Communities of Readers: Youth Culture and the Acts of Decollecting / *Comunidades de leitores: cultura juvenil e os atos de descolecionar*

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to discuss the constitution of communities of readers based on the Bakhtin Circle's conceptions of language, centrifugal and centripetal forces; Canclini's understanding of culture/collection; contemporary authors's reflections on youths and youth culture, and Chartier's reflection on reading. It interests us to problematize how these communities are constituted and how the reading practices occur as they are related to works that are placed outside the canon and are not considered "good reading". As part of a broader research study, we investigated how these youths are organized in communities of readers for the production and sharing of knowledge and experience.

KEYWORDS: Communities of readers; Youth culture; Reading; Centripetal and centrifugal forces

RESUMO

Este artigo se propõe discutir a constituição de comunidades de leitores, a partir de concepções advindas do Círculo de Bakhtin sobre linguagem, forças centrífugas e centrípetas; de Canclini sobre cultura/coleção; de reflexões de autores contemporâneos sobre juventudes e cultura juvenil e de Chartier sobre leitura. Interessa-nos problematizar como se constituem essas comunidades e como se dão as práticas leitoras em torno de obras que se colocam fora do cânone e da "boa leitura". Investigamos, em uma pesquisamaior, como esses jovens se organizam em comunidades de leitores para a produção e para o compartilhamento de saberes e de experiências.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Comunidades de leitores; Cultura juvenil; Leitura; Forças centrípetas e centrífugas

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> To each reader every single reading experience is unique. This singularity, however, is traversed by that which makes this reader similar to those who belong to the same community.
> *Roger Chartier*[12]

> [A]ll cultures are border cultures. All the arts develop in relation to other arts: handicrafts migrate from the countryside to the city; movies, videos, and songs that recount events of one people are interchanged with others. Thus cultures lose the exclusive relation with their territory, but they gain in communication and knowledge.
> *Nestor Canclini*[34]

Nobody questions the fact that the practice of reading begins in spaces and time periods outside schools. It is also unquestionable that these practices give visibility to the reading experiences that are not always centered in a reading selection that schools historically present/defend as a patrimony to be assimilated by young people as they grow up. In this sense, we are interested in problematizing the constitution of the communities of readers that are organized around the reading of sagas, and series books. By reading works outside the canon, and disregarding "good advice," which leads us to what is seen as "good reading" or to litertature that should be read by everyone throughout the times, readers adopt reading practices that challenge the perspectives that limit the understanding of what reading means. Therefore, these young people make other choices, such as sagas, series books, television, and game series, which fuel their desire to read – even when these choices are not often valued as significant to their development as readers.

Thus, we focus on the centrifugal movements of saga – series book — readers who place themselves outside the sphere of the canonic and the discourse that is moved by centripetal forces. The latter attempt to stop the "dispersion," "subversion," and "defiance" of those who prefer reading literature that is regarded as "entertainment," "best-seller," "mass" or as a "scaffold" to readings that are more complex and require a

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[1] TN. I will freely translate all the quotations from books that were not originally published in English or translated into English.

[2] In Portuguese: "Cada leitor, para cada uma de suas leituras, em cada circunstância, é singular. Mas esta singularidade é ela própria atravessada por aquilo que faz que este leitor seja semelhante a todos aqueles que pertencem à mesma comunidade."

[3] CANCLINI. N. *Hybrid Cultures*: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity. Translated by Christopher L. Chiappari and Silvia L. López. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2005.

[4] TN. Canclini (2005, p.261). For reference, see footnote 4.

more qualitative, and literary examination. In the next sections, we will discuss the theoretical grounds for our reflections.

1 Centripetal and Centrifugal Forces or When Gestures of Resistance are Mobilized

When discussing the stylistics of the novel, Bakhtin (1981)[5] mentions the forces that operate in the verbal-ideological development of certain social groups. Recognized as the forces that unify and centralize the verbal-ideological world, the centripetal forces oppose the heterodiscourse of the world of life.[6] [7] Therefore, the forces of contention and centralization operate for the defense of a unique language, which

> […] at the same time […] makes its real presence felt as a force for overcoming this heteroglossia [heterodiscourse], imposing specific limits to it, guaranteeing a certain maximum of mutual understanding and crystalizing into a real, although still relative, unity – the unity of the reigning conversational (everyday) and literary language, "correct language" (BAKHTIN, 1981, p.270).[8]

This unitary and common language is a system comprised of linguistic norms. Opposing this perspective, Bakhitn chooses to understand language not as a system of abstract grammatical categories, but as *ideologically saturated*, as worldview, and even as "a concrete opinion, insuring a *maximum* of mutual understanding in all spheres of ideological life" (BAKHTIN, 1981, p.271; emphasis in original).[9] Therefore, a unitary language makes known the "[...] the forces working toward concrete verbal and

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[5] BAKHTIN, M. Discourse in the Novel. *In*: BAKHTIN, M. *The Dialogic Imagination*: Four Essays by M. M. Bakhtin. Edited by Michael Holquist; translated by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1981. pp.259-422.

[6] Our understanding of the world of life is based on Bakhtin's formulations in *Toward a Philosophy of the Act* (1993). According to him, the world of life is the place/time in which the subject is a center of value that ethically acts and responds to his/her acts of language. In this world of life the subject has no alibi as his/her concrete and unique acts cannot be replicated by other subjects. To act in the world of life is to be answerable and responsible for the concrete acts that impact this world.

BAKHTIN, M. *Toward a Philosophy of the Act*. Edited by Vadim Liapunov and Michael Holquist; translated by Vadim Liapunov. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1993.

[7] TN. Paulo Bezerra, the translator of the essay Discourse in the Novel into Brazilian Portuguese, opted to translate *raznorétchie*, usually translated as heteroglossia, as heterodiscourse (diversity of discourses). According to Bezerra, in his Glossary (*in* Bakhtin, 2015), the social heterodiscourse encompasses the diversity of all the sociocultural voices in their historical and anthropological dimension.

[8] For reference, see footnote 6.

[9] For reference, see footnote 6.

ideological unification and centralization, which develop in vital connection with the processes of sociopolitical and cultural centralization" (BAKHTIN, 1981, p.271).[10]

In this sense, it is evident that the forces of contention and unification are not limited solely to the system of language because discourses are the matrices and nurturers of the processes of sociopolitical and cultural centralization. The attempts of discourse centralization that redound socially and culturally coexist, necessarily and dialogically, with the centrifugal forces, i.e., the ones that corrode the efforts of unification, and centralization. Moreover, laughter and carnivalization are the most powerful agents in/of this process of corrosion.

In the arena where discourse practices battle, the discourses that convey absolute truths (centripetal forces) also struggle as they try to impose a verboideological centralization that tries to restrain heterodiscourse, the dissonant voices (the centrifugal forces). From this battle between forces, accords, adherence, mutual complementation, fusions or, otherwise, divergence, disagreements, battles, questionings, refusals.

> It is clear then that the Bakhtin Circle undestands dialogical relations as loci of tension between utterances, which not only coexist but also become tense within the dialogical relations. Even the answerability, which is characterized by the unconditional adherence to the speech of others, operates in this place of tension between this speech and other speeches (social voices): to unconditionally accept an utterance (and its respective social voice) is also to implicitly (or even explicitly) reject other utterances (other social voices) that may be dialogically opposed to it (FARACO, 2009, p.69).[11]

Therefore, Bakhtin (1981)[12] declares that any utterance is a tense and contradictory unity of two opposing tendencies of the verbal life: the centripetal forces (those that try to constrain dispersion, heterogeneity, heterodiscourse) and the centrifugal forces (irony, any type of polemic, hybridization or reevaluation, the overlap of voices).

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[10] For reference, see footnote 6.
[11] In the original: "Fica claro, então, que o Círculo de Bakhtin entende as relações dialógicas como espaços de tensão entre enunciados. Estes, portanto, não apenas coexistem, mas se tensionam nas relações dialógicas. Mesmo a responsividade caracterizada pela adesão incondicional ao dizer de outrem se faz no ponto de tensão deste dizer com outros dizeres (vozes sociais): aceitar incondicionalmente um enunciado (e sua respectiva voz social) é também implicitamente (ou mesmo explicitamente) recusar outros enunciados (outras vozes sociais) que podem se opor dialogicamente a ele."
[12] For reference, see footnote 6.

Based on this perspective about the dialogical dynamics of/in discourse practices, we believe that the communities of readers confront cristalized and monologizing discourses about the reading practices that are grounded in the idea of a canon – a collection of works that are socially valued as "good literature." In the next section we will discuss the concepts of collection and decollection.

2 Reading as an Act of Decollecting

Our reflection focuses on the reading practices of young people in communities of readers. These practices oppose the canon and the absolutized truths about what good reading is, and make the centrifugal forces evident, which destabilize the statute of reader, reading, and literature. These young people create reading paths that give visibility to new collections that are not always valued positively. They live with assessments that characterize their object of interest as poor quality literature, subliterature, mass culture or any other disqualifying expression. As we aim to understand these centrifugal movements, fostered by other reading practices, our study is grounded in Canclini's (2005, p.223) reflections on the concepts of collection and the act of "decollecting":

> The formation of specialized collections of high art and folklore was a device in modern Europe, and later in Latin America, for ordering symbolic goods in separate groups and hierarchizing them. A certain type of paintings, music, and books belonged to those who were cultured, even though they did not have them in their houses and even though it was through access to museums, concert halls, and libraries. To know their order was already a way of possessing them that distinguished them from those who did not know how to relate to that order.[13]

According to the author, the history of art and literature was constructed on the basis of these collections (housed in museums and libraries). However, these collections and their agony – the name Canclini (2005)[14] gives to the critical position of the canonical works as they strive to maintain their locus and social recognition in the contemporary times – are the most evident symptom of how categorizations that used to

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[13] For reference, see footnote 4.
[14] For reference, see footnote 4.

differentiate the cultured from the popular, and both from the massive, are dissipating. Therefore, fixed and monologizing boundaries between groups in cultures are not as stable as fixed because

> Cultures no longer are grouped in fixed and stable wholes, and therefore the possibility disappears of being cultured by knowing the repertory of "the great works," or of being popular because one manages the meaning of the objects and messages produced by a more or less closed community (an ethnic group, a neighborhood, a class). Now these collections renew their composition and their hierarchy with the fashions; they are crossed all the time and, to top it all off, each user can make his or her own collection. The technologies of reproduction permit each person to set up a repertory of records and cassettes in his or her home that combine the cultured with the popular, including those who already do this in the structure of their works: Piazzola, who mixes the tango with jazz and classical music, and Caetano Veloso and Chico Buarque, who appropriate at once the experimentation of the concrete poets, Afro-Brazilian traditions, and post-Webernian musical experimentation. In addition, there is a proliferation of reproduction devices that we cannot define as either cultured or popular. In them collections are lost, and images and contexts—along with the semantic and historical references that used to bind together their meanings—are destructed (CANCLINI, 2005, p.224).[15]

The long quotation of Canclini's reflections is justified by the clarity with which he presents a dialogical process that occurs in cultures based on the concept of collection and the idea of decollecting as something that belongs to different cultural practices. He does not understand it as something harmful; he considers this process of creating other collections an act of relativizing any type of fundamentalism:

> Actually, there are no reasons to lament the decomposition of rigid collections that, by separating the cultured, the popular, and the massive, promoted inequalities. Nor do we think that there are prospects for restoring the classic order of modernity. We see in the irreverent crossings occasions for relativizing religious, political, national, ethnic, and artistic fundamentalisms that absolutize certain patrimonies and discriminate against the rest (CANCLINI, 2005, p.227).[16]

As he valued the "irreverent crossings," the act of decollecting these fixed and stable groups in cultures provides us with a more generous understanding of reading

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[15] For reference, see footnote 4.
[16] For reference, see footnote 4.

practices that occur without the consent of the school, family or any other institution that is historically responsible for the development of the "good reader." Regarless of any monologizing discourse on the value of these works, these youths are reading sagas or series books, such as *Harry Potter*, *Percy Jackson & the Olympians*, *A Game of Thrones*, *Divergent*, *The Hunger Games*. They are also creating fanfiction and publicity websites, promoting school jamborees, staging plays or sketches whose motivational power is the plot or the characters of these works. Therefore, in the chronotope of these communities of readers, reading occurs as an act of decollecting, creating another series, another collection that opposes that which is socially valued as literature.

Therefore, identifying reading with good literary works and the reader with the reader of canonical texts is denying the existence of other readers who make unique choices of (printed or virtual) texts and of different forms of reading in present times. We can go back in time when young people would oppose school, family or socially valued collections and go to newsstands to have access to what was called a "newsstand novel," such as Júlia, Sabrina, Bianca, or to furtively read censured works by Adelaide Carraro or Cassandra Rios. They became readers by reading these works and, similar to our comtemporary youths, they were either not seen as readers or considered readers of bad taste. The ones who used to read comic books also faced the same social assessment, as their choices were judged based on the canon, and literary tradition. Moreover, for us to better understand these reading practices, we need to understand the conception of "youth" and juvenile culture. We will discuss these conceptions in the next section.

3 Voices about Young People and Youth Culture

As to the condition of being young, Canevacci (2005) points out that young people are immersed in a complex context of the information and communication technologies, and the unescapable culture of consumerism. They thus create repertoires and paths that are movable, disorderly, and multifaced, and dialogically confront the possibility of being conceptually framed. Therefore, consumerism, midiatic communication, hybridization, culture convergence, and subject fragmentation make visible the experience of being a young person who defies institutions, knowledge,

norms, and regulations. On being young, Dayrell (2003) even argues that on a daily basis we engage in representations of youth that are anchored on the social idea that youth is a transitory state in which the young person is a subject in the process of becoming someone. Therefore, the opportunity to see him/her in the present, as a person who is here and now, is missed. In the same vein, the youth is also seen as a stage filled with problems and conflicts; based on this perspective, the patterns of behavior that are considered problematic, such as distancing from the family, resisting school, being rebellious for no reason or justification, and being irresponsible and harmfully immature, are attributed to young people. Problematizing such representations may foster a clearer understanding of the ways young people have their experiences – in the case of this article, their reading experiences. Thus, it is necessary to understand that the condition of being young, and the meanings we attribute to this stage in life, are sociohistorically constructed. In this sense, we should take into account social differences as well as the differences related to class, gender, ethnic group, culture, belonging.

For Dayrell (2009), youth cultures are symbolic expressions of the condition of youth. Therefore, they are constituted and manifest in diversity, and become visible through different styles, whose bodies and appearances are some of their distinctive features. Thus, youth cultures give rise to the construction of practices, relations and symbols through which young people create their own unique places that expand circuits and networks that allow them to enter the public sphere. Daryll (2009) still explains that sociability, connected to cultural expressions, is another dimension of the condition of youth. Other sociabilities related to the adult world are created and create other relations on the subjective/collective plane. To be young, in this perspective, is not a social, political, economic or cultural condition alone:

> Youth is a socially constructed category, formulated in the context of particular economic, social or political circumstances. It is a category, therefore, that is subject to be modified throughout time (PAIS, 2003, p.37).[17]

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[17] In the original: "A juventude é uma categoria socialmente construída, formulada no contexto de particulares circunstâncias económicas, sociais ou políticas; uma categoria sujeita, pois, a modificar-se ao longo do tempo."

This way, it is not possible for us to compare or hope that young people today are similar to young people of the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, or 1990s. If we follow a historical perspective of language and subject, as an individual that is constructed and constituted in different interactions, we need to understand that youth is a culturally constructed category – not an essence. Therefore, this plural perspective of the individual impacts on the act of homogenizing what is necessarily hetero/multiple/ plural: the subjects in their eventness.

In this sense, we consider young people themselves, and not an essence of youth or being young. These youths create cultural practices, which are also marked by difference, and uniqueness, as Pais points out:

> That young people do not participate in the same type of social and cultural practices; that they live them differently; that different leisure activities underlie different youth cultures […]; that these social and cultural practices – although acclaiming and legitimizing intragenerational differences – also acclaim and legitimize intergenerational differences; ultimately, that youth socialization in the leisure domain generates different youth cultures (PAIS, 2003, p.226-227).[18]

Reading in communities of readers makes it possible to see these singularities. This form of sociability is engendered with leisure spaces that, according to Carrano, are responsible for the formation of subjectivities and values. This is because

> The phenomena related to leisure activities are in the center of the processes of the development of subjectivities and social values in contemporary societies. Especially for a young person, leisure activities are in a priviledged space/time in which personal and collective identity is forged (CARRANO, 2003, p.138).[19]

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[18] In the original: "Que os jovens não participam no mesmo tipo de práticas sociais e culturais; que as vivem de forma diferente; que diferentes práticas de lazer estão na base de diferentes culturas juvenis [...]; que essas práticas sociais e culturais – embora consagrando e legitimando diferenciações intrageracionais – também consagram e legitimam diferenciações intergeracionais; enfim, que a socialização dos jovens, no domínio do lazer, origina diferentes culturas juvenis."

[19] In the original: "Os fenômenos relacionados com as atividades de lazer estão no centro dos processos de formação da subjetividade e dos valores sociais nas sociedades contemporâneas. Para os jovens, especialmente, as atividades de lazer se constituem num espaço/tempo privilegiado de elaboração da identidade pessoal e coletiva."

His statement allows us to conclude that these leisure spaces, which are often seen as spaces of rebelliousness, idleness and low productivity, are chronotopes[20] that feed/nurture youth culure to a greater degree than those places that are socially consolidated as the ones responsible to forge youth identities, such as the school, family, religious institutions. Besides, "in seeming 'idleness' young people eventually develop genuine forms of social participation as they effectively engage in certain activities and build reinforcing facades of group cohesion" (PAIS, 2003, p.115; emphasis in original).[21]

In this chronotope of the community of readers, young people are revealed as subjects that follow the norms they create. These norms aim to maintain the functioning and the sociability that is engendered in rules that revoice the instructions we find in the world of life in its different spheres.

In these spaces for leisure, contrary to what is thought of as 'idleness' or unproductivity, young people create spaces of sociability that conjugate reading, (fanfic) production, game playing (RPG and others), play or sketch staging, website creation; that is, they create networks of coexistence and dissemination that resemble what Pais calls groups of friends:

> Goups of friends are examples of these group networks as they ascertain some identification between the different elements that constitute them (they share the same musical, literary, etc. tastes) and function as coherent contexts that structure the daily routine of the young people who integrate them and the activities that they do together. In fact, for young people in general, group friends are the mirror of their own identity, a means by which they establish similarities and differences in relation to others (PAIS, 2003, pp.114-115).[22]

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[20] Bakhtin (2018, p.11) defines chronotope as "the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spacial relationships." He states that he employs it from Eintein's theory of relativity "almost as a metaphor." For him, in this concept what is important is the inseparability of space and time (time as the fouth dimension of space). As they are inseparable, time reflects in space and space becomes meaningful and is measured with time. [BAKHTIN, M. Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel: Notes toward a Historical Poetics. In: BAKHTIN, M. *The Dialogic Imagination*: Four Essays by M. M. Bakhtin. Edited by Michael Holquist; translated by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1981. pp.84-258].

[21] In the original: "num aparente 'não fazer nada', os jovens acabam por desenvolver formas genuínas de participação social, através da efectiva adesão a determinadas actividades e da construção de fachadas reforçativas da coesão de grupo."

[22] In the original: "Os grupos de amigos são exemplo destas redes grupais, ao assegurarem uma certa identificação entre os vários elementos que os constituem (têm gostos semelhantes musicais, literários, etc.) e ao funcionarem como contextos coerentes de estruturação dos tempos quotidianos dos jovens que

These reflections about youths (in the plural form as there is no single youth, but different singularities), being young, and youth culture, anchor our research on the reading practice of communities of readers. To think about how a young person behaves with books and creates sociabilities based on this loving relationship with texts means to understand who this young person is and in which spaces/times he/she moves.

As we respond to this perspective of youths, our approach to reading is aligned with the understanding that conceives of it as the active responsive understanding (BAKHTIN, 1986)[23] of a singular and historical subject who is formed in the interactions and relations with the other/others. Therefore, we agree with Chartier, when he states that

> It is necessary to take into consideration that reading is always an activity embodied through gestures, spaces, habits. Far from a reading phenomenology that erases all the concrete modalities of the act of reading and characterizes it by means of its effects, postulated as universal, a history of the forms of reading should identify specific dispositions that differentiate communities of readers and reading traditions. This procedure assumes the recognition of different series of contrasts – from the beginning, between reading skills (CHARTIER, 1991, p.178).[24]

Ignoring these aspects may result in a quick – and perhaps biased – appreciation of the forms, gestures, choices, habits, spaces/times of reading of these young people in their communities. Each community of readers develops reading practices and tastes that are unique and different. According to Chartier (1991, p.179),

> [These are] the contrasts between the reading norms that define the uses of books, forms of reading, processes of interpretation to each community of readers – after all, contrasts between extremely diverse

os integram e das atividades que praticam de forma compartilhada. De facto, para a generalidade dos jovens, os amigos de grupo constituem o espelho da sua própria identidade, um meio através do qual fixam similitudes e diferenças em relação a outros."

[23] BAKHTIN, M. The Problem of Speech Genres. *In*: BAKHTIN, M. *Speech Genres & Other Late Essays*.Translated by Vern W. Mcgee. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986. pp.60-102.

[24] In Portuguese: "É preciso considerar também que a leitura é sempre uma prática encarnada em gestos, espaços, hábitos. Longe de uma fenomenologia da leitura que apague todas as modalidades concretas do ato de ler e o caracterize por seus efeitos, postulados como universais, uma história das maneiras de ler deve identificar as disposições específicas que distinguem as comunidades de leitores e as tradições de leitura. O procedimento supõe o reconhecimento de diversas séries de contrastes. De início, entre as competências de leitura."

expectations and interests that different groups of readers have when reading. The different forms of reading depend on such determinations that regulate reading practices. They can be read differently by readers who do not have the same intellectional tools and the same relation with written texts (CHARTIER, 1991, p.179).[25]

In accordance with Chartier (1991, p.181), we seek to pay attention to "[…] the networks of practices that organize the historically and socially different types of relations with texts. Reading is not only an abstract operation of intellection: it is placing the body in play, being inscribed in a space, a relation with the self and the other."[26] Research on reading cannot be limited by what is considered "good" or "adequate"; it has to take into consideration the forms of reading, the processes, the paths, the choices people make during their different reading practices. Chartier (1991, p.151) warns us that

> Reading [...] is one of the constitutive practices of individual intimacy as it takes readers back to their self, their thoughts or emotions in their solitude and refuge. However, it is also at the center of the life of 'sharing groups' [...].[27]

As we adopt this perspective on reading practices and youth paths, we can contest the data presented in research that uses common sense to blame and negate the readings done by these youths. In the research *Retratos da leitura no Brasil* [*Portraits of reading in Brazil*] the increase of the number of books that young people – even students – chose to read in relation to the ones chosen by the school is evident. The figure below shows this fact.
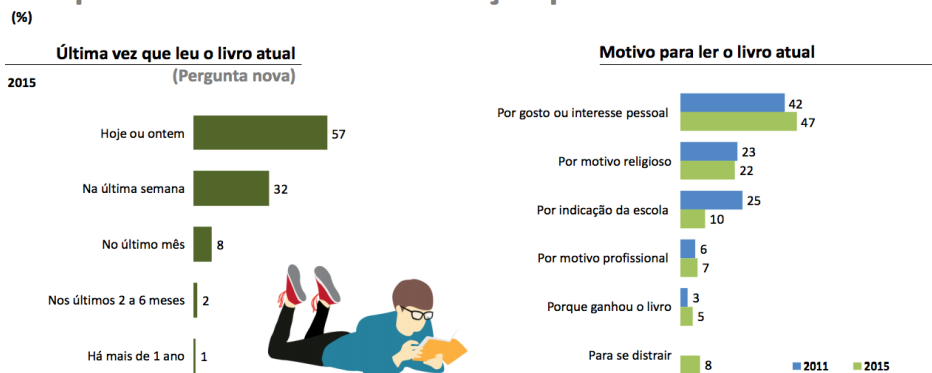
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[25] In Portuguese: "Contrastes igualmente entre normas de leitura que definem, para cada comunidade de leitores, usos do livro, modos de ler, procedimentos de interpretação. Contrastes, enfim, entre as expectativas e os interesses extremamente diversos que os diferentes grupos de leitores investem na prática de ler. De tais determinações, que regulam as práticas, dependem as maneiras pelas quais os textos podem ser lidos, e lidos diferentemente pelos leitores que não dispõem dos mesmos utensílios intelectuais e que não entretêm uma mesma relação como escrito."

[26] In Portuguese: ""[…] as redes de prática que organizam os modos, histórica e socialmente diferençados, da relação com os textos. A leitura não é somente uma operação abstrata de intelecção: é por em jogo o corpo, é inscrição num espaço, relação consigo ou com o outro."

[27] In Portuguese: "A leitura [...] é uma das práticas constitutivas da intimidade individual, remetendo o leitor a si mesmo, a seus pensamentos ou a suas emoções, na solidão e no recolhimento. Mas também está no centro da vida dos 'grupos de convivialidade.'"

Figure 1: Reading Frequency and Motivation to Read – the Current Book in Percentages[28]

Frequência de leitura e motivação para ler o livro atual
(%)

Última vez que leu o livro atual		Motivo para ler o livro atual	
(Pergunta nova)			

2015

Hoje ou ontem — 57
Na última semana — 32
No último mês — 8
Nos últimos 2 a 6 meses — 2
Há mais de 1 ano — 1

Por gosto ou interesse pessoal — 42 / 47
Por motivo religioso — 23 / 22
Por indicação da escola — 25 / 10
Por motivo profissional — 6 / 7
Porque ganhou o livro — 3 / 5
Para se distrair — 8

■2011 ■2015

Source: http://prolivro.org.br/home/images/2016/Pesquisa_Retratos_da_Leitura_no_Brasil_-_2015.pdf. Access on: 03 Jan 2018.

These figures show that readers exist, and this is proven by the frequency of reading (yesterday and today) as well as the significant increase in the number of people who read because of personal interest or taste as a determinant factor of their reading path. They responsivily contest common sense discourses that declare that there are no readers in Brazil or that the school is the only fomenter of reading practices, which leaves the reader with no space to choose his/her own reading path. The same research also informs that reading taste does not always fit the ideal taste of so-called "good literature." Titles include the bible, self-help books, novels (in the 'young adult' genres), bestsellers, sagas, religious books; that is, regardless of the cannon, readers read books that are almost always considered low literature or entertainment literature that has no formative value or does not inspire a more refined literary taste. By stating this, we are not discussing the place of socially valued literature or its value in the aesthetic formation of the subject. On the contrary, we are problematizing the reader's paths, choices or tastes that take him/her to a path of reading practices that should also be valued and respected. Now let us turn to the data shown in the table below.

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[28] TN. On the left we read: [in 2015] the last time you read the current book: today or yesterday – 57%; last week – 32%; last month – 8%; in the last two to six months – 2%; over a year – 1%. On the right, we read: the motivation to read the current book: personal taste or interest – 42% in 2011 and 47% in 2015; religious motivation – 23% in 2011 and 22% in 2015; school indication – 25% in 2011 and 10% in 2015; professional reasons – 6% in 2011 and 7% in 2015; the book was a gift – 3% in 2011 and 5% in 2015; for fun – 8% in 2015.

Table 1: Data on the Most Striking Books and the Most Cited by the Readers Surveyed

The most cited books	2007	2011	2015
	Ranking		Absolute numbers
Bible	1st	1st	482
The Fault in Our Stars	-	-	56
The Shack	-	2nd	44
The Little Prince	5th	5th	41
Fifty Shades of Grey	-	-	32
Diary of a Wimpy Kid	-	-	30
Turma da Mônica	-	-	26
Violetas na Janela	9th	9th	25
O Sítio do Picapau Amarelo	2nd	4th	23
Twilight	-	7th	19
Ágape	-	3rd	18
Dom Casmurro	7th	6th	15
The Alchemist	10th	16th	14
Harry Porter	4th	8th	14
Meu Pé de Laranja Lima	-	-	14
Casamento Blindado	-	-	13
Vidas Secas	-	22nd	13

Source: http://prolivro.org.br/home/images/2016/Pesquisa_Retratos_da_Leitura_no_Brasil_-_2015.pdf.
Access on: 03 Jan 2018

It is still worth highlighting the role that the communities of readers play in Natal, RN (Percy Jackson, Divergente, Harry Potter), where this research was carried out, in the formation of readers, and the creation of a space of sociability, for these young people. The forms of reading, the identities that are built/constituted therein, the reading path (that takes them to the movies, games or otherwise), the relationship between these youths and the socially valued literature (or canon) should become visible so that we can understand these reading paths. We are also sure that a culture of fans or, as Jenkins (2006) calls it, "early settlers," has, in its constitution, not only the desire to share the same desires, longings, tastes, and preferences, but also the controversies, disputes, the power games that equally occur in the verbal interaction, as Vološinov (1986)[29] points out, as he understands the use of language as an arena of struggles.

Finally, we seek to understand these reading practices that occur oustside the school premises and that are often disregarded, devalued or made invisible by teachers or the family of these young readers for the sake of what is valued as reading books, or as "good" reading practices. Such valuation does not allow us to see that these marginal

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[29] VOLOŠINOV, V. *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*. Translated by Ladislav Matejka and I. R. Titunik. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986.

practices develop readers who are enticed and seduced by books, sagas, series that lovingly bring them together to produce new meanings, new practices, and other sociabilities. The next section is dedicated to the Camp Half Blood (CHB), an active community of readers in Natal.

4 Camp Half-Blood: A Community in Focus

Camp Half Blood brings together "tribes" who worship the cinema, manga, the so-called "mass" literature as well as literature that is classified as classic. In this sense, the community operates as a centrifugal force that impacts and subjects to tension the "habits" of reading socially valued literature. According to those who are concerned about the formation of readers who read aesthetically complex literature or the literature that is always referred to as "classic" or any other name given to canonic titles, the readers of this literature would fit into what is called "average reader." Colomer (2014, n.p.) assesses the practices of this reader thus:

> What generally happens, especially during the final years of elementary school, is that they end up being addicted to certain genres and become collectors. When their reading possibilities end, they do not know what to do as they do not know other options. We thus need to pay attention to what kind of books they like and broaden their universe, relating the titles they have already read to other titles that although more challenging and elaborate, resemble the titles they enjoy. We should remember that they are average readers who may feel discouraged by a complex reading, for example.[30]

The remarks of the Spanish researcher make evident a markedly negative point of view in relation to youth reading practices. Her word choices, such as "being addicted to certain genres" and "become collectors" prejudicially value what is a current practice in the communities of young readers who read a lot, and know their favorite works in a detailed and systematic way. They also become collectors and, as such, reading practices do not undermine their reading formation. The fact that they read a

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[30] In the original: "O que geralmente ocorre, principalmente nos anos finais do Ensino Fundamental, é que eles acabam se viciando em determinados gêneros e acabarem virando colecionadores. Quando as possibilidades de leitura se esgotam, não sabem o que fazer, desconhecem outras opções. Precisamos, então, observar de que tipo de obra gostam e ampliar o universo leitor deles, relacionando os títulos que já leem a outros, mais desafiadores e mais elaborados, porém, que preservam alguma semelhança com o que já é apreciado. Lembremos de que são leitores medianos, podem se sentir desestimulados diante de uma leitura complexa, por exemplo."

saga comprised of three or more than five volumes, and wait for the next book release, shows how much they love books, and reading, and that they see themselves as readers, critics, producers of meaning in complex and challenging universes.

These readers have to be respected for their choices, which cannot be taken as an "addiction" or a compulsion of "collectors." Their love for books outside the canon and the construction of a different reading path cannot be understood as simple "scaffolds" for a "more challenging" and "more elaborate" literature. As an act of decollecting, youth reading subjects this very perspective to tension, which limits reading to a collection that someone assesses as better, more complex and more elaborate, and that is almost always comprised of the "classics." At a point in time, the latter were valued as adequate, good, better reading to be practiced by anyone who wanted to fit into the pattern of a "good reader."

However, young people meet in these communities and share experiences and knowledge about a literature that, for them, is complex, has aesthetic completion that should be discussed, and problematized. In these meetings, they are engaged in activities that test their skills, and the knowledge of what they know. Games, dances, arena simulations, affirmations of love, and literary sharing occur. As to the name of the community, the administrators clarified that it comes from the homonymous camp, described in the first volume of Rick Riordan's series, namely, *Percy Jackson & the Olympians*.

The CHB is run by members indicated by the cabins; there might be up to seven administrators. The number of cabins corresponds to the number of gods or pairs of gods (the minor gods, for example) "worshiped" by the group. The leader of each cabin is a counselor that is responsible for the group. Administrators and counselors have influence and voting power with regard to the decisions to be made about the meetings. The members are called campers and are placed in the cabins according to their request. Generally, choices are made after the members take online tests so they know whose "children" they are. This does not prevent them from taking the test again. The ones who do not make a decision, who do not identify themselves with one of the gods and do not feel accepted by their semigod siblings wander from cabin to cabin and are called "nosy," "clandestine," "adopted," or some other term.

The rules for coexistence make it clear that young people create sociabilities based on what they live in the world of life: the rules make especially evident that they need to respect the opinion of others, and that the exercise of freedom presupposes the respect for differences. This is how they create their own sociability rules, and where a cursory look would see only chaos or young people gathered without any "order" to keep them interacting:

1- Physical, verbal or psychological agression to any CHB member is under no circumstance allowed. A member who breaks this rule may be warned or expelled, depending on the severity of the situation.

2- Fun games outside the CHB RN meetings or CHB cabins are of no interest to the other members of the group. We therefore suggest that no posts related to games, such as 'Truth or Dare,' or to one's personal life, etc. should be made.

3- It is unquestionably forbidden to use sacred sites of any religion as a meeting place for any member of the CHB RN.

4- Insults against musical taste, religion, sports or any other theme outside Rick Riordan's universe will not be tolerated.

5- The group is exclusive to those who are interested in Rick Riordan's mythological universe. If you are interested in other realms and have no interest in Percy Jackson or any other saga of the author, you do not belong in here.

6- It is not allowed to add people from another state or country to CHB RN, either on facebook or WhatsApp cabin groups, without the permission of the administration.

7- There must be at least one ADM on any Cabin WhatsApp group. This WhatsApp group will also be assisted by an ADM.

These rules make it evident that, for the coexistence of the members of the cabins of this community, it is necessary to follow a number of norms that seek to prevent abuse, confrontation and disrespect against the other. They are "strict" rules that legitimize an exclusive space – *The group is exclusive to those who are interested in Rick Riordan's mythological universe*: participation requires permission from the administration.

The young people who seek to free themselves from the rules and norms that constrain their freedom paradoxically create a set of norms that regulate, define behaviors and assure the existence of the community. What legitimizes these rules? Maybe it is the fact that the rules were elaborated by them and that they recognize themselves in them as the subjects of their fate, rules, and ways of being in the world.

Ratifying what we have discussed about young people and youth culture, we defend that the construction of other spaces of sociability necessarily implies the creation of agreements so that interactions may exist in other practices that showcase the identity and coexistence of a group, which are legitimized because they are responsive and define the identity of the group, the community. In the set of rules there is a dialogical struggle between centrifugal forces (the reading practices and the construction of the community, of other reading spaces) and centripetal forces (the ones that regulate, make norms and demand forms of behavior). This struggle only confirms that the community takes place in the world of life, and that this world moves in dialogicity and the bitter battle between these forces.

Figure 2: Meeting of the Memebrs of the CHB Community of Readers
Source: Researcher Rosângela de França Melo's archive

Final Considerations

In this article, we reflected on the reading paths of young people in communities of readers. To do so, we anchored our reflections on current conceptions of youth culture, communities of readers and centrifugal and centripetal forces as well as on how subjects, in cultural clashes, create their own collections regardless of the institutions that are responsible for forming readers. Therefore, we argue for the perspective that, in order to understand reading and the formation of young readers, it is imperative that we reflect about young people, youth culture and the constitution of other collections in contemporary times, and that reading also implies decollecting, creating other collections that reveal the subject's path, historicity, and reading practices.

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