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# **[ Important or insignificant? The book in the everyday life of young adults (research report)**

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**Abstract:** The results of a nationwide research into reading habits do not instill optimism. It has been found that reading books is not a common cultural standard. This paper attempts at presenting the role of books in the life of the young generation. The author seeks to answer the question whether books constitute an inherent part or merely a tolerated, albeit not necessarily desirable element of everyday life. The analysis is based on the results of an empirical study conducted on a group of young adults aged 18–20, i.e. at a point in life where they complete secondary education and change or have changed their reading preferences. An emphasis is put on the pedagogic perspective (and the related socialization processes) as well as on the role of the environment, i.e. people in the closest social circle, in the development of young adults' reading habits throughout their lives.

**Keywords:** young adults, reading habits, motivation for reading

## Introduction to problems

Reading understood as an important social practice enabling efficient communication on a supra-local scale has many centuries and in this sense it can be said that it lasts. At the same time, however, it underwent various transformations at that time, so its present image differs significantly from that from several centuries ago and even several dozen or several years ago (Kostecki, 2017, p. 93).

Similarly, over the centuries, the attitude to books and reading as a social practice has been modified (from its perception in typically sacred categories to its treatment as a source of both, knowledge and entertainment) (Kostecki, 2017, p. 95). Undoubtedly, book is still present in the social space. It is difficult to imagine their lack, because the functions they performs and the purposes they serves, cannot be overestimated. At the same time, the readership activity in our society is not so obvious and raises it concern, given the results of the research. According to the report of the Polish National Library, in 2017 38% of respondents declared some contact with the book (reading it in full or in parts), including 9% who read at least 7 books. The level of readership has stabilized for several years (after its visible decline in 2008). Young people, i.e. pupils and students, constitute a category for which the book is mostly present in everyday life, due to their participation in the educational process, although one cannot speak of a homogeneous image in this respect. And despite the fact that they are a group whose reading activity is higher than that of others, the problem of a decrease in the level of reading is a fact: 35% of young people aged 15–19 declare that they have not read a single book in/within the last year (in 2000 it was 16%, in 2010 – 25%) (Koryś et al., 2018). We observed a regularity associated with “the reader getting lost along the way”, which means that/meaning that the number of people who declare reading shrinks with age. Research carried out by the Educational Research Institute in 2013 revealed that 5% of sixth grade pupils in primary school and 14% of third grade junior high school students did not read any book (related to compulsory or non-compulsory schooling) (Zasacka, 2014, p 55). A nationwide survey of youth readership (third grade junior high schools, 4<sup>th</sup> edition) carried out by the National Library in 2017 showed an increase (although not a very significant one) of readers in their free time (from 62% to 65%), which is caused by girls 82% of whom made such a declaration (this practice is not so popular among boys – 49%) (*Increase in readership of teenage girls*, 2018).

The question about the book’s place in the everyday lives of modern young people seems to be still valid and extremely important. The issue is discussed in this article whose author reports on the results of her research,

not arguing for them to be fully conclusive, but as an illustration of the proposed observations and starting point for further empirical inquiries. Adopting mainly the pedagogical point of view, she wants to emphasize the importance of the issues, by recognizing a fragment the reality of the young readers' who are about to reach adulthood, when, among others reading interests are modified. It should be remembered that "during the whole life (...) the individual acquires knowledge and various skills, which means expanding their resources, modifying coping strategies in various situations, learning from their mistakes, drawing conclusions from situations in which he was successful or failed", shaping "the growing awareness of being distinct (...) and a sense of identity" (Brzezińska, 2017, p. 390). The issue of the book's participation in this "accumulation/gathering of experience" as well as "the recognition of reality" and its place in these processes seems obvious, while at the same time, given the alarmingly low indicators, often pointing to the lack of interest, disregarding or underestimating its role, requires accentuating, both in individual and social, and also theoretical and practical dimension.

### **Young people's reading activity**

The study was conducted among young people of the Greater Poland Voivodeship in March 2018. The research group consisted of 80 people. They were students of upper secondary schools (high school and technical college), aged 18 to 21 (Table 1). In this group, 62.5% were girls, while 37.5% were boys (Table 2); the majority were people living in the city (Table 3). The diagnostic survey method was operated, using an anonymous survey, which consisted of 12 questions: closed, semi-open and open. An important diagnostic and cognitive issue has become the search for answers to questions about the importance of the book in the lives of young people, i.e. their reading activity, including the intensity of the reading practices, attitude to reading, assessment of both personal and referring to their own generation commitment in this area, also reading preferences and the participation of the loved ones in the process of reading socialization.

**Table 1.** The division of the respondents according to age. N=80

<b>Age</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
18 y.o.	8	10,0
19 y.o.	50	62,5
20 y.o.	16	20,0
21 y.o.	6	7,5

Source: own elaboration of 20.07.2018

**Table 2.** The division of the respondents according to gender. N=80

Gender	Number	%
Women	50	62,5
Men	30	37,5

Source: own elaboration of 20.07.2018

**Table 3.** The division of the respondents according to the place of the residence. N=80

Place of residence	Number	%
City	62	77,5
Country	18	22,5

Source: own elaboration of 20.07.2018

Reading is a pleasure for the majority of young people surveyed – provided they make their own choice (72.5%). Extremely polar answers, i.e. referring to – on the one hand, a passion for books (I love to read “always”, “everywhere”, “everything”), on the other – to the openly manifested resentment (necessity, coercion) was indicated by so many respondents (after 13.75%). Therefore, the category of “conditional readers” prevails (the other two introduced by the author are: “unconditional readers” and “not reading readers”). Considering the division by gender, among both girls and boys the most readers reading for pleasure, but only those not related to coercion, but among those who declare reading only by necessity a much larger group are the latter, where almost the third mentioned such an answer, and only one boy indicated that he loves to read and always enjoys it (among girls this group was definitely bigger – 1/5 of them expressed such an opinion) (Table 4).

**Table 4.** The reading attitude declared by the respondents. N=80

Reading is for me	Everybody		Indications based on gender			
			W		M	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Pleasure, but only unrelated to compulsion	58	72,50	38	76,00	20	66,67
A pleasure always	11	13,75	10	20,00	1	3,33
Necessity	11	13,75	2	4,00	9	30,00

Source: own elaboration of 20.07.2018

## Important or insignificant?

As for the dominant category, the results are consistent with those obtained in the study conducted among students, where, however, the group of reading enthusiasts were definitely larger than the group of reading skeptics (Table 5). This may result from the fact that another step in the educational career has been made, namely the consciously made decision to continue humanist-profiled education in higher education, which are related to, among others with a focus on constant contact with the book (in the field of both compulsory and supplementary reading).

**Table 5.** Featured types of readers. N=80; N=111

Types of readers	High school youth (2018) N=80		Youth studying (2012–2013) N=111	
	Number	%	Number	%
Conditional readers	58	72,50	84	75,68
Unconditional readers	11	13,75	23	20,72
Not reading readers	11	13,75	4	3,60

Source: own elaboration of 20.07.2018

Given the degree of reading activity, the frequency and intensity of reading turns out to be the basic issue. In the case of young people, two reading situations should be taken into account: free choice (free time reading) and compulsory (school) reading. Most young people replied that in their free time they read several times a year (27.5%) and at least once a month (26.25%), while 4 respondents declared that they never do it. Among girls, there are more readers every day or almost every day (14% to 10% boys) and at least once a week (18% to 10% boys), while among boys – less than once a year (20% to 10% girls) and never (10% to 2% of girls) (Table 6.)

**Table 6.** Frequency of reading in respondents' opinions. N=80

Reading frequency	Everybody		Indications based on gender			
			W		M	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Everyday or almost everyday	10	12,50	7	14,00	3	10,00
At least once a week	12	15,00	9	18,00	3	10,00
At least once a month	21	26,25	14	28,00	7	23,33
Several times a year	22	27,50	14	28,00	8	26,67
Less than once a year	11	13,75	5	10,00	6	20,00
Never	4	5,00	1	2,00	3	10,00

Source: own elaboration of 20.07.2018

Therefore, the group of those involved in the medium level (53.75%; reading several times a year and at least once a month) dominates, followed by those strongly involved (27.5%; reading at least once a week and every day or almost every day) and rather uninterested (18.75%; readers less than once a year and never). Among those who said that reading is a must for them: 1 – reads several times a year, 6 – less than once a year, and 4 – never.

Respondents were also asked about the average number of read books (except for school reading) (Table 7). Two answers were chosen most often: an average of 1 book per month (30%) and an average of 1–2 books for half a year (28.75%), so the dominant group is – conventionally called – ‘moderate readers’. When it comes to selecting several books a month, girls (18% to 3.33% boys) lead the way, supplying the ranks of “intense readers”. Boys clearly rank at the opposite pole – “potential readers”, i.e. those who read least or not at all (as much as 46.66%! to 18% of girls).

**Table 7.** Intensity of free reading in the respondents’ opinion. N=80

Number of books read in free time	Everybody		Indications based on gender			
			W		M	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
A few a month	10	12,50	9	18,00	1	3,33
1 book per month on average	24	30,00	16	32,00	8	26,67
On average, 1–2 books for half a year	23	28,75	16	32,00	7	23,33
Less	19	23,75	9	18,00	10	33,33
I do not read	4	5,00	0	–	4	13,33

Source: own elaboration of 20.07.2018

When it comes to reading, unfortunately, the answers received are not optimistic. Almost 1/3 of respondents admit that they read only summaries (which corresponds to the results of other studies conducted among third grade high school students and Polish language teachers who admitted that reading substitutes, i.e. carriages and studies are very often used substitutes, and thanks to information from this source that 47% of young people declare knowledge of reading, (Mazur, 2012, p. 194)), not much less (30%) that they are only acquainted with fragments of books discussed in lessons (when it comes to choosing solutions aimed more at avoiding than engaging boys are leading (Table 8). As the reasons for this state of affairs, respondents most often give arguments such as “they are boring”, “I’m not interested”, “I don’t have time”, “their language doesn’t suit me”. Among those who declare reading (all or some), but in full (30 people; 37.5%), girls (24 of them, boys – only 6)

are in the lead. The arguments of these respondents can be divided into two main groups: – ‘reading from belief’, i.e. reading has value for them (‘they are interesting’, ‘it is worth learning new songs’) and – ‘reading from duty’, i.e. instrumental treatment reading (“I must”, “it is necessary to pass the final exams”, “I want to have good grades”). Taking into account references to distinguished (due to the declared reading attitude and intensity expressed in the average number of items read) – types of readers cited above, among respondents, both readers and skeptics, and people who clearly avoid them, ‘readers dominate conditional’, that is, those for whom reading – but only that not related to any coercion – is a pleasure, and ‘moderate readers’ reading (apart from reading) on average several books a year. More ‘unconditional readers’ and ‘intense readers’ also indicate their activity in the context of learning the works in force within the school canon. Whereas the so-called ‘unread readers’ for whom contact with the book is (possibly) made out of necessity and ‘potential readers’, declaring reading less than 2 books per year or not reading at all, are either occasional users (acquaintance fragmentary) or negating the sense of this obligation and based only on studies. It can therefore be said that they are “consistent” in their approach, declaring their aversion to both school reading and non-compulsory reading. The situation is slightly different in relation to the first two categories. Even among ‘unconditional readers’ who accentuate their very positive attitude to reading always, there are those who, however, “give up” (partly or completely) from reading in force under the school program (36.36%) and among ‘intense readers’, i.e. the most active in the area of spontaneous reading are also those who do not practice reading or do so only fragmentarily<sup>1</sup>.

**Table 8.** Reading by respondents. N=80

Text required readings	Everybody		Indications based on gender			
			W		M	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Always or almost always entirely	13	16,25	10	20,00	3	10,00
including:						
Conditional readers	10	76,29				
Unconditional readers	3	23,08				
Not reading readers	0	–				
Intense readers	2	15,38				
Moderate readers	9	69,23				
Potential readers	2	15,38				

<sup>1</sup> ‘Unconditional readers’ mostly read school readings (63,63%), similarly – ‘intense readers’ (60%), while ‘conditional readers’ – rather skeptical about them (declaring either reading only fragments or reading abstracts) – 60,35%, and again similarly – ‘moderate readers’ (57,45%).

Table 8. continued

Text required readings	Everybody		Indications based on gender			
			W		M	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
In full, but only selected	17	21,25	14	28,00	3	10,00
including:						
Conditional readers	13	76,47				
Unconditional readers	4	23,53				
Not reading readers	0	–				
Intense readers	4	23,53				
Moderate readers	11	64,71				
Potential readers	2	11,76				
Reading only fragments	24	30,00	12	24,00	12	40,00
including:						
Conditional readers	19	79,17				
Unconditional readers	2	8,33				
Not reading readers	3	12,50				
Intense readers	1	4,17				
Moderate readers	18	75,00				
Potential readers	5	20,83				
Reading only abstracts	26	32,50	14	28,00	12	40,00
including:						
Conditional readers	16	61,54				
Unconditional readers	2	7,69				
Not reading readers	8	30,77				
Intense readers	3	11,54				
Moderate readers	9	34,61				
Potential readers	14	53,85				

Source: own elaboration of 20.07.2018

Undoubtedly, the most effective incentive for contact with a book is awakening the pleasure of reading (which is related to involvement in this process, which is determined by motivation, mainly internal motivation and the correlation with its belief in the importance of books in everyday life, which, however, can be integrated with external motivation – directly associated with the possibility of obtaining gratification <good grade, praise>). This is an important conclusion for school practice (Zasacka, 2013, pp. 96–97). And at the same time, taking into account the skepticism of the surveyed youth for the works they are obliged to familiarize themselves with, one should ask the question: what to do in such a situation? What antidote should be used for this dislike? Undoubtedly, the school's participation, starting from the activities already undertaken in the youngest classes, cannot be overestimated. Anna Janus-Sitarz emphasizes the importance of four challenges faced by a Polish teacher who should:



## Important or insignificant?

recognize the needs and reading barriers of his pupils; stimulate the appetite for reading, because nobody is born a reader, and the family environment is not necessarily conducive to developing reading habits; individual selection of reading material; looking for valuable books that at the same time give a chance to encourage young people to read on their own without compulsory reading (2016, p. 176 et seq.).

Given the preferred types of literature, the most popular among respondents is criminal / sensational literature, followed by drama, adventure / travel and fantasy. Slightly different, these tastes are spread when it comes to sex. Among the girls, criminal / sensational and moral literature prevails *ex aequo*, whereas fantasy and (equal number of indications) criminal / sensational and adventure / travel literature dominate among boys. Girls also more often indicate non-fiction / biographies and only they drew attention to poetry (Table 9).

**Table 9.** The reading preferences of the respondents. N=74.

Most often read literature	Everybody N=74		Indications based on gender			
			W N=49		M N=25	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
the manners	34	45,95	31	63,27	3	12,00
fantastic	29	39,19	15	30,61	14	56,00
crime / thriller	43	58,11	31	63,27	12	48,00
adventure / in travel	30	40,54	18	36,73	12	48,00
historical	9	12,16	5	10,20	4	16,00
biographical / non-fiction	17	22,97	13	26,53	4	16,00
comics	11	14,86	5	10,20	6	24,00
poetry	7	9,46	7	14,29	0	–
hobby / guides	19	25,66	12	24,49	7	28,00
popular science / science	12	16,22	8	16,32	4	16,00
other, including:	9	12,16	7	14,29	2	8,00
religious	1		1	2,00	0	–
romances	5		4	8,16	1	4,00
horror	3		2	4,10	1	4,00

Source: own elaboration of 20.07.2018

In order to learn the reading preferences as well as to find out what young people particularly value in the books they read, they were asked to indicate a work which, according to the respondents, was a mandatory position that should / must be known (taking into account any criteria they adopted) and which they would recommend to others. 48 people answered this question (including 30 girls, 3 of them said that there was no such one, so

they couldn't indicate; and 18 boys, 1 of them answered "I do not know"). A total of 36 titles were given (girls – 30; boys – 17<sup>2</sup>), but not always arguing about their choice. And so: 4 people proposed *Pan Tadeusz* [Adam Mickiewicz], justifying it as follows: "it's a national epos", "you just need to know such a work", "I don't know how to write such a long text just like that – applauding!", "I'm impressed." Also 4 people indicated the book *The Little Prince* [Antoine de Saint-Exupéry], arguing that: "it contains a message", "it is a source of quotes", "you can actually read it at any age", "it is beautiful". Two respondents each gave the following titles: *The fault in our stars* [John Green] – "great book for young people", "bull's-eye"; *Hopeless* [Colleen Hoover] – "Charmed me"; *Harry Potter* [J. K. Rowling] – "I can read it and a hundred times, I will never get bored", "Harry made me like to read", *Crime and punishment* [Fiodor Dostojewski] – "Interested me", "nice topic"; *We, children from the ZOO station* [Christiane V. Felscherinow] – "It should be written about real life," she "shocked me." Other titles appeared only once: *Maybe Someday* [Colleen Hoover] – "meets my taste"; *Outwitting the devil: the secret to freedom and success* [Napoleon Hill] – "Strange but interesting"; *Dziady* [Adam Mickiewicz] – "classic!"; *Wesele* [Stanisław Wyspiański] – "should be known"; *O psie, który jeździł koleją* [Roman Pisarski] – "I remember it to this day"; *Game of Thrones* [George R. R. Martin] – "amazing"; *Monstre (Mój mąż potwór)* [Ingrid Falaise] – "Doesn't let you forget about yourself"; *Desert Flower* [Waris Dirie, Cathleen Miller] – "you just have to read it"; *Anaruk, chłopiec z Grenlandii* [Czesław Centkiewicz] – "Reminds me of my childhood"; series *Jeżyjada* [Małgorzata Musierowicz] – "I love it"; *Lord of the Rings* [John R. R. Tolkien] – "it's the best"; *Walk to remember* [Nicholas Sparks] – "beautiful, like all Sparks books"; *Hunt for Atlantis* [Andy McDermott]; *Man's search for meaning* [Viktor Frankl]; *Lolita* [Vladimir Nabokov]; *Metro 2033* [Dmitrij Głuchowski]; *Kamienie na szaniec* [Aleksander Kamiński]; *Ten obcy* [Irena Jurgielewiczowa]; series *Rangers apprentice*, [John Flanagan]; *Touch* [Jus Accardo]; series *Stormlight archiv* [Brandon Sanderson]; *Quest for heroes* [Morgan Rice]; *We were liars* [Emily Lockhart]; *If I stay* [Gayle Forman]; *Obsydian* [Jennifer L. Armentrout]; *The Selection* [Kiera Cass]; *Macbet* [William Szekspir]; *Doors of perception. Heaven and Hell* [Aldous Huxley]; *Lalka* [Bolesław Prus].

Undoubtedly, the indicated collection is very diverse, both in terms of style, subject, or category to which individual titles belong/can be assigned. The justifications provided by young people do not allow to state what criteria are leading for them in the context of recognizing the book as particularly important/significant/recommendable. Apart from the fact that only a part of passages developed their statements, they often appeared only in the form

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<sup>2</sup> Some respondents cited more than one title.

of passwords, emotionally marked, intended to express admiration for a given position, often taking the form of short recommendations, yet not explaining the sources of such a positive reception and attitude.

Referring to the research previously carried out among students who were also asked to indicate a book that they consider to be a great work and a must-read (82 in total), it can be said that several titles are repeated. In the lead, as in the youth, were the positions: *The Little Prince* [Antoine de Saint-Exupéry], with the highest number of indications, followed by *Pan Tadeusz* [Adam Mickiewicz]. Others are: *The Lord of the Rings*, [John R. R. Tolkien]; *We, children from the ZOO station* [Christiane V. Felscherinow]; *Harry Potter* [J. K. Rowling]; *Game of Thrones*, [George R. R. Martin]; *Lolita*, [Vladimir Nabokov]; *Desert Flower*, [Waris Dirie, Cathleen Miller]; *Crime and Punishment* [Fyodor Dostoyevsky]<sup>3</sup>. However, it is difficult to formulate any conclusions on this basis. Such ones would require in-depth research explorations. In the author's opinion, it is rather some a thing worth paying attention to analyzing preferences and the following evaluative assessments, made by young people at various stages of the educational journey, which by answering such a question – cite both literature, already having a certain tradition and rather grounded in social consciousness (are they convinced of this choice and are behind it really appreciated the values of the work, or is the reason “should it be given this title?”), as well as eagerly point out the novelties that are on the publishing market there are plenty of them, and which – as you might think – often remain under the control of their current reading experiences (are they really such items they value or are they just remembered because of their current reading?).

The surveyed youth were also asked to subjectively assess both their own and the young generation's reading activity in general. Most respondents said that they read on average (40%), only 4 people indicated that a lot (2 of them, when asked about the number of books read, answered – several a month, 2 others – an average of 1 book per month) (Table 10).

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<sup>3</sup> At this point, the author would like to mention one more reference to her own research, carried out in the 2013/2014 academic year together with A. Tokaj, regarding the significance of the book in the lives of two generations: young and seniors (the research group numbered 122 people, 56 and 66 respectively), where also as part of one of the topics discussed, referring to literary heroes of particular importance to the respondents, among the leaders mentioned by the young was the Little Prince, Harry Potter and Zosia from *Pan Tadeusz* were also mentioned. The position of the Little Prince was also given as the one worth recommending to seniors („I think it is a book that could connect generations. Regardless of age, world, the hero created by the author will appeal to everyone”) (Slupska & Tokaj, 2014 , pp. 137–158).

**Table 10.** The evaluation of the respondents for their own reading activity. N=80

I think I read	Everyone		Indications based on gender			
			W		M	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
A lot	4	5,00	2	4,00	2	6,67
Much	15	18,75	11	22,00	4	13,33
Average	32	40,00	21	42,00	11	36,67
Little	18	22,50	11	22,00	7	23,33
Very little	11	13,75	5	10,00	6	20,00

Source: own elaboration of 20.07.2018

Referring to the state of readership among young people, more than half of the respondents said that it could be better (55%), only every tenth respondent expressed satisfaction with the current situation, and more than 1/3 – severely assessed the reading activity of peers (Table 11).

**Table 11.** The assessment of the respondents' reading activity of the young generation. N=80

How would you rate your readership today?	Everybody		Indications based on gender			
			W		M	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
it's good, young people are happy to read	8	10,00	6	12,00	2	6,67
it's average, it could be better	44	55,00	26	52,00	18	60,00
it's bad, young people don't read or do it reluctantly	28	35,00	18	36,00	10	33,33

Source: own elaboration of 20.07.2018

The vast majority of respondents were convinced that reading brings benefits (90%), mentioning among them mainly: enriching vocabulary, developing imagination, expanding knowledge, practicing the correct use of Polish, i.e., emphasizing above all its pragmatic and cognitive functions. However, 8 people (10%) revealed the contradictory opinion (among them there were 6 boys, i.e. 20% and 2 girls in their group, 4% respectively).

What is important from a pedagogical point of view – in the context of supporting the dynamics of reading practices – is also a reference to the closest environment (family, school, library), which, as Helena Radlińska emphasized, is responsible for the circulation of books and their journey (Lepalczyk, 1974, p. 36). Most of the respondents, referring to family traditions in this

respect, declare that in childhood, parents (guardians) read to them – 63 people (78.75%), 9 people do not remember (11.25%), and 8 (i.e. 10%) definitely replies that this has not happened. Gender does not differentiate between the results. When the respondents were asked who had encouraged them to read during their childhood, parents received the most indications – 57.50%, followed by: grandparents – 31.25%, teachers – 27.50%, siblings – 8.75%, librarians – 6.25%. However, 13 people (16.25%) replied that nobody did it. Referring to the current situation, interest in literature, translating into the daily reading activity of household members, is declared by 62 respondents (77.5%), indicating among those who read a lot mainly parents – 57.50%, and grandparents – 21.25% and siblings – 18.75% (you can choose more than one answer). However, 18 people (22.5%) clearly state that none of the closest relatives are interested in literature in any way. The situation of people in families where the book were not present in everyday life, and therefore, as you might think, no importance is attached to reading practices, should cause concern, because then there is no focus on developing these interests and forming specific habits. “A competent parent should be aware of the responsibility arising from the function they perform” and constitute, among others “A constructive role model for their children (...), be an efficient didactic teacher (...), a good trainer in the use of cultural goods” (Forma, 2017, p. 239). His detachment of importance for communing with the text (to a different extent, in various situations), or even a demonstrated negative attitude is often a continuation of behavior from earlier periods. It is difficult to expect that such an attitude could convince a young man to literature (Ślupska, 2016b, p. 240).

### **Summary**

Referring to the question contained in the title of this article, it can be stated that a book – present in the everyday life of a modern young man – does not occupy a leading position there, being rather moderately important, and for some (constituting a minority) – irrelevant. Among the surveyed youth there are also a group enthusiastic about reading practices and active in this field, although it should be noted that to a different extent relating to free reading and school reading (respondents who can be included in the category of ‘unconditional readers’ or ‘readers intensive’, they read school reading with varying commitment – from regularly reading all or almost all items in the Polish language lesson, through fragmentary reading, to reaching for summaries only). In general, the surveyed youth is skeptical about reading, explaining it mainly with an uninteresting plot, problematic language in which they are

written, or, taking into account external circumstances – the lack of time. As the analysis showed, respondents – a part of free choice – mainly decide on fiction, where crime / sensation literature won the overall ranking, also enjoying the greatest popularity among girls, while boys more often pointed to fantasy. The titles: *Pan Tadeusz* and *The Little Prince* repeated four times as works recommended to others for compulsory reading. In total, almost half of the respondents who answered this question submitted 36 proposals, thus creating a very diverse catalog. Students rated their own reading activity at an average level, but almost as many said they read little or very little. Referring to their assessment to the intensity of reading practices of the young generation in general, the respondents were not too optimistic. Only 10% expressed satisfaction, admitting that they are good and young people read with pleasure. Referring to the socialization of reading and the tradition of meeting literature in the close environment of students, they generally stated that parents read to them in their childhood, encouraging them, in most cases, to already have independent contacts with books. Some respondents also indicated – although in different proportions – the role of grandparents, teachers, librarians, and siblings. However, more than 1/5 of young people grew up in a “unreadable” home, where there was no and there is no custom to practice individual reading practice.

The presented analysis of research results, treated as an illustration of reflections on the book in the life of a young person and signaling selected issues related to an extremely extensive cognitive area, aims to serve as a voice in the discussion conducted around a matter that remains topical, one that is important from a pedagogical and from a social point of view.

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