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## The YouTube Channel RAK TV

### A Narrative Interview with Rachel Cócaro, 14 Years Old

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The initial proposal for this chapter was to talk to young people from Rio de Janeiro aged ten to 14, in order to learn about the creative universe of young YouTubers from Rio. We did not look for YouTubers who were considered “celebrities” or “exceptional” in their use of media, but practices and meanings built by “ordinary” young people who were considered creative based on their productions in the digital sphere. We made a Facebook call among our contacts requesting the names of young producers of media who were active in social networks. Through this network of contacts, ten young people agreed to participate in the interview.

Rachel Cócaro was one of the interviewees. As a practice among researchers of Human Sciences, the meetings were based on the precepts of “narrative interviews” (Delorme, 2008: 34), since this type of methodology favors knowing the person as a whole subject, the protagonist of his/her stories, and as a producer and permanent consumer of culture, with emphasis on his/her media creations. As narrative interviews differ from questionnaires, we do not present questions and answers here but rather blocks of opinions and ideas organized by the researchers, once they have been validated by each of the interviewees.

From this point, we came to know Rachel through her media creations presented in various videos, with content of different themes, formats, and lengths, shared on a YouTube channel called RAK TV<sup>1</sup>.

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She stood out through her critical thinking and the ability of seeing herself sometimes within and sometimes outside the universe of YouTubers of her age. In eight of our ten interviews with the young people, there emerged certain recurring themes which we used as categories: autonomy, creativity, YouTube quality, and celebrity/success. These categories were stressed throughout the interview in Rachel's ideas about the theoretical fragments to which her ideas refer.

### Who she is

Rachel Cócaro Gouvêa Veiga is a fourteen-year-old girl who lives with her mother and two sisters: fifteen-year-old Rebecca and Rachel's twin sister Raphaela who, when very young, suffered a mechanical asphyxiation that left her with cognitive side-effects: "A mental age of six, seven years." This sister has not yet learned some things, and her mother "will only let her have a computer when she can read and write. That's ok, right? It's not only cool things that are on the Internet".

To quickly understand who Rachel is, just watch the video "TAG: Twin Sister"<sup>2</sup> where she introduces herself and Raphaela, answering fun questions with agility and speed. Rachel's thinking is fast; it is fun and has the timing of spontaneous joking. On Instagram, Twitter and YouTube her productions are designated as Rak TV in the case of videos on the channel of the same name. This channel name originated from her name which, ending with the letter K, would sound the way she wanted it to [RAK], which would not be the case if she had used the literal abbreviation for it, and [TV] because she is visually exposed and "can be seen on a screen: from a cell phone, from computers or from SMART TVs."

Rachel and her sisters live with their mother, who is a doctor, in the state of Rio de Janeiro, in the city of Niterói. Their parents are separated, and the daughters live alternately with both of them.

She attends high school, considers herself good in the Portuguese language, and wishes, whenever possible, to "escape from mathematics". The three sisters study at a well-known school in Niterói, which is considered an avant-garde school in several aspects, stressing the encouragement of the arts in general as well as sports. Everyone knows Rachel is a YouTuber; her family supports her and encourages her initia-



**Image 1.** Opening photo of the “Twin Sister” video

tive. Her schoolmates are very dear to her, and she believes she is more valued in the school space for liking sports than for being a YouTuber.

Rachel enjoys watching TV series, usually on Netflix. She does not like playing on the Internet but claims to have “a competitive spirit”, which justifies “watching and liking Big Brother Brazil, because I’m interested in knowing who will stay and who will leave.” She uses Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat; she also has Facebook but does not like it, and thus does not use it.

### Her computer, her bedroom and the recordings she makes at home

Rachel has her own computer in her bedroom. In this space she improvises a kind of studio, where she records using two lamps attached to a ladder and a Canon T51 camera. She edits her videos on the computer, using the software “Final Cut”. When she is producing her videos she feels “tense, worried that her house noises will leak into the recording” and, because of this, believes that “everyone who lives with her knows when she is posting some new video. It’s stressful”. By researching on the Internet she learned how to use the resources for her recordings, as well as how to edit them and make them good enough for her fans: “There’s nothing Google and YouTube don’t teach today, about anything, and for all people”.

### RAK TV, her channel on YouTube

Rachel's channel, which she started in the first months of 2016, is called RAK TV and offers around 90 videos of varying duration and format. More than a thousand people have already accessed the channel, including 340 people who have subscribed, although she "doesn't know, even today, exactly what can leverage success on the Internet". She once made a video she considered weak, bad, from which she "didn't expect anything; about cellphone cases. I thought it was a silly one but, to my surprise, it got more than 3,000 likes. Videos where I just talk, with my face showing, have to have challenges to not be boring". She seeks to always be fun, and this is a personal value she tries to impart in all her videos.

In fact, the Rachel we see in the videos is the same young woman who makes herself known in the interview: funny, good-humored, educated, and spontaneous when dancing and talking to her audience. Still, she considers herself very impatient and talks about this in a video called "Impatience", where she complains about the time she wastes in stores waiting for salespeople to do their sums and give her the change (she is quick with figures, although she hates mathematics). She also complains about the salespeople who do not quickly find the products she asks for in the shops, as well as advertisements. Her complaints always contain certain "emphatic verbs", such as "*I hate and detest*".

In the video "Somebody Help Me?" made from Musical.ly<sup>3</sup>, a mobile dubbing app, she dubs her favorite songs while dancing; and in another video she presents her playlist to her fans.

In reference to vlogs, she has formed an opinion: "I think it's unnecessary. A 14 or 15-year-old girl telling her story? Isn't it strange?"

She made a successful video called "Types of Teachers", presenting five types of teachers in a theatrical and funny way: 1. The bipolar one (confused and contradictory); 2. The one who cannot explain anything (repeating the students' question); 3. The one who acts like the students' friend (everyone wants him/her, things proceed in a loose way); 4. The "Out of the room!" teacher (without a reason, she/he asks the student to leave the room); and 5. The one who is rude to the students for nothing (nasty, does not understand anything, coarse).

Rachel studies English in *English Culture Class* since, for her, speaking English is a prerequisite for being a YouTuber. She uses many words in English during the interview, with a British accent and in correct



Image 2. Opening photo of the video  
“Types of Teachers”

context, such as *challenge*, *playlist*, *games*, *download*, *upload*, *choice*, *free media*, *version*, *winner*, *turn* and many others.

In media, she always appears smiling and wearing lipstick “but only that, and always the same one, because I don’t wear makeup”. In the video “Somebody Help Me?” she answers her fans’ questions about her lipstick: “My lipstick is from the collection Pause for Feminine Time, and its color name is Titânia”, and keeps changing voices, dubbing characters, and playing different roles as if it were a question-and answer session, as if she were two different people. She dances, quotes other videos, asks for comments, and throws kisses to her fans. She never forgets to thank all the people who post comments on her videos, “even when they call it trash, as one of them has done. One might think it’s bad, but I wouldn’t post trash.”

### YouTube quality

“A quality video, in my opinion, must have several things. It has to be well lit, well edited, and have good sound. It has to be fun; that’s very important. The person must have charisma, because it’s horrible when someone wants to be funny but isn’t. I think you also have to present the content of your age. I don’t like writing about subjects I don’t know very well. I don’t need to have formed an opinion about everything, and if I don’t know the subject I won’t talk about, for example, Nazis on my videos. I like to watch some channels, like “After Eleven o’clock”<sup>4</sup> by two Brazilians, which is very funny. I also like Taciele Alcolea<sup>5</sup>, who

doesn't have a channel on YouTube but is funny on Snapchat. There's also the Taynara OG<sup>6</sup>, who posts ten-second videos. “

### About convergence of media

Rachel refers to Kéfera<sup>7</sup>, a successful YouTuber who, “from that success, recorded a film – a feature film – and it seems like she even wrote a book. Horrible. Being a good YouTuber doesn't mean you're a good writer or actress. It was a crappy movie. There's also JAPA, a well-known YouTuber who suddenly turned up with a book written by a ghostwriter. Do you know what that is? Well, he didn't even write his book, called *Diary of a Japa*” (Japa= diminutive of Japanese).

At this point, Rachel's statements bring us closer to what we call media convergence. Jenkins (2009) points out: “YouTube has emerged as a key site for the production and distribution of alternative media – the ground zero, so to speak – of the rupture in commercial mass media operations, caused by the emergence of new forms of participatory culture” (p. 348). In other words, beyond the commercial interests that generate expectations of financial gain, today it is no longer possible to speak of producers and consumers of media as if they had dissociated roles; they must rather be seen “as participants interacting according to a new set of rules, which none of us fully understand”(p. 30).

In this sense, what Rachel says not only highlights YouTube and the participation in it that “occurs at three different levels, in this case: production, selection and distribution” (Jenkins, 2009, p. 349), but also points to new paths by raising both the research on and analysis of each media in a more specific way, and questioning the ways in which subjects interact with them.

### Creativity

Rachel feels she has been creative in many moments in her life, for instance at school when using paintbrushes and paint, developing her artistic pursuits, but says, “you just want to be creative but sometimes you're not. When you strive, sometimes you're not and, besides that, creativity can be found in the simplest things. At times, and most often, chatting leisurely with friends at school gives you a different idea that generates a good video. Never at home, only with friends from school”.

Therefore, for her, being creative is not something that can be translated or even channeled simply as an action. The elements (themes) of the production of content for the network are identified in her everyday relationships and in interaction with others. At the same time, she does not refer to creativity when talking about her clothes, saying she likes to customize, give them a unique and personal touch, and doing the same thing with her cellphone covers. She is also creative and unique in the way she dresses.



**Image 3.** Clothes customized  
by Rachel

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On YouTube, she feels she is creative when she “has an idea no one has had yet,” or when posting something that already exists “but in a very different, original way. Original? Yes, when I defend my own opinions”!

She posts her videos “when it’s possible, when I can. All it takes is for me to mark a day and time and I get tense; for me it doesn’t work”; i.e., for her there is no creativity in having a pre-established day and time. In general, she posts three videos a month and, sometimes, more than this.

### “Not everything can be done or played”: Ethics on the Internet

Rachel always appreciates those who have their own opinion about things. She feels free to post what she wants “but there are certain things I would never do, such as posting nude scenes on the Internet, or an

offensive video about someone; I would never curse anyone. I would never be a hacker, ever. “

We point out that her concern about what should and should not be shared online can be regarded as a nuance of what we understand as “quality on the Internet”, since she seeks a relationship of legitimacy with what she considers not only relevant, but also simultaneously correct, to share on the network. On this point, it is worth underlining the complexity of building this kind of “digital regulation”<sup>8</sup> and the dimension of this issue in media, in contemporaneity.

I produce and post because...

Rachel posts videos aiming “to teach everyone what a good channel is. To amuse people and for me, too, to have fun”. She hopes to meet the expectations of her fans, become known, and get more and more fans. “The more people watching me, the better. I don’t think there are a million people giving “likes”; I imagine there are a million people following me because they like me, they understand me, they recognize themselves in me and that’s good”.

She does not know how her life will be in the future, but would like to be an actress, working with art – always away from mathematics. She likes to perform, cook sweets and decorate cakes (she talks about becoming a cake maker), and stresses that she “thinks about studying to be an actress someday.”



Image 4. Opening photo of the “RAK Cooks” video

At the same time, she does not hide her desire to be identified on the streets and to have social visibility as a YouTuber, claiming: “making money is always good, but that’s not exactly what I seek as a YouTuber”. This happens to most creative people, “but it’s not the hope of getting fame or fortune that guides them; rather, it’s the opportunity to do a job they like” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996, p. 107).

In this field, we still need to establish a discussion about “succeeding and being a celebrity”, since this reflection was identified in Rachel’s comments and indeed those of all the young people we spoke with. One of the essential reasons for producing and sharing content is a desire for recognition by their peers, viewers, friends, fans, and everyone who interacts with their productions.

Therefore, despite her worries about the quality of what she produces and conveys, she likes to assume that her products can have an even greater reach. She does not produce to meet the interests of whoever her audience is. In fact, she produces to be happy, to be as she is, and to expose her thoughts in order to legitimize herself as a fun YouTuber who “has her own opinions, without there necessarily being a goal to attain”. Her speeches are vehement and coherent, and her videos confirm what Jorge (2012) points out: “The power of celebrities has a discursive root. In fact, contemporary celebrities are built in the interaction and circulation by the media” (p. 79). In a consecutive way, it is possible to say that the construction of this kind of relation between “one who does/says/indicates/” and “one who assists/consumes/enjoys/” is also cyclical, as it suggests its growth and expansion in the light of complicity between these two parties. In addition, it can be said that the potential presented by media and its scope suggests the need for a more in-depth investigation of the role of leadership and power relations in this universe.

It is also necessary to reflect on the fact that “youth cultures are thus very marked precisely by the connection to the media culture, the cultural and entertainment industries in complex ways of which celebrities are an essential part” (ibid, p. 120).

In relation to the YouTuber videos, they address issues in Rachel’s life that are important to her and that stress her identity (it is not only her audio, but also she herself who acts and talks to the audience), among other factors that narrow the relationship between her and her

public. This implies that if on the one hand there is a desire to promote a legitimate approach between her, as a celebrity, and her fans, on the other hand there is a concern about the clear construction of limits that she plainly establishes and shapes.

It can be said that Rachel's speeches, in relation to studies on celebrities, allow us to consider that "the credibility of a celebrity between his/her public and professional life, on the one hand, and personal and private, on the other, is fundamental for activation and reiteration of cultural visibility and the effective functioning of the endorsement, whether political or commercial" (ibid p. 94, 95). However, such a nuance becomes much more sensitive in the sphere of YouTubers who still have a small number of productions and some level of control over their audience – compared to the examples offered by the interviewee herself – mainly due to her non-professionalization in the area of production and placement of videos.

Therefore, to conclude, it can be said that Rachel is aware, and takes care to ensure that her life as a YouTuber does not mix with her personal life in issues related mainly to her safety and integrity. In addition, on this dichotomy between public and private life, she concludes: "Yes, I would like to be a celebrity, to be recognized on the street; but without exaggeration, without persecution like what happened to John Lennon, who was killed by a fan".

### Notes

1. RAK TV channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCr083JAJfAsYhtDz589ltjQ>
2. "Tag: Twin Sister" video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KwxW2OSa14Y>
3. The Musical.Ly app: [www.musical.ly](http://www.musical.ly). Available for download and video creation and sharing.
4. After de Eleven o'clock channel: <https://www.youtube.com/user/depoisdas11>
5. Instagram of Taciele Alcolea: <https://www.instagram.com/tacielealcolea/?hl=pt-br> and her Snapchat:@Tacialcolea
6. Instagram Thaynara OG: <https://www.instagram.com/thainaraog/?hl=pt-br> and her Snapchat:@thaynaraog

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7. Kéfera Buchmann de Mattos Johnson Pereira (Curitiba, January 25, 1993), better known as simply Kéfera, is a Brazilian actress, vlogger, voice actress, presenter, and writer. She became better known through the YouTube channel “5ive Minutes”, one of the first channels in Brazil to reach a million subscribers. In 2016 she was named by Forbes magazine as one of the most promising young women in Brazil. Her channel can be accessed at the following address: <https://www.youtube.com/user/5iveminutes>
8. Law 12.965/14, known as the “Civil Internet Framework”, addresses issues related to the responsibility and attribution of rights and duties related to the use of the Internet in national territory. Available at: <http://culturadigital.br/marcocivil/>

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