A “Self Experience” From the Gamified Literary Cards of Shakespeare’s Work: *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*

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Based on the gamified Literary Cards of the Shakespearean work *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, we intend to observe, analyze, and verify in what ways the practices of reading and rewriting create effects of meaning, providing the subject reader/player to live an “experience of oneself”, being led to observe oneself, analyzing oneself, deciphering oneself, recognizing oneself as a domain of your own truth and, in this regard, your subjectivity can build your understanding of what sexuality is or highlight the repression of misunderstood desires.

The reflection is based on Discourse Analysis of the French “line”, Foucaultian Studies and Freud-Lacanian Psychoanalysis, in which the postulates are about the historical determination of the processes of signification, considering that the senses are constructed in a singular way. It is understood that the gamification, *used* in Literary Cards, comprises an educational technology aimed not only at the apprehension of a dynamic and interpretive reading practice of oneself, but also as a facilitating resource for teachers to promote formal sexual education from elementary school on.

*Keywords:* literary cards, gamification, experience of self, sexuality

**Introductory Scores and Contextualization**

The current pedagogical proposals introduce that the student should be encouraged to seek solutions in groups or *crowdsourcing* (collaborative experience), through the resources of interaction to stimulate competences such as the cognitive capacities of assessment, analysis, synthesis, and no longer to simple memorization of the content. What characterizes this learning model is the *hands-on* movement (learning by doing) that involves a reflexive abstraction, a process in which the individual thinks, experiences the process, and becomes capable of re-signifying. It is also known that the reading of classical works served as an anchor and reflection for many psychoanalysts, in their work of understanding and helping the human being. Certainly, literature plays a pivotal role in the construction of the subjects, insofar as it is through their reading that the subject identifies and re-signifies meanings to the world, recognizes himself, or knows others in the imaginary world of literature.

In *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, the title itself is breathtaking, thought-provoking, making the possible

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reader’s imagination circulate about a dream. A dream that, from antiquity to Freud, appears as an enigma that calls for interpretation (interpretive bias becomes one of the possibilities of approaching the phenomenon of dreams), is “pregnant” with meanings, indicating that it is not just any dream, but that of a night, so also, it is not any night, it is a summer night. Shakespeare, in his last play written for theater, The Tempest, comments: “We are such stuff as dreams are made on”. For Freud (1996), in “Third Lesson”, the dream is in an instance between the real and the unreal, reason and the dream, and it is precisely in what escapes the demarcated instance that he will focus his studies, analyze, will investigate, therefore, foresee, in the dream, the foundation of psychoanalytic theory.

The Shakespearean play, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, involves the art of mixing the classic with the popular, it takes place between two worlds where magic and reality are located in one dimension and, wakefulness and sleep alternate in one fantastic forest on the outskirts of the Greek city of Athens. There is an entanglement of the characters Hermia and Lysander, who want to escape in order to enjoy their love, but Egeu, Hermia’s father, demands the right to kill his own daughter, if she is not faithful and obedient. Shakespeare values the scene represented by Hermia, presenting her as a courageous woman as well as the passionate Helena, who, caught up in love, challenges the woman’s historical condition of being the object of conquest. It brings fantastic beings, fairies, and elves that echo arrhythmic feelings, interfering in the lives of humans.

This work shows its timeless character, the (mis)understanding of the feelings of others and our own feelings. As such, it is possible to establish an interlacement between literature and psychoanalysis in this play, at the moment of the non-submission of one’s own desire to a third party, of escaping to a place of coexistence between the real and the imaginary “among worlds”, where characters are in a space/time elaboration of their conflicts and identities, giving them a new meaning.

Thus, the dream is nothing more than the representation of a possibility of meeting with oneself and with the other. Dreaming is a constitutive and subjectivating action, as dreaming and playing are always places of possibilities, of multiple meanings. For this paper, we are anchored in the contribution of French Discourse Analysis, in Freud-Lacanian psychoanalysis and in Foucaultian postulates. It is known that, when taking the floor, the subject is submitted to a place in which he/she subscribes him/herself; he/she affiliates him/herself, in this way, as well presented by Foucault (2014) in his last studies which focused on ethics and aesthetics of existence, specifically in “The Ethic of Care for the Self as a Practice of Freedom”, the topic of an interview, the subject is an effect of subjectivity, as the discourse brings evidence of the production of subjectivity. Thus, we appropriate the language, specifically the word as an instance of the symbolic field to text other senses, when considering that the senses are constructed in a unique way, in the relation to the other, and in their environment.

**Project Description**

**Gamified Educational Technology: Literary Cards—An Experience of Oneself**

The Cards are small cards that allow the reader to know not only the physical and psychological characteristics of the characters that are involved, in the play mentioned, A Midsummer Night’s Dream from Shakespeare’s work, but also the structures of the comedy genre that, for being dramatic, plays with the real and the imaginary. The Cards can enable the reader to extrapolate, because, by being involved in the game, one is already stuck to a sense and identification.
Literary Cards are considered educational objects and they are part of studies and the research in development of the doctoral thesis of one of the authors, located within the research project entitled “Sexual Education: Literature and Social Media as Self-technology in the Construction of Modes of Existence”, linked to UNESP; it integrates the studies of the Research Group GESTELD (Study Group of Education, Sexuality, Technologies, Languages and Discourses, http://dgp.cnpq.br/dgp/espelhogrupo/3512705058041159), certified by CNPq, whose objectives are to investigate and discursively analyze the modes of existence from the relations of knowledge, discursive practices, and self-practices in several means of media communication: from canonical to digital literature, for the construction of educational practices of the subject’s ethical formation.

The doctoral thesis in development intends to work with canonical literature and young people from elementary school (basic education), using gamification to, through the game and interpretive/reframing reading, lead their readers/players to reflect on issues of identity, subjectivity, and sexuality, with possible consequences to be explored, after or concomitantly with the game, namely: the relationships between the feminine/masculine, marriage, virginity, feminism, among others.

![Sonho de uma noite de verão](image)

Figure 1. Some characters from the Shakespearean theatrical narrative A Midsummer Night’s Dream.

At first, it was thought to reframe not only the form, but also the style and support of the teaching materials through the effective use of technological resources, in favor of teaching and learning gamified reading practices, thus, Literary Cards are considered (digital or printed) as gamified educational technology.

For that, it seeks to anchor on theorists who dominate the theme: by Busarello et al. (2014), in the book *Gamification and the Game System: Concepts About Gamification as a Motivational Resource*, we find justifications to explain that gamification includes motivational elements. Another quote comes from the authors Hamari et al. (apud Busarello et al., 2014), who state, confirming that gamification is seen from an
emotional perspective: “we understand that gamification is a process of improving services, objects or environments based on experiences of elements of games and behavior of individuals” (p. 15). Thus, it is understood that knowing how to use the mechanics of games in a gamification environment is the main factor for the successful use of its concept. It is clear, therefore, that the use of game mechanics can favor the system’s functionality and, from that, influence the dynamics and, mainly, the aesthetics, which directly involve the individual’s motivational factor. As such, Busarello et al. (2014) explain:

The focus on gamification is to emotionally involve the individual within a range of tasks performed. For this, it uses mechanisms from games that are perceived by the subjects as pleasant and challenging elements, favoring the creation of a conducive environment to the individual’s engagement. (p. 33)

This way, the proposal to use the Cards (which can be produced in both printed and digital media), can promote the involvement and development of oneself, as Poulet says (apud Jouve, 2002), “Reading is becoming, [...] successively evokes the intimate relationship that unites the reader to the characters, the richness of the emotional experience, and the strength of the imaginary representations that refer to the subject’s affective history” (p. 120), when referring to a passage of Combray, of Proust, in which he highlights the essential characteristics of the reading experience, to which Orlandi (2012) points out: “it is about the fact that every reader has his/her history of readings” (p. 115).

For that, we present some possibilities of working in a discursive, pedagogical, and psychoanalytic perspective of reading, intertwining areas of knowledge in a playful interdisciplinary process.

When playing, the subject, as Brougère (1995) points out “is not satisfied in developing behaviors, but manipulates images, symbolic meanings, which constitute a part of the cultural impregnation to which he is subjected” (p. 47), re-signifying it, it is a process that involves the conditions of production, circulation, and reception of the constituting meanings of the historical-social-cultural-ideological movement present at a given moment and not at another. For Pêcheux (2009), “meaning does not exist in itself, it is determined by the ideological positions that are at stake in the socio-historical process in which words, expressions and propositions are produced” (p. 146). This means that, the subjects constantly change their meaning according to the positions supported by the way they use words, expressions, and propositions; that the meaning is socio-historically constructed, it is never predetermined, nor given or ready.

To give more emphasis to the game, the reader is allowed to appropriate emotions and feelings and reveal other attitudes towards certain situations that arise through the choice of various magic potions and other scenarios in addition to those found in the founder work. Among the characters that make up part of the Cards, there are nobles, artisans, and imaginary beings like Puck, who represents the incarnation of the playful spirit of nature, he enchants and confuses everyone with his filter of love.

It is known that reading is able to incite the reader to identification, to an aesthetic experience that can have both an intellectual and an affective meaning. As such, George Poulet, in the text “Reading as Interiorization of the Other” reproduced by Jouve (2002), “it is possible to assimilate reading to a type of vertigo, as it presents itself as an experience of otherness” (p. 119).

Considering these conceptions, we seek to innovate by bringing a device that allows, due to its speed and availability of resources in real time, that the reader-player can appropriate the available, blank Cards (Figure 4) to choose and interfere in the construction of the character or mess with the narrative, depending on the actions you want to activate in your game.
In this way, there is an imbricated and involved reader in the construction of both the story and the character, who intends to be not only a passive reader, but an active one in the process of construction and reconstruction of the story. *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* evidences a debate about gender boundaries in the constitution of identity, the female characters are nonconformist, bold in challenging men, and seem to ignore “their” pre-determined social place.
We can see perceptive dialogues and all seductive power, it uses cunning and seduction to reach their goals, usually in a farce tone. The female figures, characters in the play, can be updated to the present days, because within the work itself they represent characters that exceeded the limits of the social conventions of their time, they point to a woman who does not exist only in opposition to the man, but it is constituted from the characteristics that give it her identity.

![Figure 4. Blank available Cards.](image)

In this regard, we corroborate with Foucault (2014) who historically studied sexuality from the point of view of experience, not ideas or behaviors, but the experience of oneself. Larrosa (2011, p. 59) when metaphorically elaborated about the act of “seeing oneself” comments that it is about “[...] an unfolding between oneself and an external image of oneself, the one that appears in the mirror, which, due to the happy effect of a change in the direction of light, becomes visible to the person himself”. The imaginary register assumes the character of a constitutive instance of perceptual experience.

Discourse Analysis clarifies that the subject has the illusion that he/she chooses, because he/she will always be bound by a sense, bound by an imaginary that constitutes him/her. Stuck to something, the subject, through the imaginary, identifies and thus builds his/her identity(ies). Identity is considered to be the subjective feeling that something underlies in the different moments of our existence, and that constitutes us, that is, that it is part of what we have become and makes us unique. It is in the self-forming matrix (ideal self), also known in Psychoanalysis, as “identification processes” or “identification matrixes”, constituted in the “mirror stage” (Lacan, 1998), that the feeling of identity is constituted.

Then, Literary Card is a possible reading practice strategy that provides pleasure, with propositions of re-readings, re-creations, and re-significations, both oral and written, of a classic work adapted to the conditions of reception, production, and circulation of reading from the canons to a technological generation that often does not have the habit and the pleasure of reading the founder work.

This reading practice can increase the participation of players in discussion groups about the choice of characters, scenarios, and others. All of this presupposes a cognitive and affective commitment to oneself,
individual, and to the participants of the group, and all with adapted work, since the Cards not only facilitate the development of oral expression, but also higher levels of thought, as the meanings are built from interactivity.

(In) Conclusive Considerations...

The reader/player subject when moving through the Cards devices, assumes a position. The “positions taken” are effects of the gestures of interpretation, because in the movement that the subject makes, when identifying him/herself, he/she produces displacements from one discursive-enunciative position to another, according to Pecheux (2008), “[...] moments of identification can be perceived as acts that arise in taking positions, recognized as such, that is, as assumed and not denied identification effects” (p. 57).

This “gesture of interpretation” can be considered as “techniques of self”, because when using these spaces to build oneself as subjects, through Cards, one seeks to build the identity(ies) and sexuality(ies). It is through interdiscourse and intertextuality that polysemy can be installed and establish other subjectivating reading gestures. A priori, these devices are thought of as subjectivation technologies, since the subject, when playing, will be able to show his/her subjectivity and singularities, an experience of him/herself. This “gesture of interpretation” can be considered as “techniques of self”, because when using these spaces to build oneself as subjects, through Cards, one seeks to build the identity(ies) and sexuality(ies). It is through interdiscourse and intertextuality that polysemy can be installed and establish other subjectivating reading gestures. A priori, these devices are thought of as subjectivation technologies, since the subject, when playing, will be able to show his/her subjectivity and singularities, an experience of him/herself. Thus, their subjectivity can build their understanding of what sexuality is or highlight the repression of misunderstood desires.

In this (in) conclusion (initial phase of the research), our aim was to present the possibilities of more significant readings, from the use of Literary Cards (at first, considered as gamified educational technology), allowing the reader-player subject, as pointed out by Pimenta et al. (2017), through the movement of the senses, [...] to cause deconstructions in the constant search for difference and the loss of oneself, to find oneself in singularity as the subject of a sexuality. Establishing interlocutions in which the Other intervenes in a reflexive way anchored by alterity, which is in a constant movement of transformation for what is constitutive to us: that is, the unfinished subject. (p. 2271)

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