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WRITING AND TEACHING LITERATURE THE ROLE OF HYPERTEXTUAL AND METATEXTUAL WRITING ACTIVITIES AT THREE SCHOOL LEVELS

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Abstract

Metatextual (writing about texts) and hypertextual writing activities (writing using texts as a source) play different roles in teaching literature for the subject “French” in French-speaking countries both at different school levels and at different times in history. How do these differences show up today in daily practices? 30 teachers in French-speaking Switzerland working in primary, lower secondary and higher secondary schools (respectively grades 6, 8 and 12) were asked to teach a fable by La Fontaine and a short story by a contemporary Swiss author. The observations show that writing activities appeared in all classes either through the use of questionnaires or the production of hypertextual or metatextual texts. In the primary grades, hypertextual writing prepared for reading. In the higher secondary classes, students wrote different text genres that were then compared with the source text. More traditionally, in the lower secondary classes, hypertextual writing ends a teaching sequence allowing space for the students to produce a text. At all levels, metatextual writing was dedicated to expressing subjective responses. At the same time, traditional metatextual activities were practiced in primary classes for writing summaries, and in secondary classes for writing literary essays. Thus, new hypertextual and metatextual forms of writing have settled on traditional practices that have survived longstanding historical changes.

Keywords: teaching literature, hypertextual writing, metatextual writing, primary school, secondary school

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1. INTRODUCTION

The role of writing in literature education may be analyzed from at least two stances: through the development and evaluation of integrative writing approaches in literature classes; by observing ways of blending writing into regular literature classes.

The first approach generally leads to experimental designs where different types of teaching practices are compared. On a general level, Langer and Applebee (1987) analyze how different forms of writing shape students' thinking in academic classes. Graham and Hebert (2011) show that writing practices and teachings improve students' understanding of reading while Marshall's study (1987) investigates more specifically the impact of writing on literature education. Based on the analysis of the practices of one teacher, and referring to Rosenblatt's (1938/1978) concept of personal writing, Marshall compares three types of writing in response to four short stories: restricted writing (students answer a series of questions); personal writing (they describe and explain their reaction to the texts); formal writing (they interpret the stories in an extended way). The two latter yield higher posttest scores. In a similar way, Newell, Suszynski and Weingart (1989) compared personal and formal writings on two short stories. The first ones resulted in longer and more fluent texts, where the teachers became dialogue partners. Wong, Kuperis, Jamieson, Keller and Cull-Hewitt (2002) tested the effect of guided personal responses in reading some chapters of *The Great Gatsby* compared to a writing-deprived condition. Students had to write at least half a page addressing questions such as "What do you notice, what do you question, what do you feel" (p. 189). Students who had had a writing experience surpassed those who had not. In a much longer intervention, Boscolo and Carotti (2003) compared a class that received literature training during one year relying on traditional forms of writing (i.e. "composition" as named by the authors) with another that was taught in a "writing-oriented" manner. Writing was used as a tool for linguistic learning (language games like changing the genre or the narrative perspective of a text, re-writing stories, completing stories) and literary learning (accounting for reactions to a text, noticing impressions, describing characters, places and events, synthesizing, producing a final report, etc.). The students of the second group improved their ability to write a commentary on a literary text.

Writing is also often used for reading literary texts within a systemic functional framework. Rose and Martin (2012), for instance, as part of their method for engaging students in story reading, suggest practicing joint and individual rewriting that aims "appropriating language resources" (p. 162) and "constructing whole texts" (p. 167). Based on a highly detailed observation of the text read, the latter becomes a reference for elaborating viewpoints, overall structure, forms of sentences, but also, for instance, metaphors.

The second approach for analyzing the role of writing in literature education consists in observing ways of blending writing into regular literature classes. Re-

searchers opting for this approach try to provide answers to questions such as: what kind of writing activities do teachers set up in an ordinary class when studying literature? How, what for and why? Are there differences between teachers according to the school levels? It has become a huge and urgent task for L-1 researchers to understand what really happens in teaching practices on literature (Janssen, Pieper & Van de Ven, 2012; see also for instance Janssen & Rijlaarsdam, 2007; Daunay, 2007; Winkler, 2012). It is even more important to try to understand some of the underlying factors explaining why literature education operates as it does, following up on Doecke and Van de Ven's (2012, p. 1) statement that literacy practice in the classroom "(...) is mediated in complex ways: by the social context of the classroom, the institutional setting of the school (including its curriculum and organization), as well as mandated educational policies." This mediation yields conflicting paradigms (Sawyer & Van de Ven, 2007) although not necessarily resulting in "as many teaching curricula as are teachers" (Witte, Rijlaarsdam & Schram, 2012, p. 3). On the contrary, it is the other way around. In every classroom different paradigms coexist issued from different times in history all mixed up in different ways. Every practice in every classroom results from "sedimentation of practices", as we have shown, for instance, in argumentative writing (Schneuwly & Dolz, 2009). Or, to use another metaphor: "This diversity of approaches looks as a river delta in which 'mainstream' approaches flow alongside a host of more minor brooks and streams." (Witte, Rijlaarsdam & Schram, 2012, p. 3).

In this study, we adopt the second approach in order to understand how - and possibly why - teachers in French-speaking countries use writing when reading literary texts. What kinds of writings do they put forward? How do they relate to forms of writing used in the history of teaching literature in the francophone culture? How do they use writing for teaching literature to students at different school levels, such as primary, secondary I and secondary II?

In order to answer these questions, it helps to be knowledgeable about practices in the school subject "Français" [French], which might differ from those in other linguistic cultures. Let us therefore briefly describe the history of the role of literature in first language classes as far as writing is concerned in Francophone culture.

1.1 History of literature education and the role of writing in francophone culture

As many studies show, historically, the teaching of first language can be described as unfolding over two great periods, at least in Francophone areas (Chervel, 2006; Savatovski, 1995; more specifically for literature: Daunay, 2007; Dufays, 2007; similar observations can be made in other linguistic cultures: see for literature teaching, Fraisse, 2012; or Dressmann & Faust, 2014). The first period started during the last third of the 19th century, when the curriculum ("discipline scolaire") "Français" was established, distinguishing clearly between two educational pathways, the first for the people, the second for future elites. In each of them the way of relating to language in the curriculum "Français" was fundamentally different. According to Bali-

bar (1985), the compulsory primary school program was dominated by understanding the literal meaning based on the view that a good use of language – the “français national” – could represent the real world. The higher secondary school program, devoted to the elite, focused on studying authors, their works and style, and emphasizing the multiple linguistic and historical dimensions of the texts, serving – as often stated – “*le beau, le bien et le vrai*” [the beautiful, the good and the true]. The status of literary texts shifted from one pathway to another: they are a *means* for studying language in primary grades, and the *object* of study in higher secondary school.

In the second period, that started in the 1960s, for many reasons (change in educational structures, ideological transformations, socioeconomic factors), new paradigms massively moved into L-1 teaching: communicative approaches, innovative grammar instruction methods, diversification of text genres read, references to formalist approaches in literature, etc. This phenomenon was observed in many countries (for Francophone regions, Bishop & Cardon Quint, 2015; see also a comparative study of French and German in Switzerland, Schneuwly & Lindauer, 2016). One aspect of these reforms is that the two pathways were no longer clearly separated as merging trends brought them closer. The notion of literature as an object of study, for instance, penetrated primary schools in many different ways, as much as reading and understanding were also taught in secondary schools. Several studies in Francophone countries corroborate this orientation (see for instance Butlen, Mongenot, Slama, Bishop & Claquin, 2008). Based on a longitudinal analysis of teaching practices in reading and literature in compulsory school (7 – 15 years old students), Thévenaz-Christen (2014) points out that the traditional approach guiding readers from the local level (word, clause and sentence understanding) to the global level of understanding (ideas on the text and author), continues to be practiced. Nevertheless, contrasting inferential and interpretative approaches coexist, on a given school level, providing students with tools to understand the specifics of the studied text: whole texts are privileged, and students are taken into account as reading “subjects” in the practice of reading. Fournier and Veck (1997), Canvat (2007) and Daunay (2007), among others, provide evidence of the coexistence, in higher secondary school, both of traditional humanist models, based on “*explication de texte*” (the central school exercise) and heritage texts from literary history, and modern “methodical models”. These formalist and structuralist approaches promote internal interpretation practices, therefore building on the rise and durable impact of narratology in Francophone countries. Since the nineties, reader reception has become a core issue in education; it is currently the dominant model in scientific discourse on literature education. Similar evolutions in other cultural regions have been noted. Janssen and Rijlaarsdam (2007), for instance, summarized the debate on teaching Dutch literature since the 1960s. Based on a large empirical study, resorting to surveys, interviews and observations, they distinguished four general trends in teaching literature, that are quite close to the observations mentioned above: ‘cultural literacy’ corresponding to the heritage humanist model;

‘aesthetic awareness’ close to the formalist and structuralist approaches; ‘personal development’ achieved through focusing on students’ reception of texts; ‘social awareness’. The fourth goal identified does not stand out as an independent movement in Francophone culture, but it may be seen as part of the other three general approaches.

1.2 Writing in French literature classes: conceptual distinctions

As far as the relationship between writing and reading is concerned, two types of writing tasks can be distinguished:

- 1) Producing words or a short sentence when responding to questionnaires, i.e. to a set of questions or short tasks following the reading of a text; this kind of writing corresponds to what Marshall (1987) calls “restricted writing”.
- 2) Producing a text, or at least a fragment of a text, i.e. several sentences in response to a given task.

In the traditional approach, which is still dominant in primary and lower secondary schools, questionnaires remain an important tool for teaching reading, and furthermore a key resource for literary development (Lusetti, 1996). In a study comprising all grades of compulsory school in Geneva, Soussi, Petrucci, Ducrey and Nidegger (2008) show that in cycles 2 (8 to 12 years old) and 3 (12 to 15 years old) teachers regularly use questionnaires after a first reading of a text.

Nonetheless writing texts – or at least fragments of texts – connected to reading literature is also a frequent task in school. In the Francophone tradition and the first traditional period of the curriculum, two orientations for the link between literature and writing are observed, both matching the two pathways mentioned above. In primary schools, teachers follow the “rhetorical tradition” (Denizot, 2013) of learning to write by imitating and transforming or “impregnating” literary texts that are the starting point of teaching language. “Livres de lecture” [reading books] composed of literary texts are used for this purpose (see Schneuwly, 2015, 2016 for an analysis of these books in Switzerland between 1860 and 1990). Directly referring to the rhetorical tradition of “Belles Lettres”, these books contain what is called a “chrestomathie”, an anthology of literary texts. Following this, writing and composing are taught with a “hypertextual” perspective to literary texts (Daunay, 2003, in reference to Genette, 1982). Hypertextuality is defined as “any link between a text B (hypertext) and an anterior text A (hypotexte) on which it appends itself in a way that is not a commentary” (p. 11-12). In other words, the hypotext operates as a model, as a basis for variations, or as a counterpoint for another text. This rhetorical tradition was completely set aside in Francophone secondary schools. Historical studies (Jey, 1998; Chervel, 2006; Houdart-Merot, 2012) show that from around 1880 onwards, literary texts became material to be commented on, a goal pursued mainly through two strictly formalized school activities: “explica-

tion de texte” [text explanation] and “dissertation littéraire”, a specific form of literary essay that is very common and quite standardized in Francophone school culture (Monnier-Silva, in press). These texts are “metatextual”. Genette defines metatextuality as “a link as a ‘commentary’ between a text and another where the latter speaks about the former, without necessarily quoting it” (p. 10).

These strong links between literature and writing – hypertextual in primary schools and metatextual in secondary schools – were weakened with the transformation of the “Français” curriculum from the 1960’s onwards, as noted above. Since the eighties, new forms of writing in relation to literary texts appeared in higher secondary school in official documents, syllabi, and assessment environments like the *baccalauréat* in France or the *maturité* in Switzerland. They relate to the umbrella genre “écriture d’invention”. Denizot (2005) and Daunay (2003) define these forms as hypertextual: texts that take other texts as a starting point, a source by transforming or imitating them. Alternatively, metatextual activities requiring students to address questions about texts, express opinions, write a summary, gradually flow into reading practices in primary schools (Bishop, 2007).

The classification of writing related to literature that we have used in this section differs from that of empirical studies discussed in the introduction. Personal responses and formal writing (Marshall, 1987; Newell, Suszynski & Weingart, 1989), but also guided journal writing (Wong, Kuperis, Jamieson, Keller & Cull-Hewitt, 2002) are metatextual writing activities. The writing activities on language proposed by Boscolo and Carotti (2003), and the joint and individual writing activities used by Rose and Martin (2012) are hypertextual. Analysing the forms and functions of hypertextual and metatextual writing connected to literature will enable to determine whether these categories can be found in ordinary classes.

1.3 Research Questions

Both the institutional context and the cultural framework of literature education and, relating to this, the teaching practices of writing impact the way teachers practice writing in their classroom when engaging with literature. Within a larger research project describing practices of engaging with literary texts at different school levels, the present study focuses on the types of writing activities teachers put forward for their students. The following research questions guided our inquiry:

- How often do teachers implement questionnaires and text production activities in their literature lessons depending on school levels and type of text?
- How often do teachers implement the two main forms of writing - hypertextual and metatextual - depending on school levels and type of text?
- What are the forms and functions of hypertextual and metatextual writing at different school levels?

2. METHOD

2.1 Design

The purpose of the project from which we take the present data was to describe and analyze, from a historic-cultural perspective, how teachers in ordinary classrooms and at different school levels use writing to engage students with literary texts. Two independent variables were selected: school level and type of text.

Teachers from three different school levels were observed in their usual classroom: end of primary school (grade 6, students 11-12 years old), lower secondary school (secondary I, grade 8, students 13-14 years old) and higher secondary school (grade 11, students 16-17 years old: secondary II). These three school levels strongly differ: in primary and secondary I levels, all children of the same age attend the same grade. In the former, teachers are considered “generalists”, whilst in the latter they have a higher education degree in language and literature. The same profiles of teachers teach in the secondary II classes that were observed. As official statistics show (SRED, 2016) these secondary II classes are attended by only 30% of adolescents of a given age following various selection procedures.

We asked the teachers to teach two strongly contrasted literary texts that represent two literary traditions and allow contrasted approaches of literature. The texts chosen were a fable by Jean de La Fontaine, *Le loup et l'agneau* (1668; see the text and a literal translation in appendix A) and a short story by the contemporary Swiss author Jean-Marc Lovay (who recently received the Swiss literature prize for his overall work), entitled *La Négrresse et le Chef des Avalanches* [The Black Women and the Chief of Avalanches] (1996; see appendix B).

The first text is part of the literary heritage and is therefore highly “didactized”. La Fontaine’s fables are the most read in school (Massol, 2004) and at all school levels since the 18th century and up to today in French-speaking countries. La Fontaine is the first of the classical authors to be canonized by school (Chervel, 2006). We chose the second so as to see how a text, that is not at all known in school, that has never been taught and therefore has not been “didactized”, would be addressed in classes at different school levels. Although the vocabulary and sentence structure of the text are easily accessible for students at all school levels, the text “resists” (Tauveron, 1999) reading for at least three reasons: the relationship between the two main characters plays out a set of subtle oppositions that have to be inferred (“angel” and “demon”, “black” and “white”, and so on); the text contains an analepsis and a prolepsis that make summarizing the story difficult; voicing is alternatively that of an internal or of an external narrator, depending on the parts of the text.

2.2 Participants

Thirty teachers (60 percent women) participated in the study, ten for each of the three school levels. Their average age was 42 years-old with an average of years of

teaching experience of 15 years. The teachers in the secondary schools were teachers of French language and literature. All were volunteers, teaching in Geneva schools.

The researchers contacted the teachers by phone with the following research design: participating in a prepared interview before the lessons, during which they would share their reactions concerning the texts with the researcher and present their teaching plan for the sequence; studying the text in their classes whilst being videotaped; photocopying all the material used as well as all documents written by the students, if any; participating in an interview after the teachings so as to supply a general evaluation of each lesson. The teachers were completely free to decide how to teach the texts, the material handed out, the activities planned (writing was one option they could choose or not), the order of teaching (which text to address first), and the number of lessons dedicated to each text.

2.3 Recording of teaching sequences

Two variables were distinguished: school level and type of text (see Table 1).

Table 1: Number of videotaped teaching sequences

	Le Loup et l'Agneau	La Négresse et le Chef des Avalanches	Total
Grade 6 – primary level (students between 11-12 years old)	10	10	20
Grade 8 –secondary I level (stu- dents between 13-14 years old)	10	10	20
Grade 11 –secondary II level (stu- dents between 16-17 years old)	10	10	20
Total	30	30	60

We named the sequences using the formula “LOV 1_8”: “LOV” for a text by Lovay (LAF for La Fontaine); “1” for sequences in primary schools (“2” for secondary I; “3” for secondary II). Quotations from transcriptions are referred to as “l. 1230-1240”, “l” meaning “lines” in the transcription manuscript.

On average the teachers needed 78 minutes (*SD* 22.8) per text, i.e. 1.7 lessons of 45 minutes, with a maximum of three and a minimum of one lesson.

During the teaching sequences, the camera was operated by one of the researchers participating in the project and was positioned at the back of the classroom, with the option of zooming on the blackboard or the overhead projector's pictures. Important documents were instantly photographed. The teacher wore a microphone so as to hear him or her very distinctively, also when speaking with the students. Group work with students was audiotaped using MP3 recorders. All re-

cordings were transcribed. For an easier analysis, all transcriptions were transformed into synopses with hierarchical summaries of the different activities realized during the teaching sequence (Cordeiro & Ronveaux, 2009).

About one week before the teaching sequences, all teachers participated in a semi-structured interview. They were asked to describe the planning of the two sequences and their reasons for the way they have constructed their sequence.

2.4 Data Analysis

From the synopses, we were able to detect all writing activities and to assign them to either of the categories: a) questionnaires and text production; b) hypertextual and metatextual writing. There was no overlapping in classifying the writing activities. Two independent senior researchers classified the data. The inter-rater agreement resulting from Cohen's kappa was 0.70.

Three types of analysis were carried out consistent with the three research questions stated above.

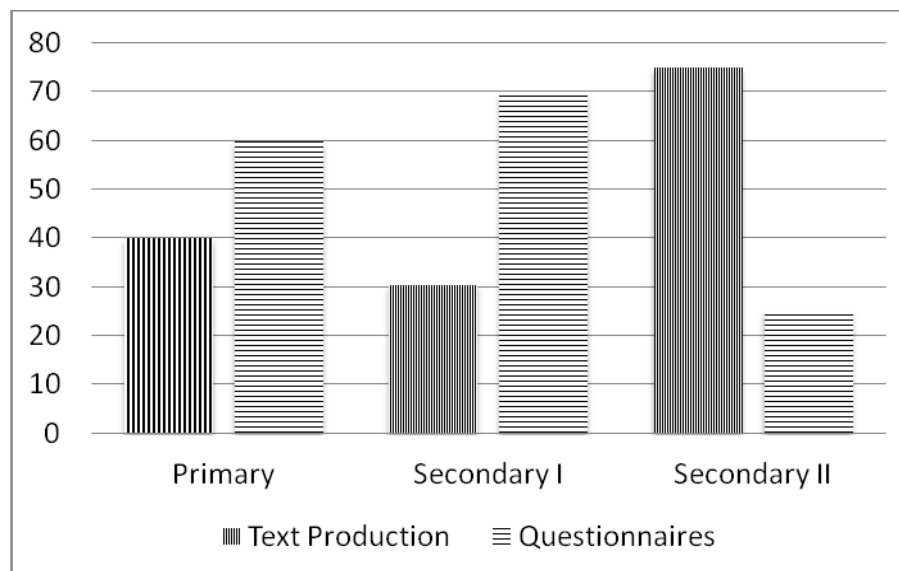
- 1) As stated previously, we distinguished two forms of writing linked with reading literary texts, responding to questionnaires and producing texts or fragments of texts. Using the synopses of all the teaching sequences that describe all the tasks put up by the teacher, we analyzed the frequency of each type of writing.
- 2) Analyzing text production tasks was carried out according to the two main forms of text that have been observed in the history of teaching practices: hypertextual and metatextual. We analyzed their frequency according to the two variables, school level and type of text.
- 3) From these general quantitative analyses, we carried out a qualitative analysis of the forms and the purposes of hypertextual and metatextual texts. We described the all situations in which the students had to write.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Questionnaires or Text Production?

In the synopses of the sixty sequences, we can observe, as expected, that writing is a widespread practice for studying literary texts: in 56 sequences, it appeared at least in one of the two main forms we have distinguished (63 occurrences; in some sequences, more than one text was written by the students); in four sequences realized by four different teachers, there were nor questionnaires answered, nor text produced. There was no difference between the two texts concerning the frequency of writing, be it questionnaires or production of texts (respectively 14 and 17 = 31 for LAF, and 16 and 16 = 32 for LOV).

Figure 1: Percentage of questionnaires and of autonomous writing activities on three school levels



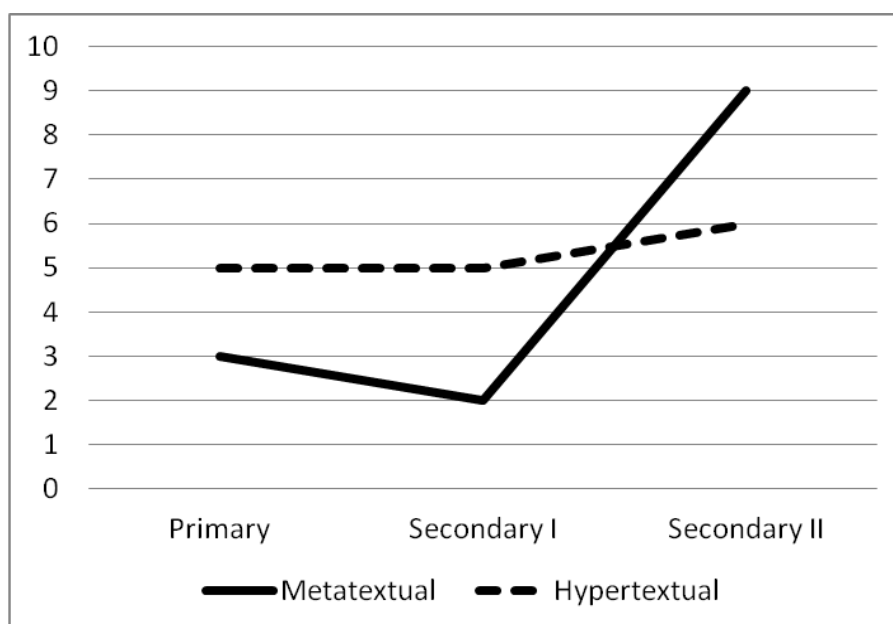
As figure 1 shows, the more questionnaires are handed out, the less text production activities are carried out, and inversely. Teachers of primary and secondary I schools sequences preferred questionnaires that provide students with detailed, step-by-step guidance. The questionnaire, containing between 10 and 20 questions and tasks, were generally designed by the teachers themselves with the purpose of guiding the students from simple questions about the contents of the text to more complex questions relating to the meaning of the text. As figure 1 also shows, inversely to questionnaires, writing as a text production activity was less frequent in the primary and secondary I school sequences: only one third of the teachers reverted to it. In the secondary II school sequences, however, three quarters of the teachers handed out tasks involving text production.

In the interviews before the teaching sequences, teachers provided several reasons for their choice: questionnaires help to plan lessons; they help handle the teaching sequence; they allow teachers to address different aspects of the text recognized as being important, and they support step-by-step control of students' learning activities; they favor understanding and analyzing texts. "With a questionnaire one can make them produce a lot of things in a short time", says teacher 2_1. "They help track the reading of the text", says 2_5.

3.2 Metatextual versus Hypertextual

There are no differences in frequency for hyper- and metatextual writing activities according to the texts read: 17 in LAF and 16 in LOV. But there is a relationship between the school levels and the type of writing (see figure 2), which also means that the teachers did not use the same writing activities for the two texts.

Figure 2: Number of metatextual and hypertextual writing activities on three school levels



In the primary and secondary I school sequences, hypertextual writing activities are more frequent than metatextual ones. Inversely, in the secondary II school sequences, the number of metatextual texts increases, whereas the number of hypertextual ones remains stable compared to that of other levels.

In order to get a better understanding of these patterns in writing activities in literature education, we carried out a qualitative analysis.

3.3 Hypertextual Writing Activities: Different Purposes at the Three School Levels

3.3.1 Primary level

In three of the five hypertextual writing activities, students produced a text in order to prepare to read the text (for instance, imagine what happens after the wolf's first answer). The other two were written at the end of the sequence: in one, the

teacher asked how Lovay's short story could be continued. In the other, the following situation was addressed:

Ens: Ok mais tout ça c'est des interprétations. Alors la dernière chose que je vais vous demander [...] c'est en quelques phrases d'écrire la fin de l'histoire. Là c'est pas la fin je vous lirai la fin tout à l'heure et puis je vous demanderai aussi de vous poser aussi une question. [...] Et puis cet après midi on se lira les fins

Jul: Alors on était à la fin de l'histoire. On doit finir d'écrire, euh, inventer la fin de l'histoire

Ens: Voilà (LOV 1_1, l. 1076-1121)

[Teach: Ok but all these are interpretations. So the last thing I want you to do [...] is to write the end of the story in a few sentences. This it is not the end. I will read you the end in a few minutes and I will also ask you to set yourself a question. [...] And this afternoon we will read the ends.

Jul: So we were at the end of the story. We have to finish writing, um, invent the end of the story

Teach: That's it]

The teacher requested to make up the last paragraph of the story that the students had not yet read. Here writing is based on students' understanding and analysis of the story. Long discussions paved the way to writing, yielding various interpretations, as shown in the teacher's last sentence before giving the instructions about writing ("all these are interpretations").

The narrative perspective is an issue in Lovay's text. Students therefore found it difficult to choose a perspective. During the writing, the teacher observed that one student used the "I"-voice and told the whole class that the text was written from an internal point of view. But this remark did not become a limitation. On the contrary, the teacher explicitly allowed students to either adopt the voice of the short story's or to change it, the focus being on the events of the story and the characters. Students produced texts such as the following one:

Je lui répondis que j'irai la chercher jusqu'à la mort. Je me suis éloigné du village. Je me suis volatilisé de ma pénombre. Plusieurs jours plus tard je me rendais près de la montagne. Et là j'ai vu un désastre: la moitié de la neige avait disparu et à la place se dessinaient des fleurs et des prés. Je compris alors qu'ils avaient vraiment besoin d'une négresse pour garder la neige. Je partis donc à sa recherche. (LAF 1_1, girl, 11 years old)

[I told him that I would look for her until I die. I left the village. I vanished from my half-light. Several days later I went to the mountain. And there I saw a disaster: half of the snow had disappeared and instead, flowers and meadows had appeared. At that moment, I understood that they really needed a black woman to take care of the snow. I therefore left to search for her.]

After reading several texts aloud, students commented on the characters, the ethics, the actions, as well as on the tension between the daily life presented in the story and the universe of magic. And the teacher concluded: "Tu penses ça. C'est l'interprétation. Elle est laissée à votre propre interprétation (LOV 1_1, l. 909) [You think this. This is an interpretation. It belongs to your own interpretation]. Interac-

tions were centered on embracing inclusiveness and understanding the text, leading to sharing interpretations enhanced by the written texts. Contents were at the heart of interactions. In fact, as seen in this example, the purpose of hypertextual activity was to understand and analyze the text, both goals having been transformed through inventing an end.

Preparing to read is the goal in three other hypertextual writing activities. Parts of the text were starting points for writing a text. Students had to predict the contents of the story based on reading and discussing the title; or they had to invent a story onwards from the first part of the first sentence of Lovay's short story: "Cet été-là, le chef des avalanches" [That summer, the chief of avalanches]. Let's take a more detailed look at the third text written for beginning to read the fable: it clearly shows the purpose of preparing for further reading of the text. The teacher read aloud the first verses of La Fontaine's fable up to when the first answer is given by the lamb: "Sire, answers the lamb".

Ens: 'Sire, répond l'agneau'. Qu'est-ce qu'il peut dire à la suite ? Donc vous pouvez discuter ensemble pour savoir que dit l'agneau à la suite. [...] Vous imaginez en fonction de ce que vous avez dessiné, d'accord (hausse la voix,) la réplique de l'agneau (LAF 1_10, l. 469-480)

[Teach: 'Sire, answers the lamb'. What could the lamb say afterwards? So you can talk about it together to guess what the lamb will say afterwards. [...] You think about it based on what you have drawn, ok, the answer of the lamb]

The instruction was also provided in writing: "Imagine la réplique de l'agneau à la manière de La Fontaine" [Imagine the lamb's answer in La Fontaine's style].

The class had already carried out a brief analysis of the contents and the form of the first part of the fable, the relationship between the lamb and the wolf, the rhymes, the unfamiliar language. They had also drawn a picture of what they thought the story would be about. The students composed their texts in groups of four.

The resulting productions were different both in style and contents, but the following example is quite typical of the length and type of writing:

Je n'ai guère peur de vos châtimements.
Veuillez me suivre paisiblement
Je vous montrerai ma famille
Qui se trouve près de ce bosquet de myrtilles
- Oh! Pauvre loup
Qui est tombé au fond de ce trou.
- Voilà ce qui s'appelle se jeter dans la gueule du loup
La prochaine fois vous mangerez un simple chou (LAF 1_10, boy, 11 years-old)

[I am hardly frightened by your chastisements.
I ask you to follow me peacefully.
I will introduce you to my family
that is near this grove of blueberries
- Oh, poor wolf
who fell in the bottom of this hole
- This is what is called to jump into the "wolf's" den
Next time you will eat a simple cabbage.]

The texts were all read aloud. After each one, the class applauded. Then the rest of the fable was read silently. The teacher asked each student to try and understand the general meaning of the text despite potential vocabulary problems, to be discussed afterwards.

3.3.2 *Secondary I level*

At this level, hypertextual activities were wide-ranging: writing a fable with reversed ethics; inventing a version where the lamb convinces the wolf; transforming the fable into a play or into a news item; transporting the short story into another place with another chief. They all end the teaching sequence, which means that after writing the text, the class does not go back to the source text.

The hypertextual writing activity in sequence LAF 2_8 is a typical example. By and large, it provides insights on the form that the activity takes, and the way it is used within a literary reading framework. In this particular teaching sequence, the genre “fable” had been studied from different points of view: two versions of La Fontaine’s text, a classical one and a contemporary one, were compared; the ethics were discussed; lexical fields related respectively to the wolf and the lamb were explored; versification was studied. Lastly, the students read Queneau’s “The lamb and the wolf”, a short poem written in 1967, where the wolf, threatened by the lamb, wants to leave the river; but the lamb knocks him down. After this, the teacher suggested a writing situation:

Ens: Est-ce que vous seriez capables d’inventer un petit poème, une petite fable [...] avec / la morale inversée ? Un peu comme il a fait lui ? Pas forcément un agneau et un, et un loup, mais la morale commence: la raison du plus faible est toujours la meilleure et une petite histoire entre animaux, très courte. Quelques lignes qui prouveraient que c’est non pas le plus fort mais le plus faible. [...] En français actuel, sans rime. Tu mets en scène des personnages animaux. [...] Et après ce serait agréable si vous vouliez bien nous les lire à haute voix. (LAF 2_8, l. 1103-1130)

[Could you invent a little poem, a little fable [...] with reversed ethics? A little bit like he (Queneau) did ? Not necessarily a lamb and a wolf, but [where] the ethics begin: the reason of the weakest is always the best, and a little story between animals, very short. Several lines that would prove that/it is not the strongest but the weakest. [...] In today’s French, without rhymes. You set the scene with animal characters. [...] And then it would be great if you could read them out aloud to us.]

This sequence builds a network of literary texts that were studied from the point of view of form and contents. Instructions however were exclusively centered on contents. The form of Queneau’s text was not analyzed: it served as a model not from the point of view of form, but because it defends the cause of the weak. The titles of the texts produced by the students (the bird and the cat, the mosquito and the bat, the hen and the fox) and the comments of the teacher show that justice, i.e. the cause of the weakest, was indeed the focus. Nonetheless Queneau’s model was sometimes imitated both in its style and presentation, as seen in this student’s text:

La souris et le chat	[The mouse and the cat
Dans une forêt	In a forest, by a stream
Devant un ruisseau	A beautiful mouse
Une belle souris se rafraichissait.	quenched its thirst
Quand un chat surgit	When a cat suddenly appeared
Et lui dit qu'elle troublait	And told her that she clouded
Son eau et qu'il allait	His water and that he was going to
La manger.	eat her.
Mais la souris	But the mouse
Prit son courage	Gathered her courage
et poussa le chat	And pushed the cat
Dans le ruisseau.	Into the river.]
(LAF 2_8, boy, 14 years old)	

The students' texts were all read aloud by the teacher: they asked her to do so. The teacher briefly discussed each text. Comments included "well done", "bravo", "there are rhymes", "this is a fable"; they also frequently addressed contents. Regarding the student's fable reproduced above, for instance, the teacher says that there could have been a mention of the cat drowning. Neither the teacher nor the students went back to the source texts by La Fontaine or Queneau. There was no backward effect of writing on the reading.

In the sequence LOV 2_5, hypertextual writing followed working on a questionnaire focusing on understanding the text.

Written instructions:

Imagine une petite histoire qui inverse les codes: 'Dans un pays très chaud, les gens souffrent de crues, de tempêtes tropicales ou de désertification. Ils veulent faire venir une x ou un x plutôt que d'enfermer le Chef du Désert ou le Chef des Tempêtes dans une Cage exposée au soleil parce qu'il n'a pas su avertir de l'arrivée de ces fléaux.'

[Imagine a little story that reverses the codes: 'In a very hot country, people suffer from floods, tropical storms or desertification. They would rather welcome an x than have the Chief of the Desert or the Chief of Storms imprisoned in a sun-drenched cage because he wasn't able to forecast the coming of the plague.']

The teacher added aloud:

Imaginez qu'il y a un moyen magique tout d'un coup de conjurer le sort d'empêcher ça en faisant venir quelqu'un, quelque chose qui va peut-être d'une façon magique empêcher cela. D'accord (LOV 2_5, l. 846 – 850)

[Imagine that there is a magic way that could suddenly ward off the plague by getting someone to come, something that can perhaps magically prevent it. Ok.]

The purpose of transforming the text was to change the setting and its threatening natural elements while maintaining some essential elements of the plot. The main focus was on contents. The linguistic and textual forms of the invented story were not made explicit. Comments after reading the text aloud centered on the setting of the invented story, on the type of magic invented to act against the natural forces, and on the presence of two contrasted characters. Lovay's style is considered "*inimitable*" [impossible to imitate], as the teacher said, and did not have to be

reproduced. And again: the class did not return to the source text. Writing a text is a way of ending the teaching sequence.

3.3.3 Secondary II level

As mentioned in the introductory historical review, hypertextual activities, i.e. new forms of writing, entered secondary II schools during the reform phase, after the 1970s. Literary writing became a way to respond to the text that had just been read. This kind of activity occurred regularly during the sequences observed, just as much with the fable as with the short story. Students were invited to write a fable with alternative ethics; to argue in favor of fairer ethics; to write a parody of the first paragraph of Lovay's short story; to produce a portrait of the characters in the short story.

In the sequence LAF 3_5, the teacher gave the following instructions out loud.

Ens: Alors pour la suite de la matinée je sais pas si on arrivera à finir. Je vais vous proposer de vous mettre par groupes de deux, trois, quatre au maximum. Y a deux options. Soit vous inventez une autre fin pour le loup et l'agneau. Vous avez pas besoin d'écrire en vers, mais vous écrivez une suite. Imaginez qu'au fond que l'agneau ne va pas être dévoré par le loup, ça serait une comédie. [...] Ou alors vous inventez une fable, aussi pas en vers. Une histoire qui aurait une morale, une autre morale (LAF 3_5, l. 453-362)

[So for the rest of the morning I don't know if we will be able to finish. I suggest that you form groups of two, three, or four maximum. You have two options. Either you invent another ending for the wolf and the lamb. You don't need to write in verse, but you write a follow up. Imagine that the lamb does not end up gulped up by the wolf, this would be a comedy. [...] Or you invent a fable, also not in verses. A story that would have ethics, other ethics.]

In his instructions for this hypertextual activity, after a long analysis of the contents and the form of the fable, the teacher pointed out to some contents and shared some hints about possible genres: comedy, fable, story. The texts were read out as they were and the students applauded. No comments were made.

A quite different approach was applied in sequence LOV 3_1. Two text genres were explicitly related to each other. Lovay's short story, with its complex pro- and analeptic structure, was analyzed during the sequence. It was compared to a very different genre, embraced by the famous French writer Fénéon, who transformed the journalistic genre *faits divers* (short news items) in a literary one. He wrote thousands of "nouvelles en trois lignes" [short stories in three lines], true stories of murder as much as daily life events, in a style that was as condensed as possible. One "nouvelle" introduced as an example by the teacher reads as follows:

Le dunkerquois Scheid a tiré trois fois sur sa femme. Comme il manquait toujours, il visa sa belle-mère ; le coup porta.

[Scheid, of Dunkirk, fired three times at his wife. Since he missed every shot, he decided to aim at his

mother-in-law, and connected.]

(translation in <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=17138822>)

The teacher 3_1 explained that these were “narrative texts inspired by *faits divers* [short news items]; or texts that wanted to imitate *faits divers*” (l. 1033). She established a link with Lovay’s story, whose events could, to a certain extent, also be regarded as *fait divers*, the author playing with this: “Ultimately the short story by Lovay, due to its particulars, could also be close to something similar.” (l. 1030-1036). Based on this analysis, she gave the following instructions:

Alors l'idée c'est d'essayer de construire, d'inventer des nouvelles en trois lignes. Essayez, faites plusieurs tentatives, inventez-en deux ou trois par groupe. Puis après on les lit, puis on regarde un petit peu, si on considère que le style est respecté (LOV 3_1, l. 1037-1039)

[So the idea is to try to put together, to invent short stories in three lines. Try doing it; give it several tries in groups of two or three. Afterwards we will read them and we will look at them a bit to see whether the style has been respected.]

As they summarized the contents of the story, adapted it to a new genre that required condensing it into three lines, and worked out different versions, students necessarily elaborated different interpretations of the story: they had to choose a perspective from which to tell the story, as well as the characters included in the scene. Each group produced three or four texts such as this one:

Par peur d’être enfermé dans une cage pour avoir failli à sa tâche, un chef d’avalanche a trouvé une solution salvatrice: amener une négresse pour effrayer les avalanches. Sans résultat... (LOV 3_1, group of 3 students, 17 years old)

[Fearing prison in a cage, a chief of avalanche found a protective solution: taking in a Nègress to scare off the avalanches. Without any result.]

The students’ texts were read and discussed from two perspectives:

Ens: A chaque fois on va se poser deux questions: est-ce-que ça respecte l'histoire et l'ordre qu'on avait plus ou moins réussi à déterminer l'autre fois ? Et est-ce-que ça respecte le style de Fénéon en terme de nouvelles en trois lignes ? (LOV 3_1, l. 1377-1380).

[Teacher: Each time we will set ourselves two questions: does it respect the story and the order we have more or less managed to establish the other day? And does it match Fénéon’s style in terms of a short story in three lines?]

As the instructions framing the discussion show, interpreting Lovay by inventing a short story in three lines allowed the students’ interpretations of the chain of events, the characters and the outcomes to emerge. Lovay’s text was read out anew. The text genre’s notions (“short story”, “short news item”) supported the analysis and guided the writing activity. The hypertextual activity fed back to the text read out and at the same time invested a new genre, a way of transforming contents and form of the source text.

3.4 Metatextual Writing Activities: from Simple Summaries to Text Interpretations

3.4.1 Primary level

Three metatextual writing activities were observed in the primary school sequences. Two are traditional summaries. In the third (LAF 1_4), the teacher asked the pupils to write reflections and personal reactions on the text. She handed out two pieces of pink paper along with a copy of La Fontaine's fable, and said:

Ens: Alors maintenant je vais vous distribuer cette fable que vous allez lire de manière individuelle. Ok. Je vais vous donner à chacun deux petits papiers roses comme ça (leur montre les papiers en question) où vous allez écrire, quand vous aurez lu votre fable: soit quelque chose que vous n'avez pas compris, soit une remarque, une impression une, voilà. [...] Donc chacun reçoit deux papiers. Donc vous avez deux choses à écrire. (LAF 1_4, l. 150 – 156)

[Teacher: So now I will distribute this fable that you will read individually. Ok. I will also give each of you two little pieces of pink paper like these (shows them the pieces) which you will write on after having read your fable: either something you have not understood or a comment, an impression. That's it. [...] So each of you will receive two pieces of paper. So you have to write two things]

The writing activity involved two perspectives on the text, made visible by the two slips of papers: asking a question about the text, i.e. a more analytical activity; and sharing a subjective impression or response. Having spent ten minutes each reading the fable and writing down questions, comments or impressions, students were then asked to form groups and to share what they had written, and to compare their aesthetic and emotional responses. Lastly, a large-group discussion took place. Questions mainly focused on vocabulary or parts of the story that were not understood. Responses and emotions were mostly comments on the features of the story: the curious ethics, the rudeness of the wolf, and the passivity of the lamb. For instance, one student wrote and read the following reaction:

Jul: Je trouve que l'agneau il est bête de pas avoir dit que c'était quelqu'un d'autre qui était venu l'année passée boire dans son eau (LAF 1_4, l. 779-780)

[Jul: I think the lamb is silly not to have said that someone else had come last year to drink his water]

This sets alight a long large-group discussion about the hypothetical silliness of the lamb, likely conversations and actions: a passionate interaction that went on without going back at any moment to the text. Everything happened as if the worldview in the text had become the reference on which to reflect, as if it was real. The subjective responses of the students in the primary school sequences relate to the text as representing a reality that is taken for granted. The discussion therefore addresses this "immediate" reality: is the lamb silly? Which does not mean, of course, that this "reality" is taken for real.

3.4.2 *Secondary I level*

One of the two metatextual activities is a summary. In the other, the teacher asked the students their impressions about the two texts:

Ens: Alors ce que je vous demande [...] vos impressions sur la première séance sur la fable. Et sur cette séance-là, par écrit, vos sentiments: j'ai aimé, j'ai pas aimé, d'accord. [...] Vous allez écrire juste quelques commentaires. [...] S'il vous plait en phrase complètes, en phrases correctes. [...] Et puis peut-être comparer bien les deux textes hein. Enfin comparer qu'est-ce qui était très différent entre vendredi passé et aujourd'hui. Qu'est-ce qui était vraiment différent (LOV 2_8, l. 1097 – 1137)

[Teacher: So what I ask you now are your impressions about the first session on the fable. And in this session to record your feelings: I liked, I didn't like, ok. You will just write some comments. [...] Please in complete sentences, in correct sentences. And maybe really compare the two texts, ok. Compare what was very different between last Friday and today. What was really different]

The impressions shared were varied: quite positive for the fable mentioning, in particular, the possibility of writing a text with reversed ethics; but also regarding the short story – that is not usually read – in being ambiguous, positive and negative at the same time, intriguing, and mysterious.

Although in this case, there was no going back to the commented text, the fact that the students were questioned on their "impressions", "feelings" shows that the "subjective turn", as it is sometimes called, had got to the classroom. The subjectivity of the reader was taken into account; the teacher was highly interested in it for adjusting her teaching practice.

3.4.3 *Secondary II level*

Besides classical metatextual genres like summaries and dissertations, students were asked to write down their responses, to express their subjective feelings. In the sequence LOV 3_4, for instance, the whole text was first read aloud by four students. Then the teacher said:

Ens: Alors j'aimerais euh discuter de ce texte avec vous. [...] Mais avant cela je vais vous demander de réagir à votre lecture. Je vous avais expliqué lorsqu'on fait une explication de texte, commentaire de texte, [...] avant d'utiliser les, disons, les outils d'analyse très précis, [...] la première chose à se demander c'est: comment est-ce qu'on réagit [...] en lisant ce texte ? [...] Qu'est-ce que vous avez éprouvé ? Qu'est-ce qui vous a frappé ? Quelles sont vos impressions ? Quelle est votre réaction ? (LOV 3_4, l. 76-87)

[Teacher: So I would like to discuss this text with you. [...] But before that I want you to respond to your reading. I explained that when explaining, commenting a text, [...] before using, say, precise analysis tools, [...] the first thing to do is to ask: how do I resonate [...] when reading this text? [...] What have you felt? What struck you? What are your impressions? What is your reaction?]

These instructions illustrate a method for approaching a text that explicitly takes the first subjective response as a starting point for the analysis. Before using specif-

ic analytical tools, for identifying the characters and the themes, the students had to think about their own responses to the text. The teacher stressed that there was no right response, no irrefutable justification. The idea is that each student tries to express the interpretation he or she considers to be the most obvious when faced with a text likely to unsettle, confuse, disorient the reader.

After the writing activity, the students read their responses. The texts varied significantly in their form: they included composed texts, schemata, but most often notes and fragmentary texts like this one:

“Négresse”: péjoratif, comparée à un chien, personnification, “marchandise” -> maison, trafic

Il y a une histoire, mais on ne visualise pas les personnages -> VRAI FOND MORAL
Contraste noir/blanc provocation, faire réagir les gens contre les racistes
Images qu’il évoque pour moi sont négatives et désagréables (danger, injustice, cruauté, cage, bêtise, etc.)

Seule touche positive, à première vue, est de l’humour ... noir, ironie
Thème du grésillement du chef -> second degré

[“Negress”: judgmental, compared to a dog, personification, “goods” -> house, traffic
There is a story, but one can’t envision the characters – REAL MORAL BACKGROUND
Contrast black/white, provocation, get people to react against racists
For me pictures that he evokes are negative and disagreeable (danger, injustice, cruelty, cage, silliness, etc.)

Only positive touch, at first sight, is the humor ... black, irony
Theme of chirping of the chief -> second degree]

This subjective starting point contrasts with the structured way of commenting and explaining a text – as laid down in a clearly defined tool described in a two page document the students had at disposal – describing a sequence of tasks that the teacher has asked to practice, immediately after the subjective response. The latter, however, as emphasized by the teacher herself, is not a superficial approach to a more organized interpretation. It provides a ground for opening up and supporting the possibility of contrasted interpretations, all the more when the text aims at disorienting the reader, as it is the case with Lovay’s short story.

4. DISCUSSION

Our intention was to describe writing in relation with reading literary texts at different school levels in ordinary classes: frequency, forms and purposes. Our first finding is that writing is a very widespread activity. In almost all classes and sequences, teachers count on writing. In fact, teachers seem “convinced that writing supports students’ understanding of literature” (Kieft, Rijlaarsdam & Van den Bergh, 2008, p. 382). We distinguished between two main forms of writing: questionnaires and text production activities. As seen, and as our historical analysis shows, questionnaires are the most frequent writing practice for literature education at the primary level and even more at the secondary I level, consistent with suggestions common to many reading manuals. Teachers see them as an appropri-

ate way of controlling students' activities step by step, of covering many aspects in a short time, and of tracking what they have read.

Besides handing out questionnaires, teachers regularly ask students to produce hypertextual and metatextual texts, more frequently in the secondary II schools sequences. The main trend shows that in primary and secondary I school levels, hypertextual text production is more frequent than metatextual one, as opposed to secondary II schools, where metatextual writing clearly dominates. This configuration shows that in sequences at the first two levels, the tradition of the hypertextual is still strongly present. When literary reading is connected to a writing activity, the latter is primarily hypertextual. Secondly, the data for the secondary II school sequences indicate both continuity and change. Metatextual links between the texts studied and writing activities play an important role in the sequences studied, all of which is very much in line with the way literary texts have been studied for a long time. But this classical approach is enhanced with writing activities traditionally reserved to lower school levels: hypertextual writing is present in as many sequences as in the two other levels. Looking at the totality of the secondary II school sequences, the two kinds of writing activities that stand out – each one representing a different historical time – seem to sediment and to evolve towards a new system through weaving together continuity and change.

The qualitative analyses of hypertextual and metatextual writing activities give a more precise view of their contents, forms and purposes. In the primary school sequences, the *hypertextual* writing activity is carried out in quite simple forms: inventing short texts based on parts of the literary text provided by the teacher. The source text is not so much targeted for transformation, but a starting point through its contents: the characters, the situations set the background for creative developments. These activities may alternatively enable students to express and analyze responses to the text or to prepare for reading, a practice not observed at other school levels.

The writings produced by the students during the reading of the text were collectively read and, sometimes, shortly discussed. They helped position the reading, but afterwards, they were no longer used. It is worth noticing that such writing activities are part of other activities typically preparing to read in many primary school sequences. This is a distinctive feature compared to the sequences at other school levels: drawing, describing a picture representing the gist of the story, exploring the back cover, etc. are all activities that allow students to read a text with expectations (Franck & Schneuwly, 2013). This kind of writing has grown from reforms introduced in the seventies, influenced by the new education movement as well as by research in psychology and linguistics, insisting on the construction of representations about possible story contents as the catalyst to more active reading.

In the secondary I school sequences, interaction between hypertextual writing and the source text is one-sided: the latter operates only as a "pretext" for writing new texts. The main focus is on transforming contents. Qualitative analysis of hy-

pertextual activities shows that the source texts work as a reservoir for ideas, a model for alternative story construction, without precise suggestions about genre and linguistic form. Additionally, discussions are geared towards story events and originality, rather than inner coherence or mode of enunciation. Hypertextual activities therefore appear juxtaposed to reading, as an opening to enjoyable writing. In contrast to the primary school sequences, there was no feedback related to the reading of the text. Texts produced by students were read and discussed as an independent body of works.

In secondary II schools, hypertextual writing appears regularly in the teaching sequences, confirming that changes in literature education have affected daily practices. Students play with literary genres and the related notions, which they already understand quite well. Conflicting generic textual forms often guide the hypertextual writing activities: portraits, parody, short news items. This requires students to review and reshape their perspectives on the source texts, and to produce new interpretations. Thus, writing regularly nurtures reading. Students have to read the source text in another way. Hypertextual writing becomes a way to reconsider the text read. This becomes possible through further accuracy regarding the form of the target text and explicit instructions as to how to turn to the contents of the source text.

Thus, paradoxically, hypertextual writing activities and reading literary texts interact greatly, albeit in very different manners, in the primary and secondary II school sequences, and weakly in the secondary I ones.

Metatextual writing has two directions. On one hand, as readers students have the opportunity to produce writings that are loosely preformatted, allowing them to express their feelings, reactions, and impressions on the text. These fit in with the category “personal writings” introduced earlier on in this paper. These activities are generally used as a ground for discussions, schooling being about teaching to write as well as to speak about texts. Writing reinforces verbal interactions that in turn become stepping-stones for conversations about texts.

In the primary school sequences, metatextual writing guides and strengthens the students’ integration of the text. Writing is used as a way of unfolding the link with the literary text. Through writing, the students can question the text to deepen their understanding. They can also express their responses and feelings thereby using collective conversations as a way of objectifying subjective feelings. Nevertheless, these metatextual writing activities remain rudimentary.

Teachers in the secondary II school sequences clearly made a distinction between expressing a spontaneous response on one hand, and carrying out sophisticated analyses based on conceptual tools on the other hand. The presence of both types of writing activities in the sequences points to a shift in teaching tradition. Subjective responses are sometimes explicitly seen as the cornerstone of advanced understanding and interpretation of the text. By stepping aside from traditional approaches, Lovay’s short story is particularly suited to such a two-fold analysis.

By contrast, activities more strongly anchored in disciplinary tradition, are maintained. Metatextual writing practices such as synthesizing a paragraph or parts of texts, or summarizing to help understand the text are quite common. Only in the secondary II school sequences, metatextual writing is also a tool for analyzing and interpreting texts, pursuing the long-term tradition of the “dissertation littéraire”. Personal and objective metatextual writing are not at all exclusive. Our analysis suggests, on the contrary, that they are increasingly becoming complementary since in several sequences, both appear.

The observations drawn from our sixty teaching sequences containing in all sixty-three writing activities related to writing in literature education at different school levels reveal important historical evolutions in teaching practices. Reader subjectivity is now acknowledged and part of classroom activities, moreover it is fostered both through metatextual (e.g. reflective) and hypertextual (e.g. imaginative) writing practices. Hypertextual activities enable the growth and the development of insights and interpretations of literary texts. The variations at secondary II level are particularly illustrative of the sedimentation dynamics at work across levels: in these sequences writing does not involve anymore imitation and amplification of source texts as was taught in the 19th century rhetorical tradition and gives way to inventiveness and creativity. Innovative reader-centered activities settle down on more classical text-centered activities, such as summary or essay writing.

Social context, institutional changes, scientific discourses and educational policies led to the restructuring of the “French” curriculum well beyond the issues of syllabi and pedagogical discourses. They also changed daily practices of literature teaching in complex ways: there is a strong continuity given that literature is still taught and being studied, which involves metatextual abilities being developed from primary school onwards, and also transformation by ways of new forms of writing, including reader subjectivity, in higher secondary school. Writing in literature education can therefore be seen as the result of historical movements that flow out in a slow, steady and long-lasting process.

This exploratory inquiry allowed us to observe a great variety of writing activities used by teachers for studying literature in texts. The interpretation of the data looking into studies on the history of literature teaching gave some insights as to why teachers use these activities the way they do it. But the number of teachers observed is much too small to support generalizations. The results presented in this paper may pave the way to other researches on the role of writing in teaching literature. Three supplementary studies can be envisioned. Based on the two variables – school level and types of text – teachers could systematically be asked in guided interviews how they might introduce writing activities in their teaching. On a larger scale, questionnaires about writing practices combined with teaching literary texts could reveal a wider view of what teachers do that would add to the observational data. And ultimately, through a collaborative research, the potential and impact of the different forms of writing activities could be explored by observing actual teaching practices.

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APPENDIX A

<i>Le Loup et l'Agneau</i>	<i>The Wolf and the Lamb</i>
<p>La raison du plus fort est toujours la meilleure: Nous l'allons montrer tout à l'heure. Un Agneau se désaltérait Dans le courant d'une onde pure. Un Loup survient à jeun qui cherchait aventure, Et que la faim en ces lieux attirait. Qui te rend si hardi de troubler mon breuvage ? Dit cet animal plein de rage: Tu seras châtié de ta témérité. - Sire, répond l'Agneau, que votre Majesté Ne se mette pas en colère ; Mais plutôt qu'elle considère Que je me vas désaltérant Dans le courant, Plus de vingt pas au-dessous d'Elle, Et que par conséquent, en aucune façon, Je ne puis troubler sa boisson. - Tu la troubles, reprit cette bête cruelle, Et je sais que de moi tu médis l'an passé.</p> <p>- Comment l'aurais-je fait si je n'étais pas né ? Reprit l'Agneau, je tette encor ma mère. - Si ce n'est toi, c'est donc ton frère. - Je n'en ai point. - C'est donc quelqu'un des tiens: Car vous ne m'épargnez guère, Vous, vos bergers, et vos chiens. On me l'a dit: il faut que je me venge. Là-dessus, au fond des forêts Le Loup l'emporte, et puis le mange, Sans autre forme de procès.</p>	<p>The reason of the strongest is always the best.</p> <p>We will show this shortly. A Lamb quenched his thirst In the current of a pure stream, A fasting Wolf arrives, looking for adventure, And whom hunger draws to this place. "Who makes you so bold as to muddy my drink?" Said the animal, full of rage: "You will be punished for your temerity." "Sire," answers the Lamb, "may it please Your Majesty Not to become angry; But rather let Him consider That I am quenching my thirst In the stream, More than twenty steps below Him; And that, as a result, in no way Can I muddy His drink." "You muddy it," responded this cruel beast; "And I know that you slandered me last year."</p> <p>"How could I have done so, if I had not yet been born?" Responded the Lamb; "I am not yet weaned." "If it is not you, then it is your brother." "I do not have any." "Then it is one of your clan; For you hardly spare me, You, your shepherds, and your dogs. I have been told: I must avenge myself." Upon which, deep into the woods The Wolf carries him off, and then eats him, Without any other form of trial/process.</p>

APPENDIX B

La Négresse et le chef des Avalanches

(In: Lovay, J.-M. (1996). *La Négresse et le chef des Avalanches*, pp. 48-50.

Genève: Editions Zoé ; published with permission of the editor)

Cet été-là, le chef des Avalanches disait qu'il était heureux; et quand il franchissait avec la rudesse d'un ange des neiges les murs du village, pour aller boire du vin, j'entendais un grésillement contre la pierre. Le chef grésillait de bonheur car il avait échappé à la Cage, et il attendait la Négresse qui arriverait d'un jour à l'autre. La Cage était le châtiment réservé à tout chef des Avalanches fonctionnant pour la durée de 36 mois, et qui, par son manque d'observation et d'attention « avait livré passage à une avalanche ». Pendant la punition, vingt-cinq jours et vingt-cinq nuits, le condamné demeurait et surveillait, dans une cage de bois calfeutrée de sciure et munie d'un vitrage sur chaque côté, cage arrimée au croisement de deux couloirs d'avalanches.

En fin du printemps, le grésillant chef des Avalanches avait livré passage à une coulée qui renversa la fromagerie, la poussa dans un précipice comme si la fromagerie avait été une mignonne armoire.

Amené devant la Cage, il cria; « Epargnez-moi! Levez la main, ceux qui sont contre ma punition. Supprimez-moi la Cage et je ferai venir la Négresse, et elle sauvera le village! » Tous les bras se levèrent, et mes bras ressemblaient aux autres bras. Je n'estimais pas injuste la justice de la Cage, au contraire: vivre parmi l'habitat de l'avalanche ne pouvait qu'augmenter la connaissance de ses coutumes. Si je votais pour l'amnistie du chef, c'était que j'étais fatigué de fuir les discours et les grimaces de policiers déguisés en bandits, et de bandits costumés en policiers. Les cailloux du chemin avaient plus de différence que les employés du crime et de la lutte contre le crime. Ainsi le chef ne connut pas la Cage et s'éloigna de la divination des avalanches parce qu'il mit dans le cœur des villageois l'espoir de la gigantesque et phénoménale arrivée de la Négresse.

Un jour qu'au-dessus du vin je vis fondre la neige dans l'œil du chef, je lui demandai s'il avait décidé lui-même de faire venir la Négresse. Il dit: « J'ai payé une organisation, et elle m'a envoyé l'image d'une négresse que j'ai observée très longtemps plus longtemps que l'avalanche de la fromagerie. Après j'ai directement passé commande sur l'île de la Négresse. C'est ça l'amour. »

Ensuite le chef me tira loin du débit de vin, pour m'emmener dans une cachette, et, m'ayant enlevé la chemise pour que je sente la neige dans le dos, il me coucha contre le talus mouillé. Il disait:

– Ecoute ! la Négresse, c'est pour l'amour de mon métier. La Négresse, c'est pour garder les avalanches. Comme un chien de berger pour les moutons.

Des insectes se baignaient dans mon dos et le chef coiffait un chapeau frappé du sigle de toutes les avalanches, et il disait:

– Tu verras la Négresse! Elle va nous montrer le froid. Je la poserai au-dessus de la Cage, toute noire, et les avalanches auront peur. Elles remonteront la pente, elles passeront de l'autre côté, dans l'autre vallée, par-dessus le sommet, et elles iront écraser ailleurs.

Le chef a menacé: « Ne raconte rien de tout ça, c'est secret. Sinon ils équipe-ront de négresses chaque village, et les avalanches s'habitueront au noir. »

Short summary

- The chief of avalanche is happy: he does not have to go into the cage for 36 days; he is waiting for the Negress.
- He had let pass an avalanche and should have gone into the cage. He promised to get hold of a Negress who would save the village and all the villagers voted against his punishment; just as well as the narrator who was tired of all the talks. So the chief escaped punishment due to him promising the arrival of the phenomenal Negress.
- One day, the narrator asked the chief how he got hold of the Negress. The chief said he had ordered her through an organization. He did it for love, for his profession. He would put her in the cage and the avalanches would be afraid. But nobody must know about the Negress should the avalanches become accustomed.