Negotiating Contexts for Reading:

Becoming *'Someone Who Reads'*

Chelsea Swift

Doctor of Philosophy

The University of York

Department of Education

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Abstract

In the current English education context, it is not enough just to be able to read; what young people read is what sets them apart as being more - or less - literate, cultured or educated than someone else. It is often specific texts, their literary value, and whether or not they represent certain groups, which are central to debates played out through education policy, research, and in the media. This focus on the text is responsible for persistent unsuccessful attempts to redistribute cultural capital and level the playing field through education, failing to take into account the different social and cultural resources young people bring to the classroom. It has led to a deficit model of reading in education which places blame on the individual for failing to understand and appreciate these texts and authors in particular ways, rather than on the school for failing to value their reading lives within the education context.

In this research, I shift this lens onto readers themselves, the act of reading, and the contexts in which it takes place. It is concerned with young people's development of a 'reading habitus'; the extent to which they view reading as being 'for the likes of them' and their ways of 'being' a reader. I explore how young people negotiate the various ways of reading and being a reader they are exposed to as they move between and within fields, in order to develop a sense for themselves of what counts as reading and what it means to be a reader. Although this research is not concerned with academic outcomes, reading for pleasure is a strong predictor of these outcomes. This, in addition to the social and emotional benefits of reading for pleasure, and the important role that identity plays in motivation and engagement, highlights the importance of researching reading identity in cultural and educational contexts which privilege particular types of reader. In order to generate data, 96 young people (aged 13- 14) completed a whole class critical incident charting activity, mapping out their 'reading journeys'. 28 of these then participated in a series of 2 semi-structured interviews. My findings challenge the broader neoliberal agenda in education and its promises of social mobility through access to a culture of which certain young people have been deprived. Placing emphasis on readers and reading rather than on specific texts, acknowledging the role of the social in acts of reading and learning, challenges the dominant model of reading, and the inequalities it maintains. It demonstrates not only the rich reading lives that many of the young people lead outside of school, but how the current deficit model serves to make these lives invisible, not only in education policy and in the classroom, but often to the young people themselves.

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Declaration

I declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. No part of it has been submitted for previous examination at The University of York, or any other institution, nor has any part it been previously published. I understand that this thesis will be made available to the public.

Introduction

In the current English education context, it is not enough just to be able to read, *what* you read is what sets you apart as being more - or less - literate, cultured or educated than someone else. This is largely due to critics such as Arnold (1993/1875), Leavis (1930), Bloom (1996) and Hirsch (2002), whose belief in the inherent superiority of particular kinds of literature, and its power to instil particular values and morals, is still reflected in much educational and political discourse today. In fact, the situation appears to have worsened over time. As Sarah Olive (2013) demonstrates, previous education secretary (2010-2014) Michael Gove's favoured authors have been dead for an average of around 206 years, whereas those cited by Leavis (1972) were still writing shortly before the publication of *The Great Tradition* in 1948. The current education secretary, Nicky Morgan (2015a), has continued much of Gove's work, also citing "Jane Austin, Charles Dickens and Emily Bronte" as authors from the canon which all young people should be exposed to. Morgan continues to place emphasis on 'British values', viewing cultural and arts education as a means of instilling these values, a part of every child's birth right as citizens of this 'island' (Morgan, 2015b). Each refer to England as an island, detached and free from the influence of other nations and their cultures (Gove, 2010; Morgan, 2015b). There are no blurred or overlapping boundaries in this English, or England. This narrative is part of a broader agenda in English education policy, based on a narrow conception of 'national identity', which seeks to promote 'British values'. This is also evident in the Prevent strategy (DfE, 2015), which seeks to target extremism through schools by "promoting British values (p.5)", defining extremism as "vocal or active opposition to (p.5)" to these values. This neglects the fact that, considering the climate of increased globalisation and the multicultural nature of many classrooms in England, we are an island only in a very loose sense of the term. Our borders are becoming increasingly blurred and our 'island story' is ever more complex than such discourse surrounding reading, literature and, culture more broadly, accounts for. This evidences the failure of educational policy to keep up, not only with developments in educational and social research, but with the variety of social and cultural experiences that young people bring to the classroom.

Further to this, the belief in the intrinsic value of particular texts and authors, in addition to the belief that meaning and value are waiting in texts to be 'unveiled' by the reader, leads to what Milner (2005) describes as the "fetishization of the object (p.6)". These texts are then revered as intrinsically and universally valuable and, consequently, worthy of serious consideration. Such a view serves to mask the arbitrary nature of the value ascribed to particular texts and authors, and does not account for the contexts in which texts are used and produced, or the variety of social and cultural experiences an individual brings with them to the text. This leads to a deficit model of

reading which places blame on the individual for failing to understand and appreciate particular texts and authors in particular ways, rather than on the school for failing to value their reading lives within the education context. As Ward and Connolly (2008) note, "the hegemonic logic has become bound up with a discourse of common sense assumptions about literature's moral power that mask some of its more troubling implications (p.301)". I argue in chapter 3 that this is a form of symbolic violence in that it is the imposition of a "cultural arbitrary by an arbitrary power" (Bourdieu and Passeron, 2000: 5), leading certain kinds of reading to be valued over others. This is particularly concerning, considering that fact that, as Yandell (2012) points out, from particular conceptions of reading, follow particular conceptions of the reader, leading individuals to be positioned as 'good' and 'bad' readers. The logic of this deficit model, also a consequence of a neoliberal agenda in education more broadly, is responsible for persistent attempts to 'level the playing field' through education (Gee, 2004; Coles, 2013; Loh, 2013: Duckworth, 2015). For example, as Yandell (2015) notes, this logic can be seen in the National Curriculum, which promises to provide access to knowledge despite an individual's social, cultural and economic backgrounds, rather than valuing these backgrounds within the educational context. However, previous research has problematized such attempts to redistribute cultural capital through education, as they fail to take into account of different social and cultural resources, including different literacies, that individuals bring with them to the classroom, and the meaning that cultural resources hold for individuals, meaning that individuals are not equally equipped to mobilise this cultural capital (Lareau, 2000; Lareau, 2003; Neuman & Celano, 2012; Coles, 2013). In this research, I argue that debates over what is read serve as little more than a distraction from the bigger problem. There is a need to shift the lens from a focus on specific texts to broader questions of what reading is and who it is for, paying closer attention to and valuing the role that reading plays in the context of young people's everyday lives.

The need for this shift in focus is also supported by recent studies which challenge the perception that young people do not read for pleasure, particularly when a broader view of what counts as reading has been employed. For example, a NLT trust survey of young people's reading found an increase in the number of people who enjoyed reading, read outside of class and thought that reading was 'cool' (Clark, 2014). However, this still only accounts for around half of the 8-18 year olds surveyed. The survey demonstrated the variety of material which young people read. This included manuals, websites, non-fiction and song lyrics. An earlier study by Hopper (2005), which also surveyed young people's reading habits, demonstrates that once the measure of reading is broadened to include the variety of texts which young people interact with, such as "magazines, newspapers and the internet (p.116)", older pupils' (Year 10) level of reading was not behind that of younger pupils but "in line with the general trend (p.116)". This suggests that the amount that young people read does not decrease as they get older, rather the nature of the texts they are engaging with simply changes. Further support against a deficit view of young people's reading lives

is provided by a survey carried out in the USA by Zickuhr and Rainie (2014), which suggests millennials (young people aged between 16 and 29) were more likely to have read a book in the last 12 months than their elders. Therefore, the picture may not be as bleak as the one often painted in research and the media. However, the surveys outlined here rarely provide reasons as to why individuals make certain text choices, nor do they provide opportunity for the individual to reflect on the function of these reading practices in their daily lives. The focus of my research is on the meaning that such choices hold for the individual, and how they are made in relation to particular social, cultural and historical circumstances, rather than the nature of their reading choices. I employ a critical, situated literacy framework, which views reading as a social practice, inseparable from the personal, social, cultural and political contexts in which it occurs and in which texts are produced (Street, 1984; Gee, 2004; Bartlett, 2007). I foreground literacy practices, which I understand as "social practices in which literacy plays a role" (Barton and Hamilton, 2000: 7). Further to this, I also draw on Bourdieu's theoretical toolkit – in particular habitus and its relation to the field, in order to "expand the notion of cultural models and augment(s) our understanding of social practices (p.20)", expand social understandings of literacy by "focusing on the production of literacy identities in relation to social structures and cultural worlds" (Bartlett & Holland, 2002: 12). Other than the approach to reading - and to literacy more broadly, which informs this research, I deliberately did not provide more specific definitions of what I meant by 'reading' and 'readers', leaving these open in an attempt to avoid placing a restrictive framework on participant's responses in the generation and analysis of data.

Although this research does not focus primarily on academic outcomes, reading for pleasure is a strong predictor of such outcomes and, therefore, has important implications for dealing with educational and social inequality. For example, recent research by Sullivan and Brown (2015) suggests that those who read for pleasure do better at school than those who do not and that reading for pleasure is more important for cognitive development than parents' level of education. There is also a body of research which suggests that reading for pleasure is the form of cultural capital which has the greatest impact on school success, likely due to the fact that it harnesses skills which are more directly transferable in the school context than things like visiting museums and art galleries, or playing a musical instrument (Crook, 1997). However, disadvantaged students are also more likely to have experiences of reading that do not necessarily align with those advocated in the educational context, impacting on their academic achievement and, in turn, their future prospects (Smagorinsky, 2001; Ward & Connolly, 2008; Coles, 2013; Turvey & Yandell, 2013). This, combined with the social and emotional benefits to be gained from reading for pleasure, particularly fiction (Richardson & Eccles, 2007; Topping, Samuels & Paul, 2008; Mar, Oatley & Peterson, 2009; Sullivan & Brown, 2015) and the important role that identity plays in engagement and motivation (McCaslin, 2009; Faircloth, 2012), highlights the importance of researching reading

identity in a cultural and educational context which privileges particular types of reader. As this study demonstrates, reading must be viewed as *more* than an academic activity, and young people must first see themselves as readers, in order to reap its academic benefits. Consequently, this research is concerned with the ways in which young people draw on past and present experiences of reading in order to develop an identity as a reader, of which there is currently little understanding in the UK context. This is as opposed to much previous research which is concerned with issues of representation and identification, developing an identity through reading. For example, developing a sense of oneself as a female (Moss, 1989; Rogers Cherland, 1994), an individual from a working class background (Coles, 2013), a member of a cultural minority (Shah, 2014), or a national identity (Ward and Connolly, 2008).

The aim of this research is to explore young people's development of reading identity as they are exposed to various ways of reading and of being a reader. This is with a view to gaining a greater understanding of the impact of dominant discourses surrounding readers and reading on the ways in which individuals value themselves as readers and their own reading lives, and the extent to which they feel that reading is 'for the likes of them'. I aim to explore how young people negotiate the various ways of reading and being a reader they are exposed to as they move between and within fields in order to develop a sense for themselves of what counts as reading and what it means to be a reader. I am also interested in the impact that this has, not only on whether they identify as a reader and view reading as an appropriate pastime, but on their ways of being a reader - their 'reading habitus'. This is with a view to developing an understanding of how all stakeholders can best foster more positive reading identities. The following research questions were investigated in order to fulfil these aims:

- How does an individual negotiate the various conceptualisations of reading and the reader as they move between and within fields, in order to develop perceptions of:

    o What reading is and what 'counts' as reading?

    o What it means to be a reader?

- What impact does this have on the extent to which an individual identifies as 'someone who reads', and on their 'reading habitus'?

These research questions are a product of both my own reading journey, and my academic studies in English and Education. Therefore, it is important to outline here this personal narrative in order to demonstrate how it has shaped the research. In order to do this, I have completed my own critical incident chart (Figure 1). Like the young people who took part in this study, I charted the events and experiences which I feel have been critical in directing my reading journey and which provided the inspiration for this research. As is evidenced below, reading has always been a big part of my

life. Reading, and education more broadly, has consistently provided me with an escape from what was, at times, a chaotic and difficult home life. My reading was both shaped by, and served to shape, my future aspirations; my sense of who I was and who I could be. I would argue that it was because of this that I made the decision to study A-levels and go to university, something which came as a surprise to my family. It has been central to my personal, academic, and professional trajectory. During my undergraduate studies, exposure to the theoretical tools of Pierre Bourdieu, debates surrounding the curriculum and issues of education and social justice, my taken for granted assumptions regarding literary and cultural value, and the nature of reading were challenged. These ideas not only gave me a better understanding of my own position in education and in society, my feelings and experiences, but also of the ways in which education could serve a vehicle for both social reproduction and social mobility. It is also important to note here, as I explain how I am situated in relation to this research, that I was a member of the same community that the young people in the study are a part of, and attended school A from 2005-2009, studying for my GCSEs and A Levels there. I reflect on the methodological implications of this in Chapter 3.

In the first chapter of this thesis, I discuss the existing literature concerned with young people's reading, outlining the historical, political and empirical context, and providing a rationale for this research and highlighting the gaps in the literature. I start this chapter by demonstrating how notions of what it is to be a reader and what it is to be cultured have taken a normative turn since the late 19th Century and the introduction of compulsory education. I then discuss how this has translated into the school context and the impact that it has had on young people in schools. I then discuss the numerous surveys which have been conducted into young people's non-school reading for pleasure, which creates a crisis account of the state of young people's reading in England. However, I argue that when a broader, more qualitative view of young people reading is employed, which moves away from the dominant 'school' model, it becomes apparent that there is, in fact, no such crisis. Rather, this deficit model serves to exclude, silence, and devalue much of what is important in the reading lives of young people. I conclude this chapter by making a case for the importance of reading for pleasure and seeing oneself as a reader, drawing on research which highlights the importance of connecting identity with learning which provides a rational for this research.

Only read to / with mother occasionally and when very young (under 5)

Mum used to buy lots of books from the car boot sale, but don't remember seeing her read them. Used to say she didn't have time.

Had a 'reading friend' in early years of primary school. Old people used to come in and read with those who were struggling - helped me improve. (aged 6-7)

Liked to write my own stories and give them to others to read (parents / siblings / teachers) inspired by my reading. Had a friend who also did the same, used to swap.

Oldest of 5 - always known as the quiet / boring / geeky one - still am! Used to get told off for spending too much time inside reading / drawing / writing

Used to read to younger sister - Roald Dahl, Alice in Wonderland. As she got older, we'd each read our own book in bed together. Felt grown up / like I was teaching her. Liked to give her books that I'd read when younger. (11 onwards)

Discovered Louise Rennison books - Probably too young for them. Tried to read them in secret, embarr -assed / worried I'd get told off as titles included "Angus, thongs & Full Frontal Snogging". Friends later started reading them, used to use the slang / phrases when talking to each other. (aged 10)

Used the school library everyday after school - reading & doing homework. Provided a quiet place to work.

Studied poetry at GCSE and was inspired to write my own & read it in my spare time. A way of escaping & dealing with problems, but no longer liked to share writing - became more private.

Now feel guilty about reading (fiction) for pleasure. Always other things I could / should be reading or doing. Only an 'occasional' reader now. Mostly read online - news + articles, social media. - both interest & enjoyment, also career.

Had large books of nursery rhymes - beautiful illustrations. Read them to myself over and over. (aged 5/6)

First 'novels' read by myself - Jaqueline Wilson. Saved up my pocket money to buy them when a new one came out. Friends also used to read them, would talk about them & share books.

Mum took me to sign up for a library card as she couldn't afford to keep buying me books. Frustrated that I was reading them so quickly. "you can't be taking anything in" Library was important for accessing books & exploring my interests. (age 10)

Used to take my sister into town to meet her mum. Would be given the bus fare by my mum and allowed to go to the library on my own for doing it (aged 11)

From the age of 14, wanted to be a writer or an English teacher - always had inspiring and encouraging English teachers.

Moved house aged 14 just before the summer holidays - didn't have friends yet and home life was difficult. Joined local library, taking 4/5 books out a week. Important means of escape.

Started a new school, became very self-conscious. Dreaded reading out loud / answering questions in front of the class. Preferred writing and reading to myself.

Started A-levels & began taking reading more 'seriously' and reading the 'classics'. - thought it would prepare me well for English at university / my future career. Identifying as well-read / intelligent.

Went on to study English & Education at University. Challenged my views on cultural and literary value & the nature of reading.

Figure 1: Researcher's Reading Journey

In the second chapter, I discuss the implications of these conceptualisations of reading and the reader for achieving social justice, particularly through education. I have attempted to develop a coherent framework for approaching the particular task of this research, generating a holistic view of the development of reading identity as experienced by the individual whilst also maintaining sight of its relationship to broader social structures and notions of cultural value. Such a task demands a theoretical framework for understanding the differential development of reading identities and dispositions towards reading, alongside the processes of reading and of social and cultural reproduction. As mentioned previously, in order to achieve this, I draw on the Bourdieusian conceptual tools of habitus, field, and capitals, in addition to applying a view of reading as a social, situated practice. This theoretical framework was central to the methodological approach taken in this research, and the methods used to generate and analyse data.

With this theoretical framework in mind, in chapter three I outline and discuss the methodology and methods adopted in an attempt to answer my research questions. I highlight the theoretical and practical issues which arose during the research process and how I overcame them, examining the strengths and weaknesses of the methodological decisions I have made throughout. This research was conducted in two state secondary schools in the East Yorkshire area. Two year 9 classes in each school took part in the research; two mixed ability in one school and one high and one low ability in the other, where pupils had already started the English GCSE course and had recently sat a mock exam. In order to generate the data necessary to answer my research questions, I employed a whole class critical incident charting activity. This required the young people who took part to map, along a river or a road, the events and experiences which they felt had been critical in directing their reading journey. They were then asked to 'rate' themselves according to how much they enjoyed reading, how much they read in their spare time and how good they felt they were at reading. I then selected a number of those who completed this first stage and who had already agreed to be interviewed, to take part in a series of two semi-structured interviews. Each stage of this research was designed to enable me to approach issues in a way that was accessible to participants, in light of their age and, in certain cases, their reading ability. These methods functioned as prompts for thinking about these issues, facilitating their guidance of the discussion. I collected a total of 96 critical incident charts from the two schools and conducted interviews with 28 young people. Data was analysed using thematic analysis. I end this chapter by reflecting on issues of power and voice which have arisen throughout the various stages of this research, issues which merit particular attention when working with young people - who are often denied both.

In the next three chapters, I present my analysis and findings. These chapters reflect the three fields which my participants most commonly identified as influencing them as readers; the family environment, the peer group and the school or educational context. I discuss the dominant conceptions of reading which characterise each of these fields, the relationships between them,

and the ways in which the young people made sense of them. I maintain a view of the individual as existing at the intersection of these fields and consequently, placing emphasis that the meaning events and experiences hold for the individuals and opportunities this provides for 'seeming' and 'feeling' like a reader (Bartlett, 2007). Each of these chapters finishes with a discussion, which draws the theoretical and practical implications of my analysis and situates it within the relevant literature. I conclude with a summary of my findings, discussing the contributions they make to existing theoretical and empirical scholarship. I then provide recommendations for stakeholders and discuss the limitations of this study, outlining directions for future research.

1. Reading in Education, Culture and Society

As stated in the introduction to this thesis, this research is concerned with young people's negotiation of the various contexts for reading which they navigate in their daily lives. The purpose of this chapter is to outline the cultural, historical and political background for this research, which constitutes the legitimate lens through which certain texts, ways of reading and, consequently, certain readers are valued over others. As Duckworth and Ade-Ojo (2015) note, literacy "over the ages has been the embodiment of a trinity: perception/theory, policy and practice (p. 1)" which have, at times, failed to keep pace with each other. As I demonstrate in this chapter, this also applies to understandings of reading, and cultural value more broadly. Policy and practice in education have failed to keep up with new literacies and understandings of reading, in addition to social and cultural changes which have taken place since the conception of English as a subject taught in schools. I begin by discussing broader conceptions of cultural and literary value and the consequent understandings of what it means to be a cultural, literate and educated individual. In the second section I discuss how this has shaped education policy in relation to reading in schools and the aims of subject English more broadly, often used as a vehicle for redistributing cultural capital in the current context of neoliberal approaches to education policy (Gee, 2004; Coles, 2013; Loh, 2013: Duckworth, 2015). I then consider how this translates into the classroom, problematizing education policy which attempts to redistribute cultural capital by discussing research which explores young people's responses to particular texts and authors in the classroom. Further to this, I demonstrate how viewing young people's non-school reading practices through this dominant model creates a crisis account of young people's reading, one which does not take into account the richness of their reading lives, arguing for a broader, more qualitative view of young people's reading, which this research aims to provide. I conclude this chapter with a discussion of research which demonstrates the importance of reading, and of connecting identity with learning, providing a rationale for the study of reading identity.

1.1. The Cultural and Literate Individual

In this section, I discuss the narrowing of conceptions of culture and literariness, and what it consequently means to be a cultural and literate individual, in England which have occurred over the course of the last century and a quarter. I demonstrate how notions of what it is to be a reader and what it is to be a cultured individual have taken a normative turn since the late 19th Century. Cultural and literary critics have become increasingly concerned with *what* is being read, as opposed to the act of reading itself. It is from this period, as Williams (1976) points out, that we can trace the "specialisation of *literature* to certain kinds of writing […] understood as well written books of an *imaginative* or *creative* kind (p.152)." Prior to this, from the 14th to the 18th Century,

the term literature referred to "both an ability to read and a condition of being well read" (Williams, 1976: 151). Beliefs regarding what it is to be literate, or a 'good' reader, have become entangled with arbitrary notions of literary value and the English literary heritage. The narrowing of the definition of what it is to be well-read is demonstrated in the revisions made between the two editions of William's (1976) *Keywords: a Vocabulary of Culture and Society.* In the first edition, discussion of this subject comes under the broad heading of 'literature', whereas, in the second it comes under 'canon' (Bennett et al, 2005), signifying a closing up of the definition of literature to certain kinds of texts, familiarity with which is a necessary a condition of being 'literate'. This is as opposed to an appreciation of the variety of complex tasks to which and individual's literacy skills are put to work on a daily basis and is surprising, considering the increase in the variety of reading materials and mediums during this same period. This specialisation of literature to specific kinds of texts is a product of a more general turn in the 20th Century towards the use of the term 'culture' in a normative rather than a descriptive sense. Eagleton (2000) suggests that there has been a slimming down of culture during this period to be inclusive only of "'imaginative' pursuits such as music, painting and literature [...] activities confined to a tiny proportion of men and women (p.16)''. Consequently, culture becomes the preserve of an elite minority who value and have access to these activities. This creates a particular image of what a 'cultured person' might look like and excludes and devalues those whose cultural lives do not match up with this concept and are, therefore, considered culturally deficient. He proposed that this concept of culture is symptomatic of a "historical crisis" in which "learning and the arts are the sole surviving enclaves of creativity (p.21)", the arts an embodiment of the "fine living (p.22)" of which civilisation is supposedly now lacking, ringing "less and less plausible as a value term (p.11)". Thus, culture functions as both a critique of and the solution to society's problems, becoming a vision of all that society and the individual should be aiming for (Eagleton, 2000). As will be demonstrated in this section, particular forms of literature have been ascribed not only with cultural, but with moral, spiritual and educational value, which is then passed on to the individual who is able to read and appreciate them.

This is largely due to cultural and literary critics such as Arnold, Leavis, Bloom and Hirsch who, although writing at different points during the late 19th/ early 20th century, were united in their contempt for an emerging popular literary culture and championed these narrower notions of what constitutes literature and the well-read individual. In England, Arnold and Leavis shared a belief in the morally and spiritually educative power of the English literary canon, and a desire to preserve tradition and Englishness. Writing during a period of political and religious unrest, Arnold (1993/1875) expressed in his cultural and literary criticism a deep dissatisfaction with what he saw as the damaging effects of popular culture on modern civilisation. One of the first to acknowledge the social function of literature (Baldick, 1983), he advocated moral and spiritual power of poetry

and the unifying effect of a literature in a common language. It is no surprise then, that Arnold was also one of the first to champion the teaching of literature in schools. As Baldick (1983) suggests, he was "looking above all for an example to lead the multitude now that priesthoods and aristocracies were losing power (p.34)." His vision of education took on a quasi-religious role in attempt to compensate for religious uncertainty in the face of scientific progress. Through recommendations made in his numerous reports on education in England, written in his role as school inspector, Arnold attempted to bring English to the forefront of the educational project. He advocated the importance of literature over other subjects and the memorisation and recitation of great works of English poetry. This was due to a belief in the benefits of studying poetry and the unifying effect of the study of a literature in a common language during a period of industrialisation and of political and religious unrest (Arnold, 1880). His vision was for a subject English fit for a national system of education, encouraging an appreciation of English cultural heritage and fostering personal growth.

This contempt for popular culture is also echoed in Leavis' (1930) *Mass Civilisation and Minority Culture,* in which he laments the fact that 'culture' and 'civilisation' have, in his view, become the antithesis of each other. The title of his essay highlights the contrast between a common, damaged and damaging, civilisation and an exclusive and revered culture which now only a small 'cultured' minority are capable of appreciating (Eagleton, 2000). He proposes that "the average cultivated person of a century ago was a very much more competent reader than his modern representative (p.18)". Interestingly, Leavis (1930) attributes this shift to an increase in the amount of distractions available in the 20th Century, suggesting that the greater variety of cultural material available has resulted in a situation where "the modern is exposed to a concourse of signals so bewildering in their variety and number that, unless he is especially gifted or especially favoured, he can hardly begin to discriminate (p.18-19)". Consequently, it is the task of this minority, who are literate in the elite culture and able to appreciate and distinguish it from the lesser mass culture, to "keep alive the subtlest and most perishable parts of tradition" and maintain cultural standards. Following this, in *The Great Tradition (1948)* Leavis presented a criteria for literature which may be considered valuable and, therefore, worthy of inclusion within an elite 'minority culture.' He distinguishes between both great and ordinary authors, according both spatial and temporal universality to those he deems 'great' authors, and suggests that they speak to us more today than those authors from our own time. Leavis suggested that good literature transcends social, cultural and temporal barriers, naturally initiating the appropriate response from the reader. Much like Arnold before him, the criteria he sets out for inclusion in such a canon are largely subjective and based on his own value judgements. In making these claims of universality, both fail to acknowledge the varying and changing contexts in which these texts will be received, and the variety of responses they may provoke, both positive and negative. Interestingly though,

these assertions regarding the power of literature are simultaneously underpinned by beliefs in the social function of reading, albeit one which is centred on the text and the meaning that is waiting to be unveiled, as opposed to contexts in which it used and produced.

E.D. Hirsch (1976, 1987, 2002) and Harold Bloom (1996), writing in the United States, highlight the fact that these ideas regarding literature cross international boundaries. England is not unique in its veneration of an elite literary culture. In his *New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy* (Hirsch, 2002) and in his earlier work such as *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know* (Hirsch, 1987), Hirsch provides a prescription for the culturally literate individual. He defines cultural literacy as possessing the "basic information needed to thrive in the modern world" (Hirsch, 1987: xiii) and, in his dictionary (Hirsch, 2002), he explicitly outlines the knowledge which the individual should possess in order to meet this criteria. It is interesting to note that there are two chapters relating to literature; "Literature in English" and "World Literature, Philosophy and Religion". The fact that these are not simply included under the broad heading of 'literature' creates a sense of 'otherness' with respect to literature from other cultures, physically and symbolically separating the two. Moreover, including 'world literature' in a chapter alongside philosophy and religion implies a lack of significance or 'usefulness' with respect to literature in English, it almost appears to be an afterthought. This places values on a specific kind of literature, with the very 'Englishness' of certain texts contributing to this. Regarding education, Hirsch (1987) suggested that American children, particularly those from minority cultures who are not already well versed in this prescribed culture, were being short changed by schools who failed to provide them with core cultural knowledge. This is due to the failure of schools to provide these children with the information they are missing at an early age in order to become culturally literate and, in turn, develop important literacy skills. He viewed enculturation into the 'national way of life' as the aim of schooling, enabling the individual to function as a part of the dominant culture. Failure on the part of the schools to achieve this aim means that the divide between demographic groups widens as students move beyond the basic skills of reading and are increasingly required to draw on various finds of knowledge in order to extract meaning from texts. He suggests that learning to read is much more than a set of skills, as is often presumed in the educational context, a view which he implies is counterintuitive to reducing inequality and producing literate individuals. Hirsch (1987) proposes that "every text, even the most elementary, implies information that it takes for granted and doesn't explain" and that "knowing such information is *the* decisive skill of reading (p.112)." This is closely linked to Hirsch's theory of reading and interpretation, which he divides into 'meaning' and 'significance'. He suggested that texts can interpreted on one of two levels, at the level of "the whole verbal meaning of a text" (meaning), and with regards to "it's significance in relation to a larger context" (significance) (Hirsch, 1976:2). He maintains that meaning is static and does not change over time, including "the affects and values that are correlative to such content (p.8)",

however, the significance of a given text may be influenced by the social and historical circumstances of the individual. It follows from this then that the meaning of a text is not dependent on the individual reader, mediated by their various and varying social and cultural experiences, and that interpretive knowledge is possible. According to Hirsch (1976), meaning resides within the text, waiting to be unveiled by reader, who must draw on their own funds of knowledge to achieve this. In short, anyone can access and appreciate a text, regardless of their social and cultural backgrounds, providing they acquire the knowledge needed to decode the text. This view of reading is challenged by the findings of this research, and by other research which views reading as social, situated practice, as I discuss in chapter 2 of this thesis.

Bloom (1996) similarly dismissed the importance of temporal and spatial contexts on the reception and appreciation of texts from the established canon of literature, arguing against ideological, political and historical readings of literature. He outlines a criteria of aesthetic value for inclusion, suggesting that "one breaks into the canon only by aesthetic strength", included in this criteria is; "mastery of figurative language, originality, cognitive power, knowledge, exuberance of diction" (Bloom, 1996: 29). He defines the canon as "what has been preserved out of what has been written (p.17)." These subjective criteria of literary value echo those put forward by Leavis and, to an extent, Arnold, suggesting that good literature speaks for itself, transcending social, cultural and temporal barriers. Meaning originates in the text, which is in a position of authority in the reader-text relationship, and will naturally initiate the appropriate response in the reader. Bloom (1996) differs from Arnold, Leavis and Hirsch in that he makes no claims to universality, acknowledging that not everyone will appreciate the aesthetic value of these texts. He argues that the 'western canon' is the preserve of an elite who are able to appreciate its aesthetic value, suggesting that only a select few have the capacity to become "highly individual readers and writers (p.17)" and that teachers of literature should focus their efforts on these select few. Those who do not subscribe to these notions of value and ways of reading and who, therefore, lack that ability become an accomplished reader of literature in Bloom's sense and are "amenable to a politicized curriculum, can be abandoned to it (p.17)." They are seen as a lost cause as aesthetic value "cannot be conveyed to those who are incapable of grasping its sensations and perceptions (p.17)." He blames the working classes for their lack of willingness to embrace this culture, suggesting that they are at fault rather than the concept of literary value he advocates. In his defence of the 'western canon', Bloom (1996) argues that it is not the place of literature to address social and cultural ills, stating that "whatever the western canon is, it is not a programme for social salvation (p.29)" and that attempts to open up the canon and to foster more inclusive notions of literary and cultural value are "destroying all intellectual, aesthetic standards in the humanities and social sciences, in the name of social justice (p.35)." Unlike Hirsch, Bloom did not view the study of literature, or education in a more general sense, as a means of redistributing cultural capital and reducing inequalities, nor did

he propose that it was their task to do so. With the exception of Bloom (1996), who is open regarding exclusionary nature of his notions of literary value, it can be said that many of the theories of literary and cultural value I discussed here are making excuses for their own elitism. They attempt to cover up the arbitrariness of their claims regarding such value by intellectualising and, therefore, naturalising them, justifying their infliction with claims of its power to achieve social justice through redistributing cultural capital. Interestingly, Hirsch's ideas regarding education, reading and literacy have made their way across the Atlantic and have been championed by British politicians such as Michael Gove, previous Secretary of Education, and Nick Gibb, Minister for schools (Gove, 2013a; BBC, 2012). His knowledge based approach to reading, and education more generally, echoes much educational policy and discourse in England which treats education, in particular the National Curriculum, as a means of redistributing cultural capital. This is particularly evident in the case of subject English and the teaching of literature, with the prescription of specific authors, texts and genres in order to ensure certain groups are provided with access to elite cultural knowledge of which they are deprived, as I demonstrate in the following section.

1.2. Reading and Education Policy

In this section I will discuss the impact that these dominant conceptions of reading and literariness have had on education policy, specifically that which concerns secondary subject English. Debates in this area have consistently centred on what is being read, as opposed to the act of reading itself, the understanding of which is often taken for granted as unproblematically occurring between the individual and the text. As Milner (2005) suggests, subject English is "essentially and centrally a matter of valuation (p.6)." In other words, the selection of subject matter in English Literature is based on value judgements regarding which texts are worthy of classroom study and there is an absence of an objective, unambiguous criteria for such selection. As Milner (2005) suggests, teachers in history cannot exercise such judgements regarding which periods in history they teach. Out of the two constituent disciplines of subject English, English Language and English Literature, the latter provides the greatest source of debate regarding content. However, despite its ambiguity, the criteria for inclusion in this literary canon and, therefore, in national and school curriculums, has become so ingrained in our perception of literature that it has taken on what Milner (2005) describes as the "quasi-objectivity of what might be termed a pseudo-fact (p.6)." This distinguishing between different kinds of written text, between canonical literature and popular fiction, has become naturalised through educational policy which provides official criteria for determining who is validated and who is not.

This distinction between popular and 'high' culture, discussed in the previous section, may in part be attributed to an increasing concern from the late 19th Century for the education of the

masses. Much educational reform from 1870 to the late 1890s was aimed at increasing provision and access to education, signalling the commencement of a journey towards a national system of compulsory education for all. This meant that more people were able to master the basic skills of literacy and access the written word. There was, however, still much variation in the length and quality of the education received by certain groups in society. This disparity can be seen in other educational policy and practice throughout the 20th Century, such as the tripartite system, where individuals received vastly different types of education depending on which type of school they were selected for at the age of 11, the subsequent failure of its comprehensivisation and the continued exclusivity of private education. With regards to English specifically, as Mathieson (1975) notes, despite that fact that it was around the turn of the century that it began to be taken seriously as an academic subject, in the universities, public schools and grammar schools, the study of English was still largely rejected due to a belief in "the superior humanism of the classics and partly because of the vernacular's despised association with the working-class education (p.17)" and the utilitarian approach to the subject in these working-class institutions. This was a hangover from the fact that, previously, the study of English "existed simply as instruction in reading and writing" (Mathieson, 1975: 17), a means of giving working class children access to the bible. Consequently, there was continued reluctance on the part of public schools and universities to include English in their curriculum and the continued presence of classics as a superior alternative meant that English remained a low status subject studied mainly by the working classes (Mathieson, 1975). Such social and cultural positioning is also reflected in more subtle discourse surrounding reading and literature in the current National Curriculum (DfE, 2014a), which has significant consequences for what it is be considered literate or 'well-read' and who reading is for. As Richards (2011) notes, there has been a shift since the humble beginnings of subject English from English vs. Classics to the canon vs. popular culture. Therefore, the distinction between various groups in society; educated and uneducated, cultured and uncultured, has been maintained. It is not enough simply to be able to read and write. Newer, increasingly subtler ways of maintaining these distinctions now dominate, advocating the same model of culture and reading despite movements such as cultural studies and media studies.

The subject has increased greatly in importance during this period, gaining much respect as a core subject in the current National Curriculum. It is now also one of only 6 subjects which pupils are required to study at KS4 (aged 14-16), gaining at least a grade C in each, in order to achieve the English Baccalaureate (DfE, 2014b). This is a measure, introduced in 2013, used to assess the performance of the school rather than the individual child. It encourages greater attention to be focused on this group of subjects which are more highly regarded than others by regulating bodies such as Ofsted, whom the school must remain accountable to. The increased importance placed on subject English, in particular the study of a literature in a common language,

has inevitably also resulted in the increased politicisation of the subject, as was made particularly evident by the media uproar surrounding the omission of American texts and authors such as Arthur Miller, John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* and Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* from the KS4 National Curriculum in 2014 (Kennedy, 2014; Gove, 2014). Ward and Connolly (2008) describe a similar reaction to the last review of the national curriculum in 2007, with "extensive coverage of the 'heritage' novels on school's lists, and newspapers proclaiming the lists of authors 'every teenager should read (*The Independent, 2007)* (p.294)". As they explain, "there has long been a reactionary quality among press and public where literature is concerned (p.294)," in addition to English being the subject receiving most interference by politicians. Such intense debates are a product of the tendency, where education is concerned, for everyone to believe that they are an expert. Everyone has been through the system, or has younger siblings and children currently going through it and, therefore, they develop a clear idea of how they feel things *should* be done. This is particularly true where subject English is concerned, with English being the language most commonly spoken in the UK, meaning that everyone can claim a certain level of expertise regarding the subject's content and pedagogy (Flemming and Stevens, 1998).

The study of English in secondary schools has evolved over the past century in various attempts to meet the changing needs of society and consequent aims of education. Its history is relatively short and very little progress has been made since the late 19th Century in providing an English suited to the diverse needs of a national system of education. This is despite persistent attempts to frame it within a social justice agenda and the fact that it has consistently been part of a wider social and educational mission. For example, Newbolt's (1921) English was not only designed to "meet the requirements of a liberal education" but would also meet the "needs of business, the professions and public services", placing emphasis on the importance of English throughout the curriculum. This was also due to wider concerns regarding the "high level of illiteracy amongst conscripts" during WWI, compared to their European counterparts. Baldick (1983) suggests that the Newbolt report was part of a wider project to improve the overall quality of culture and education during the post-war period. He quotes Lloyd George, then Liberal Prime Minister, who stated that the German schools were both "our most formidable competitors in business and our most terrible opponents in war", suggesting that the war had illustrated the importance of an effective national system of education in the global economic race. Similarly, the Bullock (1975) report into the teaching of English in England, entitled *A Language for Life,* was a product of concerns regarding educational standards, with the perception amongst politicians during the 1970s that "schools were failing to produce a literate and compliant workforce" (Tomlinson, 2005: 27). The blame for this was placed on progressive, non-selective approaches to education. Tomlinson (2005) describes how increased importance was, once again, placed on education due to social and economic change and the greater need for global competitiveness and

national unity during yet another 'crisis of national identity'. It was due to the perceived deficiencies in the current system in meeting these needs that the Bullock (1975) report was commissioned, with a committee appointed by Thatcher in 1972. This report presented a vison of English that was sensitive to the social and cultural diversity of the nation, with emphasis on mutual understanding and acceptance. The author states that "no child should be expected to cast off the language and culture of the home as he crosses the school threshold, and the curriculum should reflect those aspects of his life". Surprisingly, it was this the same government who shortly after this set in motion plans for the National Curriculum, following the Education Reform Act in 1988. Their stated intention was not only to improve standards but also to ensure continuity and coherence, ensuring that all pupils received a broad education in a variety of subjects *regardless* of their social or cultural backgrounds (DES, 1987).

Despite a move towards a more skills-focused, or what Brian Cox (1991) would describe as 'adult needs', approach within the overall aims of subject English, this focus on 'Englishness', the English literary heritage and its benefits for the individual have remained consistent. For example, the Newbolt (1921) conception of a subject for English is essentially founded on the same belief in the uniting and civilising power of 'great' works of English literature expressed by Arnold (1880) over 40 years earlier, with an emphasis on "fine poetry" and "the literature and history of our nation". The language employed to describe texts in the Bullock (1975) report towards the end of the century has a similarly exclusive effect, with references to "good quality fiction", "good, modern children's literature" and "good, imaginative literature". Emphasis is also placed on texts which are "of sufficient substance and quality to merit serious consideration" and "high quality" texts from "the English literary heritage", in both Cox's (1989) original and in subsequent versions of the National Curriculum (2007), providing lists of suggested authors considered 'appropriate' for meeting the aims of literary study. Elliott (2014) outlines three aims of this focus on the English Literary Heritage, alluded to in political discourse since the conception of English as subject to be taught in schools; fostering a sense of national unity, providing a moral education and proving pupils with the cultural capital they are entitled to as citizens of this 'island'. As Olive (2013) points out, this continued focus on Englishness and on the inherent value of certain works is unsurprising, considering Cox's ties with Leavis. As an ex-pupil of his, this '"elationship establishes a direct link between Leavis' tuition and the contents of the curriculum document", with Leavis serving as a prime example of "the influence of the values of cultural critics in determining, or provoking lively debate around the value of literature in education long after their ideas have been superseded in academia" (Olive, 2013). The use of the positive in these documents also implies the presence of a negative, highlighting the divide between 'good' and 'bad' literature. Such language suggests that that there are certain ideal 'texts' or types of text more worthy of study and creates the image of an ideal, fully developed reader as someone who is able to understand and distinguish these texts

from other, inferior forms of literature. It begs the question; what is 'good quality' literature and who decides? Moreover, this privileging of certain kinds of literature necessitates the exclusion of aspects of the popular fiction and popular modern culture which may be of great importance to pupils and which demands much of their literary skill on a daily basis, indicative of a more general hierarchy between high art and popular culture.

This social function of English is still evidenced in the most recent version of the KS4 National Curriculum for English (DfE, 2014b), implemented in 2015. Its authors claim that the subject has a "pre-eminent place in education and in society" and that "through reading in particular, pupils have the chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually", emphasising the particular benefits offered by literary texts. Consequently, those who do not develop the ability to be able to use these skills "fluently and confidently are effectively disenfranchised" (DfE, 2014b), excluded from fully participating in the social and cultural life of the nation. As Yandell and Brady (2016) notes, the most recent version of the national curriculum (DfE, 2014a), more so than any of the previous versions, "promotes an English (or sometimes British) literary heritage and the virtues of Standard English (p.45)".This focus on Englishness and literary heritage is part of a broader emphasis on British values in education, as outlined in 'Prevent', a strategy which aims to counter radicalisation and extremism – defines as opposition to these values - through education (DfE, 2015). Shah (2014) also suggests that this places "English above voices that are less English (p.216)". This is reminiscent of the culturally, morally and socially educative power attributed to the study of a literature in a common language by Arnold and Leavis. It implies a deficit view where those who are not fluent in the dominant culture are lacking, putting them at a disadvantage. Thus, the purpose of English becomes recovering this deficit and providing these individuals with what they have been deprived. Shah (2014) proposes that it should be language itself, in the various shapes and forms it takes in people's lives, rather than any specific language, which is at the centre of both education and society. This view is inclusive of the diversity of all that constitutes what it is to be 'English' in England today, rather than expecting individuals to subscribe to a narrow, often ill informed, conception of what this is. However, the criteria for inclusion in the subject English curriculum remain ambiguous and saturated in subjective notions of cultural value, a tendency which has been carried forward with the most recent review of the National Curriculum (DfE, 2014b), due to be implemented in 2015. For example, one aim of the English Programme of study for KS4 is for pupils to "read and appreciate the depth and power of the English literary heritage". This is in addition to developing an ability to "understand and critically evaluate texts" (DfE, 2014b). These two overarching aims are somewhat in contention, as there appears to be pre-determined ways of understanding and appreciating texts from the English literary heritage. In order to achieve the first aim, pupils must appropriately value the texts that they encounter, becoming enlightened to and benefiting from the positive qualities intrinsic to these works. This

leaves little room for pupils to 'critically evaluate' in any way other than that which will lead them to the pre-approved conclusions regarding the impact of these texts. This leads to the situation I described in the previous section of this chapter, which Milner (2005) terms the "festishization of the object", with value being viewed as inherent to the text rather than a product of the valuing process, placing blame on the valuer if he/ she fails to arrive at the appropriate conclusions. The scope of what is included under 'English literary heritage' and, therefore, worthy of appreciation, in this most recent version of the curriculum includes 'works from the 19th, 20th and 21st Century' and 'poetry since 1789, including representative Romantic Poetry' (DfE, 2014b). Pupils must also study at least one play by Shakespeare at this stage. Therefore, in addition to the literary heritage that pupils must learn to appreciate, the category of 'English Literary Heritage' is also reduced to particular kinds of texts, with an absence of any reference to multicultural literature (removed from a previous draft of the document) and an overemphasis on pre-1900 texts. It is not clear here whether or where literature from other cultures is presumed to be included under these various headings.

However, on examination of speeches by Michael Gove, who was education secretary at the time, we can see that a focus on 'Englishness' and 'British values' is intended by government bodies. For example, in a speech given by Michael Gove (2010) at the Conservative Party Conference around the same time that the most recent review of the curriculum was announced, urges that *"the great tradition of our literature - Dryden, Pope, Swift, Byron, Keats, Shelley, Austen, Dickens and Hardy - should be at the heart of school life"* and has stressed the importance of engaging young people with "our island story", revealing his intentions to place both at the heart of the new curriculum (Gove, 2010). The largely pre-20th Century, white male authors he cites a particular picture of what he perceives this 'island story' to be. The current education secretary, Nicky Morgan (2015a; 2015b), has continued much of what Gove started. Morgan (2015b) continues to place emphasis on British values, viewing cultural and arts education as a means of instilling these values, a part of every child's birth right as citizens of this 'island'. Each refer to England as an island, detached and free from the influence of other nations and their cultures. There are no blurred or overlapping boundaries in this English, or England. This neglects the fact that, considering the climate of increased globalisation and the multicultural nature of many classrooms in England, we are an island only in a very lose sense of the term. Our borders are becoming increasingly blurred and our 'island story' ever more complex than such discourse surrounding literature and, culture more broadly, accounts for. This neglects the fact that, considering the climate of increased globalisation and the multicultural nature of many classrooms in England, we are an island only in a very lose sense of the term. Our borders are becoming increasingly blurred and our 'island story' ever more complex than such documents account for. Kress (1995) outlines the need to rethink the notion of nation-state, or 'island', in an era of "radical

globalisation of finance, transport, culture, communication, the media and production (p.vii)". He maintains that the curriculum should create individuals equipped to both face the future and to be responsible for creating that future, central to which is the ability to deal with both change and difference. It is debatable whether the most recent version of the National Curriculum is likely to achieve this. In a more recent speech, Gove (2013b) provides an answer to his title question; *What Does it Mean to be an Educated Person?* He makes explicit the intentions of the new National Curriculum, which he labels 'an attempt to address the failure- over generations- to ensure the children know the story of our islands.' Once more, he evokes the image of England as an island, detached and free from the influence of other nations and their cultures. There are no blurred or overlapping boundaries in Gove's English, or England. He begins this speech by posing the question 'you come home to find your 17 year old daughter engrossed in a book. Which would delight you more- if it were *Twilight* or *Middlemarch*?' (Gove, 2013b). Gove claims that the current curriculum is not challenging enough and that we should expect more from young people. He compares various high and low cultural objects and activities, inviting the reader (or listener) to make a distinction between who, implying that certain texts and cultural objects are of more value and more worthy of young people's attention. These texts then come to be synonymous with 'rigor' and 'quality' in education- markers of what it is to be a truly *educated* person. In keeping with this logic, anyone who does not appreciate these texts is necessarily an *uneducated* person, and they are held responsible for their own failure.

This model of deficit is also evident in the Darren Henley's (2012) review of Cultural Education, which presents culture as a prescribed body of knowledge which can be acquired and which is often lacking from the lives of disadvantaged pupils, rather than that which the individual experiences in the context of their everyday lives (Coles, 2013). His rationale for a focus on culture in education is threefold. Firstly, it will have educational benefits for children, increasing their cultural knowledge, skills and understanding. It will also have benefits for both the creative and cultural industries and the wider economy due the quality of workforce such an education is likely to produce. Finally, Henley proposes that improving cultural education, in turn increasing understanding and awareness of our cultural heritage, will have wider social benefits. It is based on the assumption that the school is the most important site of cultural education, providing pupils access to that which they would not usually encounter and validation of the cultural capital they accumulate through the award of various qualifications. Henley (2012) proposes a cultural passport, which children would take with them throughout their school career, keeping a record of their cultural achievements and experiences. However, he does also advocate the importance of cultural subjects other than English and History, which are often the main subject of Gove's (2010, 2013) speeches relating to issues of cultural capital. The reports also remains relatively descriptive in relation to literature, avoiding the specification of specific texts, authors or time periods. It can,

therefore, be argued that Henley (2012), despite his treatment of culture as a body of knowledge, does provide a more inclusive conceptualisation of what it is to be cultured than is currently available. However, there has been little evidence of Henley's proposals being carried out in practice. For example, the introduction of the English Baccalaureate (DfE, 2014a), and its constituent subjects, is in direct opposition to Henley's proposal to move cultural education beyond literature and history. Further to this, the recent Culture White Paper (Department for Culture Media and Sport, 2016) not only treats culture as a body of knowledge that can be acquired, but also presents a normative, deficit model of culture which discusses those who do not participate as though they not possess a culture of their own, much less one that has value. With 30 mentions of 'Shakespeare' and 149 mentions of 'heritage' throughout the 72 page document, it is clear that only a very specific version of culture counts according to the writers of the report. Emphasis is placed on providing access for all to a high culture, despite their social and cultural background, rather than valuing these cultures are part of diversity of what, in reality, has come to constitute 'British culture'. Their assertion that they "want everyone regardless of background to have the opportunity to experience culture (p.23)", neglects the cultural lives of those who do not subscribe to this dominant model and leave no space for them to be valued.

This deficit model, based on the naturalisation of notions of cultural and literary value can be described as what Bourdieu and Passeron (2000) term 'symbolic violence', which is 'the imposition of a cultural arbitrary by an arbitrary power (p.5).' It is the 'misrecognition' of the arbitrariness of cultural value which allows it to go unquestioned and, therefore, the current social and cultural relations of power are maintained as they viewed as part of the natural order of things. This results in the maintenance of the Cartesian myth of "innate taste owing nothing to the constraints of apprenticeship because wholly given at birth transmutes the determinisms capable of producing both determined choices and ignorance of that determination into the free choices of primal free will" (Bourdieu and Passeron, 2000: 38). Notions of literary and cultural value and, consequently, of what it is be a literate or cultured person, are naturalised which, in turn, provides justification for the devaluing of popular or 'mass' culture and the resulting social and cultural divides. Moreover, placing emphasis on the intrinsic value of the literary text and other forms of elite culture leads to what Milner (2005) describes as the "fetishization of the object (p.6)". This is the belief that value lies intrinsically in the cultural objects themselves rather than in the valuing process and, therefore, it is the 'valuer' who is at fault if he/ she fails to fully appreciate it. Following from this is an 'autonomous' model of reading as existing solely 'in heads', context free, in which literacies – such as that of high culture- and their 'intrinsic' values can be unproblematically passed on to others (Street, 1984; Gee, 2004). In this research, I demonstrates that shifting this lens from what is being read, on to reading practices and the meaning they hold for individuals, and their connections to broader social and cultural structures, demonstrates the complex interactions which

occur when young people read and the richness of their reading lives- both in and out of school. As Yandell and Brady (2015) note, "the reading that is actually accomplished by teenagers, in school and outside, online and in print, bears little relation to the caricature of deprived adolescents that is presented by culturally conservative politician and media commentators (p.118)". As I discuss in the final section of this chapter, taking a broader, more inclusive view of reading challenges this crisis account, propagated through media and policy discourse, of young people's reading and their cultural participation more broadly. I argue that attempts to redistribute cultural capital within the 'social justice' agenda which continues to frame much subject English education policy, without accounting for individual's backgrounds and identities, do little more than reinforce educational and social inequality.

1.3. Reading in the Classroom

As Milner (2005) discusses, it is the conceptions of literary and cultural value outlined in discussed in the previous sections which spring to mind for most English teachers when considering literature that is suitable for classroom study and it is through this 'English Literature' that most "Anglophone countries mostly learn about literature (p.3)." From this follows pre-determined notions of what constitutes reading and what it is to be a reader, which pupils must then use to judge their own literary and cultural lives. However, it is also important to note here that, as Elliott (2014) suggests, "in England, the rhetoric is more powerful than the actuality so far," with many teachers now dismissing notions of literary heritage approach in English despite their continued prevalence in political discourse. For example, in research by Kress et al (2005), teachers in one of the participating schools stressed the need to "relate texts to the representational forms that inform the life-world of students", defining culture in the most general sense of the term as in opposition to "dominant English culture and Christian religion (p.148)". Therefore, their selection of texts for classroom study was based on the particular social, cultural and historical circumstances of their pupils. Such teachers view the classroom as "a site of exchange rather than indoctrination" (Ward and Connolly, 2008: 304), advocating an inclusive, multicultural approach to the teaching of English. Such an approach requires descriptive, non-value laden view of culture and literature, or least an acknowledgment and interrogation of the value laden, socially constructed nature of these phenomena. Although, in the current context of high stakes testing and accountability, it is questionable how far this is possible in practice. These studies also do not take into the account the perspectives of the young people and the plurality of meanings that these practices hold for them. Nevertheless, it is important to be cautious when making claims regarding the impact of policy, acknowledging the role of the teacher and of other contexts for reading in mediating their influence on pupils. In doing so, one would be falling into the same trap as those responsible for deficit view

of reading, failing to take into account to resources and experiences both teachers and young people bring to the classroom.

That is not to say that such discourse does not make its way into the classroom, impacting on the individual pupil and their perceptions of what constitutes reading and being a reader. As Ward and Connolly (2008) argue, hegemonic conceptions of literature and literary value are often given currency in the classroom by claims that all have a 'right' to access what Arnold (1993/ 1875) would describe as "the best that has been thought and said (p.190)." They warn of the dangers of prescribed reading lists in the National Curriculum, suggesting that it may lead to the positioning of the classroom "as outside everyday experience where something other, rather than immediate called Englishness is encountered and fostered"(Ward and Connolly, 2008: 304). Such arguments are supported by research by Coles (2013), who maintains that conceptions of culture, such as those found in Government policy such as the National Curriculum (DfE, 2014a), the Henley (2012) review, and the more recent *Culture White Paper* (2016) discussed previously, which present it as a body of knowledge which can be acquired and which is often absent from the lives of disadvantaged children, generates a discourse of deficit. It places emphasis on what is lacking from the cultural lives of pupils rather than embracing the rich and varied cultural experiences and values that they bring to the classroom. Indeed, Gove (2013b) goes so far as to claim that those who advocate popular culture and the appreciation of difference are making excuses for the failure of certain groups and patronising young people by undermining their ability. This is what Coles (2013) terms the 'Great Books' approach to the National Curriculum which views access to a shared 'cultural heritage' as every child's birth right, with the obligation to study authors such as Shakespeare and other canonical literature a means of redistributing such cultural capital and levelling the playing field, correcting these deficiencies. However, Coles (2013) demonstrates that this often had the reverse effect of placing greater emphasis on educational and social inequalities and reinforcing the cultural barriers it alleges to maintain. Coles' (2013) discussions of studying Shakespeare with secondary school students highlights that fact that the cultural and intellectual value of these authors holds "a firm place in the consciousness of the students (p.57)", with the ability to engage with Shakespeare viewed as a possible measure of an individual's intelligence. However, this had varying impact on pupil's perceptions of their own abilities and on their perception of studying Shakespeare. Those whose own cultural lives did not match this official version of culture expressing a lack of confidence in their ability to understand and engage with the authors work and were also less enthusiastic about doing so, viewing Shakespeare as the preserve of "boffins", "posh people" or "old-fashioned people" (Coles, 2013: 61). Approaching the curriculum in this way, which naturalises a particular way of being a reader, sends a damaging message to pupils regarding the validity of their own reading lives. Reading comes to be viewed as something that is the preserve of a particular group of people and 'not for the likes of them'. As I mentioned previously, I aim to

explore this issue further, also taking in to account the impact of other contexts for reading on pupils' sense of what reading is and of themselves as readers, which Coles (2013) appears to neglect. How might pupils responses to the curriculum, and to what they encounter in the classroom, be mediated by other influences, such as that of the home and peer contexts?

Shah (2014) also questions the emphasis placed on 'Englishness' in the National Curriculum, highlighting the "problematic nature of an enforced monolingual culture (p.215)", and challenging the requirement to promote the correct use of Standard English in the classroom. She illustrates how this can create a sense of "linguistic and cultural otherness", explaining that the veneration of England and its language and traditions, reflected in pupils beliefs about their own cultures, is "imbued in popular culture, the legacy of colonialism, as well as of current and past educational policy from the Newbolt Report (1921) to Gove (2010)" (Shah, 2014: 216). However, through examples from her own experience as an English teacher, working in a multicultural classroom in a London school, she also demonstrates how pupils use language to establish and enact social power relations and to challenge the linguistic norms of the school. Pupils practice their values and beliefs regarding the nature of social relationships (e.g. that between the teacher and the pupil), which have been instilled in them in their home environments, through the language they use. The use of pupils' 'home' or 'first' language also gives pupils authority in the classroom, allowing then to demonstrate knowledge that the teacher does not possess. In this sense, pupils' linguistic choices are an embodiment of their cultural identity. She comments that; "the languages and words that echo through Brompton High are ones that are inherently British. They contribute to the fabric not only of London classrooms but of our own country's identities and narrative" (Shah, 2014b: 221). Therefore, these pupils' decision to use their home language to communicate in the classroom is an attempt assert the relevance of their home culture in a context where it is often devalued, blurring the boundaries between home and school. This is evident in one of Shah's pupils' claim that "I talk the way I talk because it is who I am and that's how I speak (p.220)", illustrating the centrality of identity to issues of culture, language and nationality. The classroom can, therefore, be viewed as a microcosm of wider society, reflecting all of its difference and diversity. It then follows from this that government policy which rejects this difference and diversity as "'prattle' and promotes a white washed curriculum will result in nothing more than children whose first language will be curses and resentment (p.221)" as their social and cultural identities are marginalised. Shah's (2014) research, in addition to the alternative approaches to the curriculum described by Ward and Connolly (2008), Yandell and Turvey's (2013) illustration of how identity can be introduced into learning in the English classroom and Rogers Cherland's (1994) discussion of the private reading practices of pre-adolescent girls, suggests that there may be some room in the classroom to challenge the assumptions and values which the curriculum is based on. These studies illustrate the autonomy of both teachers and pupils in responding to the curriculum in the context of their own

social and cultural values, in addition to demonstrating the centrality of such values to identity, reading and language use. In these conditions, where pupils' are given space to use their home language, and therefore assert their social and cultural identities, individuals are able to develop a positive sense of themselves as both a learner and a reader.

Turvey and Yandell (2013), Yandell (2013), and Yandell and Brady (2016) similarly challenge the deficit model and attempts to redistribute cultural capital in their research on reading literature in urban English classrooms, although in a different way. For example, Yandell and Brady (2016) argue that ones response to the "imposition of a culturally conservative curriculum" should not be to suggests that "canonical literature is intrinsically inaccessible to certain groups of students (p.46)." However, I would also argue that this does not necessarily mean that such texts are intrinsically accessible and valuable. Through analysis of classroom observation in which inner-city student are studying Shakespeare plays, the authors demonstrate how young people from culturally diverse backgrounds are able to understand, make judgements, and ask authentic questions based on their own cultural understandings and experiences. For example, the Palestinian pupils were concerned over Juliet disobeying and disrespecting her father in *Romeo and Juliet*, whereas the British pupils were concerned as why she did not run away with Romeo sooner and were outraged at the way Lord Capulet spoke to her. The questions that the texts raised for the individuals, and their understanding of them, were a product of their respective social and cultural backgrounds. Which had not been left at the door on entry to the classroom. This challenges the emphasis on 'English Literary Heritage' and attempts to foster 'British values' through education, suggesting a lack of control over how texts will be read and understood in the classroom. Rather that universal value and meaning, these findings demonstrate multiple understandings and meanings that can arise from a given text. Young people are not A-cultural, and they do leave their rich cultural worlds at the door when they enter the classroom. A Smagorinski (2001) suggests, the value in a text, or reading experience is in its potential for new texts- new meanings and understandings, to be generated, locating meaning in the interaction between text and the individual. Following this, a text only has value of it carries codified cultural significance for the reader. Yandell and Brady (2016) also argue that view of knowledge on which the curriculum is founded is inadequate, as it suggests that knowledge stands outside the learner and is accessible through schooling, enabling them to "transcend their immediate circumstances (p.46)". They demonstrate a dialectical relationship between the text and the experience and knowledge that young people bring to the text, suggesting that "experience is constitutive of the reading that is enacted in the classroom (p.55)". Thus, experience is something that is not unproblematically replaced by the superior, official knowledge of the curriculum.

However, teachers and pupils must also function in the context of high stakes testing and accountability, particularly in the later phases of KS4, where young people must complete their

GCSE examinations. As Shah (2014) points out, such challenges to these dominant values are rarely, if ever, challenged in pupils' written work. Pupils must learn to play the game if they are to succeed in the school context which, ultimately, means succeeding in written examinations and assessments. Success in these assessments validates the knowledge acquired by the pupil and labels them suitable for certain types of work and, in turn, also positions them socially and culturally. This suggests that there are still officially 'right' and 'wrong' ways of being a reader, despite the possibility of challenging and analysing these assumptions in the unofficial discourse of the classroom. That is not to say that these 'wrong' ways of being a reader do not have value for the individual. However, as the young people in this study demonstrate, these conceptions of what reading is and what it is to be a reader, legitimized by official educational policy and practice, make their way into the classroom and become key to young people's interpretation of their own 'unofficial' reading and viewing lives. In the research outlined in this section, emphasis is placed on the local, on young people's responses to particular texts and particular authors, as Yandell and Brady (2016) note of their own research. They argue that

> It is vital to remain attentive to the local, the particular, to the differences that are instantiated in classrooms and to the different meanings that are made by individual students and in the interactions among students and their teachers (p.45)

However, in this research I argue the importance of acknowledging the broader social function that these practices serve, connecting individual subjectivities and experiences to the broader social and cultural whole of which they are a part. In chapter 3, I discuss this further as I outline the theoretical framework of this research, problematizing notions of 'submission' and 'resistance' and attempts to level the playing field.

1.4. Young People Reading for Pleasure: Where is the Problem?

As I have attempted to demonstrate in the previous sections of this chapter, much academic, educational and political discourse relating to culture and literature has generated, naturalised and legitimised particular conceptions of what is to be a literate, cultured and educated individual. This has resulted in the marginalisation of other voices, cultures and world-views in the classroom, with issues of identity, motivation and engagement largely neglected. In this section, I will discuss the non-school reading lives of young people. Data on young people's reading for pleasure has consistently highlighted a cause for concern, suggesting a decline young people's reading. However, I highlight how when a broader, more qualitative view of young people's reading is adopted- looking at not only whether young people read, but at what they read, there is no such crisis.

Looking at quantitative trends in young people's reading, it is possible to infer that the current context is not conducive to encouraging young people to read widely and for enjoyment, as has been a stated aim of the National Curriculum for English in its various versions. A recent government survey, carried out by the Department of Culture Media and Sport (2013), highlighted that 35% of adults do not read for pleasure. In addition to this, results from PISA (2009) place England 47th out of 64 other OECD countries for the number of 15 year olds who read for pleasure. An annual National Literacy Trust (Clark, 2014) survey also highlighted the fact that boys and those pupils on free school meals (FSM) were less interested in reading and reported reading less frequently than girls and those not on FSM. Furthermore, KS4 pupils claimed not only to enjoy reading the least but also read less frequently than the other age groups surveyed (Clark, 2014). This finding was confirmed in a more recent cohort of this same survey, highlighting an increased gap between primary and secondary school pupils' reading, despite a rise in the overall reported amount and enjoyment of reading (Clark, 2016). Boys and those on FSM also continued to be less likely to read outside of school and to have less positive attitude towards reading, and young people spent more time reading online than reading books. This is of concern considering the academic, social and emotional benefits to be reaped from reading for pleasure, particularly fiction, as I will discuss in the next section of this chapter.

As Bearne and Cliff Hodges (2000) point out, much of the research in this area focus on the primary phases of schooling and acquiring the basic skills of reading. They describe how "the later stages of Key stage 2 and the early secondary years do not figure as much in discussion of how to teach reading, or in the case of how to build on the experience of young, already fairly fluent readers (p.10)". This reduces reading to the basics of understanding the words written on a page, neglecting issues of understanding, engagement and identity. However, the results outlined above suggest that it is of importance to focus attention on older readers, who have already developed the skill of reading but whom need support in engaging with reading and seeing themselves as readers. As the end of compulsory schooling, focusing on KS4 demonstrates the kind of readers the education system is sending out into the adult world and the view of reading that young people are leaving school with. It is of particular value to investigate this considering the fact many pupils do not engage with reading outside of the classroom. Therefore, this is the only experience of reading they have and the only opportunity to create positive reading identities. The school provides a unique context for reading in that it is compulsory for all young people to participate in it. However, with this also comes a degree of responsibility for the school. If schools fail to engage these individuals, creating confident and competent readers, they are left with a view of reading, and of themselves as readers that may prevent them from engaging with it in their adult lives.

The term 'aliteracy' refers to those who can read but choose not to do so, and is a useful concept for exploring the experiences of older, more competent readers who do not read for

pleasure. It is discussed in research such as that conducted by Beers (1996), Alvermann (2003) and Merga (2014a). Beers (1996) outlines three 'types' of aliterate reader; dormant, uncommitted and unmotivated. Dormant readers are those who enjoy reading but do not feel they have the time to do so, uncommitted readers are those who do not identify as readers at present but may do so in the future and unmotivated readers are those who do not have an interest in reading and are unlikely to develop one in the future. This typology of aliterate readers highlights the complexity of the relationship between ability, engagement and attitudes towards reading. It suggests that we need to look below the surface to find out why certain pupils are 'aliterate' and avoid making assumptions regarding ability and attitudes towards reading, taking into account the full complexity of the specific situation of the individual. It is for this reason that I will include both high and low ability pupils in this research, considering the explanations pupils of various abilities give for their current relationship with reading. The critical incident charting activity and the semi-structured interviews I employed during data collection are particularly suited to this aim, giving pupils space to reflect on their development as readers and to decide for themselves the events, experiences and people who have be critical in guiding this journey without placing a restrictive framework on their responses.

Merga (2014a) further highlights the complexity of the issue of aliteracy, arguing that the term 'aliteracy' can be misleading, as 'it could be argued that adolescents read every day as they participate in social networking, texting, messaging, reading bus timetables, and a number of other recreational and functional literacies (p.473).' This suggests that discussion surrounding the 'problem' of aliteracy is dependent on the view of reading being employed, with such discussions often neglecting the variety of reading practices which young people regularly engage in. However, this also qualified by the assertion that 'fiction books are most often associated with literacy benefit' (Merga, 2014a: 274) and, therefore, fears surrounding the lack of fiction read by young people are not wholly unjustified. This will be explored further in the following section of this chapter, which outlines some of the benefits, and therefore the importance of, reading (in particular, reading fiction). The greater benefits offered by certain types of reading also suggests that it is important to distinguish between text types when researching these issues, looking at qualitative as well as quantitative trends in young people's reading in order to find out what reading is to them and the role that it plays in their daily lives. This will also provide a clearer picture of what young people's reading looks like.

A number of surveys have been carried out, both in England and in the USA, which examine these qualitative trends in young people's reading, demonstrating the importance of attending to them in research and in practice. For example, Maynard, Mackay and Smyth (2008) conducted an online survey in order to explore this issue. However, the aforementioned article focuses specifically on the findings from questions relating to their reading of fiction. They authors found,

in line with the National Literacy Trust survey discussed previously, that pupils in KS3 and KS44 (35.1%) read fiction less frequently than those in KS1 (47.1%) and KS2 (43%), with the number reporting reading 'often or very often decreasing with age. Girls were also more likely to read fiction 'often or very often' than the boys at all stages. These figures suggest that there is a cause for concern, with young people losing interest in reading as they progress through secondary school, and that more needs to be done to engage these pupils in reading for pleasure. However, research by Hopper (2005), which also surveyed young people's reading habits, demonstrates that once the measure of reading is broadened to include the variety of texts that they interact with, such as "magazines, newspapers and the internet (p.116)", older pupils' (Year 10) level of reading was not behind that of younger pupils but "in line with the general trend (p.116)". This suggests that the amount that young people read dose not decrease as they get older, rather the nature of the texts they are engaging with simply changes. Therefore, the picture may not be as bleak as the one often painted in research and the media. This also raises another issue; the fact that pupils do not consider these reading practices when responding to these surveys and thinking about the kind of reader they are demonstrates the power that dominant conceptualisations of reading have on the judgements pupils' make of themselves as readers. Further challenge to the 'crisis' account of young people's reading is offered by a survey carried out in the USA by Zickuhr and Rainie (2014), which suggests millennials (young people aged between 16 and 29) were more likely to have read a book in the last 12 months than their elders. Surprisingly, they were also "more likely than their elders to say that important information is not available on the internet", with 62 % of millennials agreeing with a related statement compared to 53% amongst those aged 30 and over. Older teens (16-17) in particular where more like to read print based materials and to make use of libraries. An earlier report based on the same project also found that, contrary to claims often made about the threat it poses to pupils' reading lives, technology had actually increased the amount of reading young people do in their spare time, increasing the availability of texts and the convenience with which they can be accessed (Zickuhr, Rainie, Purcell, Madden and Brenner, 2012).

A number of studies also illustrate gender differences in young people's reading choices, with boys being more likely to read a variety of materials, including sport, non-fiction texts, and online material, whereas girls were more likely to read fiction (Millard, 1997; Coles and Hall, 2002; Hopper, 2005; Atkinson, 2016). As Millard (1997) notes "when a father was reported as the main reader in the family, the general pattern given was one of reading for a set purpose (p.35)". As was the case with the boys who took part in this study, reading was often a bi-product of other activities, although such activities often demanded much of their literacy skills. These differences may provide some explanation as to why boys are often reported to read less than girls in surveys of young people's reading, which do not account for the variety of texts they engage with, failing to validate their rich reading lives. It also means that boys and girls are differently disadvantaged in the field

of the school and in the field of work, respectively, each of which demand different literacy skills (Coles and Hall, 2002). Therefore, attention should also be payed to enabling and encouraging girls' to access a variety of reading experience which will provide them with literacy skills that will serve them well in variety of contexts other than the school. These findings were also confirmed in more recent research by Atkinson (2016), who highlighted the more varied and functional nature of men's reading. Atkinson (2016) also highlights the role that class plays in the reading choices of men and women from different social backgrounds, suggesting that "most clearly gendered genres- sports books for men, romance novels for women – do decrease in popularity with a rising capital volume and, particularly, possession of cultural capital (p.15)". However, the surveys and quantitative studies outlined in this section rarely provided reasons as to why individuals make certain text choices, nor do they provide opportunity for the individual to reflect on the function of these reading practices in their daily lives. As Reay (2015) more recently argues "dispositions can include a propensity to fatalism, ambivalence, resilience, resentment, certainty, entitlement or even rage, just as much a tendency to either theatre going or watching soap operas (p.10)." The focus of this research is the meaning that such choices hold for the individual and how they are made in relation to particular social, cultural and historical circumstances, in addition to the affective dimensions of their reading experiences, rather than the nature of their reading choices alone.

Research by Alvermann (2003) highlights the importance of attending to the 'real' reading lives of pupils in the classroom, providing a "rich background of experiences with texts that go beyond traditional print (p.2)", in order to create opportunities for them to demonstrate their expertise. She claims that it is of value to "explore innovative ways of motivating youth to engage with reading, thinking, talking, and writing about a wide range of texts so that they have increased opportunities for experiencing how it feels to be capable and engaged learners (p.6)." This shifts the focus away from a view of the reader as deficient, to a view of the reading and learning context as failing to appropriately engage and motivate certain students, making them feel like confident and capable readers. Alvermann (2003) provides a model of difference rather one of deficit. As I have attempted to demonstrate previously in this chapter, this often not the case in the educational context for reading in England. This research is concerned with reading as experienced by the individual reader, moving away from a focus on the text. Where possible, I endeavour to avoid providing any sort of criteria for what reading, or being a reader, constitutes, foregrounding the meaning that it has for individual participants and leaving room for a variety of ways of being a reader to be discussed and valued.

1.5. The Importance of Reading

It is of importance to fully value pupils' reading lives, engaging young people in reading and fostering positive reading identities, considering the variety of benefits to be reaped from reading for pleasure. As previous research has shown, reading is the form of cultural capital which has the greatest impact on educational attainment. For example, a recent study by Sullivan and Brown (2013) demonstrates that those who read for pleasure often experience greater academic success, and that reading for pleasure is more important for cognitive development than parents' level of education. Di Maggio (1982) also distinguishes between the impact of various forms of cultural capital, operationalized as high cultural participation, on male and female attainment. He found that cultural capital was more important for female attainment than for male attainment, due to both the nature of their cultural participation and their different socialized gender roles and mobility strategies. He notes that ''reading literature was more strongly related to cultural activities for girls than other activities'', whereas, for boys ''cultural interests would most likely be expressed precisely through those activities that the school does not teach- for example, performing arts attendance'' (Di Maggio, 1982:198). This, in addition to the gender differences in reading choices discussed in the previous section, may explain why the girls' cultural participation had a greater impact on their attainment than the boys'. Crook (1997) and Nan Dirk De Graaf, Paul M. De Graaf and Grebert Kraaykamp (2000) also display similar findings in their research on the impact of various forms of cultural capital, specifically high arts participation and reading behaviour. Both studies suggest that reading has the most significant impact on pupil attainment when compared to other forms of cultural capital. This may be due to the fact that, as Crook (1997) proposes:

> [...] reading furnishes children with the skills that are directly related to success in school. Reading develops analytic and cognitive skills distinct from specialised skills involved in art appreciation. The skills learned through participation in the fine arts, while correlated with reading, are directly rewarded in schools and do not confer any educational advantage (p.75)

Reading literature harnesses skills which are more directly transferable to the school context, where they are recognised and rewarded. Unlike other forms of cultural capital, its benefit does not stem from its high cultural status alone. This highlights the importance of an individual's non-school reading habits in ensuring school success, suggesting that it is of particular value to analyse the role of cultural capital and the symbolic value attached to particular types of reading within the specific context of subject English, which is the only area of the curriculum that explicitly teaches pupils how to consume and value high cultural objects.

Previous research on cultural capital and educational attainment, in line with the theoretical assumptions of Bourdieu (1979, 1986), suggests that individuals who do not possess the

correct cultural capital struggle to succeed in the educational context and in the labour market, which recognises and rewards such capital (Tramonte and Willms, 2010; Lareau and Calarco, 2012). Consequently, this leads to the reproduction of educational inequalities and, in turn, social and cultural inequalities. In addition to this, there is also research (Di Maggio, 1982; Di Maggio & Mohr, 1885) which provides support for the 'cultural mobility model', suggesting that cultural capital can be used positively to foster cultural and social mobility. This would provide support for the view, often reflected in educational policy, that social and educational inequality can be overcome by providing disadvantaged pupils with an elite culture of which they are deprived. However, each of these models – cultural reproduction and cultural mobility - are challenged by recent research by Dumais (2008), which sought to test the two models through investigating the impact of adolescents' use of time on academic achievement, in addition to research discussed in the previous section of this chapter. Dumais (2008) found limited support for cultural mobility model, although she also reports that "students' time use, rather than serving as vehicle for social mobility or reproduction, helps or hurts students from all socio-economic backgrounds equally (p.884)", suggesting that the lower scores of pupils from low socio-economic status backgrounds were due their greater tendency to spend their time watching television and playing computer games, compared to their more advantaged counterparts. This implies that it is the choices that young people consciously make with regards to their reading lives which have an impact on their academic attainment, rather than being a direct consequence of socio-economic status and cultural capital.

However, it can also be argued that such choices as are a product of the individual's habitus, an embodiment of the cultural capital inculcated in the family context, which means that they are predisposed to making these choices which reproduces their social, cultural and economic status (Bourdieu, and Passeron, 2000). Young people must first seem themselves as 'someone who reads' in order to make these choices and identify as a reader in a positive way. As discussed in the previous section, young people's reading choices are shaped by both class and gender. It follows from this that policy makers need to shift their focus from the object of value and on to the 'valuers' themselves, with more critical views of culture and literariness. If this was the case, there would be no need to redistribute cultural capital as pupils' cultural lives would already carry value in the educational context, allowing them to be judged in a more positive light and succeed in this field. The research outlined do far in this section does not take into account the interactions which occur as the individual moves between fields and the impact that this has on the individual habitus, a gap which this research remedies. In this research, I have problematized common sense attempts to redistribute cultural capital through education.

Whatever role it plays, the importance of reading, as a form of cultural capital, also implies that it is of value to examine the role of the family context, where cultural capital is most likely received and a primary habitus inculcated, in developing positive reading identities. It suggests the

importance of considering the ways of reading and of being a reader valued in the family context and its influence on young people's development as readers, both in terms of their reading skills and their identity as readers. Previous scholarship has demonstrated the importance of the home literacy environment on both pupils' interest in reading and their development of reading skills. However, these studies deal solely with the primary and pre-school phases, neglecting issues of how we can develop and engage older readers (Cline & Edwards, 2013; Anthony, Williams & Zhang, 2014; Yeo, Ong & Ng, 2014). Merga (2014b), on the other hand, highlights the importance of role of parents in maintaining engagement in reading for pleasure beyond the primary stages of schooling, when the basic skill of reading is acquired. She found that as the skill of reading was acquired, parental encouragement and support was gradually withdrawn. Whilst this was often due to the fact that that children no longer needed support as they were capable and avid readers, in some cases this lead to aliteracy. Merga (2014b) highlighted that "similar taste, rather than commonality of gender, was potentially a more powerful determinate of parental apprenticeship (p.156)"; parents with similar reading interests were more likely reading role models than parents of the same gender as the individual. She also warns of the potentially negative impact that the academicisation of reading can have on young people's view of reading, suggesting that "parents who make academic improvement the basis of encouraging reading may be compromising their ability to encourage the enjoyment of this leisure activity" (Merga, 2014b: 161). This highlights the importance of distinguishing between school and non-school reading, which be of particular necessity where those pupils who have experienced limited success academically are concerned. It is through the lens of the home reading context that young people develop perceptions of other contexts for reading and, consequently, of themselves as readers. It is also this context in which they begin to develop the reading skills that will, to an extent, determine their success in the school context.

Further to this, research by Topping, Samuels and Paul (2008), Mar, Oatley and Peterson (2009) and Richardson and Eccles (2007) suggests that reading fiction, as opposd to reading non-fiction, may have greater cognitive, social and emotional benefits. Topping at al (2008) found that reading non-fiction had a negative effect on participants' comprehension and reading achievement. Boys were found to read proportionately more non-fiction than girls, and payed less attention whilst doing so, which provides some explanation for gender differences in reading achievement. This highlights the importance of examining both qualitative and quantitative differences in young people's reading when exploring these issues. Research by Mar et al (2009) also provides support for the greater benefits of fiction; specifically the link between reading fiction, empathy and social ability. They found that reading fiction was positively associated with greater social support, where non-fiction was negatively associated with this variable and positively associated with loneliness. Moreover, even after accounting for the influence of various personality traits, those who read

fiction were still more likely to perform well on an empathy task. In addition to this Richardson and Eccles (2007) also demonstrate the potential of fiction to function as a space where the individual can both escape from their daily lives and envisage future 'possible selves' which can enable them to improve their situation in reality. As Richardson and Eccles explain, reading fiction is "an important catalyst in the gestation of identity formation related to both gender and ethnicity and career related possible selves (p.348)." Earlier research also provides support for this, such as that conducted by Oatley (1999) and Bettleheim (1991) which suggest that fiction offers a 'safe' medium through which children and young people can explore real life issues at a distance. These studies provide further support for engaging young people in reading, for both their social and emotional, as well as their academic, well-being. It is important than young people are encouraged to read for purposes other than retrieving information and succeeding in education. This also provides a rationale for exploring how positive reading identities can be fostered, encouraging more young people to engage in reading as a leisure activity. However, such studies are text-focused, concerned with developing an identity and exploring the work through reading. They do not account for the social, situated nature of reading and the contexts in which texts are used and produced. In this research, I foreground reading practices and the ways young people attach their own meanings and value to them, drawing on texts in particular contexts for their own purposes. In the next chapter, I elaborate on the theoretical approach to reading and identity which informs this research.

2. Implications for Social Justice: Theorising Reading and Identity

The task of this chapter is to outline a theoretical framework for exploring the ways in which young people navigate the various –and often varying - contexts for reading in which they are situated, in order to negotiate a sense of what reading is to them and the kind of reader they are. I have attempted to develop a coherent framework for approaching the particular task of this research, generating a holistic view of the development of reading identity as experienced by the individual whilst also maintaining sight of its relationship to broader social structures and notions of cultural value. Such a task demands a theoretical framework for understanding the differential development of reading identities and dispositions towards reading, alongside the processes of reading and of social and cultural reproduction. In this chapter, I will attempt to address the following questions:

- What is identity and how does it relate to broader social structures?
- What happens when we read?
- What are the implications of these theories of identity and reading for achieving social justice?

Such questions are central to an exploration of the impact of dominant paradigm of reading on the extent which individuals come to see themselves as 'someone who reads', and on their ways of being a reader. In order to explore my research questions, I have drawn on Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical toolkit, in particular the notion of habitus. This enabled me to explore how identities are differentially produced and to highlight the importance of both the personal and the social in the development of individual subjectivities. Following this, in line with Bourdieu's theory of practice, I also employ a critical, situated literacy framework, which views reading as a social practice, inseparable from the personal, social, cultural and political contexts in which it occurs and in which texts are produced.

The theoretical fields which inform this research share an emphasis on the lived experience of the individual within the social (and cultural) relations of power; they acknowledge the autonomy of the individual and their ability to make choices, however limited, regarding their navigation of the various social and cultural environments of which they are participants. From this perspective, learning and development are acknowledged as socially, culturally and historically situated. This has important implications for both individuals' development of a reading identity and the consequent (re)production of social and educational inequalities, suggesting that the two are intimately linked, as will be demonstrated throughout this section. Further to this, positioning these micro practices of reading, which occur at the level of the individual –or between individuals, within the macro structures of society highlights their implications for social justice and equality, creating

a space in which the dominant paradigm of reading can be challenged. Lawler (2008) discusses the tendency to reject the concept of identity as a concern of sociology, as something which is not a product of the social world and which fails to provide insight into the large scale social structures which are often the concern of sociology. She argues that "while sociology ignores questions of identity, seeing them as outside, or nothing to do with, the social, or as coming fully formed into the social world, one effect is the curious situation of a sociology which represses the social when it comes to the business of how identities get produced (p.7)." Such a view of identity fails to take into account the impact of large scale social structures, such as class inequalities, for more localised subjectivities and practices. Moreover, this view of the social world and the individual's place in it is consistent with the critical theory interpretive framework, outlined in the methodology section of this thesis, which provides the philosophical foundations of this research. This has informed my approach to researching reading identity and its role in reinforcing the social relations of power, which required the acknowledgement of the various contexts in which an individual is required to function, the relationships between these contexts and the role of the individual in negotiating these contexts.

It is important to note that the theoretical framework outlined in this chapter was not intended to provide a rigorous, restrictive framework through which data would be analysed and theoretical conclusions formed. Rather, it has been adapted to suit the methodological and analytical needs of this research, as dictated by my research questions and the data collected, and developed in light of my own theoretical understanding of the data. As Wacquant discusses (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992), Bourdieu maintained that research is "simultaneously empirical (it confronts the world of observable phenomena) and theoretical (it necessarily engages hypotheses about the underlying structure of relations that observations are designed to capture) (p.35)," and they should therefore "interpenetrate" each other, dismissing any distinction made between theoretical and empirical work. His conceptual tools were intended not to be a restrictive framework for interpreting the social the social world, but a tool kit to be put in work and adapted in the context of the data and the research setting (Bourdieu and Waquant, 1992). Thus, in this research, I have drawn on Bourdieu's theory of practice and work form critical literacy studies- as described above, in addition to the data generated and analysed in this research, in order to develop and explore the notion of a 'reading habitus'. This refers to an individual's ways of 'being a reader', their 'feel for the rules of the game' in relation to reading in a particular field, and whether they see reading as being 'for the likes of them'. Such an approach to exploring reading and identity has enabled me to explore young people's development *as a reader*, in contrast to much previous research which deals with issues of representation and identification, exploring the development of a positive identity (e.g. as a male or female, or as someone from a particular socio-cultural background) *through reading* (Clarkson,2013; Rogers Cherland, 1994; Smagorinski, 2001).

This is a gap in the scholarship which this research aims to remedy by exploring the emergence of the reader through reading activity and through exposure to various conceptualisations of reading, focusing on what reading is rather than what is read.

In this chapter, I outline and discuss each of the theoretical fields which have contributed to a coherent framework for conducting this research. In the final section of this chapter, I discuss the implications of such a framework for policy and practice which seeks to achieve social justice-problematizing neoliberal approaches to education policy which seek to 'level the playing field' through the redistribution of cultural capital.

2.1. Consolidating the Personal and the Social in Identity Formation

Identity is a concept which is notoriously difficult to define. The many ways in which it has been conceptualised have variously placed identity on a spectrum which ranges from a psychological concept relating to and originating within the individual (Erikson, 1968; Marcia, 1980 & Hitlin, 2003) to a concept which functions at the level of the social and/or cultural (Clarkson, 2013; Lawler, 2008; Turvey, Yandell and Ali, 2013). Even within the discipline of sociology itself, as Lawler (2008) demonstrates, it is difficult to provide a single, over-arching definition of the concept, as the term can signify very different things "in the context of particular modes of analysis (p.2)". For example, she describes the hermeneutic perspective of identity as "constituted through the stories we tell ourselves (to ourselves and to others) (p.29)", how identity can be viewed as the work of "recognising kin and the work of forming identities based on those kin (p.53)" or a product of "the various ways in which the varying regulatory regimes identified by Foucault and Foucauldians can be incorporated by social actors, so that their schema of understanding become means of self-understanding (p.76)", in addition to highlighting several other sociological perspectives on identity. As a consequence of the diverse tasks to which identity has been put to work, there has been a lack of consistency in the literature with regards to definitions of identity and such definitions are often difficult to operationalise (Head, 1997). This is largely due to the complex, subjective nature of identity, as a phenomenon which functions at both the level of the individual and at the level of the social, being multifaceted and dynamic rather than discrete and static. Despite this, or even perhaps because of it, identity is a concept which is central to several fields within the social sciences and humanities, such as "psychology, anthropology, sociology, linguistic and cultural studies" (Holland & Lachicotte, 2007: 101). I would also add literacy studies to this list, as a discipline which is central to this research and through which various aspects of - and issues relating to - identity have been explored (Barton, Hamilton & Ivanic, 2000; Faircloth, 2012; Rogers Cherland, 1994 & Turvey, Yandell & Ali, 2013).

Out of this confusion has grown a body of research at the intersection of various fields, often referred to as "*sociocultural research*- a recent name for the interdisciplinary approach inspired by L.S. Vygotsky and others" (Holland & Lachicotte, 2007: 101). This was also highlighted by Faircloth (2012), who points to a relatively recent turn towards socio-cultural, situated explorations of identity, which she argues have "shed important light on this process by bringing attention to the intersection between the development of identity and the context of that development; that is, they have highlighted the interplay of personal, social, critical, and cultural situational factors in our understanding of identity (p.186)." Vygotsky, considering the current psychological schools of thought to be insufficient in providing an explanation for psychological phenomena, established a theory of higher psychological processes which foregrounds their developmental history and the social context in which this development occurs (Vygotsky, 1978; Vygotsky, 1986). As Cole and Scribner (Vygotsky, 1978) suggest in the introduction to *Mind in Society,* in which he outlines his theory of human development, "in stressing the social origins of thought and language, Vygotsky was following the lead of influential French sociologists", although he was "the first modern psychologist to suggest the mechanisms by which culture becomes a part of each person's nature (p.6)." Vygotskyian theory highlights the importance of the social and cultural environment in which personal development occurs and, subsequently, their centrality to the identity of the individual. Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain (2001) similarly argue that identities "do not come into being, take hold in lives, or remain vibrant without considerable social work in and for the person (p.vii)." They attempt to consolidate the often perceived contradiction between the autonomy of the individual and the social forces enacted upon them, drawing on the work of Bhatkin, Vygotsky and Bourdieu. Through this research, I seek to contribute to this body of work which seeks to explore the association between the personal and the social in identity, taking an inter-disciplinary approach.

Much scholarship which adopts a socio-cultural perspective of identity draws on the work of Lev Vygotsky, with applications of his theory and conceptual tools in more recent research highlighting its continued relevance. For example, both Smagorinsky (2001) and McCaslin (2009) draw on Vygotskian ideas regarding the role of the social in the development of higher psychological processes, in order to develop an understanding of the ways in which social and cultural influences play a role in the development of the individual and the sense they make of the world around them. McCaslin's (2009) model of the co-regulation of emergent identity is derived from Vygotsky's (1978) notion of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) - the space between that which the individual can achieve alone and that which they can achieve with assistance – and his social theory of learning. She describes identity as "a continuous process that emerges through participation and validation in social and cultural relationships (p. 137)." Such a model of identity foregrounds the "interplay between the cultural, social and personal sources of influence that together challenge,

shape, and guide ("co-regulate") identity" (McCaslin, 2009: 137). McCaslin (2009) argues that humans are essentially social beings and that participation and interaction is, therefore, a basic human need and central to the development of identity. She draws on data from classroom observations of a school in a deprived sociocultural context in Arizona, in order to illustrate how students "make school personally meaningful and what this might mean for their motivation and emergent identity (p.142)." She proposes that students make sense of who they are in relation to their "understanding of school (p.143)" through a recurrent process of participation and validation. The pupil's disposition towards schooling and, consequently, the nature of their participation in the teacher- pupil exchange influences pupil exchange, impacts on the co-regulation of emergent identity. This serves to transform equality of opportunity into a series of different 'conflict situations.' Learning takes place in the ZPD, the co-regulation of which requires the participation of both teacher and pupils, each functioning as both expert and novice. In short, "what we do and in connection with whom inform who we might become (p.138)." Thus, social participation is central to learning and development, with each participant benefitting from the mutual construction of the knowledge.

Similarly, Smagorinksy (2001) puts Vygotsksian concepts to work in order to explore the process by which meaning is constructed through an interaction between the reader and the text, resulting in the generation of new texts which are coherent with the social and cultural experiences of the individual. He draws on Vygotsky's 'zones of meaning', comprised of thought, "unarticulated inner speech", and language, "the articulation of thought through a sign system such as words (p.145)", which Vygotsky viewed as constituents of a complex 'meaningful' whole (Vygotsky, 1986). Smagorinsky (2001), through pupil's explanations of their visual interpretations of texts and characters, demonstrates how the reader interprets and extracts meaning from the text, a series of signs which are transformed, through reading and 'thought', into a new text that holds meaning for the reader. This process is mediated by the culture, society and history of the reader. Thus, when a 'sign' has no codified cultural significance for a reader, no meaning or further 'texts' will be created. It also follows from this that the 'richness of meaning' of text is measured by the potential of a reading transaction to generate new texts. Smagorinsky proposes that pupils' potential for engagement stems from their willingness to follow the 'rules of the game'; they must read, respond to and value certain texts in certain ways in order to succeed. This suggests the detrimental impact that such approaches to texts may have on the engagement and achievement of certain pupils who do not conform to such conventions. This supports the importance of taking into account the various knowledge, experiences and cultures that pupils bring to any given classroom, not only when selecting texts but also in understanding pupils' responses to them. Both Smagorinski (2001) and McCaslin's (2009) studies demonstrate how social and cultural contexts provide the basis for

meaning. They serve to mediate learning and the development of higher psychological processes, that is, ways of thinking and behaving.

Definitions which acknowledge that the self and the social world are inseparable, each shaped by and shaping the other, lead to a more nuanced, holistic perspective on identity and its development. Faircloth defines identity as "a type of ongoing negotiation of participation, shaped by- and shaping in response- the context in which it occurs (p.186)." this highlights the role of both the personal and the socio-cultural in the development of identity. The individual must attempt to develop a coherent sense of themselves and their place in the world within the boundaries of the social and cultural contexts of which they are a part. This suggests that, whilst acknowledging a degree of personal autonomy and choice within the development of identity, this autonomy and the nature and range of choices available is limited by the individual's situation within the social and cultural context. It is in this sense that identity development, finding ones place in the world, is a task of negotiation, involving interaction between the individual and the social and cultural world which they inhabit. As Faircloth (2012) demonstrates, by making the connection between the personal and the social when exploring identity, we become aware of how identity can be implicated in engaging individuals in learning activities. Much like the research discussed previously in this chapter she found that, due to the "negotiated, participatory-based and reciprocal nature of the adolescent identity experience (p.192)", by connecting identity with learning, it is possible to increase engagement and participation in the learning community. In essence, by validating pupils' own values, knowledge and experiences in the learning environment, they are able to see learning as 'for the likes of them.' Therefore, making links between the social and the personal when researching identity, allows us not only to explore how identities are differentially produced and reproduced, but also how it is possible to tailor the learning experience so as to promote positive identities and engagement in learning.

Clear parallels can be seen between the work of Vygotsky and Bourdieu's theory of practice, in particular the notion of habitus and its relation to the field- which I will address in the next section of this chapter. Although he does not explicitly refer to this in his own work, a number of scholars have suggested that Bourdieu's notion of habitus may have foundations in Vygotskian psychology (Bronkhart and Schurmans, 1999; Grenfell, 2009; Silva, 2016). Both Grenfell (2009) and Silva (2016) comment on the fact that both seek to theorise the ways in which the social and cultural become part of the individual. As Silva (2016) points out, in each case, "the inter-psychological becomes intra-psychological: the knowledge of the other organized the knowledge of the self, with individual thought resulting from collective thought (p.81)". Grenfell (2009), however, goes on to point out that Vygotsky view of learning lacks criticality, particularly with regards to his conceptualisation of the ZPD and 'scaffolding', which suggests that "learning is mediated by the teacher supporting

problem solving before 'handing over' knowledge to the learner (p.443)", presenting such interactions between teacher and learner as unproblematic.

Work within this theoretical field focuses on the micro-interactions which occur between individuals, and between individuals and their immediate learning environment. Emphasis is placed on the structure and process of learning itself, particularly in relation to language. They do not consider the ways in which such interactions serve to position the individual within a particular field. It does not take into account, or view as problematic, the 'pedagogic authority' of the teacher which "ultimately needs to be seen as a form of *symbolic violence*, especially when it is expressed in classroom language that imposes a certain way of thinking", thus neglecting the fact that a "certain way of world thinking" is being imposed and certain kinds of knowledge become legitimised in this process (Grenfell, 2009: 444). Damon (2016) similarly, although through a comparison of psychoanalytical and Bourdieusian approaches to exploring anorexia, demonstrates the fact that such approaches do not account for the social and cultural backgrounds of individuals, their position within particular fields, and characteristic social practices, when explaining behaviours. She demonstrates that the 'sociologization' of traditionally psychological objects of research, rather than "as an approach subordinated to, complementing or integrating psychoanalysis (p.111)", can provide unique insights and understandings regarding such phenomena. She proposes that such research should:

> (1) choose its own objects: for example, look at aspects of realities which psychoanalysis deems unimportant or considers mere defences (2) look at them with its own gaze: for example, not look for the sexual behind the social but for the social behind the sexual, decipher the social structure that lies under family past (p.126)

Thus psychological approaches to exploring identity, particularly when it is viewed through a socio-cultural lens, may be useful in so far as they account for the socio-historical background of the individual and characteristic practices. As Bronkhart and Schurmans (1991), translated in Silva (2016:79), note in their discussion of the social-psychological foundations of Bourdieu's theory:

> The developmental theory of Piaget is radically incompatible with the general principles of the Bourdieusian theory ... it is in the framework of social interactionism of Vygotsky that it is possible to articulate these with precision

Thus, the value of Vygotskyian theory lies in its potential to explore the micro-interactions which occur between the individual and their immediate environment- as though placing specific aspects of Bourdieu's framework – the habitus – under the microscope. However, Bourdieu's conceptual tools were not intended to be understood in isolation from one another. Placing these micro interactions within broader social structures is essential in order to gain a greater understanding of

the social relations of power and the impact they have on more localized subjectivities and practices. It makes visible the processes by which certain things are valued over others and the ways in which individuals are positioned within fields. As articulated in his discussions with Wacquant (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992), habitus and field "function fully *only in relation to one another* (p.19)." Thus, "an adequate theory of field, requires a theory of social agents (p.19)." Bourdieu (1989) explains:

> There is action, and history, and conservation or transformation of structures only because there are agents, but agents who are acting and efficacious only because they are not reduced to what is ordinarily put under the notion of individual and who, as socialised organisms, are endowed with an ensemble of dispositions which imply both the propensity and ability to play the game (p.59).

They do not just interact, but are two parts of the same whole, shaped by and shaping each other. Each is therefore integral to a full understanding of the other. Reay (2015) also argues that "habitus might contribute to psychosocial theorisations but also how the psychosocial might enhance understandings of the habitus", leading to a more "holistic understanding of the lived, embodied, affective experiences of inequalities (p.10)." This serves to generate "a better and richer understanding of how the exterior – wider social structures – are experienced and mediated by the interior (p.9)". In line with the approach to identity discussed in this section, this research seeks to connect individual reading identities with wider social and cultural conceptions of reading and what is to be a reader, demonstrating the impact of the dominant paradigm of reading and broader notions of literary and cultural value on the individual and their engagement with reading. In my analysis and discussion of the data generated through this research, I explore how the dominant paradigm of reading in a particular field is shapes, and is shaped by, the interactions which occur both between individuals, and between individuals and the fields in which they – or have been- situated. I place emphasis on the meaning that the young people attach to these experiences and highlight the importance of paying attention to the emotional, affective dimensions of the reading habitus. This has guided my approach to analysis and the discussion of my findings. As Duckworth (2014) suggests in her study, which explores the learning trajectories of adult basic skills learners, "recognition of the changing nature of the field in which the learners are located is vital for reflexivity and also for exploring resistance and challenges within these sites of symbolic power (p.27)". Murphy and Costa (2015a) similarly argue that although "emphasis placed on agent's lived experiences allows to access agents categories of perception and appreciation (p.67)", it should not be valued above an "understanding of the structure of the field; rather they should be analysed in tandem [...] which allows us to render explanations of individual's dispositions as well as their relationships with the fields of power in which they operate (p.67-68)." Therefore, I place emphasis on the individual, at the intersection of these fields, and the ways in which they negotiate and

renegotiate their understanding in order to develop a coherent sense of themselves as a reader and of what reading is to them. In the following section of this chapter, I provide further discussion of Bourdieu's theory of practice, in particular the relationship between habitus, field and capital, and their applications for this research in exploring individual 'reading habitus'.

2.2. Habitus, Field and Capitals

Bourdieu maintained a view of society as "an ensemble of relatively autonomous spheres of "play" that cannot be collapsed under an overall societal logic" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 17). These "spheres of play" are what he termed "fields", each of which "prescribes its particular values and possesses its own regulative principles (p17)". They are autonomous sites of struggle for meaning and power (such as education, the family/ home environment, or the peer group), each operating according to its own internal logic or 'rules of the game'. Individuals' positions within these fields are "anchored in certain forms of power (or capital)" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 16). Habitus is the embodiment of an individual's cultural capital – their non-economic, non-biological inherited resources and experiences which are not "immediately convertible into money (p.16)", but can be exchanged for other forms of capital, determining an individual's chances of success within a particular field (Bourdieu, 1986). Such capital is both unevenly distributed, in such a way that it represents the "immanent structures of the social world (p.15)", and therefore an individual's level of cultural capital is synonymous with their level of power. As Bourdieu (1986) suggests, it "amounts to the same thing (p.16)." The workings of capital are mediated by the habitus, which functions as a set of schema which influences an individual's interpretation of and responses to the world around them. Bourdieu (2010) defines habitus as a set of "lasting, transposable dispositions which, integrating past experiences and actions, functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions (p.72)". It determines their feel for the 'rules of the game' by which a particular field functions and, consequently, their response to and position within that field. As Wacquant (2016) explains in a more recent discussion of the concept, habitus is a:

> [...] mediating construct that helps us revoke the common sense duality between the individual and the social by capturing [...] the ways in which the socio-symbolic structures of society become deposited inside persons in the form of lasting dispositions, or trained capacities and patterned propensities to think, feel and act in determinant ways, which in turn guide them in their creative responses to the constraints and solicitations of their extant milieu (p.65).

Bourdieu and Passeron (2000) suggest that the primary habitus, developed through the pedagogic action (or social and cultural interaction) occurring in the family context, forms the basis of the individual's subsequent habitus as they move between fields, for example, from home to school. It

functions as the lens through which the individual navigates the various social and cultural contexts in which they find themselves, operating as an unconscious guide to action and determining the extent to which they have success in each of these contexts. Thus, as individuals make choices based on habitus, the nature and range of available choices being a product of the individual's social and cultural resources, they reproduce their position within the social relations of power. As Reay (2015) more recently argues "dispositions can include a propensity to fatalism, ambivalence, resilience, resentment, certainty, entitlement or even rage, just as much a tendency to either theatre going or watching soap operas (p.10)." In this study, I place emphasis not only on the young people's specific reading choices, but how they shape, and are shaped by, the meanings that the young people attach to reading and the affective dimensions of their experiences.

One criticism of the notion of habitus is that it fails to account for the autonomy and reflexivity of the individual, thus, it is overly deterministic and objectivist in explaining behaviours, choices and dispositions (Jenkins, 1982; Nash, 1990; Sweetman 2003). In contrast, rational action theorists suggest that differences in life choices and attitude are a product of more calculated attempts to minimise 'risks' and 'costs' in their future trajectories. Following this, social class inequalities are a consequence not only of differences in resources, but also the need to make realistic choices, rather than aspirations or ingrained dispositions. For example, Breen, van de Werfhorst and Jaeger (2014) develop a "model of educational decision-making in which the utility of educational choices depends on student's risk aversion and their time discounting preferences (p.1)". They provide empirical support for this model in the context of educational decision making in Denmark. The data suggests that disadvantaged students in particular make educational decisions based on the perceived likelihood of success and the level and immediacy of reward, often being deterred from the more "academically challenging but financially rewarding (p.1)" academic educational pathway. On the other hand, more advantaged students tended to opt for this academic track, regardless of their level of risk aversion, as this is the minimum level of education required in order to reproduce their position in the social structure and avoid downward social mobility. In short, inequalities resulting from socio-economic differences in educational decision making are argued to be little more than "a function of the expected costs and benefits of different educational options (p.1)" for individuals from different socio-economic backgrounds.

However, this explanation reduces the process of educational decision making and the shaping of future prospects to a simple, conscious weighing up of the costs and the benefits. It is also based on quantitative, survey data which, although highlighting possible trends in participation, does not illustrate the complexity of the lived experience of the individual. It does not access the less conscious, more complex processes at work when the individual attempts to negotiate the social and cultural world. Such factors play a key role in an individual's understanding of who they are, where they came from and where they are meant to be going and are, therefore,

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of central concern both to this research and to explorations of identity in general. Neither do Breen, van de Werfhorst and Jaeger (2014) provide explanation for why some individuals are more risk-averse than others. This could be described as a disposition (an inherent quality which functions as a guide to action) in itself. In addition to these criticisms, it also important to note that Bourdieu argued for the "primacy of relations" between individual agents and broader social structures, suggesting that "the stuff of social reality- of action no less than structure, and their intersection as history- lies in relations" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 15). The individual habitus both shapes and is shaped by the broader structures – or fields- in which they situated. More recently, Wacquant (2016), in an article which sought to dispel a number of 'myths' and fundamental misunderstandings of habitus, explains that it is "not static or eternal: dispositions are socially mounted and can be eroded, countered or even dismantled by external forces (p.66)". Habitus, although heavily influenced by early experiences, is a "multi-layered and dynamic set of schema" (Wacquant, 2016: 68). Wacquant (2016:88) translates Bourdieu's (1993) assertions that "mental structures are not the mere reflex of social structures." This hints at the flexibility and adaptability of the habitus as the individual moves between and within fields, as opposed to being set in stone during primary socialization. This is exemplified by the young people who took part in this study, as they demonstrate how various conceptualisations of reading and the reader, and the meaning attached to particular reading practices, are created through interactions between the individuals and between individuals and the fields in which they are situated. The dominant paradigm of reading was not thrust upon the young people and accepted, implying a simple top-down model of power, rather, both the dominant and dominated were equally complicit in the complex negotiation of the meaning and value attached to particular practices.

Further to this, as I discussed at the beginning of this chapter, Bourdieu was sceptical of the distinction made between theory and method in research, and his theoretical tools were designed to be adapted in the context of empirical data from the social world rather than to function as a restrictive framework to which data must be made to fit (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Reay (2004) cites Bourdieu's (1991) own assertion that his conceptual tools were, in fact, intended to bring to the surface a "practical knowledge that has its own logic, which cannot be reduced to that of theoretical knowledge; that, in a sense, agents know the social world better than the theoreticians (p.107)." This, again, suggests some malleability in the concept. Habitus is one of Bourdieu's most contested and least researched theoretical concepts (Reay, 2004; Dumais, 2002; Gaddis, 2013). Consequently, it has been used indiscriminately in educational research, often providing theoretical authority "without necessarily doing any theoretical work" (Reay, 2004: 432). As Reay (2004) suggests, there is a wide spectrum of views regarding the nature and function of habitus, arguing that the concept is put to best use when made to work "in the context of the data and the research settings" (Reay, 2004: 431). The use of it as a theoretical tool is most successful

when multiple readings are drawn upon to suit the needs of the research. Reay, David and Ball (2005) exemplify this process through their development of the concept of "institutional habitus". They describe institutional habitus as comprising of "educational status, organisational practices and the expressive order (p.60)" of a particular educational institution. In this instance, Bourdieu's concept has been applied to the empirical context of difference in higher education choices amongst individuals attending private and public schools, in order to explore the dynamics of this association. Their research illustrates, through analysis of data relating to individuals within these institutions, the ways in which institutional habitus serves to influence students identities and, consequently, the choices they perceive to be available to them. Elsewhere, Bourdieu's concept of capitals has been expanded in order to develop an understanding of the gendered nature of capitals and the role of emotions. For example, Reay (2005a), Gillies (2006), and O'Brien (2008) each contribute to the theorisation and understanding of emotional capital. I draw on this body of work in order to theorise the impact of the young people's emotional connections to reading and the affective dimensions of their experiences, in addition to the often gendered nature of reading practices.

Murphy and Costa (2015a, 2015b) propose that greater emphasis should be placed on the application of theory in the practice of research and the ways in which it can be "brought to life in research settings" (Murphy and Costa, 2015a: 14), proposing that the issue of the theory/ practice dichotomy is not exclusive to researchers working with Bourdieu's conceptual tools and is reflective of the broader challenges of applying theory in empirical work. They point out that "most variants of social theory present challenges of application for scholars wishing to bring intellectual depth to their fieldwork (p.14)" (Murphy and Costa, 2015a). In their book which explores the 'art' of applying habitus in research, Murphy and Costa (2015b) seek to examine habitus as both a "theoretical construct and method", demonstrating the various ways in which researchers "capture, operationalise, and theorise habitus (p.4)" in contexts such as education, social mobility and digital practices. In the context of this research, when I refer to the notion of 'reading habitus', I mean an individual's ways of 'being a reader', their 'feel for the rules of the game' in relation to reading in a particular field, and whether they see reading as being 'for the likes of them'. This was to help me develop an understanding of and to articulate how the practices, dispositions, and values related to reading are situated within a particular field, such as the school, and make visible the impact of these fields as the individuals move within and between them. Such an approach to habitus places emphasis on the experiences and perceptions of the individual in providing a valid account of identity, which are to be used to either support, adapt or falsify the concept, countering accusations of determinism. This is in line with the interpretive paradigm which forms the philosophical foundations of this research, focusing on the individual's understanding of the social world, which is viewed as "socially constructed and influenced by power relations" (Scotland, 2012: 13). This is

with a view to gaining as accurate a representation as possible of individual and, therefore, of social reality, allowing for a variety of voices, perceptions and experiences to be heard and valued. Analysis of the data generated through this research has highlighted the value of approaching discussion of young people's reading in this way, problematizing the dominant paradigm and suggesting a need for a shift in current debates and a reconceptualization of the 'problem' of young people's reading.

The above discussion demonstrates what Adams (2006) describes as the two "dominant tropes (p.511)" in the sociology of identity, 'self-reflexivity' (the individual's awareness of the social relations of power and an ability to change their position within them) and 'habitus,' each of which have been criticised for excessive voluntarism and over-determinism, respectively. These are the key criticisms of those approaches to identity which theorise it on a psychological level, foregrounding the agency of the individual and failing to place sufficient emphasis on the role of the social structure, and those at the other end of the spectrum which treat it as a social construction, the embodiment of the social and cultural context of which the individual is a passive product. In his article, Adams (2006), provides a reading of habitus which overcomes these criticisms and which meets the needs of research which seeks to explore the development of identity in post-modern society, characterised by social and cultural change and increased movement between 'fields'. He begins to consider how we might bring the concepts of 'habitus' and 'reflexivity' together in order to arrive at a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between habitus, reflexivity and identity. Through a synthesis of research which endeavours to consolidate these two perspectives, he demonstrates how "identities are formed in the ability to translate the choices which emerge from this complex interplay into meaningful realities. Even a heavily qualified reflexivity can only tell a partial story of contemporary identity (p.522)." He proposes that reflexivity is not necessarily always followed by agency when it is divorced from the ability to make meaningful choices due to a lack of resources within the constraints of the social and economic relations of power. In such instances then, individual reflections on their situation cannot be converted into meaningful realities. In short, "reflexivity in this context does not bring choice, just a painful awareness of the lack of it (p.525)." Adams (2006) argues that this hybridisation of the two perspectives on identity can help overcome the criticisms received by each. It presents a view of identity which simultaneously acknowledges the role of social structures and resultant inequalities and individual's awareness of these constraints on their ability to make meaningful choices and act on this awareness. Many of the young people who took part in this study were very much aware of their relative position in relation to others and of their limitations as readers, and as learners more broadly.

Further evidence of both the endurance and problematizing of habitus as the individual moves between fields in demonstrated in McNay's (1999) discussion of reflexive theories of

gendered identity formation. She suggests that transition between fields necessitates that individuals reflect on their habitus, in order to make sense of where they belong in the field. Therefore, reflexivity is enabled by the "conflict and tension of social forces operating within and across specific fields (p.110)", a consequence of changes within fields and increased movement between fields, such as the movement of women from child-rearing to the world of work. Thus, identity formation takes place in the negotiation of conflicting and overlapping social fields and, therefore, any notions of reflexivity must "be qualified with a differentiated analysis of attendant social relations and leads to a more qualified account of a reflexivity of the agent that is unevenly realised (p.111)". The extent of individual reflexivity and the ability to act on reflections regarding ones position within the field, is set within the limits of the social relations of power which characterise the field. Due to the embedded and embodied nature of the habitus, individuals are limited in the number and nature of choices regarding identity, which are necessarily consistent with their position in a given field and with the conditions under which their primary habitus was inculcated. This serves to produce and maintain their relative position in the field. Citing Beck and Beck-Gernsheim's (1995) study which highlights the contention between 'living one's own life' and 'being there for others' which has arisen from women's entry into the workforce, McNay (1999) argues that changes in social norms complicate rather than replace traditional, embedded conceptions of gender, often further entrenching such conventions in gendered social and emotional behaviour. This indicates that certain aspects of habitus endure even once the conditions of the field are removed. The endurance of habitus may be explained by the role of values in the development of identity and in influencing the choices made by individuals and their view of 'how things should be'. Hitlin (2003), proposes that values provide an explanation for the coherence of the various facets of an individual's personal identity, providing a link between the personal and the social in identity development. He suggests that these values are a product of "social contexts, draw on culturally significant symbolic material, and are experienced as a necessary and fundamental, but not coerced, aspect of the self (p.121)." Thus, the individual behaves in accordance with their identity and its foundational values, not due to social and cultural constraints, although such constraints are present, but because they view thinking and behaving in a certain way as 'right' and as 'being true to themselves'. Therefore, in the case of gender identity, it is not a simple case of symbolic identification with conventional notions of masculinity and femininity, as is evidenced by the failure of the de-traditionalisation of gender roles to revolutionise gendered habitus. Individuals exercise reflexivity and agency through the negation of discrepancies in the movement within and across fields, a form of 'crisis' with leads to the problematisation of habitus, rather than resisting them. McNay (1999) argues that such crises are more common in modern society than they have been previously, as is evidenced through changes in gender roles, in particular, the position of women in society. Friedman (2016), in his exploration of the dynamics of

habitus in the context of upward social mobility, highlights the ways in which the working class individuals experience social mobility, as they attempt to navigate new fields in which they find themselves. He demonstrates the varying ways in which individuals adapt their working class habitus to their new positions in social space, or fail to do so, arguing that this was dependent on the individuals "mobility trajectory (p.144)". It is argued that the range, speed and direction of "movement through social space (p.144)" determine the extent to which the habitus is able change and adapt to its new surroundings. This research (McNay, 1999; Hitlin, 2003; Friedman, 2016), suggests that there is need to place emphasis on the individuals navigation of various fields, the interactions which occur as the individual moves between them and the ways in which they draw on personal, social and cultural resources in order to make sense of and respond to them. It is by examining these spaces between field and habitus that we can see how it endures and how comes to be problematized, or adapt to new surroundings. As Lawler (2005) explains in her research on habitus and resistance, "habitus 'makes sense' only in the context of specific local contexts or 'fields'- the 'games' for which the 'rules of the game' equip us (p.112)" Therefore, this research places emphasis on the individual, as the intersection of these fields which operate according to varying sets of 'rules', and the ways in which they negotiate them in order to develop a coherent sense of themselves as a reader and of what reading is to them. Such research also highlights problems with attempts to 'level the playing field', and redistribute cultural capital- such as exposure to particular texts and authors, as I will discuss in the final section of this chapter. Policy founded on such logic fails to take into account the variety of experiences, values and dispositions that the individual carries with them as they move between fields.

2.3. Reading in Heads vs. Reading as a 'Social Practice'

As I stated in the introduction to this chapter, in keeping with Bourdieu's theory of practice and the approach to identity which informs this research, I view reading- and literacy more broadly- as a social, situated practice, inseparable from the personal, social, cultural and political contexts in which it occurs and in which texts are used and produced. Bourdieu (2010) defined 'practice' as "the product of the dialectical relationship between a situation and a habitus (p.72)." Individual behaviours are the results of the interactions which occur between an individual habitus, itself a product of past experiences and practices, and the fields in which they are situated. As Wacquant (2016) suggests it is neither "the mechanical precipitation of structural dictates nor the spawn of the intentional pursuit of goals by individuals (p.66)". Therefore, Bourdieu's conceptual framework is cognate with the critical, situated literacy framework developed through work undertaken under the heading of 'New Literacy Studies' (Street, 1984; Bartlett & Holland, 2002; Bartlett, 2007; Luke, 2014), which views literacy as a social practice, inseparable from the personal, social, cultural and political contexts in which it occurs. This school of thought emerged from the work of Paulo Freire

and his contemporaries. Freire maintained that the central aim of teaching literacy should be "reading the word" in order to "read the world", situating literacy within its social and cultural contexts of use (Freire and Macaedo, 1987). He advocates a dialogical approach to education, which begins with the 'lifeworld' of the learner and where both teacher and pupil take part in a reciprocal exchange of knowledge (Freire, 1972). This is as opposed to the 'banking' model of education, treating knowledge as an object that can be unproblematically passed on to and stored in the heads of young people. The 'banking' model follows a more functional, cognitive, developmental approach to literacy, referred to as the 'autonomous' model by Street (1984). This model treats literacy as something that can be unproblematically passed on to others, developing and existing solely 'in heads', and views meaning as in texts waiting to be 'unveiled'. He suggests that "this model disguises the cultural and ideological assumptions that underpin it so that it can be presented as though they are neutral and universal" (Street, 2003: 77). As Luke (2000) points out, emphasis on the personal and the individual, treating literacy as though developed and existing only 'in heads', means that we lose sight of the social and the processes by which literacies are positioned in relation to each other and become differently valued in various social contexts. Such approaches to literacy treat the skills of reading and writing in isolation from the social and cultural contexts in which they develop and will be put to use by individuals, leaving the arbitrariness of the dominant paradigm and the power relations it maintains invisible and unchallenged. This can be explained in terms of what Bourdieu and Passeron (2000) describe as 'misrecognition', where the dominance of the autonomous model is maintained "by the mere fact of being misrecognised as such, is objectively recognised as a legitimate authority (p.13)". The power and validity of dominant literacies in a given field rests on the misrecognition by both the dominant and dominated of the arbitrariness of the value ascribed to them, by presenting them as natural and masking the social relations of power of which their value is a product. In this research, I demonstrate how dominant models of reading, particularly that which was valued in the field of the school, served to shape young people's understanding of their own reading lives, the kind of the reader are, and their position in relation to others.

As Ade-Ojo (2015) notes, the cognitive, functional model of literacy which much policy in this area is founded upon has failed learners of all ages, as they fail to take into account the real lives and everyday literacy practices of these individuals. Bartlett and Holland (2002) propose that there is a need to recognise and "refigure away from hierarchies and literacy shaming" in order to disrupt and "critique the speech and literacy hierarchies on which shaming rests (p.20)", challenging notions of correctness. Critical, situated approaches to literacy make visible the ways in which literacies are ''positioned in relation to the social institutions and the power relations which sustain them'', of which education is but one such institution (Barton, Hamilton & Ivanic, 2000: 1). Street (1984) terms this the 'ideological' model of literacy, which places emphasis on the "specific social

practices of reading and writing", recognising the "ideological and therefore culturally embedded nature of such practices (p.2)". This provides a more "culturally sensitive view of literacy practices as they vary from one context to another", acknowledging the fact that literacy is always "embedded in social practices, such as those of a particular job market or a particular educational context" (Street, 2003: 77). The central concern of this approach to literacy and, consequently, of this research, is the "social practices in which literacy plays a role; hence the basic unit of a social theory of literacy is that of *literacy practices"* (Barton and Hamilton, 2000: 7). Literacy practices are defined by Barton and Hamilton (2000) as the "general cultural ways of utilising language which people draw upon in their lives (p.7)," Different literacies are viewed as coherent configurations of these literacy practices, mastery of which are integral to successful participation in particular aspects of social life (such as education, home and the work-place). Mastery of these literacy practices can, therefore, becomes a form of 'cultural capital' which enables individuals to successfully 'play the game' of a particular field (Bourdieu, 1986). As I discussed in the previous chapter, reading has the most significant impact on attainment when compared to other forms of cultural capital, likely due to the fact that it is more directly transferable in the school context. This highlights the significance of placing emphasis on young people's dispositions towards reading specifically, as an aspect of literacy which has strong currency in the school context. Further to this, placing emphasis on literacy practices, as opposed to the texts themselves or basic literacy skills in isolation, enables the conceptualisation of "the links between the activities of reading and writing and the social structures in which they are embedded" (Barton, Hamilton & Ivanic 2000: 7). This facilitates the recognition of the arbitrariness of the value attached to specific literacies in specific contexts.

The misrecognition of dominant literacies as legitimate and the use of them to evaluate and position those within a particular field can be considered a form of symbolic violence in the sense that it is "the imposition of a cultural arbitrary by an arbitrary power" (Bourdieu and Passeron, 2000: 5). Bartlett and Holland (2002) refer to this as 'literacy shaming'. They demonstrate how this occurs both horizontally, between peers, and vertically, between those occupying different positions in the hierarchy. Such literacy shaming led the adult literacy learners in Brazil in their study to experience feelings of anxiety and embarrassment and they were reluctant to speak in front of others. This shaped their future trajectories and engagement with further schooling and literacy training. Literacy shaming was often done casually, without intent to embarrass or belittle, often out of efficiency- such as in the case of the official who was helping individuals register to vote who divided the crowed into those who could and could not write in "an attempt at efficiency and organisation (p.18)", later encouraging her take her time. Nevertheless, "long term, persistent experiences of symbolic violence through literacy shaming made it difficult for them to develop themselves and cultivate identities as educated people that will transfer beyond the literacy

classroom (p.18)". The adult basic skills learners who took part in Duckworth's study (2014) similarly experienced symbolic violence, in both the public domains of the school and the workplace, and in their private lives, which had negative consequences on their learning trajectories. The working class literacies they brought to school and to further education did not carry symbolic value in these fields- they did not possess the linguistic and cultural capital which would enable them to pass exams and be valued by their teachers and peers as respectable individuals. Duckworth (2015) describes how these working class literacies, such as the 'domestic and caring literacy which has traditionally been carried out by girls and women (p.181)', were often gendered and remained invisible in the public domain. Written skills were also valued over oral skills, and the "codes of the upper classes" had greater symbolic value in the field of education, whilst those of "working class and ethnically diverse learners (p.181)" had little currency. Consequently, those who "were not proficient in the linguistic skills required in schools and colleges were defined as failures or lacking in intelligence simply by virtue of the way they relate to and know the world (p.181)". The gendered, intergenerational nature of these working class literacies and of emotional and domestic labour was also evident amongst the young people in this study, as I detail in chapter 4. Duckworth (2015) explains that adopting a critical approach to literacy, and education more broadly, in her research and practice provided a "lever for challenging symbolic violence and offering the potential for learner empowerment and emancipation (p.32)". Similarly, Bartlett and Holland (2002) draw on Bourdieu's theoretical toolkit, in particular that of the field – of 'figured worlds', in order to "expand the notion of cultural models and augment(s) our understanding of social practices (p.20)", expand social understandings of literacy by "focusing on the production of literacy identities in relation to social structures and cultural worlds (p.12)". Each of these theoretical fields are not only cognate, but fill the gaps left by the other in attempts to consolidate the personal and the social when exploring issues of literacy and identity, and challenging dominant models of literacy. This study also draws on these theoretical fields in order to explore the impact of dominant models of reading- as but one aspect of literacy, on more proximal reading practices and identities.

In a later study, Bartlett (2007) demonstrates how individuals draw on "cultural artefacts in order to 'seem' literate, or to be seen as literate by others, and to 'feel' literate, that is, to develop a sense of themselves as literate (p.51)". The Brazillian youth and adult learners in her study drew on material and non-physical resources, "inscribed by a collective attribution of meaning (p.78)", in an attempt to perform being 'literate' and reposition themselves as respectable and educated individuals in the broader social field. Bartlett (2007) suggests that "the intense inter- and intra-personal work involved in engaging in literacy practices" demonstrates "that efforts to study or instruct "basic" literacy students should not neglect the critical social dimension of literacy practices (p.89)". The young people in this study similarly drew on cultural resources, such as particular types of texts and ways of reading them, in order to make themselves 'seem', in the public domain, and

'feel', in the private domain, like 'someone who reads'. As they moved between fields, they drew on the different resources available in order to position themselves within it and perform being a reader- or non-reader – in various ways and attribute value to themselves. I demonstrate how particular fields offer varying opportunities, or a lack of such opportunities, for individuals to 'seem' and 'feel' like readers. The school, in particular, served as a key site of legitimation for the young people.

Approaches to reading, particularly the reading of literature, in schools have also largely followed the autonomous model (Street, 1984), treating reading as exiting largely in heads and meaning waiting in texts ready to be unveiled. Discussion of children and young people's reading has largely focused on two areas, each of which neglects issues of understanding, engagement and identity. As in the field of adult literacy education, the dominant model "fails to recognise literacy as a tool for personal enlightenment", although debate differs slightly to that in adult literacy with its "strong utilitarian function" (Duckworth, 2015: 28). In the case of early reading, debate is largely centred on how to teach the basic skill of reading. As Bearne and Cliff Hodges (2000) point out, much of the research and, I would add, much of the policy in this area focuses on the primary phases of schooling and acquiring the basic skills of reading. They describe how "the later stages of Key stage 2 and the early secondary years do not figure as much in discussion of how to teach reading, or in the case of how to build on the experience of young, already fairly fluent readers (p.10)". This reduces reading to the basics of decoding the words written on a page. Further to this, Gee (2004), building on his previous research (Gee, 1999), suggests that "controversies over reading should have less to do with debates about methods of instruction and more to do with understanding the links between poverty and (not) learning to read (p8)". He argues that, although most are able to acquire basic phonemic awareness and decoding skills, some young people's early 'ways with words' prepare them to do well in the school context and to make the jump from learning to read to reading to learn. He suggests that the question that needs asking is not why some young people fail to acquire academic literacies, but "what is it about school that manages to transform children who are good at learning [...] into children who are not good at learning, if they are poor or members of certain minority groups?" (Gee, 2004: 8). Whilst some bring academic varieties of language to the school, others do not and their vernacular varieties are not rewarded in this field. Thus, failing to acknowledge this and placing emphasis on decoding and phonetic awareness not only masks the real issue, but places blame on the individual for their own lack of success. This present study is concerned with older readers, or non-readers, and their reading journeys, with to exploring how best to foster positive reading identities. The young people who took part in this study have, although to varying degrees of proficiency, already mastered the basic skill of reading. The question being is asked in this study is what makes these young people come to see themselves as someone who does, or does not, read. However, in light of the data generated through this study,

I do not place responsibility for this solely on the school here, despite its pervasiveness in the lives of the young people.

Freebody and Luke (1999), outline a four tiered approach to early reading instruction through identification of four key roles as a literacy learner; code breaker, meaning maker, text user and texts critic. Effective reading requires the individual to be able to not only understand the words on the page but to also be able to generate meaning from them, make use of the text in context and maintain critical awareness of the fact that "all texts are crafted objects, written by persons with particular dispositions or orientations to the information, regardless of how factual or neutral the products may attempt to appear" (Freebody, 1992: 6). It is suggested that effective literacy draws on all four of these practices, each of which is equally necessary but not sufficient on its own for effective literacy in a given context. For example, as Freebody (1992) points out, "we are no more successful readers if we are pray to manipulative texts than we are if we cannot 'decode' […] all of these roles form part of successful reading as our culture demands it (p.7.)" This approach not only acknowledges the role of the social in literacy, but also suggests that literacy learning is an active, rather than a passive process. It also follows from this that reading and writing only truly make sense when studied in the context of the social and cultural and that what 'counts' as reading in official political and educational discourse serves particular social, cultural, moral and economic interests. A misrecognition of this results in the naturalising of dominant conceptions of reading and of being a reader, an illusion which can only be dispelled with an awareness of the social conditions in which texts are produced and received and presence and value of other literary cultures are recognised, as in the approach to reading employed in this study.

Approaching reading as a social practice, which acknowledges the real world implications of the uses to which language is variously put, creates a space in which dominant notions of what reading is and what it is to be a reader can be challenged. Shifting the focus of research and debate into the spaces where texts and contexts meet highlights the centrality of the social and cultural to the acts of reading and writing. Making these links also reveals the ways in which texts are produced and received in particular social, cultural and historical contexts and in the interests of particular individuals (Luke, 2000). This is evidenced in Gee's (1999) reframing of the National Academy of Sciences report on reading, using a sociocultural approach to language and literacy as opposed to emphasising psycholinguistic aspects of these phenomena- which fails to account for issues of understanding, engagement and identity. He highlights how placing emphasis on phonemic awareness as a predictor of later reading ability, fails to account for other factors which may be responsible for the 'fourth grade slump', the failure of some children to continue to progress beyond the basic skill of decoding, falling behind more advantaged peers. This demonstrates that decontextualizing reading from social practices, viewed as an end in itself rather than a means of partaking in social and cultural practices, has little academic, social or cultural value for the

individual. He suggests that learning to read is a process of enculturation and socialisation, with the end goal being mastery of social languages. As "learning to read means learning to read specific social languages connected to specific social identities and languages" (Gee, 1999: 370), discussion of and attempts to improve reading difficulties and, I would add, perceptions of reading must take these social and cultural contexts into account.

Where older (secondary school), already fairly 'skilled' readers are concerned, it is often the specific texts that should be studied, their literary value, and whether or not they represent certain groups, which are central to debates played out through education policy, research and in the media. In this current context, it is no longer enough just to be able to read, what you read is what sets you apart as being more (or less) literate, cultured or educated than someone else. Central to this debate are notions of cultural value and heritage, and the English Literary Canon. As discussed in the previous chapter, this is largely due to the influence of Arnold, Leavis, Bloom and Hirsch, whose belief in the inherent superiority of particular kinds of literature, and its power to instil particular values and morals, is still reflected in much educational and political discourse today. In fact, the situation appears to have gotten worse over time. As Olive (2013) points out when comparing the authors often cited by Gove, the previous education secretary, in his speeches and the authors advocated by Leavis, those cited by Gove have 'on average, been dead over 206 years'. This is contrasted to the fact that Leavis' authors were still writing shortly before the publication of *The Great Tradition,* which necessitates a re-evaluation of Leavis' influence on the National Curriculum. Rather than the specific authors he puts forward as the representatives of a revered canon, it is his 'legacy in encouraging English to be defined as a set body of texts, above and beyond [...] a set of skills or as an act of political or social identity formation' (Olive, 2013) which is to be blamed for the conception of literary and cultural value that has come to dominate in education. This comparison also speaks volumes regarding the progress that has been made in subject English in the past century, suggesting that it is almost moving backwards. It follows from this that it is not the question of the specific texts being studied which needs addressing in education policy, but the impact of hegemonic notions of cultural and literary value naturalised by educational policy and discourse, their symbolic value as a form of cultural capital. As discussed in depth in the previous chapter, this view of reading and literary value underpins the view that it is a cultural deficit on the part of the individual, rather than policy which fails to address these individual differences, which is responsible for different outcomes.

The value of maintaining an awareness of multiple literacies and cultures is evidenced through cross-cultural comparisons. Casting an eye on the ways in which reading is approached in other education systems makes visible the limitations within our own system and socio-cultural foundations of these approaches to reading and literature. For example, research on reading in the Asia-Pacific context, highlights the more 'global' view of reading and literacy advocated through

their education system, and the impact that this has on young people's relation to the world they live in. Ee Loh (2013), in her ethnography of a group of high achieving boys at an independent school in Singapore, describes the emphasis placed on 'global literacy' in this context, with the level of student's proficiency in the English language viewed as a marker of the quality of the school. Global literacy, or a globally literate identity, is defined as the possession of "literacy knowledge and skills that were relevant beyond local (Singapore) markets (p.39)". This is linked to the need, in an increasingly globalised society, for what Ee Loh (2013) describes as "flexible citizenship"; individuals who are able to "move across borders, whether through transnational travels or networks of connectivity, so much so that the local is very much imbued with global flows (p.38)". It is therefore, the ability to adapt and readjust one's relation to knowledge, rather the actual knowledge that the individual possesses which is of value. As the boys in Ee Loh's (2013) study demonstrate, the boys' broad knowledge of literature, from school classics to contemporary popular fiction, and their ability to:

> use these texts appropriately was a form of intercultural capital as they were able to access knowledge that was relevant for different contexts. It was their relation to knowledge— their ability to utilize such knowledge in appropriate situations—that put them in a position of power (p.53)

It is also important to note that Ee Loh (2013) acknowledges the class- based nature of the boy's literacies and suggests that, although their achievements are to be applauded, they also need to be problematized. The boys were unaware of the social forces which had shaped their reading stances, blind to "social inequities from their vantage point of privilege (p.54)." Greater attention needs to be paid to the inequality in access to resources for the learning of this kind of literacy. However, this is still a huge contrast to the more inward-looking, cultural heritage, text focused approach to literature which underpins much political and educational discourse surrounding reading and what it means to be 'well read' in England, as was outlined in chapter 1 of this thesis. The provides support for the approach to reading taken in this research, which places emphasis on readers, reading and the social forces shaping them, rather than on specific texts.

The model of reading, and literacy more broadly, which informs this research has important implications for policy and practice in this area as it suggests that it is questions of *what reading is* and *who it is for*, rather than which texts should be studied, which need addressing. In particular, it is important to consider how different answers to this question may serve to either reinforce or challenge the dominant paradigm, and position different literacies in relation to each other. This need to refocus the debate is support by the fact that young people who took part in this study rarely made reference to specific texts and their intrinsic qualities. Rather, it was the various reading

practices and consequent conceptualisations of reading and the reader which they viewed as critical in shaping their reading identity.

2.4. Levelling the Playing Field: Cultural Difference or Deficit?

The approach to reading and identity which informs this research challenges the deficit model of young people's reading, and their cultural lives more broadly, maintained by the broader neo-liberal agenda in the education context and notions of meritocracy (Gee, 2004; Coles, 2013; Ee Loh, 2013; Duckworth and Brzeski, 2015). It is the logic of this deficit model which is behind persistent misguided attempts to redistribute cultural capital through education, as discussed in the previous chapter. As Ee Loh (2013) points out, although in reference to the reading practices of young boys in the Singapore context, "contrary to official versions of meritocracy [...] the acquisition of intercultural capital is an unequal game in a neoliberal education system driven by market dynamics (p.39)". Duckworth (2015) similarly, when referring to the current market-driven model of further education, argues that "the notion of neoliberalism and its implications that an individual is free to determine their own pathway, is limited by the impact of structural and historical inequalities (p.26)". This deficit model fails to account for the broader social and cultural relations of power, which position individuals differently in relation to access to the resources and legitimate capitals of a given field. In other words, individuals do not enter the game at the same starting point. Further to this, they do not take into account the different meanings that cultural artefacts, such as the literary canon (Ward and Connolly, 2008; Coles, 2013), hold for the individual, nor do they account for the fact that certain individuals' lack of ability to mobilise these forms of capital in order to benefit from their symbolic value. Socio-spatial studies of school libraries, such as those by Shilling and Cousins (1990), Neuman and Celano (2012) and Loh (2016), demonstrate the complex interactions between individuals and educational spaces and resources, and the impact of social interactions within these spaces on the uses to which they put by individual and the meanings attributed to them. Such studies demonstrate that there is often a lack of congruence between official, intended use of these spaces, and the actual use to which they are put. They demonstrate that the mere presence of resources is not enough to ensure a level playing field. For example, Neuman and Celano (2012), in their comparison of two other-wise similar libraries serving communities with different social, cultural and economic resources, comment that:

> Even when "we level the playing field"- therefore creating equal access to material resources- we still have an unlevelled playing field [...] other factors, namely scaffolding adults, may make the difference in children's literacy lives (p.6)

The parents and children from the two communities were not equally equipped to use the resources provided by the library and, consequently, they did not equally benefit from these

resources. Similarly, Shilling and Cousins (1990) and Ee Loh (2016) demonstrated the impact of the broader school culture and the socio-economic demographic of the communities which they serve on the use that is made of school libraries, and the kind of knowledge and interaction-between individuals and between individuals and the educational space- they encourage. These studies highlight the lack of congruence between the intended use of such resources and the use to which they are put by parents, children, and young people from different social and cultural backgrounds. This was also evidenced in the use of the school libraries by the young people in this study, none of whom used it as a space for accessing and reading books.

What is most concerning is that this deficit approach to reading, and literacy more broadly, leaves little room for resistance, or for validating those experiences and uses of reading which do not carry symbolic value in the field of the school. Thus, within the deficit model, those who do not subscribe to the dominant symbolic are positioned as having no value. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) point out the problematic nature of both resistance and submission within this "logic of symbolic domination (p.24)," suggesting that resistance often does little more that secure one's dominated position, whereas submission and adoption of symbolic capital can be potentially liberating. They suggest that, consequently, thinking in terms of 'resistance' and 'submission' can "prevent us from adequately understanding practices and situations that are often defined by their intrinsically double, skewed nature (p.23)". As Lawler (2005) asks in her examination of the media representation of the protests of two different groups of women – working class and middle class mothers, "how liberating is it to have your clothes, your speech, your appearance vilified? On the other hand, how liberating is it to cast off these marks of difference and to adopt a normalised (middle-class) habitus (P.122)?" The middle class-mothers were "constituted as knowledgeable and understanding (p.117)." This serves as justification for their positions of power and authority, their ability to cast judgements on others, and the legitimacy of their knowledge and capital within a particular field. In contrast, the working class women "were not authorised to be actors in the field of political protest (p.123)", and consequently their attempts at resistance and claims to authority were not recognised because "their speech was not authorised (p.123)" due to the pathologised working-class identity conferred upon them and their ways of 'doing' motherhood. It is difficult to effect change when you are positioned so that your attempts to establish authority and resignify their knowledge and capital are not accepted. There is a need for broader social change and new ways of think amongst the dominant too. Both the dominant and the dominated need to recognise arbitrariness of their relationship. As Lawler (2005) notes "there is no innocent position (p.122)" that can be taken here, submission and resistance are both complicit with maintaining the social relations of power.

The question that Skeggs (2004, 2012) asks is, what space is there within the logic of this symbolic order for those who are "living life by a very different set of values" (Skeggs, 2004: 91),

those who lack the symbolic capital – and the desire to acquire such capital – to develop a 'legitimate', valued self? She describes how:

> Those who cannot accrue value in themselves by dominant symbolic techniques are therefore always/ already read as immoral. Hence refusal to play the game or lack of knowledge to participate in middle-class taste culture is read back on the working class as an individualised moral fault, a pathology, a problem of bad choice, bad culture, a failure to be enterprising or to be a reflexive self (p.91)

This is also the case of individual's relation to the deficit model of reading, which necessarily sets the parameters for what it means to be a reader, and who can and cannot be considered a reader. It is the concern of this study to explore how individuals navigate both legitimate and non-legitimate conceptualisations of reading in order to develop a sense of themselves as readers, and of what reading is to them. In a more recent study, Skeggs (2012) demonstrates how individuals who were "excluded from the dominant circuits for exchanging, accruing and investing in different forms of capital, [...] theoretically rendered as the zero sum of culture (p.486)". The individuals in Skegg's study, despite awareness of their disadvantage and the unfairness of their situation, of "why their lives had been so hard", found ways to make their lives liveable. They engaged in the "circulation of local value/s beyond the dominant symbolic, [...] one that lives value differently in the conditions of constant devaluation (p.488)". They generated "alternative ways of making value (p.472)", such as through their relations to others, characterised by care, respect and loyalty, as opposed to greed, rudeness, and self-interestedness. In this study, the young people whose reading lives were not valued within the dominant symbolic similarly found ways to attach value to their practices and to their present and future selves, often in the very fact that they positioned the individual outside of a particular field.

As Morrell (2002) demonstrates in his study of literacy development amongst urban youth, making space for popular culture in the classroom enable young people to develop an awareness of and challenge "dominant narratives and contend with oppressive practices in hopes of achieving a more egalitarian and inclusive society (p.72)". Despite this, Morrell discusses the use of texts from popular culture as though they were means to another end, for example, the use of rap to provide a 'way in' to other literary works, using traditional and accepted ways of responding to and using texts. In the examples provided by Morrell (2002), texts are removed from their social and cultural conditions of use. They are intended to lay "the groundwork for more traditional academic work while fostering student activism" (Morrell, 2002: 75), perpetuating the hierarchy between popular culture and the academic and literary. This is somewhat confusing considering his finding that these texts helped to increase awareness and engage pupils in discussion of social and cultural issues, with links to real world problems proving. Pupils also moved on from being critical readers of texts

to "becoming cultural producers themselves (p.74)", creating their own poems and taking part in drama-based activities, such as mock trials. It is necessary to first learn and play by the 'rules of the game' in order to be able to change it, which requires an awareness of the ways in which texts are used and produced. Luke (2014), Freebody and Luke (1999) and Barton and Hamilton (2000) also suggest that achieving social justice and redistributing social, cultural and economic power requires equality in awareness of the ways in which texts are produced and used in context. As Freebody and Luke (1999) suggest, "literacy was never a matter of deficit but principally an issue of economic and social access to the cultural institutions charged with literacy education and practice". This is a condition of the fact that struggles over power are also "struggles over the control of information" (Luke, 2014:20), central to which are questions of 'what is legitimate knowledge?', 'who has access to it?' and 'who can legitimately say what?' As Luke (2014) suggests, there is a need to move beyond simple ideology critique, often concerned with the content of texts, towards an emphasis on how texts are produced and used in various social and cultural contexts. This is in line with the approach to exploring reading and identity I have adopted in this research, focusing on questions of what reading is and who it is for, as opposed to specific texts and their content. Taking a view of 'structure as problem' rather than 'student as problem' (Ee Loh, 2013) creates a space in which more inclusive notions of what reading is and who it for can be generated, as multiple answers to these questions are acknowledged and validated. It follows from this that the problem of inequality is not that some young people do not (or cannot) read, as I demonstrate throughout chapter 5, but that their specific literacies are not rewarded in the educational context- they have not been "recognised as legitimate competence" in the field of the school, and therefore, are not exchangeable as symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1983: 18). In this research I employ a model of difference with regards to reading, taking a broad, critical view of what constitutes reading and acknowledging the embeddedness of such practices in various social and cultural contexts. I avoid prescribing a particular definition of reading at any point in this research, particularly when generating the data, in order to avoid placing a restrictive framework on participant's responses and replacing one dominant model with another. I deliberately left questions and tasks open to interpretation and provided little guidance, so as to best capture what reading meant to them in the context of their daily lives. However, this was not achieved unproblematically, as I will detail in the next chapter, where I discuss the methodological underpinnings of the research.

3. Methodology and Methods

In this next chapter, I outline and discuss the methodology and methods adopted in an attempt to answer my research questions. I highlight the theoretical and practical issues which arose during the research process and how I overcame them, examining the strengths and weaknesses of the methodological decisions I have made throughout. As has been discussed in much research on qualitative methods and methodology, traditional scientific notions of validity and reliability are, at best, unhelpful and, at worst, fail to acknowledge the value of social research (Sandelowski, 1993; Long and Johnson, 2000; Koch, 2006). Due to the interpretive and phenomenological nature of research which adopts a qualitative strategy of enquiry, alternative methods of assessing trustworthiness and authenticity are required. Rigor, as opposed to validity and reliability, is used to determine the trustworthiness and authenticity in qualitative research. Koch (2006) and Fereday (2006) each demonstrate the importance of openness regarding action and decision making at each stage of the research process, of providing detailed accounts of measures put in place to ensure the rigor of the research. Koch (2006) suggests that "the trustworthiness (rigor) of a study may be established if the reader is able to audit the events, influences and actions of the researcher (p.91)." She exemplifies this through what she terms a 'decision trail', documenting the decision made, influences and issues which played a role in shaping the research process so that the reader is able to see how she got from her research question to her findings and judge the trustworthiness and authenticity of the research. Fereday (2006) provides a similar account of his approach to data analysis in his doctoral research, in order to demonstrate the rigor of his research. I have attempted in this chapter to also provide a 'decision trail', offering a reflexive and reflective account of the conduct of this research. I discuss issues of rigor throughout this chapter, acknowledging its centrality to all stages of the research process.

As stated in the introduction to this thesis, the aim of this research is to explore young people's development of reading identity as they are exposed to various ways of reading and of being a reader. This is with a view to gaining a greater understanding of the impact of dominant discourses surrounding readers and reading on the ways in which individuals value themselves as readers and their own reading lives, and the extent to which they feel that reading is 'for the likes of them'. I aimed to explore how young people negotiate the various ways of reading and being a reader they are exposed to as they move between and within fields in order to develop a sense for themselves of what counts as reading and what it means to be a reader. I was then interested in the impact that this had, not only whether they identify as a reader and viewed reading as an appropriate pastime, but on their ways of being a reader - their 'reading habitus'. This was with a view to developing an understanding of how all stakeholders can best foster more positive reading identities. The following research questions were investigated in order to fulfil these aims:

How does an individual negotiate the various conceptualisations of reading and the reader as they move between fields, in order to develop perceptions of:

- What reading is and what 'counts' as reading?

- What it means to be a reader?

What impact does this have on the extent to which an individual identifies as 'someone who reads', and on their 'reading habitus'?

It is of importance to restate the aims and research questions at the beginning of this chapter due to their centrality to the issues I will discuss here, as both a starting point for the research process and as guides for action throughout. As will be demonstrated in the next section, the assumptions embedded in the research questions are a condition of the theoretical and philosophical assumptions being made by the researcher. When discussing the nature of qualitative research, Morgan and Smirich (1980) and Cunliffe (2011) have argued that the rationale for any research method cannot be "presented or considered in the abstract" as choices and judgements regarding method are situated in a "wider and deeper" context of philosophical and methodological assumptions (Morgan and Smirich, 1980: 491). Cunliffe (2011) suggests that reflecting on the ontological, epistemological and methodological logic that guides one's research provides the researcher with "a basis for crafting our research in consistent, careful, thoughtful, and informed ways (p.20)", demonstrating greater sensitivity to the social world around them. This highlights the importance of working up from the most basic methodological and philosophical assumptions of the researcher to the practical methods used to collect and analyse the data, and the way in which the research is written up. In light of this, I begin this chapter by outlining the interpretive paradigm informing the research and its most basic philosophical assumptions, which form the foundations of the research. I then proceed with a discussion of the practical issues faced in answering the research questions, outlining the research design and methods used. Issues such as sampling and the impact of the research context, methods of data collection and analysis, in addition to issues of rigor and ethics, are discussed here. I end this chapter by reflecting on issues of power and voice which have arisen throughout the various stages of this research, issues which merit particular attention when working with young people - who are often denied both. This is the case not only when they take part in research, but in society more broadly (Pole, Mizen, and Bolton, 1999; Brostrom, 2012). In my attempts to address these issues, I have faced various challenges, resulting in a more complex understanding of the relationships of power which are a condition of conducting social research, especially that which focuses on children and young people. I will discuss these challenges, highlighting the potential barriers to conducting research in a socially just way, and which is founded on a view of the child as competent and capable of exercising agency, in line with the new sociology of childhood (Pole, Mizen, and Bolton, 1999; Matthews, 2007; Brostrom, 2012).

This chapter has been organised in such a way as to highlight the various steps of the qualitative research process and how they relate to each other, as highlighted by Denzin and Lincoln (2011a) and Creswell (2013), beginning with the researcher's stance and ending with the interpretation and evaluation of findings- the task of the remainder of this thesis.

3.1. Philosophical Assumptions

In this section, I will discuss the view of the nature of the social world, and the possibilities for knowing it accommodates, which have guided this research. Awareness and transparency with regards to the foundational philosophical assumptions of research is central to a discussion and evaluation of methodology and methods. Creswell (2013) outlines the importance of acknowledging these perspectives in qualitative research, suggesting that they are integral to both the formulation of the research problem and questions, and the way in which the researcher seeks to explore them. As I will demonstrate in the final section of this chapter, issues of power in social research are also a condition of these ontological, epistemological and theoretical perspectives and are closely tied to issues of rigor and authenticity; what can and cannot be known, and by whom, who has agency and who does not. Therefore, they are particularly significant in research being carried out within a social justice framework.

I will begin this section, in which I outline the foundational interpretive paradigm of the research and the consequent philosophical assumptions, by stating the underlying assumptions of my research questions and focus. These assumptions are shaped by my philosophical stance as a researcher and my understanding of reading, identity and social justice, as outlined in in Chapter 3:

1. Conceptualisations of reading and the reader are socially constructed
2. Different types of reading and ways of being a reader are differently valued in different fields, positioning readers in relation to each other
3. As the individual moves within and between fields, they must negotiate these conceptions of reading in order to develop a sense of themselves as readers and of what reading means to them.

The critical theory paradigm which informs this research is based on the premise that "societies of the west are not unproblematically free and democratic" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011b: 93). This paradigm rejects the narrow view of economic determinism commonly held responsible for social injustice and inequality, instead choosing to examine the role of other aspects of society, such as the media, culture and language, in producing and reinforcing inequalities. In line with this approach, this research focuses on the role that the dominant paradigm of reading, as situated within broader conceptions of cultural value, plays in shaping young people's perceptions of

themselves as readers, and the ways in which it positions young people as they move within and between fields. As Burden (2008) explains:

> In a society such as ours, where literacy is a highly valued skill or commodity, a perceived inability to acquire that skill is highly likely to have a negative effect upon any individual's conception of themselves as competent (p.188).

This is certainly the case in the UK, as was outlined in Chapter 2 of this thesis, where not only literacy, but specific kinds of literacy, are valued over others, and positioned in relation to each other within particular fields.

Within the critical theory paradigm, the aim of conducting research is "empowering human beings to transcend the constraints placed on them by race, class and gender" (Creswell, 2013: 30), producing knowledge which has practical implications for overcoming social inequalities. This is due to the historical realist ontology within critical theory which suggests that a) reality is socially constructed and b) that it is shaped by "social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic and gender values" (Scotland, 2012: 13) as "all thought is fundamentally mediated by power relations that are socially and historically constituted" (Kincheloe, McLaren and Steinberg, 2011: 164). Reality is not something which exists separately from ourselves to be passively 'unveiled' by research, instead endeavouring to unveil the process by which the social world is constructed. The crictical paradigm maintains that we are "not only in the world but with it" and, therefore, we have the power to alter it (Scotland, 2012: 13). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) suggest that research within this paradigm results in a more complete account of social behaviour, when compared to its positivist and interpretive counterparts, as it acknowledges the political and ideological contexts in which much educational research - like all other social action - takes place. It is founded on the subjectivist epistemological assumption that knowledge is both "socially constructed and influenced by power relations within society" (Scotland, 2012: 13). The critical paradigm maintains the viewpoint that "what counts as knowledge is determined by the social and positional power of the advocates of that knowledge" (Cohen et al, 2007: 27) and, thus, is not value-free. Knowledge is "culturally derived, historically situated and influenced by political ideology" (Scotland, 2012:13). These ontological assumptions are commonly associated with research which finds itself within the subjective spectrum of what Cunliffe (2011) describes as "knowledge problematics (p.2)". In this research, I take a social, situated and critical view of literacy and identity development. I understand dominant conceptions of literariness and literateness to be socially and historically constructed, not only through policy and practice, but in the interactions which occur between individuals as they navigate particular fields. Such conceptions of social and cultural value work in the interests of the dominant groups in society and are reflective of wider educational and social inequalities, as was demonstrated throughout Chapters 1 and 2. With this in mind, I have endeavoured, where

possible, to conduct this research, not only for social justice, but in a socially just way, in order to avoid further marginalisation and alienation of my participants. Each stage of this research was designed to enable me to approach issues in a way that was accessible to participants, in light of their age and, in certain cases, their ability. These were intended to encourage reflection and to give participants a degree of autonomy in directing the focus of the research, avoiding placing any kind of restrictive framework onto their responses. I foreground the meaning that reading experiences and being a reader holds for the individual; acknowledging multiple possible understandings and their connection to broader social and cultural contexts.

However, it has been debated how far this can be achieved in practice, due to the inevitable imbalance in the relationship between the researcher and the researched (Scotland, 2012; Cohen et al, 2007). This is due to the fact that the researcher necessarily sets the agenda for the research, decides which methods will be used, designs research instruments and locates quotes for analysis in addition to making many other decisions which are integral to the research and often require the expertise of the researcher. Although I view participants as being the experts on the subject of their *own* lives, I view my task as highlighting the broader social and cultural forces and patterns which individual stories shape – and are shaped by – providing explanations for the differences between individual stories. In line with Akerstrom and Brunnberg's (2013) approach in their research with young people, I maintain that my participants and I each had "different roles, abilities, and expertise (p.529)", which were essential to the quality, authenticity and integrity of the research. As Lincoln, Lynam and Guba (2011) suggest, within such a paradigm, "the researcher has a voice but also imparts the voice of subjects, knowledge is presented through the paradigm of the researcher but remains sensitive to the views of others (p.115)" However, I have attempted to give participants maximum autonomy and to ensure that their voices have been heard, as far as the context of the research and the inevitable imbalance in the relationship between researcher and participants would allow. This is a consequence of the necessity, where research of this nature is concerned, to work within one's means, as I discuss in the following section. There are limits to what can realistically be achieved within the constraints of conducting social research, particularly when working with young people in schools. For example, participation in all stages of this research was optional and interviewees were self-selecting, as far as the teacher deemed it appropriate for the individual to participate. It may have been advisable for certain pupils not to take part if they were behind on classwork, if they were particularly disruptive or if there were other, personal reasons why they should not be put in a one-to-one interview situation. However, this issue only arose once, in my pilot school with two male participants, as I will detail in the final section of this chapter. Above all, I aimed to create a space where participants could share their views and take an active role in the generation of knowledge about themselves and their lives. The practical ways in which I have attempted to achieve this will be discussed in greater detail throughout this chapter.

Working within a critical theory interpretive paradigm also has important implications for the use of the knowledge and understandings generated through research. As discussed above, there is a belief within this tradition that "knowledge produced can change existing oppressive structures and remove oppression through empowerment" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011b: 103). This places on the researcher the responsibilities of the role of social and cultural critic; research within this paradigm is judged on its acknowledgement of context and its ability to effect change through a critical examination of reality and the production of emancipatory knowledge (Scotland, 2012). It is, therefore, important that this research acknowledges the historical, political, social, cultural and institutional contexts, and the values they maintain regarding literature and literariness, within which participants develop their 'reading habitus' and which are responsible for prevailing conceptions of literariness and literateness. This thesis takes a critical view of historical, cultural and political conceptions of literature and literariness throughout. Common to research working within a critical theory paradigm, this research employs a normative approach to investigating the social world, "it considers how things ought to be, it judges reality" (Scotland, 2012: 13). It seeks not simply to describe the situation as it stands but to provide a critique and an agenda for change. However, this does not mean that I am seeking to generate an alternative, but equally narrow and exclusive, understanding of what reading is and who it is for, replacing one 'cultural arbitrary' with another (Bourdieu and Passeron, 2000). Rather, my aim is to unveil and critique the *processes* by which such conceptions are produced and legitimised, and to argue for the opening up of understandings of what it means to be a reader today. It is only through 'recognition' of the process of social and cultural reproduction by both the dominated and the dominant that would break this cycle and lead to a levelling of the playing field. This places responsibility for achieving social justice on both the dominant and the dominated (Bourdieu and Passeron, 2000).

This paradigm dictates that a reflexive, interpretive approach to research is the most appropriate way of generating and analysing data in this investigation. This necessitates an openness regarding the value judgements which both the researcher and the researched bring with them. It is these very value judgements which are central to the production of knowledge and understanding. Throughout this thesis, I attempt to maintain openness regarding such value judgements, paying attention to the context, circumstances and relationships through which knowledge has been produced, in order to protect the validity of the research and to allow the reader to make their own judgements. This also had important implications for the style of writing employed in this research, with the use of first person in order to acknowledge the agency and presence of the researcher. These philosophical assumptions also have implications for the researcher's perception of the child and how they compare to adults in terms of ability and understanding. This has an impact on each subsequent stage of the research, on whose voice is being heard and privileged as providing access to 'true' knowledge of the social world, and on the

relationship between the researcher and the researched. However, as McGarry (2015) suggests, there has been little discussion of the epistemological assumptions of more participatory approaches and the researcher's positioning of the young person as 'expert' in the research encounter. She, along with Lomax (2012), demonstrates that the use of different methods for generating data differently position the researcher and researched in relation to each other, creating different power relations. It suggests that they enable different, as opposed to more authentic, insights into youth experience, acknowledging the situated nature of knowledge produced through research.

This research is driven by the belief that "educators and researchers should consider children as competent people with agency and the potential to act as active democratic participants" (Brostrom, 2012: 266) and that young people are "active participants in their societies" (Matthews, 2007: 330). Research on young people must be in their interests, which necessitates letting them set the agenda for the research, and the consequent agenda for change (Brostrom, 2012). As I will demonstrate through the analysis of data generated in this study, positioning the young person as such is key to shifting the focus of current debated surrounding young people reading and effecting change. However, I maintain a reflexive view of the impact that the research setting, my relationships with participants, and the methods used to generate data, have had on the extent to which I succeeded in positioning the young people as such. Attempting to 'walk the talk' with regards to this interpretive paradigm, and establishing the rigor and authenticity of the research, has not been entirely unproblematic. As I noted previously, I have faced various challenges in dealing with issues of power and voice in this research, resulting in a deeper understanding of the relationships of power which are a condition of conducting social research. At the end of this chapter, I will reflect on the extent to which I was successful in conducting this research in a way that was socially just, and which positioned the young people as agentic individuals who were experts on the subject of their own lives.

3.2. A Qualitative Strategy of Inquiry

This interpretive paradigm lends itself, but is not constrained, to a qualitative approach to inquiry due to its critical, subjectivist approach to knowledge and the social world, and the importance it places on social and historical contexts (Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006). Qualitative research is subjective and representational in nature, with its focus on interpreting meaning and its openness regarding the impact and presence of values. This is a huge contrast to the positivist culture of research, which is more in tune with the methodologies of the natural sciences and in which such value judgements and critique is viewed as damaging to its validity. Gewirts and Cribb (2012) question how far we, as researchers, can actually achieve a view that is "objective in the sense of

being impersonal and acultural (p.20)," suggesting that disguising the underlying values of research, rather than the overt acknowledgment of them, may reduce the validity of social research. They also highlight the difficulty in discussing certain issues in a meaningful, useful way without using value-laden terms and making moral judgements, proposing that this may be a central difference in the task of social and natural scientists.

As Denzin and Lincoln (2011a) suggest, research "is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible (p.4)." They describe qualitative research as a series of representations of the real world, with the aim of reaching an understanding of the meanings that people bring to the phenomena under investigation. The metaphor of the qualitative researcher as a 'bricoleur', as employed by Denzin and Lincoln (2011a) and Kincheloe, McLaren and Steinberg (2011), presents an image of the qualitative researcher as a 'handyman' who "makes use of whatever tools are available to complete the task" (Kincheloe et al, 2011: 168). This is a condition of the necessity to work within one's means within qualitative research, often due to the researcher's belief in the subjective, intangible nature of the subject in question. Consequently, qualitative research tends to be multi-methodical in nature, reflecting "an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question (p.7)." Thus, the researcher, or 'bricoleur', ends up with a series of representations which they must connect to form the whole picture. This metaphor for the researcher's endeavour is reflective of the interpretive, multi-vocal nature of qualitative research. Due to the intangible nature of the phenomena being explored, the central focus of this research being that of identity, perceptions and values relating to reading, it was necessary to employ a methodology and methods which would allow me to provide as accurate a representation of these as possible, making "the best out of the available knowledge (p.7)". It is possible only to produce a representation of the situation, which suggests the importance of getting information from a variety of sources and using a variety of methods, as discussed above, in order to generate a more holistic, contextualised view of the situation. Further to this, as was demonstrated in the literature review section of this thesis, in depth, qualitative studies which focus on the meaning that phenomena hold for the individual are required in order to dispel myths regarding young people's reading and challenge the assumptions of current policy and debate in this area.

The current field of qualitative inquiry, along with the philosophical assumptions which accompany it, is born out of a historical moment in which "social scientists turned to the humanities, hoping to learn how to do complex structural and post-structural readings of social texts" and in which "the line between text and context blurred" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011a: 4). Cunliffe (2011), in her article which builds on the framework of core assumptions outlined by Morgan and Smircich (1980), argues that this has resulted in an increased need for openness and reflection regarding the underlying philosophical assumptions of research as developments in

metatheoretical perspectives, research methods and ways of theorizing mean that "our choices about qualitative research have become more complex (p.647)". The interpretive paradigm and strategy of enquiry outlined in these first two sections have important implications for the way in which this research was carried out in practice. As I will detail throughout this chapter, I have approached this research in such a way that facilitates an emphasis on individual subjectivities and the social and cultural structures in which they are embedded. This enabled me to examine individual perceptions of reading and how they shape, and are shaped by, the reading practices which are valued in a particular field.

3.3. Sampling: Selecting Schools and Young People

Curtis, Gesler and Smith (2000) point out that issues of sampling often receive little attention in methodological discussion of qualitative research compared to those relating to data collection and analysis, despite its centrality to an "understanding of the validity of qualitative research (p.1002)". Newby (2010) also suggests that this is possibly the most crucial stage of the research process because "as well as being authoritative, the people and organisations that give us data have to be representative of something meaningful (p.229)". In other words, a sample must enable the researcher to "say something sensible (p.229)" about the phenomenon in question and to make convincing arguments regarding research questions. Curtis et al (2000) use Miles and Huberman's (1994) criteria for evaluating sampling in qualitative research when discussing the three examples of qualitative research presented in the article. They propose that a qualitative sampling strategy should be relevant to the conceptual framework and research questions, generate rich information, enhance generalizability, produce believable descriptions and be both ethical and feasible. As is suggested in much scholarship surrounding this issue, the effectiveness of sampling in qualitative research is judged on the appropriateness of the sample in light of the research aims and questions and its ability to facilitate both depth of analysis and to generate a "new and richly textured understanding of experience (p.183)" (Sandelowski, 1995; Morse, 1991; Coyne, 1997). I will consider these criteria when evaluating the sampling strategy used here. In this section, I will discuss the sampling strategy employed during the pilot phase of this research, the sampling issues which arose during this stage of the research, and their implications for the main study.

3.3.1. Target Population

The target population for this study was initially KS4 pupils in England from disadvantaged backgrounds. I selected this particular age group as they were nearing the end of compulsory schooling and I was interested in exploring the reading habitus young people were entering the adult world with, particularly those whose only experience of reading was in school. What kind of

choices would young people be likely to make with regards to reading, when no longer required to read in school? I was also interested to see what impact assessment and high stakes testing at GCSE- the formal qualifications young people complete in the final two years of secondary school in the UK- had on the young people's perceptions of reading and of themselves as readers. I contacted schools in areas of Yorkshire and the Humber which were ranked as some of the most deprived in England, according to the English Indices of Deprivation 2010 (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2011). This is a measure of deprivation within small areas of England, each containing around 1,500 people, termed Lower Layer Super Output areas (LSOA's). It identifies the most deprived areas across the country, using a "broader concept of multiple deprivation, made up of several distinct dimensions, or domains, of deprivation." It is, therefore, not simply a measure of affluence or of financial deprivation, but accounts for the variety of issues a community may face. The domains included in this measure are; Income Deprivation, Employment Deprivation, Health Deprivation and Disability, Education Skills and Training Deprivation, Barriers to Housing and Services, Living Environment Deprivation, and Crime. This measurement of disadvantage follows the focus of the critical paradigm, which encourages a broader view of the factors which produce and maintain social inequality, moving away from simplistic notions of economic determinism. This provided me with a more accurate picture of the school and its pupils. Drawing on my sample from schools serving communities of this nature was necessary due to my research aims and questions, which require me to examine the shaping of a 'reading habitus' in pupils from this socio-cultural background specifically. Therefore, it was pupils from these schools that would most likely be able to "say something sensible" (Newby, 2010: 229) in light of my research questions and aims. However, as the Department for Communities and Local Government (2011) advises, it is not possible to presume that all members of these communities, or all pupils attending these schools, possess the same characteristics and face the same challenges. However, data of this nature relating to individual pupils is unavailable due to issues of confidentiality. In order to account for this, I collected additional information on aspects of my interviewees' backgrounds, concerning their experience and perceptions of reading. For example, I questioned the young people on factors such as their parent's reading habits, the amount of reading material available in the home, activities they took part in outside of school, and their own aspirations for the future.

I had originally intended to compare schools serving both disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged communities, however, this would require a larger sample size which would result in categories that were either too small to determine their analytical importance or too large to accommodate the depth of analysis required in qualitative, case study research (Sandelowski, 1995). As is proposed by Sandelowski (1995), in such instances it is necessary to investigate one group at a time. I decided that a demographically homogenous sample would be most appropriate for ensuring the analytic relevance of this research. Therefore, further research will be needed

involving schools and individuals from more advantaged backgrounds, along with a larger synthesis of the findings from both studies in order to make comparisons (Sandelowski, 1995). In this research, I was able to make claims regarding the reading identity of individuals from this socio-cultural background specifically but was not able make comparisons with other groups or claims regarding the experiences of these groups. Two schools took part in the main study for this research in order to control for school-specific factors, increase the number of critical incident charts that could be collected and broaden the sampling frame from which individual interviewees could be selected.

3.3.2. Sampling Method
I encountered a number of barriers when attempting to gain access to schools, and had to make compromises regarding the age of my participants. I initially created a list of schools and emailed a letter (Appendix 1), either to the Head of English or to receptions, requesting that the email be forwarded. The letter gave details of the project and what their participation would entail. I then telephoned the schools a week later. I was often unable to speak to the relevant member of staff when I telephoned schools, either administrators would not forward me to the relevant department or calls went unreturned when staff were unavailable. I also did not receive replies to the emails that I sent to each school. Recruiting participants was made particularly difficult by the fact that, no doubt with good reason, contact information for relevant staff members and departments were often not made available on school websites. This is understandable, and unsurprising, considering the challenging circumstances these schools were facing. Schools are very busy places and it is unlikely that participating in such a project would be a priority, particularly in light of the pressures placed on teachers in the current climate of competition and accountability. Such schools, like many others - regularly inspected and judged by Ofsted - are accustomed to being subject to the scrutiny of the outside world. In one particularly extreme example of this, only one day after I had emailed and attempted to telephone a number of schools who were part of a chain of academies, did I see on the news reports that they were being shut down. The schools who took part in this study, although they fit the criteria of the research, were accessed by convenience. School A was the secondary school I had myself attended from the age of 14-18, and I was able to gain access by contacting a teacher I knew who worked in the English department. I then able to access school B through my contact teacher at school A, who put me in touch with the then Head of English there. My contact teachers were responsible for placing me with particular classes. Neither of my main study schools were willing to allow me to work with KS4 pupils. As these young people were preparing for final examinations and completing coursework, neither of the Subject Leaders would authorise their participation in the study, which required them to take time out of lessons. My final sample comprised of two year 9 classes in each school; two mixed ability in one

school, and one high and one low ability in the other, where they had already started the GCSE coursework and had recently sat a mock exam.

My selection of individual pupils for interviews was more theoretical and I had greater control over this stage of the sampling. I set out to select pupils whose critical incident chart (C.I.C) indicated that the pupil had something to say on the subject of reading, whether positive or negative, and would be likely to engage in discussion and shed light on developing themes. This was also in keeping with my focus on generating maximum opportunity to learn, as discussed in part one of this chapter. After completing the observations and C.I.Cs with each of the classes, I then proceeded to select two to three pupils from each class. Selection was based on the nature of their C.I.C, on their willingness to participate and on agreement with the teacher that the pupil would be a suitable participant. The C.I.C. activity is discussed in detail in the section of this chapter which outlines and evaluates methods of data collection. It involved the charting of experiences and events along a river or a road, which individuals felt had been critical in directing their 'reading journeys', impacting on their view of reading and of themselves as readers. Pupils were asked to indicate their willingness to participate in the interviews on their C.I.C. This gives the pupils' a degree of freedom in the research which is in line with my interpretive paradigm and with Miles and Huberman's (1994) criteria of ethical sampling. The use of a purposive, non-probability sampling strategy allowed me to select a number of what Liamputtong (2013) describes as "information-rich" cases which enabled me to develop "'in-depth understanding and insights into the findings instead of empirical generalisations (p.12)." In previous and current scholarship on this issue, sampling has often occurred at the level of the school or the level of a particular lesson or set of lessons (Moss, 2000; Coles, 2013 & Yandell, 2013). However, sampling at the level of the individual allowed for a more detailed, holistic representation of the issue which would have been made difficult by sampling at the level of school. This decision was also based on my theoretical understanding of the issue, as outlined in part one of this thesis, in addition to my methodological understanding that each pupil, or case, functions within their class, school, family, local and wider community (Stake, 2008). This is in line with the nature of much qualitative research which seeks information rich cases that purposefully fit the study (Sandelowski, 1995; Coyne, 1997). It also conforms to several of the criteria outlined by Miles and Huberman (1994) for evaluating qualitative sampling; it is likely to generate rich information that is relevant to the research questions and conceptual framework and, therefore, is more likely to produce believable descriptions. However, as Curtis et al (2000) point out, sampling at the level of the individual involves more complex issues, particularly where marginalised people are concerned, which could have "implications for the people within in the study, possibly other people's lives in the future (p.1009)". Consequently, it was necessary to pay particular attention to ethical issues such as confidentiality and informed consent and to avoid labelling in this research due to detailed descriptions of individual experiences

being provided. This was also a condition of the critical theory paradigm of the research, which places importance on the need to protect and to avoid the further marginalisation of participants. These ethical issues and my attempts to overcome them are discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

My final interview sample was comprised of 28 pupils from two different schools, in order to ensure full exploration and saturation of theoretical categories. In addition to this, I collected total of 96 critical incident charts. It was necessary to keep my sample size relatively small due to the case-centred approach of this research. As Sandelowski (1995) discusses, the aim in qualitative research is to "maximize understanding of one in all its diversity (p.180)" and such research is often case-oriented, rather than variable-oriented. Therefore, having a sample size that was too large would interfere with the case-centred nature of the research and would prevent the depth of analysis needed to ensure a holistic, fully contextualised understanding of individual cases. The focus is on quality rather than quantity in qualitative sampling, with the aim of unveiling meaning and processes (Liamputtong, 2013). Therefore, the researcher seeks conceptual relevance, rather than the statistical or probabilistic relevance sought in quantitative research and which is not facilitated by my sampling strategy. In the case of this research, and in qualitative research more generally, using statistical, probability based sampling would not necessarily leave me with a sample comprised of those individuals able to provide the greatest insight into my research questions. Qualitative research seeks to make analytic, rather than statistical, generalisations; careful selection of cases and in-depth examination of "how they fit within general constructs […] may lead to elaboration or reformulation of a theory" (Curtis et al, 2000: 1002). Therefore, the rigor of sampling in qualitative research is determined by its ability to meet the needs of the study and to leave room for a full description of the phenomenon (Coyne, 1997; Morse et al, 2002). It is suggested by the data collected during the pilot stage of this research that an interview sample of this size will allow for a more thorough exploration and saturation of theoretical categories, whilst also maintaining focus on individual voices through in-depth discussion of specific cases.

Moreover, sampling in qualitative research, where the focus is not on the individual themselves but their ability to shed light on a phenomenon, the sample size must also take into account factors such as the number of interviews, observations and questionnaires, etc. which allow a complete account of the phenomenon in each 'case' to be developed (Sandelowski, 1995; Coyne, 1997). A variety of data collections methods have been adopted in this research and multiple interviews with each participant and observations of each class have taken place in order to allow me triangulate my findings and ensure the analytic validity of the research. As discussed in the introduction to this section, there is a need to maintain a balance between this deep, case-oriented analysis and developing a "new and richly textured understanding of experience" (Sandelowski, 1995: 183) in research of this nature. My pilot study played an integral role in determining the size

and nature of the sample that would be most appropriate for this research. Due to the size of the sample, the findings of this research cannot be generalized to the wider population and should be considered alongside other research of a similar nature. However, it can be said that this is a condition of much research in the social sciences more generally, both qualitative and quantitative, with individual research projects being but a 'brick in the wall' of a much wider body of work.

3.3.3. The Research Context and Participants
This research was conducted in two state secondary schools in the East Riding of Yorkshire, each catered for both males and females from the age of 11-18. I refer to these schools throughout this thesis as School A and School B. Each of my interviewees have also been given pseudonyms and any identifying information has not been included in the writing up of the research. This was to protect the identity and anonymity of the young people and institutions involved in this study. School A was located in small coastal town on the east coast of Yorkshire (population: 15,000), whose industry centres largely on seasonal, low skilled, and low paid work. School B was located 11 miles to the south west, in a small, rural market town (population: 13,000). Despite some remaining agricultural industry, the local economy rests largely on retail, hospitality and service industries. They are each, respectively, 24 miles and 23 miles, away from the nearest university city- with poor public transport links. The population of both is primarily white and working class.

Although these challenges appear consistent with those faced in many inner-city, urban areas, as Ovenden-Hope and Passy (2015) explain in their study of coastal academies "the isolated location of these coastal academies brought additional challenges (p.12)". Despite recent scholarship by Ovenden-Hope and Passy (2015) and a series of initiatives to support economic development and employment in these areas (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2016), the specific challenges faced by coastal areas, such as a poor access to resources and a lack of opportunities for cultural and work experience, have largely been neglected in research and policy. For example, many national initiatives, such as London/ City Challenge (Kidson & Norris, 2014), have focused on raising attainment and aspirations in disadvantaged inner city areas. An MP for another town in the East Yorkshire region recently wrote a letter the current education secretary, Nicky Morgan, expressing her concerns that, despite achieving highly in the primary years, many young people in her constituency fail to achieve highly in secondary school and even fewer move on to university. She suggests that these young people are being let down by central government and prevented from achieving their full potential, calling for more support to be given to such communities. Similarly, little research has been conducted on the educational challenges of rural areas, except for a body of work which focuses on teacher recruitment and retention (Hudson and Hudson, 2008; Eppley, 2009), and on pupil migration from these areas (Corbett, 2005; Corbett, 2007; Sherman & Sage, 2011). Previous research and policy has also failed

to examine young people's experience of living and growing up in these regions and dealing with their geographical and consequent educational, social, and cultural isolation (Ovenden-Hope and Passy, 2015; The Future Leader's Trust, 2015). Further to this, the majority of research into literacy and reading has taken place in the specific context of urban classrooms and communities (Morell, 2002; Turvey, Yandell & Ali, 2013). This research seeks to contribute to filling this gap by examining the specific challenges of raising young readers in the context of the challenges faced by coastal and rural communities. Despite this challenging context, each of the schools achieved relatively high levels of A*-C grades at GCSE than those in English when compared to similar schools, and both were rated as 'good' by Ofsted- although school B is currently receiving some media attention after an recent inspection which has resulted in the Headteacher's resignation and reports that the school is being placed in special measures.

During an initial meeting with my contact teachers at each school, I asked about the schools' reading cultures and their efforts to encourage reading for pleasure. School A, other than allocating time at the beginning of English lessons on a Friday for quiet reading, was doing little to encourage reading for pleasure throughout the school. Much of the work was done by individual teachers working with individual students. For example, my contact teacher described recommending books to particular students based on what they had brought to read during their free reading time, however, this appeared to be young people who were already interested in reading rather than an effort to engage reluctant readers. In contrast, School B went to great lengths to encourage reading for pleasure and create a pro-reading culture within the school. There was a screen up in the English Department with a rolling display of pictures of staff members from various departments and their favourite books, accompanied by quotes explaining their selection. The teacher also described author visits and workshops that had been organised by the school, and an event where all students and staff- including caretakers and cleaners- had to stop what they were doing and read a book of their choice. Pupils also had fortnightly 'library lessons', where they had an hour to read a book of their choice in the library, in addition to quiet reading time in lessons. The subject leader was keen to show me around the library during my initial visit and introduce me to the librarian. Pupils in KS3 were also encouraged to work their way through 3 reading handbooks which required them to complete various activities related to the texts they had read. For the bronze award, the young people had to read 5 books of their choice. To complete the silver award, they had to read 10 books, and the 'type' of books were specified for them. To achieve the 'gold' level, students had to read 15 books that were considered, in the teacher's words, 'classic' and 'challenging'. The young people received increasing numbers of 'tickets' for a prize draw to win a Kindle or book voucher, as well as congratulatory letters that were sent home to parents, on completion of each level. Further to this, the subject leader explained his desire to raise the profile of reading in the school, suggesting that it was part of his motivation for taking part in the research.

However, the school itself is not my primary unit of analysis, but forms part of a holistic exploration of individual pupils' development of a reading identity. It takes into account the various social and cultural contexts which may be responsible for shaping their perceptions of reading and of themselves as readers, and the specific barriers and advantaged faced by these individuals. It is important also to disclose here the fact that I attended this school from 2005-2009, and studied for my GCSE's and A Levels there. Although this was a number of years before I returned to conduct this research in 2014, little had changed and many of my old teachers were still working there. Despite now being an adult, this gave me a certain degree of 'insider status' and familiarity with the young people. I was familiar with the local community, and the particular challenges faced by young people growing up in the area – such as the lack of opportunity and aspiration, low expectations, and the social problems which accompany high levels of poverty and unemployment. I was also familiar with the workings of the school and many of the staff members who were working there.

School	Students	Class		Ability	Gender		Interviewees	
School A	42	1	26	Higher (B-A*)	Male	4	Male	3
					Female	22	Female	9
		2	16	Lower (D-C)	Male	11	Male	4
					Female	5	Female	4
School B	54	1	21	Mixed	Male	8	Male	2
					Female	13	Female	2
		2	33	Mixed	Male	12	Male	2
					Female	19	Female	2
Total	96				No answer 2			28

Table 1: Research Participants

3.4. Methods of Data Collection

In this section, I will discuss the methods used to generate the data necessary to answer my research questions. During the pilot phase of this research, I began by conducting classroom observations. This was with a view to exploring how literature and reading was conceived of in the context of the classroom, and how pupils respond to this conceptualisation. However, I decided not to include this stage in the main study. A number of practical and methodological issues were highlighted by this stage of the study. Firstly, the teachers were very aware of my presence in the classroom. During my first observations, teachers apologised that they were not doing anything interesting or exciting, expressed concern that I might 'catch them out' saying something wrong, and used me as an example during class discussions. For example, when comparing the prospects of educated women today with women in the 1300s, she explained to the pupils that, in 1300 'Miss would just be really clever, she wouldn't be able to do anything about it' and stated that 'you might catch me out here, Miss' when estimating when the play was written. The teacher's sensitivity to my presence is a potential limitation of this research for two reasons. Firstly, it may result in

researcher effects, or the 'Hawthorn Effect', with participants under observation altering their behaviour due to the presence of the researcher. This would lead to a bias in my findings and an inaccurate representation of what goes in this context. The second issue is of an ethical nature, as any altering of participants' behaviour may also result in disruption to their usual daily routine which, in turn, may disrupt pupils' learning.

There were also issues surrounding the relevance of those lessons which were not based on the study of a literary text. My observations suggest that these were useful in giving a general sense of pupils' behaviour and reactions to subject English as a whole and the teacher's presentation and framing of the subject. However, they offered little direct insight into the conceptualisation of reading and pupils' reading identities. They were only useful when compared to those lessons which were focused on the study of a literary text, highlighting the consistency of certain themes across the subject as a whole. In addition to this, my philosophical and theoretical framework, which focuses on the meaning that reading choices and behaviours hold for the individual, and how they are made in relation to particular circumstances, rather than the specific nature of their reading choices, necessitated a focus on the voice of the individual, as the "point of overlap between the physical, the symbolic and the social" (McNay, 1999: 98), rather than on the contexts themselves. Therefore, it is the individual's interpretation of these contexts, and the meaning of them *for the individual*, which is of significance in this research, rather than the objective nature of these contexts. For example, whether young people think their friends view reading as socially acceptable, rather than whether they actually do, because that is what then influences their perceptions and behaviour. When analysing the data, it became apparent that the observations were offering little insight into why the young people were doing what they were doing, and the meaning they ascribed to their behaviour. This led me to question what the data was contributing, whose voice was being heard and whose perspective I was viewing things from. Conducting more interviews in place of the observations allowed increased focus to be placed on the voice of the individual, rather than my interpretation, which enabled a more fruitful exploration of my research questions. When conducting observations, it is difficult to make inferences of cause, effect and intention or observations, stimulus and response. It left to the researcher to decide "of what is this observation evidence?" (Cohen, 2007: 396). When working with human participants, the researcher can only see 'what' is happening not 'why', it does not allow the researcher to 'get inside people's heads'. Wragg (2012) also discusses the "danger with the taken for granted (p.51)" when using qualitative methods of observations. He suggests that one limitation of research of this kind is the often subjective nature of the explanations of observations, due the tendency to see things as we wish to see them, rather than as they really are. Our interpretations are often coloured by judgements and values which form the basis of a shared system of beliefs viewed as objective 'truths'. This suggests that observations are not the best method for providing the data that will

answer my questions, which are concerned with individuals' beliefs and perceptions and their origins. This approach would also be inconsistent with the interpretive paradigm which guides decisions in this research, which maintains a view of the social world that is both socially constructed and based on "social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic and gender values" (Scotland, 2012: 13) and which foregrounds the voice and agency of the individual (Bernal, 2002). It followed from this that it was more analytically valuable to interview a greater number of student, rather than proceed with conducting classroom observations.

This main study took part in two stages. Firstly, I employed a whole class critical incident charting activity. This required the young people who took part to map, along a river or a road, the events and experiences which they felt had been critical in directing their reading journey. The young people were then asked to 'rate' themselves according to how much they enjoyed reading, how much they read in their spare time and how good they felt they were at reading. I then selected a number of those who completed this first stage and who had already agreed to be interviewed, to take part in a series of two semi-structured interviews. The first interview involved further elaboration on and discussion of the participant's reading 'journey'. In the second, I brought in a variety of reading material to prompt discussion of different kinds of texts. This allowed me to explore the ways in which pupils view certain types of text and what they consider to be relevant reading material for them. It also provided insight into the process of reading related decision-making, highlighting the factors that attract or deter individuals from approaching particular texts. This is in line with the approach to identity which informs this research, which views choices and behaviours as the embodiment of an individual's identity (Bourdieu, 2010; Hitlin, 2003; Reay, David & Ball 2005). Each stage of this research was designed to enable me to approach issues in a way that was accessible to participants, in light of their age and, in certain cases, their ability. These methods functioned as prompts for thinking about these issues, facilitating their guidance of the discussion. I will now proceed to discuss these methods of data collection in detail, alongside the lessons learnt from the pilot study.

3.4.2. Critical Incident Charts

The first stage of my main study was a whole class activity in which pupils were required to map their 'reading journey' using critical incident charts. This tool has been adapted from Pamela Burnard's 'rivers of musical experience' (Burnard, 2000; Burnard, 2004), for use in exploring the reading lives of my participants. Critical incident charting is a visual-based construct elicitation tool, which involves the visual mapping of the individual's "assumptions, values, ideas and histories (p.168)" (Burnard, 2012). It originated as a clinical tool in personal construct psychology, adapted for use in research into music education concerned with teacher identity (Burnard, 2012) and pupils' experiences of a musical phenomenon (Burnard, 2000), and in research which seeks to trace

the musical lives of mature age keyboard players (Taylor, 2011). I conducted this activity with a much larger sample (96) than the tool is usually used with, where around 10-15 people would complete the activity and all would be interviewed or, alternatively, the activity would be completed during the interview (Francis, 1997; Taylor, 2011; Burnard, 2012). Only a select few of the participants who took part in this stage of the research were asked to participate in the interviews, where the critical incident chart was discussed in greater depth. In the first interview, pupils were asked to talk me through what they had put and why, providing further explanation and clarification. They were also given opportunity to add anything at the end of each interview after our discussions. The primary purpose of this section of the research was to explore the various events and experiences which pupils themselves viewed as being integral to shaping their reading identities.

Pupils were asked to think about their attitudes towards reading and towards themselves as readers, noting events and experiences that they felt had been critical in directing their reading lives and adding them to the river/ road that represents their 'reading journey', using words and – if they wished – pictures. I asked pupils to try and explain why they felt that these events and experiences were 'critical' in shaping them as readers. However, I also advised that, if they were unable to articulate this they could simply put a smiley or a sad face to indicate whether the experience was a positive or a negative one. This was intended to allow participants who found it difficult to explain themselves to communicate their ideas in a way that was more accessible to them. It was also intended to prevent them having to go into detail where they didn't want to, regarding experiences that may be personal or distressing. Before creating their critical incident chart, I explained to pupils what a 'critical incident' was and talked them through an example of a critical incident chart, or 'reading journey'. The teacher and I also gave further examples and prompts whilst pupils were writing, particularly for those who were struggling with the activity. However, I purposely provided limited guidance and left the activity open to their interpretation, so as to have as little influence as possible on their responses. Pupils were then asked to fill out a 'face sheet' (see Appendix 2), indicating whether or not they would be willing to be interviewed and the extent to which they agreed with the following:

- I am good at reading
- I enjoy reading
- I read a lot in my own time (not for the purposes of school)

These questions have a clearer, more specific focus than those used in the pilot (see appendix 2), making my intentions more explicit. They gave me a sense of individuals' perceptions of themselves as readers, their perceptions of reading and the importance of reading in their daily lives. In short, whether or not they identify as 'someone who reads'. I also took this opportunity to collect data on

the gender and the individual's native language. This was because my pilot data suggested that these factors played a significant role in shaping reading identity. However, unlike my pilot school, none of the young people who took part were EAL (although one stated that their first language was 'sarcasm', and another 'American'). Considered alongside the individual's critical incident chart, this enabled me to see how these experiences, or lack thereof, have shaped their reading identity and how this has served to guide subsequent reading behaviours and perceptions. The pilot data demonstrated the value of the C.I.C.s in highlighting where these perceptions have originated from and the ways in which individuals have made sense of their experiences.

My use of critical incident charting was shaped by my theoretical understanding of concept of identity, discussed in the previous chapter of this thesis. It acknowledges the social, situated nature of identity and recognises and facilitates the individual's capacity for personal reflexivity. Pupils are actively encouraged to reflect on what these experiences and events mean to them and to decide for themselves what had been important or significant in their reading lives, rather than relying on pre-specified criteria. This activity gave pupils the opportunity to reflect on why they hold certain beliefs and values, which they may previously have taken for granted, with several of my interviewees adding to their critical incident chart at the end of the last interview. The critical incident charts place focus on the individual interpretation of events and leaves room for a variety of responses, avoiding placing a restrictive framework on the diversity of human experience. Those, this tool offers "insight into the richly multifaceted and highly complex relationships by which identities are built" (Burnard, 2004: 7). This is also consistent with the critical theory interpretive paradigm which forms the foundations of this research, encouraging "active involvement from participants in an emancipatory and democratic way (p.8)" and "promoting reflection on and change in the self (p.7)" (Burnard, 2004). As this interpretive paradigm maintains, it is only possible to effect change through a critical awareness of one's situation.

Other advantages of using the tool in this way is that it has generated a lot of, often rich, data in a short space of time. Although this tool is more often used with a much smaller sample, as mentioned previously, this gave me sense of the general attitude towards reading within the various groups and the reasons given for this, as well as allowing for focus on the diversity and uniqueness of specific cases of reading identity development. This data could then also be used to contextualise that generated during the interview stage. It was also enlightening for the teachers in that they were given an insight in to how and why their pupils might be responding in a certain way to what they are presented with in the classroom. Due to issues of confidentiality, teachers were not given the opportunity to read through the C.I.C.s, although, they were able to discuss these issues with the pupils whilst they were completing the task, providing support for those who needed it.

There were, however, some issues with using these charts as a method of selecting participants for this stage of the research. Those who did not agree to be interviewed were often those who were less able and less interested in reading. Every pupil in the lowest ability (G-E) group in my pilot study declined to be interviewed and, therefore, no one in this group was interviewed. Fortunately, I only had this issue with one of the classes who took part in my main study- with only 8 students agreeing to be interviewed in School A, Class 2, which was also the lowest ability class. This may be due to fears that they were being tested or judged, or a product of a lack of interest in the topic. Understandably, those who have a negative attitude towards reading and/ or themselves as readers appear to be less likely to want to engage in a conversation about it. It is also unlikely that they would have been forthcoming during the interviews. However, some of the individuals who declined to be interviewed also produced some of the most interesting and thought provoking 'reading journeys', which I was unable to pursue further. This may result in some bias in my final results as those who do agree to participate are not necessarily representative of the full range of experiences and perceptions present in that particular classroom. I have, however, endeavoured to select a mixture of males and females with both positive and negative perceptions of reading and who represent a variety of abilities and experiences, each providing 'maximum opportunity to learn'. I also interviewed several young people who wrote little on their critical incident charts. Interestingly, these participants, despite deciding not engage in this stage of the research – or lacking the ability to do so- had agreed to be interviewed and often had a lot to say on the topic. I found out in the interview stage of the research that two of these participants were, in fact, dyslexic and had struggled with the activity. This highlights the importance of using a variety of methods in social research, an issue I will elaborate on further in the final section of this chapter. When conducting the main study, I also altered my language when asking pupils whether or not they would like to be interviewed, using 'discussion' or 'chat' instead of 'interview'. This was intended to make the process appear less formal, putting participants at ease avoiding associations with job or college interviews which may form the basis of their understanding of what an interview is. Such a conception of being interviewed is likely to have negative connotations of being judged and examined.

Furthermore, during the pilot, there was occasionally evidence of an over-reliance on the example that I gave and on the support given by myself and the teacher. For example many of the pupils mentioned the first time they got a library card, reading using technology and being read to as a child. Each of these were prompts given by either myself or the teacher. However, I feel it was necessary to provide this support and examples when completing a task like this, particularly for pupils of a lower ability. Moreover, it is difficult to tell whether these genuinely are their experiences or whether they were copying because they did not know what to put. At times it was also unclear whether an experience had influenced their reading identity in a positive or a negative

way, despite being informed that could put a sad/smiley face to indicate this, should they find it difficult to articulate the influence it had. I placed increased emphasis on the importance of thinking about why events were critical when explaining the task to young people in the main study. There was also a tendency amongst those with negative views of reading to simply tell me they did not like reading, without discussing any experiences leading to this. However, I think that this is a finding in itself as it indicates the impact a lack of reading-related activity in their lives, or least the absence of certain kinds of reading. This lack of reading activity is perhaps why it is unclear to them how they have come to feel the way they do and have certain perceptions about reading and of themselves as readers. If an individual had had lots of positive reading experiences, it appeared to be much easier for them to articulate why they feel the way they did about reading. Some also explained that they did not have anything to write on their reading journey, because they did not read or enjoy reading. However, when prompted to think about more non-traditional reading such as magazines and online material, they realised that they did have something to say and that their experiences were valid.

3.4.3. Interviews

In the second stage of this research, 28 of the 96 young people who took part in the first stage were selected to take part in a series of two semi-structured interviews. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed into NVivo for analysis. In the pilot stage, I conducted 3 interviews with each participants. However, when transcribing the interviews, I noticed a degree of repetition between interviews, particularly in those instances where an individual's only experience of reading was in the school context. Issues intended to be discussed during later interviews were often brought up in earlier interviews, such as during discussion of the critical incident charts. It was also rare that the interviews lasted for the full 30 minutes allocated. Therefore, I made the decision to condense the interviews into two 30 minute interviews, with 2-3 weeks between each interview. This not only avoided repetition, but took up less of the young people's time. This also reinforced for me the need for flexibility in the research process, to avoid being constrained by my interview schedule and let participants direct the conversation. Despite this, conducting multiple interviews allowed both myself and the participants to reflect on what had been discussed in the previous interviews, before revisiting the issues. This was intended to put the participant at ease, giving them time to prepare. It also enabled me to fully explore any emerging themes, listening to interviews afterwards and making additional notes, covering anything that I did not pick up on first listening to their responses in the context of the interview in a subsequent interview.

Further to this, in the pilot study, two of the young people were interviewed together, as they requested when completing the critical incident charting activity. Several other pupils in their class also requested to be interviewed as a pair. This option was then given to the other classes

taking part in the study. This was intended to encouraging the more shy pupils to participate, in an attempt to increase the number of pupils who would be willing to be interviewed after none of the lowest ability class had agreed to be interviewed (they were the first to complete the critical incident charts). However, on analysis of the pilot data, I decided not to offer this option for those taking part in the main study due to the influence the girls had on each other's responses and my aim to focus on individual journeys. I had planned on conducting two of these 'friendship' interviews in the pilot, however, one pupil was absent on the day of the first interviews so her partner was interviewed alone- this demonstrates further issues with conducting interviews in this way and relying on the attendance of specific individuals.

Interviews were selected as a means of collecting data that would avoid making any assumptions regarding the ability of participants. When discussing the use of questionnaires, Gillham (2007) suggest that such methods often make assumptions regarding the literacy skills possessed by participants. In order to fill out a questionnaire participants need to be able to a) read and understand the questions and b) write coherent, legible responses to those questions. In an interview situation, there is opportunity for participants to ask for clarification and questions can be reworded and refocused in order to generate a response. There are also no demands made on their literacy skills. In addition to this, during the classroom observations, many pupils demonstrated a preference for expressing themselves verbally, particularly those in the lower ability classes. The quality of writing on some of the critical incident charts suggested that this may be due to a lack of confidence and ability in their writing. Such pupils were often able to express and explain themselves clearly and intelligently during the interviews. This supports the appropriateness of the use of this method of analysis with these participants, in that it is likely to generate richer, more analytically valuable data. Kvale and Brinkman (2009) describe the research interview as "a professional conversation; it is an inter-view, where knowledge is constructed in the inter-action between the interviewer and the interviewee (p.2)." This suggests a naturalistic, open exchange of ideas and experiences, a dialogue through which knowledge about the concept or phenomena is produced. It acknowledges the role of both researcher and research in contributing to theory and facilitating a greater balance of power in this relationship, foregrounding the voice and experiences of the individual and enabling them to contribute to the research process. It is also a situation that pupils are likely to be familiar with and in which they can draw on tool used in everyday speech and conversation in order to get their voice heard. However, Silverman (2013) suggests the need for caution when making claims about interview data which, as opposed to providing direct access to participants' experiences and perceptions, may be a "series of actively constructed narratives involving activities which themselves require analysis (p.47)." However, it follows from the epistemological and ontological stance I maintain throughout this research that participants' responses, at each stage of data collection, are interpretations of the social and

cultural world, which is itself socially constructed due to the absence of an objective social reality that can be unveiled through research. As has been discussed previously in this chapter, it is the concern of qualitative research to generate a series of representations of the real world, with the aim of reaching an understanding of the meanings that people bring to the phenomena under investigation (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011a; Kincheloe et al, 2011). Therefore, the construction of these narratives and representations are a central focus of research of this nature, rather than a limitation.

I took a semi-structured approach to interviewing, using a series of bullet points to guide discussion and make sure that the relevant topics had been covered. However, I attempted to tailor the discussion in a way that would allow the specific experiences of the individual to be fully explored, occasionally deviating from the interview schedule (see appendix 3). For example, the first interview was relatively unstructured, shaped by the participant's critical incident chart. I began by asking them to talk me through what they had written, providing further elaboration and explanation. This then formed the basis of subsequent discussion, with questions being shaped by participant's explanations of their C.I.C, attempting to generate further insight into why certain events held meaning for the individual. This gave participants some control over the content of the interview, as the experiences they had decided were critical formed the basis of the conversation. I also repeatedly asked for clarification and further elaboration throughout the interviews, in addition to briefly summarising participants' responses at the end of each, in order to confirm my understanding and provide opportunity for participants to correct me. This is consistent with the interpretive and theoretical frameworks which provide guides for action throughout this research, acknowledging the autonomy and reflexivity of the individual and valuing their voice and their interpretation of the social world. Pupils were given the opportunity, at the end of each interview, to add anything they thought was relevant to what we had discussed and to make and comments or ask questions. They were also encouraged to bring up anything they thought of on reflection after the interview, which was relevant to the issues being discussed, in the next interview. Again, this was intended to give participants a degree of control over what was discussed, placing focus on the individual's interpretation of the social world with a view to creating an accurate representation of said social world. During the main study, I gathered more information in this first interview on the peer group and its influence, asking participants to describe their peer group, the kind of things they do together and whether or not someone who reads would fit in with them. This is due to the insights provided by the pilot data into the strong impact that their peer group identity had on their reading identities, suggesting that this may be a particularly fruitful area to explore further. We also discussed the role of the family and the reading (or lack of) that went on in home environment, including the perceived reading habits of family members. I finished this interview by asking participants about the role that reading played in their daily lives and what reading,

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specifically being a good reader, meant to them. This was to give me a sense of pupils' perceptions of what reading is for and the level of importance they attribute to it, providing insight into their disposition towards reading. I also asked pupils to explain the ratings they had given themselves during the first activity, in order to make clearer and more explicit the links between their 'critical incidents' and their perceptions of themselves as reader.

In the second interview, the discussion centred on the reading activity that goes on in school; what they believed to be the purpose of reading in school, whether they enjoyed the reading they did in school, how it compares to the reading they do in their own time and any extra-curricular activities they are involved in- including use of the school library. Participation in this interview also involved the sorting and discussion of a variety of reading materials, including newspapers, magazines, novels, online material, children's and young adult fiction and non-fiction text, which I had selected for discussion. I started by asking several open-ended questions which required participants to make judgements of the texts such as, which they found the most and least appealing and who they thought the intended audience for each of them might be. This was then followed by asking them to organise the texts according to a criteria of their choice and then to explain their thinking behind their choices. Again, this places control of the discussion in the hands of the participants, levelling the playing field between researcher and researched. However, in order to avoid repetition in the main study, the two stages of this activity were reversed and further questions were only be asked where these issues had not been raised through the participants' organisation of the texts. In the pilot, several of the participants, after answering my initial questions, used these judgments as a way of organising the texts. This suggests that my questions may have lead them to think about the texts in a particular way. Re-organising this activity ensured that I had as little influence as possible on participants' responses. This activity allowed me to explore the ways in which pupils view certain types of text and what they consider to be relevant reading material for them. It also provided insight into the process of reading related decision-making, highlighting the factors that attract or deter individuals from approaching particular texts. This is in line with the approach to identity which informs this research, which views choices and behaviours as the embodiment of an individual's identity, which form a guide to such action (Bourdieu, 2010; Hitlin, 2003; Reay, David & Ball 2005). This activity enabled me to approach these issues in a way that was accessible to participants, in light of their age and, in certain cases, ability. These activities functioned as prompt for thinking about these issues, enabling pupils to bring these views and their origins to the surface. For example, in several cases, those who had previously said that they did not read, claimed that they read non-traditional/ non-academic material, such as magazines or online texts. This in itself provides insight into participants' perceptions of reading and of themselves as readers, with the activity functioning to challenge these perceptions.

3.5. From Data to Findings: Iterative, Inductive-Deductive Thematic Analysis

I employ a method of thematic analysis outlined in many standard texts on qualitative data analysis (Gibson and Brown, 2009; Kuckartz, 2014), which draws on both inductive and deductive processes of theory building. Gibson and Brown (2009) define thematic and analysis as "the process of analysing data according to commonalities, relationships and differences across a data set. The word 'thematic' relates to the aim of searching for aggregated *themes* within data (p.27)." This approach to analysis facilitated the unveiling and exploration of the key factors which play a role in the development of reading identity, bringing to the surface common issues, experiences and perceptions, whilst also leaving room for the exploration of difference and of anomalous cases. Kuckarts (2014) outlines a method of thematic analysis which has be drawn upon to guide the analysis of data in this research. I began by reading through all of the data carefully, starting with that collected in the first stage of the research. This is involved writing down initial analytic observations and annotating the data, making initial links between cases and groups of cases and highlighting key passages. This enabled me to familiarise myself with the data and emerging codes and themes. The second step in my analysis was to develop my broad thematic categories, which were generated by my research questions and, for the interview data, the broad topics which guided the discussion. Due to the size of my sample in the pilot and the number of categories, I did not need to test these categories by using them to code a section of the data. As Kuckartz (2014) suggests, the larger and more complex the data set and the greater the number of categories, the greater the amount of data that needs to be tested. I then proceeded to code all of the data using these main categories, assigning them to passages from the data whilst keeping in mind the overall nature of each text and ensuring that the context of coded passages is preserved. Moreover, as a content analysis of the data is not being conducted here, "a single comment was considered as important as those that were repeated or agreed on by others on the group" (Fereday, 2009: 86). This acknowledges the idiosyncrasies of specific cases, highlighting the complex and dynamic nature of the concept of reading identity and ensuring that important findings are not lost or disregarded in the analysis. The next stage of my analysis involved gathering all of the data assigned to each of main categories and inductively generating sub-categories which were grounded in the data. I proceeded to code the whole of the data set using this complex system of codes and created case-related thematic summaries using a framework matrix in NVivo. Each cell of a framework matrix contains a summary of the data coded at both a particular case and a specific thematic code. It is also possible for the researcher to view the summaries of the data and the data on which these summaries are based alongside each other. This prevents the researcher from losing sight of where their assertions originated from, ensuring transparency in the discussion of data. As Kuckartz suggests (2014), this enabled me to make within and between case thematic comparisons, whilst remaining grounded in the data. The final stage of my analysis involved making links between codes

and sub-codes, considering the differences between and within them and exploring the distribution of these codes across different groups of participants (e.g. males and females, high and low ability pupils, etc.), in order to generate analytic themes. Gibson and Brown (2009) outline three key aims of thematic analysis: examining commonality, examining differences, examining relationships. As Fereday (2009) also explains, themes are the product of connecting codes and discovering patterns in the data. Links can then be made between themes in order to generate what Fereday (2009) describes as 'second-order themes,' comprising of several sub-themes, which "capture the phenomenon […] as described in the raw data (p.90)." This constitutes the interpretive phase of the analysis, in which themes are "connected into an explanatory framework consistent with the text (p.90)." Thus, second-order themes serve to represent the interaction between data, codes and sub-themes and point towards theoretical conclusions relevant to the research questions. Fereday (2009) and Gibson and Brown (2009) each point out the iterative nature of this form of analysis, which required the researcher to move between the data, codes, themes and research interests in a cyclical, rather than a linear fashion. This ensures that findings and conclusions remain consistent with the data collected and that they are relevant to the research questions whilst also allowing for unanticipated themes and codes to emerge. Analysis moved from codes to sub-codes and them from themes to over-arching themes, moving from the broad and abstract, to the more specific and back again. In much qualitative research, these processes are rarely revealed to the reader and, therefore, it unclear how valid and reliable the author's theoretical assertions are. This was particularly important in the case of this research, in which I was the only person to fully read and analyse the data, as is commonly the case in PhD research (Fereday, 2006). In future research, in order to achieve greater rigor, it would be desirable for more than one person to code and analyse the data (Vaismoradi, Turunen and Bondas, 2013). However, as Koch (2006) points out, even in these cases researchers and readers may disagree on how the data should be interpreted, suggesting that although "readers may not share the interpretation but they should be able to follow the way in which the author came to it (p.92)." Therefore, I have provided this table (table 2) displaying subcodes and themes for reading coded under the peer group, in order to accompany the discussion in this section in its endeavour to achieve transparency in the process by which I have moved from the data to my findings. These themes and over-arching themes also provided a structure for the final three chapters of this thesis, in which I discuss my findings.

Codes	Sub-codes	Themes	Over-arching Theme
Peer group	Need for Shared Interests Need for Social Interaction and Inclusion Reading as (non) Anti-Social Reading as Social Reading to fit in/ stand out Reading with Friends Renewed Social Acceptance of reading Reading Performance Film, television and social media	Reading as a Barrier to Social Participation Reading to escape social participation Social participation as a barrier to reading Reading with friends Reading and popular culture	Reading as social currency

Table 2: Example Codes and Themes (Peer Group)

Data analysis was assisted by the use of Nvivo, a computer aided qualitative data analysis software package. Bazeley (2007) points out that, although this software is not intended to "supplant time honoured ways of learning from data (p.7)", it does facilitate the "recording, sorting, matching and linking" of data which can be used by the researcher in a variety of ways to "assist in answering their research questions from the data, without losing access to the source data or contexts from which the data have come (p.7)." NVivo enables the organisation a categorisation of data, ensuring analysis remains grounded in the data and that context is preserved, however, it does not replace the rigorous, in depth qualitative analysis achieved through familiarity with the data. Mac Ruairc (2011), in his study into social class, schools and linguistic discontinuity, also describes how using such software to aid qualitative data analysis facilitates the linking of specific quotes to analytic concepts and categories and the subsequent development of themes and sub-themes from the data. The interpretive paradigm which guides this research necessitates that analysis remains grounded in the data so that individual voices are not lost. In order to aid this analysis, all critical incident charts and interviews were scanned/ transcribed into the programme for analysis alongside each other. I was then be able to include some of these as examples when writing up my analysis, ensuring that it remained consistent the data and that reader is able to see on what basis I have made my claims. Taylor (2011) also provides transcriptions alongside images of the original C.I.Cs. and Burnard (2000, 2004, 2012) also provides examples of complete C.I.Cs when presenting her analysis. However, due to the number of C.I.Cs and for ease of reading, when

referring to a specific example, I have – where possible - provided an extract of the relevant material and contextualised it in my discussion, maintaining a view of its place within the whole 'journey'.

3.6. Ethical Considerations

I have considered issues of ethics at each stage of conducting this research, from the philosophical perspective and the formulation of my research questions to the writing up of my findings, as has been detailed throughout this chapter. I have followed the guidelines for conducting ethical educational and social research provided by the University of York's Education Ethics Committee and BERA (2011). Such issues are central not only to the research methods employed (3.4.) and issues of consent, but also to the philosophical assumptions guiding the research (3.1.), such as perceptions of the nature of the child (3.1.), and to issues of quality, rigour, and power (3.7.). These are each addressed in the relevant sections of this chapter.

The teachers and young people were given details of the aims of the study and were informed as to what their involvement would entail. This information was sent to my contact teacher to pass on to teachers whose classes would be involved in the research, giving them option to opt out if they wished (see Appendix 4 for consent forms). I gave this information verbally to the young people prior to conducting the critical incident charting activity, and again in written form to those taking part in the interview stage. I sought opt-in informed consent from the subject leader in each school, in the form of the initial letter to the school (Appendix 1), and from the young people who took part in the interview stage. Considering the age of my participants - although technically still minors, the non-sensitive nature of research topic, the level of disruption to the usual course of their studies, I only sought opt-out consent from parents. In light of my view of the child and their ability in relation to adults, and the fact that they were the ones actually taking part, I felt it was ethically sound to let them make the decision regarding their participation. The young people could opt out of the first activity by leaving their sheet of paper blank- which some chose to do, and only those who had already agreed to take part in the second stage on their 'face sheet' were approached to take part in the interviews. This was to avoid placing pressure on those who did not want to participate, but may have felt obliged to do so when asked face to face in front of their teacher. I also felt that seeking opt-in consent from parents may have been detrimental to the quality of the research, reducing the number of participants if the letter did not make it home or parents forgot to fill it in. This in itself is an ethical issue, as the researcher has an ethical responsibility to ensure that the research produced is of a high quality (BERA, 2011).

3.7. Issues of Power and Voice: Working with Young People

Issues of power and voice have arisen throughout the various stages of this research. In my attempts to address these issues, I have faced various challenges, resulting in a more complex understanding of the relationships of power which are a condition of conducting social research, especially that which focuses on children and young people. In this section, I will discuss these challenges, highlighting the potential barriers to conducting research in a socially just way, and which is founded on a view of the child as competent and capable of exercising agency.

3.7.1. Reconceptualising the Research Problem

Overall, I feel I succeeded in enabling the young people to direct the focus of the research. This was achieved by the use of methods, outlined previously, which avoided placing a restrictive framework on to participant's responses. Evidence for this is provided by the way in which the young people challenged common assumptions, including my own, regarding the nature of the problem which the research sought to address. As I discussed in the literature review section of this thesis, it is often the specific texts that should be studied, their literary value and whether or not they represent certain groups, which are central to debates played out through education policy, research and in the media (...). Consequently, my initial thoughts were that the problem would be related to the *kinds* of texts the people had to study in school. I had expected my participants to make comments which demonstrated a perceived lack of purpose or relevance in the study of particular texts and authors, such as Shakespeare. However, I found that young people rarely made references to specific texts and, when questioned, most claimed that they enjoyed the texts which they had read in class- even those of a lower ability. As I will demonstrate in the final three chapters of this thesis, the young people foregrounded the different reading practices which were characteristic of a particular field, such as being read to by parents, reading stories on line written by their peers or having to read out loud in class. Such practices were what they themselves identified to be critical in directing their reading journeys and determining the extent to which they saw themselves as 'someone who reads'. Interestingly, when asked to recall the specific texts they had read, the young people often could not remember them, particularly those who claimed they did not enjoy reading or read outside of school.

By placing an emphasis on the meaning that behaviours and phenomena hold for the individual, as opposed to simply observing such behaviours, it was possible to shift the focus the debate. My findings support the need to shift the lens onto questions of what reading is and who it is for, not just in education, but in all areas of young people's daily lives. Placing emphasis on readers and reading rather than on specific texts, acknowledging the role of the social in acts of reading and learning, makes visible the ways in which literacies are ''positioned in relation to the social institutions and the power relations which sustain them '' (Barton, Hamilton & Ivanic, 2000:

1). This creates a space where the dominant paradigm, and the inequalities it maintains, can be denaturalised and challenged. Taking this step back from the text has the potential to move us towards a model of difference, removing blame from the individual for failing to appreciate specific texts in specific ways, or be a particular kind of reader. I would also argue it enables more informed, effective interventions to be developed and implemented, which move beyond simplistic attempts to redistribute cultural capital (Henley, 2012; Gove 2010; Gove, 2013; DfE, 2014 & Morgan, 2015b), and which allow more young people to see themselves as 'someone who reads'. This demonstrates the importance of creating space for participants to define the problem and positioning them as the expert, which has important implications for the role of the researcher in the research process. In line with Brostrom's (2012) perspective on the child and what they can and cannot do, "educators and researchers should consider children as competent people with agency and the potential to act as active democratic participants [...] Researchers and educators are under an obligation to change the status quo (p.266)." In summary, research on young people must be in their interests, which necessitates letting them set the agenda for the research and consequent agenda for change. In this research, I have sought to do this through foregrounding the meaning that reading experiences hold for the individual in the context of their daily lives, problematizing dominant conceptualistions of reading and the reader and illustrating a need to refocus the debate on young people's reading.

3.7.2. Negotiating Relationships

I did, however, experience some difficulty in my attempts to achieve a greater balance in the relationship between myself and my participants. Previous research has demonstrated the impact of context and social interactions on establishing power relationships, with the researcher often having little control over establishing the kind of adult they are 'read' as in the research setting (Hill, 2013; Schnoor, 2012). This was first made evident to me during the pilot study. One particular incident highlighted to me the potential issues with being a young female researcher conducting research with young males. When conducting the critical incident charting activity with one class in the pilot school, one male asked the teacher how old I was and if he could add me on Facebook. Another wrote his telephone number on the back of his C.I.C. and asked me to call him. The teacher advised me not to select these boys for interviews, questioning their motives for taking part. Similar comments were made about me by a male student in another of the classes in the pilot school. Fortunately, this was not an issue during main study, in which male students were more reluctant to participate. This demonstrates the ways in which the researcher can be disempowered and deprofessionalised, and the ways in which this could also be detrimental to the quality and validity of the research.

Further to this, the task of creating a level playing field on which my participants and I could interact was not as simple as telling participants that "I'm not a teacher" or "you can say what you

want". This may have been due to broader cultural assumptions regarding the nature of the child and their relationship to adults. As an adult in the context of the school, even outside of the classroom, the young people already held assumptions regarding who I was and what they could and could not say in front of me. The norms and assumptions regarding the relationship between adults and young people which characterised the research setting framed my participants understanding of our relationship, and their subsequent response to me. In the context of the school, the young people were required to respect their elders and to avoid being told off for bad behaviour, or expressing unacceptable views. More significantly, there was an assumed expertise and authority of the teacher. Such assumptions can often be deeply embedded and it was difficult for me, during the short period of time I had with the participants, to challenge them. In fact, attempts to do this were often confusing and unsettling for the young people, with many appearing to find guiding the focus of the research quite difficult. As Brostrom (2012) points out "when children are accustomed to having a say and to being involved in cultural changes, it will be 'natural' for them to act in ways we refer to as political (p.266)." However, this was not how the young people in this study were accustomed to behaving in the context of the research setting.

The teacher or, more specifically, the school, had the power to validate particular reading experiences and texts as 'real' reading. Consequently, the young people who took part in this study often needed myself or their teacher to validate their experiences and preferences as 'proper' reading. Their experiences often did not match the schools' usual criteria for what counts as an appropriate text, or way of reading and appreciating such texts. They needed guidance and re-assurance that what they were doing and saying was 'right', particularly during the critical incident charting activity, for which I purposely offered little guidance. This may be explained by the fact they were used to having more support and clearer guidelines from their teachers regarding what was expected. As a result of this, when I gave them greater freedom and less support, they were unsure of what to do and tried to determine what I might be looking for. Many explained that they did not have anything to write on their reading journey, because they did not read or enjoy reading. However, when prompted to think about more non-traditional reading such as magazines and online material, they realised that they did have something to say and that their experiences were valid. Further evidence for this was provided in the text sorting activity (3.4.3.), which served to challenge and broaden the young people's views of what 'counts' as reading, which were heavily influenced by the school context. I elaborate on this further during in chapter 6.

It was difficult to position the young person as the expert, when they didn't see themselves as such or know how to act in that role. As Lawler (2005) points out when discussing Bourdieu's (1998) theorising regarding the justification of working class lack, 'privileged groups are constituted as knowledgeable and understanding (p.117).' This serves as justification for their positions of power and authority, their ability to cast judgements on others, and the legitimacy of their

knowledge and capital within a particular field. In the case of this study, within the tradition structures and power relations of the school, myself and the teacher were positioned as the experts with the authority to determine what did and did not 'count' as reading. Much like the working class women in Lawler's (1994) study "were not authorised to be actors in the field of political protest", the young people in this study were not commonly authorised to be actors in the field of the school. This also demonstrates the distinction made by Schnoor (2012) between actual and metaphorical voice- the fact that the young people have a voice in the literal sense does not mean that it will always be heard, or that they are willing and able to use it.

3.7.3. Issues of consent

I gave the young people opportunity to give their consent as far as I had the power to do so in the context of school with its own policies, power relations and social norms. Opt-out consent forms were sent out to parents, to let them know what was happening and to give them the option of withdrawing their child. This was in line with school and university policy. Participants themselves were then given the option to opt out of the first stage of the research if they did not wish to participate, I then later asked those being interviewed to sign a consent form. A handful chose to leave their charts completely blank and not write anything. One class also insisted on folding up their papers so the teacher could not see who had written what. However, the presence of the teacher and the fact that we were in their usual classroom, where particular rules and expectations were usually followed regarding completing work set, may have made some of the young people feel like they did not have this choice or that there may be negative consequences if they did not participate. I also asked participants to indicate during this stage, on the same sheet where they gave their ratings and other information, whether they agreed to be interviewed. This meant that I did not approach those who did not want to be interviewed, putting them under pressure to participate. During the pilot phase, a whole class chose not to participate. In contrast to this, some wrote little/ nothing on their critical incident chart, but agreed to be interviewed. Participants not only chose whether to participate, but did so on their own terms. As Beer (2004) points out, participants decide what to reveal and what not to reveal, the researcher, as an outsider to youth culture, is limited to things that the young people are willing to share. Ultimately, the success of the research rests on their co-operation – the researcher can not just 'give' them a voice, they have to choose to use it and how to use it.

3.7.4. Exercising the Power to Protect

There may also be certain cases where, as researchers working with young people, our ethical need to protect participants has to come before giving them power and autonomy, and fulfilling

assurances of confidentiality. Particularly in cases where their safety and well-being may be in danger. For example, during Kaylah's first interview, she almost started telling me things about her sister which were clearly a matter of child protection and were being dealt with elsewhere. She explained that she was not allowed out by herself because of "what happened to my sister", and told me several times that she was "not allowed to talk about it" despite continuing to make reference to the incident. In this case, I felt that, ethically and legally, I had to move the conversation along and prevent her from revealing further details. During the second interview, when talking about *Romeo and Juliet* and the theme of death, she explained why she was enjoying it:

> I think of death as a positive thing not a negative thing. Some people'll be like "oh no, I don't wanna die, I don't wanna die but with me not, me hating my life sort of, I'm like "bring death on, I'm not bothered"

On its own, I might have just thought she was trying to shock me. However, paired with her comments in the first interview, and comments explaining how lonely she was- revealing that she she talks to herself - when I asked about her friendship group, I felt it was necessary to report her comments to her teacher in order to ensure she was receiving the necessary support. Kaylah was exercising her power in using the space and her time with me how she wanted to use it, by confiding in me and speaking to me like a friend or counselor. However, I had to take that away from her and tell her teacher out of concern for her safety and mental health. There was also a girl in school B who, on her critical incident chart revealed personal details not related to the study and made no reference to reading, so I made the decision not to interview her in order to protect myself from being placed in a similar position.

Daniel, who later revealed he was dyslexic, was also visibly distressed and angry during the interview because of his experiences relating to the topic. For him, reading was related to something he associated with punishment, conflict and anger. This shows that we, as researchers, are not always aware that participants are 'vulnerable', or that the topic may prove to be 'sensitive' for certain individuals. You can not predict how the young person will respond to questions, how they will perceive the relationship and what they may want to reveal to you. You can not protect participants if you do not know what you need to protect them from. These cases also raise the issue of responsibility, should the teachers have let some of these pupils, Kaylah in particular, participate if they were known to be 'vulnerable'? Or did their right to participate negate these concerns. As Daley (2015) suggests in discussion regarding the ethics of research it often argued that exclusion of participants is more desirable than including them in research which may harm them. This is in line with guidelines provided by the Department of Education at York University and BERA (2011). However Daley (2015) argues that it only through the inclusion of such groups and their experiences in research that "the principle of social justice can be truly achieved (p.136)", and

that discussing their experiences may be "therapeutic, validating, or empowering (p.136)". I think this was certainly the case with Kaylah and Daniel, who were more than willing to share their experiences, as well as others who were open about negative experiences and feelings towards reading, particularly in school. In fact, those who did not enjoy reading or had issues with school reading appeared to enjoy being given the opportunity to voice their opinions. This was particularly evident in the case of Alfie, as will be demonstrated in chapter 5. This research provided the young people with a forum for sharing these views and experiences, and a space in which they were being listened to and in which their opinions were not only valued, but prioritised. Therefore, I would argue that young people's right to have a say on issues which affect them is more imperative than protecting them, and excluding them, from research. This is supported by my findings, which highlight the value of placing emphasis on the meaning that social phenomena hold for the individual.

3.7.5. Final Reflections

As I outlined earlier in this chapter, this research is founded on a view of the child as competent and capable of exercising agency, expressing views and participating in research and decision making which affects them. Their ability to do this has been evidenced by the examples I have provided in this section, and others in this chapter (3.4). It is important to be aware of the unpredictable ways in which participants themselves may exercise their own power and find ways to participate (or not) on their own terms, challenging romanticised assumptions regarding the researcher's ability to 'give voice' to participants. Previous research (Lomax, 2012; Schnoor, 2012; Hill, 2013, and McGarry, 2015) has demonstrated the situated nature of the relationships of power and knowledge generated through research, a condition of the research context and methods employed. It also highlights a need for reflexivity throughout the research process, and for attention to be payed to the influences of the researched, the researcher and the research context. I have attempted to achieve this, not only in this section, but throughout this chapter. As discussed in section 3.3.3., I am sensitive to the influence of the fact that this research took place in schools may have had on my findings, and on my relationships with my participants. This is something I also address when discussing the data on the impact of the school on young people's perceptions of reading and being a reader.

Such a view of the child is also at odds with broader cultural understanding of the child and their relationship to adults, which can provide a barrier when attempting to conduct research within such a paradigm (Matthews, 2007). This may explain why, in many of the cases above, the young people were complicit in their disempowerment and lack of voice. Drawing on Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital, Pole, Mizen and Bolton (1999) describe the way in which age "and its assumed to be accompanying experience" acts as a form of capital in the research process,

suggesting that "without this commodity, children are likely to be at worst objects rather than subjects of research and at best one of many factors which influence the research design and the research process (p.51)". They also suggests that this is a condition of narrow conceptions of what counts as "acceptable academic knowledge (p.39)". This view also extents to and, I would argue, is a condition of the way children and young people are positioned in "many areas of social life (p.51)". Consequently, despite good intentions, what the researcher theoretically and morally believes can and should be done to address issues of power in social research is often not fully realised. There are limits to what can realistically be achieved within the constraints of conducting social research, particularly when working with young people in schools. For example, the ethical, moral and cultural code of research setting (school) and the university can limit the power of both the researcher and the researched.

4. Families Raising Readers and Non-Readers: Primary 'Reading Habitus'

The young people in this study operate within a variety of fields, each of which has its own criteria for what is valued as 'reading' and, consequently, what it means to be a reader. As I explored in chapter 2, previous research demonstrates both the endurance and the problematizing of the habitus as the individual moves between fields (McNay, 1999; Hitlin 2003; Duckworth, 2014). There is a need for research to place emphasis on the various fields which the individual must navigate, the interactions which occur as the individual moves between these fields and the ways in which individuals draw on personal, social and cultural resources in order to make sense of and respond to them. As Duckworth (2014) suggests in her study which explores the learning trajectories of adult basic skills learners, "recognition of the changing nature of the field in which the learners are located is vital for reflexivity and also for exploring resistance and challenges within these sites of symbolic power (p.27)". Murphy and Costa (2015a) similarly argue that although "emphasis placed on agent's lived experiences allows us to access agents categories of perception and appreciation (p.67)", it should not be valued above an "understanding of the structure of the field; rather they should be analysed in tandem [...] which allows us to render explanations of individual's dispositions as well as their relationships with the fields of power in which they operate (p.67-68)." Therefore, I place emphasis on the individual, at the intersection of these fields, and the ways in which they negotiate and renegotiate their understanding in order to develop a coherent sense of themselves as a reader and of what reading is to them.

The three fields which my participants most commonly identified as influencing them as readers were the family environment, the peer group and the school or educational context. However, the broader social and (popular) cultural context permeated each of these fields, shaping young people's general understanding of what it is to be, not only a reader, but an adolescent in 21st Century England. Interestingly, when writing about and discussing significant reading experiences, young people rarely placed emphasis on the texts themselves, instead foregrounding the different reading practices which were characteristic of a particular field, such as being read to by parents, reading stories online written by their peers or having to read out loud in class. This supports the need for research, policy and practice which is informed by a model of reading which moves away from a focus on the text to the social and cultural contexts in which they are used and produced. In the following three chapters, I discuss each of these fields, the relationships between them, and the ways in which young people make sense of them. I draw on both the critical incident charts and the interview data generated through this research. Each of these chapters finishes with a discussion, which draws the theoretical and practical implications of my analysis and situates it within the relevant literature.

This chapter is concerned with the role that the family and home environment plays in raising both readers and non-readers. Out of the 96 young people who took part in one or both stages of this research, 77 (80.2%) suggested that, for better or for worse, the family had played some part in shaping them as readers. Those who reported during the text sorting activity that their parents provided access to a variety of texts in their home, even if those texts did not necessarily belong to the young person, were more likely to have a positive view of reading and of themselves as readers. This highlights the importance of continued parental involvement and a strong reading culture in the home in fostering a reading habit, a passion for reading and a belief in the importance of reading for pleasure. Support for this can found in a survey recently conducted by YouGov for the children's publisher Scholastic (2015) which indicated that parental involvement in children's reading lives was a key predictor of reading frequency amongst 6-17 year olds. Further to this, research by Sullivan and Brown (2015) also suggests that reading for pleasure is stronger predictor of academic achievement than parent's level of education. A full discussion of the literature which supports the importance of reading for pleasure and reading in the home for young people's cognitive development and reading frequency is provided in chapter 1 of this thesis.

The family appears to be most influential in shaping young people's perceptions of reading and readers during their early years, when the young people had not yet started school and had limited exposure to people and social situations outside of the family environment. This finding is also in line with the survey by YouGov (Scholastic, 2015), which found that that parents commonly stop reading to children in the early years of primary school, once they are able to read independently, and that fewer parents are reading bedtime stories to their children. It is important to note, however, that there is possible conflict of interest here as it is of benefit to the children's book publishers who have carried out - or funded - this research that children and young people engage with reading. Moreover, such research offers little explanation as to *why* this is the case, or the meaning that such support (or lack of) means to young people, a gap which the current study aims to remedy.

One explanation offered by this research for the tendency for parents to withdraw support once the basic skill of reading is acquired, is the academicisation of reading in the home; the use of school like reading practices in the home and the consequent conceptualisation of reading as solely a means of getting ahead, or keeping up, in school. Alternative explanations for this tendency may also be provided by sibling birth order and the gendered nature of family roles. I explore each of these themes later in this chapter, in addition to young people's experiences of reading with family members, and the personal relationships which shape (and are shaped by) them. In order to theorise the gendered nature of reading in the home and mothers' heavier involvement in the young people's education, I draw on the concept of emotional capital, arguing that reading in this field is often an emotional, intimate experience and is employed to strengthen and maintain

personal relationships. Emotional capital is an extension of Bourdieu's (1986) concept of capitals, developed in the work of scholars such as Diane Reay (2000, 2005a), Val Gillies (2006), and Maeve O'Brien (2008). It is understood as largely a gendered form of capital, described as "the emotional resources passed on from mother to child through processes of parental involvement" (Reay, 2000: 569), resources which may include "inner emotional energies, emotional skills acquired through practice, and, most importantly, the emotional supports that are available to the mother to enable her care" (O'Brien, 2008: 138). Emotions and emotional connections are understood in such research as a form of capital which may increase young people's chances of accessing other forms of capital and, therefore, will determine their success (or lack thereof) in other fields, such as the school. Such research often explores the transfer of emotional capital from the viewpoint of mothers, considering their perceptions and experiences of raising children and the barriers they face in enabling their children to succeed. In the specific context of this research, I focus on the ways in which the young people acquire emotional capital and put it to use, basing my analysis on an understanding of emotional capital as young people's emotional responses to reading. Throughout this chapter, I demonstrate the ways in which the family is central to the development of positive relationships with, and emotional responses to, reading, with much of this work being carried out by mothers.

4.1. Reading Together

In this section, I discuss the impact of parental involvement in the young people's reading lives during the early years, in particular reading with or to parents and other family members. For many, positive early reading experiences in the home environment were often perceived as critical in setting up an initial reading habit and normalising reading as a leisure activity, presented as something which can be engaged in for non-school purposes. In certain cases, the family also served to generate negative or indifferent views of reading and being a reader, with the absence of reading activity and talk about reading being equally as influential as having a rich reading environment. However, as the young people get older, their social networks grow, and they are required to move between an increasingly larger number of fields, the influence of the family decreases. This is evidenced by the fact that, in the majority of cases, parental or family input was not highlighted on critical incident charts as being significant in directing the young person's reading journey, beyond the early stages of primary school. Parental support beyond this point was less hands on, manifesting itself primarily in the form of financial access to reading materials, as opposed to sitting down and reading together or actively encouraging reading. However, these early reading experiences, or a lack of such experiences at this stage, were integral to the raising of young people who do- or do not- read for pleasure. The durability of their impact on the individual will be demonstrated in subsequent sections of this chapter.

This decline in parental involvement was with the exception of a limited number of young people, whose parents continue to be involved in their reading lives well into their teenage years. For example, Helen, perhaps one of the most able, confident and engaged readers I came across in this study, describes a strong reading culture in her home. Helen differed from many of the other young people who took part in this study in terms of her level of cultural capital, her parents' level of education and their level of interest in hers. They can be described to be engaging in what Lareau (2003) describes as the "process of concerted cultivation", in which they "deliberately try to stimulate their children's development" in order to ensure "the transmission of differential advantages (p.5)". Born into a family who values and shares reading for pleasure, she grows from being the daughter of a librarian learning to read and exploring the library, into a competent young person capable of engaging in conversations with adults about what she is reading. Helen explains how, even though her mother is no longer a librarian, "we still look for books like we just got a massive book box it only cost us like a fiver but it should have cost us like five six hundred quid so that's all hardbacks a lot to get through." The fact this was considered something to be excited or impressed by suggests that books and reading have an important place in their family home. However, this excitement is preserved for particular texts considered 'worthy' of consideration. Now that Helen can read independently, emphasis is placed on being challenged and broadening her reading horizons. Helen shares reading material with her mother, with Agatha Christie novels and *The Week* magazine being two such texts, and describes how her mum would:

> [...] challenge me with a book and be like "oh, you just wanna read this and the Famous Five, although it's probably a bit errrm too much for you but you can try reading it anyway" and I'd read it and everybody else'd be reading like slightly more kiddish books for their age so I feel I'm a bit more like ahead when I read

With both parents being avid readers themselves, they are able to make recommendations and there are lots of books in the home for her to choose from with which she can challenge herself and explore her interests, something which she takes great pleasure in. Consequently, Helen feels that she is ahead of her peers in terms of her reading ability and the kinds of texts that she reads, giving her the confidence and self-esteem that would go on to serve her well in school. Reading, for Helen's family, is something that is valued, shared and encouraged, and she is treated no differently to her adult counterparts in this environment. There is sense of shared expertise and interest in Helen's case, with opinions being considered equally as valid as those of the adults in her life, who encourage her to discuss and share her views. She describes how, because her mother was a librarian, she could tell her "what I thought of the book and stuff and so she got to tell the author". Later in the same interview, Helen also reveals that she likes "to say to my mum that oh I'm liking the book that I'm reading or I'm not liking it but I'm going to persevere with it." It is more than just

a skill to be acquired, it is a rewarding leisure pursuit to be indulged in for its own sake, enabling her active participation in the adult world of her parents.

Parents and other family members provided support and encouragement for the young people in a number of ways, the most common of which was being read to by, or reading with, a parent or other family member. Out of the 96 participants who completed the critical incident charting activity, 51 (53%) identified being read to, or reading with, a family member as being critical in directing their reading journey. Moreover, of the 28 young people who took part in the interview stage of this research, only 8 (28.6%) either explicitly stated that they were not read to as a child, that they did not remember being read to or did not mention being read to. In most cases, this was the first reading related experience highlighted by the participant. With the exception of a select few cases, the majority of these 8 were male. In fact, males were less likely to view any form of family support or encouragement as being critical in shaping them as readers. This may be explained by the often gendered nature of reading in the family environment, as will be discussed later in this section.

Many of the young people who took part in this study identified being read to by their parents as a small child as not only being critical in directing their reading journey, but as being responsible for setting them off on that journey. For example, Alfie explains how being read to by both of his parents was "quite good and like, it was quite fun to enjoy and that really got me like started and I quite liked, you know like, enjoyed to listen to it and that." He then goes on to describe how he believes that this is responsible for sparking his interest in reading:

> The books when you're young, they're like really interesting […] it makes you think that you can like do, well what they do in the book you can do it yourself […] it got me like interested in wanting to read more when I got older

For Alfie, being read to by his parents was a positive experience and he attributes his continued interest in and enjoyment of reading to this early exposure in the family environment. It showed him that reading is something that he can engage in for his own pleasure and introduced him to reading material that was suited to his own interests. It was a combination of the act of being read to, listening to and spending time with his parents, and books which sparked his imagination and opened up new possibilities, which made this particular experience significant for Alfie. Alfie's positive view of reading and of himself as a reader is further demonstrated by the ratings he gave himself and his view of reading during the critical incident charting activity. He agreed that he was a good reader and strongly agreed that he enjoys reading and that he reads a lot in his own time. Isla similarly felt that being read to by her mother played a significant role in establishing an interest in reading, explaining that she believes that "it made it better for when I got older and then I carried on reading more." Having this experience, which she describes as "enjoyable", was integral to the

development of a reading habit and a positive view of reading. Also referring to being read to, Jessica states that "I felt like I could read and I wanted to start reading a lot more". Violet describes her experience of reading with her mother and grandmother in a similar way. She states that "my mum got me into reading because she always used to read to me on a night and so did my Grandma", the explanation for which may be provided by shared enjoyment of particular books, they would "just laugh for ages and it gave off a really good atmosphere." Again, positive early reading experiences in the family context provide the foundations for a strong and lasting personal interest in reading for pleasure, as it is presented as something that is enjoyable and interesting. Further support for this provided by Baker, Scher, and Mackler (1997) who demonstrate that "the affective dimensions of shared storybook reading are particularly important contributors to the development of motivations for reading (p.76)". They found that the effective dimensions of reading, such as physical contact, use of expression, and extra-textual talk, were key to young people's enjoyment of reading and their subsequent motivation to read for pleasure. In these cases, positive relationships with parents led to positive relationships with reading.

Further explanation for young people's enjoyment of reading with family members as young children may be provided by the fact that it was often part of a bedtime routine, a key part of the primary care giver's role. As many participants indicated on their critical incident charts, this tended to occur before the young person had started school, often the first reading-related experience highlighted by the young people. Participants communicated their enjoyment of this activity in quite similar ways, as is evidenced in the extracts below:

Figure 2: Jodie (Female- School A, Class 1)

Figure 3: Ella (Female- School A, Class 1)
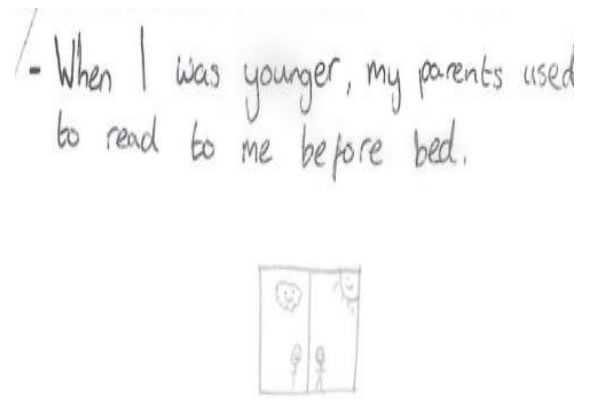
Figure 5:Maisy (Female- School B, Class 1)

Figure 4: Amber (Female- School A, Class 2)

The examples above demonstrate that being read to before bed was a positive experience for the young people, through either the words used or the pictures which accompany them, contributing to the positive ratings given by participants of both themselves and of reading. Reading in these instances is a calm, relaxing and quiet activity, employed by parents as a tool to help their child settle down before they go to bed. The drawings provided in Figure 2 and Figure 4, such as the book 'snoring', the smiley face and the sun to moon transition, further illustrate the positive association made between reading and settling down to go to sleep. It becomes a natural part of the young person's daily routine, something familiar and comfortable, an enjoyable way of unwinding and escaping from the stresses and excitements of the day. These findings are consistent with previous research on family routines and rituals, such as that by Spagnola (2007), whose systematic review of the literature on this topic demonstrates that activities such as bedtime stories and eating together:

> [...] form the foundation for rituals that are built upon emotional connections. When these gatherings are opportunities to share the news of the day and to be emotionally supported, then there are more opportunities to feel like a valued member of the group (Spagnola, 2007: 290)

These rituals did not have the same positive, encouraging impact when they were viewed as a source of conflict between parent and child. Spagnola (2007) found that "variations in the emotional investment in family rituals are associated with variations in family relationship satisfaction (p.284)". This was also the experience of a small number of the young people in this study, particularly where reading together was used solely as a means of 'getting ahead' in school, as I will evidence later in this chapter.

Such differences may be explained by variations in the socio-emotional quality of such experiences, on quality of the relationships and interactions on which they are based. Reading was viewed as a bonding exercise in certain cases, held responsible for strengthening the relationship

between parent and child. This may be due to the fact that reading together was most often part of a bedtime routine, as described above, which inspires a high level of intimacy. Intimate and personal, it was seen as an appropriate activity with which to fill family time spent together. Lucy describes this as her and her mum spending "quality time reading together" and, as with the participants discussed previously, suggests that it "encouraged me to read more and read more in my own time". For Violet, the love of reading is something that is shared, passed down through generations of women in her family. She refers to reading as "ours", meaning hers and her mother's, it is not something which she considers fitting to her and her Father's relationship, suggesting that she "can argue with him quite a bit". She explains how "it was the same for my mum and my Grandma, they had the same sort of relationship that me and my mum do. It's like passed down. So it's quite a nice thing." Violet believes that this is responsible for the strength of the relationship between her and her mother, and wishes that her father "could have got involved", as the two have a tendency to clash and are not as close as her and her mother. She explains that the only time they get on is when they are watching football together, which is an interest they share. When watching football, Violet and her father are "always just stood shouting at the TV and we love the world cup coz then we say that it just brings us together and that's the only time that we actually stop arguing." Just as she bonds with her mother over reading, she bonds with her father over football, with each relationship centred on shared interests. However, the latter is a huge contrast to the calmer, quieter, more intimate and personal nature of reading together, which does not fit with the more boisterous, turbulent and distant nature of her relationship with her father.

Annie also hints at a difficult relationship with her father and suggests that she is closer to her mother, who read to her when she was younger and who continues to support her reading interests. Approval, disapproval and indifference towards each other's reading interests are presented as indicative of either closeness or distance in her relationships with each of her parents. This is exemplified when she discusses both her mother and father's reactions to her interest in manga and anime, as she explains that:

> My Mum's like, she encouraged my interest in it and then there's my Dad who's like "oh, you're reading picture books", I'm like "it's not a picture book! If you gave this picture book to a little kid, they'd be scared for their life"

In addition to this, when talking about her Father's reading habits, she asserts that "I don't even know, I don't have any interest in what my Dad does". There is a degree of hostility expressed towards her Father in this second comment and, as could also be said of Violet, a sense of inevitability, that this is the natural order of things. It is almost as though she wants to be in conflict with him, or lacks any desire to reach a consensus and establish common ground. This may be due

to the fact that he does not seem to understand her and her reading interests, or at least she feels that way, as is demonstrated by his comments regarding the fact that she reads anime. His comments are also a challenge to her level of maturity, which she is quick to defend by highlighting his misunderstanding of what anime is. Although the difficult relationships discussed here are unlikely to be the sole consequence of the individual's reading interests, or vice versa, they provide the back group against which reading practices take place. Conceptualisations of reading are created through interactions between the individuals in these relationships. These cases also suggest that reading together, although an effective means of strengthening relationships, must be suited to the nature of the relationship in question and to the specific ways in which the individuals involved interact with and relate to each other. Further to this, although it is the parent of the opposite gender in each of these cases with whom they have a difficult relationship, gender is not perceived to be the primary issue here. Rather, it is a lack of shared interests – or lack of a shared interest in reading- which causes difficulty, consistent with research by Merga (2014b). However, it may be that influence of gender roles in the family environment is being taken for granted as 'natural' and, consequently go unnoticed and unremarked, as was found in research by Reay (2009) and Lawler (2000). It is well documented in the research that it is most often the mother who takes responsibility for their child's educational and emotional wellbeing (Gillies, 2000; Lawler, 2000; Reay, 2009; Auger, Reich & Penner, 2014), which may provide some explanation for their father's lack of involvement and interest. In this research, as I will demonstrate in the final section of this chapter, reading was heavily gendered in the family environment in most cases, and was tied to particular ways of 'doing gender'.

4.2. Getting Ahead: Reading for School Success

Other participants who were read to by their parents, or who read to their parents, suggested that the purpose of this activity was the development of skills that would serve them well in the school, a way of helping them to 'get ahead'. This was a product of the importance placed on education by the family, reflecting the fact that 'school work is now seen to be the responsibility of the family as well as the teacher (p.104),' leading to a collapse in the 'division between the public and the private (p.113)" (Reay, 2005b). In cases where the field of the school and the home overlapped in this way, the school dominated. For example, Nora explains how, from an early age, her mother encouraged her and her siblings to "engage in conversations, try and learn a lot […] she would read, try get me to read with her and stuff and learn the words and how to say them and spell them and stuff." She believes that this has "pushed me to try harder on my reading and learn more, like, from reading I've gained more English language and I've become pretty smart with my English Language" and that it helped her to progress in her "speaking and being able to learn more things". It appears, to Nora at least, that it is important for her mother that her children excel in this area, that they are

confident in communicating with others and are good learners in general. Nora views her mother's involvement at this stage as the foundations of her intelligence, her desire to learn and her consequent success in school. Becca describes her experiences with her own mother in a similar way. Due to the fact that Becca's Father was not able to read or write, her mother was particularly concerned about her children's ability to read. She recalls how, after giving birth to her younger sister, her mother refused to stay at the hospital overnight so that she could get home in time to read Becca her bedtime story, demonstrating the importance that she places on her child's education. It illustrates Becca's mother's sense of urgency surrounding her children's literacy development. When asked why she thought her mother felt it was so important to read to her, she explained that:

> "She thought because I can't, I can't read very well, I don't like really, I don't like talking in front of people or anything and when I read, I like stop and I can't like, I can't physically get the words out of my mouth, so I just go really quiet and I ran off because, I ran off in year six, I ran off, I went outside"

Seeing her daughter struggling with reading, and with communicating with other people in general, which was proving to be a barrier to her success in school, made Becca's mother take action. This may be due to the fact that she had witnessed Becca's father experiencing these difficulties as an adult and the barriers they had presented him. She had helped him overcome these barriers, as Becca reveals: "he could only write his name when my Mum taught him to". Unlike Nora, reading together in this case is a reactive, short-term solution, rather than a preventative measure, and her intervention stopped once she had mastered the basic skill of reading. This may provide some explanation for its lack of success in both inspiring in Becca a love of reading for its own sake, which was not characteristic of the family culture, and improving her literacy skills.

Isla, on the other hand, was read to as a small child and her mother still encourages her to read because of her own lack of reading experiences and reading skills, as is demonstrated in the following exchange:

> Isla: My mum's like, I wish I could have read more you know. Coz she's like, she says like "I'm like a slow reader" and then she says "I wish I read more."
>
> C: So she wants you to have that for yourself?
>
> Isla: Yeah, and like it'll be better for me coz I'm doing stuff so I can read quicker.

Unlike Becca, however, and despite the fact that they do not read themselves, Isla's parents continued to encourage her to read and provide access to reading material, with most books in their home belonging to either Isla or her brother. This may offer some explanation as to why Isla was in the higher ability set, and was someone who 'agreed' that she was good at reading, 'strongly

agreed' that she both enjoyed reading and that she read a lot in her own time. Hampden-Thompson, Guzman and Lipman (2013) found that social and cultural communication in the home- which included talking about books, films and television - was associated with higher levels of reading literacy, whereas, parental support with homework - an indicator that the child was already experiencing problems at school - was not. This suggests that pro-active practices, integrating literacy and reading into everyday family life, as opposed to a more reactive approach to parental involvement in children's reading lives as a 'treatment', are more effective means of improving literacy and fostering positive reading identities.

Nora, Becca and Isla's parents each share the same fear that their children will be left behind, that they will be deprived of the same opportunities and experiences they themselves were deprived of. They had strong belief in the importance of education because of, as opposed to in spite of, their own lack of success in the education system. It is the fear of continuing the cycle of educational disadvantage, and a desire for a better life for their children, which fuels their parent's efforts. Reading is employed as a 'common sense' way of getting ahead, essential for school success, a perception likely borne of a combination of the academicisation of reading and a lack of parental non-school reading experiences. There has been limited research into the impact of parental beliefs about reading on home literacy practices, however, Auger, Reich and Penner (2014) found that beliefs about the importance of reading were associated with higher reading frequency, once the child had reached 12 months of age. However, Cline and Edwards (2013) demonstrate the importance of paying attention to both the emotional and instructional quality of literacy practices in the home. High emotional quality combined with high levels of extra-textual talk were "related to positive child learning (p.1227)". This highlights the need to focus on the quality, as opposed to the mere presence, of reading activity in the home and between family members, and avoid placing emphasis solely on skills.

This may provide some explanation for why parental involvement in the young person's reading life, particularly when linked to 'school' reading, was not always described as having a positive impact on the direction of their reading journey. For example, one of the males who only took part in the first stage of this study, and identified the significance of being read to, suggested that it had a *negative* impact on his journey as a reader, as in the case in the example below:

Figure 6: David (School A, Class 1)

In this case, reading is something that the young person is being forced to do and, given the option, he would not have chosen to do it. This is illustrated by his use of language, which contrasts that used by other participants, as he describes being 'made' to read. Reading is perceived as 'boring' because it is preventing him from doing other things. It appears that it is this lack of choice, also characteristic of the reading that he does in school, rather than reading itself, which puts him off reading. He is distracted by the feeling that there is something 'better' he could be doing, a theme which is consistent throughout his reading journey. This follows from a view of reading, and the reader, common amongst the young people in this study, as being inherently non-social and acting as a barrier to full social participation. This explored fully in the next chapter of this thesis.

Daniel and Summer, who took part in both stages of the research, also describe negative experiences of reading to/ with parents. In the extract below, Daniel, who was in the low ability set in School 1 and is dyslexic, describes being punished for not being able to read at the expected level for his age:

> "When I was younger my mum used to get quite annoyed at me coz, you know, she was getting like emails and messages from school saying "he's been a naughty boy, he hasn't done a task that we've set, he's just always done, he just arses around all day" but and then I would get home and I would get shouted and she'd like shout at me to y'know, read a book or summat and I wouldn't like I, I'd just be trying my. I would try read it but I, and then just one day she took me for a test for dyslexia and after that she's kind of just like, she's been a bit more gentle about it like."

Daniel's story is particularly emotive. Reading appears to be a difficult issue for him to discuss as it evokes strong feelings of anger and embarrassment, of being judged and labelled by others. His mother's attempts to improve the situation, by negatively reinforcing the school's assertions regarding the importance of reading and behaving appropriately at school, rather than attempting to get to the root of the problem, serves to provide further justification for the 'literacy shaming'

and symbolic violence he experiences in the school context (Bartlett and Holland, 2002; Bartlett, 2007; Duckworth, 2014). Reading becomes associated with punishment, conflict, failure and anger, a kind of negative emotional capital which does not enable him to deal with the struggles he is facing in school. The adults in his life are failing to fully understand the problem, placing the blame on Daniel by labelling him 'naughty', and consequently. It is not until he is diagnosed with dyslexia, an acceptable excuse for his lack of success in the school context, that this narrative changes and his mother stops trying to force reading on him in this way. She chooses instead to 'leave him to it', providing no additional support. This could be explained in one of two ways; either she lacks the expertise to support him, or she feels that this is not something that can be solved, it is just a part of 'who he is' and must be accepted. Within this logic, based on an autonomous model of reading which places the problem within the individual as opposed to being the result of a lack of appropriate intervention, his identity as a non-reader becomes fixed.
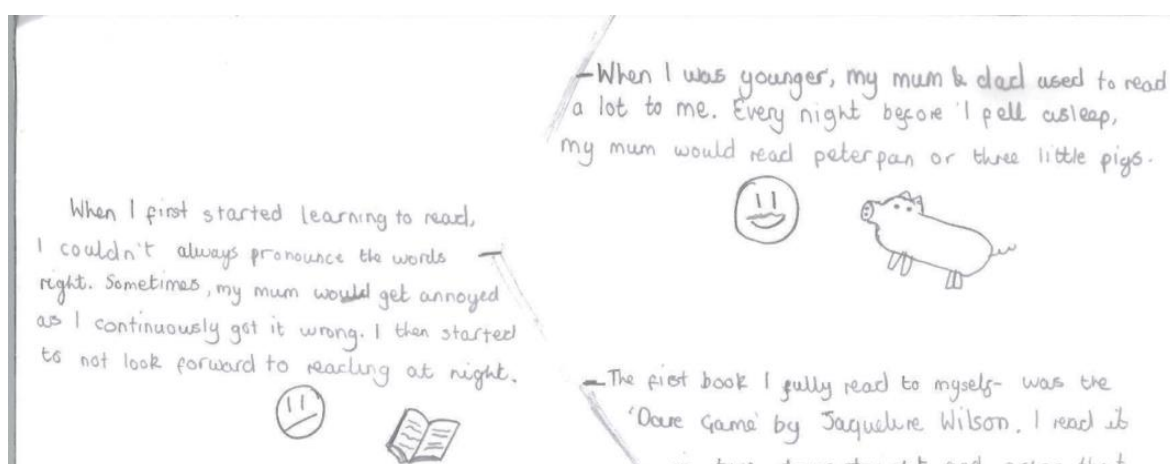
Figure 7: Summer (School A, Class 2)
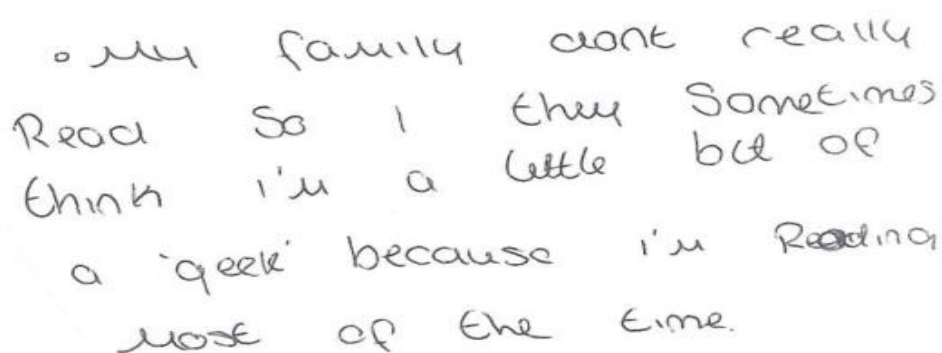
Summer (Figure 6), who attends the same school but is in the high ability class, also describes similar instances of literacy shaming. She recalls how, as a small child her mother would get annoyed with her and could not read certain words correctly. This meant that she did not look forward to reading with her mother. As in Daniel's experience, negative reinforcement leads reading to become associated with punishment and being 'wrong'. As can be seen in the extract from her C.I.C above, Summer is put off reading, despite previously enjoying being read to and her mother's attempts to support her development of skills and independence as a reader. Again, parental involvement becomes part of the problem. This change in reading practices in the home may be due to her mother's changing expectations regarding her ability and confidence as Summer gets older. This leads to a change in the relationship between her and her mother, as Summer is expected to take a more active role. Reading is no longer something that is done 'to' her. The impact that this had on her as a reader may be explained by the fact that she was not yet ready for this

independence. The role of the mother in this situation becomes closer to that of teacher, as is detailed in the extract below:

> "If I was just reading by myself like, if it was the same book, I would have enjoyed it because at least I'm saying the words right in my head, but because mum was always pointing out where I was going wrong, which she should do because she's the mum but, it's a bit, I don't really wanna read then."

This taking on of a teacher-like role by parents creates a hierarchy between the home and the school, and reading is no longer an enjoyable, shared, bonding activity. In both Daniel and Summer's case, their parent's frustration mirrors that of their teachers. However, in Summer's eyes, this does provide some justification for her mother's annoyance and correcting of her mistakes. It is simply what 'mothers' do as figures of authority and expertise, and, 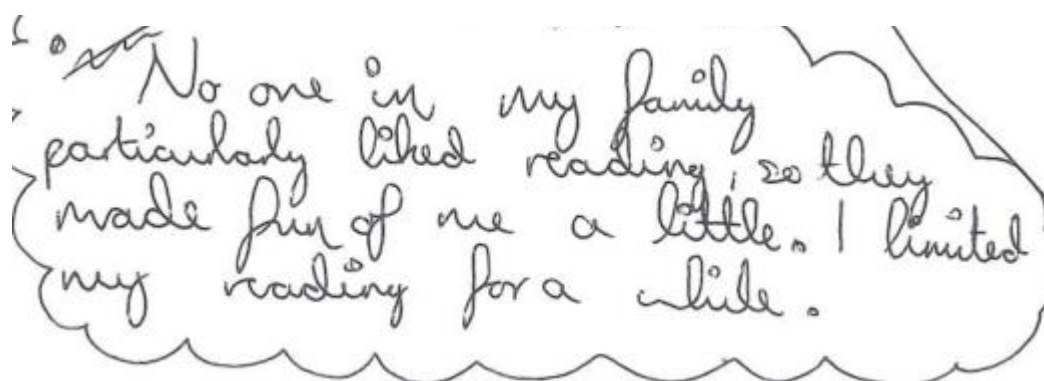consequently, Summer is to blame for making the mistakes in the first place. Despite feeling confident in her ability to read privately in her head, this does not extend to her feelings towards reading aloud, which is an uncomfortable experience for her and leads her to re-evaluate her belief regarding her own ability. The more public nature of reading aloud enables others to judge her as a reader. This then becomes the criteria with which she is validated, and validates herself, as a reader. This is an issue I will explore in greater detail in chapter 6. Despite this, unlike Daniel and the male from school 1, class A, Summer goes on to become a confident, capable reader with a real passion for fiction. Unlike the two boys, Summer had the opportunity to develop independence and interests as a reader, and to be positioned as the 'expert'. She recalls the first books she read by herself and her subsequent passion for that particular author, Jacqueline Wilson. She also describes her friends introducing her to *Wattpad*, an online reading community where she can read and comment on the writing of her peers. These experiences have allowed her to develop an understanding of reading and of herself as a reader outside of the family context, providing her with an alternative criteria for evaluation and a positive relationship with reading. Nevertheless, these cases highlight the need for parents to have the appropriate skills and knowledge in order to provide positive support for their children, which should be appropriate to their age, ability and needs. As demonstrated in this section, for some of the young people in this study, there is little distinction between 'home' and 'school' reading, which becomes an issue when 'school' reading is associated with boredom, failure and punishment. As previous research has shown, over-emphasis on educational achievement can be to the detriment of young people's emotional wellbeing (Reay, 2000; Reay, 2005a) and engagement in reading (Baker, Scher & Mackler, 1995; Spagnola, 2007; Merga, 2014b). They demonstrate the need to move away from 'school' like reading practices and an emphasis on reading as a skill, which may be a reflection of parent's own understanding and experiences of reading.

In contrast to this, there were also cases where the family contexts appeared to be *un*supportive of the young person becoming 'someone who reads', which had an equally negative impact on young people's reading journeys. This was the case for Lyndsay, Freddie, Isla and two of the pupils who only took part in the first stage of this research. As the extracts below illustrate, each reported being ridiculed by their family for being readers, or that they felt it was not something that would be valued in the family context:

o my family dont really Read So i think i'm a little bit of a 'geek' because i'm Reading most of the time. they sometimes

Figure 8: Isla (School A, Class 2)

No one in my family particularly liked reading, so they made fun of me a little. I limited my reading for a while.

Figure 9: Jayne (School A, Class 2)

> "My Mum and my sister's don't care but like my Dad will say I'm boring if I stay in and read and not go out and socialise […] my Dad tells me to go outside, he's like "do a mix".
> **(Lyndsay)**

Similar to when such perceptions were believed to be present amongst the peer group, as will be discussed in the following chapter, there was a fear of not fitting in in this particular social context, of being identified as 'different'. In Isla's case, there are also conflicting messages, from different family members, regarding the importance and acceptability of reading, with her mother being keen to encourage and support her reading. Similarly, Lyndsay's mother and father had differing views about whether and how much reading was an appropriate pass time, due to perceptions that it was an 'anti-social' activity. This often resulted in a situation where the young person did not

always feel they could be open with their identification as a reader. Again, these were all individuals who identified on their 'face sheet' as enjoying reading and considering themselves to be 'good' readers. However, in each of these cases, the peer group exercised a more positive influence, providing a space where the young person could be 'a reader'. For example, Freddie, revealed during an interview that his family "took the mick out of me, called me a bookworm or whatsoever" which made him feel like he should stop reading. However, "after speaking to friends and stuff and like at school, teachers at school, you realise, you didn't realise how good it is for you actually". Due to the more supportive, pro-reading culture within his peer group and in the school context, he still carried on reading and was able to positively and openly identify as a reader without being in conflict with the social norms of the peer group. This provides support for both the strength of the peer group influence, particularly during pre/ early adolescence, and the weakening of the family influence beyond this point. As long as reading is consistent with the identity of the peer group, it will most likely negate any negative influence or lack of support in the family context.

4.3. 'Doing Gender' in the Family: Roles and Responsibilities

Reading in the family context was also often heavily gendered. It is interesting to note that, in many of the cases discussed so far in this section, the mother took on the responsibility of reading to the child, whilst the father tends to take less of an active role in encouraging a reading habit. Bourdieu (1986) theorises that, cultural capital transmitted through the family is dependent not only on the family's level of cultural capital, but on the time available for such activities, in particular the amount of free time the *mother* is able to allocate to such activities. Further exploring these assumptions, Reay (2009), refers to mothers as the 'silent majority', arguing that research on and discussion of 'parents' and parental involvement often hides the fact that it is often mothers who carry out the practical, educational and emotional work of parenting. Lawler (2000) terms this 'mothering the self', proposing that "mothers have become increasingly responsible for nurturing a specific type of self within the daughter (and the son) (p.1)." Previous research by Reay (2000, 2005b, 2009) and others (Gillies, 2006; O'Brien, 2008; Duckworth, 2014) provides further support for the belief that such work often falls into the hands of mothers, in both advantaged and disadvantaged families. This is also reflected in current policy discourses which hold mother, through the production of 'undesirable' young selves, responsible for social problems. For example, British Prime Minister David Cameron's proposal that Muslim mothers should learn to speak English, with a view to fighting extremism and promoting British Values (Cameron, 2016a), and his proposals for parenting classes, suggesting that all children need "tiger mothers" to reinforce the values of "work, try hard, believe you can succeed, get up and try again" (Cameron, 2016b).

This was the case for many of the participants in this study, with the mother most commonly being responsible for encouraging and supporting reading. However, despite this, the

mother was also less likely to have the time to read herself. For example, when asked about their parent's reading habits, Becca, Kaylah, Lauren and Lucy each describe how their mothers' caring responsibilities reduce the amount of time they have to read themselves, to read to their older children, or prevented them from reading completely:

> "When my mum gets books quite a lot, she, when she gets like into a book then like, me, my dad has to make tea and everything coz she gets into it. But she doesn't read a lot coz she just doesn't have time" - Becca

> "My mum like, she reads more like, I think if she reads horror books and love books. She tends to read them when either my sisters are distracted and they're playing something, or when they're in bed. But most of the time when they're in bed, she's watching TV" - Kaylah

> "My mum does when she's not looking after my brother" - Lauren

> "My mum she is really busy all the time because of my brother's behavioural problems so that needs all sorting" - Lucy

In each of these cases, the mother must sacrifice her own reading for the sake of her children, whose development and wellbeing must now take priority. As Lawler (2000) suggests in her study of mothers and daughter relationships, mother's needs are often considered to be either non-existent, less important than, or to be the same as those of their children. In the case of this study, mother's identities as readers come second to, or are replaced completely by, their role as mothers. There were no similar explanations of why fathers read, or do not read. In the case of Becca's parents, it is implied in the example above that, on the rare occasions when her mother does find time to read, this necessitates her father taking on what is usually her role. This suggests that such activities are not ordinarily her father's responsibility. Reay (2005b) similarly found, with regards to parental involvement in school work, that "fathers 'helped out', whereas the main responsibility lay with their female partners (p.106)". Mothers were responsible for supporting their children's schooling and consequently, placing increasing responsibility for children's education onto parents results in an "increased workload of women in relation to their male partners (p.113)." This may offer some explanation for the fact that the mothers in this study often had little time for their own reading.

The perceived gendered nature of certain types of reading also had an impact on young people's own reading practices and beliefs about reading. Reading in this context was often linked to the role traditionally played by each gender in the day to day functioning of the family and is framed as a more feminine activity, central to 'doing girl', similar to the girls in Rogers Cherland's (1994) ethnography of reading. This was also reflected in a number of the males' responses to the text sorting activity. For example, Callum, Daniel, Dexter and Lucas each had mothers and sisters

who read magazines and particular types of fiction and, consequently, they labelled them as being 'for girls' when asked 'who might read these?'. There was also a tendency amongst the young girls in this study to mimic their mothers' behaviour and take on a kind of 'mothering' role themselves, with many claiming they had little time for reading due to caring responsibilities they had for younger siblings. For example, Nora suggests that this is the main reason that being a good reader is important to her, describing it as " an important thing because being a good reader's quite a main thing in my life because I have siblings, I have to read to them a lot and I have to teach them how to read." There is no mention here of personal interest or enjoyment, of reading for its own sake. Similarly, when asked when asked why she doesn't have time for reading, Lucy answers "my little brother. And then I read to him a lot of the time though and he's got loads of little books so I read them". Becca, who is not someone who often reads for pleasure, also describes how she reads with her younger brother, "helping him along", and how she enjoys it "just to know what like, he can do. It's just interesting". The reading that these girls do is for the benefit of their younger siblings and, as is the case for their mothers, this leaves little time for reading of their own.

Further to this, those who had younger siblings often felt that their parents no longer had the time to encourage and support their reading. There is a belief that younger siblings, particularly those who had not yet learnt to read, should take priority over older siblings who have already mastered the basic skill of reading. They have had their 'chance', or their 'turn', to learn how to read. For example, Lauren describes how "they don't really help me with my reading, don't really help like coz they've got, they need to spend more time with my brother just time to, to get, let him, whilst he's learning at the moment". Nora describes a similar situation where her parents "don't really try encourage me to read. It's more focusing on my little brothers this time." In the case of Lauren and Nora, there is the perception that their parents' job is done, and that, as older sisters, they must now spend their time and energy supporting the younger children's development as readers. Thus, gendered reading identities were not only a product of young people's relationships with their parents, but also with their siblings. Edwards, Weller and Capital (2014) describe the "ongoing construction of gender, and negotiation of masculinity and femininity, as part of brothers' and sisters' routine, and what are often thought of as trivial, interactions with each other in specific spaces and locations over time (p.2)." Therefore, reading practices in the home, which change as the young people get older and the family structure and relationships change – such as when a new sibling is born, may be considered one such 'routine' or 'trivial' interaction through which gendered reading identities are negotiated. This may also provide further explanation for the tendency, discussed previously, for the decreasing influence of the family on young people's reading lives beyond the early years of primary school. The young people's discussions of reading with younger siblings are reflective of a functional, autonomous view of reading, or an 'adult needs' or 'cross-curricular' model of English (Cox, 1991), placing emphasis on

skills that will serve them well in school and in the workplace. Thus, once the basic skill of reading is acquired, parental input is no longer required as the end goal has been achieved, and efforts must be placed on younger siblings who do not yet possess these skills. Little attention is being paid in these instances to the need to foster enjoyment and engagement, inspiring a lifelong passion for reading.

There is sense of acceptance in the matter of fact way that the girls speak about this process, suggesting that, to them, stepping aside for younger siblings is part of a natural consequence of growing up and being mature and responsible. They are not complaining about it or criticizing their parents, nor are they suggesting that they are being treated unfairly. This demonstrates the significant impact that birth order can have on young people's development. This is line with Black, Devereux and Salvanes' (2005) findings from their study into the effects of family size and birth order on children's educational outcomes using census data from Norway. The authors found that, once sibling birth order was controlled for, family size has little impact on young people's educational outcomes. To put this into perspective, they compare the gap in attainment between the first child and the fifth child in a five child family to that between "black and white educational attainment calculated from the 2000 census" with older siblings being at a greater disadvantage. Black et al's (2005) findings, and those of this study, are in contrast to Booth and Kee's (2009) findings, where the impact of family size did not vanish once birth order was accounted for and the education of younger, rather than older, siblings was most negatively affected by birth order. However, perhaps of more interest here are Black et al's (2005) findings in relation to gender, with birth order having a greater negative impact on the educational outcomes of earlier born females, and an even greater impact on their likelihood of being in full time employment compared to their male counterparts. There was also little impact on these findings when mother's level of education as taken into account, suggesting that differences are not due to financial resources. My study provides some explanation for these differences, suggesting that different gender roles in the family environment may be responsible for the greater impact that sibling birth order has on the educational outcomes of women.

The females experienced their responsibilities for younger siblings in a variety of ways, highlighting the importance of considering the meaning that such experiences held for the individual. For some, being involved in the reading development of younger family members had a more positive impact on the direction of their own reading lives. For example, Lyndsay has several younger siblings, in addition to several who are older. Twice on her C.I.C. she identifies reading to her youngest brother as being critical in the positive directing her reading journey. Figure 7 below is the second time Lyndsay writes about reading to her younger brother:
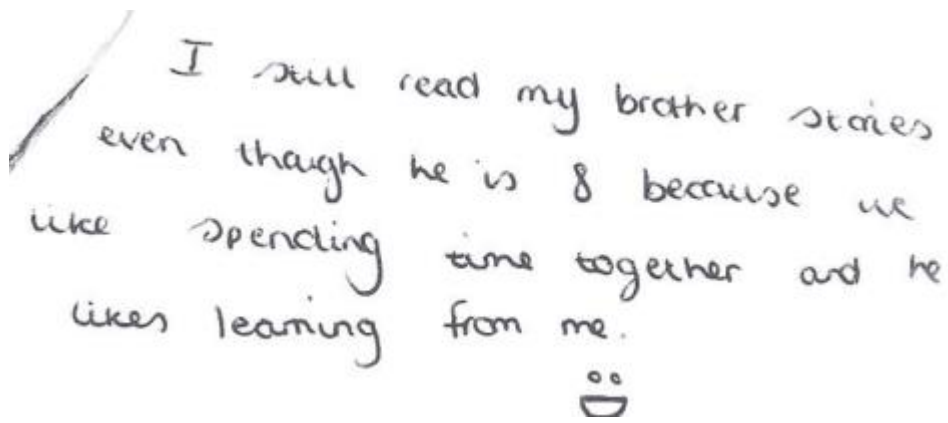
Figure 10: Lyndsay (School A, Class 2)

Both Lyndsay and her brother gain something from this experience, which provides an opportunity for both bonding and learning, as reading becomes characteristic of their relationship. She also describes acting out stories she had written with her younger sister, recalling in her first interview that she "was good at writing like stories and plays". The fact that this is something they have done together for many years, which did not stop once her brother was able to read independently, suggests that the purpose of reading for them goes beyond the development of basic skills. It becomes, as in the cases discussed at the beginning of this chapter, a source of fun and a way of establishing and maintaining relationships. Helen also describes reading to children younger than her at a book club, run by the library at which her mother used to work. She explains how, as she got older "instead of being one of the little kids she was helping with I'd help the older ones sort of like read to them and stuff." Below, she explains how this new level of responsibility made her feel:

> "grown up, I dunno, like errrmm, like I could help others read it made me feel sort of proud that I was getting others to read and stuff and it was also like I don't know, I can't really describe it, it was enjoyable."

Helen's response suggests she feels a sense of validation, being given this task means that she possesses the necessary skills and can be trusted with this level of responsibility. It is almost a rite of passage for her, as she progresses from being one of the attendees, to taking a more active role as a facilitator of the activities. Both Lyndsay and Helen are given the opportunity to position themselves as the 'expert' in these situations, passing on their knowledge, skills and enthusiasm to younger, less experienced readers. This, in addition to the continued strong reading culture in each of their homes, may be partially responsible for their current appetites for reading. In these cases, being lower down in the birth order has had a positive impact on their development as readers, which challenges the findings of the existing research discussed previously. This demonstrates the value of paying attention to pupil's experience of such phenomena and the meaning that it holds for them.

These gender roles, and the feminisation of reading in the family environment, may offer some explanation as to why the males in this study were less likely than females to view any form of family support or encouragement as being critical in shaping them as readers. This may also be due to the different nature of the relationships between mothers and daughters, and fathers and sons. For example, in research on gender issues in parental involvement in higher education choices, David, Ball, Davies and Reay (2003) found that female approaches to this kind of decision making were collaborative and often involved their mothers. Males, on the other hand were less open to involving their parents in their education. Further to this, many of the males chose not to involve parents in the study itself and more mothers than father were willing to be interviewed. This is in line with findings of this research, with males and their fathers being less likely to read together, or view family support as an integral part of their reading lives. None of the males in this study described reading to younger siblings, either because this did not happen, or because they chose not to report it as it was not considered to be a significant part of their reading lives. However, a number of the boys did describe sharing the same interests as their father, which in certain cases extended to their reading interests. For example, Alfie describes his interest in golf, which he plays with his step-dad, and reveals that his step-dad recommends books for him to read. Callum shares his father's interest in engineering and technology, and explains that the males in his family read "a lot of non-fiction but not a lot of fiction". This is in contrast to his mother's interest in fiction. Just as reading fiction was passed down through the females in Violet's family, as I discussed in the first section of this chapter, reading non-fiction was passed down from Callum's Grandfather to his Father, and then eventually to him. This highlights the importance of positive reading role models for both males and females in the family environment, as parents' own private reading practices and beliefs are often passed on to their children, whether intentionally or unintentionally.

4.4. Conclusion

For the young people in this study, the family was responsible for the development of the primary reading habitus on which future dispositions towards reading were build. It was field in which the initial normalisation of reading, or not reading, generating a set of schema for what it is, who it is for and the extent to which it is an appropriate leisure pursuit. This supports previous research which suggests that attitudes towards reading develop at an early age, and that the home literacy environment is integral to the development of these attitudes is dependent on the home literacy environment (Baker, Scher & Mackler, 1997; Partin & Gillespie, 2002). This suggests the need for a positive reading culture in the home during the formative years which includes not only reading together, but the presence of books and talk about reading. Family relationships served to shape, and were shaped by, the reading practices which were characteristic of this field. As has been evidenced throughout this chapter, conceptualisations of reading are created through interactions

between the individuals in these relationships. It was often used during this period as a bonding activity, a means of establishing and maintaining relationships, or as a way of preparing children to meet the demands of school. Although the two were not mutually exclusive, the former appeared to be most effective in fostering both positive relationships with and positive emotional responses to reading, a form of emotional capital that goes on to serve them well in the school context.

This research provides evidence to suggest the value of continued family input beyond the early years of primary, of moving away from treating reading as simply a skill to be acquired, and of making a distinction between the reading the young person does at home and that which they must do in school. However, in most cases, such activities stopped once the child had acquired the basic skill of reading, which sends out particular messages about its importance and purpose, and about what it means to be a fully developed reader. By focusing on older readers, on reading practices as opposed to specific texts, and on the meaning that such practices hold for the individual, I have found that school-focused approaches to reading rarely succeeded in fostering a reading habit, especially when reading becomes associated with failure, boredom and punishment. Such approaches reduces reading to the basics of understanding the words written on a page, neglecting issues of understanding, engagement and identity. The families were most successful in raising readers in cases where they encouraged the young person to see reading as more than an academic activity or a functional skill. My findings demonstrate that there is a need to pay greater attention to the socio-emotional dimensions of reading in the home, and the relationships and interactions which through which particular constructions of reading and the reader are formed. This is as opposed to the instructional quality of such practices, or the texts that are being read, which are often central to debates surrounding young people's reading. This supports Gee's (1999) assertion that decontextualizing reading from social practices, viewed as an end in itself, has little academic, social or cultural value for the individual. This is supported by research by Baker, Scher, and Mackler (1997) and Spagnola (2007), which highlight the importance of the social and emotional dimensions of reading practices in the home. However, such research focused primarily engaging younger readers and the acquisition of basic literacy skills. In contrast, this research contribute to an understanding of the need to continue supporting older readers who have already developed this basic skill, and the ways in which one might do this.

It is likely that such approaches to reading in the home are a condition of parent's own experiences of reading which, in certain cases, had been limited to the school context in which they themselves had been unsuccessful. This is also in line with research by Reay (2005b), who found that "mothers' own educational histories continued to exert a powerful impact on their involvement in the present (p.107)", which results in difference in the kinds of parental involvement of mothers from various social and ethnic backgrounds. In the specific context of this research, it is likely that the emphasis on the development of basic skills and preparation for the world of work

are a consequence of parent's own educational background and position in the labour market, with the majority of families served by the schools being of working class backgrounds, carrying out low skilled, often seasonal work. However, for many of the parents, these attempts to support their child's reading came from a desire to break this cycle and to enable their own children to do better. The parent were very aware of the importance of education, however, they lacked the symbolic capital for their attempts at "concerted cultivation (P.5)" (Lareau, 2003) to transmit educational and social advantages to their children. Therefore, this key factor here shaping the young people's development of a reading habitus, is not just whether parents support their children's reading, but how. Neuman and Celano (2012) demonstrate a similar trend their comparison of the use of two similarly resourced community libraries, which served two very different communities, with parents from the more disadvantaged community unable to fully mobilise the potential information capital the library had to offer for their children.

Reading practices in the home were also heavily gendered, and the young person's experience of reading in the family environment was dependent on their gender and on their age in relation to any siblings. These had strong implications in certain families for the role and responsibilities which the young person was expected to take on, with females in particular following in the footsteps of their mothers. This had consequences for the meaning that reading held for the individual, and the ways and the extent to which they engaged in reading in the home. As Reay (2005a) suggests, mothers from working class backgrounds are often "emotionally pre-occupied with surviving from day to day", leaving little time and energy to invest in their children's educational well-being. This was reflected in the mothers in this study's reported lack of time for reading with children, particularly older children, and for their own reading, which is reflected in their daughters' beliefs about reading and reading behaviours. There is a need for parents, particularly mothers, to model their own reading for pleasure, as well as supporting their children's reading.

5. The Peer Group: Reading (or Not Reading) as Social Currency

Although the home environment was where the young people most commonly first encountered reading, other fields, such as the peer group and the school, served to either challenge or reinforce the beliefs and values learnt in the home environment. As the young people gained increased independence from the family, and access to and positions within these other fields became more important in terms of the young people 'getting ahead' and 'fitting in'. In certain cases, this required the re-negotiation of these beliefs and values. For example, when starting secondary school, many young people reduced the amount they read or stopped reading completely for fear of not 'fitting in'. On the other hand, there were also cases where individuals - who had not previously been engaged with reading - decided to read a book because everyone else in their peer group was talking about it and they wanted to be part of that conversation. In these cases, the peer group introduced the young person to reading and enabled them to positively and openly identify as a reader, therefore, these relationships may also be seen as a form of social capital in themselves, providing access to cultural capital. Particular reading practices, or the decision not to read, were varyingly used as a form of cultural capital by the young people in this study, establishing and maintaining their position within the peer group. It was differently valued and its purpose varied in different social situations. The common factor, however, was whether or not reading was perceived to be conducive to their participation within the peer group and was consistent with the identity of this group.

Young people's perceptions of the nature of the relationship between reading and the social ranged from reading as a social activity which formed the basis of friendships to reading as inherently incompatible with social participation. Particular reading practices served to position, or allow individuals to consciously position themselves, within (or outside of) certain social groups. Individuals variously 'play the game' or choose to opt out, depending on what is valued and the meaning of specific reading practices within their particular peer group. Young people's reading choices and use of reading can be understood in the context of their broader social and cultural engagement, in particular their engagement with popular culture. For example, Power and Smith (2016), when discussing the famous people young people admire and dislike, suggest that young people's 'likes' and 'dislikes' can be viewed as "a form of constructive identity work of affirmation and cultural belonging (p.6)" to a particular peer group, asking as markers of social distinction. Allen and Mendick (2013) also suggest that young people's use of celebrity in identity work is a form of active social engagement, as opposed to a passive reception of popular culture. However, they also suggest that these identities are themselves a product of a particular "social, cultural and economic context, which sets limits on the kinds of identities that are available to particular selves (p80)", and

were shaped by classed and gendered positions. This also applies to the reading choices and practices of the young people who took part in this study, which say more about them than the texts themselves, functioning as markers of social distinction and identification with a particular peer group, as way of creating a sense of 'belonging' to a particular group, even where this meant 'belonging' on the margins. This provides some support for Gee's (1999) assertion that "learning to read means learning to read specific social languages connected to specific social identities (p.370)", with different literacies embedded within particular social structures, existing between rather than within individuals. In this chapter, I will outline and discuss each of the subgroups mentioned here, considering the impact that these views of reading - and being a reader - have on an individual's desire and ability to identify as 'someone who reads' within a particular context, and their ways of being a reader.

5.1. Reading as a Barrier to Social Participation

For many of the young people in this study, being 'someone who reads' was constructed as being in direct conflict with, or at least unconducive to, full social participation. This implies a narrow conception of what reading and, consequently, being a reader entails. As I will demonstrate in this section, such perceptions are socially constructed, and are in line with dominant, "'common sense' conceptualisations of reading as an individual, rather than a social act" (Yandell, 2013: 283). This view and the behaviours it engenders treats reading as silent and as occurring solely between the individual and the text, reflective of the autonomous model of reading, and of being a reader, which is maintained in the school context (Yandell, 2013). Participants who maintained this view tended to fall into one of two sub-categories, which impacted, to varying degrees, on both their level of willingness to read and on their willingness to be identified as a 'reader'. The first group viewed reading as *anti*-social, due to the stigma attached and its lack of fit with the accepted values and norms of the social group. It served to exclude the individual from the social, or was used by the individual as a means excluding themselves. Thus, reading (or lack of) was used by members of this group in order to construct an identity which would allow them either to fit in with or opt out of certain social groups. In the middle of these two extremes, there were some young people who perceived reading as intrinsically *non-* social, with the more neutral view that there was simply a lack of fit between being a reader and the very social nature of young people's everyday lives. For individuals in this group, it was their desire for and prioritisation of social participation which prevented them from identifying as a reader, rather than any social stigma attached to reading- they were not making a value judgment. These views were not limited to those who did not enjoy reading or identify as 'readers'.

It is useful here to draw on Beers's (1996) categorisation of aliterate readers into unmotivated, dormant and uncommitted readers, in order to illustrate the subtle differences between these first two groups. Individuals who viewed reading as a barrier to social participation had a negative view of reading itself and can, therefore, be categorised as 'unmotivated' readers. They do not have an interest in reading and are unlikely to do so in the future. In contrast, those who view social participation as a barrier to reading can be classified as either 'dormant' or 'uncommitted' readers; they enjoy reading, or at least are not opposed to it, but do not feel they have the time for it. Therefore, although they do not identify as readers at present, they may do so in the future. In this section, I will discuss the former.

This belief in the intrinsically anti-social nature of reading amongst the young people is a cause for concern due to the fact that, As Yandell (2013) suggests, from particular notions of reading follow particular notions of "who counts as a proper reader (p.285)", with the notion of reading as a personal, private activity painting a picture of the "silent, solitary reader of prose (p.283)". Several of my participants viewed reading as intrinsically 'quiet' or 'boring' and consequently, viewed those who identified as a reader as possessing similar qualities. Reading was viewed as being in conflict with someone who is 'loud', as Zoe suggests when she explains that she doesn't like to read outside of school because "I don't like being quiet" and "I don't like being alone". This perceived dichotomy is also reflected in Violet's explanation of why she decided to reduce the amount of time she spends reading, stating on several occasions throughout her two interviews that "I'm trying to get my social skills up with my friends". Her belief that she needs to improve her social skills stems from the difficulties she has experienced with confidence and interacting with people, and her chosen solution suggests that reading is unconducive to the development of such skills. These beliefs were also at the root of various conflicts with parents, concerned for their child's social development. For example, in both her critical incident chart and her interviews, Summer describes how she caused her parents some concern when she began to spend a lot of time reading fiction online through a website called *WattPad;* an online community of reading where stories can be shared and discussed. Her parents also express concerns regarding the content of this site, as will be discussed in the following section. She explains that "as I became more closed off, I started getting into trouble with my mum". There is an underlying assumption in Summer's comment regarding her parents' concerns that reading was causing her to become withdrawn and isolated from her friends and family. This demonstrates her parents' lack of understanding regarding the opportunities for social interaction that are facilitated by the site. Further to this, she attempts to defend the amount of time she spent on the site by asserting that "it wasn't like I was spending six hours on the internet, I was spending six hours reading books on the internet". This suggests that she perceives a difference between reading fiction online and playing on the internet, and that spending this time 'reading' is more acceptable than playing online, even though it still reportedly

caused her to become 'closed off' and despite the fact that both make demands of her literacy skills. Therefore, her parent's concerns may have more to do with the fact that she is reading online, rather than the fact that she is reading. For Summer, the benefits of reading outweigh the perceived disadvantages of spending time online.

Similar beliefs to those of Summer's parents were reflected in Lyndsay's father's reaction to her reading, as discussed in the previous chapter. She reports that "my Dad will say I'm boring if I stay in and read and not go out and socialise [...] my Dad tells me to go outside, he's like "do a mix"". This suggests that by being a reader, she is not only excluding herself and being anti-social, but that she is becoming dull and uninteresting. He is making a judgement, not only of the value of the reading as an activity, but of Lyndsay as a person. These conflicts also suggest that there is a perceived gap between the 'real', physical world, of interaction with friends and family, and the imagined, mental worlds that readers engage in. This also reflected in the false dichotomy alluded to in many of the young people's comments between being sporty and being academically gifted, a point I elaborate on later in this chapter. The parents' reported concerns also illustrate the belief that there is a need for greater balance between reading and the social, and that too much reading poses an unhealthy risk to both social development and the individual's position within certain peer groups. As Mar, Oatley, and Peterson (2009) explain:

> Along with social awkwardness, frequent readers are often seen as having fewer friends, being socially isolated, and experiencing more depression, loneliness and stress as a result. Our own conception of readers, however, predicts just the opposite (p.411)

This is a belief which is not supported by research in this area, which highlights the cognitive, social and emotional benefits of reading, particularly fiction (Richardson and Eccles, 2007; Topping, Samuels and Paul, 2008 & Mar, Oatley and Peterson, 2009). This suggests that these parents may be depriving the young people of the very qualities they are trying to protect, due to this perceived dichotomy between reading and social participation.

Those who viewed reading itself to be the barrier to their full participation in certain social groups, such as the peer group or the family, often expressed a fear of being excluded from these groups and being viewed as 'different'. As indicated on their critical incident charts, 24 of these young people believed that reading was viewed as 'uncool' and as being the preserve of 'geeks'. In this context, the word 'geek' is a pejorative term used to describe a socially awkward, academically successful individual with an excessive interest in intellectual, often school related pursuits. Reading was, therefore, perceived to be something they should hide or be embarrassed about, carrying little currency in the context of the peer group. It is interesting to note that this view of reading often appeared to materialise at the very end of primary school, or in the first years of secondary school. This may be explained by and also provides support for the fact that, at this age the peer group

begin to have more of an influence on the young person, as they gain increased independence from the family context. For example, one girl from School A Class 2 relates:
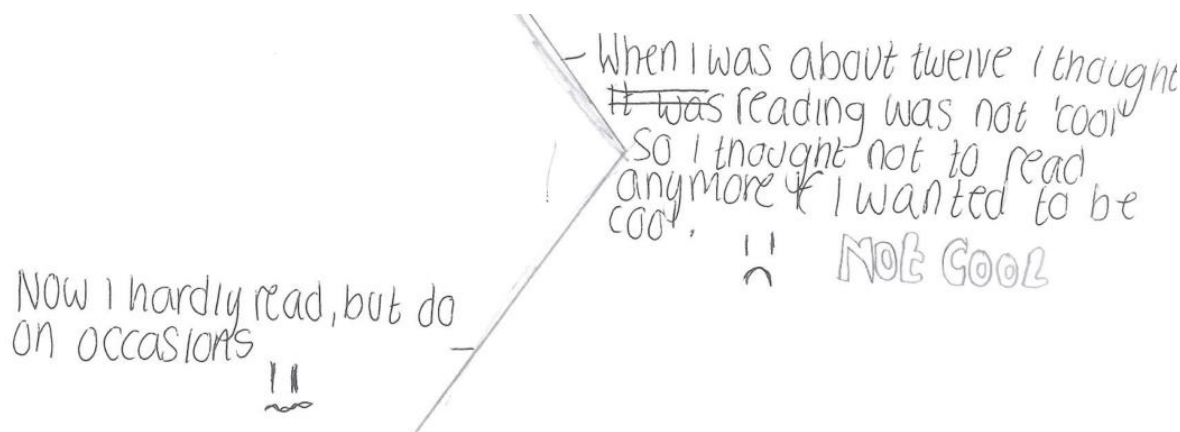
Figure 11: Mia (School A, Class 2)

In this instance, her decision to stop reading appears to come from her own view that being a reader will prevent her from being socially accepted, rather than a result of external influences, such as bullying or negative comments from her peers. She follows this by stating that "now I hardly read, but do on occasions". This suggests that it is her own perception of what is 'socially acceptable' and a fear of being excluded which has influenced her behaviour, rather than pressure from others to conform to particular social norms. Her use of sad and unsure faces further emphasises the negative impact she feels that this has had on her reading life. This is in contrast to Dexter, who reveals on his critical incident chart that "my friends say reading is for geeks", this indicates that peer pressure has played an integral role in preventing him from further pursuing his developing interest in reading. There is an absence of any stated reading activity beyond this point in his life so far. Dexter's statement was also accompanied by the drawing of a sad face, which supports the idea that this had a negative impact on their 'reading journey'. In each case, this could also be interpreted as symbolising feelings of regret towards the fact that it prevented them from identifying as 'readers'. For these participants, being 'a reader' and 'fitting in' are perceived to be mutually exclusive and a decision must be made by the young person as to where they want to position themselves in relation to these perceived norms; in their view, they must choose one or the other.

Surprisingly, these participants both 'agreed' that they were good at, and enjoyed, reading. This demonstrates that it was their desire to conform to perceived social norms and be accepted by these social groups, rather than a dislike of the act of reading itself or difficulties with reading, which prevents them from identifying as readers. The fact that none of my participants said that they would reject 'someone who reads' from their social group also suggests that they themselves

do not feel that reading is 'uncool' or for 'geeks', further demonstrating a lack of actual stigma surrounding reading. This is in line with findings from Merga's (2014a) study, in which only 9% of respondents to a questionnaire on adolescent's reading agreed with the statement "it is not cool to read books". Further light is shed on this issue by examining the interview data generated through this study, with three cases in particular providing additional insight into the impact of a view of reading as an anti-social phenomenon. For example, Daniel, Freddie and Jessica describe having to either hide their enjoyment of reading or give up reading all together, in their search for social acceptance. Each of these participants suggested that they did not feel they were able to openly identify as a reader, either because they were new to the school or because their position in the 'social hierarchy' of the school did not permit them to do so. As Daniel explains, "you can't really have books in your bag. I remember being like the first few days, you know everybody's judging each other […] I was tranna y'know, just tranna fit in." Similar beliefs are echoed in Freddie's (School A, Class 2) explanation of why he felt unable to be open about his interest in reading:

> "when I first moved to the school anyway, you didn't really know a lot of people so and like, you wouldn't really wanna say to one of your friends that you've just made with maybe coz they might think that they have a different opinion than you if you say something else like "[…] do you wanna come down come down to the library in town with me so I can buy this book?""

Both boys describe being new to the school, which required them to negotiate their position within a new peer group. In both cases, their actions, and the kind of reading identity they lead to, are based on their own assumptions regarding the kind of behaviours that will be considered socially acceptable by others. They are not a product of ridicule or bullying, or of their own views on reading, but of a kind of second-guessing as to what other people would think of this kind of behaviour. They are at a stage in their respective relationships where they are still getting to know each other and developing an understanding of what is and is not compatible with the group identity. As new comers to the school and to their peer groups, they are not yet in a position to break the social norms in this field, or to establish new ones. Their decision not to identify as 'a reader' here appears to be part of a conscious and calculated struggle for meaning and value in this field. This is also reminiscent of Scholes's (2015) 'Clandestine Readers', young people who "while they enjoyed reading, they felt compelled to conceal their endeavours" due to "a dominant peer group culture which they viewed as unsupportive of this endeavour […] constraining their reading frequency and subsequent outcomes (p.364)". Thus, reading, or not reading, was used as a means of positioning people in relation to the social norms of the dominant peer group. It served as a determinant of popularity and acceptance, a tendency which is also evident in my participants. Further support is provided for this by the fact that it was not only one's position in, or entry to, the peer group which required this kind of interaction and negotiation. As I demonstrated in the previous chapter, in

certain cases, the family context appeared to be unsupportive of the young person becoming 'someone who reads'. This often led to the young person feeling they could be open with their identification as a reader in this context. In each of the cases where the family actively discouraged the young person's reading, a more positive pro-reading culture within the peer group served to negate any negative influence or lack of support in the family context. This provides evidence for the strength of the peer group influence, particularly during pre/ early adolescence, and the weakening of the influence of family values beyond this point in the young people's lives.

5.2. Reading to Escape Social Participation

In contrast to the cases discussed in the previous section, the perceived anti-social nature of reading was a positive for some: the very quality which encouraged them to read. It was, in certain cases, used to actively avoid, or to escape, social participation. Ten of my participants expressed views which fell into this category. The majority of these simply used reading as means of 'escaping' into a fictional world, often alongside monitoring their reading frequency in order to avoid being perceived as anti-social by their peers. These included Violet, Summer, Lyndsay, George and Ryan. All variously described using reading to 'escape' or as providing them access to 'another world', an alternative social reality. Summer, for example, reveals on her critical incident chart that she "began to slowly spend more time online in my reading world than the harsh reality. I found that reading was relaxing, an escape from everything around me (parents)". Reading offers her an escape from conflicts in the family home, albeit conflicts that she was at the centre of due to bad behaviour- reportedly a consequence of accessing reading material online that was too 'mature' for her, as will be discussed in the final section of this chapter. She elaborates further on her use of reading as an escape during her interviews:

> Nowadays, instead of listening to like my own problems and things, I can listen to somebody else's and it's like a bit of escape from what's happening now, you can just go to somebody else's and enjoy that like, don't always have to focus on me and I can focus on somebody else

Through reading, Summer is able to put herself into someone else's shoes, which offers her temporary relief from her own problems. This use of reading as a means of escaping real life difficulties is also reflected in the following extract from Jessica's first interview:

> Obviously we're quite intimidated by them because if sometimes me and my friend Helen we go to the textiles and she brings a book on Fridays and I bring a book on Fridays for English and we just read them in textiles after we've eaten our lunch (Jessica, Interview 1)

Jessica and Helen, who were part of the same peer group, both describe feeling 'intimidated' by

the more popular girls in their class, a group which they are not a part of. Reading provides an escape for the girls from the social politics of the classroom. As I will discuss in the section later in this chapter, 'Reading with Friends', for Helen and Jessica there are spaces within the school were reading would invite ridicule and people in front of whom they do not feel able to openly identify as a reader. However, they have found a physical space in school- the textiles room- were they feel 'safe' and, in Jessica's words, "welcome to read". Thus, reading her is simultaneously providing a physical and mental escape from the social world, whilst also forming the basis of the girls' own separate, private social world. In each of the cases discussed here, the non-social nature of reading provides an alternative reality to the one the young person is faced with, a way of forgetting their own problems and their dealings with the people around them for a short while, and focusing on someone else's instead. Not only do the problems encountered in these fictional worlds belong to someone else, they are far removed from their own life worlds and perceived to be unlikely to occur within them. For example, when discussing reading books which deal with issues such as divorce and child abuse, Lyndsay is keen to emphasise the fact that "I can't relate to it coz it didn't happen to me but it makes you think that the reason why people are upset at school is coz they have problems at home." Rather than helping her deal with own problems or better understand her own situation, reading enables her to empathise with other people who may experiencing these difficulties and understand them better. This is in line with research by Bettleheim (1991), Oatley (1999a & 1999b) and Mar, Oatley, and Peterson (2009), which highlights the potential for reading fiction to enable the exploration of emotions and experiencing sympathy for others.

Kaylah also provides a particularly concerning example of this use of reading as an escape from reality. I discuss the methodological issues highlighted by her particular case in chapter 3. For Kaylah, reading provides imagined solutions to real life problems. In the following exchange, we discuss why she was enjoying *Romeo and Juliet*, the play she was studying in class at the time:

Kaylah: Mainly because of the violence. At the moment I quite like violence now.

Chelsea: And why's that?

Kaylah: Because most of the time in, some people would die in it and get hurt and I quite like that sort of stuff.

Chelsea: And what attracts you that kind of thing or sort of interests you in it?

Kaylah: I think well, I think of death as a positive thing not a negative thing. Some people'll be like "oh no, I don't wanna die, I don't wanna die but with me not, me hating my life sort of, I'm like "bring death on, I'm not bothered"

Although she did not specify details, it was clear from our discussions that Kaylah has a difficult home life. For example, she confided that she felt isolated because she was not allowed to go out

with her friends after "what happened to my sister, but I'm not allowed to tell anybody what happened [...] But it was a really bad thing that happened." She also describes moving around a lot when she was younger, which made her feel unsettled and provided a barrier to forming strong friendships. As is suggested in her comments above, reading allows her to experiment with violence, providing a medium through which she can take out her frustration and anger and explore ideas of death and suicide, with which she appears morbidly fascinated- later discussing a preference for knives over guns. Although reading provides a relatively low-risk medium through which to experiment with and experience these concepts (Bettleheim, 1991), what is worrying here is her state of mind and the potential that she may see them as appropriate solutions to her real life problems. Kaylah's case posed a particular ethical dilemma to me as a researcher as I was required to pass this information on to her teacher due to concerns for her safety, despite stating beforehand that anything she said in the interview would remain confidential. This is discussed fully in the methodology chapter of this thesis. In instances where reading was used as an escape, unlike those discussed in previous sections, it provides the young person with an alternative reality which is more appealing than the 'real' social world which they must navigate in their everyday lives. They are able to step into somebody else's shoes and experience those feelings, a 'low risk' means of working through problems, real or imagined, without experiencing the real life consequences. This conceptualisation of reading as 'escapism' and 'putting oneself in someone else's shoes', serves to problematize current, text-focused debates in policy, research and the media, as outlined in chapter one of this thesis, which are concerned with issues of representation and identification, suggesting a gap between young people's actual and perceived uses of fiction.

This positive view of reading as an inherently anti-social practice provided the young people with ways of ascribing value to being 'someone who reads', for either themselves or in the context of the peer group. Thus, they were able to positively and openly identify as a readers, as it was in keeping with other aspects of their identities which they valued. For example, reading was perceived as being consistent with and enabling of certain young people's identities as quiet and private individuals, as opposed to being just a barrier to their inclusion in particular social groups. For several of my participants, the need, or desire, to escape stemmed from a preference for being alone or in the 'quiet'. As Lyndsay indicates on her critical incident chart, she "used to spend lunch time reading in the new library at primary school as I liked being alone in the quiet". Ryan also describes a space where he can "go sit outside, sit on my stool outside in my studio and just put my music on a bit quiet and just read, I can just go in my own world and everything." It is an activity that they can do by themselves and in silence, a way of shutting other people out of their own private life worlds.

This conceptualisation of reading and being 'someone who reads' was also used in a more subversive, almost defiant, way by some of the pupils in this study. It enabled a number of my

participants to actively construct a positive identity as an outsider, as someone who is 'different'. These identities often manifested themselves in terms of specific reading choices. For example, Summer, through her online reading of material which would usually be considered unsuitable for younger readers, attempts to present herself as being rebellious and more mature than other teenage girls.

> My mum didn't like it because I read a lot of things. Coz I was in year 7 I read a lot of things that were older, so I knew like a lot of things that maybe I shouldn't have known in year 7. And I sort of took like a bit of a turn like, it's really embarrassing, I took a turn for a bit of a worse because I started reading some quite dark stuff like, quite sad that you should really be reading like, year 7 and 8. It used to get me upset and then like, my mum like found out I was reading it and she banned me off it, she was like "I refuse to let you read on *Wattpad*" and I was, I was like, because I was so like, I wouldn't say addicted, but because I was so used to doing it, I just used to carry on.

She places emphasis on how 'adult' and unsuitable some of the content was in order to demonstrate the seriousness of the fact that she had been able to access and read it. This serves reveal more about her as a person, or at least her perception of herself, rather than the texts themselves. She resists her mother's attempts to censor her reading and her dislike of what Summer was reading, continuing to read the stories on there. When questioned whether she thinks such sites should be censored and young people protected from being exposed to material of this nature, she acknowledges the negative impact it might have on some young people who might "react quite bad to it [...] it can turn people for the worst." However, she then goes on justifies her own engagement with this material, by explaining that:

> **Summer:** other people like, I'd say myself like, can come from it and like read that sort of stuff and not be completely changed and things like that because I've read some like murder things and some awful stories that I've read online but like, I've not thought anything of I just think it more as a story, I think other people might.
>
> **Chelsea:** Not have that same sense of perspective?
>
> **Summer:** Yeah, like other people I think like, I'm not calling like, saying I'm good or anything but like I think I'm quite mature so I was able to say "this isn't real, I know this isn't real" but.

She presents herself as being more grow up and better able to handle such content than other people her age. Unlike them, she is able to see the text for what it is- a work of fiction, and is therefore immune to its potentially damaging effects.

> Annie provides the strongest example of the use of reading as an act of defiance and

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difference, expressing particularly strong feelings towards being around other people, having to engage in social interaction of any sort and being considered 'normal'. In her critical incident chart, she immediately appears defensive about her reading choices, asserting that "I really like manga but I got called an idiot for reading it as it's a "stupid picture book." Just because I read manga doesn't mean that my brain doesn't function". Manga, anime and horror were often viewed as an 'alternative' form of reading, alongside a particular genre's of music, and appeared to be an important part of the adolescent emo/ goth identity. Annie's response to people's questioning and ridiculing of her reading choices is to stand up for and take ownership of them, rather than to hide them or to stop reading altogether. It is not only the fact that she reads, but her particular reading choices, which provide her with a useful tool for placing herself outside of social norms Throughout her two interviews, she discusses on numerous occasions her aversion to social interaction, describing how she is 'bored' by being around other people. She explains that "I don't like really being sociable and stuff, I don't think it really suits me." Just as reading was inconsistent with certain people's identity as active members of their peer group, engaging in the social was not consistent with Annie's sense of identity as an outcast and someone who is shy. By being social, she is not being 'true to herself'. This is further exemplified by the following quote from Annie:

> I know what you mean but I'm more of a shy person and it's like, I like being different from the others but I don't like being near other people as it is. I'm quite shy and, as you can tell from this, coz I can't really speak.

For Annie, being different and not fitting in is a positive thing, building a sense of identity on the fact that she isn't like other people her age. However, Annie's reaction could alternatively be interpreted as consciously making a virtue out of necessity. She may be excluding herself from the social, due to a fear that she will be excluded anyway. She consistently describes herself as being shy and introverted and as struggling to interact with others and, therefore, her apparent dislike of being around other people may be masking the fact that she lacks confidence in her ability to interact with them, or that they will not be accepting of her 'difference'. Therefore, she turns her difference into an act of defiance, rejecting 'other people' before they can reject her.

Nora was also part of a peer group which embodied a similar counter-culture and similarly used reading as an act of defiance, as is evidenced by her feelings towards texts which have been forbidden or censored by her parents or the school:

> I prefer it when my mum and tell me that I can't read certain things, I will try and read them purposefully or watch them purposefully, just to annoy them. (Nora, Interview 1)

The fact that these texts have been deemed unsuitable by figures of authority have increased their appeal for Nora, providing her with something to rebel against. Much like Annie, she makes an

explicitly conscious and calculated decision regarding the kind of reader that she is. She describes her transition from reading 'girly' fairy tales and books about princesses with her sister, to her interest in horror and murder mystery, which she continues to read despite nightmares and concerns expressed by her parents:

> Well, I kind of was, I was a really girly girl at one point, like I'm not now at all and they were kind of the things I would read coz I'd grown up reading them. As I started to hang out with more people I realised how I didn't actually like certain things and like, I didn't want to see, I mean like read and act certain ways so I would read different things and then that's when I kind of like grew out of reading princesses books and stuff like that coz, just, I don't know, I just didn't really, I kind of grew out of it.

Nora's change in reading choices serve not only to establish her independence from her family and her identity as someone who is 'different', or at least part of a peer group that is 'different', but they also provide her with an alternative way of 'doing girl' which is counter to that which is valued by the family (Rogers Cherland, 1994). As she gets older and begins to form relationships outside of the field of the family, she beings to challenge gender norms by going against expectations regarding what she should be interested in and what is traditionally valued as being a 'girl' in the home environment. Her reading choices are an important part of this, providing her with alternative possibilities to the "pretty" princesses, princes and "happy ending(s)" of the fairy tales she read with her sister.

It is interesting to note that such rebellion is facilitated by reading, an activity which is deemed socially acceptable by the school and the adults in her life. Therefore, they are able to present themselves as being defiant and engaging in anti-social behaviour, whilst simultaneously engaging in behaviours which conform to the expectations and rules of adults. This is also reminiscent of the private reading practices of the pre-adolescent girls in Rogers Cherland's (1994) study, which serve to accommodate "their culture's demands whilst while at the same time resisting them (p.163)". Although, ultimately, she observes that "reading, as an act of resistance, did not appear to disturb the status quo (p.163)." It is unlikely that Nora's reading behaviour, as with Annie's, will have any real impact on the social norms with which she is judged and the power relations within which she must function. Further to this, as Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) explain, thinking in terms of 'resistance' and 'submission' prevents "us from adequately understanding practices and situations that are often defined by their intrinsically double, skewed nature (p.23)." The practices the girls here engage in function as both an act of resistance and of submission, serving in either case to do little to challenge the dominant symbolic of the family and peer groups. In fact, for the girls, their very value lies in their lack of value and legitimacy, without which they would not serve to position these girls as being defiant or different in relation to others their age. Therefore, to view them as

simple acts of resistance masks their true function, which relies on the dominant symbolic remaining intact.

5.3. Social Participation as a Barrier to Reading

In contrast to the cases discussed in the previous sections, some viewed the social nature of their life world as preventing them from engaging with reading, rather than being dissuaded by any social stigma attached to reading itself. Reading was perceived by these young people as intrinsically non-social, although not in direct conflict with social norms. In these cases reading was not an activity which had any kind of currency in the peer group, unlike those in the previous and in the following sections; serving neither to secure nor jeopardise their position within the peer group. It was the perception that reading does not facilitate social interaction and takes up time that could be more fruitfully spent socialising which prevents some from reading, despite reportedly high levels of ability, confidence and enjoyment. Once again drawing on Beers' (1969) categorisation of people who are able to read but choose not to do so, the young people in this group could broadly be characterised as 'uncommitted' or 'dormant' readers. They have chosen not to read, or to limit their reading, because they do not feel that they have the time and are unable to make it a priority, due to its lack of fit with their very social worlds. That is not to say that they will not become readers in the future. There were 13 out of the 96 (13.5%) young people in total whose views fell into this category.

One of the main reasons individuals in this group either reduce their reading or give it up completely is a lack of time due to spending time with friends and family, especially where friends and family did not read or talk about reading. In his interview, Dexter explains how he dealt with the fact that his friends stopped reading, stating that "I was like "oh, maybe I should stop reading then" […] I just don't have the time sometimes". His desire to fully participate in the peer group led him to question whether he should be reading, as he did not feel that there was time for him to do both. Several of the pupils who only took part in the critical incident charting stage of this research also made similar comments to those made by Dexter, indicating a perceived lack of time for reading. For example, Johnathan (School A, Class 1) wrote that he "didn't have time to read because I went out with my friends". Brooke (School B, Class 1) and Olivia (School A, Class 2) each also describe a decline in reading as they got older and began to spend more time with friends. For example, Brooke writes "I carried on reading until about 5 or 6 because I was more busy with my friends etc" and Olivia similarly recounts that in "Year 8, read lots, but friends did not read so lost some interest." Much like Olivia and Brooke, Skye describes a loss of interest when her friends stop reading, or no longer talk about the reading that they do. For example, on her critical incident chart,

Skye explains that her "friends don't really talk about books, lost interest in reading." She then elaborates on this when being interviewed, during the following exchange:

Skye: I sort of lost interest in reading and my friends didn't talk about it either. So I didn't read as much.

Chelsea: So what would you say your friends' opinion of reading is, so obviously you don't really talk about it much with them?

Skye: I think some read but they don't really talk about it coz, I don't know, they're not really interested in it to talk about it.

As in the other cases mentioned so far in this section, reading is not an activity which has currency in her peer group and, therefore, she has no motivation to engage in it. This is further reinforced by the fact that those who do read do not talk about it with the rest of the group, taking it out of the social sphere and rendering it the preserve of the individual. This was a common occurrence amongst the young people during late primary or early secondary school, a stage in the young person's development during which social interaction within the peer group appears to become increasingly important. These young people did not have an aversion to reading itself, it simply was not a priority for them, being an active member of the peer group takes precedence. In these cases, reading was not an activity which enabled this and it was not relevant to their identification as a member of a particular group. Consequently, a choice must be made between the two.

Choosing to participate in the peer group over identifying as a reader may also be a result of a fear of missing out. For example, one boy in School 1, Class A states that "at home I don't like reading because I find it boring and everybody else at home are always doing something better or fun." Again, it is not the act of reading itself which is the issue, but his desire not to miss out on other things that are going on around him, things which it seems everybody else is taking part in and which are integral to his participation in the social group (in this case, the family). This is in line with Dumais' (2008) finding that it is the choices young people make regarding their use of time, rather than their socio-economic status or level of cultural capital, which served to either help or hinder them in the educational context. This was found to be true of individuals from all socio-economic backgrounds, not just those who are considered disadvantaged. Similarly, the young people in this group are depriving themselves of the cognitive, social and emotional benefits of reading by choosing social participation over reading, depriving themselves of those benefits, not because they do not possess the relevant cultural capital to become 'readers'. Further to this, the findings in this section highlight the importance of being part of a community of readers, where reading can be shared, discussed and given a sense of meaning and purpose. In each of the cases I have discussed here, the dominant paradigm of reading did not facilitate this, and the young people

could see no real reason to read. Consequently, it was not made a priority. As Gee (2000) suggests, reading and writing only truly make sense when studied in the context of the social and cultural. Therefore, those for whom reading did not serve any purpose within their peer group were less likely to read in their own time and to identify as readers.

This view of reading as non-social, existing solely 'in heads', was also at the root of this perceived dichotomy, alluded to by many of the young people, between being a reader and being an active, sporty and outgoing person. For example, Daniel, Joseph, Liam, Becca and Skye each present their passion for sport and physical, outdoor activities as being incompatible with being a reader. This was itself largely consequence of the distinction made by participants between being academically and physically gifted- particularly those who did not enjoy, or feel they were particularly good at, reading. As Skeggs (2004) might put it, they were "living life by a very different set of values (p.91)", finding ways to make their everyday lives liveable and valuable. This enabled the young people to find value in their own skills and knowledge, even though they were not officially valued in the field of the school, as I will elaborate on further in the next chapter. For example, when asked to explain the fact that he 'strongly disagreed' that he reads a lot in own time, Joseph asserted that "the things what I do are more physical than reading or writing and that." Similarly, when asked if someone who enjoyed reading and read a lot in their own time would fit in with his peer group, Daniel responded:

> **Daniel:** No, coz chances are they're not that sporty coz I think all of us struggle at summat like, we're just. I think they like to do sport coz it makes them a little bit less stressful. I don't know.
>
> **Chelsea:** So do you think the two don't really go together, being the sporty person and enjoying being a reader and things. Do you think they don't sort of mix, go together.
>
> **Daniel:** No, they don't mix at all. Like we, well we've got a few people who just like to sit around but they're people who we've known for, we went to playgroup with them and that sort of stuff so they're just like friends that you'll always be friends with but if you just met them now I'd probably just wouldn't bother about them.

There is an underlying assumption in Daniel's response that his groups of friends would not have anything in common with someone who reads and, consequently, they would not get along. If it was not for their shared history, he would not feel the need or desire to maintain his relationship with his friends who do not enjoy sport. There is also the implication, in his comment that people who are not interested in sport just 'sit around', that people who are interested in reading are lazy and do not use their time productively. Here, Daniel making a moral judgement of act of reading, and of readers, suggesting that to be a reader is to be lacking as a person, to be doing nothing of

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any real consequence or intrinsic value. However, this may be rooted in his own insecurities regarding his struggles with reading, a defence against the potential judgement of others. This is demonstrated by the fact that, before this, he also observes that "all of us struggle at summat". This, whilst excusing some people's lack of sporting ability or interest, both reflects, and provides some justification for, his own lack of ability or interest in reading. These distinctions can also be seen from the point of view of readers, especially those who dislike sport. For example, when George discussed his interest in reading, he explained that "reading is considered an intellectual thing. It does fit in with my personality, sort of academic, academic- that's the word, yeah". I then asked him if he preferred reading to something more active or physical and he responded "God, I hate sports". Summer also, when asked why she enjoys reading, explained that "reading probably like, everybody's got their little thing they're good at, like some people are good at shooting, some people are good at sports, I'm good at reading. It's summat I think I'm good at". This is despite being reluctant to say she 'strongly agreed', as opposed to just 'agreed', with the fact that she was a good reader, for fear of coming across as "too big headed", hinting at a quiet confidence. Underlying the comments both 'readers' and 'sporty' or 'active' individuals is the belief that some people are simply better at some things than they are at others. Previous research has also found that reading, particularly in silence, is largely considered a 'girls' activity because boys tend to more physical or sporty (Millard, 1997; Coles and Hall, 2002), and that reading about sports was considered a marker of masculinity (Dutro, 2001). This distinction did not appear heavily gendered for the young people in this study. However, in each case, it serves to provide some justification, or at least an explanation, for their own interests and/ or level of ability. However, Daniel's subsequent comments and George's equating of being a reader and being intelligent suggest that they believe that some skills have more merit than others. It is also of significance to note here that both Daniel and Joseph aspire to be P.E teachers, a profession for which they do not perceive being skilled, much less interested, readers to be important. Thus provides further justification for their lack of interest and ability; they no real reason to read outside of school. I will fully explore these issues of aspiration and possible future selves in the next chapter, in relation to the academicisation of reading.

5.4. Reading with Friends

The young people in this study did not always view reading as being anti-(or non-) social, with the peer group serving as an important vehicle for confirming the social acceptability of reading in certain cases. This contrasts Merga's (2014a) study on the social acceptability of book reading, in which "the influence of the peer group as a whole was found to be limited significance (p.479)". For these individuals, reading was a social activity which formed the basis of friendships, with certain

kinds of reading being central to the identity of, and participation in, the peer group. As I have demonstrated previously in this chapter, the peer group were particularly strong in determining whether or not the individual identified as a reader, and the extent to which they felt they could openly do so. This is particularly evident in the case of Helen, who describes her experience of taking part in book groups at the library when she was younger:

> Well coz I used to go to the library I saw lots of kids my age reading but errrm and the library wasn't like a quiet place it was somewhere you could just chat and read out loud and stuff and it was sort of friendly and like it was just sort of fun to read instead of having to be really quiet when you read and stuff and so it made me read more books and things

This was a space where she could share and discuss reading with other young people. Here, reading could be noisy and social, as opposed to something that one does alone and in silence, forming the basis of interactions with others and securing her membership of the group. This encouraged Helen to continue reading, showing her that it could be engaged in for pleasure and that it would be conducive to 'fitting in'. This is consistent with, and provides further support for the way in which reading is approached and valued in Helen's family environment, where it is very much a social activity and a rewarding leisure pursuit, as was discussed in the previous section.

As Helen gets older, reading remains something that she is able to share with both family and friends, as is evidenced by her discussion of the fact that she and her friends are reading some of the same books. She explains that "we can talk about it and things. Me and my other friend are reading the same book so we're talking about that and stuff. " It is important to note the way in which Helen and her friends read 'together' has changed. It no longer means being read to, or reading to other people, but discussing what they are reading, and sharing and recommending books. Thus, although the act of reading itself becomes less social, it instead comes to form the basis of social interactions. Jessica, who is also a member of this particular peer group, said that she felt "welcome to read", and that she does not feel like she will get "picked on", for reading in front of her friends. Below, she explains further:

> Sometimes me and my friend Helen, we go to the textiles and she brings a book on Fridays and I bring a book on Fridays for English and we just read them in textiles after we've eaten our lunch and if we did that in the canteen we'd probably get picked on for reading or something. So we just like to go in a quiet space and read coz we're kind of like the quiet group

There is a space in school (the textiles room), where the girls can go and eat their lunch and enjoy reading their books together in peace. Here, this is a perfectly socially acceptable thing for the girls to do together. However, Jessica also notes that there are areas in the school, and people in front

of whom, she would not feel 'welcome' to read. Due to their position in relation to other groups, this kind of behaviour in a more public environment would invite ridicule. Jessica describes the more popular groups as "intimidating", highlighting the power that they have over her and her friends. They do not feel they are in position to challenge these social rules regarding what is or is not acceptable, or to create new ones. Consequently, they have to find a space where they can break the rules, keeping their reading activities below the radar of those who 'make' them, avoiding conflict and unwanted negative attention. As I discussed earlier in this section, there were a number of individuals who felt unable to openly identify as readers, either because they were new to the school or because their position in the 'social hierarchy' of the school did not permit them to do so. However, Jessica, Helen and her friends have found a space for themselves within the school, away from those they believe will judge them, where this possible, and where such behaviour is not only accepted, but valued. In this space, reading is both anti-social, enabling the girls to escaping those who do not think reading is socially acceptable, and social, in that it is shared with friends.

5.5. Reading and Popular Culture: Fitting in and Standing Out

Popular culture, or young people's distancing of themselves from it, played an important role in enabling them to either fit in or stand out. It was responsible for shaping what it meant to be not only a reader, but an adolescent in the 21st Century. It was due to a fear of not 'fitting in' that many young people reduced the amount they read or stopped reading completely when starting secondary school, taking it back up a few years later- often in order to read a popular text. This may be due to the fact that this is time where was a time when the young people were starting a new school and negotiating their position within new peer groups. This is demonstrated in the two 'reading journeys', pictured on the following page. Jessica (Figure 12) reveals how her friends discouraged and encouraged her reading at various points in her life, as it went in and out of 'fashion'. As long as her friends are readers, and participating in the peer group facilitates being a reader, Jessica identifies as such. In the second example (Figure 13), the girl has had consistent encouragement from her peer group, where there has clearly always been a strong reading culture. For her, reading has evidently always been something that is shared with others. This further supports the importance of strong pro-reading culture amongst the peer group.

My family used to
read to me when I was
little, they used to makeup
stories from the top of their
head. 😔

I started to get my own
books. I chose ones that
I liked and I would take
them home and read them. 😐
(Age 10/11)

In primary school, we had a reading
club and I felt like everybody
was better than me so this
knocked my confidence so
I didn't read as much
as I used to. 😟

I was coming to the end of my
SATs, so I decided to start reading
again and I found that I read
the majority of the day. 😊

I came into secondry school
and made new friends so I spent
more time with them than I did
with my books. 😐

After seeing my friends reading
John Green' books, I decided I wanted
to read one and after reading 2 of
his books, I really enjoy reading his
books. 😊

I buy my own books now
and I read in any spare
time I have, school and at
home 😊

Figure 12: Jessica (School A, Class 2)

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Reading Journey

Read to as a child, out of school not just at school.

Started reading when I chose my own books - liked because I had independance.

Borrow books from friends, started to really like an author. Good because I found an author I really liked.

Finished books by the same author, re-read them as I really liked them.

Went to a book signing. Good as inspired me, and was really interesting and learnt a lot.

Came to Brid school and made friends that really liked reading.

Got a Kindle. Really good because meant I could easily access books.

Started swapping books with friends and recommending them to each other. Got into different styles books.

Started reading classics. Reading a lot, onto the 5th in the series.

Figure 13: Anna (School A, Class 2)

There were also cases where individuals who had not previously been engaged with reading, had decided to read a book because everyone else was reading it and talking about it and they wanted to be part of the conversation. This is in line with Jones' (2015) research on young people's reading of series fiction, which demonstrated that the reading of such books "served the dual function of enabling their membership to the peer group and their independent development of their reading skills and motivation for reading (p.307)". My findings suggests that this may also apply to young adult popular fiction more broadly. For example, many of the females in the study, including Violet, Summer and Molly, were reading (or planning to read) John Green's *The Fault in Our Stars,* the film version of which was shortly due to be released in cinemas. This meant that

those who were not reading it were excluded, unable to share the experience and understand what their friends were getting so excited about. This is evidenced in Jessica's (figure…) critical incident chart above. She stopped reading when she started secondary school, and only began again when her friends became interested in *The Fault in Our Stars* and other John Green books. Similarly, Becca, who did not commonly read for pleasure in her own time and experienced difficulties with reading, decided to read this book because all of her friends were reading it. When I asked Becca why she decided to read this particular book, when she is not someone who ordinarily reads, she responded that she did so:

> Because there was quite a lot of things on the internet about it and people say it's a really good book I sort of wanted to see what it was about and if, but there's like loads of people seen the film, they say the film is better.

In these cases, not reading put individuals at risk of being excluded from the group, as opposed to reading being side-lined due to fear of being excluded from non-reading activities. Peer pressure and the need to conform required these young people to identify as readers, rather than avoid or hide their reading activities.

Isla's friends also introduced her to *The Fault in Our Stars* and Susan Collins' *The Hunger Games* series. She explains that she "saw the film and I was like, and people were like "you need to read these books" and I was like, I might go and get them and I started reading them and they're really good". In each of these instances, it is clear that film adaptations have contributed to the popularity of the books amongst adolescents of this age. There is limited research on the impact of film adaptations of young adult novels on young people's perceptions of reading and the popularity of particular texts, with much research in this area being text-focused and dealing with dominant themes and issues of representation (Wannamaker, 2008; Silver, 2010; Bartlett, 2012). This data demonstrates the social function of such texts and their film counterparts serve. For example, several of the girls I spoke to were trying to finish the book before they went to see the film with friends to avoid 'spoilers'. Alfie also suggests that the books he and his friends read and talk about have often recently been adapted into films. When asked whether they ever talk about what they have been reading, he responds:

> It depends if it's like, if it's been a movie or something like Harry Potter or something, like "have you read the book, it's better than the movie" or something, or "the movie's better than the books" or something. So we sometimes talk about that, like movies that have been books or that have been made into movies, but that's really, we don't normally talk about

what we're reading that much, unless it's like something popular, that's it.

Film adaptations offer the opportunity for comparison with the novel, and provide a trigger for discussing and generate awareness of the text. This is evidenced by the fact that the only time that Alfie and his friends discuss reading, is when a book has been made into a film. This is likely due to the increased in public interest in the book due to advertising, reviews and media coverage surrounding the film, generating hype and increasing its popularity. The books become an important part of a broader adolescent popular culture and, therefore, anyone who does not read them is excluded from that culture, and from the peer groups which function within it. Reading these books becomes essential if the young person wants to 'fit in', serving as an important form of cultural capital within the peer group.

Freddie provides further explanation of the importance, for him and his friends, of reading the same books:

> Say one of my friends is reading one books and he's like "Oh, I'm reading this book, it's really good, it's really good, you should read it" and he borrows me it and I read it and I like it then we d'you know, we all kind of talk and socialise around that kind of thing. D'you know, as well as around like other things and stuff, which is quite cool coz, you're not just like, you don't feel lonely and stuff, you don't just feel like you're the only one doing it. So you know that more than one person in you know is doing it so you know it's alright.

There is sense here of kind of 'quality assurance' that comes with books that are recommended by friends. Like the two girls I discussed previously, Freddie trusts the opinion of his friends and reading particular texts appears to be integral to his full participation in the group. More importantly perhaps, the fact that his friends are also reading, and that it is an experience they talk about and share with each other, assures him of the social acceptability of reading. Further to this, if he is not "the only one doing it", then he is not reading at the expense of missing out on other things that the group are doing together. Kaylah expresses similar sentiments regarding the reading that she does in school, stating that "if everybody in school's reading it then maybe it's a good thing to read coz then like if you read the same book then it can help you learn the words". Seeing other people her age reading and enjoying it, even though this is in school and they have little choice, shows Kaylah that it can be "interesting and fun to read", and it also provides her with the opportunity to ask her peers to clarify anything she does not understand. As for Freddie, there is a kind of 'quality assurance' that comes when other young people have read and enjoyed a particular text, and it provides confirmation that reading is not only acceptable, but enjoyable. The examples here demonstrate the importance of reading role models and of a positive reading culture within the peer group.

In addition to film, social media and other online tools were also useful for facilitating social interaction through and around reading. For example, most of the young people who took part in this study mentioned Facebook as being part of their daily reading lives, often suggesting their use of Facebook is essential for keeping up with what is going on in the group. Summer, when asked to categorise the texts I had provided, placed the screenshot from a Facebook newsfeed in a group with things that she does "quite a lot". However, she explains that this is not an entirely positive thing. When asked what she enjoys about using Facebook, she spoke at length of the negative consequences of young people's preoccupation with the social media site:

> I dunno, I wish I didn't but once I've started I don't stop. I wish I never had, like I wish would, like I wish it was like, in the 1960s/ 70s, because then all this, you would actually go out and socialise. Having said that, I would never give up Facebook because it's so like, everybody's focused around it nowadays, everybody's sort of crowding round it and it's just, you get so left out if you're not involved in it.

Summer describes getting "sucked in" to the use of social media, suggesting that once you enter into that world, it becomes all-consuming and it is difficult to get out. She no longer wants to use Facebook anymore, but must continue to participate due to a fear of missing out and being excluded from the group. This is because, now that all of her friends use Facebook, it provides a platform for interacting, sharing the latest news or 'gossip', and arranging gatherings; it has become central to the functioning of the peer group. Nora explains that she uses Facebook because:

> [...] a lot of my friends go out and stuff and then they all like chat about it and everything but then I'm not allowed to go out so I use like, Facebook and stuff to keep in touch with them and everything. So, I do that, that's what I use it for.

Becca similarly describes using Facebook for more social purposes and explains that it is integral to her being able to "get hold of people and ask them stuff about anything". Daniel, Freddie, Isla, Joseph and Skye each also suggests that using social media is key to their full participation in the group. Therefore, opting out of this community would mean, for the most part, opting out of the peer group. This is further demonstrated by Annie's contrasting decision not to use the social media site to interact with others, thus excluding herself from the social:

> **Annie:** I just scroll and find some like, on some pages like, there's a science page that I like, that puts some interesting weird things so, yeah. That's really weird.

> **Chelsea:** Yeah, so mainly for like, sort of, finding things and, to read and stuff like that rather than?

> **Annie:** Stalking people

> **Chelsea:** Interacting and, yeah.

> **Annie:** Yeah, the rule is if I message you and I don't reply within like 10 minutes, I'm not gonna reply at all.

It appears as though Annie is 'above' being caught up in the hype over Facebook. She speaks about her use of the site in a casual manner, she is a passive rather than an active member and it is other people who are using it to get in touch with her, rather than the other way around. She does not feel the same sense of urgency as Summer to be involved. Annie purposely does not engage with the site as part of a more general effort, as described in the first section of this chapter, to present herself as 'different' from other people her age, and as being in opposition to social norms. Although this contrasts to previous examples of using Facebook to socialise, the underlying principle remains the same; being a fully active member of the peer group requires participation in such sites. There is a blurring of the boundaries between the real and the virtual in the lives of these young people, with each being as critical as the other to their participation (or lack of) in the social world.

There was also the sense amongst some of the young people – mainly the boys - that not reading print-based materials, and a preoccupation with film, technology and the internet were a characteristic of their generation, something that they had grown up with. Ryan explains that he "lives online", constantly watching YouTube videos and playing online games with his friends. He uses 'walk through guides' in order to help him understand the stories behind these games and to find out how to access the skills and resources needed to 'win'.

> Quite a lot of the time I read walk through guides for like stuff like jumping puzzles on the game I play, vista's, again, another kind of check point thing for the game, and skills points for the game, depends on what it is, quite often, at the minute I'm following something called a crafting guide to get my crafting level up on one of my characters so I've got to do quite a lot of reading for that and find all the materials and stuff like that

Ryan's description of the games he plays demonstrates their level of complexity and the level of technical, specialist vocabulary needed in order to be able access their content and succeed in playing them. For Jamie, playing these video games is a social activity, central to his participation in the peer group. He states that "I only started getting into the shooting ones when I moved back, when I moved to X, coz everyone started playing." As was the case with the girls who were reading *The Fault in Our Stars,* it is the not only the fact that he plays video games, but that he plays *particular* video games, which enable his participation in and identification with a particular peer group. Jamie also explains that he only reads "when there's nothing else to do and I can't be bothered playing on my computer". This makes a distinction between computer games and things

that he perceives to 'count' as reading, despite the demands it makes of his literacy skills. As he later reveals, he only reads things that are "about a game or something like that". Further to this, playing the game itself also necessitates a certain level of skill in reading.

> We nearly always read when we're playing computer games, coz we nearly always have the subtitles on so I can learn new words [...] normally when I play computer games my brothers come in so I have to put subtitles on and turn it down

As is suggested in research by Gee (2003) on video games demand much of young people's literacy and have the potential to enhance young people's learning, arguing that "schools, workplaces, families and academic researchers have a lot to learn from good video games (p.1)" regarding how to get young people "master something that is long and challenging – and enjoy it (p.1)". This is demonstrated by the fact the, in the case of both Ryan and Jamie, the video games they play and the activities surrounding them demand much of their literacy skills as they draw on multiple texts in different mediums and the use of a specialist vocabulary.

This belief that the use of technology was characteristic of the younger generation is illustrated in Ryan's explanation of why his parents and older brother and less interested in and skilled with technology:

> Yeah, as I say, our generation's like the first year to get i-Pads and stuff like that, but not as in year 9 but this sort of like generation that's in school at the minute. They're all getting i-Pads but by the end of this school year, everyone will have an i-Pad so. We're getting i-Pads off the school coz of.

Callum similarly attributes his interest in technology and learning about how things work to the fact that "everything's technological now, so I like to know what it is. Like, what all the technologies are." There is sense of inevitability and naturalness in the boy's explanations of their interests, that their predispositions towards technology and online activity are little more than a product of their time. As has also been documented in previous research (Millard, 1997; Coles and Hall, 2002; Hopper, 2005; Atkinson, 2016) general, the boys who took part in this study were more likely to choose to read a wider range of materials, such as sport, non-fiction, newspapers, special interest magazines and online material, although such materials were not exclusive to the boys in the study. This was with the exception of social media, as discussed previously, which the majority of the young people regularly engaged with, reluctantly or otherwise. Alternatively, girls- such as those discussed at the beginning of this section - were more likely to read and share fiction within the peer group. As Millard (1997) notes "when a father was reported as the main reader in the family, the general pattern given was one of reading for a set purpose (p.35)". This was also evident in the different non-school reading choices of the young people in this study.

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The belief that film, technology and the internet are characteristic of the reading lives of younger generations was also reflected in the belief expressed by Rosie, Becca, Annie, Liam and Jessica that newspapers were 'boring' and for 'old people', and that young people preferred to get such information online or by watching television, if at all.

> Old people don't really know how to use computers, they're like "what is that? how do I understand this? what is it?" Coz they can just read the newspaper, seeing what has happened, really what's going to happen **(Rosie).**

> You wouldn't really see at a teenager walking with a newspaper [...] Because they seem more appealing to like older people than like teenagers and children **(Becca).**

> Business men would but just general adults tend to read the newspaper **(Annie).**

> Boring, too long... not interesting, a bit dull **(Liam)**

> I wouldn't necessarily read a newspaper because I find it a lot easier to read like a magazine or something because it's a lot more, I feel like it's a lot more for like my age **(Jessica).**

The above quotes, each in reference to newspapers, suggest that reading the newspaper is perceived be old fashioned, the preserve of an older generation who, according to Rosie, lack the skills to use the technology with which young people today access their information. These technological skills are not only central their social participation, but provide more immediate access to bite sized knowledge than their print counterparts. Consequently, reading the newspapers not considered to be a suitable, desirable or necessary activity for those who identify as an adolescent in the 21st century. This problematizes research by Zickuhr and Rainie (2014), which found that young people were "more likely than their elders to say that important information is not available on the internet," suggesting that there may be a gap between young people's perceptions and use of such texts.

However, some of the young people viewed this centrality of film and technology to young people's lives as a negative thing. In addition to her dismissal of Facebook, Annie also comments that "Coz people in my generation don't really tend to read much. They're all weird", further distancing herself from other young people of her age and presenting herself as part of what might be described as a counter-culture by identifying as a reader. Her use of the word 'weird' also indicates an inability to comprehend the fact that some people choose not to read. Violet makes similar comments regarding her enjoyment of reading and other young people's reported preference for film:

> When people say " Oh, the film's better" I always think that the books are better and I just think it's kind of sad that people don't read as much as they should do because it's really

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good practice for like social skills

There is a sense here that Violet feels that other young people are missing out, that they are being deprived of the benefits that she has received from reading- it is something that they 'should' be doing, but are not. Being a reader, for Annie and Violet, is a way of trivialising and placing themselves above popular culture and other young people's preoccupation with screens and technology, an attempt to demonstrate maturity and intelligence.

5.6. Conclusion

The peer group were the most important determinant of the individual's beliefs about what reading is and what it means to be a reader from late primary/ early secondary school, often challenging what had been learnt in the family environment. Key to the young person's identification as a reader was the extent to which it was suitable to do so amongst their peer group and the extent to which it facilitated or hindered their participation within this group. The young people were able to appropriate particular texts and ways of being a reading in order to engage in process of active, conscious identity construction, enabling them to either 'fit in' or 'stand out'. It was often not just whether or not they read which was significant to their participation in the peer group and the development of "distinctive networks and social ties" (Power & Smith, 2015) but what they read. As Power and Smith (2015) ask, with regards to young people's dislike or admiration for particular celebrities, "what distinctive networks and social ties can be forged through admiring saints or disliking child-abusers?" arguing that "who you admire or dislike says more about yourself than the objective virtues or vices of the famous person (p.6)". In the case of this study, the young people's specific reading choices said more about them and their peer group allegiances than any intrinsic value or meaning within the texts themselves. Reading choices, or lack of, played a key role in the young person's sense of belonging, even when this meant belonging on the outside. It is important to note that even those who resisted and deliberately positioned themselves outside of social norms did not succeed in challenging these norms and the relations of power they maintained. However, for those who did engage in this resistance, it was the very lack of legitimacy and value of particular texts and practices which gave them value for the young people and enable them to serve their intended function.

The findings outlined in this chapter also demonstrate the dangers of non and anti-social views of reading and, consequently, of the reader, preventing certain young people from reading or openly identifying as readers. Young people attach particular meaning to their literacy practices, and to those of others, including the decision not to engage in them, or to engage in them in private. These meanings then have particular consequences in the social world, serving to position the individual, or allow them to position themselves, within it. They have implications for who can

legitimately read, what and when. Reading does not simply exist or occur 'in heads', a private relationship between the reader and the text and acknowledging this a more provides a more "culturally sensitive view of literacy practices as they vary from one context to another" (Street, 2003: 77). In the case, we can see how they very between and amongst peer groups, and how they facilitate identification with particular peer groups. It also highlights the complexity behind the reasons why certain young people become alliterate. As the young people's experiences I have discussed in this section demonstrate, reading is implicated in the social not just despite, but because of, beliefs in the non/ anti-social nature of reading. The meaning and purpose young people attach to reading, or decisions not to read, is in line with a more general need for shared peer interests and social interaction. In other words, it must fit with their 'fitting in', wherever that may be.

These findings demonstrate both the autonomy of the individual in making identity related choices, and the role of broader social contexts in determining the range and significance of choices available. The relationship between the personal and the social is one of negotiation, with interaction central being central to the development of identity and, consequently, "what we do and in connection with whom inform who we might become" (McCaslin, 2009; 138). This indicates the importance of being part of a community of readers, where reading can be shared, discussed and given a sense of meaning, purpose, and value. Therefore, those who did not have this positive peer influence were less likely to read in their own time and to identify as readers. This supports Luke's (2014) assertion that there is a need to move beyond simple ideology critique, often concerned with the content of texts and issues of representation, towards an emphasis on how texts are produced and used in various social and cultural contexts. In particular, it is important to note the variety of purposes which reading serves in the daily lives of young people, and the variety of activities young people engage in which demand much of their literacy skills.

As discussed towards the end of the previous section, there were also gender difference in young people's reading choices, which reflects the findings of much previous research (Millard, 1997; Coles and Hall, 2002; Hopper, 2005; Atkinson, 2016), with boys tending to read for a specific purpose (Millard, 1997). For the boys, reading was usually a bi-product of other activities, such as playing computer games or keeping up to date with sports news, whereas the girls were more likely to engage in reading for its own sake, opting for popular young adult fiction which was often based on romance – as in the case of *The Fault in Our Stars*. This also means that boys and girls are differently disadvantaged in the field of the school and in the field of work, respectively, each of which demand different literacy skills (Coles and Hall, 2002). Further to this, Atkinson (2016) also suggests that "most clearly gendered genres- sports books for men, romance novels for women – do decrease in popularity with a rising capital volume and, particularly, possession of cultural capital (p.15)". This may offer some explanation as to why those rejected the popular culture, or aimed to

positon themselves as 'above' it and as being more mature than other people their age, such as George, Helen, Nora and Annie, tended to opt for less obviously gendered reading choices. This demonstrates the importance of paying attention to both the classed and gendered nature of young people's reading, and how it served to differently position young people with various fields, such as the school.

Although the young people in this study experience rich reading cultures amongst their peer groups and families, these cultures are not reflected in the curriculum or in the classroom. As Power and Smith (2015) point out, "the official curriculum has seen strengthening of the boundaries between school knowledge and popular culture", ignoring the "cultural climate which shapes young people's aspirations and values (p.9)". In particular, the findings outlined in this section highlight the importance of acknowledging and validating more social, interactive forms of reading, due to the centrality of the social and interactive to the current and – more than likely – future lives of these young people. As I will demonstrate in the following chapter, the school served to shape young people's understanding of their private, non-school reading lives and the value they attributed to it.

6. The School as a Site of Validation and Symbolic Violence

The school was a particularly strong institutional force in the lives of the young people who took part in this study, serving to validate particular ways of reading and being a reader. However, it is important to bear in mind, when discussing the school's influence on young people's reading lives, the role that the research setting may have played in shaping these findings. The fact that the research took place in schools, during the young people's usual English lesson time and in their usual classroom, may have influenced the way in which they interpreted and responded to the task and my interview questions. A full discussion of this issue, and the ways in which the research context shaped my relationships with my participants, can be found in the methodology chapter of this thesis.

Out of the 96 young people who completed the critical incident charting activity, 65 made some reference to the school, with many charting their reading journey alongside the various stages of their educational careers. This is demonstrated by the two examples below:

At gabie house _I got read to at 4years.

My mum and dad first read to me when I was about 3years old. The book was kipper.

At home I started to read A book called Harry and his bucket full of dinosaurs. I was about 7/8ish when I started reading this book series.

I got read to in year r by my teacher Mrs Milner. She was really really tall!

In year 6 I started reading on a night. I was reading Diary of a wimpy kid.

When I got into year 7 I stopped reading Every night, I only was reading maybe once or twice a week.

Now in year 9 I Practicly never read. I think this is because I'm always hooked on my PS4 and my phone.
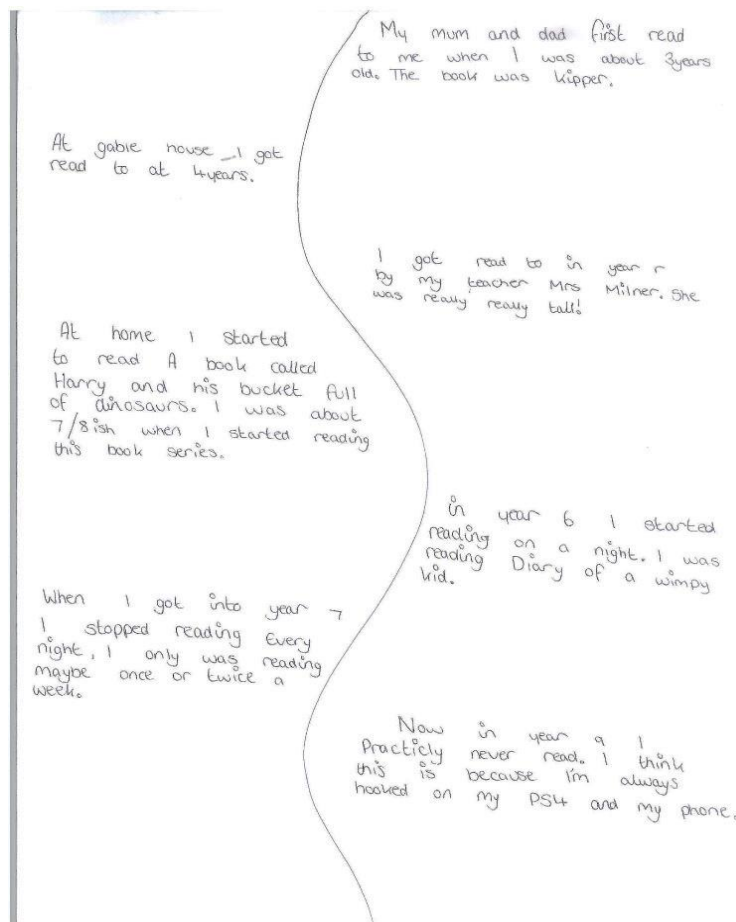
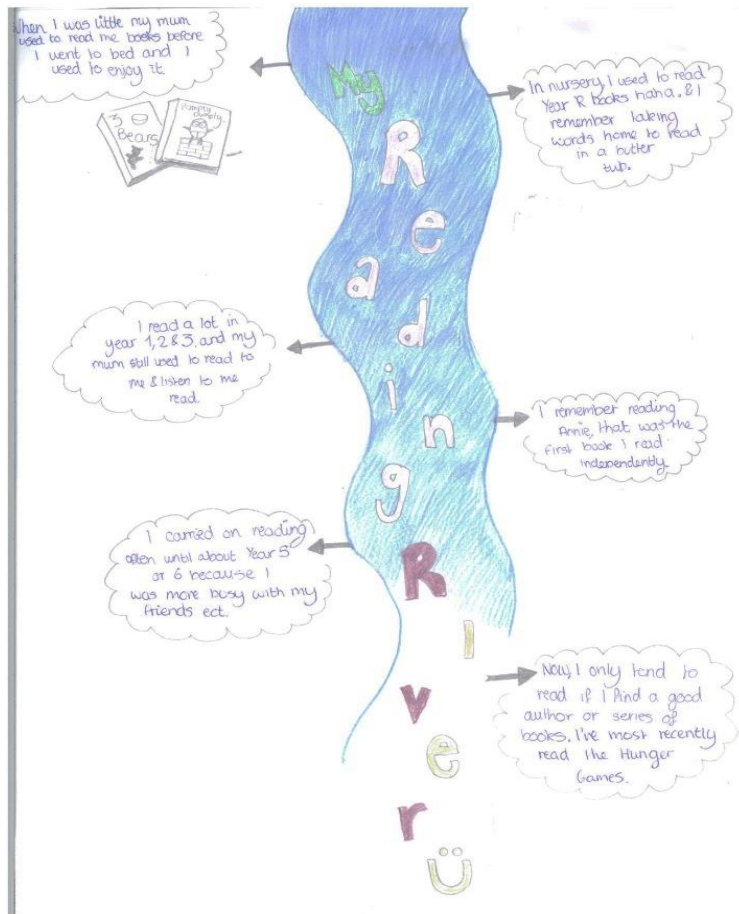*Figure 14: Josh (School A, Class 2)*

Figure 15: Millie (School A, Class 2)

In each of these cases, once they have started school, both school and non-school reading experiences are remembered and understood by placing them at a particular stage in their educational career. This demonstrates the extent of the power that that school has in shaping young people's understanding of themselves and their lives. They frame their understanding of their own development and their level of maturity in terms of 'school years'. These 'school years' and 'key stages' organise young people by age and dictate what the individual should know and be able to do by a certain point, providing a criteria for being 'ahead' of or 'behind' others. The fact that there are a finite number of school years, at the end of which the individual must pass an exam in order to validate what they have learned, also suggests that there is an 'end point' at which one has either failed or succeeded to acquire the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding to enter the adult world. Reading development was also understood within this restrictive, and often harmful, framework. Daniel, for example, when asked if there was anything that might be able to improve his negative feelings towards reading, explains that:

> I think it's kind of too late for that but, I don't think I could really get better at it or, I'm kind

of, it's kind of too late coz I'm already doing my tests already y'know. So I've just got to hope I do well and that's it.

Daniel views his reading ability and perceptions of reading are set in stone, measured by high stakes exams which he believes will determine and fix his place in the adult world. There is a sense of resignation and powerlessness in his response, viewing his failure in the impending exams as inevitable. He believes there is nothing he can do but "hope" that he succeeds, suggesting that he does not feel he has any control over it; there are no actions he can undertake to shape his future. Further to this, He does not see any opportunity beyond his exams for his continued development as a reader as, for him, reading is something that is only done in school. This illustrates the danger of applying a fixed, restrictive framework onto young people understanding of their intelligence and reading ability. Such a view placed blame on the individual for failing to meet particular standards or be a particular type of reader, a product of an 'autonomous' model of reading which view reading as existing only 'in heads' and suggests that such skills can unproblematically be passed on (Street, 1984). Such a view fails to take into account issues of engagement, motivation and identity, and the contexts in which texts are used and produced.

The impact of school model of reading was particularly strong where this was the only experience the young person had of reading, as will be demonstrated throughout this chapter. However, its effects were not limited to those who did not read outside of school. It also impacted on young people's perceptions of their non-school reading practices and the meaning they attached to them. As Chong (2016) suggests, reading in the context of the public domain shapes individual's understanding of their private reading practices, which take on different meaning and are differently valued as the individual moves between fields. As discussed earlier in this thesis, I consider the boundaries between different fields to be boundaries only insofar as they offer "some sense of tangibility to the reading experience without enforcing a rigid shape to any individual experience of reading" (Chong, 2016: 20). The young people's perception of reading, of themselves as readers, and their reading practices were multifaceted and dynamic, negotiated and renegotiated as they moved between fields. In this chapter, I will consider how the reading practices which were characteristic of the school, such as reading aloud and the valuing of particular texts and authors, served to frame the young people's understanding of what counts as reading and what it means to be a 'good' reader. I argue that the misrecognition of this dominant 'autonomous' model of reading in the school as legitimate, and the use of it to evaluate and position the young people within the field of the school can be considered a form of symbolic violence in the sense that it is "the imposition of a cultural arbitrary by an arbitrary power" (Bourdieu and Passeron, 2000: 5). It creates the conditions for the literacy shaming of those who do not fit within this dominant symbolic. This 'literacy shaming' occurs both horizontally, between peers, and vertically, from teachers to their pupils (Bartlett and Holland, 2002). However, the young people were often

themselves complicit in the symbolic violence which was enacted upon them in school as such criteria came to be viewed as natural and often went unquestioned. I demonstrate how the school positioned individuals as either 'good' or 'bad' readers, the impact this had on their aspirations and, in turn, on the perceived role and importance of reading in their lives. However, I end this chapter by discussing the ways in which the young people also resist this and assert their own value in this context, challenging the schools attempts to encourage reading for pleasure. I critique the school's attempts to redistribute cultural capital through education, as discussed in the literature review section of this thesis, and highlight the importance of considering the interactions between the field of education and the resources- or lack thereof – which young people bring to the classroom and which position the young people within it.

6.1. Reading Aloud

Reading aloud and talking about reading in class were a source of embarrassment and anxiety for the majority of the young people in this study, particularly those who lacked the correct linguistic and/or social capital, or whose reading habitus was consistent with more private reading practices. The ability to read aloud clearly and confidently was in itself an important form of symbolic capital in the field of the school. Viewed by the young people through the legitimate lens of the school, it was an important social marker of who was 'good' and who was 'bad' at reading, avoiding or inviting ridicule from their peers and impacting on their status within the group. Those perceived, either by themselves or others, as lacking this ability were left feeling that they were also 'lacking' as a reader and lacking intelligence, losing face in front their peers and their teacher. Forcing young people to read aloud can, therefore, be interpreted as a form of symbolic violence on the part of the school, stigmatizing and disempowering those who lacked this ability. This practice served to open up the young people to potential literacy shaming, from both their peers and their teachers (Bartlett and Holland, 2002). This was particularly evident amongst those who experienced reading related learning difficulties, such as dyslexia, as I will discuss in the next section of this chapter. The majority of the young people wrote about or discussed experiences of having to read aloud to the rest of the class, or listen to their teacher and peers read out loud. It was often the main aspect of school reading about which my participants, of both high and low ability, expressed negative views. Participants regularly described feelings of anxiety and embarrassment, particularly the females in the group. Such feelings were often identified as being critical in directing their reading journey, as was the case in the following examples:

Figure 16: Joel (School A, Class 1)

Figure 17: Robert (School A, Class 1)

These comments demonstrate a fear of being exposed as a 'bad' reader, inviting ridicule from their peers. Joel's fears regarding feeling "dumb" implies a link between being a 'good' reader and being intelligent in a more general sense, therefore, lacking skill in reading aloud not only signifies that the individual is a 'bad' reader, but also that they are lacking in intelligence. This reinforces his fear of displaying a lack of reading ability. Such comments also suggest that they do not feel that the classroom provides a safe environment in which they can make mistakes without being judged, bullied or ridiculed.

This discomfort caused by reading aloud was particularly evident when I asked the young people who participated in interviews what the advantages and disadvantages of reading in school were, as it was often listed as a disadvantage. For example, her response to this question was that:

> The good things about reading in school is that you're not the only one reading the book, bad thing about it is that you sometimes get picked to read the book if you're forced to read when you don't want to.

Although she enjoys being able to read with other people, as opposed to reading in silence by herself, she does not enjoy being made to read out loud in front of the rest of the class. The expository power of reading aloud was particularly problematic for those who struggled with reading, such as Lauren.   When questioned on what makes her lack confidence in this area, she explains:

I compare myself with like the stronger people in class, which then that I put myself down but the... it doesn't help with people like, taking the mick out of me, saying that I'm not good enough or owt

Lauren describes being bullied throughout her school life, which has made her extremely self-conscious, particularly when it comes to speaking in front of the class. Reading aloud not only creates the opportunity for young people to compare themselves to others and judge themselves as readers, but for their difficulties to be exposed to their classmates and commented on. In Lauren's case, in addition to providing her with a reason to 'put herself down', being made to read aloud class provided her peers with the ammunition to 'put her down' and gave them further ammunition for their bullying. Lauren describes being 'forced' to read out loud, implying a perceived lack of choice and autonomy in this field. Earlier in the interview, she also described the teacher's use of reading aloud as a punishment for those who are not paying attention or doing what they have been asked, a tactic for ensuring that her students remain on task. Using reading aloud in this way suggests that it is something the young people would want to avoid, the teacher is making the assumption that reading aloud is not a positive experience for them. This lack of control over if and when the young people read out loud in the classroom may contribute to the discomfort it causes many of the young people. Similarly, Kaylah, Zoe and Emma, despite valuing the social nature of reading in the classroom and listening to others read, each expressed a dislike of being made to read aloud themselves. It is of significance to note here that, with the exception of Emma, for these girls, this was their only experience of reading. This is particularly concerning, as this is the only criteria they have with which they can judge themselves as readers, further limiting the likelihood that they will engage with reading outside of school of their own volition.

It is also interesting to note that negative feelings towards reading aloud were not exclusive to those of a lower ability, or those who did not enjoy reading outside of school, with many distinguishing between their enjoyment of and ability to read in their heads and reading out loud. For example, Lyndsay discussed her preference for reading in her head:

I'd say that I'm quite a confident reader but only if it's not out loud because It just helps me to know what's going on and what a situation is and then it makes me more imaginative as a person because it just puts ideas in my head

Lyndsay is in top set and is an avid and highly capable reader, coming from a family where books and reading are valued. She appears confident in her ability to understand and use the text to help her understand the world around her and consider multiple possibilities. However, she does not feel comfortable reading aloud, preferring instead a more solitary, and contemplative kind of reading. This is partly due to that fact that she has a lisp, which makes her feel self-conscious when speaking in front of others, undermining her confidence. She confided that:

> Because like I don't like speaking out loud because I have a lisp and I don't like how it sounds but I prefer to speak like and read in my head because then I know no one can hear my voice.

Being made to read aloud forces Lyndsay to draw attention to a part of herself that she would prefer to keep hidden. It is as though she believes that her lisp is all that her peers will hear when she reads out loud. They will not be aware of the complex work that goes on in her head as she reads. It is important also to note, however, that she does not mention being bullied for having a lisp, it is Lyndsay herself who does not like the sound of her voice. It seems in this case that it is her own self-consciousness which presents a barrier. Helen, Violet, Isla, and Nora despite each being confident, capable and engaged readers outside of school, also expressed similar feelings of anxiety over reading aloud in class as those described above. These girls, although high achievers, were inclined towards more private reading practices, describing themselves as quiet, shy individuals. For example, Nora, who uses reading as a way of distinguishing herself as 'different' to her peers and avoiding social interaction, makes a similar distinction to that made by Lyndsay between reading out loud and reading 'in heads':

> I am pretty confident outside of school but it's like, when it comes to being in school and having to read I prefer not to because I just get afraid like people judge me like, the way that I read and stuff, I don't know

Much like her peers of a lower ability, it is the potential of being exposed and judged as a bad reader which leads to discomfort and anxiety towards reading aloud. However, she has experiences of reading outside of school which serve to validate her as reader, fuelling her confidence and enjoyment of reading. Further support for this is provided by the fact that she 'strongly agreed' that she is good at reading and that she enjoys reading. In her first interview, she explained:

> I am a really good at reading, like I read a lot and I read quite fast and quite clearly and everything and confidently, it's just when it's like, in front of people that I get a bit afraid. I do really enjoy reading, it's like one of my favourite things and I do read quite a lot in my own time but like, not loads, but I'll read like quite a bit, I read like every night and stuff but not loads.

These non-school experiences, although not valued in the field of the school, enable her put her experiences of reading aloud in class into perspective, offering a buffer against any further damage that negative experiences of reading aloud may cause to her perception of herself as a reader. Young people who read inside of school were aware that there is more than on way of 'being a reader'. This highlights the importance of taking into account the non-school reading practices of high, as well as low, achievers, as they may also be in conflict with the official practices of the school.

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It also demonstrates the dynamic nature of the habitus, renegotiated as the individual shifts across fields where different reading practices are differently valued.

Underlying the anxiety regarding reading aloud, amongst both 'high' and 'low' achievers, is the assumption that others do not struggle with reading, that they were alone in their anxiety and perceived lack of ability, and that displaying such difficulties will negatively impact on their position in the group. However, further exploration of this during the interview stage of the research suggests that, in some cases, their fears may be unfounded. Several of my participants suggested that they would not, in actual fact, be ridiculed, nor had they seen anyone else be ridiculed, for making mistakes when reading out loud, or speaking too slowly. For example, when asked if anyone else made mistakes, or if their fears over being laughed at had ever been realised, both Becca and Zoe suggested that, although others in the class used to behave like that in primary school, it was no longer something that happened in the classroom. This is demonstrated in the following exchange I had with Zoe:

> Zoe: It used to happen quite a lot in primary school and then like kids like say the words and then you feel stupid because you don't know it but other people do.
>
> Chelsea: Is that something that's still happens now?
>
> Zoe: No, not really.

Becca also explains that, now they are in secondary school, people no longer make fun of others for making mistakes when reading out loud:

> They did at like primary school and everything but I don't think people really care now or like some people like read in their head and go like in front of everyone and then some just don't read and just listen to them.

She acknowledges, and appears to accept as 'normal', the variety of ways in which her peers engage with the text. Some read ahead independently, whilst others choose to just listen to whoever is reading, both of which appear to be acceptable behaviours for the young people and their peers. However, despite the fact that their classmates have now matured, and are no longer interested in or entertained by such things, past experiences have clearly left a mark on the girls, and others like them. This suggests that, for the most part, it is the individual's own beliefs about what makes a good reader, and what is socially acceptable, rather than any actual stigma attached to those with reading difficulties which is at the root of their fear of reading aloud.

Another possible explanation for this aversion to reading aloud may be that the young person's level of popularity within the group determined how others would react to them making mistakes. This is certainly something that Rosie believes to be true. When asked whether other people made

mistakes, or if she thought others might be embarrassed about reading aloud, she explained the perceived difference between herself and the other girls in her class:

> Yeah, coz I'm not, I'm a shy girl because I'm not very popular and all the girls in my class are popular and they like, if they did it wrong, then like, everyone just laughs but if I get it wrong they're like "why did she get it wrong?" Coz they're mates and I'm the new girl

As I also demonstrated in the previous section of this chapter, certain individuals had more power than others to challenge social norms and set new ones, due to their position in the group. Rosie does not perceive herself to be one of the 'popular' girls, which means that there is separate, stricter set of social rules that must guide her actions in classroom. Because of her tenuous position within the group, as the new girl, she is at greater risk of losing face and damaging her reputation. Only the popular girls have the luxury and privilege of openly making mistakes, which may even serve as source of entertainment, strengthening their popularity. Rosie's position on reading aloud in class is surprising considering the fact the she enjoys performing, and had ambitions of being and actress or a singer. At the time of the interview, she was involved in a number of musicals, both in school and as part of an out of school drama group. She also took singing lessons and sang in pubs. It is interesting to note the difference between her levels of confidence both in and out of school. This context-dependent nature of feelings towards reading aloud and being 'on show' may be due the people present in each of these cases. In school she does not feel she is popular, whereas, amongst those who attend her drama group she believes she is.

> It's coz I've always known it through my life and everyone seems to enjoy it and I'm popular there, back in Richmond Street, and it helps me get involved in other stuff

Unlike when she is at school, Rosie feels comfortable around and accepted by the other students in her drama group. It provides a safe, familiar space where she can be herself without having to worry about being made fun of. This highlights the social nature of reading and identity formation, dependent on the nature of the field and negotiated through the relationships and interactions which are characteristic of it.

In the contrast to the cases described so far, there were some who viewed reading in the classroom as an opportunity to 'perform' to their peers. This was more likely to be the case with the males in the study who, with the exception of Daniel, did not experience any discomfort or anxiety when called on to read aloud. For example, below, Freddie describes his feelings regarding reading and studying plays in class:

> It's quite fun because you get to get up and do a bit of acting with it as well because it's a play which is quite fun so, as I say, it's alright.

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It appears to be the more active nature of reading aloud which he finds enjoyable, having the opportunity to get up in front of, and probably with, his peers. Alfie also viewed reading aloud as a positive aspect of school reading:

> Well I'd say that sometimes you get to like read in front of the other people, so it like boosts your confidence in like reading in front of others. I think that's mainly it.

It is likely that, unlike some of the cases described previously, Alfie has received a positive response from his peers, which has served to validate his reading ability and increase his confidence in himself. This has then reinforced his enjoyment of reading aloud, making it a positive experience for him. Joseph also enjoys reading aloud in class, despite not enjoying reading outside of school, stating that he 'used to feel nervous when I read in front of the class, but not anymore.' This suggests that, like Alfie, reading aloud more in class has increased his confidence. However, he prefers reading plays because 'like a play like a couple of people are reading and a novel like, just one person's reading'. The fact that there is more than one person reading may also explain Freddie's enjoyment of reading plays. For these boys, the social nature of reading aloud in class, the interaction with others it facilitates, is a positive, rather than a negative, aspect of school reading.

The strength of the impact that this emphasis on reading aloud has on the young people's view of what makes someone a good reader is demonstrated by the fact that the majority of those who were interviewed, when asked what makes someone a good reader, listed the specific characteristics of someone who is good at reading out loud. They described someone who was able to read aloud clearly and confidently, who did not stutter, mispronounce words or read too slowly. This is particularly evident in Ryan, Becca, and Lucy's descriptions of what they believe makes a good reader:

> **Ryan:** A good reader, I think, obviously can read quite well and they can stand up and read in front of like a group and a class.
>
> **Chelsea:** So confidence?
>
> **Ryan:** Yeah, confidence or like, yeah.
>
> **Chelsea:** Or like the speed that they read and things or?
>
> **Ryan:** Ummm, I mean mainly either confidence to actually stand up and speak in front of a group or class.
>
> They'd have like to have like confidence and everything like, so they could like read out loud and they sort of know what they're doing and like, be able to like see the words on the page but, I don't know. **(Becca, Interview 1)**

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Errrmm… confident like, really confident because if you wasn't then you wouldn't have the confidence to read. A happy person as well because like they'd be able to show emotion in how they'd read and stuff. Errrmmm, that's it really. **(Lucy, Interview 1)**

Consequently, being valued as a 'good' reader, required a certain degree of confidence and level of skill in speaking. This demonstrates the dominance of 'school' reading in the lives of young people, the power it has to validate them as readers, and the importance they place on success in this context. It is possible that this is due to fact that reading aloud brings reading difficulties and insecurities out into the open. They are more difficult to hide than a 'bad' test score, leaving the individual open to judgement from their peers. This provides further support for the fact that young people are more concerned about what their peers think of them, than they are about the judgements of the adults in their lives. This is perhaps why the young people placed so much emphasis on reading aloud, which was surprising considering the importance placed on success in written assessments of their reading ability by teachers and policymakers. The emphasis placed on reading aloud was a form of symbolic violence, successful only due to the young people's acceptance of the value placed on this skill and their use of it to judge themselves and each other. Although the teachers made them read out loud, the young people made sense of themselves and their peers through the legitimate lens of the school. It is also important to note that, as Holland and Bartlett (2002) explain in their study, the use of this practice was more likely "an attempt at efficiency and organisation (p.18)". It was a way of ensuring the young people remained on task and that everyone read the text at the same speed, rather than a deliberate, conscious attempt to shame the young people. This demonstrates the importance of paying attention to the unintended emotional and social consequences of the practices employed in the classroom.

Previous research on reading aloud has focused on its use in developing the reading skills of young children (Mayer, Wardrop, Stahl and Linn, 1994; Goodwyn and Redfern, 2000; Fox, 2013) and second language learners (Gibson, 2007: Seo, 2014), its use in the teaching of poetry (Pullinger and Whitley, 2013; Schmidt, 2015), and on teacher's perceptions and understanding of reading aloud in the classroom (Warner, Crolla, Goodwyn, Hyder and Richards, 2015). Such studies often neglect the meaning that reading aloud holds for individuals, in particular young adults, and the social dynamics of the activity. The findings in this section highlight the importance of paying attention to older pupil's experiences of reading aloud in front of their peers, demonstrating the impact that it can have on the reading and learning identities of both high and low achievers, and both those who do and those who do not read outside of school.

6.2. Reading Related Learning Difficulties: Strategies of Avoidance and Management

Being made to read aloud in class was particularly problematic for those who experienced reading related learning difficulties, such as dyslexia, or who perceived themselves to be of a low reading ability. As Duckworth (2014) notes of the adult learners in her study who had dyslexia, "struggling to read and write led the learners to being labelled as thick and experiencing symbolic violence (p.69)." A number of the young people in this study who experienced these difficulties were similarly subjected to being labelling and the symbolic violence of their peers, and were not receiving adequate support. Daniel, Becca and Jamie each experienced significant difficulties with reading, which negatively influenced their perceptions of themselves as readers and of their general level of academic ability, leading them to lack confidence in the field of education. This was demonstrated by the fact that both Daniel and Becca 'strongly disagreed' that they were 'good' at reading, and Jamie 'disagreed' with the statement. The reading practices which were characteristic of the school served to confirm these perceptions, highlighting for these young people what they are lacking as readers and positioning them as inferior to others. Previous research has also highlighted an association between dyslexia and low academic self-concept (Burden, 2008). This association was particularly pronounced in the case of Daniel, as discussed in this section and in chapter 4, who was not getting the support he needed for his dyslexia, either at home or at school. As Burden (2008) points out:

> In a society such as ours, where literacy is a highly valued skill or commodity, a perceived inability to acquire that skill is highly likely to have a negative effect upon any individual's conception of themselves as competent (p.188).

The impact that reading difficulties had on young people's reading identities and perceptions of their status amongst their peers was largely a result of stigma attached to illiteracy amongst the young people and the fact that it was commonly associated with a lack of intelligence. As demonstrated in the previous section, reading aloud brings young people's reading difficulties out into the open, for others to judge and criticize. For example, Jamie explains that he feels embarrassed when reading out loud because of his dyslexia. He describes in the following exchange his experience of reading aloud in class:

> Jamie: I didn't really like it 'cause everyone laughs and all that, and it was really uncomfortable reading
>
> Chelsea: and why does it make you feel embarrassed?
>
> Jamie: Because people like laugh and say like "ha, I knew what that word means" and all that lot, and I just feel like, you feel like really embarrassed and like annoyed that you didn't get it right and all that lot

He believes that others have access to knowledge that he does not, and being made to read aloud only served to draw attention to his perceived deficiencies, subjecting him to symbolic violence and literacy shaming from his classmates. Making his private struggles public serves to reinforce his negative views of reading, of himself as a reader, and his perceived position in relation to others. Daniel, who also has dyslexia, explains that he tries to avoid reading in front of people because they "start to recognise, you know, and then they start to laugh at you". Like Jamie, Daniel has reportedly also been made an object of ridicule by his classmates, and neither he nor his struggles are taken seriously by others. This explains the frustration he feels when his teacher asks him to read, revealing his learning difficulty to the rest of the class:

> I do get annoyed a lot sometimes like when miss says "Oh, we're gonna have to do some reading, you're gonna have to read out loud", you just ... I remember always having to like just trying to hide behind my pencil case or something

As discussed in chapter 4, because of Daniel's experiences of reading at home and in school, and the lack of sufficient support he reportedly received for his dyslexia, he associates reading with anger, frustration and punishment. This had led him to avoid reading wherever possible. Becca similarly describes making up excuses for not reading out loud in class, in order to avoid revealing to her peers the difficulties she faces with reading:

> Like, coz I don't like reading out loud and I tell people "oh, I don't have my glasses today so I can't see it, so I can't read it" and so I just don't like reading in front of people coz I end up speaking like really, really fast and then I like can't get my words out so I just don't like reading to be honest

In an attempt to avoid having to read aloud, exposing their perceived lack of ability, they have each developed strategies to divert the teacher's attention. In each of these cases, the teacher, presumably aware of their dyslexia, does not take into account the young person's emotional response and the potential impact that being made to read aloud may have on the young person's relationship with reading, learning, and equally, if not more, important, with their peers. It also of significance to note here that Daniel did not reveal the fact that he has dyslexia to me, even though we were discussing reading, until the end of the second interview. This suggests that it is not something that he wants to be defined by it, or considers a significant aspect of his identity as a reader. This may also be a result of the perceived stigma attached to dyslexia amongst the young people, leading him to feel that he must hide it, including from me as another adult in the field of the school, whom he may perceive to have certain expectations regarding what he should be able to do.

However, not all of those who experienced difficulties with reading shared similar experiences. For example, Violet, who has visual stress, and Ryan, who is dyslexic, each found ways of managing these learning difficulties and benefited from the support of parents and teachers. As Burden (2008) notes, many young people who experience these difficulties find strategies of control and ways of dealing with them which lead to an improvement in their academic self-concept. The diagnosis of their reading related learning difficulties enable them to move forward as readers, and develop more positive views of reading and of themselves as readers. For example, Violet benefited from both a positive reading culture at home and the support of her English teacher, who helped to arrange the support that she needed after she mentioned in passing the difficulties she was experiencing reading *Harry Potter.* She had experienced these difficulties with reading since the age of 9, making it source of stress for her. She describes how, at the age of 11, she:

> ...tried to read the first *Harry Potter* book and for about the third time errrm... but I found it like really really hard and [...] it took me like an hour to read just one page or one and a half pages, something ridiculous like that

This led her to giving upon the book and watching the film versions of the popular series instead, which she found less stressful. Below, she discusses the support her teacher provided:

> Then like maybe half way through last year I was just talking to Miss Perkins and just mentioned that I, that the words fade and like move around a little bit or shake so she emailed a woman who works in the dyslexia department and she got me tested for dyslexia but I just have visual stress which means that I just need like a blue overlay and that helped a lot and after that I can read a lot of books like I'm reading like four books at the same time right now.

Being diagnosed with visual stress provided an explanation, and some justification, for her perceived lack of reading ability. It also meant that she was able do something about it, other than avoid reading. As is evidenced in the above quote, once she had been given the blue overlay, her confidence increased and, consequently, so did her enjoyment of reading. She now sees herself as someone who reads "a lot", as is also demonstrated by the fact that she 'agreed' that she reads a lot in her own time and 'strongly agreed' that she enjoys reading. This is in line with Duckworth's (2014) findings that such diagnoses can also be empowering, enabling the individual to "understand the reasons she had struggled to read and write at school (p.71)" and take measures to help manage these difficulties. However, she still 'disagreed' that she is good at reading, explaining in her interview that "I stutter, I need an overlay, I need glasses and I'd be a lot more confident like if I didn't stutter". Again, the ability to read aloud confidently and clearly is foregrounded here as a determinant of whether the individual is a 'good' or 'bad' reader. Further to this, she perceives the use of an overlay as making her less of a reader. This suggests that her visual stress still has a

negative impact on her perception of herself as a reader, despite the fact that she now has strategies for dealing with it. It is these strategies which overshadow her achievements, such as finally managing complete the *Harry Potter* books.

Similarly, Ryan 'disagrees' with the statement that he is a good reader, despite the fact that he also now has an overlay and is permitted to use a tablet when reading in class because of his dyslexia. He explains that he is "Ok at reading, but I'm not great". Further to this, in a later interview, when asked where he would rank himself as reader in relation to his classmates, he stated that "if I didn't have my tablet then I'd be quite low but because I use my tablet constantly I'd say about mid." He describes how people comment on the fact that he uses an overlay and complain when he is reading slowly. However, he does also agree that he enjoys reading and strongly agrees that he reads a lot in his own time, it is no longer a source of stress for him and he no longer sees it as a barrier to his enjoyment or to getting on in school. When asked if he felt that his dyslexia had influenced his perceptions of reading and his opinions of himself, he responded that:

> I'm getting quite confident now with my reading. Coz I'm starting to read quite a lot more books and quite a lot of my friends are recommending quite a few so I'm like "ok. I'll read some of them" and, for example, if I'm like reading for the class, I'm getting better at that. Mainly because I'm getting more used to being on stage and stuff like that coz I'm a musician and I do quite a lot of guitar

Unlike Daniel, Becky and Callum, Violet and Ryan have each had experiences outside of the school which have enabled them to feel validated as readers. Ryan has benefited from a pro-reading culture within his peer group and, although he suggests that his friends have been more influential in his reading life, he has benefited from talk about reading and exposure to a variety of reading materials in the home. He is also able to capitalise on skills and experiences acquired in other fields, such as performing as musician, and transfer them into greater confidence in the field of the school when called on to read aloud. These cases offer a contrast to Daniel, whose dyslexia is simply seen by his parents as an acceptable excuse for his lack of success and misbehaviour in the school context, as described in chapter 4. Although this leads his mother to stop pressuring and punishing him, she and the school also reportedly do not provide any additional support for his reading. They respond to it as though it simply a natural part of who he is, rather than something that can be changed, a possible consequence of his father's own continued struggles with reading. The contrasting experiences of those with reading related reading learning difficulties highlight the importance of social and cultural capital in supporting young people's management of reading related learning difficulties. They suggest that an emphasis on functional reading skills in isolation from their contexts of use is not enough when supporting young people facing these difficulties, it is important to also pay attention to it impact on the young person's experience of reading and of

school. There is a need to encourage enjoyment, providing alternative conceptualisations of reading and a supportive learning environment where the individual feels safe to make mistakes.

6.3. Establishing What 'Counts' and What Doesn't

Despite the importance the young people placed on the opinions of their peers and participation in this group, the school had a strong influence on their perceptions of what does and does not 'count' as reading, and what reading is for. Many suggested that they enjoyed the time they were given to read in class, both listening to others read aloud set texts and free 'silent' reading time, as it was not considered 'real' work when compared to written activities. Lucy suggests that this is why she enjoys the time in class spent reading, as it gives her a break from writing. This came up in each of her interviews, when asked what she enjoyed about reading in school and what she thought were the advantages and disadvantages or reading in school were.

> It's better than writing all the time, you've got that break where you're just reading a bit **(Lucy, Interview 1)**

> It' a bit of a break from all the writing but then because it helps us with our work and helps me get what to do more **(Lucy, Interview 2)**

Although acknowledging that reading does help her to do the written work set, she does not see it as work in itself, it is something separate and more enjoyable. A similar perspective is also evident in the following exchange with Lyndsay:

> **Lyndsay:** It's just summat to do for 20 minutes instead of working all the time.

> **Chelsea:** So it's a nice break from

> **Lyndsay:** Yeah, from writing

Nora expresses her views on the library lessons she has once a fortnight in a similar way. During these lessons, the students can select a book of their choice and are allowed to read for a whole hour.

> **Nora:** It's like different to get away from like doing your like normal lessons coz you've gotta silent lesson of reading, it's just different and it's just a nice like break from all the like writing lessons.

> **Chelsea:** And do you find that, do you like having that time?

> **Nora:** Yeah, it's like a bit of a break from like everything else and you just kind of sit and put your head inside a book kind of thing.

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It is interesting to note that, although these girls are in different classes and different schools, they are expressing themselves in very similar ways. Their comments are reflective of the importance placed on the written in the school context over reading, speaking and listening. Ultimately, the quality of their written work, the intended outcome of reading a given text in class, will be how they are 'officially' judged as a reader by their teachers and their examiners. Thus, writing comes to be viewed as more important, and is taken more seriously, than reading or talking about texts, due to the status placed upon it by the school. Reading was perceived to be less demanding and offered variety. This may also explain why each of these girls referred to reading in class as a 'break'- it is less stressful than other, more high-stakes, tasks which they are required to undertake in this field.

Further support for the perceived primacy of written tasks in this field is provided by the fact that, when asked what they thought the purpose of reading in school was, their answers focused on the skill of reading itself and the access it would give them to vocabulary and knowledge for writing. Notably, there was little mention of developing a love of reading, or enjoying the texts for their own sake. Where the young people did believe school reading had increased their interest and enjoyment in reading itself, this was most often as an indirect consequence. The following are exchange with Dexter, after I asked him what the purpose of studying a book, such as play or a novel, in class was, demonstrates this.

> **Dexter:** I think just learning to be honest and then reading helps you educate sometimes and then when you read faster it just makes you, your handwriting gets better apparently, some people say but, it just helps you learn to be honest and then know about and just learn.

> **Chelsea:** What do you mean by it helps you learn, do you mean it helps you learn about something in particular or just it helps you in general be better at...?

> **Dexter:** Just better and grammar and you know about the punctuation because sometimes they tell you about the punctuation and like "what's that mean?" and some of us don't know what it is. Just stuff like that really.

He views learning to read as integral to becoming an 'educated' person and developing the ability to write, and to learn more generally. It is the key to accessing essential, legitimate knowledge, passed on through the written word, which is valued above other forms of language in the educational field. He also suggests it plays an integral role in his own development of writing skills, allowing him to demonstrate his knowledge in such a way that it can be validated in the form of qualifications. Ryan also alludes to the development of writing skills and acquiring knowledge when discussing the purpose of studying books in school, describing the centrality of reading to his everyday life.

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> I think it's because we learn the style of the way it's done and we learn more about the past just by reading and stuff. If we couldn't read we wouldn't be able to learn a lot of stuff that we know, for example, a lot of history, different languages, even doing our options we couldn't do them if we couldn't read, so. **(Ryan)**

He lists some of the things he would not know or be able to do if he was not able to read, moving from more academic knowledge and skills, to more instrumental uses of reading. Ryan also places particular emphasis on studying a book or a play to learn about the past, likely a reflection of the way in which young people are encouraged to approach literature in the classroom, in order to enable them to meet assessment objectives which require them to place texts in their historical contexts (DfE, 2014a).

Summer similarly emphasised the role of reading in improving reading skills, when asked what she thought the purpose of studying a play or a novel in class was.

> Ummm, I think it's so you just like, it improves your reading skills coz you're gonna need reading for like all of your life so, if you get used to doing it earlier then it's gonna be easier when you're older **(Summer)**

For her, reading in school is intended to enable her to acquire and practice the skills she will need as an adult. Again, there is no discussion of the intrinsic qualities of the text, or of reading enjoyment. There is clear lack of correspondence between what is intended to be the purpose and outcome of studying literature in school, and what these young people appear to believe is the purpose. Their understanding of the purpose of reading were framed by either an adult needs or cultural heritage model of English (Cox, 1991), this is in contrast to Goodwyn's (2008) findings that teachers viewed personal growth and more radical cultural analysis models as being more important. This is of significance as it highlights the importance of exploring young people's perspectives on what the primary purpose of subject English is, something which has not been explored in previous research, the focus of which has been primarily teacher and student teacher perspectives.

The school also had the power to validate particular reading experiences and texts as 'real' reading. The young people who took part in this study often needed myself or their teacher to validate their experiences and preferences as 'proper' reading, due to the fact they did not initially realise that certain things 'counted' as reading. The experiences often did not match the schools' usual criteria for what counts as an appropriate text, or way of reading such texts. As I discussed in the methodology chapter of this thesis, whilst completing the critical incident charting activity, many of the young people initially complained that they had nothing to put because they did not read in their spare time. However, when prompted by myself or their teacher to think about more

'non-traditional' reading such as magazines and online material, they realised that they did have something to say. They would ask questions about what 'counted' or whether they were 'allowed' to include certain things on their reading journey. Even though they perceived these events and experiences of reading to be critical in directing their reading journey, they needed myself or their teacher to assure them they were valid. As Lawler (2005) points out when discussing Bourdieu's (1998) theorising regarding the justification of working class lack, "privileged groups are constituted as knowledgeable and understanding (p.117)." This serves as justification for their positions of power and authority, their ability to cast judgements on others, and the legitimacy of their knowledge and capital within a particular field. In the case of this study, within the tradition structures and power relations of the school, myself and the teacher were positioned as the experts with the authority to determine what did and did not 'count' as reading. This, as discussed in the methodology chapter of this thesis, was despite my attempts to position the young people as the expert. Just as the working class women in Lawler's (2005) study "were not authorised to be actors in the field of political protest (p.123)", the young people in this study were not commonly authorised to be actors in the field of the school. They were not accustomed to being given authority and having their voices privileged within the symbolic order of this field. This meant that young people often required either myself or their teacher, positioned as the 'experts' who carried authority, to confirm that their reading experiences 'counted' before they included them on their charts.

This was also evident in the language some of the young people used to describe these 'non-traditional' reading experiences, particularly on some of the critical incident charts. The two girls below both, despite initially stating that they do not read very often, go on to reveal that this is not actually the case. However, their experiences are tagged on at the end as though they were an afterthought. Both are downplaying the significance of their non-school sanctioned reading interests, with the first seeming almost apologetic about her choices, which she separates from the reading of 'books'. The second is slightly more defensive, asserting that, even though she does not read books very often, this is justified by the fact that reading is a part of her everyday life. Both appear to be pre-empting what I might be expecting them to say and any judgements that myself or their teacher might make. This separation of 'official' and 'unofficial' reading reflects a perceived hierarchy between 'real' books and other reading material, such as magazines and websites, which do not fall into the category of school reading.
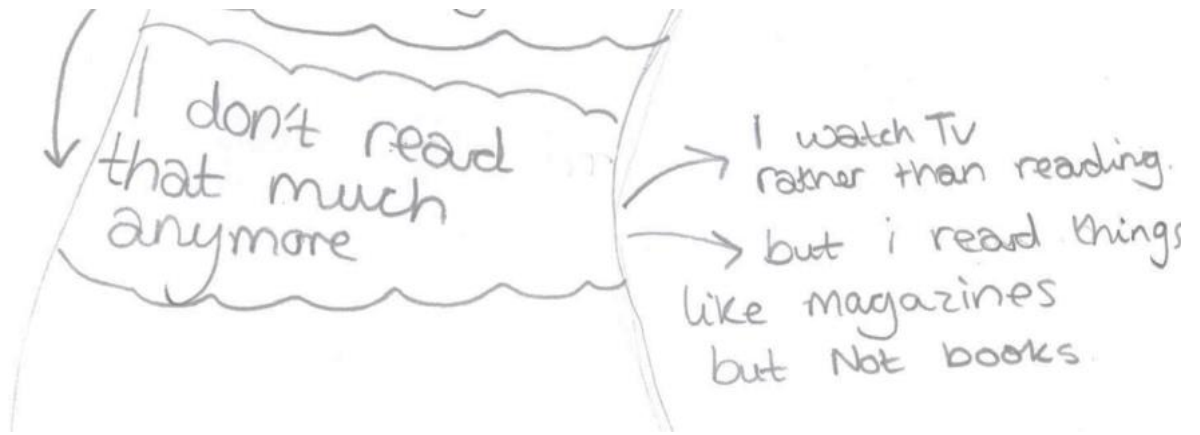
Figure 18: Veronica (School B, Class 1)
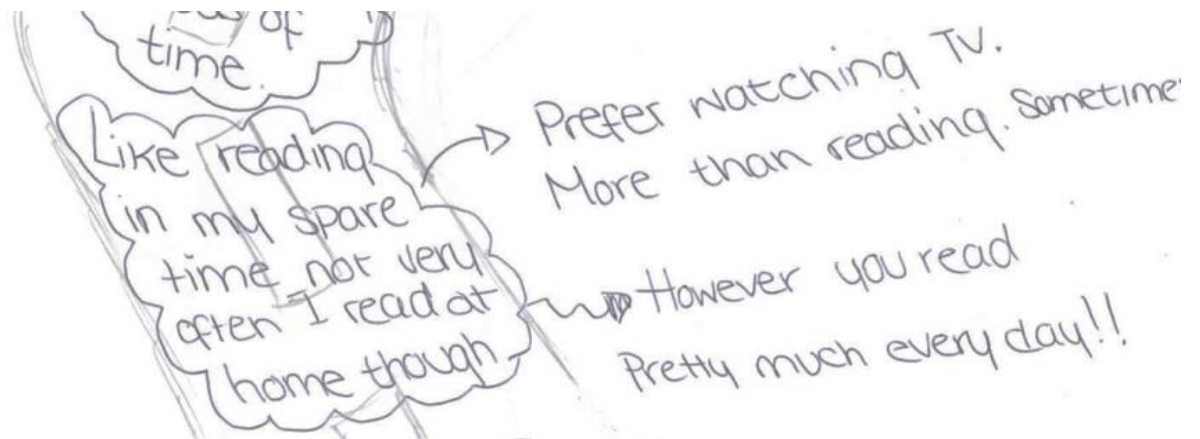
Figure 19: Lyla (School B, Class 1)

This was not exclusive to those who did not read in their spare time outside of school. For example, Lyndsay, an avid reader in her own time, with a strong reading culture in her home environment, distinguishes between the 'novels' she reads in school and the 'stories' she reads at home. She mentions Philip Pullman's *Northern Lights* when I ask her if there was anything she had particularly enjoyed reading in school, believing at first that it was a play or "more of a story". When I explain that it is a novel, and point out that there is a copy of it on the pile of reading materials I have provided, she then claims that she does not like it. The fact that she was originally going to say she had enjoyed *Northern Lights* before realising it was a novel provides further support for the fact that it is not the specific texts which influence whether young people enjoy or do not enjoy reading in school, but the ways in which they are approached and used. It also demonstrates that there is, in fact, no real distinction to be made between the two. It is only when they are viewed

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through the legitimate lens of the school that she views a hierarchy between them. When questioned on the distinction she makes between novels and stories, she describes novels as "more like a play and less like an animated story", more "realistic", with greater depth and fewer characters.

> I think it's like more formal because it's, the words are more sophisticated and like proper and then like in stories like, sometimes they'll have slang in it or like, how it's writ how, it's spelt, like baby sounds, how you have to write them how they sound and then like they're they type it how it sounds like, they describe it more than just put the word.

Novels are perceived to be more serious, complex and difficult, whereas stories are more lively, exciting and imaginative. The fact that she refers to the language of novels as 'sophisticated' also implies that they have a greater culture value, that they are of a higher class of writing. This is the rationale behind her belief that novels are more suited to reading in school.

The text sorting activity, which formed the basis of some of the discussion during the second interview, also demonstrated that certain, more superior, kinds of texts were considered to be the preserve of school. For example, authors such as Shakespeare and Dickens were often categorised as things you would read in school, but not at home. For example, when questioned on why she had put texts by these authors in group of texts that were to be studied in school, Becca explained that:

> Charles Dickens and Shakespeare are like quite, like school sort of, school related coz like, bigger books and take more, they have like different sort of like words and like different time periods.

She associates these particular authors with school, viewing them as difficult and challenging texts, requiring more effort on the part of the reader. The language they use and their subject matter are also far removed from her own experience. Becca's comments suggests that these characteristics are what make them particularly suitable for study in school. Jessica makes similar comments about the Dickens novel I included in the selection of texts.

> I think like the Charles Dickens would be aimed at like people at college and things like that because they might have to study it

This author also came up in her previous interview, when discussion her assertion that "some authors I don't understand", authors which she describes as 'famous' and who have been around for a long time. She explains that:

> Yeah like we've just read *The Inspector Calls* and I can't remember what his name was but I'd never I'd never really heard of him but like Charles Dickens and Shakespeare and stuff

like, everybody's hear of them so they just automatically think that they're quite an old author and they've been around for a while and they've brought like loads of books out but their books are aimed at like an older range so they're more confusing to read.

It is interesting note here that J.B. Priestley's *An Inspector Calls*, which she also studied in school, is put into the same category as Shakespeare and Dickens. This suggests that she makes little distinction between the different kinds of texts that she encounters in school, such as those of different genres and from different time periods, all of which come under the broad heading of 'school' reading and possess the same aura of difficulty. The very presence of particular authors on the curriculum, on exam syllabi and in classrooms, acts as a kind of quality assurance. According to Jessica, their presence in the classroom is justified by the author's longevity and fame, they have stood the test of time. It is their very longevity which is taken as proxy for the intrinsic value and importance of these authors, evidence of quality, earned respect and high status. However, Jessica finds these texts difficult and too grown up for herself to read, suggesting their age also means that they are more appropriate for an older audience.

Notably, there are no references here, nor in any of the previous examples, to the quality of the content or the meaning of the texts themselves. This is something that the young people neither critique nor affirm, taking the quality of the texts for granted. Instead, they take issue with their level of difficulty and lack of suitability for someone their age, absolving the texts of any blame. It becomes a failure on the part of the reader to 'appropriately value' and understand the texts, as opposed to a failure of the text to speak to the reader in light of their social, cultural and historical circumstances. Further to this, it is the authors themselves, as opposed to the texts they have written, which are foregrounded in their discussion. It is the credibility of these authors which assure the quality of the work they have produced, making them worthy of and suitable for serious study. The status accorded to particular authors and the perceptions of difficulty surrounding them may also provide some explanation for the fact that these texts did not encourage reluctant readers to read outside of school, even though the majority claimed that they enjoyed them in class. These texts were the sole preserve of school, with even more competent, capable readers, claiming that they would not approach them in their own time. This, alongside the young people's need for others to validate their experiences, demonstrates the power that that educational field has on their perceptions of what does and does not count as reading and, consequently, who can be considered a reader. Carter (1999, 2004) highlights the inherent non-literalness and creativity inherent in everyday language, and suggests that the reader is autonomous in deciding whether to read something in a literal or literary way. This problematizes these taken for granted notions of literariness and cultural value sanctioned by the school, demonstrating that the reading and appreciation of such texts is culturally and socially mediated. It is through the misrecognition of these socio-cultural processes which are responsible for the status given to certain authors, on the

part of both the dominant and dominated (Bourdieu and Passeron, 2000), that the criteria for what does and does not count as 'Literature', as set out in national and school curriculums, take on what Milner (2005) describes as the 'quasi-objectivity of what might be termed a pseudo-fact (p.6).' The young people are, therefore, complicit in the symbolic violence which is enacted upon them in the field of school. They misrecognise as natural, and therefore do not question, the value attributed to particular authors, making the decision to accept these texts and authors as 'literary' and worthy of serious consideration.

6.4. Possible Future Selves: Ability, Aspiration and the Purpose of Reading

The use of streaming and grades in the schools also had a significant influence on young people's perceptions of their ability as readers. They determined their expectations and aspirations regarding the nature and number of possible future selves, which in turn shaped their understanding of the purpose and relevance of reading in their daily lives. The young people read "in the present state the possible future states with which the field is pregnant. For in habitus, the past, the present and the future intersect and interpenetrate one another" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 22). Their current and past positioning in the field of the school shaped their perceptions of the possibility for improving as readers, moving into a higher set, succeeding in exams, and getting a 'good' job on leaving school.

The young people regularly used the achievements of others as a benchmark for measuring themselves as readers, and understanding what they should be capable of. This was particularly prominent in School A, where pupils were grouped into classes according to their ability. The fact that those in this school had recently received results from a mock exam may also provide some explanation for the findings in this section. Those who were in the bottom set were often made to feel they were lacking compared to those in higher sets, that they were somehow not 'good enough'. Joseph explains, when asked how he felt about the set that he was in, that "our sets, I might be quite a good reader in our set but not as good in a higher set [...] coz they're like, better readers". This suggests that despite his achievements in comparison to those in his own class, they still do not match up to those who are in the higher ability set. Daniel responded to the same question by stating that being in a lower ability set makes him feel "bad [...] you just have to look around you and see who's in there". When questioned on what he meant by this, he elaborated:

> Well, you just, you can just tell by looking at them like, there's a few drips or what have you. You just look around and you think, what am I doing in here? You know, you think you can do better but, it's just not a, you just don't like, coz you wouldn't even talk to any of those people, coz they probably still read *Power Rangers* or whatever

I then asked why he did not try to do better in order to be moved into a higher set, he explained that "coz the people actually in there are alright but I didn't like people who were in top set coz, they're all nerds, they just, everyday took everything seriously". Daniel's explanations simultaneously place him above those who are in his class, dismissed as lacking intelligence and maturity, and those who are in the higher set, who are dismissed as being uninteresting and trying too hard. His comments also suggests that an individual's level of ability is perceived to be a reflection of the kind of person they are. However, he is reluctant to identify with either those in lower ability set or those in the higher ability set. This may be considered a defence mechanism against his own lack of ability and confidence, justifying the fact that he is in bottom set. As was discussed at the beginning of chapter, Daniel viewed his ability as fixed, and had resigned himself to failing his exams. Like the 'lads' in Willis' (1977) study, he makes a virtue out of necessity, thus maintaining his position in the field of the school, rejecting it just as it rejects him. Lauren differed slightly to the two boys as, to an extent, she did not appear to mind being in the bottom set.

> Because we're in a, I'm in quite a low set, it makes me feel like I'm fine because I'm not the only one with this but some point in it, it makes me feel like, that I could've done better in my previous schools and stuff. Coz everybody, like everybody rubs it in that they're in a higher set or they've got higher marks and something.

She takes comfort in the fact that other people are also experiencing the same difficulties and are working at the same level as her. As was the implication of Daniel's comments, the fact that she says "it makes me feel like I'm fine" suggests that her level of ability is a reflection of her as a person, being 'good' or 'bad', with a lack of ability justified only by the fact that there are others in the same boat. This suggests that the acceptability of being 'low ability' is dependent on the number of people who are working at a similar level. However, like Daniel and Joseph, she is aware that others are 'better' than she is at reading, emphasising her own deficiencies. As was also noted early in this chapter, Lauren has persistently been subjected to bullying in school because of her lack of ability, which has had a lasting impact on her confidence. The above extract also demonstrates that she feels that she is the one who is responsible for her lack of ability as she "could've done better". However, when questioned further on whether or not it might be possible to put in more effort in the future and move into a higher ability set, she responded that "not really, because I can't, with most of the stuff I can't get my head around what I'm working on, it takes me like a few lessons to figure it out". There is sense of resignation in her comments, similar to that expressed by Daniel, that there is little that can be done to improve themselves, that their lack of ability is a fixed and natural part of who they are. They simultaneously hold the belief that with hard work they could move up into a higher set, and that putting such effort in is futile. In contrast to this, Lucy, who was also in the bottom set, describes how this inspires her to work hard and move up to the top set, stating that "The set that we're in, coz we're kind of near the bottom but it gives me that extra

boost to try and get myself up into the next class and stuff, into a higher class." This suggests that she believes that it is possible to do better if she puts in more effort and pushes herself, indicative of a desire to exceed the expectations of others. This may explain why being in bottom set does not appear to have a negative impact on her perception of herself. However, when asked if she thinks this possible in practice, she adds:

> I use it as a challenge but then I don't think I'd want to move class because I'm used to all the people who's in there now and moving up are just new teacher, new people and but then there'd be a good side because of like, making new friends and everybody but, I don't think I'd like to move up to, well I'd like to move up to get my grade higher but not to leave all my friends and stuff

As was Daniels' view, moving up into the top set was not completely desirable, as it would separate her from her peer group, which she prioritises over getting a better grade. Again, this provides some justification for her position within the field of the school, as she chooses to value participation in the peer group over improving this position. In other words, she could do better, but chooses not to. Jamie, who was also in this class and had recently achieved a grade C in a mock exam - his highest grade to date, describes how this increased his confidence and his perceptions of what he was capable of both in and out of school. He mentioned this both on his C.I.C and during his interview.

> It's actually my first time getting a C in English, so I thought if I can do it, I can try read a little bit better and I can start reading out loud in front of everyone and it boosted up my reading at home and all that lot a bit more

Not only has this increase his confidence in school, but it has also encouraged him to read outside of school "since I got that C". Achieving this grade has changed his perceptions of what he might be capable of in the future. This demonstrates the power of the school to validate young people as 'good' and 'bad' readers, with grades and setting viewed as objective judgements of the individual's ability, recognised by the young people themselves as an objective fact.

This is further demonstrated by those in top set who believed that they were there because of how hard they have worked in comparison to others, and because of their own intelligence. For example, Summer's response when asked how being in the top set made her feel about herself as a reader, responded:

> I think it says that I'm quite intelligent and that I do put the effort in and that I don't just mess around, well I do mess around sometimes but I don't, I can mess around and get on with it at the same time. Which I think is a really good thing

She believes that her being in the top set is an accurate and fair reflection of her own ability and hard work, she takes school seriously, unlike those who "mess around" in class and do not do as well. Lucas expresses similar beliefs about why he has been placed in the top set:

> I think it sort of tells me that I'm a good reader as its top set then it helps me basically, you learn more stuff rather than being in second set or third set, you learn more important words and they test you more and they give you harder work so I think it's better to be in top set than any other set?

He shifts the focus here onto what happens in the top set classroom, compared to other sets. Not only is he in the top set because he is a good reader, but being in the top set has itself provided him with the opportunity to improve as a reader, more so than if he had been in "second set or third set", where there is less challenge and lower expectations. Therefore, his very position in the top set is itself an educational advantage. This belief was also evident in Freddie's discussion of grades and being in the high ability set.

> Well, it makes me think I'm quite good at English and obviously getting my exam results back from my reading exam and being above target and getting a lot better. Doing the higher paper made me realise that, d'you know, we must be better than other people in the year. Because when we was doing our coursework and stuff, everybody was getting the same around the year group, everyone was hitting Cs and Ds and Bs and stuff, but when it actually came to the exam, not a lot of people got higher than a C, but that's because they did the foundation paper. So I guess getting higher than a C, when all my friends got a C, I guess it makes me realise that, maybe I am the smartest one. D'you know, I am better at English than the rest of the people in here and hopefully I'd like to stay in the higher set because I think, because I think it's better than being in a lower set coz in the lower set, the teachers might not make you work as hard, which can affect your grade coz it kind of makes you lazy but then again in a higher set, you have to do a lot of work and you have to keep up with a lot of work and you have a short period of time to. So I guess it makes you feel quite smart and quite intelligent to be in like a set like, top set.

Like the others, Freddie equates being in top set with intelligence, being 'good' at the subject, and working hard. However, he also highlights the advantages that he receives due to his position in the set. For example, the fact that he sat the higher tier paper, and was given the opportunity to achieve the full range of grades, whereas others sat the foundation paper and had their grades effectively 'capped' at a C. This suggests that there are lower expectations of those in lower ability set, as is also implied in Freddie's comment that "teachers might not make you work as hard", suggesting that they are not pushed as much as those in the higher ability set, which he acknowledges "can affect your grade". However, at the same time, his belief that he is "the

smartest one" misrecognises these inequalities, which mean than those who are behind are further disadvantaged and those who are in higher ability set are pushed further ahead, as a product of his own ability and hard work.

In contrast there were also those in the top set who did not feel that this was an accurate reflection of their ability, highlighting a lack of congruence between their teacher's expectations and the young people perceptions of their own ability. For example, when comparing herself to others in her set, Emma describes feeling like she does not meet the standards expected of her in top set:

> I think, coz most of the people in our class are quite good at reading and stuff, quite fast, I think, I don't know, it's more like, I don't know. Like I should be better than I am because everyone else is better and I should be a bit better than I am, or how I think I am

She blames herself for failing to achieve what is expected of her and match her classmates, than the standard that has been set for being too high- it is her who "should be better". Rosie similarly describes feeling out of place in this class, as is evidenced in the following exchange:

> **Rosie:** Well, if I'm in top set it feels like I'm proper brainy but I'm not. I don't even know how I got up there, I don't know how I actually got up there. So, my reading, it's not very good but I don't show that in my face, I show that I'm really brainy at it, but I'm not. I just like guess at all the questions.
>
> **Chelsea:** So do you not think that it's an accurate reflection of sort of, your ability and the type of reader that you are and?
>
> **Rosie:** Not really, it's kind of hard to like understand it all in one go. Then, if a film is like "oh, I wanna watch it", again and again, but books you're like "ugh, I have to go back all the pages and read it all again". Especially if it's tiny writing.

It is not just Rosie's ability which she believe makes her not "brainy" enough for this class, but her lack of appreciation for particular kinds of text. However, she is able to 'seem' like a reader, even if, like Emma, she does not 'feel' like one (Bartlett, 2007). As I will discuss in the final section of this chapter, Rosie develops strategies for performing the particular habitus that has currency in the school context. However, despite validation in this field, she still does not see herself as 'someone who reads', or is who is even very able to. These girls perceived themselves as being out of place, lacking authenticity and failing to match the schools idea of the particular kind of reader they should be, despite public perceptions of them as readers.

The young people's perceptions of their own ability also influenced their future aspirations and, in turn, the perceived purpose and relevance of reading in their daily lives. In particular, the

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association between reading skills and employment placed limits on the aspirations of those who were placed in the lower ability set. When questioned on the purpose of reading, most of the young people highlighted the importance of being able to read in order to secure employment. They were aware of the general importance of reading as a skill which would serve them well in the world of work, although many had not yet decided what they wanted to do when they finished school. For example, Liam and Lauren - who were in the lower ability group, when asked why they believed reading was important, each explained:

> When you've got an exam or you go for a job interview or you get your driving license do your driving test. That's about it. **(Liam)**

> Coz you need reading in everyday life, if you don't have it, you can't get a job, you can't get interviewed or owt. **(Lauren)**

It is interesting to note that neither Liam nor Lauren view reading as being integral to the job itself, but for providing access to employment. The only demands that they anticipate being made on their literacy skills are those required in order to read and fill out paper work, and to take tests that are integral to getting through the application process. The emphasis on reading as a functional skill suggests that they expect to enter relatively low-skilled employment on leaving school, and that they will have limited use for reading in their daily lives.

In contrast, Daniel and Rosie viewed reading as lacking any utility in getting them to where they want to be, or will inevitably end up, as they felt that this would not require strong reading skills or academic success. They did not see any purpose for reading beyond school which, reinforced by a lack of non-school reading experiences, meant that they saw no real reason to read. This served to justify a lack of interest and ability in reading. It also enabled them to establish value and meaning in themselves and their lives, even if these selves were not valued through the legitimate lens of the school. In particular, Rosie did not feel that reading, or any other academic skill, would be integral to fulfilling her aspiration of becoming a famous singer or an actress:

> Well, it's important to other people coz apparently it gets you brainy, but people say that I don't need my brains coz I'm gonna be a singer. I only need like music and drama, so no reading doesn't matter to me.

She equates reading with being intelligent and doing well academically, traits which she does not believe will be of use to her. Therefore, being good at reading, or even taking an interest in it, is not something that she considers important. The only texts she reads outside of school are magazines and scripts, which are more consistent with her identification as an aspiring celebrity and as someone who is talented in other areas, namely singing and acting.

Coz I can do singing and I've been working since I was like 5 and I just really want to be a big star and since reading all the magazines, it helps me coz I've memorised what I can do and I've had singing lessons and stuff so I feel really confident going out there and singing.

This may also be, in part, an attempt to justify her own perceived lack of ability in this area. She finds an alternative means of establishing her own value, which does not depend on being a 'good reader' as measured by the school, nor does it require success in this field. However, her earlier comments do not take into account the uses to which her reading skills are put when reading, understanding, and then putting to use the information these texts provide, likely because such texts are not valued within the legitimate lens of the school. Daniel similarly establishes value as someone who is 'sporty' and physical, as opposed 'academic', as I discussed in the previous chapter, justifying his lack of ability or interest in reading. He hopes to go into a career which will allow him to use these skills:

Daniel: Yeah, it's all I really care for. It's all I'm good at so, if I'm gonna make a career, it might as well be in that. I've already got a job, I think it's just because I'm stronger than everyone else I can do it but.

Chelsea: And what job do you have?

Daniel: Baker, in a bakery.

At the time of the study, he had a part time job in bakery, which involved lifting and cleaning heavy machinery; a job which he had been given because of his physical strength. However, unlike Rosie, he is also aware of the limits that his level of reading ability and his lack of success in school will place on his future options. He is lacking a realistic alternative pathway to aspire to, or at least one that he perceives to be realistic. The fact that he explains that he "already has a job" suggests that he expects little more for himself than this kind of low skilled, manual work. He later mentions aspiring to be a PE teacher when he leaves school, but does not think that this is a realistic goal due to the literacy skills it requires, explaining the importance of such skills for accessing particular fields of work:

If you can read, you have to get those fancy jobs when you're older. You get a nice car and that lot but I don't think it's too bad not being able to read y'know, you get to live a healthier, happier life maybe.

Daniel's explanation suggests that such jobs are for a particular class of person, providing access to further privileges. It is not something that he expects for himself, or suggests that he might deserve. These jobs are not 'for the likes of him'. However, he finds meaning and value in being fitter and 'healthier' than those who have access to more high skilled, mental occupations, suggesting his lack of ability will lead to a better life for himself in ways that are not financial. Both Daniel and Rosie

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are able imagine a liveable life for themselves which has value and meaning (Skeggs, 2012), despite their awareness of the fact they were devalued when viewed through the legitimate lens of the school.

6.5. Reading for 'Pleasure' in School: You Can Take a Horse to Water...

The distinction the young people made between school reading and the reading that they did (or did not) engage with outside of school was detrimental to the schools attempts to encourage reading for pleasure. Attempts to engage those who did not already read outside of school, and saw reading as an exclusively academic activity, were particularly counterintuitive according to the young people. For example, many misused the time they were given in school for free reading, both in class and in the school library, and developed strategies for avoiding reading during this time. Neuman and Celano (2012), in their comparison of two libraries serving communities with different economic resources, comment that:

> Even when "we level the playing field"- therefore creating equal access to material resources- we still have an unlevelled playing field [...] other factors, namely scaffolding adults, may make the difference in children's literacy lives (p.6)

They highlight the lack of congruence between the intended use of such resources and the use to which they put in specific contexts by particular individuals. In line with this, the findings outlined in this section demonstrate the importance of paying attention not only to the reading resources, spaces and time available to the young people, but the way in which they drew on the various capitals available to them to make use of them. There was often a disconnected between the intended and actual use the young people made of the resources provided in this field. This was particularly evident in the use the young people made of the school library, and the ways in which school drew on the library as a resource. For example, in a bid to encourage and facilitate reading for pleasure, the students in this school had library lessons once a fortnight, where they were given the full hour to read a book of their choice. The young people had mixed views on these lessons and their effectiveness. When asked if they actually spent this time reading a book of their choice, Becca and Alfie admitted that they did not. Becca explains that it is difficult to concentrate on reading in silence when her friends are there to distract her.

> **Becca:** when we go to the library, like nothing really gets done, it's just people talking and stuff. Not much reading gets done.

> **Chelsea:** So you think it's better in class when you have the teacher to sort of help and structure that reading?

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Becca: Yeah, coz not many people read, they just like walking around. Just like choosing not to do it

Chelsea: And do you, so thinking about those lessons that you have, how do you use them? Do you tend to use it for reading or do you talk to your friends?

Becca: It depends coz sometimes like, when they're not here, I read but if they are here then I normally just talk to them.

Despite the best intentions of the teachers and the school, according to Becca, little reading is happening in these lessons. The time is only used for reading when her friends are not there, as she has no one to talk to and, therefore, has little choice but to read. She does not usually use the time to read, because she does not perceive anyone else to be doing so. It had become the norm to use this time for socialising, rather than reading. To spend this time reading, when others were not, would have made Becca stand out and placed her in opposition to these norms. This provides further support for the importance of the peer group in the lives of the young people, and the need to fit in, even in the context of the rules and values of the school. As has been demonstrated in previous chapters, their inclusion and status within the peer group was more highly valued than the school's and their family's perceptions of them. Furthermore, Becca points out that they are 'choosing' not to read, exercising their own agency and using the time and space for their own purposes. They could have done what was expected of them of them if they had wanted to, and followed the teacher's guidelines, but chose instead to opt out.

The fact that little reading happens during this time in the library was also one of Alfie's criticisms of the lessons.

In my opinion, I just think they're a bit of a waste of time really, because a lot of people just talk and I prefer to like to spend that time maybe doing like research in a book with like a friend or something, rather than just like reading for an hour, coz you could maybe just read for 5 minutes or 10 minutes at the start of a lesson but with, when you start, rather than just reading for a constant hour, you can like do some research on the book, maybe read it for say 20 to 15 minutes, then go off with a friend and then find, go on the computers and find information about it.

Alfie does not see any purpose in having the library lessons either. He observes, as Becca does, that people tend to use the time to talk rather than read. He suggests that the time may be better spent working with others to explore the texts and share ideas, in order to develop a deeper understanding. Alfie's comments are surprising considering the fact that he claims to enjoy reading in his spare time, reportedly reading his Kindle every night before bed. This suggests that it is the constraints placed on when, where, how and for how long he is expected to read in this field, in

addition to the distraction provided by other students, rather than the fact that he is being asked to read, which is the cause of his complaint. He feels that one hour is too long to expect young people to sit and read in silence. This also provides further demonstration of the centrality of social interaction to many of the young people's lives, he values having opportunity to discuss what he is reading. Becca and Skye both express similar sentiments towards the length of these lessons, which are an hour long. When asked whether she found the lessons useful and whether they were successful in engaging her with reading, Skye appears ambivalent.

Skye: It's alright, sometimes it's a bit annoying coz like, a whole hour. It's good when you enjoy the book and everything.

Chelsea: So does it sometimes feel like it's a bit long?

Skye: Yeah, it seems to drag.

Although Sky does not feel as strongly about the lessons as Becca and Alfie, she feels that an hour, which is how long the lessons are, is too long to be expected to read in silence. A possible explanation for this may be that, like Becca and Alife, is not someone who ordinarily reads on her own outside of school. Consequently, she struggles to concentrate for that long and maintain her interest in a book. However, she does also explain that, when she does find a book that engages her, the length of the lessons can be a positive thing. This highlights the importance of teaching young people to make informed reading choices, giving them room to explore their reading interests and discover what they like. Only once their interest had been captured, can young people begin to build on their reading stamina.

The young people's attitudes towards these lessons may be an extension of the tendency, in both schools, for the school library to be used as space for socialising, doing homework and using the computers, if at all. Socio-spatial studies of school libraries, such as those by Shilling (1990), Neuman and Celano (2012) and Loh (2016) demonstrated the complex interactions between individuals and educational spaces and resources, and the impact of social interactions within these spaces on the uses to which they put by individual and the meanings attributed to them. Such studies demonstrate that there is often a lack of fit between official, intended use of these spaces, and the actual use to which they are put. Interestingly, none of the young people in this study used the school library as a space for accessing and reading books at the time the study took place. The fact that the space was also somewhere that compulsory lessons took place, and where the rules of the classroom still applied (such as being silent), may have contributed to the lack of success in creating a space that would encourage and facilitate reading for pleasure. For example, Alfie complains about the strict rules regarding behaviour in the library, which prevent him from making use of it for reading for pleasure in the way that he wants to.

The librarian she's a bit of a something, I don't really like her at all and she just always tells people to shut up and everything but she's really annoying and like, when you're trying to do something or you're talking to a friend, or even if you want to go on your phone and find something, she'll take your phone off you because you're not allowed on your phone in there, but I think you should be, because the sixth formers are allowed it to do research, so why shouldn't we be allowed it?

Alfie values having the opportunity to share ideas and talk about what he is reading, and using technology to assist with reading. As was outlined earlier in this section, this is not something that was valued as a legitimate way of reading and responding to texts, with the school's focus on written work and assessments and rules regarding working in silence. This extends to the more informal spaces in the school, such as the library, with certain behaviours labelled as unacceptable. This not only devalues, but demonises certain reading practices, such as reading on mobile devices and discussing texts, making them punishable. Further to this, Alfie does not feel the librarian is helpful or welcoming. She is another figure of authority whom he is required to obey.

Zoe also complains that the library tends to be used more by the year 7 students, which is why, as a year 9 student, she does not go in there herself. When asked who does use the library she responds: "Year 7s and stuff, they go in and get the books. That's why I don't go in," adding that "they're really gobby like these ones and they do my head in and then I get kicked out." When asked why this particular group of young people used the library, she suggested that they may be trying to "get away from us lot", referring to herself and her friends. The library, in Zoe's view, is a place where those who are being bullied, in particular, younger students, can take refuge. The librarian then takes on the task of protecting these pupils, preventing those who are bullying them from accessing the library. As someone who does not require this such refuge, and who is more likely to be the bully than bullied, it is not a space that she uses. Instead, for Zoe, the library becomes another space in the school where she gets into trouble and is 'told off' by a figure of authority. It is a site of conflict for her, albeit conflict she is responsible for. In each of these cases, the use of the library is not conducive to encouraging and facilitating reading for pleasure, and for encouraging young people to view reading as more than an academic activity. This may be due to the library's requirement to function within the broader structures of the school, in line with the culture, rules, and values which comprise its habitus. Shilling (1990) and Loh (2016) similarly demonstrated the impact of the broader school culture and the socio-economic demographic of the communities which they serve on the use that is made of school libraries and kind of knowledge and interaction- between individuals and between individuals and the educational space- they encourage. Although somewhat beyond the scope of this research, it is implied in the young people's discussion of their school libraries that they were not organised and used in a way that encouraged reading for pleasure of one's own volition.

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It is important also to note here that, for some, the library did provide an important space for reading and accessing books, although this was usually during primary school and in the early years of secondary. For example, Alfie describes making use of the school library to access books when he was younger. He suggests that it was particularly important in terms of giving him access to reading material in primary school, as the community mobile library that he used to use did not come often enough to support his reading habit. He valued the permanence and ease of access to the school library. When elaborating on his critical incident chart, he commented that "it's got like a really wide selection of what I really like to read, coz I sometimes like to read fiction but other times I quite like to read non-fiction", and later again made reference to the breadth of material available:

> I found it easier to find books in school because they were more my age coz like, this was in year 3 and it was like quite, they were like a wide selection but for my age

The school library is easier for him to navigate than the local library, as the books have been carefully selected to be appropriate for his age and ability. Therefore, they come with a kind of quality assurance. He is likely to find himself picking up something that is difficult, uninteresting or that is not age appropriate. The fact that the whole library is intended for young people of school age, and is not shared with adults, also means that they have more choice. No space is taken up by material that is intended for a different readership. Freddie also pointed out that the school library was more convenient for accessing books than the public library in town. He recounted the following when elaborating on his critical incident chart:

> When I moved to X school they had their own library which means I don't have to go out as far, I didn't have to go into town and I get books coz I could get it from school and then if I haven't finished it I could renew it and give it back when I've finished it

Having a library in school meant that he could take out, renew and return books with greater ease, and did not have to rush to finish it or travel into town. The school library came up in our discussion at several points during the interview, demonstrating the importance of library in directing Freddie's reading journey.

> Having a library card like gave me the chance to actually go out and look at books and find books I liked instead of being forced to read certain books which kind of, and it made me think reading was better [...] I read more because I had, it was closer and it was d'you know it had a, like a wider range of books. There's, there's like suited my difficulty for my age like, I struggle, I did struggle to read some but they wasn't the easiest books.

In contrast the experiences of the young people previously discussed, for Freddie, the library provided a welcome contrast to the reading that he does during English lessons, where he has little

choice. This, in addition to the wider range of age and ability appropriate books available in the school library, increased his enjoyment of reading, enabling and encouraging him to read more. Changes in young people's use of the school library may be explained by changes in the social acceptability of reading and the increased importance of the peer group in the lives of young people, as I discussed in the previous chapter.

Another factor which may be responsible for the lack of success that initiatives such as the library lessons had in engaging some young people in reading for pleasure may be the constraints teachers placed on the young people's reading choices. Rules set by the teacher regarding what the young people were allowed to read and how, posed a barrier to complete agency in their reading choices and the exploration of different reading interests. For example, the pupils in School A did not have these library lessons. However, they were given time at the beginning of their English lessons on a Friday where they could read a book of their choice in silence. The book could either been one they had brought from home, or one they had checked out of the library. On my initial visit to the school, I was able to observe one of these lessons. The young people were sat around tables in groups of four or five. In the middle of each table were copies of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, the book they were currently reading as a class. I noticed that two or three of the student on the table next to me had picked up copies of the Harry Potter book to read during this time. When the teacher noticed this, she asked them to select a book from a box, provided by the school, at the back of the class to read instead. One of the girls was then caught hiding a copy of the book inside the one they had selected from the box and was asked to put it back in the middle. Two of the boys were also prevented from sharing a comic book that one of them had brought to read, the other was told off for not bringing a book. Similar approaches to library lessons and 'free reading' time in the classroom were evident in my initial discussions with the Subject Leader and second in department of school B. Although one allowed their pupils to read a variety of reading material, such as newspapers and magazines, the other stated that they "make" their pupils read novels. The young people were allowed to read what they wanted during this time, as long it was in line with the criteria set by the teacher for what does and does not count as reading. Thus, this supposedly 'free' reading time becomes simply an extension of more official, guided 'school reading'. This does little to make a distinction between reading in and for the purposes of school and reading for pleasure, it is still something the young people are being 'made' to do, they have little choice in the matter.

Consequently, many of the young people were performing reading during this time simply to avoid being 'told off' by the teacher, rather than out of interest or engagement in the text, in the same way they might approach other classwork. For example, Lauren has developed strategies to avoid having to spend this time reading, whilst still appearing to be doing what is expected of her. For example, she described taking books out of library and pretending to read them, in order to

avoid drawing attention to herself and getting into trouble. She admits that "I used to pretend to take a book out of the library but didn't read 'em because, so I didn't get told off and in class." Again, despite the school's best efforts, there is no reading going on here. She does what is asked of her, picking a book and sitting quietly with it, but she cannot be forced to actually read, much less enjoy it. In the following exchange, Lauren discusses how she pretended she was reading, and why she felt she had to:

> **Chelsea:** And why did you feel that you had to pretend to be reading and, to be seen to be reading?
>
> **Lauren:** Coz our teachers in primary school always checked to see how we was doing at reading and see what page I got up to in the books.
>
> **Chelsea:** So how did you, what did you do to pretend and make them think you were?
>
> **Lauren:** I used to, I used to like put a bookmark half way through the book.

Lauren is aware that, in the classroom, her progress and behaviour is being monitored by the teacher. Therefore, she must at least appear to be on task, otherwise, she will have to face the consequences. She finds strategies that will enable her to appease the teacher, creating the illusion that she is making progress with the book simply by moving the bookmark, without having to actually to read. Lauren does the minimum she can get away with without getting into trouble. As she will not be assessed on the book, which would defeat the purpose of the exercise in this instance, it is difficult to police her engagement, understanding and enjoyment of it.

This reluctance to participate was also evident in Rosie's discussion of free reading time and having to get books out of the library. She states that she has "never owned a book in my life. I only get them from the library because Miss tells us to get one every Friday but, oh that reminds me, I've to get one." Rosie, as discussed previously, does not come from a family which reportedly places importance on reading. Consequently, there are no books in her home environment, much less ones that she herself owns, and reading for pleasure is not actively encouraged. Reading is not something she values or see as having any real purpose. This is reflected in her attitude to reading in the school context, her lack of interest translating across fields, particularly with regards to this free reading time. The only reasons she takes books out of the school library is to meet the teacher's requirement that she turns up to class with a book that she has chosen, urgent only due to the consequences that might follow. If the teacher had not asked her to bring a book, she would not have been going to the library to get one out. It appears that Rosie gives little thought to her choice of book, all that matters that she takes one to class. She is reminded only by our discussion of her lack of reading outside of school that she needs to go to the library. Rosie employs similar tactics in order to avoid being 'exposed' as a bad reader, choosing instead to volunteer herself for things that

she knows she can do, creating the illusion of being confident and capable. Despite being in top set, she describes feeling like she does not belong there, that it should mean 'I'm proper brainy, but I'm not [...] my reading, it's not very good but I don't show that in my face'. She does not feel she is able to meet the school's expectations of her as a top set student. I explored the impact of setting and grading students on their perceptions of their ability earlier in this chapter. Rosie goes on to describe the strategies she uses to deal with the perceived conflict between her own and her teacher's expectations:

> Smile like I understand it and pay interest in my face expressions and sometimes put my hand up, that's only if I really understand it, and I write all the time so Miss knows I understand it.

She has worked out what the teacher is looking for, mimicking the legitimate habitus of the school, displaying legitimate embodied capital in order to minimise the chances of being called on to do something that she is not comfortable with and does not feel she is capable of doing. Feigning understanding and engagement, Rosie presents an image of what she believes will be considered a 'good' reader in the classroom so that she does not give her teacher any cause for concern, attracting unwanted attention. This outward display is used to conceal her real struggles and actual lack of the correct knowledge, and strangely appears to require a lot of effort and skill in itself. This further illustrates the fact that she sees little difference between reading as classwork and the free reading time that she is allocated in school. Both are done unwillingly and out of necessity. Like Lauren, any reading that she does do is not done out of choice, but out of a fear of drawing unwanted attention to herself and the consequences of not doing what is expected of her. Both mimic the habitus of the school in order to avoid being labelled as 'naughty' or viewed as lacking in ability. Like the adult learners in Bartlett's (2007) study, the girls were able to appropriate cultural artefacts, such as books from the library, which had symbolic capital in this field, in order to perform particular literacies and particular identities. Therefore, they were able to 'seem' like readers in the eyes of their teachers, even if they did not 'feel' that way. As Bartlett (2007) also notes, the artefacts themselves do not create a particular reading habitus or make an individual a reader.

Interestingly, however, Rosie does enjoy having this time to read, although it does not encourage her to read outside of school. This was also the case for Joseph and Zoe. The school creates a space for reading for those who do not usually read and see little purpose for it beyond school, or who feel they did not have the time for it. Rosie describes, on more than one occasion, how sometimes she gets 'addicted' to a book when she is reading during this time. "Addicted" is a strong word to use when discussing reading, and suggests a deep connection to and interest in the text. This does not, however, translate into a desire to read outside of school. Below, she explains why this is the case:

Kind of because when I have to read in period 5 after this lesson, you get a book. I get sometimes addicted but then when I get home I just like, I don't read any more. I read magazines, if that's it, it's got more colour, yeah [...] It's because it's like I'm made to read the book and sometimes I get addicted but then I put it down and I just carry on, I just forget about what I've just read and I just don't really care about the book anymore. But if I pick it up again I just get addicted to it again.

In school, she has no choice but to read and, consequently, she ends up enjoying it. When she puts the book down and leaves the classroom, she forgets about it. 'Addiction' is, therefore, an interesting choice word here, implying that she becomes absorbed in the book and struggles to put it down, a spell which is not usually so easily broken. However, at home she is not "made" to read it and can choose how to spend her time, and so she gets on with her everyday life. She has no desire to take the book with her. This suggests that it is not the book itself that prevents her from reading, but that the act of reading gets in the way of other, seeming more enjoyable and important activities. Her behaviour may also be explained a view of reading as exclusively an academic activity, something one only does in school.

In the following exchange, Dexter also describes finding himself enjoying a book during this compulsory 'free' reading time. When asked whether he spends the library lessons reading, he responds:

Dexter: I have a few times, coz the book I was reading, I thought it wasn't that good coz it was my own, I brought it and then I did a few times but then I was like "oh, I might as well read it" and I'm reading it now so I'm still reading it and I've nearly finished it now so I'm really, I really like it so, I just gave it a chance and the, yeah, it's good.

Chelsea: So do you think that having that time is useful for, does get people reading, get people to read something they've chosen and for pleasure?

Dexter: Yeah, I think it is really, coz you kinda get bored just sat there so the only option is to read, so it just, I think that's why they did it really, so then you can just read and then just educate yourself. Stuff like that really.

Again, he is only reading because he has little choice in the matter. The only other option is to sit there, do nothing for an hour and be bored. As he has to be there anyway, he has nothing to lose from using the time to read. It is little more than the lesser of two evils. However, despite his preconceptions, he found himself enjoying the book and, unlike Rosie, continued to read it outside of school. In this case, the school's attempts to encourage reading for pleasure were successful. Although, this may also be explained by the fact that Dexter was part of peer group which valued reading. The book that he had chosen to read in class was recommended by his friends, who enjoy

reading and talking about series fiction, offering a kind of quality assurance. This demonstrates the potential power of providing space for young people to explore and share their own reading interests in the classroom, particularly for those who would not ordinarily read in the classroom. Seeing peers read and talk about what they are reading facilitates the potential normalisation of reading for pleasure.

6.6. Conclusion

The school provided the young people with a criteria with which to judge their own reading lives and with which to understand their position in relation to others. They had little authority in this field in determining what legitimately counted as reading, and what did not. The school was in a powerful position to validate, not only particular texts and authors as 'real' reading, but also the young people themselves. The symbolic violence and literacy shaming which was enacted on the young people in the field of the school served to sort them into either 'good' or 'bad' reader. The fit, or lack of fit, between their own reading habitus and that which was valued in this field served to shape the young people's perceptions of both their present and possible future selves. This literacy shaming, much like that experienced by the adult learners in Bartlett and Holland's (2002) study, impacted on the young people's future learning trajectories and "made it difficult for them to develop themselves and cultivate identities as educated people that will transfer beyond the literacy classroom (p.18)."Those who were of a high ability and enjoyed dreading outside of school were not immune to the effects of the symbolic violence and literacy shaming in this field, particularly where there was a lack of fit between private reading practices and the public practice of the school. This suggests that there is also need to consider impact of school practices on 'good' readers. In particular, there is a need to consider the emotional and affective dimensions of young people's experiences of these practices, and of school conceptualisation of reading in general, which serve to shape the meaning young people attach to them and position the individual within this field.

In contrast many of the cases discussed in this section are also indicative of the power that young people have to exercise their own agency in the classroom, choosing to engage on their own terms and finding ways to privately circumnavigate the school's rules and regulations. They are able to able to appropriate cultural resources in order to perform the legitimate reading habitus of the school, enabling themselves to be valued as readers and avoid being labelled as disruptive or as lacking in ability, without having to engage in the reading practices which were characteristic of the school in any meaningful way. They were able to 'seem' like readers, even if they didn't 'feel' that way (Bartlett, 2007). However, it is also necessary to question how far such behaviour can be considered any kind of real resistance, when they are simply conforming to the norms of the school,

even if only to keep up appearances. The appropriation of these texts and practices did not themselves make the young people readers. Further to this, as Lawler (2005) it is also necessary to consider "how liberating is it to cast off these marks of difference and to adopt a normalised middle-class habitus?" There was a sense that, by adopting the legitimate habitus of the school, a number of the young people were not being 'true to themselves', they were putting on an act which served to reinforce the dominant symbolic of the school and maintain the social relations of power.

This also call into question the schools ability to 'mandate', or even encourage, reading for pleasure, and the level of responsibility often placed on them to do so. The school creates a space for reading for those who would not usually read and see little purpose for it beyond school, or who felt they did not have the time for it. Although the young people often enjoyed the reading they did in school, this was rarely enough to encourage them young people to read outside of school, which suggests the need for young people to see reading as more than an academic activity. Further to this, providing time, space and materials for reading did not necessarily guarantee that the young people would read, much less enjoy it. This demonstrates the importance of paying attention to both the intended and actual uses of these resources (Neuman and Cleano, 2012; Ee Loh, 2016). Ultimately, the young people had the ability to choose whether to participate, and in what way. As Cremin (2015) states "reading for pleasure and reader engagement cannot be mandated". It is not the act of reading itself, or even the specific texts being studied, which prevent them from reading for pleasure, but the fact that they see no real reason to read beyond the requirements of the school. As Power and Smith (2015) note, there is a lack of fit between what goes on in school "the wider cultural climate which shapes young people's aspirations and values (p.9)." The broader structures, culture and values of the school, and they ways in which reading was conceptualised, often presented a barrier to enabling the young people to view reading as more than an academic activity, even in the more informal reading spaces in the school. The findings in this section provide further problematize attempts, within the broader context of a neoliberal, market driven agenda in education, to redistribute cultural capital through education, as discussed in the literature review section of this thesis. They highlights the importance of considering the interactions between the field of education and the capitals- or lack thereof - and dispositions which position young people within it. Current debates, concerned with which texts young people have a 'right' to be exposed to, do not consider the lens through which these texts are viewed and they ways in which individuals are different resource to mobilize these capitals. However, as Lawler (2005) notes "there is no innocent position (p.122)" that can be taken here, as submission and resistance has a role to play in maintaining the social relations of power. By misrecognising as legitimate the criteria of value for readers and reading provided by the school, the young people were complicit in the symbolic violence that was enacted upon them, variously adjusting, conforming and resisting.

Conclusion: Navigating the Field and Negotiating a Reading Habitus

I begin this conclusion by reminding the reader of the questions and the research problem driving this research. I then go on to outline the key findings and the contributions the research has made to the existing scholarship in this area, considering the implications of these findings for future policy and practice regarding young people's reading. I conclude the chapter with a discussion of the limitations of this study and their implications for my future research practice, in addition to outlining possibilities for future research in this area.

The aim of this research was to explore young people's development of a 'reading habitus' in the context of the various, often varying, ways of reading and of being a reader they are exposed to in the private and public domains of their daily lives. This was with a view to gaining a greater understanding of the impact of dominant discourses surrounding readers and reading on the ways in which individuals value themselves as readers and their own reading lives, and the extent to which they feel that reading is 'for the likes of them'. I sought to address the following questions:

- How does an individual negotiate the various conceptualisations of reading and the reader as they move between fields, in order to develop perceptions of:

    o What reading is and what 'counts' as reading?

    o What it means to be a reader?

- What impact does this have on the extent to which an individual identifies as 'someone who reads', and on their 'reading habitus'?

These were pertinent questions to explore in a cultural and educational context which privileges particular ways of reading and being a reader. Much policy in this area, both currently and historically, is founded on a deficit, autonomous model of young people's reading and literacy practices. The logic of this deficit model is product of a broader neoliberal agenda in education, which views the 'student as problem', as opposed to 'structure as problem' (Ee Loh, 2014). It is responsible for persistent attempts to 'level the playing field' through a redistribution of cultural capital, based on a conception of social mobility which fails to take into to account the varying levels of social and cultural resources young people bring with them to the classroom, which make them unequally disposed to mobilise this capital and reap its rewards. It places blame on the individual for failing to understand and appreciate certain texts and authors, rather than on policy and practice which fails to value their reading and cultural lives within the education context.

7.1. Key Findings

In this section, I will provide a brief outline of the key findings relating to each of these fields, before highlighting the ways in which they interact with each other and the common themes which run through each of them. This study has demonstrated the complex interactions that occur as the individual moves between and within fields. Conceptualisations of reading and the reader were negotiated through relationships between individuals- such as parents and children or members of a peer group. These relationships served to shape, and were shaped by, the reading practices which were characteristic of a given field. These reading practices were themselves a product of the social and cultural structure of the field and broader understandings of what is and is not valued, which determined what legitimately 'counts' as reading and what it means to be a reader (Figure 21). The young people had multiple literacies and identities which they carried across fields, in which reading was engaged with for a variety of different purposes. Thus, the individual's reading habitus was at once dynamic, multifaceted, and enduring, shaped by shaping the fields in which it was produced. The young people's reading choices and practices, or lack thereof, were also both classed and gendered. For example, despite concerns which are often expressed over boys' reading, working class girls appear to be most negatively influenced by both the family environment and the reading practices which were characteristic of the school. In addition to this, the young people's perceptions of the importance and purpose of reading were linked to career aspirations and gender roles which were a product of growing up in a working class community characterised by low skilled, seasonal labour.
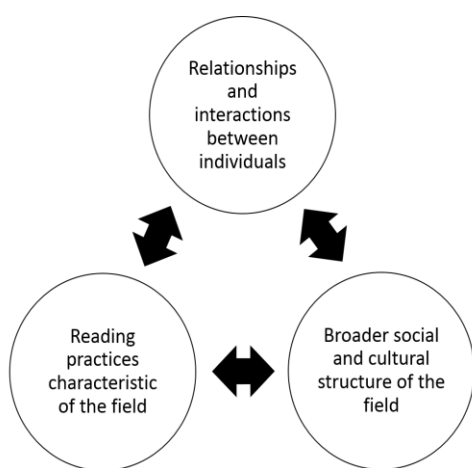
Figure 21: Conceptualisations of Reading and the Reader
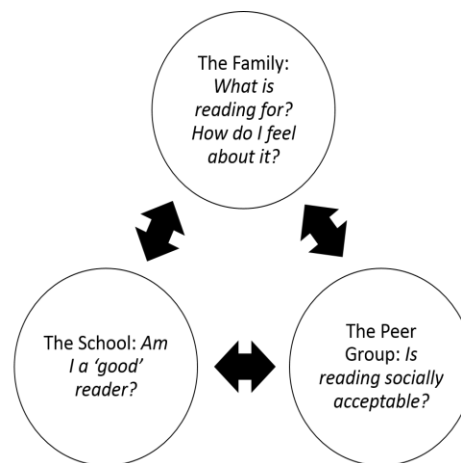
Figure 20: Negotiating a 'reading habitus'

The three fields which my participants most commonly identified as influencing them as readers were the family environment, the peer group and the school or educational context. However, the broader social and (popular) cultural context permeated each of these fields, in particular the peer group, shaping young people's general understanding of what it is to be, not only a reader, but an

adolescent in 21st century England. Each of these fields provided answers to particular questions throughout the young person's negotiation of a reading habitus, as they engaged in an ongoing struggle for meaning and value as a reader. The family served to shape their initial understanding of what reading is for and how they feel about reading, for example; is reading something that makes me *feel* good? Is it more than an academic activity or basic skill? The peer group were key to determining whether or not the individual considered reading to be socially acceptable, or whether they had time for it outside of school. The school framed the young people's understanding of whether or not they were a 'good' reader and where their non-school reading practices were 'valid'. Each of these fields served to either challenge or reinforce what had been learnt in the other, for example, a positive reading culture within the peer group might negate the negative influence of the family (Figure 20). In the young people's discussions and the critical incidents they identified, emphasis was rarely placed on specific texts. Rather it was the way in which these texts were used, the reading practices (such as sharing books with friends, or being made to read aloud in class), which served to shape their understanding of what reading is, what it means to be a reader, and the kind of reader that they are - for example, is reading anti-social? Is it something that I only do in school?

The family was responsible for the initial normalising of reading as a leisure activity, as something which was more than a basic skill or an academic activity. This was largely dependent on the dominant model of reading within the family context. For example, reading together was often an important bedtime ritual during the early years, serving to strengthen family relationships and establish positive emotional connections to reading. This provided an important form of emotional capital, which would serve the young people well as they entered the field of the school. It led to a view of reading as non-school activity, something which could be engaged in for pleasure for its own sake. However, in most cases, this parental involvement stopped after the early primary phases, once the basic skill of reading was acquired. This was particularly common where reading together was used exclusively as a means of 'getting ahead' in school, meaning that there was little perceived need for parental involvement once the child could read independently. Perhaps more concerning was the fact that when school-like reading practices were employed in the home, reading at home became associated with the stress, anxiety, and lack of choice which they associated with reading on the school context. In several cases, the family were unsupportive of the young person's development as a reader, actively discouraging the young people from reading for pleasure and making fun of them. For these young people, reading was something they had to hide or do in private. The peer group and, to an extent, the school, were able to negate this negative influence in certain cases as the young people got older. Reading was also linked to gender roles and responsibilities within the family, which more negatively impacted on girls' reading as they took on caring roles and became responsible for teaching younger siblings to read. This was also

mediated by birth order, with older female siblings faring worse, depending on the dominant model of reading being employed. In those families where the autonomous model of reading was dominant, it was often perceived that once the older sibling had acquired the basic skill of reading it was then the turn of younger siblings to receive reading support and attention from family members. However, in families where reading was viewed as more than an academic activity, something they engaged with for enjoyment, older siblings enjoyed reading to younger siblings. Here, reading was not only a way maintain family bonds, but it also gave older siblings a sense of responsibility.

As the young people gained increased independence from the family, access to and positions within other fields became more important in terms of them 'getting ahead' and 'fitting in'. Within the context of the peer group, reading, or not reading, functioned as a form of cultural capital, which could be exchanged for social capital and status within the group. The kind of currency reading, and being a reader, provided varied between peer groups depending on the level of symbolic value placed on reading and their perception of its relationship to the social. The young people tended to fall into one of four categories, perceiving reading as either a barrier to social participation, social participation as a barrier to reading, or reading as a means of escaping the social. In contrast to this, there were those who read with friends, and for whom reading was a very social activity. In these cases, the peer group offered 'quality assurance' with regards to specific texts, with knowledge of these texts being central to their participation in the peer group. For example, certain books were made popular by film adaptations, encouraging first time readers to pick up a book in order to be part of the conversation. Other, more interactive forms of reading, such as that surrounding social media and websites such as *WattPad*, were also central to participating in the peer group. The common factor here was the need for consistency between reading and the identity of the peer group, and whether or not being a reader facilitated their participation within it. This enabled the young people to actively position themselves within, or outside of particular fields. In particular, their relationship to popular culture, such as their use of social media and interest in particular text and types of texts were an important means enabling the young people to 'fit in' or 'stand out', with a minority of students opting to position themselves outside of and 'above' popular culture. Young people ascribe their own meanings to texts and reading practices within their peer groups, drawing on them for their own purposes. However, these practices were understood in relation to dominant social and cultural conceptions of reading, such as that which characterised the school context.

The school provided an 'official' framework for the young people's understanding of their non-school reading practices, and their development as a reader. Critical incidents in the young people's reading lives were remembered in terms of the various stages of their educational careers. The key identifier of whether or not an individual could be considered a good or bad reader in this context

was their ability to read aloud confidently and clearly. Reading aloud was most often identified as the most negative aspect of the reading the young people did in school, associated with embarrassment and anxiety- even for those who would were confident, capable and engaged readers outside of the school context. This was with the exception of a small number of boys who enjoyed the opportunity to demonstrate their abilities in front of their peers. The school also provided a set of criteria for what 'counts' and what does not count as reading, with knowledge of certain texts and authors considered a marker of being intelligent and educated. However, it was the authors who were foregrounded in the young people's discussions, rather than specific texts. These authors were considered to be of a high quality and were associated with a certain level of difficulty, although the young people had only a very vague sense of why they were so important, and did not mention any specific reasons of intrinsic quality which warranted their status. Until prompted by either myself or the teacher, many of the young people claimed they had nothing to say as they did not read - they did not initially think that their experiences and interests 'counted' as reading. This demonstrates the power that the dominant model of reading has on the young people's perceptions of their own reading lives, and the authority of the school to value them.

The findings also problematize the schools' attempts to encourage reading for pleasure. During the time given for 'free' reading in class and during 'library lessons', some of the young people were simply performing reading- 'seeming' but not 'feeling' like a reader (Bartlett, 2007). These young people were engaging with reading, or pretending to engage with reading, because they had little choice in the matter. These young people were able to use objects and actions which were codified with symbolic cultural value, such as an appropriate book from the school library, in order to 'perform' the reading habitus which would enable them to avoid attracting unwanted attention in the school. However, this did not translate into other fields, in terms of engaging with reading outside of the school. Further to this, the library was often used as a social space, rather than a space for reading for pleasure, signifying a lack of fit between the intended and actual use of this important resource. The lack of success of these attempt encourage reading for pleasure may be explained by the fact that constraints were still placed on the young people's reading choices and practices during this time, with several pupils suggesting that they would prefer to discuss and read books with friends, rather than sit and read in silence. I would suggest that these constraints were a product of the broader culture of the school, with its rules and norms regarding behaviour, in which the library operated.

These findings demonstrate the importance of non-school reading experiences in enabling young people to develop a positive relationship with reading and a positive view of themselves as readers. Very few of the young people in the study claimed to dislike the reading they did in school and even reluctant readers view reading as important for academic success and, in turn, success in the labour market. However, this was rarely enough to encourage these young people to read

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outside of school, which suggests the need for young people to see reading as more than an academic activity and the acquisition of basic skills. It is not the act of reading itself, or even the specific texts being studied, which prevent them from reading for pleasure, but the fact that they see no real reason to read. In some cases a lack of interest in reading was justified by its lack of utility in getting them to where they wanted to be, or would inevitably end up, if they felt that this did not require strong reading skills or academic success. Therefore, although these young people were unable to establish value in themselves as reader, this was not a central their construction of a particular current or possible future self, for example, one which was centred on being physical and sporty, or which aspired to be a performer.

The family and, in particular, the peer group, appeared to have the strongest influence, not only on the young person's willingness to openly identify as 'someone who reads', but on their ways of 'being' a reader. A lack of a positive reading culture within these fields provided a significant barrier to the young person's identification as 'someone who reads'. It was important that being a reader facilitated these relationships and that their position within these groups, or that it was at least not a detriment to it. Being a reader must also be in line with other aspects of their identity and their perceptions of possible future selves. Further to this, those who had these positive non-school reading experiences, did not see themselves as 'lacking' as a reader when in the field of the school. Experiencing a positive reading culture outside of the school provided these young people with a valuable weapon with which to engage in the 'struggle for meaning' in the field of the school. It provided an alternative set of values with which to put school reading and the symbolic violence which was enacted upon them in this field into perspective. For example, there were a number of young people who claimed they felt they were a good reader when reading in silence at home, but not a good reader in school when reading aloud in front of their peers and comparing themselves to others. Due to the multifaceted nature of their reading habitus, the young people sometimes 'seemed' but did not 'feel' like a reader, sometimes 'felt' but did not 'seem' like a reader, and others they both 'felt' and 'seemed' like a reader. However, the school still had a powerful influence over the individual's understanding of these non-school experiences, with the public domain of the school serving to shape their perceptions of the value and legitimacy of their private reading, or non-reading, lives. Those who did not read outside of school were more vulnerable to the symbolic violence they were subjected to within the school context. Grades, levels and sets were the only indication of the 'kind' of reader that they are, they had no other experiences with which to contextualise this and no other way of validating themselves as readers. However, those who did engage with reading outside of school were most likely to experience a conflict in reading habitus, which highlights a need to also consider the impact of school practices on 'good' readers.

7.2. Contributions to Existing Scholarship

This study has contributed in a number of ways to developing an understanding of how young people come to see themselves as 'someone who reads'. The findings complement previous research which challenges the deficit model and subsequent attempts to level the playing field through education, as it highlights the complexity of the interactions which occur as the individual moves between fields and different resources young people bring with them to make sense of what goes on in the classroom. However, much of this research has focused on young people's more local interactions with the texts and authors present on the National Curriculum and in classrooms (Ward and Connolly, 2008; Coles, 2013; Shah, 2014; Yandell, 2013; Yandell and Brady, 2016). In this research I have demonstrated the importance of acknowledging the broader social function that these practices serve, connecting them to the broader social and cultural whole of which they are a part. I have focused on the meaning that reading choices and practices hold for the individual, and their relation to particular social, cultural and historical circumstances, rather than the nature of these reading choices. Taking such an approach to reading in this research highlights a need to shift the lens onto questions of what reading is and who it is for, not just in education, but in all areas of young people's daily lives. Placing emphasis on readers and reading rather than on specific texts, acknowledging the role of the social in acts of reading and learning, challenges the dominant model of reading, and the inequalities it maintains. It demonstrates not only the rich reading lives that many of the young people lead outside of school, but how the current deficit model serves make these lives invisible, not only in education policy and in the classroom, but often to the young people themselves. Taking this step back from the text creates space for a model of difference, removing blame from the individual for failing to appreciate specific texts in specific ways, or be a particular kind of reader, and allowing them to view themselves and their reading lives more positively. This highlights a need to move from a view of 'student as problem' to one of 'structure as problem' (Ee Loh, 2013), challenging the broader neoliberal agenda in education and its promises of social mobility through access to a culture of which certain young people have been deprived.

A further consequence of these findings is the challenge they offer to the current 'crisis account' of young people's reading created by the current dominant autonomous model of reading which frames much education policy and practice. Previous surveys have suggested that there has been a decline in young people's reading for pleasure in general, and that young people's reading decreases with age (Maynard, Mackay and Smyth, 2008; Clark, 2016). This research has been challenged by further survey-based studies which adopt a broader conception of reading, focusing not just on whether or not young people read, but on what they read (Hopper, 2005; Clark, 2014). These studies have demonstrated that, when a more inclusive, qualitative view of reading frames the research, the picture may not be as bleak as that painted by research and in the media. For example, research by Hopper (2005) found that the amount that young people read does not

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decline as they get older, rather, the nature of the texts they are engaging with changes. However, these surveys which investigate young people's reading rarely provide reasons as to why individuals make certain text choices, nor do they provide opportunity for the individual to reflect on the function of these reading practices in their daily lives. The present research challenges this 'crisis account', suggesting that the problem is not that young people do not read or do not enjoy reading. Rather, those who had rich non-school reading lives are not valued or validated by the legitimate lens of the school, and those who claim not to read outside of school are unable to see reading as anything other than an academic activity. As Power and Smith (2015) demonstrate, there is a lack of fit between what goes on in school "the wider cultural climate which shapes young people's aspirations and values (p.9)." Previous research has also suggested that there are significant gender differences in young people's reading, highlighting a cause for concern with regards to boy's reading for pleasure (Millard, 1997; Dutro, 2001; Coles and Hall, 2002; Clark, 2014). However, this study provides additional insights into research conducted by Atkinson (2016), which suggests that reading choices are both classed and gendered. This study suggests that girls from disadvantaged backgrounds may be more of a cause for concern than boys, due to the gendered nature of roles in working class families and the impact of the reading practices which were characteristic of the school on their perceptions of themselves as readers.

Finally, this research builds on existing literature in the field new literacy studies and critical literacy, which seeks to explore issues of identity in young people's reading. This research is concerned with the ways in which young people draw on past and present experiences of reading in order to develop an identity *as a reader*, on which there is currently limited research. This is as opposed to much previous research which is concerned with issues of representation and identification, developing an identity *through reading*. For example, developing a sense of oneself as a female (Moss, 1989; Rogers Cherland, 1994), as an individual from a working class background (Coles, 2013), a member of a cultural minority (Shah, 2014), or a national identity (Ward and Connolly, 2008). Other research in this field has variously been concerned with the development of language skills and socialisation (Heath, 1983), the development of early reading skills and young children's engagement with reading (Baker, Scher and Mackler, 1995; Katzir, Lesaux and Kim, 2009; Cline and Edwards, 2013), and the experiences of adult basic skills learners (Street, 1984; Bartlett and Holland, 2002; Bartlett, 2007; Duckworth, 2014). However, the participants in this study were each already fairly competent readers, even those who experienced reading related learning difficulties. This study has highlighted the importance of paying attention to, and building on, the experiences of older, already fairly competent readers and their identities as readers, particularly in the current educational and cultural context, which values particular ways of reading and types of reader.

7.3. Implications for Stakeholders

These findings support the need to shift the lens onto questions of what reading is and who it is for, not just in education, but in all areas of young people's daily lives. These findings may be of interest to those who have a stake in raising readers, including policy makers, schools and families. In particular, they highlight the importance of non-school reading experiences and support networks in fostering positive reading identities, questioning the school's ability to raise readers and the level of responsibility that is often placed on them to do so. As this research has evidenced, the fact that certain young people do not see themselves as 'someone who reads' is often a result of social and cultural factor which extend beyond the school. There is a need for a more 'joined up approach', with stronger lines of communication between schools, parents, students and their peers, facilitating communities of readers where resources and knowledge are exchanged, enabling more young people to see themselves as 'someone who reads.' I would argue that community libraries, in particular, have a role to play here in terms of connecting stakeholders. Interactive, online platforms, similar to those already used by the young people, may also help to strengthen these lines of communication. In this section, I consider the implications of this research for each of these stakeholders. However, it is important to note here that this research is based on relatively small sample and, therefore, the findings are not generalizable to the whole population. Consequently, these recommendations are made whilst bearing this in mind.

7.3.1. Policymakers

There is a need for a more inclusive policy regarding young people's reading which acknowledges the contexts in which texts are used, produced, and valued, and the social, situated nature of reading. Debate with regards to policy in this area needs to shift from curriculum content and a deficit model which attempts to level the playing field through education without acknowledging the varying social and cultural resources which young people bring with them to the classroom. Such debates offer little more than a distraction from the real source of the problem, which is the result of the alienating impact of the belief in the intrinsic, universal value of certain texts over others and the veneration of particular authors. Moreover, history would suggest that it is unlikely that a consensus will be reached regarding what young people should read, and what constitutes their cultural 'birth right'.

7.3.2. Schools

This research also highlights a need to account for the emotional, as well as the instructional, quality of reading practices which are characteristic of the school, and the meanings that young people attribute to them. This includes awareness of practices – such as reading aloud- which have the

potential to open young people up to literacy shaming, inadvertently or otherwise. There is potential for free reading time and school libraries to be used more effectively, and teacher should be aware of the official and unofficial uses of the time and spaces allocated to reading for pleasure in the school. In particular, my findings suggest that these may be best used to facilitate interactions between the young people and their peers, allowing conversations surrounding reading to take place. The reading practices which characterise this time should be more than a mere extension of ordinary classroom practices which place constraints on young people's reading. These times and spaces provide an important opportunity for school to gain an awareness of the variety of what goes on in young people's reading lives, and to value these within this field. Young people need to see reading as more than an academic activity in order for any positive influence of the school to result in them reading for pleasure at home. However, this also means that there are limits to what the school can do to encourage young people to see themselves as 'someone who reads', as discussed in the introduction to this section.

7.3.3. Families

As in the school context, it is important that parents and other family members pay attention to the emotional quality and impact of the reading practices which are characteristic of the home environment. Parents should be aware of how these practices shape young people's understanding of the purpose of reading and their emotional connection to reading, which will be an important factor in their ability to navigate the field of the school. In for young people to see reading as more than an academic activity, parents should extend their input beyond the early years once the basic skill of reading has been acquired, sharing reading materials and encouraging discussion around reading. Further to this, the reading practices which are characteristic of the home should not simply be an extension of those which are characteristic of the school. Finally, parents', particularly mothers', involvement in their children's reading lives should not be at the expense of their own. It is important that parents model their own reading for pleasure, in order to assert its importance. Libraries and community centres have a potential role to play in connecting parents with the texts, and the skills and knowledge necessary to facilitate their reading and enable them to provide support for their children.

7.4. Limitations and Directions for Future Research

As I have learnt throughout the process of conducting this study, no research is without its limitations. What is important is honesty and transparency regarding these limitations. The methods I employed have been largely successful in enabling me to answer my research questions. However, despite the contribution this research has made to understanding how young people

come to see themselves as 'someone who reads', there are a number of limitations that must be taken into account when evaluating these findings. Firstly, as noted in the previous section, and in the methodology chapter of this thesis, this research is based on a relative small sample. Although this is a consequence of the nature of the research, which sought depth of understanding rather than breadth, the findings cannot be generalised to the whole population. In particular, further research is needed to fully explore differences in relation to class and gender highlighted by this research. Additionally, the fact that the research took place in a school had a significant impact on my relationship with my participants, the issues of power and voice I encountered in the conduct of the research, and the knowledge generated through my interactions with the young people. As I discussed in the methodology chapter of this thesis, despite good intentions, what the researcher theoretically and morally believes can and should be done to address issues of power in social research is often not fully realised. There are limits to what can realistically be achieved within the constraints of conducting social research, particularly when working with young people in schools. The fact that the research took place in schools, during the young people's usual English lesson time and in their usual classroom, may also have influenced the way in which they interpreted and responded to the task and my interview questions. Therefore, if I were to conduct this research again, I would meet the young people in their homes or in a location which they feel is suitable in light of the aims of the study. However, this would not be without its own ethical and practical issues - such as issues surrounding safeguarding and the difficulty of establishing connections with young people without the support of the school.

This research has also highlighted a number of other interesting directions for future research which build on the findings outlined in this conclusion. It has demonstrated the power of the dominant model of reading which shapes much educational and cultural policy in this area. Future research should involve cross-cultural comparisons of the construction of readers and reading through education policy and practice, and the impact that this has on young people. This would provide a deeper understanding of the impact of the broader socio-political context on young people's perceptions of reading and of themselves as readers, and of the relationship between theory/perceptions, policy, and practice. Future research should also young people's aspirations and cultural and educational experiences in rural and coastal areas. Although it was not a central concern of this research, it has highlighted some of the potential barriers experienced by young people in these areas, particularly in terms of their aspirations and access to resources. As was noted in the methodology chapter of this thesis, research in this area limited, largely focusing on the experiences of young people from urban, inner city areas. My pilot data also highlighted the specific challenges faced by young people for whom English was an additional language in their negotiation of a reading habitus. However, only three young people met these criterion in the pilot, and English was the first language of all of those who participated in the main study. Therefore,

more research is also needed which explores the experiences of young people with EAL. Finally, research is also needed which explores reading in the peer group and its connection to popular culture, which this research suggests has a significant influence on young people's perceptions of the social acceptability of reading. In particular, it would be of interest to explore young people's interaction with social media and online reading communities such as *WattPad*, and their reading and sharing of series fiction, and fiction made popular by film adaptations. Previous research which explores popular and series fiction has been largely text focused, concerned with whether and how certain groups are represented, and the themes that are dealt with.

Despite these limitations and that fact that more research is needed in this area, this research has contributed to an understanding of how individuals come to see themselves as 'someone who reads'. It has sought to explore young people's development of a 'reading habitus'; the extent to which they view reading as being 'for the likes of them' and their ways of 'being' a reader. I have contributed to a body of research which shifts lens onto readers and reading, as opposed to specific texts. By connection local subjectivities to more distant social and cultural relations of power, and taking a view of reading as a social practice, I have highlighted the complexity of the interactions which occur as the individual moves between fields and exposed to a variety of ways of reading and being a reader. Throughout this thesis, I have argued for the importance of acknowledging the meaning that reading practices hold for the individual, their function in their daily lives, and the affective dimensions of these practices. I have highlighted the ways in which individuals are differently positioned to mobilize the cultural capital that is redistributed through education. This serves to challenge the deficit model of reading and attempts to 'level the playing field' which characterise much education policy and practice, making visible the social and educational inequalities it maintains. I have demonstrated not only the rich reading lives that many of the young people lead outside of school, but how this deficit model serves to make these lives invisible, not only in education policy and in the classroom, but often to the young people themselves.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Letter to Schools

Chelsea Swift

Department of Education

University of York

York

YO10 5DD

cs697@york.ac.uk

07868052394

04/02/2014

RE: Request for Participants

Dear ...,

I am a first year PhD student from the University of York, Department of Education, conducting research which seeks to examine the various social and cultural factors shaping pupils' reading identities. I am particularly interested in the impact that the literary texts and ways of reading valued in subject English have on KS4 pupils' perceptions of reading and of themselves as readers. This is with a view to gaining a deeper understanding of how we can best foster positive reading identities and attitudes towards reading.

Having recently conducted a pilot study for this research, I am now seeking secondary school English departments who are willing to participate in my main study during the present academic year (2013/14) or early in the next academic year (2014/15). The study involves a short (20-30 minute) whole class activity with two KS4 classes, non-intrusive classroom observation and pupil interviews. Each of these activities will be scheduled to your convenience. Information gathered and reported will remain confidential and any recordings will be deleted after transcription. All participants will have the right to withdraw their information at any point, during or after participation, and the schools and individuals taking part will not be identifiable in any written material relating to the research. Furthermore, should you wish, there will be opportunity for you to discuss any findings generated from this research and/or to read the final report. I am also fully CRB checked.

Although I am aware that schools are very busy places, I believe that giving students the opportunity to reflect on their perceptions, attitudes and beliefs will be beneficial in fostering more positive reading identities and attitudes towards reading. When working

with year 10 pupils in my pilot school in West Yorkshire, I found that pupils began to think more critically about the factors they felt have shaped their perceptions of reading and of themselves as readers.

Should you be interested in taking part in this research, please respond to this letter at your earliest convenience in order to discuss your participation further. Needless to say, your reply would be non-committal, should you simply wish to find out more about what taking part would involve. My contact details are stated above; please feel free to respond, via the means most convenient to you, with any queries regarding the project. Your department's participation in this research would be much appreciated.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours Sincerely,

Miss Chelsea Swift.

Appendix 2: Critical Incident Charting Activity

Pilot

Name: Class:

Are you happy to discuss your 'reading journey' further (please circle)?   Yes   No

How do you feel about reading? (1= very negative, 5= very positive)

1   2   3   4   5

How do you feel about yourself as a reader? (1= very negative, 5 = very positive)

1   2   3   4   5

How much do you read outside of school? (1= nothing at all, 5= a lot/ every day)

1   2   3   4   5

Main Study

Name: Class:

Gender (please circle):   Male   Female

What is your first language?

Are you happy to discuss your 'reading journey' further (please circle)?   Yes   No

I am good at reading (please circle as appropriate).

Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

I enjoy reading (please circle as appropriate).

Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

I read a lot in my own time (not for the purposes of school), please circle as appropriate.

Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

Appendix 3: Interview Schedules

Interview 1

Open:

- Intro
- Go through consent form (duration, confidentiality, recording etc.) Understand? Ask them to sign

Topics to cover:

- Talk me through C.I.C.- explain events/ key incidents and reasons behind their influence in more detail (prepare specific questions)
- Why were certain events 'critical'/ important in shaping your perceptions of reading?
- Is there anything you'd like to add to it, in hindsight?
- Explain the 'rating' you've given yourself- why do you see yourself in this way? What characteristics/ habits, etc. warrant these ratings? What do you possess/ lack?
- What does reading/ being a 'good' reader mean to you? Important?
- Do your friends read much? What would they think of someone who reads a lot? What about someone who doesn't read at all?
- What about your parents? Do they do anything to encourage you to read?

Close:

Brief summary of responses/ what we talked about

Any comments/ questions?

Is there anything in particular you'd like us to talk about next time?

Open:

I'd like to start by quickly recapping what we discussed last week (main points of previous discussion).

Any questions/comments/ anything to add?

Topics to cover

- Why do you think that you have to read in school? Any benefits?
- How do you feel about what you're reading in class at the moment?
- Is it something you'd read in your own time? Why (not)?
- Do you ever use the school library? How? Why?
- Future career- importance/ purpose of reading?
- Group/ organize texts and explain your reasoning
- Who might read them? Where?
- Which would you read in your own time/ for pleasure?
- Which would you be least likely to read in your own time?
- Which are you most familiar with? Which are you most likely to find in your house?

Close

Brief summary of responses/ what we talked about

That's all I need to ask you today, is there anything else you'd like to add to what we've talked about?

Any comments/ questions?

Appendix 4: Consent Forms

Teacher Consent Form

Teacher Declaration of Informed Consent

Purpose of Study	The aim of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of the factors influencing the development of reading identities and how we can be best foster positive reading identities and attitudes to reading.
Procedures to be followed	This will involve non-participant classroom observation, with minimal disruption to the normal running of your lesson. I will be looking at the approaches taken to the teaching of literary texts and the presentation of and discussion surrounding these texts. Written notes will be taken during the observation.
Statement of Confidentiality	All data will remain confidential and the reporting will be anonymous. In the event of any publication or presentation resulting from the research, no personally identifiable information will be shared. You will also be given the opportunity, should you wish, to view any written products of this research.
Voluntary Participation	Your decision to be included in this research is voluntary. You can opt-out at any point during the research.
Complaints/ Concerns	It is university policy that any complaints or concerns relating to the ethical conduct of this research should be addressed to myself. I will then refer your complaint to the chair of the education ethics committee.

I have read and understand the above:

Name   ………………………………………………………

Signature   ………………………………………………………

Date   ………………………………………………………

Student Consent Form

Pupil Declaration of Informed Consent

Purpose of Study	The aim of this study is find out about you as a reader and about your opinions and experiences relating to reading and literature. This is with a view to gaining an understanding of the factors influencing the development of reading identities and how we can be best foster positive reading identities and attitudes to reading.
Procedures to be followed	You will be interviewed 2 times for approximately 20 – 30 minutes in person. Interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed.
Statement of Confidentiality	All data will be confidential and the reporting will be anonymous, so I hope you can be as honest as possible, nothing you say will be shared with your teacher. In the event of any publication or presentation resulting from the research, no personally identifiable information will be shared. Audio recordings will be destroyed once the research period is over. You will also be given the opportunity, should you wish, to view any written products of this research.
Voluntary Participation	Your decision to be included in this research is voluntary. You can opt-out at any point during the interview. You do not have to answer any questions you do not wish to answer.
Complaints/ Concerns	Any complains or concerns relating the conduct of this research, which you do not feel you can address to myself, should be discussed with your teacher who will deal with the issue in the appropriate manner.

I have read and understand the above:

Name   …………………………………………………………

Signature   …………………………………………………………

Date   …………………………………………………………

Parental Consent Form

Chelsea Swift

Department of Education

University of York

York

YO10 5DD

cs697@york.ac.uk

07868052394

18/05/2014

Dear Parent,

I am PhD student from the University of York, Department of Education. I am conducting research in your child's school which aims to examine pupils' perceptions of reading, literature and of themselves as readers and the various factors, both in and outside the classroom, which influence this. This is with a view to gaining a deeper understanding of the factors influencing the development of reading identities and how we can best foster positive reading identities and attitudes to reading.

This research has so far involved a short whole class activity, in which pupils were asked to reflect on their experiences of reading. A small number of pupils have also been asked to take part in a series of short (15-20 minute) interviews, either on their own or in a pair. I am fully CRB checked and have much experience working with young people. I will be working closely with staff involved to ensure minimal disruption to pupils' education and their education, safety and well-being will be considered above all else. With parental consent, your child's participation in any interviews/ discussions with me and in any other tasks relating to this research will be completely voluntary and they will not be expected to answer any questions that they do not wish to respond to.

The data gathered in this research will be used to inform my PhD research, as detailed above. However, it may also form the basis of future academic or professional publications and research which will be accessible to a wider audience. Needless to say, no individual persons or institutions will be identifiable in any final writing or reports related to this research and confidentiality will be maintained throughout. Data gathered will be stored securely and will only be accessed by myself. Should you wish, access to transcripts and any other written products of this research will be made available on request. It is university policy that any complaints or concerns relating to the ethical conduct of this research should be addressed to me, via the contact details outlined above. However, you may wish to address your complaint to your child's school, which will then be passed on to me. I will then refer your complaint to the Chair of the Education Ethics Committee.

Your son/daughter's participation in this research would be much appreciated, however, please fill out the form below and return to your child's English teacher if you **do not** wish for your child to take part.

Many thanks,

Miss Chelsea Swift

Name of child:

(tick as appropriate)

I **do not** wish for my son/ daughter to be interviewed for the purposes of this research ☐

Signed: ……………………………………………. Print Name:…………………………………………………………

Date ………………………………………………..

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