

# Literatura E Livros-Jogos

## Review of “Literature and Gamebooks” by Pedro Panhoca da Silva

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### Abstract

Pedro Panhoca da Silva’s dissertation explores the convergence of literature and gamebooks. It commences with a playful nod to gamebook elements, suggesting an innovative approach. Silva categorizes various ludic products and analyzes Jonathan Green’s successful adaptation of Lewis Carroll’s classics into a gamebook. He then presents his own gamebook adaptation of José Frederico Ferreira Martins’ “Angrid: romance oriental,” resulting in “Ângela: a vingança transcontinental” (Angela: The Transcontinental Revenge). Feedback indicated a positive reception, highlighting the younger generation’s interest in interactive texts. Silva emphasizes the need for gamebooks in educational settings, suggesting they resonate with contemporary readers. His work stands as a significant academic contribution to gamebook studies.

Keywords: Gamebooks, literary adaptations, interactive texts, dissertation review, Portuguese

### 要約

ペドロ・パンホカ・ダ・シルヴァの論文は、文学とゲームブックの融合を探求している。この論文は、ゲームブックの要素に遊び心を持たせることから始まり、革新的なアプローチを示唆している。シルヴァは様々なリユディック作品を分類し、ジョナサン・グリーンがルイス・キャロルの古典のゲームブック化に成功したことを分析する。そして、ジョゼ・フレデリコ・フェレイラ・マルティンスの「Angrid: Romance Oriental(アングリッド: ロマンズ・オリエンタル)」を自らゲームブック化した「Ângela: a vingança transcontinental(アンジェラ: 大陸横断の復讐)」を紹介。反響は上々で、若い世代がインタラクティブなテキストに関心を寄せていることが浮き彫りになった。シルヴァは、教育現場におけるゲームブックの必要性を強調し、現代の読者の共感を呼んでいることを示唆している。彼の研究は、ゲームブック研究への学術的貢献として重要な位置を占めている。

キーワード: ゲームブック, 文芸翻案, インタラクティブ・テキスト, 博士論文書評, ポルトガル語

### 1. Introduction

Funded by three scholarships (Mackenzie Presbyterian University’s own 509 Scholarship, PrInt-Capes UPM Institutional Internationalisation Programme and CAPES PROEX), Pedro Panhoca da Silva’s PhD dissertation *Literature and Gamebooks: Literary Adaptation and its Benefits* (2022) has added a lot to studies involving literature, games, and media.

Right at the start, in the “Acknowledgements” section, the author makes a kind of joke with the use of rolling dice involving the people who helped him, an external element often used in gamebooks, which gives the reader the idea that they are about to encounter a “game-dissertation.” So, the reader can already have a broad idea that the literary genre addressed there – if the gamebook can be considered one – is something playful and different.

In his master’s thesis, Silva (2019) had already created a historical overview of gamebooks in Brazil

and around the world, sometimes analyzing series as a whole or specific and fundamental gamebooks, according to the researcher himself. Thus, *Literature and Gamebooks: Literary Adaptation and its Benefits* comes to complement it, focusing on a specific case study with empirical experience. The proposal of Silva’s text is innovative: to analyze a case of adaptation of Anglophone literature into a gamebook and, based on the study, to think about a Lusophone<sup>1</sup> one.

### 2. Overview and Evaluation

To begin with, Silva proposes a terminological classification to distinguish what Role-playing games (RPG), interactive fiction, solo adventure, gamebooks, interactive dramaturgy, interactive comic, gamecomics, text adventures, interactive phone calls, interactive TV programs, interactive films, and adventure games are. With many examples

<sup>1</sup> Lusophone concerns the Portuguese language.



and richly illustrated, this chapter updates and expands Katz's (1998–2023), Schick's (1991), and Green's (2014) opinions of what can be considered a gamebook or not. Silva explains the need to create a proper nomenclature for ludic productions, since, in Brazil, there was a great deal of confusion when it came to classifying the first products of this type, since RPGs, interactive fiction, gamebooks and solo adventures arrived practically together on the Brazilian publishing market.

Later, Silva analyses how Jonathan Green's adaptation of *Aventuras de Alice no país das maravilhas* ("Alice's Adventures in Wonderland," Carroll 2013b), *Através do Espelho* ("Through the Looking Glass," Carroll 2013a), and *A caça do snark* ("The Hunting of the Snark," Carroll 2017) led to the gamebook *Alice no país dos pesadelos* ("Alice's Nightmare in Wonderland," Green 2019). Seeking to understand why other gamebooks adapted from the literature have not been as successful as Green's, Silva analyses the aspects of horror, fantasy, and steampunk, using as a basis key authors such as King (2003), Roas (2016), Vandermeer and Chambers (2011), respectively.

Having sketched out a "formula for success," Silva then moves on to the next stage of his research, which was to create an unprecedented Lusophone adaptation. The author, looking for innovation, uses as a base text a well-known work that won awards in the 1930s in Portugal, but which didn't survive the time: *Angrid: Romance Oriental* (1938), by José Frederico Ferreira Martins (1874-1960). It's an adventure involving Portuguese-speaking areas such as Portugal, Brazil, and Goa, at the time still a Portuguese colony. The choice seemed to be original since there are only a few mentions of this work in academic studies, but without the reader having contact with the original text – Martins' book is rare – the adaptation, in this case, doesn't work so well, since the reader only has contact with the final product of the process. However, it is known that better-known texts, when adapted, can sometimes suffer from interference between their different media iterations.

The result of reading and analyzing this text is the creation of *Ángela: a vingança transcontinental* ("Angela: The Transcontinental Revenge,"), the first draft of a Lusophone gamebook adapted from a literary text, one of the annexes to Silva's extensive research. After expanding Martins' narrative, the author carried out a field survey to find out how it had been received by the reading public. The amount of feedback, affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, was lower than expected, but even so, the few volunteers who took part attributed positive results to the work. With this, Silva draws conclusions about the future of literature and the gamebook: The new generation of readers is interested in interactive texts, but they lack

publicity and mediation. Schools, libraries, and cultural institutions should have gamebooks in their collections, and professionals to apply them to young reader-players since this new generation of readers values active participation in their lives.

Silva, even though he focuses on gamebooks, could have used and appropriated the concepts Sánchez-Feijóo uses for the interactive fiction series Choose Your Own Adventure in his text *Diseño narrativo de librojuegos: breve manual de referencia y primeros auxilios* ("Narrative Drawings in Gamebooks: A Brief Reference and First Aid Manual," Sánchez-Feijóo 2021), and perhaps used the concepts of narrative structures for his work, which could have enriched his dissertation even more. However, it is perhaps the most complete academic work on gamebooks to date.

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