating the database
- Training the machine
And cultural institutions?

What we plan to offer:

- Possibility to annotate and enrich digital collections
- Possibility to create special collections about reading
- APIs and methodology replicable and transposable to other esthetical experiences
Thank you for your attention.

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