

The fandom of Blue Jeans: online reading and literary socialisation

El fandom de Blue Jeans: lectura y socialización literaria en línea

Alba Torrego-González

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4083-8727>
Universidad Complutense de Madrid (Spain)

Boris Vazquez-Calvo

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8574-7848>
Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (Spain)

David García-Marín

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4575-1911>
Universidad Rey Juan Carlos (Spain)

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Contact:
alrtorreg@uclm.es

Abstract

Both fans' and writers' social network participation configures an ecology of digital literary practices which alter how literary pieces are received and how readers and writers can potentially connect and interact. We explore the use of online affinity literary spaces through the literary universe of Spanish writer Blue Jeans. We proposed a case study. We analyzed 3,997 comments from digital spaces in the fandom (managed by the author or by the fans), and a semi-structured interview with Blue Jeans. Results indicate that (1) there fans socialize their affinity to literary reading differently according to the various spaces and who manages them (author, fans), (2) there are spaces more prone to literary socialization, and (3) keeping an active network for literary and reading socialization is a prominent part of the repertoire of the writer's professionalization. Thanks to the horizontal interaction (writer/fans, fans/fans), Blue Jeans' followers extract intercultural learnings revealing the potential of connecting vernacular contexts and formal education to educate generations of critical readers, without this involving the extraction of fandoms from their contexts. Finally, we propose some lines for future action in language and literary education such as tapping into the potential of social semiosis or the multiliteracies proposal

Resumen

La participación de fans y autores en redes sociales configura una nueva ecología letrada digital que modifica la recepción de la obra literaria y las posibilidades de interacción entre lectores y escritores. Con un estudio de caso, exploramos el uso de varios espacios de afinidad y socialización del universo literario del escritor español Blue Jeans. Analizamos 3.997 comentarios de los espacios digitales de este *fandom*, con datos cuantitativos y cualitativos, además de una entrevista semiestructurada con el propio autor. Los resultados sugieren (1) diferencias relevantes en la socialización lectora según el tipo de espacio y su gestor (autor o fans), (2) correlaciones entre algún espacio y la socialización literaria, y (3) la relevancia de mantener activa una red de socialización lectora como parte del acervo de profesionalización del escritor. Gracias a la interacción entre iguales, los seguidores de Blue Jeans desarrollan aprendizajes de corte sociocultural, que revelan el potencial de relacionar contextos vernáculos y educación formal para formar generaciones lectoras y críticas, sin que ello implique extirpar la cultura *fandom* de sus contextos. Acabamos con algunas líneas de actuación futura en la educación lingüística y literaria, como la semiosis social o las multiliteracidades

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Introduction

Literary socialization on the web: the case of the writer called Blue Jeans

Digitization disrupts our understanding of reality, social contexts, and social practices, such as teaching, reading, or socializing literature. In this article, we study how online socialization of literary works by author Blue Jeans, also known as Francisco de Paula unfolds. Blue Jeans is a well-known writer who, using social networks, found a way to interact with readers.

Blue Jeans is no newbie to the web. After several publishers rejected one novel of his in 2008, he decided to use digital spaces to promote the first chapters of that novel using a blog targeted at young people. Months later, with more than 30,000 followers, he managed to get his work published by Planeta, a top publishing house in Spain. The author personally sought out these followers/readers on the social networks trendy back then. Since he moved into the publishing world, Blue Jeans published thirteen best-selling novels for young adults, and has won the Cervantes Chico Prize too, while keeping in online touch with his readers.

Based on Blue Jeans' case, this study explores current use of digital environments as spaces of affinity and literary socialization as developed and appropriated by authors and other actors involved in producing and publishing literary works. Our corpus consists of fans' comments and online interactions among fans themselves or with the author, as well as an interview with Blue Jeans, as he coordinates and participates in many of these digital spaces. Participation in these spaces, both by fans and the author himself, is part of a complex and sophisticated ecology of digital literary practices. Therefore, our cross-sectional study offers a comprehensive and contextualized interpretation of the reality of literary universes and how young people read and socialize literature today.

Literary socialization and digital culture

Changes in literary socialization blossom as the Internet increasingly become a space where readers share their readings and interact virtually in a community of practice and learning (Paladines-Paredes & Margallo, 2020). Literacy practices like literary socialization transcend local cultures. Authors such as Gee (2005) point out that any analysis of reading and literacy practices must include the social and cultural contexts where they take place. The analysis of these contexts shows how knowledge is built and how values and attitudes linked to reading and literary work are established (Black, 2006). For the purposes of this study, we understand reading and literary socialization as a unitary concept, because the reading socialization that emerges from our data results from reading a literary work. This does not necessarily mean that all reading socialization in general or all reading socialization originating from reading a literary work are literary socialization strictly speaking or that literary/reading socialization emerges directly from a literary product. In line with Korobkova and Black (2014), we can explain the reading and literary socialization with five features:

1. It is based on consumption, feedback, production, and revision of messages from readers and authors based on the reading of a literary work.
2. Such feedback (as well as the consumption and production derived from it) mobilizes literary, linguistic, and social learnings, which influence the identity development of the people who participate in those interactions.
3. Socialization is not limited to discussing literary aspects. It also generates various forms of knowledge about the literacy and literary universe, about the relations among readers and, sometimes, between author and readers (as in this article), and about other elements that connect participants on a more emotional and affective level, regardless of their situated role: consumer,

producer, reader, author, etc. In previous studies, we explored this enhanced socialization in fanfiction contexts (Vazquez-Calvo et al, 2020).

4. The emotional ties and sharing of knowledge and practices, which emerge from membership with and a liking of specific literary universes, create affinity spaces (Gee, 2005), a concept related to community of practice (Wegner, 2002), but specific to fannish activities such as reading a novel for fun and following an author's literary or amateur activity.
5. These spaces of affinity are often nourished by the potential of digitization and generate online affinity spaces (Gee, 2005).

The most productive practices in these online affinity spaces engender multimodal literary practices. These practices involve socializing and discursively appropriating discursive literature and paraliterary elements, including the use of different semiotic modes (linguistic, photographic, video, audio, gestural, etc.), giving birth to literacy practices with materiality, discursive coherence (intermodality) and inherent metafunctions¹. Some studies have already explored reading socialization on digital platforms (Bal, 2018), even with purely multimodal practices such as booktubing, whereby booktubers provide amateur literary critiques and recommendations on video (Rovira-Collado, 2017; Vizcaíno et al., 2019).

Libraries, institutions, publishing houses, or other cultural actors take advantage of the potential of online platforms to emulate or adapt some of the non-digital literary practices onto the web. Examples include virtual book clubs or booktrailers to promote literary works instead of traditional face-to-face presentations (Ibarra-Reus & Ballester-Roca, 2017). Due to the COVID-19-related lockdowns, several virtual literary clubs, virtual book fairs or poetry festivals were held on Instagram. From a marketing perspective, digital contexts make it easier for writers with hundreds of thousands of followers on the

web to connect more personally and emotionally with their readers.

Online reading/literary socialization and the literary works driving it often remain outside formal education, so we can argue they are vernacular literary practices (Barton, 2007). According to Cassany (2012), vernacular literary practices occur outside institutions such as schools. Driven by affinities and interests, young people get together with other followers to consume and share a specific cultural product. On occasions, such participation by these motivated fans leads them to remake or produce novel narrative worlds, with multimodal products. Fan studies confirm the educational potential of hypertextual vernacular literary practices, such as fanfiction — fan writing, reading, and commenting of works derived from or inspired by popular culture personalities or universes, such as *Harry Potter* (Vazquez-Calvo et al., 2020). Fanfiction is even fan-translated (Vazquez-Calvo et al., 2019). Fan practices allow young readers and authors to build their own personal learning networks out of sheer love towards popular cultural references and shared identity and cognitive frameworks.

Prior to the emergence of numerous fan movements fueled by digitalization, some young writers had been using the Internet for years as a space for socialization and literary creation. Thanks to media convergence (Jenkins, 2008), new forms of literary consumption and production developed, such as the experience of sharing and socializing online the personal reading of a literary work. These writers are aware that their literary piece is no longer a finished product offered for the reader to consume later but realize that the literary piece is part of a shared experience in —digital and non-digital— social environments, subject to multiple interpretations and comments from readers who might even modify the product (Torrego & Gutiérrez-Martín, 2018).

Technological development results in heterogeneous practices of access to literary content.

In other words, readers distribute their cultural and media repertoire on various platforms. Such content enhances the multimodal nature of literary socialization practices, with the combination of diverse meaning-making resources (word, image, sound, etc.) (Sánchez-Mesa & Baetens, 2017), and transcends into various media through transmedia movements (Jenkins, 2009; Scolari, 2013).

Affinity spaces, fans, and role of the writer

Increasing desktop publishing, digital popular culture and participation in digital social networks transfigured literacy practices. As Barthes (1987) announced under the premise of the author's death, the textual interpretation of a work transcends the intention of the writer. Readers today have resources to make their own reinterpretation of any literary work and even create new works in a social way, becoming authors themselves. These new reading and literacy practices are triggered by the principles of participatory audiences who, through the use of available technologies, contribute, modify and even co-create the narrative worlds displayed in literary works (Pratten, 2011).

Many authors positively value fan-generated content and its ecology organized in several fandoms. Other authors, such as George R.R. Martin, author of the *Game of the Thrones* saga, are more cautious as they believe that authors should be the one to decide what happens to the characters in their works (Fathallah, 2016). The strength of the fan movement and the open, horizontal reality online make it easy for fans to continue appropriating and developing plots, tropes and characters. Fans become prosumers or emirecs (Cloutier, 2001), simultaneously assuming the roles of sender/receiver, sometimes acting under principles of "horizontalization, democratization of discourse and absence of hierarchy" (Aparici & García-Marín, 2018, p. 77) or establishing more organized and hierarchical participatory ecologies (Jenkins et al., 2016).

In these networks and digital environments, it is common to find affinity spaces (Gee & Hayes, 2012), created by the followers of a literary work to show their sense of belonging to the community. There is no one true way to being a fan. Some fans celebrate their membership to the community, others create their own content inspired by the original versions while others analyze and transform derived content created by fans themselves (Sauro, 2020). Thus, the feeling of belonging is not limited to sharing readings, but also generates new literacy and cultural practices. It even creates and strengthens social, emotional, and intellectual links among fans (García-Roca, 2016) and between fans and writers. So, there emerge a generation of authors who gain popularity thanks to their online strategies for contacting potential readers (Ramdarshan, 2018). Publishing houses are no longer the only intermediary between writer and readership.

Method

To explore reading socialization in Blue Jeans' universe, we propose a mixed and emergent study with three phases, with the object to analyze interactions of readers and the author. It is a case study with an ethnographic perspective (observation, empirical data in natural contexts, emic perspective) and two distinct characteristics:

- (1) This is a remote case study (Postill, 2017), with online observation (phases 1 and 2) and data collection by recorded telephone interview (phase 3).
- (2) It features a strong quantitative component due to the high volume of online participation and to our intention to provide a holistic view of reading socialization and digital literary practices.

The three phases are detailed below: (1) Non-participant observation, (2) Identification of the most relevant networks and collection of readers' comments, and (3) Semi-structured interview with Blue Jeans.

Table 1

Description of the applied research model

| Objective | Phase | Data collection | Analytical/conceptual tool |
|---|-------|------------------------------|---|
| O1. Describe and explore Blue Jeans' literary universe | 1 | Non-participant observation | Mapping of literary practices. |
| O2. Determine the type of socialization and interaction of readers/fans/ author in Blue Jeans' literary and fandom universe | 2 | Automatic comment extraction | Coding and Counting, computer-mediated discourse analysis |
| | 3 | Semi-structured interview | Thematic analysis |

Although we included a quantitative methodological component, we thought it relevant to follow it up with a final interview with Blue Jeans to verify data with the author whose work originates the fandom in this study. This interview makes it possible to verify, with the voice of the author, how big an impact online socialization of literary works exerted on the co-construction of the author's identity and on his literary work, and how he perceives the interaction and participation he receives from his followers in various social networks (objective 2, table 1). According to Callejo and Viedma (2005), the three methodological articulate a *modus operandi* that is emerging, snowballing (the results obtained in a prior phase are used to construct data collection instruments used in subsequent phases) and operates by supplementation (in our design, the results from phase 2 are considered the main results, the results from phase 1 are necessary to obtain the results from phase 2, and the results from phase 3 serve as an addition to the results obtained in phase 2). In short, the results from the last phase (semi-structured interview with the author) verify, reinforce, and detail some nuances regarding the results derived from the main methodological process (phase 2), which is central to achieving the two objectives outlined in table 1.

Phase 1. Non-participant observation

We used non-participant observation to (1) gain an in-depth understanding of the narrative universe of Blue Jeans as deployed in several online and offline spaces, and (2) discover the strategies for recruiting his readers and building fan loyalty on such platforms.

Through observation, we mapped out their literary world from three perspectives: (1) platforms used by the author, (2) platforms used by readers (fandom) and the digital literary practices developed in these, and (3) contents and activities used on these platforms and the connections among them (intertextuality). To produce this cartography, we used the model proposed by Askwith (2007), which examines readers' access to the author's universe and the developing of such literary work, including the emerging productions forms. Interactions between the author and the readers were also observed, which allowed for a comprehensive vision of the phenomenon under study.

Phase 2. Identification of the most relevant networks and collection and analysis of the corpus of readers' feedback

In phase 2, we identified that the most relevant networks for online socialization of Blue Jeans' work are Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube and TikTok. With those we could build a massive and robust corpus of readers' feedback on "official" networks managed by Blue Jeans (table 2).

To complement our analysis, we added two additional fan-managed sources: (1) the "Buenos días, princesa" (translation: "Good morning, princess") Facebook fan group with 21,296 participants, and (2) four open threads in the "¡¡Ábrete libro!!" (translation: "Book, open!!") literary forum. The final corpus amounts to 3,997 comments:

Table 2

Official platforms analyzed in phase 2 (data as of 27/Jun/2020)

| | Followers | Persons followed | No. of publications | Start |
|------------------|-----------|------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| Twitter | 171,417 | 12,251 | 154,717 | 2 APR. 2010 |
| Instagram | 74,700 | 5,453 | 1,316 | 7 JAN. 2015 |
| Facebook | 72,232 | — | — | 15 JUN. 2012 |
| YouTube | 36,700 | — | 125 | 22 APR. 2015 |
| TikTok | 2,174 | 72 | 18 | 17 MAY. 2020 |

To analyze this massive corpus, we combined a descriptive-quantitative analysis, by categorizing the contents of the comments, with a discursive analysis. Coding followed the “coding and counting” method from Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis (Herring, 2004), employed in similar studies (García-Marín & Aparici, 2020; Torrego & Gutiérrez, 2016; Zhang & Cassany, 2019). After this inductive analysis, four categories emerge:

1. Literary feedback. They refer to literary appreciations and concepts from the point of view of reflection, criticism, or literary positioning. Ex.: “Emilio is a great character. He is always ready to help Julia with her crazy stuff.”

- Expressive-Affective Discourse. They denote an affective link with Blue Jeans’ work or universe. Ex.: “I love your books; you are the best” or “🥰.”
- Questions about works. Ex.: “When will your book be published in Peru?”
- Other. Not relevant to this study.

Two coders coded the corpus. To reduce potential subjectivity and ensure internal validity, we ran a pilot test with 123 comments. After coding them separately, we applied an association test by extracting the Cohen’s Kappa index, with a highly positive result (0.926). After the coding, we extracted the descriptive statistical data with SPSS and carried out ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) and chi-square tests for greater data accuracy.

Table 3

Feedback part of the corpus

| | Comments | Remarks |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| Accounts managed by Blue Jeans | YouTube | 502 All comments from 2019 and 2020 |
| | Facebook-official | 616 Comments from 16 MAR. 2020 to 7 JUN. 2020 |
| | Twitter: #elclubdelosincomprendidosneox | 448 Hashtag used by the writer and his fans to comment on the film based on the homonymous book |
| | Twitter: #elpuzledecristal | 421 Hashtag which presents the homonymous book |
| | TikTok | 353 All comments to micro-videos from start to 20 JUN. 2020 |
| | Instagram | 780 Comments from 1 JUN. 2020 to 22 JUN. 2020 |
| Groups/pages self-managed by fans | Facebook-fans | 673 Comments from 1 JUN. 2015 to latest comment of 5 APR. 2020 |
| | “¡¡Ábrete libro!!” forum | 204 All comments generated in four threads on Blue Jeans’ work |

Phase 3. Semi-structured interview with Blue Jeans

We conducted a 15 minutes semi-structured interview with Blue Jeans on 24th June 2020 and compared his perceptions with previously analyzed quantitative data in reference to three topics: (1) negotiation of literary content in digital environments; (2) social networks as spaces for immersion in social reality of young people; (3) and social networks as a method to curate the fandom. When preparing the interview script (see appendix 1), we used some statements taken from their website and some of the recurrent themes analyzed in the data. Two researchers also agreed on the script, analyzed the interview and discussed the information obtained.

Ethics

The comments collected are public and accessible, but we removed all reference to fans to preserve their anonymity and respect the online “impression” of privacy (Raad & Chbeir, 2013). Blue Jeans was informed and consented to participate in the study before data collection² started.

Results

We divide the presentation into three sections. First, there is an initial section that serves as contextual information and approach to the object of study. The following section includes qualitative data that show the semiotic complexity of Blue Jeans’ literary universe, based on the intertextuality analysis of the different contents. The concluding section scrutinizes socialization among participants.

Blue Jeans’ literary universe online

Accounts managed by Blue Jeans

Blue Jeans’ literary universe Jeans mostly relate to his work, published since 2009 and grouped into two trilogies and two series (thirteen books to date). His narrative jumped onto the world of cinema with the film *El club de*

los incomprendidos (2014), an adaptation of the novel *¡Buenos días, princesa!* In April 2020, the author announced that the first book of the latest trilogy (*La chica invisible*) will be adapted to a comic book, while a production company bought the rights of the trilogy to turn it into a TV series.

His official website (lawebdebluejeans.com) gives access to all contents, hosted on every remaining platform. In the About me section, the writer states: “Now I devote myself to writing novels and to spending hours and hours on social networks answering questions from my readers (...). Readers are the most important part of this adventure and I owe them everything I have achieved.”

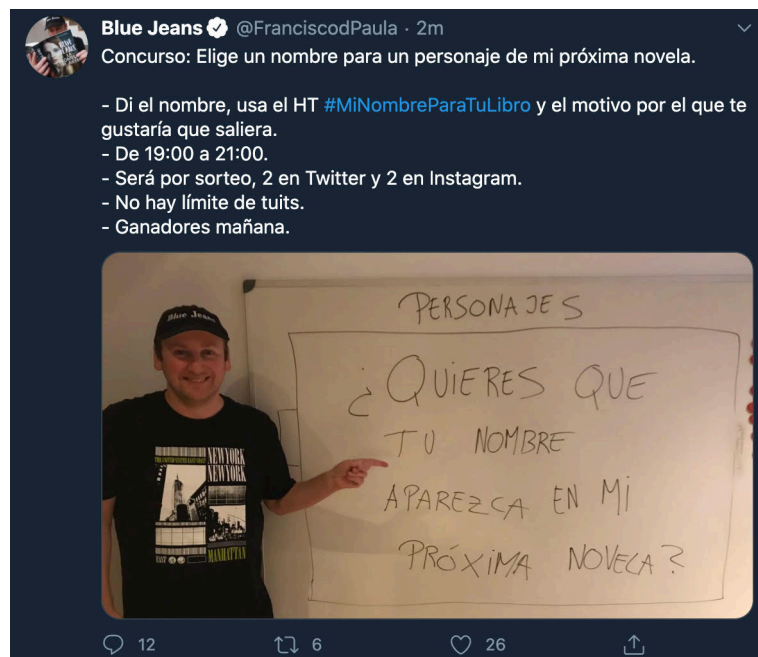
We took that About me section statement by Blue Jeans’ to start our interview (appendix 2), and Blue Jeans responded: “If there emerges any social network, any new one, I need to be there.” He continues with a reflection on the power of social networks exert to shape his own identity as a professional writer and his relationship with a committed, activist, and passionate readership:

In 2008, social networks were starting to become fashionable and saw it as a good opportunity for people to read and judge me (...). Thanks to all those people who started following me on social networks, who even started promoting *Canciones para Paula* [one of Blue Jeans’ first novels], because they wanted to, fan sites were created on Fotolog, Tuenti [social media common back in the day], thanks to all those people, I could get my novel published on paper.

Aware of the power of digital socialization, today Blue Jeans manages profiles on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. He modulates his discourse to target each network: (1) Facebook for announcements and news; (2) Twitter and Instagram to interact with fans (contests, surveys); (3) TikTok to naturalize his image and offer the most comical side to being a writer; (4) YouTube for *booktrailers*, live streaming, tribute videos to participants in face-to-face events, or explanations on the process of writing a novel.

Figure 1

Example of a contest on Twitter



Already dead social media like Tuenti still leave a traceable mark on Blue Jeans' discourse: Tuenti was very important. I met a lot of people there. I used it in parallel to Messenger. Then, these social networks died, and new ones appeared on stage: Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. Twitter's been the one I've had more contact with: we would make contests and I'd get worldwide trending topics almost every week, but young people started to abandon it. Now's the time for Instagram.

In every platform, it is noteworthy how Blue Jeans sets a routine for his online persona as he openly interacts with the fan readership/audience, answers questions about his novels published or in the making or share reflections about tropes and characters:

Social networks are a great tool and being updated is essential (...). The audience I am addressing, they are young people, whose world changes continuously, so I have to be updated with trends and so do my social networks. Every day I say "hi!" on Twitter, reply to private messages on Instagram or try to upload a photo. Now I am uploading three or four TikTok videos a week. Participating in social media and interacting with the readership is now part of the pro-

fession [of being a write] as if when in a book-signing event. Now [during confinement], online presence is much greater because of the lack of physical contact and events.

Blue Jeans is the promoter of reading socialization events about his work. During the confinement because of the COVID19 pandemic, he organized collective reading sessions of his books on Telegram, in which he actively participated. As an example, he construes social media as a key tool to make clear distinctions between authors and literary work and characters: "I try to explain that the author does not think the same as the character: if any character behaves in a toxic way or does something wrong, it does not mean that the author agrees."

Self-managed groups by fans

There are also affinity spaces managed by fans: blogs, websites [<http://www.afortunosdeblue.ml/>], online book forums, Facebook groups (a book club with 11,400 members), Twitter accounts and Instagram of Spanish-speaking fan clubs, and fanfiction on the

Figure 2

Mapping of official platforms

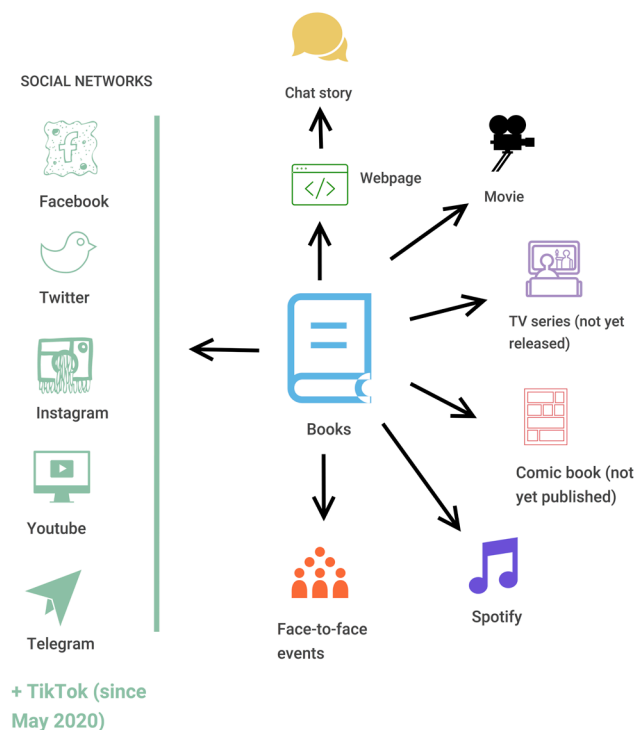
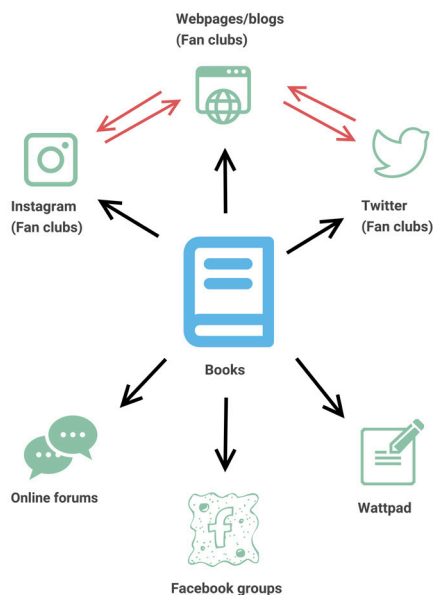


Figure 3

Mapping of fan-managed platforms



Wattpad platform. These fandom spaces keep readers up to date and encourage their creativity around the Blue Jeans universe, beyond what the control of the author.

Intertextuality

Both Blue Jeans and his fans make up the intertextuality of the literary universe, which we understand here as the links between the different texts (contents and practices). We use the Askwith model (2007) to analyze intertextual links. This model distinguishes five components: (1) expanded access (book adaptations to the cinema, upcoming productions in comics or series, official social networks as entry points); (2) adapted content (booktrailers on YouTube, trailers of film adaptations); (3) expanded content (intramedia, each book in its trilogy expands the content of previous works; meta-textual, YouTube videos on the process of book creation, humorous reflections on the writer's life in TikTok; extratextual, content relating

to the author's private life); (4) related paratextual activities (analytical or productive such as discussion forums or fanfiction; competitive, competitions on social networks; experiential, shared readings and face-to-face events), and (5) social interaction (fans-fans; author-fans):

I receive many private messages saying, 'I know won't read this', but I read them all. There is not a single message in these 12 years that I have not read, but quite another thing is that I answer all. Even so, I try to answer as many messages as I can (...) Then, they (the fans) see that I am an average person, whose profession is writer, that I have managed to do what I like, mainly thanks to them and with some of them I have been in touch for 10 years. I try to be as friendly as possible, as close as possible.

Socialization and interaction of readers/fans in Blue Jeans' literary universe and fandom

The analysis of readers' comments shows the prevalence of affective discourse (60.64%) as opposed to subject positioning over literary content, which accounts for only 9.08% of the total comments (table 4). Only 3% of the messages are used to make questions to the author or other members of the community.

Figure 4

Intertextual relations between contents and practices within the Blue Jeans’ transmedia universe



The proportion of literary content emerging on YouTube comments is low (1.79%). However, other networks concentrate literary opinions, perceptions or suggestions for improving Blue Jeans’ literary pieces. We see Facebook-official with 0.49% comments, Instagram with 0.89%, and the majority of comments stemming from forums (22.54%) and two Twitter hashtags devoted to commentary on the books and films (30.87% dedicated to the book; 19.64% linked to the film). These environments work as: (1) spaces of some affective affinity among readers and between readers and authors, and (2) platforms

to debate literary aspects, taking advantage of the potential of the digital environment.

In the opposite direction, YouTube (90.83%), the official Facebook page (87.5%) and Instagram (81.53%) stand out as spaces of great affective interaction. Across these sites, messages from fans bear a strong laudatory nature towards the author and his work, and show affective responses to explanations given by the author about his ongoing and future projects.

Consequently, there are significant differences in the frequency the content categories are present across the dataset on the platforms we mapped out. To confirm this hypothesis, we conducted a single factor one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). In this case, the factor was the type of comment, with three groups: literary comment, affective comment, and question. The result of the ANOVA test confirmed the existence of highly relevant differences ($p < .01$) (appendix 3.1). The test only reports whether there are frequency differences among the three groups, without providing data on the categories in which such differences occur and to what extent. To complete the results with this information, we decided to conduct a post hoc HSD Tukey test. The result of the HSD Tukey test detects very significant deviations between the affective content and the other two categories ($p < .01$) (appendix 3.2). But it does not determine large variations in the values of literary feedback

Table 4

Descriptive statistics of the comment type variable on each of the platforms analyzed

| | | Affective | Literary | Question | Others | Total |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|----------------|-------|
| Spaces managed by Blue Jeans | YouTube | 456 (90.83%) | 9 (1.79%) | 30 (5.97%) | 7 (1.39%) | 502 |
| | Facebook-official | 539 (87.5%) | 3 (0.49%) | 19 (3.08%) | 55 (8.93%) | 616 |
| | Twitter (book) | 162 (38.47%) | 130 (30.87%) | 2 (0.47%) | 127 (30.16%) | 421 |
| | Twitter (film) | 184 (41.07%) | 88 (19.64%) | 2 (0.44%) | 174 (38.83%) | 448 |
| | Instagram | 636 (81.53%) | 7 (0.89%) | 9 (1.15%) | 128 (16.41%) | 780 |
| | TikTok | 186 (52.69%) | 28 (7.93%) | 20 (50.66%) | 119 (33.71%) | 353 |
| Spaces managed by fans | Forums | 78 (38.23%) | 46 (22.54%) | 27 (13.23%) | 53 (25.98%) | 204 |
| | Facebook-fan | 183 (27.19%) | 52 (7.72%) | 11 (1.63%) | 427 (63.44%)* | 673 |
| | Total | 2424 (60.64%) | 363 (9.08%) | 120 (3.00%) | 1,090 (27.27%) | 3,997 |

Table 5
 Difference from the overall sample average for each comment category

| | Affective | Literary | Question | Others |
|---------------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| YouTube | +30.19 | -7.29 | +2.97 | -25.88 |
| Facebook(official) | +26.86 | -8.59 | +0.08 | -18.34 |
| Facebook (fan) | -33.45 | -1.36 | -1.37 | +36.17 |
| Twitter (book) | -22.17 | +21.79 | -2.53 | +2.89 |
| Twitter (film) | -19.57 | +10.56 | -2.56 | +11.56 |
| TikTok | -7.95 | -1.15 | +2.66 | +6.44 |
| Forums | -22.37 | +13.46 | +10.23 | -1.29 |
| Instagram | +20.89 | -8.19 | -1.85 | -10.86 |

compared to the readers' questions ($p>.05$). With this picture, we conclude that the presence of affective messages in the Blue Jeans affinity community is significantly higher than literary content. The percentages of messages with literary feedback or comments are not significantly higher than messages asking questions.

As for differences between sites and content shared depending on whether the site is managed by author or the fans, we took two Facebook accounts managed in several ways: the official Facebook site managed by the author; and the fan-managed Facebook interest page. It is interesting to compare whether messages originating from the two platforms show relevant differences in typology and content. As these are categorical variables, we conducted the chi-square test. This allows for hypotheses to be verified by calculating their margin of error (level of significance). According to derived descriptive statistics, the frequency of literary comments on the Facebook fan account is much higher than the frequency of this type of comments and feedback on the official account. The chi-square test confirms this hypothesis by determining an error rate of less than 1% ($p<.01$) (appendix 3.3).

Our analysis also shows the author's intention to promote literary reflection on his books on Twitter. There is a high percentage of comments/messages under certain hashtags with some subject positioning over literary content and

aspects. These hashtags promoted by the author show how the author activates the production of literary and non-literary comments on his work. Our statistical analysis also confirms the value of horizontally managed communities as producers of debates around popular culture and literary works. The spaces managed by fans are useful to reread the novels and share personal interpretations. The author is aware of this reality as confirmed by our interview:

If it were not for the readers, in *Canciones para Paula*, the character called Alex would have disappeared (...). Their influence [that of fans] is not direct but I am interested in knowing what they think [about my novels and characters, etc.], and I accept absolutely everything they tell me. I have had debates in private.

Fan interaction online connects fans' identity development with subject positioning over plots, tropes and characters present in Blue Jeans' literary works. Note the substantial number of messages labeled as Other on the Facebook fan sites (63.44%). On this specific social network and related sites, fans-readers usually organize games or challenges that transcend the content of books and propose dynamics that are not found in other sites managed by the author. Examples include a girl fan groups to share personal secrets or sending confession messages to account managers to obtain group reinforcement and opinion in an anonymous manner over personal subjects.

Discussion and conclusions

Social media influence the way we understand literature. The book is no longer presented as a finished work (Cassany, 2012), but it promotes emerging, transmedia and multimodal social practices. Writers who are more aware of the power of social networks encourage the development of reading/literary socialization practices. Blue Jeans is a paradigmatic example in the Spanish-speaking world. In parallel, fans create their own informal socialization spaces: forums, fan-managed social network profiles or sites aimed at specific practices such as fanfiction. Our study emphasizes the power of digitization to exacerbate reading and literary socialization and to alter author-reader and reader-reader interactions.

Overall, the study reveals that: (1) there are spaces more prone to socialize literature than others; (2) part of the set of practices for the professionalization of writers involve maintaining an active digital network of reading socialization; (3) thanks to reading and literary socialization, there may emerge some sociocultural learning, driven by the horizontal interaction between writer and fans and among fans themselves, or (4) it is important to establish links between what happens in vernacular contexts and in the classroom if we really promote critical reading in future generations. Let us explain these four implications:

(1) Reading and literary socialization. All the social networks and sites examined in our study provide a space for comments that imply literary socialization, understood as the participation in affinity spaces around a literary work, but there are social networks more prone to literary discussion. More prone to literary discussion were Twitter and the online forums in comparison with YouTube, Facebook, Instagram or TikTok, where comments are more affective. Two explanations may justify the choice of Twitter and forums for literary discussion: forums, with their written format and without character limitation, allow more textual planning, and Twitter allows

direct interaction with Blue Jeans, who also encourages literary commentary by fans. The most formal social networking sites in terms of the content of comments run parallel to the prominence of the written text. In the other networks, image, video, or sound bear distinct affordances which modify both the nature of content and content presentation. Images of Blue Jeans showing part of his everyday life in image-based social networking sites enhance affection and admiration towards the writer, emotional ties between writers and fans, and among fans.

The affordances of each social networks may also favor the differentiation of the social function: Twitter is generally used for information, while Instagram provides more entertainment (Alhabash & Ma, 2017). In the interview, Blue Jeans acknowledges that he strategizes to stay in touch with his followers and generate feedback. He activates interaction with questions, contests, or activities, and sometimes socialization also emerges spontaneously with the writer adopting less of a leading role.

(2) Writer professionalization. After over a decade using digital environments, Blue Jeans has developed strategies for managing social networks and promoting reading socialization, in a way that has allowed him to continue publishing novels. Blue Jeans surveys, channels and filters the messages posted on his networks, enabling him to reach millions of people globally. In Blue Jeans' case, the writer becomes an *influencer*, aware of the intricacies of the novel digital cultural industries (Establés et al., 2018). An instance of his awareness occurred when Blue Jeans was invited to *Operación Triunfo* (a musical reality TV show in Spain) in 2017, to advise participants on how to manage social networks and connect with their fans. According to the writer in the interview, the interaction between him and his readers allows Blue Jeans to comprehend his fans' social reality and ways to communicate so as to include relatable social ways

in his novels and create credible stories. In the opinion of Morales-Lomas (2018), it is a question of linking the text with a community of thought. Blue Jeans verbalizes it when he says: “My next characters will all have TikTok.”

- (3) Sociocultural learning in interaction. The spaces where Blue Jeans and his followers carry out these digital literary practices create potential communities of practice (Wenger, 2002), which may generate learning. Communication is bidirectional, with a high number of interactions. Fans learn from an expert (writer, another fan), who encourages them to refocus attention on potentially unknown literary aspects or who shares favorite books by other authors to undertake new literary adventures. The fans become coagents in the configuration and development of the fandom. They participate in contests to even set the name of the fandom: *bluejeaners*, blue army, etc. Although we have not centered our study on characterizing these learnings through fans’ active interactions, we can hypothesize that such sociocultural learning may occur, and propose a deeper discursive analysis in the future given the considerable number of subject positioning and informational acts in comments with literary content across the dataset (“I think”, “I believe”, use and distribution of emoticons and memes, etc.). Other studies which produced detailed analyses of online interactions to verify whether there is sociocultural learning (Benson, 2015, Vazquez-Calvo, 2020) are a starting point to support this hypothesis drawn from our study.
- (4) Bridges between vernacular and classroom contexts. Young and teenage fans’ participation in multimodal literary practices implies multifarious ways of receiving and appropriating the literary text and young adult literature in general. Such participation facilitates intercultural dialogue, cultivates intellectual curiosity, and develops a civic culture (Tuzel & Hobbs, 2017; Zhang & Cassany, 2019). Traditional literary commentary and memory-based learning of the

literary canon do not allow us to explain with pedagogical rigor the ways whereby contemporary readers socialize their reading of literature, how young people stick to reading literature, as with the fandom of Blue Jeans. In promoting multimodal literacy, Mills and Unsworth (2017) advocate for understanding and applying the “multimodal grammar” of texts as part of meaning-making contemporary social practices. This socio-semiotic approach runs parallel to other proposals, such as the pedagogy of *multiliteracies* (The New London Group, 1996). It is not detaching vernacular practices and from their original contexts, but rather, from schools, enabling students to participate in these contexts. Practical examples include teaching ways to access the literary text by digital means and participate in online literary social practices, encouraging a critical analysis of popular literary culture (Garlen & Sandlin, 2016) or comparing how discourse is appropriated in each historical moment and each phase of technological development, considering literary, sociological, educational, and other digitization-related implications.

This study foregrounded how relevant digital contexts are for producing and consuming literature. In contrast with restricting notions of digital platforms as mere instruments for publicizing literary works, our research demonstrated the enhanced affordances social networking sites provide as catalysts for literary socialization and shared knowledge creation. Renewed consumption habits of popular culture products require new models to explicate current literary creation patterns, the relationship between writers and readership, and novel educational dynamics bridging vernacular literary reading practices, including literary socialization online, into the classroom.

Notes

1. See Mills and Unsworth (2017) for more on the concept *multimodal literacy*.

2. We followed the ethical recommendations of the Association of Internet Researchers (AoIR) (Markham & Buchanan, 2012).

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Intertextual relation model applied to contents and activities (Askwith, 2007)

STUDY OF INTERTEXTUALITY. CODEBOOK

Expanded access. Every possible point of access to the transmedia universe. Each point of access compiles comprehensively, with no modification, pre-existing content.

Adapted content. Every type of content which manipulates, re-organizes, extracts, re-uses or adapts prior content. These texts do not offer, in general, new information. Instead, they interconnect and systematize available information (guides, synopsis, etc.).

Expanded content. All new or unpublished content. It can be divided into:

- a) **Textual extension.** It comprises narrative (new stories partly related to the original work such as sequels, *spin-offs*, etc.) and diegetic extension (artifacts which build up on the narration per se, surpassing the fictional world and insert it into the “real world.”)
 - b) **Metatextual information.** Information related to the project overall, the author or the production process.
 - c) **Extratextual information.** Information not connected with the original content.
-

Related activities. They compel readers to take on an active and participatory role. These activities can be experiential, productive or competitive.

Social interaction. Social interaction is split into horizontal (not hierarchical), vertical (hierarchical) and diagonal types of relationship. The diagonal social interaction refers to reader-character interaction through interactive games or social media, often managed by a trained scripter who represents the dramatic role of the characters.

Appendix 2. Interview questions

Topic 1: Author-fans relationship and motivation: emerging literacy roles of literary consumption:

- In your website, you state that “Los lectores son la parte más importante de esta aventura y a ellos les debo todo lo que he logrado” (our translation: *Readers are the most important part of this adventure [of being a writer and a recognized author] and I owe everything I have achieved to them*). Could you explain the implications of this sentence for your work as a writer?
- What do you think your authors feel given that they can contact you personally through social media?
- What do they, your fans, seek when approaching you? Do you think they want you to change something in your books? Do they influence your literary work?
- Could you explain some funny experience you recall of a fan trying to talk you into changing something in some of your books?

Topic 2: The author/content curator identity: new literacy roles of literary production

- In your website, you state that “Ahora me dedico a escribir novelas y a pasarme horas y horas en las redes sociales respondiendo las preguntas de los lectores” (our translation: *Now my job is to write novels and to spend hours and hours in social media replying to readers’ questions*). Could you explain the implications of this sentence for you as an author?
- Do you think it is a requirement now to upload and curate updated content online to become a writer? Why (not)? And to live off writing professionally? Why (not)?
- Out of the things you spend hours and hours doing online, which activity do you think brings you more benefits or success vis-à-vis your fans?
- With such a massive participation online, do you think your way of perceiving literature has changed? And writing or reading? Why?
-

Appendix 3. Statistical tests

3.1. One-way ANOVA test applied to the variable “type of comment” (literary, affective or question)

| ANOVA | | | | | |
|----------------|----------------|----|-------------|--------|------|
| Frequency | | | | | |
| | Sum of squares | df | Mean square | F | Sig. |
| Between groups | 13278.968 | 2 | 6639.484 | 24.975 | .000 |
| Within groups | 5582.784 | 21 | 265.847 | | |
| Total | 18861.752 | 23 | | | |

3.2. Post-hoc multiple comparisons tests between type of comments, including significance only

| (I) Type of comment | (J) Type of comment | Sig. |
|---------------------|---------------------|------|
| Affective | Literary | .000 |
| | Question | .000 |
| Literary | Affective | .000 |
| | Question | .632 |
| Question | Affective | .000 |
| | Literary | .632 |

3.3. Chi-squared tests applied to the two Facebook accounts

| Chi-square tests | | | |
|------------------------------|---------|----|-------------------------------------|
| | Value | df | Asymptotic significance (bilateral) |
| Pearson's chi-squared test | 116.048 | 2 | .000 |
| Verisimilitude rate | 112.280 | 2 | .000 |
| Linear by linear association | 45.067 | 1 | .000 |
| No. of valid cases | 807 | | |