

## Media competence in fan practice: intertextuality in the telenovela *Liberdade, Liberdade*

*La competencia mediática en la práctica  
de los fans: intertextualidad en la  
telenovela Liberdade, Liberdade*

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Media competence involves the mastery of knowledge, abilities and individual attitudes regarding content. Ferrés and Piscitelli (2015) propose a methodology for evaluating the development of this phenomenon in participatory culture. Using this theoretical framework, this paper attempts to reflect upon the dimensions of media competence operating in Twitter profiles of *Lady Revolution* (*Liberdade, Liberdade*) fans.

**KEYWORDS:** Media competence, telenovela, fandom, Twitter.

*La competencia mediática involucra el dominio de conocimientos, habilidades y actitudes de los individuos en relación a los contenidos. Ferrés y Piscitelli (2015) proponen una metodología para evaluar el desarrollo del fenómeno en la cultura participativa. Este artículo tiene el objetivo de analizar las dimensiones de la competencia mediática que están en operación en los perfiles ficticios de personajes creados por los fans de Liberdade, Liberdade en la red social Twitter.*

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Competencia mediática; telenovela, fandom, Twitter.

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## INTRODUCTION

Technological innovations have transformed human relations and digital social networks began to permeate different forms of communicating on the Internet. Many studies focus on understanding the dynamics of these transformations and promote learning in order to stimulate the development of these new ways of communicating.

Different forms of sociability are present in these networks, propelling the growth and complexity of relationships in the scope of participatory culture. In this universe, we see the emergence of social media practices by fans of cultural products, which is growing and getting stronger, raising new challenges for communication studies.

In Brazil, *telenovela* fans have a vast audiovisual and narrative repertoire that is revalidated, re-signified and reinforced in every new telenovela on the air. This *fandom*<sup>3</sup> has always acted on television and now migrates and spreads through the Internet, particularly through social media, often acting as content curators. Fans select, evaluate, criticize, appropriate, remix, reinvent, recreate and expand serialized televised narratives through their own cultural and audiovisual repertoire, which is also related to the social and emotional Brazilian memory. Content produced in fan posts, which range from replicating dialogues and commentary to creating memes express ways of living and understanding Brazilian culture.

In this paper, we will reflect upon the practices of telenovela fans on Twitter, through the analysis of fictional character profiles created during the broadcast of *Liberdade, Liberdade* (a telenovela internationally distributed under the title *Lady Revolution*; (Globo, 2016). This will allow us to deepen the discussion carried out in the scope of the Ibero-American Observatory of Television Fiction (OBITEL) around “social TV”, which focuses on the television experience of watching a piece of entertainment and creating content to circulate in social media (Proulx & Shepatin, 2012). Our analysis discusses how fans reverberate and create critical and interventional media content on Twitter, using the perspective proposed by Ferrés and Piscitelli (2015) regarding the abilities understood within the dimensions of media competence. Thus,

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<sup>3</sup> Fandom (a shortened form of “fan kingdom”) refers to a group of fans.

we focus on how fans mobilize the dimensions of technology, language, ideology and values, interaction processes, aesthetics and production and diffusion processes in their interactions on Twitter, simultaneously with telenovela's broadcast.

*LADY REVOLUTION (LIBERDADE, LIBERDADE),  
THE TELENOVELA*

Developed by Mário Teixeira, based on a story by Márcia Prates and directed by Vinícius Coimbra, *Lady Revolution (Liberdade, Liberdade)* is a telenovela inspired by *Joaquina, Filha de Tiradentes*, a 1987 book by Maria José de Queiroz. The telenovela aired at 11PM on Rede Globo, from April 11<sup>th</sup> to August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016, with a total of 67 episodes.

The telenovela's main narrative arc focuses on the fictional story of Joaquina, played by Mel Maia in the first part and Andréia Horta in the second part. After her parents are murdered by the Portuguese crown, the daughter of Tiradentes (Thiago Lacerda) is adopted by Raposo (Dalton Vigh) and moves to Portugal, where she gets a new identity and starts going by the name of Rosa. Fifteen years later, to escape Napoleon's attacks in Europe, Joaquina returns to Brazil. Greeted by a different reality, the protagonist makes every effort to fight the colony's injustices and honor her father's name. Like in Maria José de Queiroz's book, Joaquina is characterized by her revolutionary nature. The character's libertarian ideals were quick to charm viewers, encouraging the discussion of issues such as feminism and social justice. The story mobilized interacting viewers<sup>4</sup> on social media. During the show's 67 episodes, the audience reacted to both the story plot and the social issues around it.

*Twittertainment: a new kind of fanfiction<sup>5</sup>*

As well as decisively altering the role of creators and consumers, convergence culture remodeled media influxes. According to Pearson (2010), the digital environment introduced new means for socializing

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<sup>4</sup> According to Primo (2008), an interacting agent "... emanates the idea of interaction, i.e., the action (or relation) that happens among participants" (p. 8).

<sup>5</sup> It's worth mentioning that, in Gallucci's studies (2010) and, consequently, in this paper, the concept of fanfiction is inserted in a broader con-

and content creating among fans. In this context, the avid viewers –i.e., those who have a deep knowledge of a show– have various possibilities for disseminating, deepening and re-signifying the story’s fictional universe.

Launched in 2007, Twitter was quickly adopted by the fan community. According to Jenkins, Green and Ford (2014), the adoption of the social network “... was provoked by the efficiency with which the website facilitates the kinds of resource sharing, conversation and coordination that communities have been using for a long time” (p. 57). These kinds of social and cultural interactions highlighted by the authors are related to the informational architecture of microblogging.

According to Eleá (2012) and Hillman, Procyk and Neustaedter (2014), social media encourages the emergence of new practices when incorporated by fans consuming and creating. Coined by Gallucci (2010), *Twittertainment* is a category of fanfiction specific to Twitter. Fanfiction, or just fic, are prose narrations of fictional stories created by fans (Jamison, 2017; Jenkins, 2015). The stories use fictional universes (movies, books, TV shows, comics, etc.) and even artists’ lives as reference points, deepening and re-signifying events that are not in the original text.

Fanfiction gets new possibilities when transposed to Twitter. According to Gallucci (2010) and Neves (2011), the fans not only play characters in the social network, but also create an alternative world. In August, 2008, the microblogging platform users were surprised by the creation of a Don Draper (Jon Hamm) profile, the protagonist of the series *Mad Men* (2007-2015, AMC). The page, managed by a fan, reinforced the narrative presented on television through humorous tweets about the adman’s daily life. The page’s success, gaining thousands of followers in just a few days, encouraged other avid viewers to take part in Twittertainment.

With the emergence of social TV, Twittertainment allows for new practices in fan culture. In this phenomenon, interacting viewers

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text. Therefore, the term isn’t necessarily linked only to autonomous fan creations, but also to the expansion of a narrative in other platforms and the introduction of elements which aren’t present in the fictional universe.

comment on television narratives in synchrony with the show airing on the network, re-signifying the fictional universe.

### *Twittertainment on social TV*

The telenovela *Avenida Brasil* (Globo, 2012) was relevant in Brazilian TV for its emblematic characters and audience records, an also for mobilizing fans in Twitter. As mentioned by the journalist Nilson Xavier (2012), “thousands (or millions) of tweeters gather every night at 9 p.m. to watch João Emanuel Carneiro’s story and discuss everything that happens in the telenovela, from the plot to the outfits” (n.p.). It marked the popularization of social TV in Brazil, the phenomenon that refers to sharing content (memes, photos, videos, comments, etc.) through social networks (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc.) and second screen apps<sup>6</sup> (TV Showtime, Viggie, etc.) simultaneously with the show’s airtime. In this sense, social TV is guided by the temporality of television flow –i.e., as interacting viewers disseminate their impressions on digital platforms while watching the show–.

Inspired by Twittertainment, the fans created fictional profiles for *Avenida Brasil*’s characters to interact with the show as it aired. During its episodes, audience commented on João Emanuel Carneiro’s plots on Twitter, reinforcing, expanding, analyzing and especially re-signifying the telenovela’s fictional universe through the “backchannel”.<sup>7</sup>

Even though it is a recent practice, Twittertainment, in the scope of social TV, soon became popular among fans of Brazilian telenovelas. Nowadays, every<sup>8</sup> telenovela produced by Rede Globo has fictional character profiles that share content simultaneously with the show’s

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<sup>6</sup> Refers to the parallel and synchronized interaction with the TV experience through mobile devices (Proulx & Shepatin, 2012).

<sup>7</sup> The term “backchannel” is used to describe the secondary channel where content (texto, image, video, etc.) is shared, formed specifically during the airing of a show.

<sup>8</sup> A secondary channel for sharing content (text, image, video etc.) created specifically during a show’s airtime (Proulx; Shepatin, 2012). It connects the viewer’s individual experience with numerous interacting viewers in digital platforms, strengthening the shared experience.

airtime. However, whether pages are created weeks before the show or by the time the show is already on the air, we observe constant updates in these fictional profiles. The avid interacting viewer, the fan who produces, shares, creates, re-signifies and disseminates content on social TV, is not limited to representing a single character; they reformulate the page according to telenovelas broadcast in the network's schedule. This aspect is related to Twitter's informational architecture and particularly, to the characteristics of Twittertainment.

The microblogging platform allows the user to alter both their username and the name that identifies them on the timeline. After signing up for the social network, the interacting viewer can alter their page as often as they like, therefore, a profile that, for example, represents Helô (Cláudia Abreu), the protagonist of *A Lei do Amor* (Globo, 2016-2017, internationally distributed under the title *Wounded Past*), can be entirely modified for another character in the following month. This constant transformation of profiles indicates that the fan's interests and in the context of social TV Twittertainment is not restricted to a single actor and/or character.

This issue is even clearer when we compare the amount of fictional profiles created by fans and those that are altered after the end of the telenovela. Table 1 shows the data gathered by monitoring Rede Globo productions from 2015 to 2017, at the 6 p.m., 7 p.m. and 9 p.m. air times.<sup>9</sup> The selection of fictional fan-created profiles for the telenovelas *Parts of Me*, *Time After Time*, *The Good Side of Life!*, *Rising Sun*, *New World*, *I Love Paraisópolis*, *Total Dreamer*, *Burning Hearts*, *Rock Story*, *Ambitious Women*, *Rules of the Game*, *Old River*, *Wounded Past* and *Edge of Desire* was defined through Twitter searches. We accessed the social network's profile search and input the name of each character of the telenovelas monitored. After that, using the tool Tweet Deck, we monitored fan posts during the entire run of the shows. In this way, the avid interacting viewer's interest is in the genre telenovela, and that is why their profiles are adapted according to the shows in the network's schedule.

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<sup>9</sup> Referring to the telenovelas which premiered and concluded in this time period.

TABLE 1  
MONITORING OF FICTIONAL PROFILES

Telenovela	Air time	Year(s) it was aired	Number of profiles created	Number of profiles altered
<i>Sete Vidas (Parts of Me)</i>	6 p.m.	2015	82	78
<i>Além do Tempo (Time After Time)</i>	6 p.m.	2015-2016	35	34
<i>Êta Mundo Bom! (The Good Side of Life!)</i>	6 p.m.	2016	74	70
<i>Sol Nascente (Rising Sun)</i>	6 p.m.	2016-2017	42	42
<i>Novo Mundo (New World)</i>	6 p.m.	2017	98	95
<i>I Love Paraisópolis</i>	7 p.m.	2015	128	120
<i>Totalmente Demais (Total Dreamer)</i>	7 p.m.	2015-2016	130	125
<i>Haja Coração (Burning Hearts)</i>	7 p.m.	2016	21	21
<i>Rock Story</i>	7 p.m.	2016-2017	41	41
<i>Babilônia (Ambitious Women)</i>	9 p.m.	2015-2016	15	16
<i>A Regra do Jogo (Rules of the Game)</i>	9 p.m.	2015-2016	70	65
<i>Velho Chico (Old River)</i>	9 p.m.	2016	33	31
<i>A Lei do Amor (Wounded Past)</i>	9 p.m.	2016-2017	11	8
<i>A Força do Querer (Edge of Desire)</i>	9 p.m.	2017	105	100

Source: Research data (2018).

However, it is important to consider that aspects such as identification and popularity can also interfere in profile creation. Some fans, for example, only play female characters or only choose protagonists, assuming they will be more popular being the focus of the story.

As we have already argued in previous papers (Borges & Sigiliano, 2016; Sigiliano & Borges, 2016), Rede Globo social media department was created in 2009 with the intent of broadening the dialogue between the network and its audience. However, the network's profiles on social media, particularly on Twitter, did not establish a collaborative coauthoring relationship with fans. Therefore, even though the creation of fictional profiles is a popular practice in fan culture, Rede Globo does not encourage it, not even indirectly, nor does it share content published by the audience.

According to Donath (1999) and Recuero (2009), just as in face-to-face communication, cyberspace media subjects also search for individualization resources. Recuero (2009) states that on social media, choice of avatar, profile's description, publications themes and username are the main forms of representation for interacting agents. When it comes to social TV Twittertainment, fans use these elements not only to individualize themselves, but also to bring an aspect of realism to fictional character profiles. That is, every resource adopted by avid interacting viewers reinforces the persona they represent while the telenovela is on the air.

In general, the pages feature similar characteristics when it comes to images, usernames, descriptions and context for tweets. The profiles feature an avatar and a cover picture with promotional character pictures. However, the fan's choice of picture can change due to events in the story—for example, when it shows a protagonist's childhood and adulthood—. The username is usually composed of character's name or an ironic play on their personality, such as @alice\_tanaka (*Rising Sun*) and @tiãosinistro (*Wounded Past*), highlighting the vast cultural repertoire of telenovela fans.

Even though it is usually guided by the telenovela's fictional universe, profile descriptions regularly summarize the character's narrative from a humorous perspective. The fan-created text points out aspects that are present in the paratext, but approached in a different manner on Twittertainment. As, for example, the villain of *O Rebu* (Globo, 2014, distributed internationally under the title *The Party*), Ângela Mahler (@Angelamahler), described as "Rich and envied by my enemies" or Kiko (@CharmosoKiko) who states that "My best

friend was killed, I was framed for it, tried to sell the dossier and ended up being dumped”.

The tweets posted by avid interacting viewers during the show’s airing reinforce and re-signify the stories. The fictional profiles not only reproduce quotes and dialogues, but also explore new aspects of the plot. When accessing one of those pages, it is possible to follow the characters discussing issues related to their daily lives, telenovela’s political and social themes, etc. In this sense, fans show a particular competence regarding the diachronic knowledge of telenovelas and their capacity of reflecting and portraying social facts in its temporality, i.e., in their actuality as lived fact (Bakhtin, 1988).

However, this re-signification process happens gradually, starting with the metatext created by the fans. According to Jenkins (2015, p. 147), the metatext is based on information given specifically by the show or secondary sources (newspapers, specialized websites, interviews with the author and cast, etc.). Thus, avid interacting viewers can only detach from the fictional universe after creating their metatext. This means that this informational repository serves as a basis for fan’s portrayal of the character in the fictional Twitter profile and, afterwards, will bring coherence to re-significations. The more knowledge and mastery avid interacting viewers show regarding the metatext, the more realistic the tweets will seem. As, for example, Carminha’s (Adriana Esteves) profile complaint about her outfits. Even though it is not part of *Avenida Brasil*’s narrative arc, the microblogging posts are coherent with its characterization. As fans know, due to the metatext, how the villain would act in that situation.

According to Stedman (2012), recombining and juxtaposing different preexisting elements in order to create new content demands that interacting agents show a competence called “remix literacy”. The author states that the concept spans the entire remixing process, as requires that they understand from digital platforms’ operational architecture to circulation of re-signified content.

According to Russo and Coppa (2012), fans have always been in the forefront of remixing. The authors point out that, having deep knowledge of a certain content, fans can visualize and create interconnections between different contexts that are not usually noticed by the general

public. Analyzing *Lady Revolution* Twitertainment, we observed that tweets shared by avid interacting viewers aggregate various strands of the fictional universe and of external elements. This issue is present from transposing telenovela's character into Twitter's informational architecture to content created in the backchannel.

Even though they are developed and guided by Mário Teixeira's paratext, the Twitter fan posts recombine various cultural and audiovisual contexts. Fans keep the perspective of the character they are portraying, but aggregate different elements so that content acquires new meanings. As, for instance, memes created by fans combine with the image of a particular scene; choosing a narrative sentence to get a humorous effect; or when fans mention another telenovela's character to make fun of *Lady Revolution*'s narrative developments. Even the reproduction of on-air dialogue represents a genre reconfiguration when a television quote is adapted for Twitter. In this context, by appropriating *Lady Revolution*'s fictional universe and recombining it on Twitertainment, fans explore new contexts and interconnections for the story.

### *Lady Revolution's fictional profiles*

Created by fans, the fictional profiles of *Lady Revolution* characters reinforced and re-signified the telenovela's fictional universe. As the show aired, microblogging pages were created for characters Joaquina da Silva Xavier, Rubião, Branca, Dionísia, Virginia, Bertoleza, Raposo and Vidinha. The profiles had personalized avatars and cover pictures, a short bio and the character's setting. Not only did it help with the profile's realism, but the avatar also followed the story's events. *Lady Revolution* had two parts, and some Twitter avatars were changed according to this chronology. For example, the avatar for the user @JOAQUINA was initially a picture of child star Mel Maia playing Joaquina and after the telenovela's time jump it is replaced by a picture of Andrea Horta, who played the character in her adult years.

As we discuss in further detail later, tweets posted during the show's airing often reproduced integrally lines of dialogue said by characters being portrayed. However, pages managed by *Lady Revolution* fans not only reproduced on-air content, but also broadened

the fictional universe. Through metatext, fictional profiles brought new meanings to the telenovela. Therefore, by following the backchannel, interacting viewers had access to content that was not present in Rede Globo's show.

As pointed out by Wolton (1996) and Vassallo de Lopes (2009), telenovelas in Brazil are a factor of social integration and cultural identity. The intrinsic relation between the genre and televised experiences and the Brazilian viewers' daily lives grants telenovela the title of "national narrative". Beyond telenovela's identity aspects, the show's events promote debate among viewers. According to Wolton (1996), "everybody talks about telenovelas, which perfectly illustrates the thesis of television's social bond" (p. 163).

This conversation encouraged by telenovelas can be observed on social TV: telenovelas are the third most commented genre on Twitter. The telenovela's capacity for mobilizing the backchannel is so significant that fictional character profiles end up, indirectly, playing the part of curators for the public. As *Lady Revolution* aired, the microblogging pages about the show gathered around 46 000 followers, who shared content created by fans, talked through tweets and asked questions about the show's fictional universe.

In this way, the fictional character profiles dialogue with the concept of "experts". According to Santaella and Lemos (2010), the term refers to interacting agents who are widely known in their areas and who generate instantaneous fluxes of information on social media. The authors state that it is a reactive moment that does not require the choice of a specific insertion strategy, "... it's enough to define their external communication lines and the connections they will establish in return" (2010, p. 69). During *Lady Revolution's* 67 episodes, fictional profiles became, among the interacting viewers who followed the telenovela, a source of information about the story that was playing on the air.

Amaral (2012, p. 45) argues that curating relates to genres and platforms as well as to processes, practices and appropriations happening therein. Thus, there are different levels and ways of curating. Our study points towards the understanding of fictional telenovela Twitter profiles as curators, since they select, in real time, information to be shared based on what they are watching on television. For Rosenbaum

(2011), curating adds value through human beings and their judgement of what is being collected and organized. Beiguelman (2011) proposes three models for online curating: curator as filter; curator as agent; and platform as curating dispositive. Amaral (2012, p. 45) highlights the fact that the curator as filter selects and shares links, contextualizes information and observes its effects. On Twitter, for example, a profile can manage an informational curatorship regarding a specific subject, just as fan clubs or fandoms can practice this model. Amaral (2012, p. 46) proposes two other curator models to be added to Beiguelman's (2011): curator as critic and recommendation as curating. The curator as critic reclaims the critical dimension of curating in a web context, based on social and historical context. This can happen through sharing re-signified images, GIFs, memes, etc. It is curating through the selection and sharing of data, subverting it with a comment or critique.

In the context of music, Jennings (2007) highlights the notion of cultural memory curators, like those who preserve materials, archives and information from different periods and share the data through digitalization. Amaral (2012, p. 44) mentions that this notion of social memory curating also shows up in collector fan practices, through the creation of fan videos, *lipdubs* or remixed products, which she named "fan sourcing" (Amaral, 2012). We extend this understanding to telenovela fans, who, in this instance, preserve cultural memory through remixing. By reclaiming famous telenovela characters, establishing intertextual relations and creating new content, Twitter fan profiles update telenovela's memory and leave a legacy for new generations, who might come to know these characters through Twitter, for instance.

### *The dimensions of media competence in Lady Revolution's backchannel*

Before analyzing the tweets shared during *Lady Revolution's* airing, it is important to detail the methodological approach adopted in this research in order to monitor, collect, select and analyze data. The selection of fan-created fictional profiles of *Lady Revolution* characters was guided by a search for every character name on the microblogging platform. We accessed the page search section on Twitter and inserted the name of every one of the 48 characters described on Globo's website page

about the telenovela. We also consulted social media profiles of casts' fan clubs. Afterwards, we mined 6 325 tweets posted by the pages.

Tweets were analyzed through the methodology proposed by Ferrés and Piscitelli (2015) in order to evaluate and promote the development of media competence in participatory culture. According to the authors, the technological and neurobiological revolutions point towards the need of encouraging the participative dimension of communication processes. In this way, participation does not refer only to the ways in which an individual express him or herself creatively, because message analysis also influences how they are created. Thus, media competence is built through an active and dialogical approach, taking into consideration the interlocutor's participation in processes of selection, interpretation, acceptance or rejection, critical analysis and transmission, among others, which stimulate and sustain creative production.

Media competence involves the mastery of knowledge, abilities and individual attitudes towards media messages. In order to methodologically operationalize the concept, Ferrés and Piscitelli (2015, pp. 8-14) defined six dimensions through which the indicators are created. In turn, these are related both to analysis –i.e., the way in which people receive and interact with messages–, and to expression –i.e., the way in which people produce messages–. It is worth noting that the points theorized by the authors are related, and this separation is created only so that we can didactically analyze each one. The dimensions are language, ideology and values, aesthetics, technology, interaction processes and production and diffusion processes.

In *Lady Revolution*, the dimensions of media competence are interrelated. Our analysis goes deeper in the dimension of language, but other dimensions are also present. Technology permeates the relation established by interacting viewers with television and Internet. In the case of Twitter, interacting viewers need to understand how digital social network works in order to interact with it. Thus, we realize that fans master the potentiality of the network's current language to the point of being able to create intertextual content based on their understanding and their construction of representations of reality.

Regarding interacting processes, which are intrinsic to social networks, conversation migrated from television to Internet and interaction happens in the backchannel, based on experience and cultural repertoire provided by television. However, fans select and self-evaluate media consumption itself, noticing how ideas and values are associated with characters and plots to promote specific emotions. The processes of production and diffusion refer to the ability to select, appropriate and formulate messages that create new meanings, share and disseminate them; creating collaborative networks, as it happens in Twitter and its fictional profiles. In the dimension of ideology and values, we observe the issue of breaking taboos and the way in which values are explored by fans through imagetic suggestions provided by the telenovela. Finally, in the aesthetic dimension, we highlight the production of memes by fans who create a parallel narrative to the television narrative.

*Language: intertextuality in fan practice*

According to Ferrés and Piscitelli (2015, p. 9), the language dimension of media competence refers to the capacity to interpret, evaluate, analyze, express and modify existing content. The scope of analysis refers to the capacity of understanding the way in which messages are construed in different media, generating meanings, as well as the capacity to establish relations between texts, codes and media. The scope of expression refers to individuals' capacity to express themselves using different representation and style systems according to the communicative situation, transmitted content and interlocutors, as well as the capacity to modify existing products, creating new meaning, such as memes, intertextual references and remixing, for example.

During the airing of *Lady Revolution*, fictional character profiles created by avid interacting viewers underwent a process described by Jenkins (1992) as *fannish* reading. According to the author, the term is used to describe "... a movement that goes from the initial reception of a TV transmission to a gradual elaboration of episodes and their remodeling in alternative terms" (p. 54). When analyzing the tweets shared by telenovela fans, we could observe a clear development of content created in fictional character profiles.

In the beginning of the show's exhibition, posts only transposed scene dialogue to the backchannel. That is, if Joaquina said "If we're going back to Brazil, it better be soon" (loosely translated), immediately the fictional profile @JOAQUINA, repeated that line. The same happened with dialogues between more than one character: they were replayed by fans on Twitter.

FIGURE 1  
THE PROFILES REPEAT *LADY REVOLUTION* DIALOGUE ON TWITTER



Source: Research data (2016).

As well as mirroring telenovela's narrative events, tweets shared by fans refer to the microblogging platform's informational architecture and to central aspects of social TV. According to Santaella and Lemos (2010), Twitter, just as other multimodal networks, is based on an "always on" temporality. Thus, "... the connection is continuous to the point where interest in what happened two minutes before is already lost. Only the now matters" (p. 62). On social TV, fast microblogging dynamic is interlaced with television's direct transmission, making so that backchannel aggregates two continuous presents, Twitter's and the network's. In this sense, fans who generated *Lady Revolution* fictional character profiles understood the instantaneity of both microblogging and social TV. Do they not only share content simultaneously with scenes being aired, but also adapt show's dialogue in order to fit the limitations of social network's textual space. This demonstrates that technology and language dimensions of media competence are immediately identified and become part of the tweets' narrative.

According to Booth (2010) and Jenkins (2015), the detailed knowledge of metatext encourages re-signification of fictional universe. As pointed out by Jenkins (2015), “watching the show becomes a trampoline for conversations and discussions in which the fans evaluate and ‘rewrite’ episodes” (p. 69). Therefore, the more knowledge fans have of the story, the more they are capable of analyzing and exploring new perspectives. After spending weeks reproducing dialogue by “their” respective characters, avid interacting viewers started to introduce new meanings to *Lady Revolution*.

By following the backchannel, one could observe fan-created profiles for Joaquina, Xavier, Rubião, Branca, Dionísia, Virginia, Bertoleza, Raposo and Vidinha sharing and making fun of plots’ main events. On their tweets, fans commented what happened on the show by the lens of the characters they played on Twitertainment, re-signifying the scenes that were on the air. For example, during Rubião (Mateus Solano) scenes, the profile @JoseMariaRubiao highlighted the character’s true intentions. When the villain introduced himself to Antônia Xavier da Silvia (Letícia Sabatella) respectfully, without letting on that he had just sold Tiradentes (Thiago Lacerda) out to the Portuguese crown, the fan who managed the fictional profile tweeted: “Nice to meet you, I’m Rubião, but you can call me Judas” (loosely translated). The same thing happened when the villain met Joaquina: when he meets the protagonist for the first time, he is courteous, according to the time’s social norms, but on social TV Twitertainment the fictional profile said “Hey gorgeous let’s make out #LadyRevolution” (loosely translated).

However, it is worth noting that tweets shared by avid interacting viewers were faithful to the characters’ central aspects, even though they re-signified the telenovela’s fictional universe. This means that if Branca’s character is a vicious spoiled young woman in the *Lady Revolution* metatext, the profile @Escravocrata posts replayed the story’s events from that perspective. Tweets not only commented the scenes with the villain, but also those of other parts of the plot. For example, during the scenes showing Tiradentes being hanged and Joaquina grieving, the fan who managed the profile posted: “L-o-v-e seeing Joaquina suffer #LadyRevolution” and “It’s only fair to put Tiradentes’ head on a stake, I love it #LadyRevolution” (loosely

translated). In this way, by accessing the show's backchannel, the interacting viewer could follow new developments of telenovela's characters.

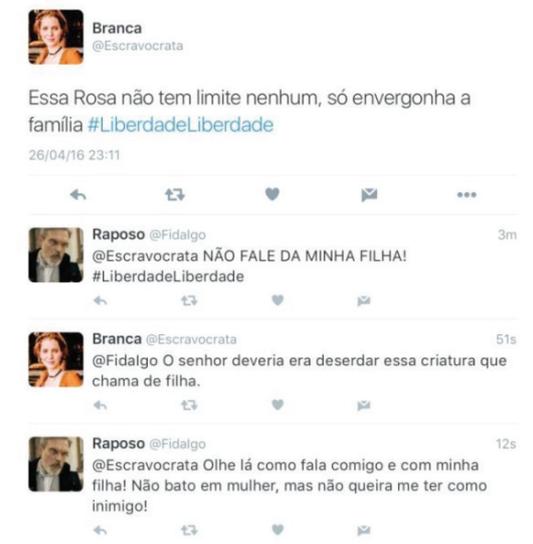
Tweets posted on fictional profiles also criticized the story and explored narrative arcs that were not present in the telenovela. With Joaquina's defiant outlook, the profile @JOAQUINA complained about the constant danger the character got in and asked for more screen time in *Lady Revolution*. During the scenes broadcasting, the fan questioned "Ok! I've suffered enough in this episode. Where's daddy to save me? #LadyRevolution" (loosely translated) and also made fun of extras "Too many extras in tonight's episode. Please cut to my saving. Thank you #LadyRevolution" (loosely translated), in a way that verbally indicated knowledge of filming techniques.

Narrative arcs that were part of telenovela's paratext gained new developments on the second screen, and characters took part in parallel stories as the show aired. An example is the exchange of tweets between fictional profiles of Branca, (@Escravocrata), and Raposo (@Fidalgo). When criticizing Joaquina, @Escravocrata is promptly refuted by @Fidalgo, but the entire dialogue was created by fans, since in *Lady Revolution* the characters had not yet met.

In this sense, the process of fannish reading covers the main aspects of the language dimension of media competence, as proposed by Ferrés and Piscitelli (2015, p. 9). Through social TV Twittertainment, *Lady Revolution* fans interpreted, evaluated, analyzed and modified the telenovela's fictional universe, creating new meaning in a constant process of re-signifying the plot on the backchannel.

When studying fan culture, Pearson (2010) and Jenkins (2015) state that avid viewers have the habit of creating intertextual connections composed by many interpretative layers: "Fans, as many other consumers of popular culture, read both textually and intertextually, and their pleasure comes from the particular juxtapositions they create between a show's specific content and other cultural content" (Jenkins, 2015, p. 55). During the airing of *Lady Revolution*, fictional profiles shared content alluding to other Rede Globo productions and created memes based on scenes that were on the air. This highlights the difference between interacting viewers in the digital environment

FIGURE 2  
DIALOGUE CREATED BY FANS ON TWITTER



Source: Research data (2016).

and the older forms of consumption, because connectivity dismantles established spaces and gives way to many other voices who foster and communicate on fandoms, establishing a collaborative culture.

As previously discussed, telenovelas in Brazil are a factor of social integration and cultural identity. Considered as the central production of the television industry, the genre garnered the audience's recognition as an aesthetic and cultural product (Vassallo de Lopes & Palma Mungioli, 2013). The telenovela's capacity to establish a common repertoire among viewers becomes clear when we analyze the interpretative layers present in intertextual connections made by *Lady Revolution* fictional character profiles. References used by avid interacting viewers involve telenovelas, TV series and even broadcast news. Thus, by making intertextual connections and combining different contexts, fans re-signify the show.

During the telenovela's first part, protagonist Joaquina was played by Mel Maia. The child star became known by the public after playing the iconic role of Nina/Rita in *Avenida Brasil*. Tweets posted by @JOAQUINA connected Joaquina's childhood suffering to Nina's tragic trajectory in João Emanuel Carneiro's telenovela. As scenes portraying Tiradentes and Antonia Xavier da Silva being killed were shown, the Twitter page dedicated to *Lady Revolution* protagonist posted: "Rubião wanted to throw me in the trash #LadyRevolution" (loosely translated) and "Rita and I were born to suffer #LadyRevolution" (loosely translated). To understand the tweet's interpretative layers, the interacting viewer had to follow the telenovela and know Mel Maia's career and the main narrative arcs of *Avenida Brasil*.

However, references to elements external to *Lady Revolution*'s fictional universe also reached other telenovelas. Fictional profiles compared Felix, from *Amor à Vida* (Globo, 2013, internationally distributed under the name *Trail of Lies*), to Rubião's sadism. The intersection of both characters went beyond Mateus Solano, who played them. Tweets also pointed out the villains' duplicitous behavior, because they acted in different manners according to the situation. Another show mentioned by avid interacting viewers on the backchannel was *Caminho das Índias* (Globo, 2009, internationally distributed under the title *India: A Love Story*), created by Gloria Perez. In one of the scenes in the first part of *Lady Revolution*, Raposo gives Joaquina medication to help her sleep, so that their escape to Portugal is easier. As the scene aired, @Fidalgo tweeted: "I gave Norminha's milk to @Joaquina" (loosely translated). To understand the fan's intertextual connection, one had to know Norminha's (Dira Paes) narrative arc in *India: A Love Story*. In the show, to cover up her infidelities, the character put sleeping medication in a glass of warm milk and gave it to her husband, Abel (Anderson Müller). Therefore, the interpretative layers present in the tweets did not only allude to characters and actors, but also to specific telenovela arcs.

The intertextual connections made by avid interacting viewers also included TV series and broadcast news. Every tweet about scenes involving Padre Vizeu (Marcos Oliveira) referred to the character as Beiçola, the character played by Marcos Oliveira for 13 years in the

comedy show *A Grande Família* (internationally distributed as *The Big Family*). During the July 29<sup>th</sup>, 2016 episode of *Lady Revolution*, the word “Beijola” reached fifth place in Twitter’s trending topics. Joaquina’s constant suffering was made into a joke by social TV Twitertainment fictional profiles. The posts mentioned that, after many tragedies, Tiradentes’ daughter could request a song on *Fantástico*. In the news broadcast’s sports section, players who score three goals in one soccer match can choose the song that will play over their tape on the show.

Thus, it is worth noting that interacting viewers immediately understand interpretative layers present in the fictional profiles’ intertextual connections. Tweets referencing other shows got instant buzz on Twitter, quickly getting dozens of retweets (RTs). It means that both fans and profile’s followers have the capacity of correlating genres, narrative arcs and themes, as well as identify influences.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Content shared by *Lady Revolution* fictional character profiles highlight the fans’ critical capacity. Avid viewers’ deep knowledge of telenovela’s metatext do not only allow for propagating and re-signifying the fictional universe, but also generate reflection regarding the narrative’s social themes. When they transpose on-air scenes to Twitter, portraying the story’s characters on Twitertainment, fans do an attentive reading of the show. Every detail and aspect of the characters are adapted and apprehended by backchannel interacting agents. However, as the telenovela is on air, the story gains new meaning. Fans explore perspectives that were not present in paratext, establishing connections with other television programming and everyday issues. Therefore, media competence dimensions analyzed in this study show that fans re-signify television narratives through curation, fannish reading (Jenkins, 1992), unfolding content in fictional character profiles, and also intertextuality, highlighting the language dimension.

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