

Digital Literary Reading Experiences by Young Readers

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ABSTRACT

In this article, we present an overview of the results of a survey conducted with Brazilian youngsters aged 15 to 18 years old, belonging to diverse socioeconomic strata. We have identified their means of search and access to the works and the experience of digital literary reading, considering that it includes the reading of works of both digital and digitized literature. We have based our research on studies about the history of books and reading, youth literature, sociology of reading, multimodality and digital literary genres. We applied a questionnaire to 342 youngsters, a semi-open questionnaire to 68 youngsters, and followed the practices of digital literary reading of 6 young readers through semi-structured interviews. Digital search environments are diverse, but not always easily understood by young readers. For each type of digital literary reading there are specific ways of accessing the digital environments that make them available.

KEYWORDS

digital literature; digitized literature; young readers; reader training.

RESUMO

Neste artigo apresentamos um recorte dos resultados de uma pesquisa realizada com jovens brasileiros de 15 a 18 anos, pertencentes a estratos socioeconômicos diferenciados. Identificamos as formas de busca e de acesso às obras e as experiências de leitura literária digital, considerando que esta compreende a leitura de obras de literatura digital e digitalizada. Fundamentamos o nosso trabalho em estudos sobre a história do livro e da leitura, literatura juvenil, sociologia da leitura, multimodalidade e os gêneros digitais literários. Aplicamos um questionário a 342 jovens, um questionário semiaberto a 68 jovens, e acompanhamos as práticas de leitura literária digital de 6 leitores jovens por meio de entrevistas semiestruturadas. Os ambientes digitais de busca são diversos, mas nem sempre fáceis de serem conhecidos pelos leitores jovens. Para cada tipo de leitura literária digital existem formas específicas para acessá-las nos ambientes digitais que as disponibilizam.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

literatura digital; literatura digitalizada; leitores jovens; formação de leitores.

I. INTRODUCTION

Research in the field of the history of reading and the book in several areas of knowledge has looked at reading as an object of historical and social investigation. Studies by Roger Chartier (1997, 1998, 2002, 2011) and Robert Darnton (2010), for instance, have addressed the specific forms of production, the materiality of these cultural objects, as well as their circulation and reception in certain historical periods. These studies have also examined digital technologies, given the mutations that these new forms promote regarding the culture of the book.

Other approaches are more focused on pedagogical or literary aspects, including textual genres, reading practices, mediators, and reading behaviors. Reading practices are also the subject of the sociology of reading which investigates, among other aspects, reading habits, the distribution of reading materials according to distinct geographic and socioeconomic perspectives, the dispositions of the readers regarding the act of reading, and the ways in which the reading materials are used (Leveratto and Leontsini, 2008; Diaz-Plaja, 2008; Colomer, 2003, 2007).

In this article, we seek to dialogue with several of these studies, using historical, sociological and literary studies approaches to focus on digital literary reading. According to Chartier, to understand reading practices it is necessary to understand and analyze “uses, manipulations, forms of appropriation of printed materials” (2011: 78)¹ by readers in certain periods, groups or in specific populations. As stated by Batista and Galvão, reading practices mark the studies on “reading in its concrete event, as developed by real readers, and situated within the processes responsible for its diversity and variation” (2011: 13).²

We also consider as reading practices all acts involved in the moment of literary reading, among them gestures like unrolling a scroll, turning of pages, touching a screen behaviors, experiences and preferred resources. The conception of reading practices also includes the actions of young readers, and how they create certain forms of appropriation of literary materials, ways of sharing information about the works read, searches of similar works or known authors, among other actions that create the conditions for the act of reading the digital

1 “dos usos, dos manuseios, das formas de apropriação dos materiais impressos” [originally in Portuguese].

2 “leitura em seu acontecimento concreto, tal como desenvolvida por leitores reais, e situada no interior dos processos responsáveis por sua diversidade e variação”. [originally in Portuguese]

literary work. The reading activity involved in digital literature comprises the reading of digital and digitized literature carried out by young people in digital media. The first is defined by Torres (2007) and Hayles (2009) as different from printed literature that is sometimes transposed to the computer. According to Hayles, digital literature, “generally considered to exclude print literature that has been digitized, is by contrast ‘digital born,’ a first-generation digital object created on a computer and (usually) meant to be read on a computer” (2009: 3).³

There is a variety of types of works considered as digital literature: some include genres that descend from printed literary works, but using collective construction networks, online or offline. Others inaugurate new literary genres, with different characteristics from those found in the printed culture, elaborated by means of hypertexts, multimodal resources, and using computer programs. Digitized literature, in turn, is transported from print to digital media, preserving most of its features, and is meant to be accessed on the Internet or downloaded to digital devices through websites, blogs, social networks, digital libraries or acquired on e-commerce store sites, or on smartphone apps.

We will now present a summary of the results of a research study titled “Practices of digital literature reading of young readers” conducted with young Brazilians aged 15 to 18 years old, belonging to different socioeconomic strata.

We have identified their ways of searching and accessing works, and experiencing digital literary reading. The research adopted a quantitative and qualitative perspective: a questionnaire was given to 342 youngsters, a semi-structured questionnaire to 68 youngsters, and we also followed the digital literary reading practices of 6 young readers through semi-structured interviews for seven months.

We have selected empirical data that allows us to discuss two interconnected themes. On one hand, we look at searching practices and means of access to digital and digitized genres in order to understand how search and access in the digital environment require a combination of new skills with skills that readers take from their practices with the printed texts. On the other hand, these activities also involve the participation in networks of literary sociability on the Internet, which, in turn, allow certain literary genres to be accessed, shared and enjoyed.

II. FORMS OF SEARCHING AND ACCESSING DIGITAL LITERARY WORKS AND REPERCUSSIONS ON WAYS OF READING

Reading literature in a digital device, whether digitized or born-digital, requires the young reader to search in ways that are not always simple. Exploring Search engines, social networks, blogs, among other digital environments, and having

³ “geralmente considerada excludente da literatura impressa que tenha sido digitalizada, é, por contraste, “nascida no meio digital”, um objeto digital de primeira geração criado pelo uso de um computador e (geralmente lido em uma tela de computador).” [originally in Portuguese].

free access to literary works, downloading and reading them freely over the Internet, or buying them in electronic commerce websites, bookstores or smartphone apps, are some of the means that readers use to access and read digital literary works.

The six young readers who participated in the semi-structured interviews chose to access the desired work online, free of charge, as downloading the work can lead to a reduced memory space in the mobile digital device on which they usually read. Acquiring the work in its printed version is not very frequent, and the digitized version was not cited by the young readers. If we compare with the quantitative data, the index for this form of access is below 12%.

The mode of access has implications on the ways of reading, both because the digital file of the work is not saved and new procedures are required in order to resume reading where it was interrupted. Book markers, among other strategies, are used for printed works; in a digitized work in PDF format, however, the marking of the last page read is not possible, and it is up to the reader to memorize the page where reading was stopped. Thus there are gestures and behaviors inherited from the print culture, as mentioned by Roger Chartier and other historians of the book such as Antônio Gomez (2014) and Robert Darnton (2010). The writers/creators of digital works, as well as their readers, look for material forms that remediate some characteristics of the graphic or physical order of the printed book. The renewal of a type of media according to strategies derived from another is conceptualized by Bolter and Grusin (2000) as remediation.

When reading scanned books in epub format, the last page read is automatically loaded when the reader resumes reading, as well as performing other functions which resemble the possibilities of the printout. In terms of access, young readers point out that they prefer to read digital works through free access on the Internet; however, the speed of Internet access may be the determining factor for young readers to decide whether to download the file or read the work online.

The type of work can also define whether the young reader will install it or not in their digital device. If the work is difficult to access, storage with the purpose of having a digital private library may occur. Book applications, such as Google Play Books or Ebook Reader, are relevant digital environments for the search and easy access to a diversity of digitized literary titles, where young readers can access sample pages of the works sold as well as read those that are freely available.

Many of the digitized works of interest for the young people surveyed are not in the public domain, but there are networks that make them available, challenging copyright laws. In digital culture, this subversion of the traditional circuit of the book, which begins with the author and goes through several professionals until arriving at the hands of the reader, has repercussions on other possibilities of dissemination of the book through purchases or copyright for institutions, such as Google, as pointed out by Darnton (2010), thus eliminating some steps of the circuit. Despite the copyright issues involved in the practices

mentioned above, examining current practices of electronic distribution (CHARTIER, 1998) helps us understand the changes in the dissemination of written culture. One of the networks of literary sociability on the Internet that shares information about digitized works of literature, facilitating searches, is provided by social media networks.

Using social networks can be seen as a safe way to search for digital literary reading, but it is necessary to know the page through the comments of the participants in 'communities' of readers. At the same time, in those shared comments, the young reader may have access to safe sources of links from scanned works, as well as the typed text of the desired work.

But the procedures for knowing works of interest for young readers requires them to perform searches on the social media page in which they participate and send requests for recommendations to the community of readers. There are several literary sociabilities involved in these paths, but, according to Leontsini and Levaratto (2008), we must question whether the literary sociabilities on the Internet come from a previous sociability, external to the digital culture, or it is a sociability specific to digital culture.

Another place where all young readers search for information about literary works and access works to read online or download is Google's website. But the ways to find virus-free, spam-free sites that are only for downloading and not for buying is not simple. It is necessary that the young reader has expertise in elaborating searches and filtering results, so that the task of finding the best sites becomes easy.

In order not to occupy the memory of digital devices, there are many hosting and file sharing services. Users can upload or download various types of files, including digitized works of literature. For sending files, the user receives a link and can distribute it over the Internet, making it easier for young readers to download the scanned books they want to read. That is, there are a number of favorable conditions for the dissemination and access of digitized books in digital culture.

Other forms of search are provided through information about the writer/creator and about works that have already been read by young readers. The Internet is the place where searches for the desired works begins, and even printed works to be read are also chosen through the Internet.

However, the search for literary works in actual bookstores remains one of the ways to find about new titles related to reading interests of young readers, which is then followed by an online search for the digitized version. The bookstore, which is usually used as an acquisition space, sometimes becomes only a search space, not a purchase space, as the young reader D_F_16_D points out in the interview transcribed below.

D_F_16_D: Yeah ... I go there ... I get the book, I leaf through, I look at the back cover, it's the synopsis of the book, the summary, then if I like it, I look for it at home.

E: Um ... yeah ... and you, do you usually find it on the Internet?

D_F_16_D: ah-ham.

E: Um, what have you ever done about it, with what book have you done that and then found it on the Internet, do you remember?

D_F_16_D: What book? Let me see.

E: You went to the [bookstore] Reading, liked...

D_F_16_D: Divergent, it's a ... it's a trilogy, and... I downloaded the three books, it's ... on the Internet.

E: On this website?

D_F_16_D: That's it.⁴

The blog is a digital environment widely used as an environment of literary sociability on the Internet, but also, according to Leveratto and Leontsini, quoting the British sociologist Jenny Hatley, these groups can be “*éphémères, et divers, ils forment des communnautés de parole excitées et instables*” (2008: 24).⁵ Because blogs are usually created by a person who signs them, it creates a sense of security for young readers to be in a trusted environment in which they can maintain a more stable relationship with the creator. In addition, for readers to continue to visit the blog, it is necessary for the creator to maintain a relationship of trust with its readers, different from social networks, where several people post information in the community of readers.

Digital libraries are not very well known by the young readers interviewed, only P_M_17_C1, D_F_16_D and his friend S_F_19 said they knew this digital environment, through the government website Public Domain. And this is probably because these digital libraries are created by institutions, research groups or non-governmental organizations, and they follow copyright norms and only make available works that are in the public domain. Young readers may be unaware of several authors who are not of their time and therefore cannot locate the site unless the schools they attend indicate. As P_M_17_C1 reports, access to this environment for searches of literary works occurs only when the school indicates certain literary readings. Because young readers have a preference for bestsellers, the digital library that serves as a repository for classic works will not be a more favorable digital environment to find works of their own. This dissonance between what the school curriculum prescribes and what young readers prefer restricts the school's ability for guiding students to other networks of literary sociability on the Internet.

The ways of searching for works of digital literature are also not simple. D_F_16_D reports on the procedures needed to find trusted fanfic sites: Look for

4 D_F_16_D: É ... eu vou lá ... pego o livro, dou uma folheada, olho atrás, é a sinopse do livro, o resuminho, aí se eu gostar, eu olho em casa.

E: Hum ... tá ...e você, aí geralmente você acha na Internet?

D_F_16_D: Hum rum.

E: Hum, o que você já fez em relação a isso, que, que livro que você fez isso e você achou na Internet, você lembra?

D_F_16_D: Que livro? Deixa eu ver.

E: Você foi na [livraria] Leitura, gostou...

D_F_16_D: Divergente, é uma ... é uma trilogia, e ...eu baixei os três livros, é ... na Internet.

E: Por esse site?

D_F_16_D: Isso. [originally in Portuguese]

5 Quote translated into French in our source.

the most organized and least spammed, and then select from the various fanfics available on the site to start reading. This selection takes place through some criteria, among them, the amount of comments about the work. After locating the site and the work, the young reader begins another stage: to check if the chosen work is to his liking. The choice of the work is not done by the title or the writer / creator, but in a random way. The reader starts reading a fanfic and, if it is not of interest, interrupts it and starts reading another, until coming to a final selection of the work to be read.

When R_M_15_C1 is undecided on which theme to select to read a fanfic, a search system of an RPG site to indicate themes is used. Then, he/she searches on Google using the word “fanfic” followed by the topic indicated on the RPG site and thus selects a site from the list to start reading a fanfic. This decision then goes through the consultation of additional sites.

The specificity of this kind of work in digital literature probably facilitates this form of selection, as there are fanfics of various sizes with few or many chapters, and on a single website, the quantity of themes and works is also abundant. All these paths to digitized and digital literary works become simpler when there is a network of literary sociability on the Internet. The sharing of information by members of the community of literary readers who read, comment and review the works, allows the young reader access to websites, blogs, social networks where they can find not only digital literary works, but also digitized literature read by their peers.

This sharing of information also favors the choice of works that are to their liking, more assertively than they would in physical bookstores, although many of them highlight the best-recommended books by means of reminders to the reader posted on the shelves. This strategy does not compare with those used by real readers, sharing their impressions of their literary readings in reader communities, site assessments on websites, and other literary sociability environments on the Internet.

G_F_17_B1 points out that the recommendations are important, especially for those readers who are new to digital literary reading. Because they do not know how to navigate in those digital environments to find the desired works, they can give up the search and remain on the sites and applications make available only works in the public domain. For the young reader, this would be the reason why classical works that are considered uninteresting are ranked among the most downloaded works.

Finally, we also see in young readers the effects of convergent actions around the same literary work, exerted by various media that allow them to know new works of digital and digitized literature related to other types of media or visual narratives. By watching series, movies, anime or playing video-games, young readers soon feel motivated to verify the existence of a literary work that is related to the same content. This convergent thinking (JENKINS, 2009) — enhanced by contemporary marketing strategies that link products to

different types of media and to different forms and spaces of circulation — provides an extension of the practices of digital literary reading.

M_F_17_C1: No, let's suppose ... some of the series that I like, I try to know if there's a book about it. Or, if not, some book that I already have reference from friends of mine that have already read and told me about. Then I search the Internet and read it.⁶

Thus, cinema, TV series and videogames are mobilizers for young readers to perform searches of digitized literary books with related contents. For reading digital literature, this type of convergent thinking is equally relevant. D_F_16_D points to movies and anime as topics of interest in searching for fanfics.

III. DIGITAL LITERARY READING EXPERIENCES

The six young readers, whose practices of digital literary reading we followed through the reports over seven months, have said that they carry out readings of digitized and digital literature. In the second type of digital literary reading, fanfiction, hyperfiction, interactive fiction, and online RPG were cited, and in the first, they mentioned scanned literary books and comic books, including Manga.

Most of them reported more experience of literary readings with digitized literature than with digital literature. This reality has relations with the diffusion of the digital literature, still restricted in Brazil. We have found that experience with digital literary readings are carried out by young readers for study, for entertainment purposes, but also for written production, as the young reader P_M_17_C1 reported in interview sessions when he reported that he had already written fanfics.

Next, we will discuss some types of digital literary reading, relating them to the genres or modes of their production and publication.

3.1 *The reading of fanfiction*

The range of interests and practices of digital literary reading are diverse and intertwined. Among the types of digital literary reading, the most widespread genre of digital literature in the country is fanfiction. Among the six young readers we surveyed, four of them, P_M_17_C1, D_F_16_D, G_F_17_B1 and R_M_15_C1, are familiar with and have had a frequent practice of reading the genre. L_M_15, a friend of R_M_15_C1, reports that he does not like fanfics because it is a collective work: "I don't think it is fun to take something that is not

⁶ M_F_17_C1: Não, vamos supor... igual das séries que eu gosto, eu procuro saber se tem o livro. Ou se não algum livro que eu já tenho referência de amigas minhas que já leram e aí falam para mim. Ai eu procuro na Internet e leio. [originally in Portuguese]

from that author, you know? You take the universe from an author ... but you do not read something that is really his ...”⁷. For this young reader, the literary production coming from the handwritten and printed tradition in which the work is written only by one writer gains preference in his choices of literary readings.

Despite the ingrained idea of the individual literary author, the history of the book shows that there were often multiple agencies in the production of the works both in manuscript works and in the printed works, but they were implicit actions (CHARTIER R., 1998; GOMÉZ, 2014). However, in the production and publication of works in digital culture, multiple authorship is part of certain genres and it is expected that this intervention will be made, explicitly.

As for the forms of fanfics, read by young readers, P_M_17_C1 reports to have read collaboratively written works, different from the fanfic format read by D_F_16_D and G_F_17_B1, which were written by only one writer. The young reader found out about this type of work by herself, while looking for information about movies and anime that she liked. During the interview period, she reported that she had not read it for five months, because she preferred to read on her tablet that it was defective. During the interview sessions, the young reader resumed reading fanfics and this practice was strengthened after the acquisition of a smartphone. The first reading was of a fanfic with the theme of a game she likes, *League of Legends*. In order to select the work, she verified, among the diverse options of fanfic on the subject, available in various sites, one that had a grammatically correct text. According to that young reader: “I prefer it as if ... if it were a book, even, correct spelling, with certain paragraph, punctuation, I prefer that.”⁸

The fanfiction reading experience of G_F_17_B1 occurred when she was fifteen years old, on the advice of a friend who had created a fanfic about a heavy metal band. Like D_F_16_D, G_F_17_B1, carried out readings of this kind sporadically for the last two months of the research period. During the interview sessions, G_F_17_B1 again searched for fanfics and shared reading, according to her, a type of literary work available on blogs and written by more than one person, “I looked for the two that were ... the ones I read the most, the ones I liked the most. Fanfic, I found a lot, right, and ... andI didn’t find any of the shared reading,” as she states.⁹

The ephemerality of works in digital media creates a fast renewal of possibilities for literary reading, while erasing others. In this sense, we cannot say that printed culture suffers from a similar problem. Besides, the quality of the works read does not go through the same criteria of legitimacy present in the literary or editorial field in its conventional forms. Thus, the analysis that read-

7 “é...não sinto muito graça em pegar uma coisa que não seja...daquele autor sabe? Você pega o universo de um autor...mas você não lê algo que seja realmente dele...”. [originally in Portuguese]

8 “[...] Eu prefiro como se ... se fosse um livro, mesmo, ortografia certinha, com parágrafo certo, pontuação, eu prefiro assim”. [originally in Portuguese]

9 “Procurei os dois, que eram os ... que eu mais lia, os que eu mais gostava. Fanfic eu achei bastante, né, e... e... a leitura compartilhada eu não achei nenhuma”. [originally in Portuguese]

ers D_F_16_D and G_F_17_B1 do on the quality and the form of the digital literary works they like reading shows that they use a repertoire of evaluation associated to the tradition of printed works.

R_M_15_C1, who is very fond of fanfiction, and only reads works in English, almost on a daily basis, presents some reading habits such as remembering the titles of the works being read, a more direct search for works of interest that indicate this youngster is a more attentive reader, especially considering that fanfiction is a genre in which creators/writers can start writing a narrative but if they lose interest or do not wish to continue writing it they can stop before its conclusion, which may discourage the young readers to follow the ongoing posting of the chapters.

P_M_17_C1: It was like that, something without commitment, like some kind a forum, and people posted, or they totally invented, a small thing, I don't know, about five pages a week or a day. And I just don't remember anyone finishing one. And people were taking too long and I would lose interest. And the person who was writing the Fanfiction was not interested in doing it anymore.¹⁰

D_F_16_D and R_M_15_C1 report that they were apprehensive about the posting by the creators/writers of the forthcoming chapters. This relationship of loyalty with the work and the need to read it makes them access the site daily on their most used digital devices or any other digital device they find available. In order not to be apprehensive about waiting for chapter posts, D_F_16_D prefers to select fanfics that are finalized and this is related to the idea of completeness of the work. Loyalty to a work is conditioned by a regular posting of the creator/writer. This posting should proceed at short intervals, otherwise the young reader will not create a bond with the work.

It should be emphasized that this genre of digital literature may have only one chapter or several, as mentioned by the young readers in the sections below. Themes also vary and can be a creation with a plotline similar to the literary works taken for reference or they can diverge completely from them, but with some elements and characters pertaining to the work of reference. The creation can be shared with others interested in the work or only one creator/writer writes and post the chapters.

The continuity of the reading of a fanfic can be based on the comments of the readers of the work, indicating, thus, the influence of the network of literary sociability on the Internet. According to R_M_15_C1, he uses this strategy when he begins to lose interest in the work he has read, i.e., he categorizes the work as "strange/bad." Then he looks for the comments of other readers for information on the continuity of the story. The young reader reports the existence of

¹⁰ P_M_17_C1: Era tipo assim, era uma coisa bem sem compromisso, tipo algum fórum, e as pessoas postavam, ou elas inventavam completamente, uma coisa pequena, sei lá, de umas cinco páginas semanalmente ou por dia. E só que não me lembro de ninguém terminando uma. E acabava que o pessoal prolongava demais, e eu perdia o interesse. E a pessoa que estava fazendo a *fanfiction* não tinha mais o interesse em fazer. [originally in Portuguese]

two ways of using comments: before and during reading. Before reading, the amount of comments about a work can be a sign of both positive and negative popularity. After reading it, it is the content of the comments that is important. In spite of the relevance of the comments before and after reading, young readers generally do not have the habit of writing and posting comments, but only reading them, since, in general, it is necessary to register on the website for writing and posting comments. This unwillingness to register is likely to be a time-consuming task because it requires users to enter their personal data. Some sites create registrations using data from social networks, migrating data from those who may possibly be already registered.

3.2 *The reading of hyperfiction*

In addition to the fanfic, another genre of digital literature read was hyperfiction. This was the particular case of M_F_17_B2, who sought information on digital literature and located the website of the *Brazilian Digital Literature Movement*, which provides works of this nature. On the site, the young reader found other digital literary works, such as *O Jogo do Gato Poeta* [The Game of the Cat Poet] by Ana Mello, and the *Minicontos Coloridos* [Colorful Mini-Short Stories] by Marcelo Spalding. The first one intrigued the young reader because he could not solve the mystery to find the name of the cat, and the second caused surprise because it is a work that, at each access, generates a different work, from the reader's participation in selecting the percentage of the colors, red, green and blue.

We can consider that this type of work can be read more than once, because the young reader can access the same work and, at each reading, it presents itself differently. The interest of M_F_17_B2 for the works of digital literature available on the website of the *Digital Literature Movement* is related to a literary reading experience permeated by the reader's participation, heightened through the intense use of multimodal elements and interactivity.

M_F_17_B2: In my opinion ... because I didn't know it ... it caught my attention because ... it kind of ... touched in several other senses ... not only in vision or imagination ... same ... it was in the imagination ... in the knowledge ... I heard the sound ... it was very cool ...¹¹

This form of reading is quite different from what is expected from a conventional printed book, which is called by Anne-Marie Chartier (2016) as reception reading. By problematizing the reading models, in general, in several historical periods, the author comments on the contemporary model of interaction by reading and writing that, when combining reading with acts of writing, create

¹¹ M_F_17_B2: Na minha opinião...porque igual eu não conhecia...ela me chamou atenção porque...tipo...tocou em vários outros sentidos...não só na visão nem na imaginação...igual...foi na imaginação...no conhecimento...eu ouvi o som...foi muito bacana... [originally in Portuguese]

a new model of reading in which the act of reading is to communicate, that is, the interaction is essential for the creation of the work. If we take this idea to digital literary reading, we would have to verify moments in which there is this simultaneity, such as when works are created collaboratively.

One of the attempts to search for works of digital literature by the young reader M_F_17_B2 occurred on a social media network:

M_F_17_B2: I started reading more ... I searched ... I tried to enter a community on Face... (Facebook) ... but there was one there that was Spanish ... I said that way ... how cool ... there's even outside Brazil ... there it was in Spanish ... so then I could not read much...¹²

The surprise with the works in other countries and the lack of knowledge in a foreign language can be indicative of some impediments to the expansion of the reading of digital literature. The creations of this type of literature, outside Brazil, are in wide expansion and diffusion.

M_F_17_B2: I tried to look for a few more ... I just wanted to look ... I even talked to Walisson [the young reader's boyfriend] on my cell phone ... because my computer was a bit more restricted ... because I did not find any more sites ...¹³

3.3 *Reading interactive fiction*

Another genre of digital literature read by P_M_17_C1, M_M_17_B2, R_M_15_C1 and G_F_17_B1 that appeared in the research is interactive fiction, which, according to Hayles (2009), has characteristics of games, but with fictional stories that require actions from the reader to define the course of the narrative. When they cite this literary genre, young readers call it game. The combination of real and fictional stories, the participation of young readers in the creation of the work and other elements such as the mystery and the dispute between the players sharpen the interest for this type of work. R_M_15_C1 and D_F_16_D report playing/reading online RPG, and we consider the RPG text as a type of literature. R_M_15_C1 differentiates the RPG he plays/reads in a chat room with the RPG titled *Dungeons & Dragons*, leader in the market for role-playing board games and precursor of the most modern RPG.

R_M_15_C1 reports that to play/read RPG, takes at least two people and at most five or six, more than that would be very confusing: "Everybody has an

12 M_F_17_B2: "aí eu comecei a ler mais...procurei... eu tentei entrar em uma comunidade no face (Facebook)...mas tinha uma lá que era espanhol...eu falei assim nó...que legal...tem até fora do Brasil...aí era em espanhol... então aí eu não consegui ler muito...". [originally in Portuguese]

13 M_F_17_B2:: "tentei procurar mais alguns...só que eu queria procurar...eu até falei como Walisson [namorado da leitora jovem] no celular...porque no computador já ficou um pouco mais restrito... porque eu não achei mais sites...". [originally in Portuguese]

opinion, there the opinion of that person can, uhm, can conflict with that of others. There's a whole mess there.”¹⁴ As the young reader uses a free chat room, it is not allowed to exclude a player, as this is only possible in paid rooms. The match can be stopped or resumed at any time.

We have found that the game/reading is created by means of a shared fictional written production, different from the RPG game/reading that D_F_16_D plays, since it is a combination of RPG elements with real-time strategy games and, in order to be played, it is necessary to access or download the game from its website. *The League of Legends* was also mentioned by R_M_15_C1 throughout the interview sessions.

3.4 The reading of digitized literary works

In this section, we conclude with the report of experiences of the young readers with readings of digitized literature. These are the most frequent among them. However, they are restricted to only two types: literary works that have a printed version and comics. Of the six young readers who participated in the qualitative research phase, M_F_17_B2 and M_M_17_B2 are the biggest readers of digitized literary books. In this case, access and dissemination by a particular community of readers — on websites, blogs, social media networks and other digital environments — also show that there are literary sociabilities on the Internet around this mode of literary reading. G_F_17_B1, D_F_16_D, and R_M_15_C1 have had few experiences with digitized literary reading, and perhaps because of this, when they read a book of literature, they prefer the printed version:

D_F_16_D: Digital. Well, what I read on the Internet was *Moreninha*, the *Auto da Barca do Inferno* ... let me see. I think these are the two, which I remember are these two.

E: And what are they?

D_F_16_D: These are classic works that I read more because of school work.¹⁵

G_F_17_B1 reported having searched in his smartphone book app for other digitized works but did not like the works found and read only a few chapters of a work in which he was initially interested. Another type of work of digitized literature indicated by S_M_19 and L_M_15, friend of M_M_17_B2 and R_M_15_C1, respectively, were Mangas and comics.

¹⁴ “Toda pessoa tem uma opinião, aí a opinião dessa pessoa pode, ahm, pode entrar em conflito com a das outras. Aí fica uma bagunça toda aí”. [originally in Portuguese]

¹⁵ D_F_16_D: Digital. Bom, que eu já li na Internet foi *A Moreninha*, o *Auto da Barca do Inferno*... deixa eu ver. Acho que são estes dois, que eu lembro são estes dois.

E: E que são eles?

D_F_16_D: São obras clássicas que eu li por causa mais de trabalho da escola. [originally in Portuguese]

S_M_19: No ... I'm reading little ... because as I follow ... I'm following a series of manga and comics ... so it's out every week ... there ... it's the only one I have been reading ... then I read on my cell phone ... or on the computer ...

L_M_15: I have a habit of reading a little of comics on the Internet ... because there are many sites that release these comics ... online ... for free ...¹⁶

Young readers are expanding their literary reading experiences with digital culture, seeking access to literary works that previously were only possible to read in printed versions, acquired in newsstands or other places of commercialization. The release of free digitized works on the Internet, in spite of copyright issues as mentioned previously, favors literary reading experiences, but we also observe little diversified practices, since they are limited to literary works in the form of classic books and comics.

IV. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Digital search environments are diverse, but not always easily understood by young readers. The practices of digital literary reading are permeated by the ephemerality of the works and the difficulty of relocating them, again, after reading. This is because readers generally do not remember the website, the title of the work, the name of the author, or the path taken to find them. For every type of digital literary reading, whether digitized or born-digital literature, there are different ways of accessing them in the digital environments that make them available. For each digital environment, specific procedures are also necessary for young readers to locate works of interest. These practices often depend on a network of literary sociability on the Internet providing shared information so that young readers are more successful in their searches and able to increase their digital literary reading.

It is understood, therefore, that even considering the problems related to access and the production of digital literature in Portuguese in Brazil, the digital literary reading experiences of young readers are carried out with both works of digitized and digital literature, the latter being the most widely read. Each type of work demands particular uses and forms of appropriation. Even though reading is a solitary act, the reading experience is shared through literary sociability on the Internet and the specific demand of some types of digital literary works, such as fanfics and online RPG.

We have found that the socioeconomic strata of the young readers are not a determining factor in their experience of digital literary reading, since all of

16 S_M_19: Não...tô lendo pouco...porque como eu acompanho...tô acompanhando uma série de mangá e de história em quadrinho...então sai toda semana...ai... é a única que eu tô lendo...ai eu leio no celular...ou no computador...

L_M_15: Eu tenho costume de ler um pouco de quadrinhos pela Internet...porque existem muitos sites que liberam esses quadrinhos... on-line... de graça... [originally in Portuguese]

them, regardless of their social strata, have digital devices and access to the Internet. The difference is when accessing mobile digital devices and a mobile Internet data plan. In this context, it is the possession of a private digital device — that is, not shared with family members — and the mobility of digital technology that allows the expansion of digital literary reading experiences.

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