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iTEXTS: TECHXTUAL POETICS, AUTHORSHIP AND RE-WREADERS IN 21ST-CENTURY SPANISH LITERATURE

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iTEXTS: TECHXTUAL POETICS, AUTHORSHIP AND RE- WREADERS IN 21ST-
CENTURY SPANISH LITERATURE

DISSERTATION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
College of Arts and Sciences
at the University of Kentucky

By

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Lexington, Kentucky

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Lubbock, Texas
Lexington, Kentucky
2018

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

iTEXTS: TECHXTUAL POETICS, AUTHORSHIP AND RE-WREADERS IN 21ST- CENTURY SPANISH LITERATURE

In 2007, Nuria Azancot published an article in the magazine *El Cultural* in which she identified a burgeoning group of Spanish writers that she referred to as the “Nocilla Generation.” The catalyst behind the article was a literary reunion that took place weeks before in Seville and brought together authors from all parts of Spain to talk about the status and future of writing. She described them as “transgressors” and “bloggers” who hybridized literary genres and held a revolutionary approach to the literary that was clearly marked by the Internet. Numerous articles and dissertations have since highlighted the impact that technology has had on the literature of this generation and how the Internet has allowed these authors a very active presence on social media. Few of these critical examinations have engaged in close textual analyses of the works of this so-called “Nocilla Generation” of writers. This dissertation engages with these issues for the purpose of exploring three main points. First, it seeks to identify and examine the role of the Internet on the literary production of Agustín Fernández Mallo, Alberto Olmos and Vicente Luis Mora. Second, it looks at the way that the internetization of literature implicitly undermines the traditional understanding of authorship. Third, the project suggests that the concept of an author as the source of an original creation should be replaced with a “re-wreader” (a blend of reader and writer infused with the repetitive nature of the prefix “re.”). The main thesis of this dissertation is that the interneticized text gives rise to a new understanding of authorship that is best captured in the figure of a re-wreader writing re-wreaderly texts that echo the ideas of the readerly and writerly from Barthes. The result: a textual space at once strange yet familiar in which a search for meaning, textual stability or origins gives itself over to the pleasure of the search, a search for something or nothing, a search for the search, a search in which all the material of the world (printed and digital) is there to be used and repackaged into a new literary creation.

KEYWORDS: Internet, Nocilla Generation, Spanish Literature, authorship, copyleft.

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To Adela, ideas and the future

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Countless things go on during the actual writing process as well. In the back of my mind I always knew that I would finish the project but my atypical status of a graduate student added additional layers to my efforts to see it through (a full teaching load year-round, promotions, home projects and life in general). But my wife Adela

Borrallo-Solís, “perfección total,” was always confident that I would reach my goal and put together a meaningful project. I loved the look of amazement and pride on her face on the countless occasions when I would essentially disappear into my project only to emerge some weeks later with a significant amount of work to share with my dissertation director. To be able to explore a world of ideas and literature in Spanish has been and continues to be one of the best experiences of my life and it just could not be what it is without Adela. In addition to my wife, I am also very thankful for my Spanish in-laws Jorge Borrallo and Emi Solís, as well as my brother and sister-in law Jorge and Yolanda. Each of them has believed in me and supported me over the years, especially during the summers in Spain when I would write but still try to spend time with them. If I have made them proud with this project then I am grateful for that. Finally, I owe a big and sincere thank you to my parents, Dad and Mom. They taught me to value knowledge and people and without both of those this project would not have happened.

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INTRODUCTION: THE SPANISH LITERARY ATLAS REUNION AND THE NOCILLA GENERATION

Preface

This dissertation will focus on Spanish peninsular literature of the so-called “Nocilla Generation” of the twenty-first century. Its specific subject is the production of literature in the digital age and how the introduction of the latter into the former raises important questions about the nature of literature, authorship and writing. Although issues related to literature, authorship and writing are not new (one only needs to think about the importance of the seventeenth century novel *Don Quijote* as an example), the advent of the Internet and its influence on the literary production is for the most part a phenomenon particular to the twenty-first century. When the new cultural practices and elements of the Internet like sharing, copying, the snippet and copyleft are introduced into the more powerful print culture where originality, authorship and copyright still hold significant sway, an interesting tension arises. There is perhaps no better site to explore that influence than in a selection of novels from the Nocilla Generation of writers in Spanish peninsular literature. It is my position that this particular group of writers is uniquely positioned to explore these changes and challenges precisely because they are the “generation” that lies closest to the pivot point between the pre- and post-digital worlds. The generations before them lived less in the digital world while those generations that succeed them know more about the digital and less and less about the pre-digital era. The Nocilla authors were born into and grew up in a pre-digital world but then transitioned to the digital world and grew into adults alongside the technological revolution of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. I argue that this makes them an ideal group to comment on the changes that we see taking place in these areas.

While novels by the members of this group have received both popular and critical attention in Spain, articles and lengthy academic projects dedicated to their novels are still relatively few in number and even fewer are the number that seek to explore the influence of technology like the Internet on the literary texts by these writers.¹ This current project will be one of only a few to specifically examine the influence of the Internet on the literary production in the printed book and will seek to explore how that influence challenges the understanding of literature, undermines the established rules of authorship, and points toward the idea of “re-writers writing re-writerly texts.”

The dissertation will be divided into three main chapters. Chapter One will seek to identify and present the idea of a “techxtual poetics” as an overarching characteristic of many of the novels of this generation of writers as they engage with and are influenced by new technologies. One of these, in particular the Internet, is of specific importance as it gives rise to what this project calls an “internetized text.” And the most salient feature of an “internetized text” is the snippet, a small bit or scrap of something larger. Chapter Two takes as a point of departure this idea of an “internetized text” and the element of the snippet to suggest that these novels represent a site of friction that challenges, if not undermines, the established rules of authorship. Chapter Three picks up on the idea of a

¹ For academic projects related to the Nocilla authors and technology, see: Christine Henseler’s 2011 book *Spanish Fiction in the Digital Age: Generation X Remixed* and 2011 article “Ode to Trash: The Spam Poetics of Agustín Fernández Mallo” Vicent Moreno’s 2010 doctoral dissertation *Literatura en juego: La legitimación y construcción del campo literario peninsular contemporáneo* and 2012 article “Breaking the Code: Generación Nocilla, New Technologies and the Marketing of Literature”; Jesse Barker’s 2011 dissertation *No Place Like Home: Virtual Space, Local Places and Nocilla Fictions* and 2011 article “The Nocilla Effect: What is New in the New Wave of Spanish Narrative?”; Alexandra Saum Pascual’s 2013 dissertation *Mutatis Mutandi: Spanish Literature of the New 21st Century*; Alice Pantel’s 2013 article “Cuando el escritor se convierte en un hacker: Impacto de las nuevas tecnologías en la novela español actual.” Pablo Rodríguez Balbontín’s 2014 article “El caso Mallo: Crisis de la autoría en la sociedad de la información;” and finally Carlos Gamez-Perez’s 2017 dissertation *Las ciencias y las letras: Pensamiento tecno-científico y cultura en España (1959-2016)*.

challenge to authorship to propose and explore the idea that instead of authors, some members of the so-called Nocilla Generation are more like “re-writers writing re-writerly texts.” The idea of a “wreader” was first suggested by George Landow in 1994 when he saw the emergence of a new kind of relationship between readers and hypertext. For Landow, “wreader” is a blend of both reader and writer because when the reader interacts with hypertext, he or she is as much as producer as a consumer of the text. The textual production then of a “wreader” would be a “wreaderly” text which I argue brings together not only the idea of the “wreader” proposed by Landow but also the ideas of “readerly” and “writerly” texts proposed by Roland Barthes in his 1975 book *S/Z*. Very briefly, Barthes argues that most of our texts are “readerly texts.” These texts are what he calls the “classic texts” and are presented in a linear, traditional manner that in general follow the established norms in both style and content. By contrast, “writerly texts” are the texts that we would struggle to find because “the writerly text is not a thing, we would have a hard time finding it in the bookstore” (5). With the writerly text, the reader, previously relegated to an inactive position of reception, is now in a position of control that plays an active role in the construction of meaning.

The novels selected for this dissertation, published in Spain between 2006-2014, are a mere sample of the extensive and diverse corpus of writers and works from the so-called Nocilla Generation. This study aims to demonstrate that, despite being only a small sample of a loosely associated group of writers from Spain, this is an interesting site to explore the nature of literature, authorship and writing which will resonate both locally and internationally.

Introduction

June 26, 2007. Sevilla. Casa Fabiola, the headquarters for the Foundation of José Manuel Lara. The previous night, around 50 authors and critics enjoyed a reception and dinner to kick off the beginning of a four-day literary conference called the *Spanish Literary Atlas* or *Atlas: 1st Meeting of New Narrators*. Sponsored by the editorial Seix Barral and the Foundation of José Manuel Lara, the objective was to bring together a group of diverse individuals to debate and talk about a series of issues: the future of literature in Spain; the nature of narrative in Spain; problems related to narratives published in languages other than Castilian like Euskera, Gallego or Catalan; the present and future of the story; keys to standing out in a changing literary landscape. The director of the Foundation of José Manuel Lara, Ana Gavín, affirmed that the meeting was designed to bring together a “new batch of different and emerging writers who can give a broad perspective of what narrative in Spanish is” (1).² It’s possible this reunion could have taken place and passed on into history without leaving so much as a mark if not for an important online magazine article by Nuria Azancot that was published a couple of weeks later.

² The Internet is an interesting repository for information because on the one hand it seems endless, comprehensive and consultable. If someone wants to find something, they just pull up a search engine to find it. It is like a live encyclopedia never imagined before. But at the same time, there are those moments when a fissure or glitch appears that reminds us of the ephemeral nature of the digital universe. Such was the case when I was researching the history of the Spanish Literary Atlas reunion in Sevilla. On a Saturday night I was able to open up the first hit in the search results page of Google, a detailed article about the events surrounding this literary get-together. By Sunday morning, that same page still open in a tab on my computer, was now not available. After numerous attempts to reload it or find it elsewhere, I had to accept that it was perhaps gone forever. That in turn required me to track down that information via more marginal and incomplete sources like references in blogs or brief announcements in newspapers.

Make Room: The Nocilla Generation Is Here

In the online magazine article, titled “Make Room: The Nocilla Generation and Afterpop Are Here,”³ Azancot essentially becomes the first point of reference for the idea of the existence of a burgeoning group of Spanish writers that she referred to as the Nocilla Generation:

Over the past few months, a rumor has been swirling around the Spanish literary world: there is a new generation of authors, born around 1970, with a revolutionary approach marked by the influence of the Internet. The main point of inspiration for their existence owes itself to the unexpected success of the novel *Nocilla Dream*, by Agustín Fernández Mallo, published at the end of 2006. In June of this year they all got together in Sevilla for an event sponsored by the Foundation of José Manuel Lara and the editorial Seix Barral. During the event, their literary arms were on full display. Some prefer that they be called ‘Afterpops,’ but what is clear is that they see a new way of narrating, fragmentarily. And the literary world should make room. (Azancot, translation mine)⁴

Azancot states that despite some of the normal suspicions around the idea of a “generation,” (not to mention the random jokes about the moniker “Nocilla,” a popular chocolate/hazelnut spread very similar to Nutella), there does appear to be a new group of authors clearly distinct and against the other members of their generation, that other group sometimes referred to as “the comercialites” or “late moderns” that continue to

³ www.elcultural.com/revista/letras/La-generacion-Nocilla-y-el-afterpop-piden-paso/21006

⁴ Unless otherwise noted, all translations from here on will be mine.

cling to specific genres and conventional literature. For Cara Santos, a literary critic cited in the same article, there does appear to be something different and nonconformist about this group, not to mention an element of indignation for the conventional literary world. For her, “they tend to publish in smaller editorial houses. Almost all of them have their own blog and they use it not only as a blog logbook, but also as an experimental space for their own works of fiction” (Azancot). For Azancot, some of the key figures of this generation and their year of birth are: Vicente Luis Mora (1970) y Jorge Carrión (1976), Eloy Fernández-Porta (1974), Javier Fernández (1971), Milo Krmpotic (1974), Mario Cuenca Sandoval (1975), Lolita Bosch (1978), Javier Calvo (1973), Domenico Chiappe (1970), Gabi Martínez (1971), Álvaro Colomer (1973), Harkaitz Cano_(1975), Juan Francisco Ferré (1962), Germán Sierra (1960) Agustín Fernández Mallo (1967).⁵ For other researchers like Christine Henseler, authors like Alberto Olmos (1975) and Robert Juan Cantavella (1976) are also included in this generation.⁶

Not all the authors themselves agree with the moniker, though, and some even question the existence of a “generation.” One of the group’s principle members, Vicente Luis Mora, interviewed in the same Azancot article, while he does feel part of a group he prefers the name “posmoderns” to characterize the authors. For him, what distinguishes these novels is the cultivation of a fragmented narration that is influenced not only by American literature but also the mass media and all of the structural models made possible by new technologies. Take for example the way in which some of these writers include SMS in their novels by reproducing the specific language used to send text

⁵ See Azancot’s article “La Generación Nocilla y el afterpop piden paso.”

⁶ See pg.7 of Christine Henseler’s 2011 book *Spanish Fiction in the Digital Age: Generation X Remixed*.

messages. Another important aspect of this generation of writers, according to Mora, is a lack of preoccupation with character development and an interest in sociology; more interest in space than in time; and the genres are now hybrid because there are no longer any borders between them, which is why it is possible to see poetry, novel and essay all in the same book with a high degree of naturalness. For Mora, it comes down to an attitude that he describes as “more open and transgressive” (Azancot).

Jorge Carrión, another member also interviewed in the Azancot article, when asked about its appropriateness, denied that it was an adequate name: “The Boom was already a rather lamentable label, I don’t believe that putting ‘Nocilla’ in circulation is a good idea, on behalf of the professionals of the word” (Azancot). But he does concede that one of the most distinct characteristics of this group of writers is “that technological consciousness that is really new is what distinguishes our historic moment from that of our predecessors” (Azancot). Javier Calvo, however, for his part, responded a bit more critically in the same article when asked about the existence of a Nocilla Generation of writers. He stated that he did not know whether or not it existed “[...] but I could care less if it does. For me, literature is the supreme act of individual expression. An author or a book must be judged according to the parameters of that author or of that book, not in comparison to those of others. And as far as I know, I don’t share absolutely any model or maestro with any other Spanish writer of my generation.” (Azancot).

Milo Krmpotic, another member of the group that was quoted in the same Azancot article, doesn’t believe that there exists a Nocilla Generation today but does recognize that there are a series of common attributes that link many of these authors. One of those is their heterogeneous character along with temporal coincidences. “The

‘technological filter,’⁷ the one that Agustín Fernández Mallo talks about, is definitely a major characteristic as well as the ease with which we jump from reality to fiction.” (Azancot). One final observation, from another member of the group named Eloy Fernández-Porta, quoted again in the same Azancot article, highlights some of the spirit of indignation present in the group in his assessment of the way some of them are being understood by the press:

Some people think we are *poppys*.⁸ It’s not true. I’m just a fuckin European intellectual that found the new avant garde in the critical overcoming of pop culture. I know enough people who think the same thing. The real *poppys* are some of the older guys, who think they are in the forests of Heidegger when in reality they reside in the prairies of Disneyland. (Azancot)

Can the “Nocilleros” Defend Themselves?

Almost three years after the publication of that first article about the emergence of a new generation of writers that Nuria Azancot would refer to as “Nocilleros,” and numerous publications from its members (the *Nocilla* trilogy (2006, 2008, 2010) of novels by Fernández Mallo was now a reality as was the critical work *Afterpop* (2007) by Fernández Porta and Alberto Olmos’s *Algunas ideas buenisimas que el mundo se va a perder* (2010)), Azancot published another online magazine article with the title “The

⁷ The “technological filter” is essentially the technologically influenced perspective or lens through which these writers see their literary productions. Fernández Mallo sees technology and the sciences as avenues or “filters” through which new literary works and poetry can be written. See his 2009 book *Postpoesía: Hacia un nuevo paradigma* for a more detailed commentary on this topic.

⁸ The word “poppys” in Spain is a colloquial expression for those individuals who like pop culture aesthetics. An authentic “poppy” would be a bohemian, pseudo intellectual type from the seventies.

Fragmentarios, A Fight to the Death with the Classics?”⁹ In it, she argues that over the past few years no significant literary conference has ended without someone lamenting that all these “fragmentarios” (another moniker for the members of the Nocilla Generation) are causing irreparable harm to Spanish narrative. Why? According to critics of this new generation, everything they do is invented; they are an imitation of true literature; a high-profile invention with nothing inside (Azancot). And the interesting thing, according to Azancot, is that the “fragmentarios” are not going to back down and be quiet.

As a point of departure in her online article, Azancot quotes Vicente Luis Mora, (who openly distances himself from the Nocilla Generation despite being considered years earlier one of its principle members), to suggest that the fragmentary is actually the new realism and that right now the most precise narrative is that of these “mutantes” (yet another nickname for the authors of the Nocilla Generation). To that declaration, the Spanish novelist Rafael Chirbes (thirty years older than many of the Nocilleros), replied in the same Azancot article that such a position was nonsense because

[...] in narrative I believe everything has been done. Sterne inserted black pages to give the impression of it being nighttime, he jumped page numbers for narrative effect and he managed time as if it were chewing gum. And that occurred around 200 years ago. Writers should do whatever they can to write

⁹ www.elcultural.com/revista/letras/Los-fragmentarios-a-muerte-con-los-clasicos/26783

literature so long as it allows them to write about their time here [...] In every time writers write with the materials that they have at their disposal. There is nothing new under the sun. The only truly dangerous thing is when they write books without knowing about the existence of libraries (even if they are virtual). They run the risk of repeating (like a clown) something that some other writer already wrote. (Azancot)

Alvaro Pombo, also quoted in the Azancot article, for his part suggests that the fragment is not necessarily something unique to this generation as T.S. Eliot wrote about it in *The Waste Land* in the 1920s. When asked if he thinks that the attacks on the young writers are unfair, he jokingly suggests that “before anyone gives them the title of innovators one has to eat a lot of nocilla” (Azancot). Another writer quoted in the article, José María Guelbenzu, recognizes that there is some debate about the future of the novel and what direction it takes is certainly in play but that what he reads and sees these days he does not like very much. For Guelbenzu, “it appears to me that the anxiety for change is out in front of change itself” (Azancot). And finally, Vicente Molina Foix again in the same Azancot article, insists that everything is invented and we shouldn’t really be talking about a literary revolution. Instead, he sees it more as a publicity stunt, even propaganda, pushed by both the authors and the media.

In response to these criticisms, principle figures of the Nocilla Generation like Agustín Fernández Mallo and Vicente Luis Mora have responded with their own defenses. Fernández Mallo, quoted as well in the second Azancot article, for his part looks at the issue as one of a certain group of writers that think there is only so much room in literature and only for certain writers:

There are people who think they are the selected ones to guard the sacred temple, but in reality, no one, except for a perverse little machine that resides in the brain called the Super ego has asked them to do it. And then they transport that confusion into the realm of the moral, as if they were priests. Literature for them is a moral that is being violated. A puritanism if there ever was one. (Azancot)

Vicente Luis Mora, also quoted in the second Azancot article, thinks that his statement about the Nocilla narrative being more precise was incorrectly taken to mean “better.” When he used the expression “more precise” to describe the way in which the Nocilla Generation authors approached Spanish narrative, what he was referring to was that these authors, through their fragmentary approach to writing, have created a precise way to interpret and describe the contemporary experience by taking charge of the current epistemologies, media, science and sociology and applying it to their novels. For Mora, these writers “look at the world through a complex and ambitious lens and then create mechanisms (each author with their own touch) to reproduce it. And since the experience of contemporary reality is not completely accessible nor can it be captured in a snippet, the fragmentary narrative is the only one that can reproduce this perception and as a result it is the most realistic and therefore the most precise” (Azancot).

The purpose of this lengthy preamble has been to provide some necessary background information on the emergence of this group of writers as well as some of the current debates about the nature of their narratives. It should be clear to the reader that in naming this group of writers the Nocilla Generation this did not instantly homogenize the group nor bring all of its members together. On the contrary, it seems to have sowed both division amongst its members and criticism from those on the outside, not to mention a

lack of agreement on the moniker first put forth by Nuria Azancot as numerous other nicknames for the group have popped up over the last few years to include: Afterpop, Mutants, The New Light, Pangea, The New Gonzos and The Dot.com Generation.

Whichever moniker and number of members one ascribes to them, these writers and their novels have captured critical attention and only time will tell how significant their works will be in the literary canon.

Dissertation Structure

The goal of this project will be to take a closer look into this “generation” by examining a selection of novels through the lens of the influence of technology. Chapter One is dedicated to the development of the idea of looking at a select corpus of novels with the goal of demonstrating that not only have they been influenced by technology in general, but that many of them seem to actually be modeled on the dynamics and cultural practices of the Internet. The critical lens is that of intermedia studies so as to allow for a diverse range of approaches to understanding the novels that are analyzed. The goal of this initial chapter is to propose that many of these novels are characterized by what I refer to as a “techxtual poetics” which intentionally fuses together the idea of “tech” and “text” to reflect the highly technologized nature of some of these novels. But it also captures some of the tension inherent to bringing together such disparate idea as “tech” and “text” because each of them embodies its own sets of rules and hierarchies that when fused together create an interesting textual environment for analysis. The result of this “techxtual poetics” is the emergence of what I call an “internetized text” which

reproduces many of the dynamics and cultural practices of the Internet and puts on full display the friction caused by essentially introducing or reproducing the digital within print media. After an initial literary review of some of the research on this topic so far, this chapter will transition to the development of the case for the existence of an “internetized text.”

As a part of that transition, the reader will see how one of the most noteworthy elements of this analysis is that this project breaks with current trends that tend to focus on all of the possibilities of the literary in the digital; instead, it focuses on the uniqueness of novels like the ones from Nocilla writers that introduce the digital into print media. Some background information on the growth of the Internet will help paint a picture of how important speed and change are to the digital and some of the inherent difficulties of writing about technology and the Internet with those elements as their hallmarks. For example, a key consequence of speed and change is that things become obsolete very quickly and what may seem cutting edge today can become old technology in a very short period of time (or in this particular case, old literature). To bridge some of these difficulties, this project will depart from a more “user friendly” understanding of the dynamics and cultural practices of the Internet (in other words, it will try to avoid tech jargon or complex concepts such as algorithms that work behind the scenes to create the experience of the Internet that we are familiar with). It will also try to present a clear transition from a “not-so-technologically inspired” text to the idea of an “internetized” text. To make that possible, novels and writers outside of or on the margins of the Nocilla Generation sphere, like Lorenzo Silva’s *El blog del Inquisidor* (2008) and Alberto Olmos’ *Alabanza* (2014) are referenced and analyzed to show how they represent

transitional texts. That is to say, while inspired by or embodying certain elements of technology like the Internet, these novels still look and feel like texts firmly rooted in the canonical literary tradition in the way that they are structured and the way they resonate intertextually with the literary canon. Next, Alberto Olmos' 2009 novel *Algunas ideas buenisimas que el mundo se va a perder* is presented as an example of an overtly interneticized text as a way to segue to a more subtle example in the case of Agustín Fernández Mallo's 2006 novel *Nocilla Dream*. The chapter concludes with a summary of some of the overall characteristics to suggest that the "snippit" is the defining element of the interneticized text.

Chapter Two suggests that as a result of using increasingly smaller bits to construct these novels from a variety of different sources, it opens the door to those elements losing context and connections to their origins which in turn problematizes the notion of originality and authorship. The chapter opens with a series of contemporary literary events in which the concept of or practice of authorship was challenged, redefined or undermined. In their totality, they are used to suggest that a change seems to be taking place as it relates to the traditional understanding of authorship and its close connection with copyright. As a specific example of that change, the chapter presents the idea of "copyleft" as a practice that perhaps mitigates some of this authorial transformation to offer an alternative to the rigidity of copyright. With the idea of authorship under siege in the foreground, the project transitions to a selection of novels from the Nocilla Generation as a site in which to explore some of the dynamics of that authorial alteration.

To make that case, the project calls upon a variety of poststructuralist ideas about the author (principally those of Michel Foucault, Roland Barthes and Jacques Derrida) to then go on to analyze Agustín Fernández Mallo's *Nocilla Dream* (2006), *Nocilla Experience* (2008) and *El hacedor de Borges (Remake)* (2011), Vicente Luis Mora's 2007 novel *Circular 07: Las afueras* and Alberto Olmos' 2009 *Algunas ideas buenisimas que el mundo se va a perder*. If there is a thread that links all of these novels and represents one of the defining characteristics of the way in which they are put together it is the way in which the "authors" sift seamlessly through all of the literary and digital artifacts at their disposal only to reintroduce them into the confines of the printed book. In that process, which includes varying degrees of citations, appropriations, remaking and even some copying and pasting, these novels become a site in which the internal components of the interneticized text are laid bare and traditional understandings of authorship and writing are challenged, redefined and undermined. The chapter concludes with the idea that perhaps instead of authors, the writers of these novels should be viewed as something more akin to "re-writers writing re-writerly texts." This last idea brings together the multiple layers that each of these terms embodies (their intentional fusion of reader, writer, readerly and writerly) and couples them with the prefix "re" to suggest that what makes these novels push authorial and literary boundaries is the way the way they "repeat" material and ideas from other sources.

Chapter Three takes up the idea of "re-writers writing re-writerly texts" to suggest that being able to see at the same time these portmanteaus and the independent words used to make them opens an interesting lens through which to see how the *Nocilla* writers create their texts. To make this point, the chapter begins with a brief discussion of

the idea of a “wreader” before transitioning to an analysis of each of the individual terms that reside with that term. This almost by default leads to the inclusion of what it means to be both a “reader” and a “writer” in general, but it also opens the door to the theoretical constructs about the “readerly” and “writerly” as articulated by Roland Barthes. In addition to everything that these terms represent individually and as a part of the fused terms of “wreaderly” and “writerly,” the prefix “re” adds the variable of repetition or remaking which I believe captures and defines the inner workings of these novels. Once the theoretical framework from which the idea of “re-writers writing re-writerly texts” is established, the chapter analyzes in more detail two parts from the story *Mutantes* in Agustín Fernández Mallo’s *El hacedor de Borges (Remake)* (2010) with the goal of showing how they play out the “re-writerly” process. To make that point, the chapter calls upon the ideas outlined by Fernández Mallo in another book called *Postpoesía* (2009), an extended essay that essentially argues for a poetic revolution via an experimental process much like that which occurs in the sciences. The chapter concludes with a reflection on the idea of the “re-writerly” text as the site in which a conglomeration of vastly different artifacts from random sources creates a textual environment that not only challenges authorship, but also our understanding of literature and reality.

Final Considerations

The dissertation, which covers novels spanning a decade in Spain, offers but a small selection of the entire corpus of narratives produced by authors of the so-called

Nocilla Generation. Nevertheless, each reading included here has been done in an effort to demonstrate the novelty of their narratives as a challenge to the literary status quo in Spain. Despite their tendency to push the boundaries of genre and the literary in general, the following chapters show that in addition to the scarce critical attention that these works have received, their place in the literary canon as a new generation of avant garde writers seems to be solidifying. In that process, no matter how fragmentary or appropriated the material, or how wreaderly or re-wreaderly the approach, the novels are a productive site in which to explore the changing nature of printed literature in the digital age.

CHAPTER 1: iTEXTS: TECHXTUAL POETICS AND THE INTERNETICIZED NOVEL IN
21ST- CENTURY SPANISH LITERATURE

The book critic Christian Lorentzen recently published an online article¹⁰ in which he muses about the nature of literature under recent presidents and suggests that the American novel under Obama will be discussed through the lens of authenticity, or more precisely about “problems of authenticity” (Lorentzen, par. 3). According to Lorentzen, this preoccupation with authenticity should not come as a surprise given that this was someone whose political charm took root in an air of authenticity that was repeatedly called into question by political adversaries bent on questioning his identity and origins.¹¹ Now that he has left the office of the president, a new challenge is dealing with troubling questions of fake news and alternative facts whose very existence results from the 24-hour news cycle and the unprecedented reaches of the Internet and social

¹⁰ From the article “Considering the Novel in the Age of Obama” published online on the website Vulture: www.vulture.com/2017/01/considering-the-novel-in-the-age-of-obama.html.

¹¹ Lorentzen initiates his article from the perspective that for the better part of seventy years American novels have been interpreted through the lens of a “postmodern” vs “postwar” dichotomy that at least in the case of the latter term has perhaps lost some of its usefulness. As an alternative, he wonders why it could not be just as useful and interesting to look at novels through the lens of presidencies. He goes on to suggest that John Updike’s *Rabbit Run* could be matched with John F. Kennedy; Jay McInerney’s *Bright Lights* with Reagan; Bret Easton Ellis’s *Less Than Zero* to Bush I and finally David Foster Wallace’s *Infinite Jest* to Clinton. Under Bush II he highlights the popularity of 9/11 novels, superheroes and humanitarian lit the likes of which we can see in novels like Jonathan Lethem’s *Fortress of Solitude* or Dave Egger’s *What is the What*. For Lorentzen it was a political landscape defined by elaborate fictions. When Obama arrives on the scene, against a backdrop of “birther” conspiracy theories and an identity imbued with the traumas of colonialism, Lorentzen suggests that the notion of authenticity became an important element precisely because that is what made Obama so appealing while at the same time his political adversaries sought to undermine him by questioning that authenticity. Literarily speaking, if during the Bush years it was enough to present “knowingness” and artifice that called attention to itself, during the Obama years writers needed to go further’ they had to create “authentic characters” and artifice was supposed to be presented in such a way that it created an effect of authenticity, a narrative that made the real or true seem more real and more true.

media. Authority and authorship appear to be undergoing a fundamental shift in the digital age and the recent presidential election was perhaps no greater reflection of that change.

But it was a more marginal element of the article that caught my attention when I read it. Lorentzen points to the publication of a book by David Shields in 2010, *Reality Hunger: A Manifesto*, as an important prophecy in American literature, and many of the issues that Shields addresses in that book and the way he composes it are very similar to the ones that appear around the same time in some of the experimental novels of the authors of the so-called Nocilla Generation in Spain. Composed of snippets and vignettes, many of them borrowed (or is it, “appropriated” or “sampled”?) and altered, the manifesto directs its attention toward the wall that has been erected between nonfiction and fiction, and the notion that nonfiction presents something more pressing because it is based on fact. It calls for “deliberate unartiness: ‘raw’ material, seemingly unprocessed, unfiltered, uncensored, and unprofessional ... Randomness, openness to accident and serendipity, spontaneity; artistic risk, emotional urgency and intensity, reader/viewer participation” (Lorentzen, par. 7). In the case of the Spanish novels, they too share many of these characteristics but what I propose is that this very nature, that of the fragmentary novel that borrows material and embraces randomness, is the direct result of a “techxtually inspired” or “internetized text.” That is to say, it is the principal point of departure for this project to show how some of the novels of the so-called Nocilla Generation of Spanish writers are inspired and influenced by technology and in particular the products and practices of the Internet, which in turn raises serious questions related to authorship, reading and writing.

Writing about technology and literature in the twenty-first century of course presents a host of challenges perhaps unparalleled in history. Probably the most slippery component in this pair is the notion of technology precisely because of the pace with which it changes. Rapid change is the hallmark of the modern era as it relates to technology. The magnitude and velocity of change is exacerbated by the fact that the technology to which this project directs its attention is not what one might refer to as the traditional historically progressive modern advancements in the areas of transportation, medicine, energy or architecture, for example.¹² On the contrary, the technology that will serve as the point of departure for the observations of this chapter is the one that revolves around the massive paradigm shift brought on by the computer, the Internet and the subsequent creation of the digital and virtual worlds.

It is my position that the Internet in particular, along with all of its subsidiary components (computers, smart phones, social media, blogs, chatrooms, email, webpages) is what perhaps more than anything else in the modern era has dramatically and radically altered the social world and subsequent creative and literary landscapes. One only needs to pause and think about the image of the contemporary individual, smartphone in hand at all times, a consummate reader and writer but in a vastly different way than at any other point in history. It is into this dynamic landscape that I will insert this work with the hope

¹² That is not to say that any one of those areas has not at some point in some way influenced or molded the way literature was read or written. One need only look to the historic Spanish avant garde to see instances where the view out the window of a passenger train offered a new way of not only seeing the world but narrating that experience as something akin to the rapid succession of images that form that basis of the cinematographic experience. Or how all of the new advancements in manufacturing in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries produced sounds and noises previously unknown to the human ear which in turn gave rise to onomatopoeic neologisms. But it is my position that the impact on the production of literature in general, albeit notable and influential by these technological advancements and especially film, did not represent a seismic threat or shift.

of being able to overcome not only the necessary distance for critical analysis of someone enmeshed in this landscape but also some of the inherent challenges of trying to say something meaningful, relevant and interesting in an environment beset by rapid change where the new can become old in days or hours. In other words, there is a lurking sense of “chasing meaning” in the sense that in the moment that one gains some understanding or reaches some insight into a specific element (be it a webpage, a blog, a social media platform, a new word or software or a new device) it could very well have already been displaced or replaced by something else.

This project finds some encouragement and perspective for this endeavor in a different historically significant moment that took place over a century ago. On Jan. 25, 1896, the Lumière brothers screened their short film “L'Arrivée d'un Train en Gare de La Ciotat” (“Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat Station”) at the Salon Indien du Grand Café in Paris. While it was not the very first showing of a film it was one of the earliest and the effect it had on the audience is what gave rise to a longstanding urban legend. According to the legend, the spectators shrieked with fear and even jumped and ran from their seats when they thought the oncoming train on the movie screen was literally going to break through the screen and crush them. Film historian Martin Loipendinger was not able to find any firsthand accounts of any pandemonium but he along with other film historians like Ray Zone believe that the audience was at very least astonished by the image on the screen. Loipendinger suggests that the purpose of the urban legend has been to accentuate just how far culture and society have come since the early days of film when it was most likely a shocking experience.

What calls my attention about that occurrence is that while on the surface it reveals the incredible newness and unfamiliarity of film at that particular moment and how relatively unprepared the public was for all of the visual and spatial implications that film ushered in, if one looks deeper and more critically one could already in that moment identify and explain the inner workings of film and how those mechanisms were being experimented with outside of film in literature for example (the 1923 novel *Cinelandia* by Ramón Gómez de la Serna is a good example of this that will be looked at briefly later on). In other words, even if there was still some disconnect between the new technology and how it was playing out and interacting with the individual, the underlying tenets and mechanisms of film were already impacting and influencing what they were designed to do: significantly alter the visual experience and the way the individual perceives the human experience.

Almost a century later, I argue that we are once again witnessing a significant transformation of the human experience and the way we see and perceive the world and our relationships because of the advances in technology. Much of this, in my opinion, owes itself to computers and the Internet. But in addition to an impact on the individual experience, it is at the same time having a particularly profound effect on the areas of reading and writing as well. For George Landow, reading and writing in the digital age have given rise to “wreaders” (the portmanteau is the result of combining “readers” and “writers”). He coined the word in reference to the way in which readers interact with hypertext fiction by suggesting that they were as much producers as consumers of the text. Dolores Romero López takes up this idea and suggests that “playing with hyperlinks involves disorganized thinking, associative laxity and conceptual and linguistic

alternatives that infringe the linear construction of the literary paradigm. The mechanism that appears during this creative ‘wreandering and wandering’ process operates in such a way that time and space converge to produce what is called “digital entropy, a creative force in which it is nowadays possible to identify cultural keywords” (Romero, 1). While this is still most likely the early stages of this transformation, with both a distance and disconnect between all the processes and the individual, I propose to explore in more detail some of the basic underlying mechanisms that I believe are already in place to show exactly how they influence writing and reading.

It should be noted that this is not to naively suggest that this particular moment of change that we are experiencing is singularly unique and different from other periods of great change but there is a sense that the breadth, depth and pace of change in this period is wider, deeper and more accelerated than previous ones and this in turn has led to significant uncertainty and often apocalyptic stances as it relates to the future of literature, reading and writing. This observation takes as a point of reference or comparison another significant period of innovation with the Gutenberg revolution. As critics like Elizabeth Eisenstein, Marshall McLuhan and William M. Irvin have pointed out, Gutenberg’s invention (1439) produced what is understood today as both scholarship and criticism in the humanities. Scholars, no longer preoccupied with the task of preserving information by way of fragile and sometimes elaborate manuscripts that degraded with every use, shifted to work with books which in turn ushered in the development of an entirely new set of conceptions related to scholarship, originality and authorial property.

Over the centuries, scribes, scholars, publishers and other makers of books improved upon some of the inherent limitations of that early transition by inventing a host of devices to increase the speeds of information processing and retrieval. Manuscript culture gradually saw the invention of individual pages, chapters, paragraphs and spaces between words. Book culture also saw improvements through the introduction of pagination, indices and bibliographies which in turn made possible much of what is understood today as scholarship. Yet while early studies of the transition from manuscript to print culture suggested a shorter duration for the transition to take place, recent studies point toward a much more gradual shift, on the scale of centuries. In fact, if one recalls, Gutenberg unveils his invention in 1439, it is not until around 1700 that, according to Alvin Kernan, print technology “transformed the more advanced countries of Europe from oral into print societies, recording the entire social world, and restructuring rather than merely modifying letters” (Kernan, 9). An obvious question then becomes: How long will it take digital culture to affect another similar change? While it is perhaps too early to tell there are indications that suggest this process might be more accelerated than previous ones like the Gutenberg printing press precisely because speed and change seem to be the hallmark features of today’s technology, especially as it relates to all things digital and the Internet. To support this position, I present below a brief snapshot of the growth and development of our digital age:

1966: US Advanced Resource Projects Agency (ARPA) launches

ARPAnet project which lays the foundation for today’s internet.

- 1972: Electronic mail is introduced by Roy Tomlinson, a Cambridge, MA computer scientist. He uses @ to distinguish between sender's name and network in the email address.
- 1974: The term "internet" is born after Vint Cerf and Robert Kahn publish "A Protocol for Packet Network Interconnection."
- 1980s: Radia Perlman creates the Spanning Tree algorithm which enables us to save data to the "cloud."
- 1983: The Domain Name System (DNS) institutes the host names we are now familiar with such as .com, .gov, .edu.
- 1987: The internet now has over 20,000 registered domain hosts.
- 1989: Sir Tim Berners-Lee, a graduate of Oxford University and a computer scientist, invents the world-wide-web.
- 1990: Berners-Lee creates and writes three technologies that are still in used today: HTML, URL and HTTP.
- 1991: The world-wide web is open for business.
- 1993: The White House as well as the UN are now online along with 600 other websites.
- 1994: Netscape Navigator and Windows 95 launch.
- 1995: Amazon.com and eBay go live. Spamming term born.

- 1996: Approximately 45 million people using the Internet with roughly 30 million in North America, 9 million in Europe and 6 million in Asia/Pacific Rim. Approximately 43.2 million American households own personal computer and 14 million of them are online.
- 1998: web-publishing tools are now available giving rise to the term “weblog” which is later shortened to “blog.” Google opens first office in California.
- 1999: computer application to swap music over the Internet, Napster, is founded. “E-commerce” becomes the new buzzword as Internet shopping rapidly spreads. MySpace is launched. The number of Internet users worldwide reaches 150 million by early 1999. More than half come from the U.S.
- 2001: Wikipedia is created. About 9.8 billion electronic messages are sent daily. Napster charged with violating copyright laws.
- 2002: Almost 60% (164 million) of U.S. population uses the Internet. Worldwide there are now roughly 544 million users. Napster is done.
- 2003: An estimated 2.6 billion music files are downloaded illegally on the Internet each month. Spam accounts for almost half of all emails. Apple Computer introduces iTunes Music Store where users can download songs for 99 cents each.

- 2004: Facebook launches but is only open to college students. Online spending reaches record high \$117 billion.
- 2005: YouTube is launched.
- 2006: Twitter is launched. Facebook opens its eDoors to everyone. There are more than 92 million websites online.
- 2007: Amazon.com launches first Kindle e-reader.
- 2008: Federal district court judge orders disabling of Wikileaks.
- 2009: Happy 40th to the Internet.
- 2010: The photosharing site Instagram is launched. Pinterest is launched too. Ebook sales skyrocketed 1260 percent since 2008, accounting for around 20 percent of all book sales. The American Booksellers Association counted 1660 independent bookseller locations.
- 2011: Barnes & Noble files for bankruptcy.
- 2014: World-wide Internet users reaches more than 3 billion. The web celebrates 25 years.
- 2015: The Federal Trade Commission adopts laws to keep the Internet free and open. Facebook has over 1 billion users. Pinterest is published in more than 30 languages and has over 73 million users. Ebook sales decline 10 percent but still represent around 20 percent of all book sales. The American Booksellers Association releases new data that shows the number of independent

booksellers in the U.S. increased from 1660 locations in 2010 to 2227 locations in 2015, suggesting that the end of the book might not be as imminent as once predicted.

2017: President Trump signs measure to lets ISP's sell your user data without consent.

2018: The FCC repealed Obama era net neutrality rules that said Internet providers can't block or slow down websites or prioritize their content over others. Under the new rules, Internet Service Providers (ISP's) will enjoy additional freedoms as they seek out new ways to make money in this rapidly changing market.

In addition to the aforementioned challenges of writing about technology (like the Internet) and literature, and something necessary to set the stage for the analytic shift that is paramount to this project, it is also important to examine in greater detail the trajectory that the discipline of Literary Studies has taken in the digital age, the consequences of that movement, and how this current project seeks to invert that pattern with the hope of revealing new insights into the relationship between digital technologies and literature.

Applying a broad stroke to the theoretical trajectory in digital studies reveals a tendency to focus on all of the new possibilities (collective works, multimedia infused texts, live links and running comments, to name a few) that the adaptation of literary texts to new digital technology promises, with early research using the notion of "hypertext" as their main point of departure. In other words, a significant portion of research deals exclusively with the reproduction or transfer of the literary (what tends to associated with

the written word inside the confines of a book cover) to the digital and what the possibilities and implications would be of that transfer. It was Theodore H. Nelson who coined the term “hypertext” in the 1960s as a form of electronic text. He explains it as “non-sequential writing—text that branches and allows choices to the reader, best read on an interactive screen. As popularly conceived, this is a series of text chunks connected by links which offer the reader different pathways” (12). The idea of hypertext and its offspring “hyperfiction” became the catalyst for a series of theoretical studies falling under the umbrella of a “new hypertextual paradigm” beginning with those of Moulthrop (1989), Landow (1991, 1992, 2006), Aarseth (1997), Wardrop-Fruin and Harrigan (2004), Funkhouser (2007) and finally Simonowski et al (2010).

What draws my attention about the focus of these studies about hypertext and hyperfiction is how similar its main characteristics—a decentralized text, non-linear discourse, open text, confusion between writer and reader, intertextuality, metaliterature and playfulness—are to the understanding of postmodern culture. It was Jean Francois Lyotard, in his important work the *Postmodern Condition* (1979), that proposed that the effects of “informatization” are recognizable well before they actually invade the social framework. But perhaps it was George P. Landow who underscored it better in his important work on hypertext when he observed that over the course of the last few decades two seemingly disparate branches of knowledge, literary theory and computer science (with hypertext as a main component) have been converging and that has meant

that the ideas of computer scientists like Nelson and van Dam and those of cultural theorists like Derrida and Barthes are intangibly related.¹³

Even if one supposes, as Barthes and other structuralists do, that every written text participates collaboratively with other written texts of a culture, what is evident is that in contrast to the technology of the book, hypertext makes no attempt to hide this collaboration. Even if any text (defined however it may be) exists in relation to all of the other texts, as Landow suggests before the advent of hypertextual technology, these relationships could only exist in the minds that perceived them or in other texts that confirmed their existence. The texts themselves, be they artistic objects, books or laws, always maintained a physical separation between each other. Hypertextual systems or webs, on the other hand, register and reproduce these relations between the texts. It is this idea of an interconnected hypertextual web, where so many of the previously hidden mechanisms are actually laid bare, that points Landow and others dedicated to literary and hypertextual theory to a need to abandon the current conceptual systems based on notions of center, margin, hierarchy and lineality and substitute them for others based on multi-lineality, nodes, nexus and webs.

Following the path laid down by these theorists, several research studies have also been published on the topic. J. Anis (1998) and L. Codina (2000) focus specifically on the change from the linear to the virtual while S. Botley and B. Mena (2000) are concerned with the didactic nature of the new paradigm and how academics can prepare for teaching in the new arena. Others like Caridad and Moscoso (1991) attempt to make

¹³ It is important to mention Julio Cortázar's 1963 landmark protohypertextual novel *Rayuela* as one of the earliest literary manifestations of the hypertextual.

sense of an Internet still in the early stages of its development but already showing signs of its possibilities and challenges to literature. Still others like Moreno Hernández (1998) turn their attention to the broader affiliation between hypertext and the humanities, hypermedia and literature. While occasionally they do allude to some early textual or literary manifestations of hypertext, like the fragmented nature of Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, their focus still tends to be on the creation of text or literature in the emerging digital space.

Given that the focus of this project is contemporary Spanish literature it seems logical and important for it to also look at the way this hypertextual paradigm shift has played itself out in Spanish literary and critical circles as well. In 1994 Jenaro Talens published a pioneering article, "El lugar de la teoría de la literatura en la era del lenguaje electrónico," in which he meditates on and hypothesizes about the space occupied by and the role that literature will play in this new digital universe. The following year Talens published the book *Escritura contra simulacro: El lugar de la literatura en la era de la electrónica*. In it, he argues that since today's individual (embedded in and influenced by technology) is different than the one that gave rise to the concept of literature as it is understood today, then the concept of literature must change as well. It is not difficult to perceive a lurking sense of preoccupation and uncertainty about literature in these writings, a theme that Talens will carry into another publication, "El robot ilustrado y el futuro de las humanidades" in 2000. While definitely not the only critic worried about the state of affairs in the humanities and literature in particular, Talens does represent an important figure in an otherwise lengthy chain of somewhat nihilistic and apocalyptic visions about literature stretching back at least as far as Roland Barthes' declaration of

“the death of the author” (1969), Michel Foucault’s “What Is an author?” (1969), Michael’s and Knapps statement about the “end of theory” (1982), Alvin Kernan’s book *The Death of Literature* (1990), and then the almost constant and widespread cries today about the “death of the book.”¹⁴ If there is a hint of optimism in Talen’s work it can be found in the door that he leaves open for the idea of an electronic language as a means by which to articulate the new digital universe.

In 2000, Nuria Vouillamoz published *Literatura e hipermedia: La irrupción de la literatura interactiva: precedentes y crítica*, in which she looks at the different models for hypertext and multimedia as well as aspects of electronic literature like dynamism, interactivity and open authorship. In 2003 María José Vega published *Literatura hipertextual: teoría y literatura* and although there is a hint of skepticism on the author’s part about the new literary changes, it does not deter her from analyzing a wide range of topics from hypertext, tradition and the canon to virtual reality and hypertextual reading. Domingo Sánchez Mesa published *Literatura y cibercultura* (2004) the following year in which he responds to the growing need to address the challenges to literature presented by the new communicative paradigm by way of an empirically based philological study. In 2004 Susana Pajares Tosca published her theses *Literatura digital: El paradigma hipertextual*, in which for the first time in Spain she set out to analyze the most salient features of the new hypertextual paradigm: multilineality, multimedia, multiplicity, interaction, dynamism and connection. The following year another text with another title

¹⁴ A simple Google search reveals a number of publications on the topic such as: “The Death of the Book Through the Ages” in the *New York Times* in 2012; “Why the ‘Death of the Book’ is a Dead Subject” in the *Huff Post* in 2013; “The Death of the Book” in the *Los Angeles Review of Books* in 2011; “The Death of the Book Again” in *The Guardian* in 2007; “Books After the Death of Books” in *Public Books* in 2017; Project Muse article called “The Death of the Book” in 2016.

about literature and technology, *Textualidades electrónicas: Nuevos escenarios para la literatura* (2005) appeared on the bookshelves. In this book, Laura Borrás looks specifically at the influence of the Internet on literature from an interdisciplinary perspective, especially as it related to the questioning of the post-human subject in the digital age.

Numerous other publications followed the book by Borrás: Abuín and Vilariño presented translations to Spanish of canonical articles in *Teoría del hipertexto: La literatura en la era electrónica* (2006) and argued for the need to create collective and connective workgroups to tackle the challenges brought on by the rise of the digital. Some of this same sentiment for the need for connected work groups was also perceived in two books published from the results of an international seminar held at the Complutense University of Madrid in 2005, *Literatures in the Digital Age: Theory and Praxis* (2007) and *Literatura del texto al hypermedia* (2008). Both books bring together the main research projects of its national and international participants and reflect the organizers' desire for the creation of connected networks that would allow the individual projects to move away from the "I" toward a better sense of the "We." Such a desire for collectiveness on the part of the organizers seems to be a natural tendency or perhaps both a sign and a symptom in the digital age in the sense that on the one hand "getting connected" is a fundamental tenet of the digital age both literally and figuratively, but it is also a symptom I believe of the growing uncertainty and insecurity around the paradigmatic change brought on by the Internet.

As for the corpus of publications dedicated specifically to the Nocilla authors and their relationship with technology, authorship and writing, it is a small but growing field.

Christine Henseler's 2011 book, *Spanish Fiction in the Digital Age: Generation X Remixed*, is probably the principal point of departure for any analysis of these writers. In it, she traces the historical roots of "Generation X" (of which she considers the Nocilla writers a second wave) in Spain and seeks to examine the "hybrid aesthetic effects of media technologies as they are impressed on the printed page" (23). After looking at the historical origins of Generation X, and then its relationship with other media like punk literature, MTV video clips, reality tv and video games, she dedicates the last chapter to the idea of "mash-ups" and "remixes" in what she refers to as "Mutant literature" (another moniker given to the authors of the Nocilla Generation). For Henseler, Spanish literature in the digital age needs to be approached differently, through what she refers to as a "critical remix reading." Only that way can we appreciate and seek to understand the "mash-up/remix" nature of novels that bring together a vast array of seemingly unlinked cultural artifacts. While published a year earlier and not related to technology as much as globalization, Vicent Moreno's doctoral dissertation *Literatura en juego: La legitimación y construcción del campo literario peninsular contemporáneo* is worth mentioning as well. Departing from Pierre Bourdieu's "fields theory," which states that a literary field stays alive so long as all the agents involved in that field (writers and readers for example) continue to believe in the field, Moreno suggests that globalization has played an important role in the conditioning of contemporary Spanish literature. Coupled with the challenging economic environment of the last couple of decades, he argues that the literary field has been forced to rethink its role and position in society and pushed writers to reinvent and redefine the literature of the future.

After the publication of these projects, several other articles and dissertations have emerged as well. Jesse Barker's 2011 dissertation *No Place Like Home: Virtual Space, Local Places and Nocilla Fictions* was the first significant study dedicated solely to the Nocilla writers. In it, he argues that instead of representing a new digital consciousness that is shaped by new media and the Internet, the narratives of this group of authors are actually an attempt to make sense out of global and virtual spaces within the context of local and physical places. For Barker, these writers create hybrid fictional spaces in which meaning is produced by means of a continuous negotiation between the physical and virtual realms. In his 2011 article "The Nocilla Effect: What is New in the New Wave of Spanish Narrative?" Barker argues much the same. After reviewing some of the theoretical concepts put forth by such writers as Vicente Luis Mora and Eloy Fernández Porta, concepts about the ways in which media and new technologies are interwoven into the fabric of these new texts, Barker argues that the narratives of this new wave of authors do not "represent a radically new consciousness but rather engage in a dialogical relation between new technologies of remote communication and pre-existing social constructions of reality." (1). That same year Christine Henseler published an article titled "Ode to Trash: The Spam Poetics of Agustín Fernández Mallo" in which she argues that the author's practice of engaging with trash, with the residues and margins of the human experience, is actually a way to challenge the dominant discourses by presenting a perspective from below. That is to say, Fernández Mallo's "trash aesthetics" in which he recycles that which has been thrown away or marginalized is not only a new and innovative literary source but perhaps, as Henseler suggests, the path toward "catastrophic collective literary results" (1).

The following year saw the publication of a few more projects on the Nocilla Generation. Vicent Moreno published an article “Breaking the Code: Generación Nocilla, New Technologies and the Marketing of Literature” (2012) in which he argues that new technologies have allowed DIY culture (self-publishing, self-promoting via social media, etc.) to become an influential element of the contemporary Spanish literary scene. Aldunate Cifuentes’ 2012 book chapter “La a-historicidad de la novela del fragmento: De *Rayuela* a *Nocilla Dream*” looks at the way that the implications of the fragmentary novel on our concept of time and understanding of history. Laura Borrás published her article “E-Literature in Bytes and in Paper: The Digital Revolution in Contemporary Literature from Spain” the same year in an online journal.¹⁵ Marta del Pozo Ortea published her doctoral dissertation that same year entitled *Towards a Posthumanist Reenchantment: Poetry, Science and New Technologies*. In this interdisciplinary study of the works by Agustín Fernández Mallo and Javier Moreno, del Pozo analyzes the importance of the image, of the dialogues between the humanities and science and of the emergence of a net of global connections in their narratives. Ultimately, she proposes that their works are part of a Spanish literary response to the “hypercomplexity and entanglement of the present *Weltanschauung*” that challenges the classical postmodern model by introducing the idea of “reenchantment” into the three areas highlighted above (1).

¹⁵ This is a perplexing case for me as a researcher because this is the only article that is not available from the website of this digitally published journal. Specifically, while the volume in which this article was supposedly published is in fact available online via their website (*Hispanic Issues On Line* 2012) and all of the corresponding articles/reviews contained therein, the article by Laura Borrás is simply not there (the only thing that appears on the website is the number “5. Laura Borrás”).

In 2013, Alexandra Saum Pascual published her doctoral dissertation called *Mutatis Mutandi: Spanish Literature of the New 21st Century*. In her study, she analyzes how the new hybrid prose and poetry published by the Nocilla Generation questions the purpose and nature of art in the current climate of widespread information technologies. Ultimately, she suggests that the works by these authors will become the site in which we get a better understanding of the inherent tensions between the Spanish individual and the web of information technologies that surrounds him. This same year, Virginia Ruifernández-Conde published another dissertation titled *Figuraciones transatlánticas: Visiones globales de la narrativa contemporánea* with the goal of studying the relationship between Spanish and Latin American writers that move to one side or the other of the Atlantic and the different literary successes that they experience there. Her study questions the traditional idea of a “national literature” as writers and their narratives become increasingly more globalized and suggests that they embody something more along the lines of what Jurgen Habermas referred to as “postnational.” Alice Pantel published an original and interesting article in 2013 titled “Cuando el escritor se convierte en un hacker: Impacto de las nuevas tecnologías en la novela española actual (Vicente Luis Mora y Agustín Fernández Mallo).” In her article, Pantel proposes to look at the ways in which new technologies have left their mark in the printed works of Vicente Mora and Agustín Fernández Mallo. She identifies the practice of citing other works (*apropiacionismo*) as one of the most distinguishing formal characteristics of the poem and short story that she analyzes and ultimately suggests that these writers operate like “literary hackers” in the sense that they manipulate already existing texts to create new ones.

In the following years, several more projects have emerged in this field.

Alexandra Saum Pascual's 2014 article "La poética de la Nocilla: Transmedia Poetics in Agustín Fernández Mallo's Complete Works" presents some interesting insights into the ways in which Fernández Mallo's works challenge the concepts of narrative structure (via transmedia storytelling) and authorship (he fictionalizes the author function which Saum Pascual sees as a "parodied metafictional object within the transmedia landscape"). Pablo Rodríguez Balbontín's 2014 article "El caso Mallo: Crisis de la autoría en la sociedad de la información" suggests that the polemics surrounding Fernández Mallo's *El hacedor de Borges (Remake)* is the result of the inherent tension between the Internet and print culture, between what he sees as the "hyperlink poetics" of Mallo's narrative and the anxieties within the publishing industry. Saum Pascual published another article in 2015, "Alternativas a la (ciencia) ficción en España: dos ejemplos de literatura electrónica en formato impreso" in which she looks at how computational practices have influenced two printed books and suggests that such literary instances represent a rejection of the Spanish literary canon.

In 2017, two doctoral dissertations were published with each of them in some way touching upon an issue or work related to the Nocilla Generation. Carlos Gamez-Perez published *Las ciencias y las letras: Pensamiento tecno-científico y cultura en España (1959-2016)* in which he looks at the development and manifestation of techno-scientific thinking in Spain through three clusters of writers (the latest one includes the *mutantes* writers). Jennifer Pretak published the doctoral dissertation *The Generation Nocilla and the De-Politicization of the Postmodern Spanish Novel* in which she compares the Nocilla trilogy by Fernández Mallo with the Mendiola trilogy by Juan Goytisolo. She ultimately

proposes that the Nocilla works “remain disassociated from the ideologies of sociopolitical and cultural revolution, as they instead endorse and employ the commodifying effects of the contemporary culture industry” (1).

Finally, in the process of researching the small but growing body of work related to the authors of the Nocilla Generation, something in the MLA bibliography called my attention: the presence of numerous entries from Agustín Fernández Mallo himself (4 to be exact within a field of 27). I don’t imagine that this is the only instance in which a writer publishes critical pieces on his own work but as a researcher it is not something that I recall noticing very often and it may be an interesting element to investigate further in the future. For now, I thought it would be interesting to mention because it adds another element of intrigue to the way in which these writers are pushing the boundaries of literature and literary criticism. That is to say, and this idea will most likely make more sense after reading the entire project, the additional layer that a critical perspective (written by the author of the book upon which the critical article is based) blurs the boundaries between not only the literary production and literary criticism but also calls into question the mechanisms and practices upon which those perspectives are based.

This review is necessary in order to effectively present the backdrop against which this project situates itself and the tendencies against which it seeks to depart. As mentioned earlier in the introduction, the objective behind the idea of “techxtual poetics” is to look at the influence of technology and in particular the Internet on Spanish literature in the twenty-first century. It is my argument that it is the “techxtual poetics” of these novels that give rise to the idea of an “internetized text.” The choice of the umbrella term “technology” is not unintentional in this case however. While over the

course of its history it has certainly enjoyed a myriad of connotations, I would argue that “technology,” and in particular its shortened form “tech” employed in the “techxtual poetics” of the title, as it is understood and widely applied in today’s vernacular, alludes almost exclusively to everything related to what we understand as the digital revolution and a key component of that revolution is the connectivity made possible by the Internet. Having established some key ideas, the lingering question then arises: What distinguishes this project from the aforementioned body of works devoted to technology, literature and the digital revolution in particular?

First, while the majority of critical work on the subject has focused primarily on the potential of the digital and the digitalization of literature, this project proposes to invert this tendency and look at the way that the digital finds its way into the literary and in particular the way in which print-based literature engages with and incorporates the nature of the Internet into the literary. That is to say, what interests me and what I think presents an interesting opportunity for study is what happens when the digital and in particular the experience of the Internet are recreated within the confines of the printed book because it is precisely this introduction or intrusion on the part of the digital into print culture, what I refer to as both “techxtual poetics” and the “internetization of literature” that I think opens up numerous considerations related not only to the production of literature in the digital age but also key issues related to authorship and writing. It echoes a position that Kathleen Fitzpatrick points toward in her book *The Anxiety of Obsolescence* (2006) when she suggests that in the face of all the change and implications of technology and the supposed erosion of the status of the book, instead of deriding or fearing technology, writers and critics alike should engage with it (6).

Secondly, this project will draw more heavily than previous studies upon the current usage and understanding of the Internet as opposed to “hypertext” as the principle lens through which this critical analysis will be undertaken. The reason behind this is twofold. On a rather superficial level as it relates to the current vernacular, hypertext is simply no longer used and instead the term Internet has grown to represent and encompass so much of what it means to be “connected” or online, which in turn points directly toward the world-wide-web (www or simply “the web”) which itself in turn points toward the host of applications and devices that make that connectivity possible. Hypertext, while still a key part of that entire digital apparatus, is in my estimation too limited and somewhat obsolete at least popularly speaking because it refers exclusively to the text displayed on a screen with references (hyperlinks) to other texts that the reader can immediately access by clicking or swiping. While it is indeed the underlying concept defining the structure of the world-wide-web, and is used widely in much of the critical approaches on this topic, the Internet, with its broader scope, better defines and captures the experience of “tech” that this project seeks to explore. That is to say, as much in Spain as elsewhere hypertext theory was and is the predominant paradigm in the field of digital textuality and aesthetics even though things in tech have changed. So much so that even one of the most fervent proponents in the case of Spain, Susana Pajares, recognizes the limitations of hypertext theory and the idea that they have been “for too long concentrating on a very small part of the picture” (53).

While part of the rationale behind this steadfast commitment to the idea of hypertext has to do with the belief that it is necessary in order to establish their critical positions before a Spanish academia that has still not fully accepted the canonical digital

literature criticism, it is difficult to deny that tech is not changing rapidly and in many instances outpacing some of these critical positions. For example, while much established criticism on digital literature still refers mainly to hypertext (and its preference for shorter sentences and paragraphs, fragmentary, non-linear constitution, etc.) the overall concept of digital literature has expanded and become more varied (to hypertext it adds the overall experience of the Internet, blognovels, email, chat and SMS-fiction, computer game narratives, just to name a few).

Finally, what makes this project even more unique and relevant is that it will represent one of only a few in-depth critical analyses of some of the works by this new group of Spanish authors loosely associated under the umbrella of the Nocilla Generation and one of a handful to look at them through the lens of the influence of technology and the Internet, in particular, on their literary productions. As I mentioned earlier, Christine Henseler's 2011 book, *Spanish Fiction in the Digital Age: Generation X Remixed*, is probably the main point of departure for any analysis of these writers but she dedicates only the final chapter to the Nocilla writers. This project here, if anything, picks up where her analysis left off by dedicating a broader and more in-depth analysis to the works referenced or only briefly noted in the book by Henseler. And it does so without inserting itself into the historical trajectory of Generation X nor looking at them through the lens of "mash-ups" or "remixes" like Henseler but instead departing from the idea of a "techxtual poetics" ushered in by the explosion of the Internet.

The overreaching but not exclusive theoretical framework will be intermediality. Broadly speaking, intermediality refers to the interconnectedness of modern media. As a means of expression and exchange these different media depend on and refer to each

other, both explicitly and implicitly while serving particular communicative strategies. The driving force behind the decision to utilize this theoretical framework lies in the fact that if this project wants to look at the way that the Internet manifests itself in some of these works then it seems to make sense that it departs from an understanding and familiarity with the features of that Internet experience. It should be mentioned, however, that while much of that decision was based on that premise, it is not an approach without some potential problems.

It is somewhat problematic in the sense that it could be argued that, even before the arrival of digital literature, the interconnectedness of intermediality was already an inherent feature of literature (the allusion in pre-digital, print-based texts to other types of texts, like the glosses in early modern literature and to other artifacts like music, film or art) and a property of the reading process (in which intermediality becomes a type of intertextual connection, conjured up in the mind of the reader, to other types of texts). Much of this has been seen through the lens of intertextuality, which for Kristeva refers to the text's past, meaning the intertextual property is intrinsically connected to memory (both on the part of the writer and reader).¹⁶ With the arrival of the digital text, not only does it participate in the aforementioned types of intermediality/intertextuality and operate on a different level in the sense that the "intertextual" becomes now "intermedial" and points not so much toward other printed texts as to other digital artifacts but it also adds a crucial aspect: the digital text is intrinsically intermedial from its very technical materiality. This in turn directly influences the reading process.

¹⁶ See Kristeva's 1966 ideas in "Word, Dialogue and Novel" which appear in *The Kristeva Reader* published in 1991.

While the novels analyzed here are not digital ones per se in the strict sense of the word, they are highly influenced by the digital and in some instances attempt to literarily recreate the experience of navigating the Internet, an element that seems to add credence to the position that intermediality is an appropriate point of departure for this exploration. Building on that point of departure, some recent research on the digital and theater by Anxo Abuín has provided an additional inspirational direction for the theoretical framework. In his 2006 book *Stages of Chaos, Between Hypertextuality and Performance in the Electronic Text*, Abuín departs from the premises outlined by Omar Calabrese in his *Neobaroque: A Sign of the Times* (1992) regarding the opposition of Classic and Baroque notions inside Western culture—one devoted to order, rule cause, finitude, etc. and the other to disorder, irregularity, chaos, chance, etc—and contextualizes digital literature inside the anti-classicist, carnivalesque logics of the hybrid artistic forms that incarnate the sign of our times. What specifically calls my attention about Abuín’s work is that it is imbued with an understanding of intermediality as an analytical practice which crosses different spaces, media and genres, borrowing concepts and ideas from a heterogeneous pool of sources in an attempt to find an overarching framework into which can be inserted an equally diverse variety of interpretations and cultural artifacts. This eclectic approach to the interpretation of novels under the umbrella of intermediality is precisely the one that this project will employ in this initial chapter as it seeks to identify, describe and analyze the techxtual poetics of these interneticized texts.

Returning again to the idea of the “internetization of literature,” perhaps a point of departure would be to pose a rather simple and obvious question: how can someone recognize an interneticized text with its techxtual poetics when he or she reads one? It is a

question very similar to the one asked by Werner Wolf in his pioneering study on the theory and history of the imitation of music in fiction, a work that helped shape some of the theoretical and practical approach for this current project.¹⁷ To pose this question, though, implies that the internetization cannot be solely regarded as something that is just “out there” in a given literary text but that is also an element that needs to be identified and decoded by a technologically sensitive reader. Consequently, the individual reader along with his or her decoding capabilities and frames of reference ultimately play an important role in the reception of interneticized texts. However, these readerly factors, as anyone familiar with the theory of reader response knows, are undoubtedly subjective, perhaps somewhat idiosyncratic and ultimately difficult to identify. As a result, it is the intention of this project to distance itself from the inherent complexities of the individual reader as well as the ideal of a reader who is an expert in internet related technologies and instead presuppose a “competent reader” who to a more or less certain degree participates and engages with “internet culture” enough to be able to recognize and understand some of its most salient components and practices (like internet navigation, email, texting, chatting, Twitter, blogs, spam, social media, etc).

The emergence of an interneticized text introduces a host of issues and concerns as they relate to what is considered literature and what is something more in the realm of

¹⁷ This work is a pioneering study in the theory and history of the imitation of music in fiction and represents an important contribution to current intermediality research. Beginning with a comparison of basic similarities and differences between literature and music, the study goes on to provide outlines for a general theory of intermediality and its fundamental forms --in which a more specialized theory of the musicalization of (narrative) literature based on contemporary narratology and a typology of the forms of musico-literary intermediality-- are embedded. It also addresses the question of how to recognize a musicalized fiction when reading one and why Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, contrary to what has been previously said, is not to be regarded as a musicalized fiction. In its historical section, the study explores forms and functions of experiments with the musicalization of fiction in English literature.

the digital. As a result, perhaps a good place to start for an examination of an interneticized text would be to look at an example that straddles both of these classifications but that in my opinion is still firmly rooted on the side of the literary (understood here as a text that employs specific and readily identifiable literary tropes and devices that in general point toward its inclusion in the intertextuality of the literary canon). That example is the recently published novel/blog by Lorenzo Silva.

Lorenzo Silva's 2008 *El blog del Inquisidor* is a good example of a novel that calls upon the Internet medium of the blog to create a work that still feels and looks very much like something canonically literary. Silva's book is the combination of two stories united by the medium of the blog. On the one hand, it contains the historical events that transpired in the Convent of Saint Plácido in Madrid and the subsequent process of interrogation carried out by the Inquisition at the beginning of the seventeenth century in Spain. On the other hand, it plays out the budding relationship between a mysterious and reclusive blogger (who calls himself the "Inquisidor") and a curious historian who for her part happens upon the blogger's website and in turn becomes the narrator of all the events. It all begins when the historian turned blogger herself happens upon another blog where she reads about the historical events surrounding the accusations of conspiracy and heresy leveled against the Benedictine Teresa Villa and other members of the convent by the "Santo Oficio" of the early seventeenth-century. Soon after discovering the blog and saving some of its contents to her hard drive, it disappears completely from the web. But the story and the mysterious identity of the blogger who posted it pique her interest so much that she sets out to contact him.

What ensues, and what the reader sees transcribed, is the chat log of conversations between the young and curious historian and the older, mysterious blogger. It begins with inquiries about the details of the historic event of the convent but ends with the two of them meeting in person in Berlin, Germany. I realize that the idea of what constitutes a traditionally or canonically literary feeling text is perhaps vague and even inaccurate, but what I am after with this observation is that a quick and superficial perusal of the printed copy of this book does not immediately point toward something out of the ordinary as far as the literary printed word is concerned. In other words, it looks and feels like a typical novel in both its construction and organization, with numbered pages being occupied by words and sentences that form paragraphs. As the reader begins to read it he or she is almost immediately aware of its “literariness,” especially early on in the novel when the intertextual allusions to the *Quijote* are almost too obvious to overlook. It seems then that at first glance, despite the appearance of “blog” in the title, the novel is one more entry in the vast library of literature and knowledge, that seemingly infinite realm of the written word, embodied in religious manuscripts that later became books and encyclopedias that in turn became massive library collections.

What interests me particularly about *El blog del Inquisidor* is how it represents a first step in our progress toward explicitly and implicitly interneticized texts. I say an initial step because, as I mentioned earlier, the book is inspired by the medium of the internet blog and while there are hints of “digitalness” in the novel it still looks and feels much like a literary text. That is to say, the aura of the blog manifests itself in the novel and there are moments when the material does seem to point toward something outside of the intertextual confines of the literary canon but they are neither prominent nor

proliferate enough to create or recreate the illusion of our experience of the blog. Interestingly enough, the original title of the book was going to be “Offline” (a title which I think echoes fairly nicely my argument that this text straddles the literary and the digital because even though it is “offline” and not connected it still implies some connection, some sense of being “online”), but in a preliminary footnote the editor/translator states that after receiving thoughtful advice from some close confidants, the title was changed to “El blog del Inquisidor” so as to appear less abstract.

In addition to the hesitancy about the title, there is also some semblance of the blog as numbered or titled chapters have been replaced with dated blog entries. And finally, the sporadic use of the word “blog” along with semi-frequent interventions on the part of the editor/translator in footnotes at the bottom of the pages, footnotes in which references to the blog, writing and translating are frequent, taken together are still not enough to move a digitally inspired text into the full experience of that medium. Any attempt to establish a set of criteria to measure the tipping point between these two poles (the literary and the digital) is problematic because my position is that much of that criteria resides in the mind of the reader as they actively engage with the text. However, in this particular case I would argue that, despite the presence of dated blog entries and the sporadic use of the word blog, the absence of other visual cues that one would expect to see on a digital medium like a blog (other web links, comments from readers, graphics, etc.) make it difficult, in my estimation, to make the jump from the literary to the digital. This point is accentuated by the content itself when, in the opening two sections of the book, the “Aviso preliminar” and the first blog entry of the editor/translator, instead of reading resonances of the digital, of some idea, event or reference to the world-wide-web,

for example, we find an echo from the literary canon that is difficult to ignore, that of the *Quijote*. And as a result of this early allusion, all subsequent material and references, however strong and convincing they may be, continuously point us back to the literary canon and some of the issues related to authorship and writing so magnificently explored already by Cervantes in his seventeenth century modern novel. Let's take a look at an example from *El blog del Inquisidor*:

Even if chance has provided me the opportunity, or the obligation, to publish it, I am not the one who has written this book [...] In the name of truth, I do not consider my intervention irrelevant, albeit insufficient to claim royalties for the pages that follow. If not for me, in fact, they could have been lost forever. What you all are going to read was posted on an Internet blog for a few weeks in the fall of 2007. By coincidence, I happened upon it. Its unusual content piqued my curiosity and just to be sure that I could access it again, I decided to save it to the hard drive of my computer. A few days later, as luck would have it, the link stopped working and the text was no longer available [...] One final clarification: much of the blog was written in English, in particular the annotations of its owner and no small amount of the conversations that were transcribed. I judged that it was better, for the sake of publication, that everything be in the same language and that language would have to be mine. (11-12)

If with *El blog del Inquisidor* the reader could see the difficulty on the part of the medium of the blog, introduced into the literary field, to recreate the experience of the blog in the digital realm, to essentially escape and distance itself from the literary and literature in general, Alberto Olmos' 2014 novel *Alabanza* presents us with something of

an inversion of that dilemma in the sense that what one sees play out thematically in this novel is the difficulty of literature and the literary to develop precisely because of a simultaneous absence and presence of the internet/digital. In other words, in *El blog del Inquisidor* the experience of the blog struggles to manifest itself because the link to literature is too strong, while in *Alabanza* literature and the literary struggle to develop because of the simultaneous presence and absence of the Internet. Let me explain.

Olmos' novel takes place in the year 2019. Sebastian, the protagonist, is a cult favorite who goes from being a best-selling author to a writer who wrecked his life and lost it all. Marginalized by the critics and in a state of writer's block, he flees to his native village that has no Internet where he plans to find himself and his artistic mojo. Accompanying him to the village is his girlfriend, Claudia, who, while Sebastian is locked up in a room trying to write, spends her days meandering around town. The stories that Sebastian intends to write and recollect in a book called "Las amadas," (if they come to him), are about all of the women with whom he has had a relationship. But, as the blank, crinkled up pages begin to accumulate on the floor of the bedroom in which he has holed up, coupled with a constant and frustrated urge to connect up to the Internet (remember this village has no internet access), it becomes increasingly clearer that Sebastian will only think about writing and that constant thinking in turn becomes material (on a metaliterary level) for Olmos himself to write his own novel. In addition to the struggle to write experienced by Sebastian we also read about how his girlfriend Claudia's daily walks in the village give rise to her learning about an unexplained fire that took place a long time ago in the village and how it could be attributed to a mysterious old woman that she sees periodically during her walks.

Despite having something of a plot, what the reader sees play out on the pages is a frustrated attempt at literary creation. Sebastian can only recall the relationships he had with women but not produce anything of literary quality, caused in no small part by Sebastian's marginalization by the critics (on the one hand) but more importantly by the absence of the Internet in the village. The lack of Internet in the village was an attractive component at first, but not being able to connect weighs heavily on Sebastian and his girlfriend, who constantly bemoan being disconnected. The lurking absence of the Internet coupled with the constant desire to connect to it explains, perhaps, something behind the decision to situate this novel in an immediate future and declare it as a time characterized by the disappearance of literature, an interesting idea that deserves some additional meditation. Three citations from the text will provide some context for further reflection on the topic.

By the year 2017 there was nothing left of those things that for decades were known by the name of Literary Supplement or Book Magazines, and the debate about artistic writing had transitioned completely to the realm of the Internet, where all of the battles of partisanship played themselves out [...] Now no one ever won, now no one was famous or prestigious; now nobody had anything that was worth listening to. Everything was noise, everything was origin. (78)

As a writer the nomenclature of a nonexistent reality fascinated him, but it also embarrassed him a little for not having done something for the survival of the word, for those words that at one time had their use and utility, and that he had always avoided in his stories, concerned as well in writing with hiding its origin, and given this to the celebration of novelty, of Anglicisms, of the new and

technical word that connected his stories with the imperial and web-surfer realities: never glory or waste, never worked. Always blog or social network or smart phone or troll. (180).

Literature was evolving toward a form of marketing, and he was on the front line of that degradation. Writers had always fallen into embarrassing practices in order to get themselves read—he talked about the fake letter by Laurence Sterne, directed toward an important critic under the guise of a well-known actress, in which he pondered his own novel *Tristram Shandy*—but he tried to keep up a certain decorum, or the technical insufficiency allowed it to appear that way. Now, with the Internet, it was important to know who was a writer and who an idiot, well everyone, writers and idiots, spent their days pedaling their books, especially the ones that didn't exist. The Editor—supported by his more than two decades in the business—had noted that each generation wrote shorter books than the previous generation, more fragmented as well; as if literature lived in a process of consumption that was going to end up being the last word of a sentence that no one felt like writing. For the writers who were younger than Sebastian, those born in the 80s, literature was evidently a way to become famous—more accessible than those better suited to music or film, which always required some sort of education—and becoming famous was nothing more than a postmodern game, show up in the news and then give oneself a pat on the back. These young writers began creating books of around fifteen pages, and to define themselves as writers on the Internet because of those fifteen-page-long books. The Editor was still waiting for the glorious day in which a writer born in the 90s turned into him

for his consideration a book composed of completely blank pages. Then he would know that the end had finally arrived. (304-305)

This last passage along with the previous ones cited are introduced to show the ways in which Olmos' novel addresses, at least thematically speaking, the influence of the Internet on literature in particular by showing the development of writing (or lack thereof) within the context of an internet-less village which is in turn embedded within a broader social environment where the Internet is omnipresent. If in the case of *El blog del Inquisidor* we saw the creation of the literary inspired by the medium of the internet blog, yet still firmly rooted in the broader literary tradition, here we see an interesting case of the frustrated opposite in a text born out of the absence of the Internet yet surrounded by an external society in which the Internet is everywhere and being "unconnected" would be a noticeable anomaly.

These first steps toward an interneticized text are imbued with a certain degree of anxiety; anxiety about the future of literature, anxiety about the role and nature of the author and reading, and anxiety about the influence of the Internet. This anxiety is not something necessarily new or particular to these novels nor the contemporary experience today, however, because the uncertainty around the future of literature and the role of the author has been playing itself out for centuries, especially in the twentieth in the numerous discourses and apocalyptic calls for the death of the novel, the death of literature and the death of the author. But it does seem that the number and frequency of these anxious positions is on the rise and that the gap between the theoretical calls of death or obsolescence and the practical realization of that apocalyptic vision is shrinking. That is to say (and this will be explored in more detail in subsequent chapters), it has

been said that theory is often out ahead of practice and in some instances a book is written with the express purpose of trying to make the theoretical a reality. Take for example the numerous attempts in the early twentieth century in Spain to emulate or embody the theoretical constructs about the “dehumanization of art” put forth by Jose Ortega y Gasset. I would argue that something similar has happened with all of the pronouncements of the death of the author, literature and the novel as they are/were more or less theoretical constructs/arguments not yet completely developed or manifested at the time of the pronouncement. With the emergence of the Internet, however, it seems as though this moment may be the one in which that apocalyptic process will take place.

This may take place with alarming speed and points toward a moment of great uncertainty that will perhaps radically alter the way in which literature is read and written. Kathleen Fitzpatrick, in her 2006 book *The Anxiety of Obsolescence: The American Novel in the Age of Television*, makes a similar observation but also moves beyond the uncertainty around the literary status quo. She suggests that both the scholarly community and the novelist as well must move away from purely literary-historical models of critical and creative production and instead consider and confront the role of literature in a broader cultural context, especially as it relates to the influence of technology. For Fitzpatrick, the threat to the author, the novel and to literature as a whole is no longer something to be found and studied in its precursors because “these precursors are no longer perceived to be anywhere near as threatening as what’s coming next” (6).

Joseph Tabbi, in his book *Reading Matters: Narrative in the New Media Ecology* (1997), echoes a similar argument when he expresses that “what has changed” in the age of electronic media “is not the book per se, but the way that books can be read now. The

end of books is more accurately the end of academic readings that isolated texts from the larger ecology” (13). This is some of the idea behind the two novels that will be examined next for they seem to embody in their interneticized form an aspect of that new way of reading texts precisely because of the way in which they engage with new technologies and point away from literary-historical precursors and traditions like the ones seen in the previous texts and instead signal a turn toward “that which lies outside of text,” specifically digital culture as a whole and the world-wide-web in particular. Returning once again to the ideas expressed by Kathleen Fitzpatrick, she echoes a similar approach when she suggests that “models of reading that are exclusively literary-historical must give way to models engaged with culture, technology and media in an era in which these are thought to threaten literature’s very existence” (6).

One of the most explicit demonstrations of an interneticized text then can be found in the format of Alberto Olmos’ 2009 novel *Algunas ideas buenisimas que el mundo se va a perder*. A very quick and superficial perusal of the 303 pages that make up the novel seems to suggest that there is not much out of the ordinary or outstanding about the text given that it at first glance appears to be a book full of pages with words and an occasional image. But upon closer inspection, and certainly as the reader enters into the reading environment, it becomes clear that the formal and structural elements of the novel, even the more marginal nuances not always given that much attention like font and formatting, represent significant “triggers” of a text highly inspired by the Internet. That is to say, this is not a novel organized around literary organizing elements like chapters, nor protagonists, nor major events or plot lines. Instead, a reader with a modest level of familiarity with the Internet and its many communicative tools (email, Twitter, blogs,

etc.) will almost immediately recognize their reproduction/recreation on the page. For example, the image of the search box so common to popular search engines like Google or Yahoo almost needs no explanation. Nor does the reproduction of a “subject” line followed by “from” and the body of a message so common to emails. Equally as recognizable are the 140 character “Tweets” made popular by the social media platform Twitter. And finally, the numerous appearances of the words “published by” followed by a screen name are almost ubiquitous within blogs and other social media postings. Taken as a whole, it is immediately apparent that this novel is markedly different in no small part because of the way it breaks from the literary tradition by constructing itself not out of the intertextual world of the literary canon, out of the physical pages of other books, but out of the extratextual world of the Internet and world-wide-web, out of the digital pages of the new virtual library. In other words, in the recreation of an illusion of reality, the Internet functions as an extratextual referent much like Madrid did for the novels of Benito Pérez Galdós for example.

So marked is the sense of the Internet that Olmos himself admits that what he attempted to do with this work was to reproduce the experience of surfing the Internet. What one finds as a reader, then, is a textual environment that not only visually reproduces some of the more salient features of that experience (a blank page with only the Google search box in the middle of it; the results from a Wikipedia search; a SPAM email; a page full of 140 character Tweets, etc.) but structurally it also recreates the fragmented/interrupted/rhizomatic nature of surfing the web, an experience in which nothing really happens nor does one remember much about it. As a reader of this novel, we nevertheless continue figuratively “clicking” our way through the pages as if with

every turn of the page (or click of the mouse) a new morsel of information lies there waiting to satisfy one's virtual appetite. Let's take a closer look at just how this experience is reproduced and how it plays out.

With the five seemingly simple words of an instant messenger program the textual experience of the Internet in *Algunas ideas buenisimas que el mundo se va a perder* begins: "Tu estado actual es ausente" (Your status is unavailable). The phrase, common to many messenger and other communicative programs online, is the first indication of a textual reproduction of something digital that points the reader outside the text to the Internet and to other texts as well. What I want to say with that idea of something outside the text is that as one reads those words and recognizes their context and normal place of appearance in an internet program, there arises a certain level of friction, a peculiar friction that will be an important and recurring theme in this entire project. While the words are written on paper within the confines of a book their aura is digital, which redirects the reader almost immediately upon reading them to the visual of an online messenger service on a computer screen or smart phone. In that sense, these five words set the stage for what lies ahead: five words alone on a page, a curious interplay not only of the aforementioned tension between the text and the Internet, but also on a more semantic level because "Tu estado actual es ausente" (Your status is unavailable) refers to an absence, a lack of communication or connection yet at the same time that absence/lack of communication is the only element of communication that the reader sees printed on an otherwise blank white page.

The transition to the next page at first seems to point toward a more stable and insular sense of the literary because nothing structurally nor formally about the words or

their organization on the page jump out like the ones on the first page. But as the reader takes up the reading experience, it is the content in this case that once again points him or her toward something inspired by the Internet as the focus of the two-and-a-half page vignette turns to preoccupations about reading in general along with writing and being read on a blog. Once the reader reaches the end of these pages of random musings on reading and writing there is a growing intuition that what is being read is a literary reproduction of an internet blog which is confirmed by the presence of the words “escrito por *supercrisis*” (published by *supercrisis*), a common tag made up of the words written/published/posted by + screenname when publishing/posting online. In the interest of painting as accurate a picture as possible of how the reproduction of the digital in the print medium is made possible it should be noted that the boundaries/margins/toolbars common to most search engines are not included on the page but as I have already suggested that absence is not significant because the text itself either via its content, font or other visual cues is sufficient enough to trigger the digital reference.

Turning to the next page, or to continue the digital allusion to clicking one’s way to the next page the reader finds the immediately familiar structure of an email from a certain “David” to a host of recipients ranging from “Barbara” to “gorka gorka.” The email contains a poem entitled “Another precipitated twilight poem that I will burn tomorrow” (translation mine) which is constructed on the premise of what the author refers to as “a new technique of improper appropriation.” Immediately following the 31 lines of the poem the reader is presented with what appears to be another email but something about it is amiss. The subject line “urgent assistant” and the sender “Etoh” both call the reader’s attention for the awkwardness and grammatical inaccuracy of

“urgent assistant” and the uniqueness of the word “Etoh.” The body of the email is in Spanish, however, and after reading only the first three lines of the first paragraph it becomes almost instantly recognizable as a reproduction of a “SPAM” email, in this case a petition from a Zimbabwean family member, a certain “Mermelades de Etoh,” seeking help to recover a large sum of money being held in a bank. Below are the initial lines, including their orthographic mistakes that gave the message away as a SPAM email:

“I know this will come as a surprise to you sir, but they would want that you sir I give you a first consideration in order to help me and my family from our present trouble” (13).

The source of this SPAM email, the “Mermelades de Etoh,” becomes the inspiration for the next page which is the simple visual reproduction of a web browser search engine with the words “Mermelades de Etoh” inside the search box. This search in turn gives rise to the next page where the reader sees the Wikipedia results of that search in English. The next page contains eleven “Tweets” from the social media program Twitter taken from the web in 2007 and all of them in Spanish. (“Tweets” are limited to 140 characters and as far as a social media platform phenomenon goes they embody nicely the limitations of those 140 characters in that they tend to be short, superficial snippets of ideas or thoughts that the sender of the “Tweet” deems worthy of “Tweeting.”) Given their restrictive textual nature, “Tweets” have a tendency to take on a “daily diary/show & tell” sort of usage in the sense that often what they present is a mundane, insignificant or incoherent comment or thought (Presidents of the United States included) about the quotidian experience or a current event like these examples from the novel: “I am

fighting with Flash and losing” or “We are so winning” or “It’s Friday night at 7:13 pm. This is not life.”

Continuing this lengthy but necessary presentation of the way in which this book develops the experience of the Internet for one more moment what the reader finds when he or she turns/clicks to the next page are three presentations in three different languages (Spanish, English and Esperanto) of the Wikipedia results for a definition of Twitter. A very concise snapshot of these presentations is given below:

Twitter

De Wikipedia, la enciclopedia libre

Twitter es un servicio gratuito de MicroBlogging, que hace las veces de red social y que permite sus usuarios enviar micro-posts (también denominados <tweets>) [...] (18)

Twitter

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Twitter is a free social networking and microblogging service that allows users to send <updates> (or <tweets>); text-based posts, up to 140 characters long to the Twitter website [...] (20).

Twitter

El Vikipedio

Twitter estas socia-reta kaj blogadeta servo kiu pernesas uzantojn sendi gisdatigojn (au <tweets>; tekst-mesagoj, kiu enhavas 140 da literoj maksimume) [...] (20).

From this point forward, it is a continual rhizomatic/internetic presentation of a variety of material that the navigation of the Internet can give rise to, much like what was seen in the examples discussed above. While I don't intend to present a detailed account of the entire novel, I do think it would be helpful and interesting to at the very least present a broader vision (via brief summaries of the vignettes) of how the narration develops in the novel and what elements are included so that the reader can see first-hand exactly what an explicitly interneticized novel looks and behaves like before reflecting on its most salient characteristics and other implications.

Instant messenger status indicator----blog----email----poem----SPAM email----
search box for sender of SPAM----search results reproduction----Wikipedia
results----Twitter feeds----Twitter definition from Wikipedia----blog by
supercrisis----blog by Daniela----Google search box----blog by Eritrea----Twitter
feed----instant messenger status indicator----blog by Eritrea----email----SPAM
email----blog by *supercrisis*----Twitter feeds----blog by Daniela----Search for
“What is a blog?”----Google search box----poem----blog by Eritrea----email----
email asking to connect----Instant messenger indicator status----Twitter feeds----
email----email----blog by Eritrea----blog by *supercrisis*----blog without name----
blog by Eritrea----blog by Cristina with comments----Real Academia does not
contain the word “blog”----Twitter feeds----instant messenger status indicator----
picture of cassette tape----blog by Daniela----Google search box for Monica
Naranjo disc----blog by Millana----lyrics from song----blog by Daniela----random
statement----instant messenger status indicator----[...]----email de los lunes----

email----blog by Eritrea----blog by *supercrisis*----Twitter feeds----Editor's note and credits.

Now that the reader gets a detailed look at some of the initial pages as well as a more comprehensive look at how the textual presentation develops, this project can now transition to address the looming question of what some of the defining characteristics of this first example of an explicitly interneticized text are. From a structural/formal standpoint, what almost immediately calls the reader's attention flipping/clicking their way through the novel is just how important the way it is put together is as well as the fonts and presentation of the words on the pages. Even a reader semi-familiar with different internet platforms/programs will instantly recognize the common phrase "Tu estado actual es ausente" (Your status is unavailable) just as they would also recognize the familiar 140 characters of a "Tweet" from Twitter. Equally as familiar are the structures of emails, SPAM messages, and the search box of a web browser. In that sense, there is an experiential component to the novel in that it invites readers to "click" their way through the book in much the same way that they might click their way through a web surfing session.

And at the same time a text like this seems to favor the experiential aspect over everything else, including plot, character development and literariness because as I have alluded to previously these novels play by a different set of rules and call upon a new fountain of inspiration that disrupts and unsettles more traditional literary-historic interpretations. In other words, as critically trained readers we are taught to pay attention to things and look for clues and cues for meaning or explanation yet in the interneticized text world so many of these attempts are frustrated or obsolete because either the novel

employs them as a sort of booby trap or doesn't even include material worthy of interpretation. To say that it is meaningful or meaningless most likely depends on how one views published material on the Internet and perhaps it is too early to pass judgement on that idea. It does beg the question though to what degree it is either frustrating or pleasurable to essentially go over someone else's web-surfing session reproduced within the confines of a book. I would argue that we are seeing a transition in how these types of experiences are being interpreted for "viewing" someone else's actions in the digital arena are increasingly more popular. We only need to think about the explosion of videogames and the legions of fans that simply enjoy watching other people play video games (some of the most popular YouTube videos are organized around exceptional gamer's recording their videogame experiences for others to watch.). Whatever the current perspective may be, it seems to me that the experiential component of these novels and the peculiar way in which they are structured (internetized) does open the door to meditation on the nature of literature and the literary in an internetized text.

One of the initial consequences of an internetized text like the one presented here is how it disrupts and challenges the way literary scholars read these books. To make that point I would like to draw upon a couple of observations about the ways some preceding books have been read and looked at so as to open a new perspective on the current text. A nineteenth-century novel like *Fortunata y Jacinta* by Pérez Galdós, a very long and detailed one at that, could be said to have been read from a similar perspective to the way they were written, meaning as an attempt to narrate with significant detail, intimacy and scope the time and place of the events narrated, in this case the atmosphere of nineteenth-century city life in Spain. Realism was after all a break with the classical

demands of using art to show life “as it should be” to instead show life “as it is.” But that effort to capture life “as it is,” to use language as a mirror or window into a perceived “real” is not without contradictions for realism disguises well the mechanisms it uses to create that sense of the “real.” That is to say, the idea that an extensive nineteenth century novel by Galdós could in some way capture city life “as it was” is problematic because what it captures in its verisimilitude is an effect that it achieves by way of particular literary and ideological conventions invested with a kind of truth value that makes the effective affective.¹⁸

It is not my intention here to enter into the debate about realism and its many contentious interpretations, only to point to this very limited perspective as a way to introduce the idea that if it can be accepted that novels like *Fortunata y Jacinta* embodied a small and insular microcosm of nineteenth-century Spanish city life, fictitiously represented of course, there is also no doubt that literary scholars and others alike have drawn upon these novels as resources for other things outside or external to the text. That is to say, despite their perceived literary insularity some of these novels have been used as fountains for exploring and getting familiar with the geographic and historical references that appear in the text, a sort of guided walking tour of the literary city if you will, as evidenced by books like *Madrid en las novelas de Benito Perez Galdós* published in 2016 by the editorial Aventuras Literarias or in articles like the one written by Gemán Gullón called “El Madrid de Galdós: de la calle a la via urbana.” Novels like these then embody narrative and literary contributions on the one hand but at the same time, and this

¹⁸ See the section “Realism and the Realist Novel” on the University of Virginia hosted website *The Electronic Labyrinth*. <http://www2.iath.virginia.edu/elab/elab.html>

is the thread that I want to trace through a couple of examples, contain within themselves elements that point the reader outside of the text, something to be investigated or verified, in this case the spatial organization of the experience of the city.

Jumping ahead to the early twentieth century in Spain there is an interesting case of the infrequently studied novel *Cinelandia* (1923) by Ramón Gómez de la Serna. This novel resonates well with some of the novels of the Nocilla Generation in the sense that whereas so many of them are focused on and inspired by the emerging technologies of the early twenty-first century and the Internet in particular, *Cinelandia* is perhaps one of the earliest Spanish novels to focus on and be inspired by the emerging technology of cinema. While a more detailed and deliberate analysis of the affinity between the Spanish historical avant garde— and novels like *Cinelandia* and the new Spanish avant garde of today— might be worthy of exploration, what I want to underscore here is the way in which de la Serna’s novel repeatedly points toward the experience of the cinema, identifies something external to itself which is the visual as it continuously invites the reader to frame the text and adopt a cinematographic eye, much like the camera would focus in on or frame an image for a scene.

To make this point I would like to identify three particular aspects of the novel that work to achieve the experience of the cinematographic. On a structural level, just as a film or scene is made up of a series of shots or fragments, so too is the novel of de la Serna made up of a series of fragments often disconnected and lacking cohesion, instead of a carefully constructed over-arching narrative. Second, a widespread use of cinematographic terms and vocabulary is another way in which the novel embodies the experience of film as the reader constantly finds words with the root “cine” or sections

that begin with some sort of cinematographic jargon as it relates to “cut,” “lights” or “action.” Their repeated presence has the intended effect of constantly moving the cinematographically informed/sensitive reader to adopt a literary position outside or above the text that privileges the visual over the inter/intratextual, for example. Finally, one can see the literary manifestation of such cinematographic techniques as juxtaposition, montage and the “ojo-camara” (eye as camera). Take the opening scene of the novel, a segment also studied and highlighted by Benjamin Fraser in his article on the novel,¹⁹ in which the words provide a sense of movement from a take from a broad and expansive view of the city to a more detailed contemplation of specific buildings along the lines of a close up. First: the shape of Cinelandia, from afar, had something of Constantinople in it, mixed with Tokyo and a bit of Florence and New York. The little suburbs that grew up around it were not very large, but enough of a neighborhood for every demographic” (49). Later, “As one drew closer to the city a large museum area could be found with reproductions of different streets from all over the world” (49). In the “from afar” one can perceive a sense of a shot that focuses on the place and then with “as one drew closer to the city” the reader experiences the sense of zoom in slow motion.

Taken as a whole, the novel is most likely the result of an attempt to truly emulate cinematographic techniques. It is an interesting textual world in the sense that one sees neither sentimentality nor emotion, nor a very in-depth exploration of and development of characters. Instead, the experience is a rather fragmented, “clip-infused” text that seems to depict the fast-moving world of cinematographic images. Emerging

¹⁹ Benjamin Fraser highlights the cinematographic way in which the opening scene introduces the city. Using a literary language of movement the text gives the impression that the reader is situated behind the eye of the camera as it makes its way closer to and through the city streets.

cinematographic techniques became important influences on the novel in their promotion of a fragmented vision of reality. In “Cinema y la novísima literatura,” Guillermo de Torre Ballesteros, when commenting upon *Cinelandia* (1923) argues that “in the cinema the fragment takes precedent over the action, thereby weakening the narrative thread” (101). What can ultimately be seen here is the way in which artists engage with the new technologies of the day as a way to make sense out of and comment on the world in which they live, however imperfect and difficult that project may be.

If one takes this idea of the artist’s attempt to make sense out of or explain the world through the interplay of new technologies and literature, it opens up another angle to explore the “openness” or “insularity” of the text. That is to say, departing from the position that even though some books over time, like the ones mentioned here, have pointed toward something outside the text, whether it be to the city or the cinema, they are still imbued with a high level of literary insularity and closed offedness that more closely resembles inter/intratextuality than anything else. In fairness to a declaration of textual insularity, it should be noted that this insularity can manifest itself as much on the level of the individual book as it can within a series of books or generation of authors or even Literature as a whole. Again, I point toward the long, detailed novels of the realist tradition of the nineteenth century in particular (this observation would not go unchallenged though, for many a Galdós scholar would refute this point as naïve and amateurish and highlight the complex artistry of these texts). The point that I am trying to articulate is that the level of “openness” that a book has, the degree to which it points toward something outside itself, like *Don Quijote* points toward other “libros de caballería” and then back toward itself in the second part or *Ficciones* by Borges points

toward the creation of literature as a whole and the nature of intertextuality both internally within its short stories and as it relates to Literature, has always seemed to ground itself in the literary tradition, to ultimately point back to or reference that vast corpus of written works that is understood as literature and knowledge and that tends to reside on the shelf in a library.

The explicitly interneticized text, like the one analyzed here, challenges that literary insularity precisely because perhaps for the first time it breaks free from the literary and print canon because there exists an alternative to the world of books that is the world-wide-web. What I think makes this particular novel so interesting is the way in which it breaks from the different levels of literary insularity alluded to above. *Algunas ideas buenisimas que el mundo se va a perder* breaks with a world intimately tied to the concept and practice of authorship, copyright and the immense weight and significance of those institutions but also by extension to the tangible verifiability of the textual because it exists on paper and resides in a library, bookstore or bookshelf. And because of that physical presence it has an aura that gives it agency within the literary universe which in turn means it can participate in the intertextual relationships of literature because it can be read and consulted. In short, *Algunas ideas buenisimas que el mundo se va a perder* continuously points toward the digital universe of the world-wide-web. And what happens with that continuous “outside of text orientation” is that the experience of the reader and the written text for that matter is a somewhat frustrated one (or perhaps pleasurable) because so many of the elements that readers have been trained to look for and depend on for interpreting texts and making meaning (plot, character, chapters,

tropes, intertextual references, fragments of significance, authorship, etc.) are simply not there or are completely displaced in the novel.

Not only are these elements not there, the result being a novel in which not much of anything happens and many if not all of the ideas expressed or narrated are just what one would expect to find and read on the Internet's social media sites, but the reading process is deferred and interrupted because everything about the novel points outside the book. It says "look me up on the www" which in turn invites the mind of the critical reader to continuously veer off course. To complicate matters even more, if one actually does interrupt the reading and begin to try and explore and track down on the world-wide-web some of the textual references to social media sites or webpages, while some of them return real search hits, some of them like the blogs return nothing at all because the site that hosted them has simply vanished from the web and taken all of the blog postings with it. It was that realization of the ephemerality of the digital that not only perhaps explains or informs the title of the book ("Some great ideas that the world is going to miss out on") but also raises serious and interesting concerns about the digital/virtual medium as a whole precisely because of its inherent mutability, instability and pace of change.

Much of that mutability and instability has serious implications for issues related to authorship and reading/writing, two topics that will be examined in more detail in the subsequent chapters. For now what I have tried to highlight is that the nature of an explicitly interneticized text made possible by the novel's "techxtual poetics" is an interesting yet problematic one due in great part to the inherent friction created by meshing together two alternately opposed worlds, the paper with the screen, print culture

with the digital, the library with the world-wide-web, the author with the poster, copyright with copyleft and the writer with the idea of “wreader” first put forth by George Landow and later alluded to by Dolores Romero as well in the context of Spanish literature in the digital age.

Redirecting our attention away from the explicitly interneticized text to an implicit one, there is the 2007 experimental novel *Nocilla Dream* by Agustín Fernández Mallo. The novel is made up of 113 vignettes that occupy on average no more than a page. They are numbered and consist of a random compilation of scientific musings, an underlying storyline that revolves around a tree in the middle of the desert with shoes hanging from it, and brief snapshots of the lives of seemingly non-descript and semi-marginal individuals. There really is no beginning nor end, just a constant and continual rhizomatic literary composition or what Christine Henseler refers to in her book *Spanish Fiction in the Digital Age: Generation X Remixed* as “creating a story through the techniques of sampling and remixing” (208). To provide the reader with an idea of what that rhizomatic wandering looks like and to allow us to make some general observations, I have included below a very concise sampling of the first ten vignettes:

1. The capabilities of the computer and the human brain are compared.
2. A description of US50 in Nevada and a brothel.
3. Billy the Kid, a random individual, finds a shoe in the middle of the road between Sacramento, CA and Boulder City, NV.
4. A lone poplar tree grows stronger but a marriage falls apart.
5. A Nevada brothel with a prostitute named Sherry.

6. The lone poplar tree in the middle of the desert again with lots of shoes hanging from it.
7. A paragraph about hotels and the items that guests leave there and steal.
8. Deeck the Danish guy and his art made of chewed gum. He gives up art with gum to collect lost photographs.
9. A scientific musing about the binary system and computers by F.G. Heath.
10. A man named Paul and the mother of the previously mentioned Billy the Kid are cruising in their car and come upon the lone poplar tree in the middle of the desert with all the shoes hanging from it, take a pair, but one falls off in the middle of the road while they are driving.

Without the overtly obvious visual cues present in the previous novel by Olmos, in the case of Fernández Mallo's novel the experience of the Internet and its techxtual poetics plays itself out more implicitly but no less effectively. If one revisits the prologue of *Nocilla Dream* after reading the entire novel, it lends itself nicely to the argument that this is an implicitly interneticized text. That happens because the prologue, penned by a well-known and important Generation X writer named Juan Bonilla²⁰ is titled "Rizoma"

²⁰ In the 90s in Spain, some of the cultural icons were actually writers. They were young, nonconformist and had an air of punk that magazine covers loved to showcase. But their popularity in the press did not always translate into critical acclaim from literary critics. Dubbed both "Generation X" and "Generación Kronen," their literature contained echoes of dirty realism that incorporated pop culture references and audiovisual elements like rock music. Juan Bonilla was an important member of this generation of writers whose 1996 novel *Nadie conoce a nadie* was later made into a movie. He along with other writers pushed the boundaries of the Spanish literary canon in the 90s. A prologue written by him would seem to suggest that despite being a decade apart, there is some affinity

(Rhizome) and outlines some of the ways in which they operate, paying special attention to the way that they multiply almost endlessly, “the rhizome has woven into its very structure the conjunction ‘and...and...and.’ But it is not a matter of going in one direction from one thing to the next but rather in multiple directions, a perpendicular direction, a transversal movement that brings them all together, a river without a beginning or an end that corrodes its shores and gains velocity with each rhizome” (7). The way the rhizome operates, moving endlessly from one point/connection to another and building on the idea of “and” seems to reflect the way in which an experience on the Internet operates as well and in particular the element of the hyperlink which hides behind its underlined/hyperlinked form another potential hyperlink which in turn represents another potential hyperlink and so on.

As an aside, the comparison between the two leads me to think about the underlined/hyperlinked word as something akin to Derrida’s notion of “trace” and Heidegger’s “Dasein,” both of which point toward an attempt at representation and meaning that is fleeting or unattainable because of the inadequacy of the word. It is also interesting to think about a time when all interneticized text will be underlined/hyperlinked/under erasure for as it stands right now, in general, only certain words or parts of a paragraph or lengthy article online are “hyperlinked.” Even if one doesn’t recognize and make the connection between the rhizome and surfing the web initially, as a reader one is pointed in the direction of thinking about the connection via

between the two generations of Spanish writers. See the online article ¿La Generación Kronen, los autores que se atrevieron a romper con la tradición.” www.bez.es/695672453/La-Generacion-Kronen-los-autores-que-se-atrevieron-a-romper-con-la-tradicion.html

the first vignette which presents a scientifically oriented musing about computers, their ability to crunch numbers, and how our network or web of cerebral neurons seems equally as capable. This vignette to think about the nature of numbers, attributed to B. Jack Copeland and Diane Proudfoot, represents perhaps the bedrock of computing and by extension the Internet precisely because in the processing of information it is all about the binary code of “0’s and 1’s”.

The allusion to this idea is a subtle yet effective way by which the novel essentially sets the stage for reading and looking at the vignettes as fragments or snippets of information from the Internet. That is to say, between the opening prologue about the rhizome and the first vignette about computers, numbers and webs, the reader becomes oriented and directed toward a mindset or at least a sensibility that has those ideas and connections in mind. What’s more, it’s not even so much what is written on the pages as how it is written and organized because there is something literarily “hypnotizing” about a short, numbered vignette about computers and numbers attributed to two unfamiliar names that beckons to be read more than once, meditated upon and perhaps even researched to confirm or discredit the attribution. Ultimately an academic reader might end up “googling” the supposed authors of the vignette. With the computer screen or smart phone now active as one turns the page to the next vignette and reads about a solitary highway (US50) in Nevada, that too might be a sufficient enough temptation to use Google maps to try and locate it and learn more about it. And as the narration in the vignette continues, presenting details about the road trip of a former boxer named Falconetti, the search and confirmation for meaning or more information so often now satisfied by an internet search, has an interesting effect on the way the text is read

because once again the reader might be tempted or inclined to “google” “Falconetti boxer,” for example, just for the random possibility that it delivers a hit (that’s not to suggest that just because it gets a hit that there is substantive meaning in that result for information on the web can easily be created by anyone but a hit could have extended the rhizomatic playing out of the search for meaning or the playful nature of information and narrative that is so much a part of this experience).

Extending this initial idea of an implicitly interneticized text to encompass the entire novel, a number of different elements can now be identified that help point the reader toward that impression. On a structural level there is a curious interplay between the use of numbered vignettes and the insertion of random scientific musings about technology and computers. At first the usage of 113 numbered vignettes to organize the novel might not seem all that important or significant and even less so as it relates to an argument for an interneticized text, but it does take on significance when considered against the numerous vignettes that discuss not only the importance of the numbers “0” and “1” that form the basis of the binary code that processes information in computers and internet language, but also the capacities of computers and the human brain to calculate vast amounts of information. The insertion of these scientific musings about technology, the human brain, and numbers operates similarly to the repeated use of cinematographic vocabulary in the novel *Cinelandia* (that lead to a reading in tune with cinema) in that it constantly makes the reader reflect on the potential of science, especially as it relates to technology like computers and the Internet, which in turn has an effect on the mindset and perspective of the reader. It works to make us increasingly more sensitive to and aware of the close connection between the Internet and the text that

we are reading because we encounter different triggers that validate or make real the scientific musings. In that sense, the scientific musings contribute to the “effect” of tipping this novel in the direction of an “internetized text” because of the way they orientate the reader to reflect on those musings while at the same time seeing some of them play themselves out in the structure of the novel.

The reader then finds him or herself on the one hand repeatedly contemplating the marvels of the computer and the human brain as they relate to numbers, but then on the other hand naturally looking for patterns or connections between the numbered vignettes themselves. And what one finds is that those attempts to make sense out of the disparate vignettes, to identify the secret thread that connects them all is a frustrated one because each instance when there appears to be a connection it is undermined or simply not developed any further. Instead of a reading experience capable of linking together a group of snippets/vignettes into a larger whole and therefore a broader sense of meaning and understanding, the process that plays itself out here is just an endless game of dead-end paths of meaning, promising symbols and signals that do not lend themselves to the idea of “wholeness” but instead cling to their playful nature as a chain of disconnected snippets. We are left with the potential of the pleasurable experience of the search for the search because the rules of the literary game are changing. It is not so much about cracking the secret code of the book so much as it is experiencing the processes involved in the creation of a novel.

Another aspect that the novel uses to create the impression of an internetized text is what I describe as a representation of the margins. There is something to be said about the reaches of the web, how in a very short period of time it has created an instantly

accessible network in which both the center and the periphery coexist simultaneously. If at some earlier moment in time there were assumed and lived limitations of both time and space, a time when perhaps the local and the marginal played themselves out within those specific and limited confines and were most likely only familiar to those individuals connected to that space, in the digital age of the world-wide-web all those limitations seem to have disappeared and now the isolated/marginal/local can very easily play itself out on a national or international scale. This happens because in a certain way everyone is now a community member of any community that one chooses no matter the distance. As users of the web and readers of the material there, the individual becomes molded and influenced by his or her scope and capacities because of the instant access to a whole new body of tools that allow the individual to not only interact with the margins (through research, google maps, searches, chatrooms, etc.) but also to entertain with relative familiarity narrative spaces that incorporate such disparate material. That is to say, it probably does not surprise or disorientate a reader to have some sort of connection with, to try to identify with, places as different as Washington D.C. or Ely, Nevada, publications like the *New York Times* or an individually published blog about literature, because it seems natural that they coexist. The perceived gaps between space and time have been diminished. To put it another way, it seems as though the unfamiliar, the marginal and the isolated, are now a more familiar, less marginal, not-so-isolated precisely because of the operative nature of the Internet and the world-wide-web, and in my estimation *Nocilla Dream* plays that out.

In the novel there is a certain level of familiarity, then, in the way it mixes randomly selected ideas, narratives or places precisely because they lend themselves to

be investigated/researched on the Internet, to be made more familiar and less marginal because that is the mindset that the Internet makes possible. Incredibly remote highways in the middle of Nevada, referenced in the novel, while unfamiliar have an air of familiarity because a Google search or Google maps lets the reader connect with those spaces. The idea of *micronations*,²¹ something referenced numerous times in the text, at first unfamiliar is made familiar by researching their political structure and marginal location on the web. The idea here is that the reader is imbued with a new sensitivity because just like the experience of the Internet and social media and their capacity to make mainstream, even if only for a moment, the most marginal and distanced of people, places or things, the text as well lends itself to that same sense of accessibility, that same sense of unfamiliar familiarity in that the mere mention of a marginal or unfamiliar person or event triggers a move to investigate it on the web. It is precisely this constant “back and forth” between the textual and the Internet, between the idea of fiction and the possibility of an experience of the “real” through the virtual, that plays itself out over the entire novel and in the process contributes to an implicit experience of an interneticized text.

So what unites or what element is a constant and most defining and destabilizing characteristic of these interneticized texts and their techxtual poetics? The snippit. The “snippit,” defined as a small bit or morsel, is closely related to the fragment but is more technologically inspired as it is also part of a popular Microsoft Windows tool called the “snipping tool.” The “snipping tool” in Microsoft Windows allows a user to capture and

²¹ According to Wikipedia, a micronation is: “sometimes referred to as a model country or new country project, is an entity that claims to be an independent nation or state but is not recognized by world governments or major international organizations.”

save any part element from their computer screen (usually just a small part, hence the idea of a “snippit.”).

There is no doubt that the snippit²² is related to the fragment and the fragmentary, and is not something necessarily particular or specific to this time period as the fragment has enjoyed numerous moments of literary importance throughout history. For example, if the reader reflects upon that which has survived from the ancients, it is quickly apparent that much of it is made up of fragments, shreds, and cut pieces. During the medieval and Renaissance periods in particular, the fragment was used in an allegorical fashion to suggest that that which was left over had been broken off or separated from a perceived divine whole. It was seen as something that had survived from an earlier time. With the passage of time it could be said that neither the reality of a fragment nor an incomplete or unfinished work was something that unsettled or frustrated readers. Instead, by the early nineteenth century, poems and other works were being intentionally published in an incomplete or fragmentary form because it was seen as fashionable.²³ This appetite for relics of the past and the perceived piece of a whole in turn contributed to the acceptance of the romantic fragment, now recognized as a genre in its own right. The modernist poets in turn reinvented the fragment as something self-conscious in nature that could disrupt the flow of time, leaving behind both voids and tears. They wrote discontinuous texts, collages and mosaics like T.S. Eliot’s “The Waste Land” in which we read “These fragments I have shored against my ruins.” In the case of the

²² I would argue that precisely because of its technological connotation that the snippit is less connected to the supposed whole from which it has been snipped. Whereas a fragment may still enjoy an aura of having been ripped from a larger, more complete entity, the snippit, born in the pixelated ephemerality of the digital landscape, has perhaps never known a larger whole.

²³ See the 2014 book *A Poet’s Glossary* by Edward Hirsch.

postmodern fragment there is a less regretful and less nostalgic tone than with modernism for the fragment no longer yearns to be reunited with the whole. Instead, the fragment is seen as some sort of destabilizing element, as a kind of liberation that breaks the dominance of totalizing systems. In that sense, in the aesthetic of the postmodern, the fragment celebrates its own incompleteness, its partiality, precisely because a postmodern text is fragmentary by its very nature.

But in choosing the idea of a snippet instead of the fragment, what I have done is to select a term that both echoes the idea of a fragment yet at the same time clearly situates itself within the technological jargon of techxtual poetics and points toward a transformation of sorts. In the digital age, what I argue is that the nature of the fragment and the levels of fragmentation have changed and increased in the digital world and in these interneticized texts to a point where sentences or even words can now trigger an interruption of the literary flow as the reader is tempted with the possibility of searching for a way to reconnect the pieces that have been scattered in front of them on the page. It is something similar to what Maurice Blanchot suggests with the idea that “The interruption of the incessant is the distinguishing characteristic of fragmentary writing” (21). But as that incessant interruption continues over the course of a novel and plays itself out seamlessly and naturally in the virtual pages of the world-wide-web, I propose that something else is happening as well and that is that the snippet, whether it be a word, a phrase, a specific moment in time, a sentence or a Tweet, not only no longer pretends to be part of a missing whole but instead seems to be undergoing something of an inversion in the sense that it appears as if the snippet itself were the whole, the totality. Let me explain.

In the works that were looked at in this first chapter, there were varying degrees and manifestations of the “snipping tool” (fragmentary). This plays itself out in the case of *El blog del Inquisidor* in both the brief moment in time captured by the narrative and the nature of the blog itself that was posted online and downloaded by another blogger before it disappeared from the web forever. There is no pretension to capture anything or any moment in its entirety nor do we learn the totality of the story behind the posted blog or its mysterious author. Instead, it presents just a snippet of the events surrounding the accidental encounter of a new blogger with a blog post that disappeared from the web. The novel itself is composed of snippets of blog postings instead of chapters and dialogues have been replaced with email exchanges.

In the case of *Alabanza* the snippet manifests itself on a temporal level in the short period of time that Sebastian and his girlfriend spend in the village without Internet. But also in the snippets of text/narrative captured by Sebastian in his frustrated attempts to write another best-selling novel, the “metaliterary” element of the text which in turn becomes another layer of snippets in the narrative undertaken by the writer Olmos who also compiles those snippets into a larger one that represents the novel itself. There is also some of this expansion of the action of the “snipping tool” on a thematic level when the novel talks about the tendency of young writers to write increasingly short and fragmented novels. So much so that the editor within the novel suggests that it is probably just a matter of time before one of them turns in a completely blank manuscript for publication.

The novel *Algunas ideas buenísimas que el mundo se va a perder* represents perhaps one of the most snippit-laden examples precisely because of its explicitly interneticized structure and form. That is to say, the sense of the fragmentary and the presence of snippits are omnipresent because what constitutes the novel is a compilation of internet snippits ranging from Tweets to emails to Google searches to Wikipedia results to blogs. With almost every turn of the page we are presented with the friction that is caused by converging yet opposing tendencies to find meaning and literary importance in the snippits while at the same time realizing that those efforts are probably futile because the novel makes no pretension to satisfy them. Instead, it merely reproduces all of these internet snippits for what they are: random ideas and musings, raw and individualized digital material to be shared and experienced momentarily, often absent of context or some larger sense of meaning. The experience of this novel, then, becomes the site of the birth of a new kind of reader who with time, moves away from the friction of converging tendencies and initial frustration when the academic reading approach no longer fully applies, to find a certain kind of pleasure in this experience. It is a pleasure marked by the instantaneousness of the ideas and the individual expression of representing both literary and digital snippits in the space of a book. Pleasure is to be had in the process, the search and not so much the destination or some ultimate meaning.

Something similar happens in the novel *Nocilla Dream*, albeit on a more implicit level, in the sense that in addition to being composed of short vignettes (another form of the snippit) that present a variety of scientific musings along with undeveloped storylines about seemingly random, nondescript individuals from more marginal walks of life, it is also imbued with literary booby-traps (the symbol of a lone poplar tree in the middle of

the desert with shoes hanging from it, a recurring individual or number, a website, a reference to Borges, a lost shoe, a scientific musing that gives momentary meaning to the organized disorder of the novel, etc.) that pique our interest as readers for their potential to provide context or link disconnected elements but don't lead us anywhere except back to the interplay of snippets that no longer pretend to nor yearn to be part of a presupposed whole.

The point that I have tried to make here is that there is something incredibly destabilizing yet interesting going on in these novels that I think is reflective of the intertwining of internet culture, digital material and the literary. That is to say, on one side of the equation there are a variety of new social and cultural practices, like sharing, posting, borrowing, downloading, Tweeting, reTweeting and texting engendered by the Internet. These are coupled with all of the digital material, mostly snippets and fragments (photos, texts, Tweets, blogs, messages, bits and bytes²⁴) that these practices exchange instantaneously on a very regular basis. The destabilizing and interesting part happens when all of those processes and products are introduced into the realm of the literary, and in particular that of print culture, because that collision of cultures, between posting/texting/Tweeting and writing, between downloading/sharing/reTweeting and printing, between blogger/Tweeter/poster and author, between copyleft and copyright, is what gives rise to a literary tension in these novels that points toward a challenge to both

²⁴ According to the website Lifewire, the terms “bits” and “bytes” in computer networking refer to “standard units of digital data transmitted over network connections. There are 8 bits for every 1 byte.” Computers use bits (short for *binary digits*) to create information in digital form. A computer bit then is a binary value. When represented as a number, bits can have a value of either 1 (one) or 0 (zero). A byte is simply a fixed-length sequence of bits. Modern computers organize data into bytes to increase the data processing efficiency of network equipment, disks, and memory.

the nature of the literary but also authorship, reading and writing as well, topics that will be explored in subsequent chapters. While it could be said that there has never been such an avid and abundant amount of readers and writers as there are right now because of the omnipresence of mobile devices, the reading and writing that is taking place is markedly different because the letters and content that are being exchanged are mostly fragmented, decontextualized and highly personalized. The “way we read” is changing and as a result it seems so too is the way the writers are writing. Gone are the grand narratives and the widely shared cultural artifacts that at one time supposedly defined a generation and in their place there are only isolated pockets and snippets of things that connect us. There is a sense that the experience of the individual has become ultra-personalized and customized, the result of the constant exchange of digital material predominantly in the form of fragments or snippets.

What I will argue in the next chapter but want to point toward here is that as text, in general, has become more and more individualized and fragmented, it loses its context and any connection to a source or authorship and while that is widespread on social media it creates tension when that same practice is introduced into print culture where it collides with the pillars of authorship and copyright. So, what was shown in the cases of the two truly interneticized novels were instances where all of that cultural baggage from internet culture, expressed most saliently in the form of the snippet, created a textual experience in which certain images or phrases or references continuously directed the reader toward the world-wide-web, to something outside or behind the text.

Maybe this “literary exponentiality” has always already been present since the beginning for certain readers (intertextuality) but I think the technology of today has

created a new sensitivity to what lies behind the word or sentence, the possibility that something is just a piece or snippet of something larger which in turn is just a piece of something even larger and so on. But the interesting part of this is that even with that perceived sensitivity to what lies behind a meme or hyperlinked text, everything now is so individualized, so customized, so tailored to each individual's interests and fancies that any sense of origin or authority seems to have been pushed aside in favor of sharing/borrowing/sampling. What I hope to present and argue in the next chapter is how the uber-fragmentation of the interneticized novel opens the door to the publication of increasingly smaller tidbits of information and ideas to reflect the individualized nature of the digital which in turn opens up an even bigger door to questions related to authorship and copyright as cultures of "sharing" and "downloading" and "borrowing" penetrate the rigid hierarchies of print culture.

CHAPTER 2: COPYRIGHT OR COPYLEFT: A CHALLENGE TO AUTHORSHIP

In February of 2011, a new book by the Spanish author and member of the so-called “Nocilla Generation” of Spanish writers, Agustín Fernández Mallo, appeared on the bookshelves with a title nothing short of polemical: *El hacedor (de Borges)*, ‘*Remake*’. It was controversial because it reproduced the title and some of the content of the original text published by Jorge Luis Borges some fifty years earlier. For Fernández Mallo the homage to Borges was clear and evident. But for Borges’ widow and administrator of his authorial rights, María Kodama, it was nothing short of an egregious breach of copyright law. That summer her lawyers contacted the Spanish publisher Alfaguara and shortly after they had reached a confidential agreement that would remove the text from bookstores (one copy is currently on sale at Amazon on the second hand market for \$858). An interesting aside that added a bit more intrigue and perplexity to this controversy was the realization that while Kodama’s lawyers were settling the final stipulations of their agreement with the editorial Alfaguara, she was in Madrid to present the limited edition (only 100 copies) of a work called *Mi amigo Don Quijote* (Del Centro Editores). The book, the result of a transcript from a conference that Borges delivered in 1968, was recently discovered in the University of Texas at Austin by scholar Julio Ortega and up until then had remained partially unedited.

In another separate instance and only loosely related to the Nocilla Generation of writers, there is another event that points toward some authorial turbulence. In early 2013 Spanish newspapers were captivated by a scandal in which Irene Zoe Alameda, the wife of the head of a Spanish Socialist Party think tank, created the persona of an American

writer named Amy Martin, complete with a fake photo that she lifted from the web. She did this in order to write articles under that name and bank up to \$3000 euros for each, an incredible sum of money for a publicly funded think tank in Spain. The collaboration between them lasted the better part of two years during which articles by “Amy Martin” appeared alongside other notable figures (Bill Clinton, Al Gore) in anthologies of essays related to progressive themes. It didn’t seem to make sense given the profile of Alameda: a published author of novels like *Sueños itinerantes* (2004); film producer; director of the Cervantes Institute in Stockholm from 2009-2010; and a PhD in Comparative Literature from Columbia University. When the “true” identity of Amy Martin was discovered, the Spanish press had a field day with it. Their obsession with rooting out the “real” author of the texts (given their political overtones), seems to echo Foucault’s idea of the “author-function” in the sense that historically speaking the move to attach an author to a specific work had its roots in being able to hold someone accountable (in this case the author) for subversive or heretic material (125).

A similar event took place in 2013 and included both some well-known authors like J.K. Rowling as well as some lesser-known authors. A popular British writer is discovered to be the author of an obscure mystery novel. Immigration officials grant asylum to an individual once they were able to verify that he did in fact write anonymous articles critical of his native country. And then a man is convicted of murder when police are able to connect the writings left at the scene with their author. What do each of these seemingly disparate cases have in common? Forensic linguistics, an investigative technique that aids experts in determining authors by identifying idiosyncrasies in a writer’s style. And why is this important to the case of J. K. Rowling? It turns out that the

new computer technology of “forensic linguistics” was used to out J. K. Rowling as the writer of *The Cuckoo’s Calling* (2013), a crime novel that she published under the pseudonym Robert Galbraith. To realize this discovery, an investigator ran a series of tests that examined sequences of adjacent words and characters while another tallied the most common words and identified a preference for long or short words. This in turn produced what is known as a “linguistic fingerprint” or hard data on the author’s stylistic idiosyncrasies. In the case of Rowling, that fingerprint was then compared to other books by her as well as a control group by other authors. In the end, the investigator believed it was a match and after consulting an Oxford linguist and receiving another concurring opinion, the investigator confronted Rowling who ended up confessing. Perhaps even more interesting yet is the fact that an investigative analysis of this kind, one that used to take months if not years to realize, was completed in about half an hour on a computer.

In addition to this authorial discovery is another element of intrigue as it relates to authorship because with her previously bestselling Harry Potter series she was asked to alter her name (Joanne Rowling) to something more masculine so that the books would sell better to young males. In addition to once again showing the preoccupation with connecting a book to a particular author and finding the actual people behind the name of the “author,” this case also seems to reflect the ideas of Craig Owens in his 1983 essay “The Discourse of Others: Feminists and Postmodernism.” In this essay, Owens argues that despite the significant efforts on the part of feminist criticism and the destabilization of binary oppositions and hierarchies made possible by postmodernity, the patriarchal hold and tendency continue to manifest themselves, especially when particular interests both economic and authoritative are at stake. While the use of a pseudonym is certainly

nothing new, especially for women who have a long history and a host of reasons for using them, the supposed “scandals” that occupied the pages of news outlets across Spain and Britain suggest that the site of the “author” is still haunted by the phantasmagorical figure supposedly killed off by Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault more than forty years ago. Barthes recognized in 1967 something that is still prevalent in the press: that “the author still reigns in histories of literatures, biographies of writers, interviews and magazines...” (1).

For Spanish writer and theorist Eloy Fernández Porta, on the other hand, we are living in a period in which our traditional understanding of artists and authors has given way to what he calls “*homo samplers*”. In his 2008 book *Homo Sampler: Tiempo y consumo en la Era Afterpop*, Fernández Porta argues that we are living in a period called “RealTime” or “sampled Time” in which the work of art is a subjective work that seeks to interfere with the sense of time marked by and promulgated by technology (like the one organized by Swatch watches). In this new experience of time “the peasant has been substituted with the “Homo Sampler” (160). That is, an individual that resists the official, conventional use of Time by remixing, manipulating and undoing it, like the musical DJs in their sessions in which they appropriate music from all different genres and times only to alter it into their own creation. But they are not mere plagiarizers because what a “sampler” makes his or her own is not some distant fragment, but “an instant that had been taken away from them” (161). For Fernández Porta, the Foucaultian sense of the “the death of the author” has manifested itself metaphorically in the artistic praxis in which theories about appropriation and plagiarism have converted the “author” into a “sampler of texts and images” (102).

The idea of a reconsideration of time and how it relates to the understanding of originality and artistic creations is also something taken up by Agustín Fernández Mallo in his 2009 extended essay called *Postpoética: Hacia un nuevo paradigma*. In it, and in very general terms, he declares that Spanish poetry in particular has fallen behind and not kept up with the times, especially as it relates to the post-postmodern world of the sciences and technology. He calls for a sort of uprising or call to action on the part of poets to awaken poetry from its slumber by engaging with the here and now of the sciences, by treating poetry like a laboratory to experiment in. And about midway through the book Fernández Mallo identifies “appropriation” as an important tool in that process.

What happens, though, when poets, or what he refers to as “post-poets,” take material from other sources (from other poetry for example or from external sources like advertising or science) and introduce it into their own creations is that the new creation is seen as somewhat inferior or bastardized. This lack of legitimization of appropriation owes itself, according to Fernández Mallo, to:

[...] a classic view, not of literature though, but rather, as we mentioned earlier, of the very concept of time. In effect, the presumption of the existence of certain typologies of poems, platonically pure and ideal, of canonical forms, which are in turn copied or violated by the poet in order to create a new poem, refer back to a consciousness of time that is not relative but lineal. (89)

For Fernández Mallo, in order to make “appropriation” an acceptable, normalized process it is necessary to imagine a different “world system,” much like physicists do in the laboratory when they study atomic activity, in which time and space are relative. In this

new world system of relativity, “no temporal direction is privileged, there is no forward or backward, nor a before or after. Instead, there is a system of two or more poetic artefacts that exchange literary flows while they rotate around each other” (90). What is more, this idea of relative time is not some radical theory from a mad scientist/artist but instead, according to Fernández Mallo, the concept of time that actually defines our current postmodern condition and even opens the door to the possibility that since the inception of literature that postmodern condition has existed.

Also in 2009 another Spanish author, Alberto Olmos, published a novel lacking the polemic flair of Fernández Mallo or Irene Zoe Alameda and the significant critical attention received by Fernández Porta but that manifests a thought provoking commentary on authorship. In his novel *Algunas ideas buenisimas que el mundo se va a perder* (2009) Olmos includes at the end of his novel a “nota del editor y créditos” (editor’s notes and credits) that seems to cast a curious light over the entire novel precisely because the material reproduced in the novel was the product of random searches on the internet published by other individuals and not by Olmos the supposed author. While this instance is not as egregious an affront to authorship/copyright as the first example, it is worth highlighting because it raises some interesting and serious questions about literary production in the digital age in general and digital copyrights in particular. This forces the question (and this idea will get more attention later on in this chapter), what happens when digital material like Tweets, blogs, emails, search results, etc. find their way into the confines of the book? What does the presence of the vast, seemingly endless network known as the world-wide-web mean for literature as a whole

and authors in particular? Is the world-wide-web just an infinite cloud of information free to be appropriated, shared and reproduced by any individual?

According to a March 20, 2017 article by David Bauder²⁵ of The Associated Press, the trustworthiness of the information that is exchanged on the web and social media is not dependent upon the original source so. A study by the Media Insight Project, a collaboration between The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research and the American Press Institute, found that in the exchange of information on social media, the credibility of an article or posting was not determined by the original source (author) but rather by the individual that shared the information. In other words, the study points toward an interesting yet unsettling tendency in the digital universe in which longstanding pillars of supposed credibility like journalism, news based on facts, authorship and copyright are being replaced by opinions, fake news, sharers, samplers and something perhaps more along the lines of copyleft.

The notion of copyleft, a clear play on the word copyright, is a particularly interesting concept because while it is still a form of licensing software or artistic artifacts, it is a reaction against the rigidity of copyright. Under the practice of copyleft (created in 1984 by Richard Stallman and Eben Moglen with a clear connection to informatics and software), an author may stipulate that every person who receives a copy of the software or artistic artifact is allowed to reproduce, share, adapt or distribute the work so long as all resulting copies or adaptations are also bound by the same agreement.

²⁵ See article on website accessed March 27, 2017: http://finance.yahoo.com/news/sharers-rather-authors-more-important-social-media-120038778.html?soc_src=social-sh&soc_trk=ma.

With time, the practice of copyleft began to break from its origins in informational technology and software to include artistic, cultural and literary artefacts. This in turn gave rise to the creation of a new license called “Creative Commons,” founded by Lawrence Lessig in 2002. The “Creative Common” license was born out of the position that no work is absolutely original; instead it always takes elements from its surroundings or the common history of a society (from things like folklore, stories, jokes and regional dances) (de la Cueva, 115). To date more than 400 million artifacts have been licensed under this umbrella worldwide.

But a “Creative Commons” license is not a softened or watered down version of a copyleft license for it does not simply give something away. On the contrary, what each of these licenses seeks to do is challenge the copyright status quo by making these artifacts readily accessible and shareable on the internet. At the same time though just because they are accessible on the web does not necessarily mean they are free and have no potential revenue stream. The premise is that earnings come from the impact of the book and that impact is directly tied to the number of individuals with access to the book, either in print version or via the web. Which is why in many instances a pdf file of a book will be uploaded online and accessible to everyone the same day that the book hits the bookshelves in printed form.

One of the more recognized instances of this practice occurred in 2011 when, three days before the passage of the Spanish law called “La Ley Sinde,” (which created a new intellectual property commission designed to review requests from copyright holders about websites that they claim infringe upon their copyright), the author Juan Gómez-Jurado posted his newest best-seller novel *Espía de dios* online but never told his

publisher. Not only that, he uploaded his novel under the initiative of “one book, one euro” with the donations going to a charity. For defenders of copyleft and “Creative Commons” licenses the event was nothing short of a success as the novel surpassed \$65,000 euros in earnings after only a few days. But these licenses are not without their opponents. For Antonio María-Avila, director of the FGEE (Federación de Gremios de Editores de España), a group representing more than 800 publishers, these kinds of licenses are nothing less than suicide for an author: “The author can do whatever he or she wants. If what they want to do is throw themselves onto the internet and not reap the benefits of their work, that is their problem. What is clear is that from an economic standpoint there is no benefit at all” (1).

The relationship of copyleft with Spanish law is a particularly notable and interesting one because, according to Javier de la Cueva in his article “Introducción al copyleft: una perspectiva de su recepción en España” published in 2007, Spain has the highest number of copyleft licenses in the world. For de la Cueva, the “Copyleft Movement” is gaining traction in Spain, in particular with some universities (Universidad de Extremadura) and periodicals (*20 minutos*), because it is characterized by a decentralized nature whose existence and transmission lie in virtual communities whose host is the Internet (121). Licenses under the “Creative Commons” tag are growing and very popular as well. Despite their increasing popularity, however, neither of them addresses a perhaps more problematic practice in Spain, a topic that I want to wade into carefully and deliberately, which is internet piracy.

According to a March 30, 2010 article in the *Los Angeles Times* by Ben Fritz, Internet piracy is part of the Spanish culture and is so prevalent, especially with movies,

that studios are considering no longer selling DVDs in the country (2). Despite the fact that new laws are being passed to address some of these issues, namely the “Ley Sinde” mentioned above, it is still a challenge in a country where illegal Internet downloading and streaming become so entrenched in a culture that it’s a societal habit. If we look at the pressures being exerted by both of these forces, the copyleft/Creative Commons on the one hand and the high level of Internet piracy on the other, it points toward a cultural environment ripe for copyright boundaries to be challenged and broken. While none of the authors that we will analyze in this chapter have copyleft or “Creative Commons” licenses on their books, what I suggest is that some of the authorial flexibility inherent to these licenses (not to mention the high degree of piracy found on the internet), has created an environment in which the lines of copyright demarcation are blurred at best and outright ignored and overlooked at a minimum. I would argue that licenses like copyleft and “Creative Commons” only legitimize the cultural shift toward a “sharing” society, one born out of Internet practices, and that while they do seek to set up some sort of framework for artistic and intellectual property rights, the spirit of sharing, posting, reposting, downloading, hosting and streaming will continue to challenge if not erode the pillars of copyright law as they have been understood and recognized for years.

The purpose of this collection of observations has been to suggest that the nature of authorship as it has been understood is undergoing a change. I deem that the novels (the classification “novel” is applied here in the spirit of it being the most adaptable of literary genres) by the authors of the so-called Nocilla Generation are an interesting site in which to explore some of those changes. In particular, I would argue that the concept of authorship as it relates to literature might be undergoing a change, a destabilization if

you will, of the mechanisms that have held sway over the sanctity of the author for so many centuries. As I alluded to throughout the previous chapter, I suggest that some of that destabilization is the result of the growth of the Internet. That in turn has given rise to what I call the techtual poetics/internetized text examples that I analyzed, which themselves were characterized by a preoccupation with small elements like the snippet. That is to say, it is my argument that because of the cultural practices ushered in by the growth of the Internet—practices with a preference for sharing, hosting, streaming, “resharing,” “reposting,” “retweeting” information in the form of the snippet, bits and torrents—coupled with the way in which the internetized texts combine elements of the digital with print culture, that they give us glimpses of the destabilization of authorship.

This is not happening just in literature. Musicians have been sampling music from other musicians for decades already, constantly pushing the boundaries of copyright infringement and artistic interpretations. Journalism as we know it has been superseded by the opinions of an editorial page and fake news by pseudo “authors” and “reporters” which has potentially undermined a presidential election not to mention a democracy. With the growth of the Internet and social media hundreds of millions of users are now “publishing” material in ways and quantities almost unimaginable a few decades ago.²⁶ In some sense, then, we have never had so many “authors” as we do now but in the digital universe, where the practice of “sharing” is an almost inherent characteristic, the notion of “authorship” and “copyright” are constantly being undermined and eroded. Tweets,

²⁶According to the online website “Worldometer,” on any given day more than 4.5 million posts are made to blogs across the blogosphere. According to a website “Internet live stats,” more than 500 million Tweets are sent every single day. According to the website “Zdnet,” more than 55 billion messages are sent every day on the Whatsapp platform.

blogs and postings are the new publications which in turn give rise to the collateral practices of retweeting, sharing and reposting. For Eloy Fernández Porta in his aforementioned book, some of this activity is the result of a new kind of individual, what he refers to as “homo sampler,” an artist who “samples” material from a variety of different sources in order to create something new but that still mentions his or her sources. The image that I am trying to paint is one in which everything around the book is operating within a destabilizing cultural practice of sharing and “re” posting/tweeting/making/writing that directly undermines the sacred pillars of authorship and copyright. It is probably just a matter of time before that line is blurred even more and I think that some of the works by this generation of Spanish authors offer an interesting glimpse into that change.

The idea that authorship and the author and even literature are under siege is not necessarily a novel one today, given that this is just one more in a long tide of attacks that have been levied against them by critics and digital media pundits. What I think makes these novels particularly interesting in this debate, however, is the way in which they actually manifest and challenge some of the theoretical declarations advanced by critics who see the death of the author and literature as we know it as imminent. Initially it was Nietzsche with the “death of God” and then came Barthes with the “death of the author” and over the last several years there are renewed proclamations about the “death of the novel,” the “death of literature” and the “death of the book.”²⁷ In the case of Roland Barthes, he declares that “writing is the destruction of every voice, of every point of

²⁷ See the articles by Andrew Gallix, Will Self, Joel Breuklander and Sam Sacks. See the books by Alvin Kernan and Jose Ortega y Gasset and the essay by John Barth.

origin...the author enters into his own death” once the process of writing begins (1). He concludes by stating that “the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author” (3).

Michel Foucault borrows this idea of the “death of the author” and develops it further. Foucault declares the death of the author as a way to say that the author is decentered, shown to be only a part of the structure, a subject position and not the center, which directly undermines the humanist view that placed the author as the source and origin of the texts. By declaring the death of the author, Foucault is “deconstructing” the idea that the author is the origin of something original, and replacing it with the idea that the “author,” just like the “reader,” is the product or function of writing, of the text. But Foucault recognizes that once we throw the idea of “author” as individual creator into question, what do we mean by “work?” The decision on what to exclude or include depends on what Foucault calls the “author-function.” The consequences of the “author-function” are that the author’s name characterizes a particular manner of existence of discourse; the texts attributed to an author are given more status, more attention, and more cultural value than texts which have no author or were not considered a “work.” There are aspects of this at work in the case of the Nocilla authors that I will analyze shortly in the sense that some of the material that they introduce into their novels would appear both random and perhaps even meaningless and insignificant in its digitally published form (Tweet, email, blog, etc.), but once it is reproduced within the confines of a book and attached to an author of a certain status then all of a sudden it gains interest and even credibility, even if only momentarily. It’s as if these writers still want a piece of the traditional authority or at least recognize its power despite populating their novels

with digital material that is still trying to figure out where and when certain authoritative limits lie.

Walter Benjamin in his 1934 essay “Author as Producer” takes a political position with the goal of reclaiming the means of production from fascism to refocus it on the struggle between capitalism and the proletariat. One interesting component in this process is how Benjamin gives special attention to technology (what he calls “technique”) as the means by which authors can overthrow the status quo, rethink the literary forms and genres, and focus their literary energies on those forms that will allow for change. In other words, Benjamin calls for an author-producer who can harness the technologies of the day, like Brecht in his epic theater (and like I believe the Nocilla writers are attempting to do), to force the public to “think,” to participate as a producer instead of a distant, contemplative observer or reader.

To use the distinctions put forth by Roland Barthes in his book *S/Z* (1970) the change in authorship would represent a move away from “readerly texts” to “writerly texts” that challenge the reader to play an active role in the construction of meaning. Sixty years later, Hal Foster intentionally evokes the Benjamin essay with his own “The Artist as Ethnographer” in which he identifies a contemporary tendency, what he calls “an ethnographic turn,” of artists pretending to be anthropologists and using their methodologies as a way to subvert the dominant culture by supposedly speaking for and representing the “other.” He is critical of the artist that works inside and outside the institution because “few principles of the ethnographic participant-observer are observed, let alone critiqued, and only limited engagement of the community is effected” (196). The real concern for Foster though, is the way in which the authority of the artists goes

unquestioned in their conversion of materials and experiences of local life into an anthropological exhibit. In other words, they bring back into the fold the very notions of authenticity, authority and originality that postmodernist criticism had already discarded.

As I mentioned in the introduction, some of the Nocilla writers' novels, especially those of Agustín Fernández Mallo and Alberto Olmos in particular, challenge our understanding of authorship and address the problem of the "death of the author" and/or the "death of literature" via an experimental form highly influenced by new technologies made possible by the Internet. The first chapter of this project looked more closely at the trajectory that certain texts had taken in their move toward a truly "internetized text" and two of them, *El blog del Inquisidor* and *Alabanza*, called our attention because of the way in which they were inspired by technology and played that influence out more thematically than anything else. But each of those works also confronts concerns about authorship and the death of literature as well, albeit once again on a more thematic level. In the case of *El blog del Inquisidor* this plays out in the way that the author in the "aviso preliminar" declares that he/she did not really write what we are about to read because it was found on the Internet and much of it translated.

But just as it was with its relationship to the idea of an internetized text so too it is with the way it talks about authorship in the sense that while it does point to the Internet as a source for its material, the overtones of the *Quijote* coupled with the literariness of its composition make it difficult to truly call it a destabilizing text like the ones that I will analyze shortly. That is to say, while there is an element of "finding and borrowing something from the Internet" in *El blog del Inquisidor*, which could raise some concerns about authorship, the way in which that element is employed comes

across more as a literary trope designed to create a sense of mystery than a real assault on authorship. In the case of *Alabanza*, it too points toward a concern with both authorship and literature that plays itself out within the novel via the protagonist and a case of writer's block, but also thematically in the sense that the novel is situated in a moment in the near future when literature has disappeared completely from society. If we were to look at them through the lens outlined by Kathleen Fitzpatrick in her book *The Anxiety of Obsolescence* (2006), these works could be seen as examples of texts that call upon the anxieties about authorship and the future of the novel as a source of literary inspiration. That is to say, in addition to on the one hand advocating for an openness to and interaction with the processes that are supposedly working to undermine the future of the book, Fitzpatrick also suggests that all of the worries about the death of the novel are somewhat overblown and exaggerated because what they are really masking is an anxiety on the part of critics and writers in the face of a changing media landscape in the late twentieth century in general and other deeper social preoccupations specific to the United States (3). So, texts like the ones mentioned here actually owe their existence and inspiration to anxieties that are at the same time supposedly threatening their very existence. In the transition to other novels, though, I hope to show how they distance themselves from these anxieties and really start to push the limits of our understanding of authorship.

The first novel that will be analyzed is *Nocilla Dream*, the first book in the *Nocilla* trilogy by Agustín Fernández Mallo published in 2007 (the other two are *Nocilla Experience* 2008 and *Nocilla Lab* 2010). In an attempt to accentuate the experimental nature of this text and how it addresses the problem of the "death of the author" and

authorship in general, I would like to take perhaps an unusual and unexpected approach by reflecting on a literary text of the past (*Guzmán del Alfarache* (1599) representative of many of them) as a distant point of comparison because of the way in which its construction exaggerates an “authorial presence.” As we open the cover of this text from the Spanish Golden Age, we find a series of elements that revolve around the author: a decorative introductory page with the title and author of the book, an approbation from a third party as to the quality of the text and the character of its author, a dedication of some kind on behalf of the author, a “*captatio benevolentiae*” on the part of the author, a letter to the reader from the author, an image of the author and then a prologue by the author. It really does seem to exemplify what Foucault points toward when he speaks of the “author-function” in that everything seems to be about highlighting the reputation and credibility of the author so as to give more prestige to what the reader is about to read.

In the case of *Nocilla Dream*, it is something entirely different for we only find an image of Fernández Mallo (supposedly in Las Vegas) and a prologue about the rhizome by Juan Bonilla. That’s it. I highlight this rather superficial aspect because I think it points toward a “shedding” or at least diminished/downplayed authorial presence, in the sense of author as both source of originality and giver of credibility, over the course of centuries of writing and sets the stage for this particular novel before one even enters into the textual body of the work.

Once inside the novel, the experience of an “authorless” literary environment is accentuated even more and could be described as absolute solitude or abandonment because all the elements to which we cling as readers for orientation (narrator, point of

view, context, plot, references, significance of details) are either never there or disappear with every turn of the page.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the book is made up of 113 vignettes that occupy on average no more than a page. In addition to the elements explored in the initial chapter of this dissertation, the textual environment of the novel is one that is overpopulated with random musings that take numbers as their point of departure: references to distances from cities in km, references to the longitude of highways, references to the number of shoes or trees, musings about the number of items that hotels lose and guests forget each year, scientific musings about the calculating capacities of computers or the binary system, musings about number systems and patterns used to decipher code, quantities that people drink, times when people go to sleep or get up, percentages to reflect certain social changes or societal problems. The omnipresence of numbers not only accentuates the sense of it being an interneticized text (as mentioned earlier, computers work with “0’s” and “1’s” and so much of the web experience is marked by numbers, be it number of users, number of “likes”, or number of “searches”) but it also orientates the text and the reader to adopt a mindset that repeatedly ponders both information and the scientific which in turn, as I will suggest shortly, helps to undermine the presence of the author and authorship. For Fernández Mallo, this omnipresence of scientific musings is precisely what a “postpoetic” text is supposed to have if it seeks to be a contemporary text. Under this theory, a contemporary text should be like a laboratory in which it experiments with and interacts with science as a way to produce something new, as a way to bring new relevancy to the poetic and literary.

What calls my attention about the form of this text are two aspects: on the one hand, the way in which both scientific musings and the development of a story coexist and on the other hand, the way in which the plurality of different writings are collapsed together into an “author-less” space. Early on in his essay, Foucault talks about how, historically speaking, the relationship between a text and an author has changed. In the Middle Ages, literature did not require an author because the age and tradition of the text guaranteed its authority, but scientific publications did in fact need an author to provide their authority. Then, Foucault says, a shift occurred: the literary texts created a tyrannical bond with their authors while scientific publications gave theirs up and simply became part of an established, provable collective body of information. The coexistence of scientific and literary material in *Nocilla Dream*, with some being attributed to authors and others not, seems to embody the historical perspective offered by Foucault and represents a technique that the text uses to address the problematic relationship between text and author.

As the reader makes his or her way through the field of snippets/vignettes, he or she is repeatedly confronted with scientific musings and short narratives about seemingly random individuals. Each turn of the page presents a technological observation attributed to a verifiable individual or a documentary style observation that has no reference to a narrative that feels like it may have been lifted from somewhere else, and in that progression the reader becomes increasingly desensitized to a search for stability, meaning or authority. As readers, we begin to question whether or not it even matters who wrote what or which ideas belong to whom. In fact, in the “créditos” section that appears at the end of the novel, it states that what has been read is a “docuficción”:

Although, as we know, everything is made up of fiction, some stories and characters have been extracted directly from that ‘collective fiction’ that we commonly call ‘reality.’ The rest, from that other ‘personal fiction’ that we tend to denominate ‘imagination.’ Therefore, the reader will have found real and public biographies that veered off course from the original, and fictitious biographies that ended up on the course of real ones, in that way forming the ‘docufiction’ that has come to form *Nocilla Dream*. (220)

In other words, the reader’s experience is impacted by this coexistence in such a way that we are encouraged to “think,” in the sense described by Walter Benjamin, about the nature of the relationship between text and author. What that “thinking” points toward is not only a decentering of the author figure, but perhaps something even more startling and provocative: absolute indifference to authority/authorship.

The tension caused by the coexistence of science and literature is further accentuated by the sheer randomness and fragmentation of the text. As one reads through the fragmented sections of the novel, there are “narrative booby traps” that entice the reader to pay attention to them (because reading has taught us to pay attention to them), but those efforts are frustrated because they lead to nowhere. Any attempt at finding “meaning” or “stability” in this author-less world is continuously frustrated because the elements that used to stabilize the text are gone (Author-God) and so too are the ones that could substitute that absence (like details that explain an event or fragments that reconnect with the whole). The result is a continuously deferred meaning. The instant that the reader stumbles onto stable textual ground or ties together enough bits and pieces to get some sense of “meaning” he is immediately pointed to yet another possibility (which

is probably the objective of the text: it's not about meaning but the problematic and playful search for it).

Perhaps the best example of this is the role played by the lone poplar tree in the desert with shoes hanging from it. Its recurring appearance in the text is too tempting to not warrant an interpretation in hopes of it tying together in some way the randomness of the vignettes. What happens, though, is that the reader experiences an endlessly deferred and frustrated sense of meaning because with each new vignette that mentions the lone poplar tree comes another explanation or “narrative booby trap” to nowhere.²⁸ The naïve nostalgia for a reconnection with the whole or a context for the fragments or even an understanding of the significance of the details is completely frustrated. This is a text of solitude or perhaps more accurately a text of texts. That is to say, I think this structure is closely aligned with what Barthes is talking about when “Author-God” can no longer provide any meaning or order, the text becomes “a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture [...] the writer can only imitate a gesture that is always anterior, never original” (Barthes, 2). And it is in this multi-dimensional space that we see the emergence of a new kind of reading experience that an academic reader might find frustrating but for a “wreader” it might be pleasurable. This sense of pleasure is derived from the recreation of the digital world (surfing the internet,

²⁸ At first it is suggested that the lone poplar with shoes was the result of a couple that just happened to seek shelter under its canopy, had an argument and in the heat of the moment someone threw the shoes up there. But in another vignette we read about a lone shoe that falls out of a moving car and is picked up by a man walking through the desert who is able to couple it with another missing shoe to form a pair. The text implies that he is responsible for putting them in the tree but does not explicitly state it. As the book progresses, we are offered more explanations but never left with a stable, comprehensive understanding; only multiple ones, repeatedly deferred to another.

texting, blogging, etc.) which in itself is a supposedly pleasurable experience (albeit a rather superficial one that often involves passively consuming random information for the sake of passing time).

This idea of a text made up of a variety of writings and quotations drawn from other sources manifests itself in a similar and more accentuated way in another book by Fernández Mallo, *Nocilla Experience*, the second book in the Nocilla trilogy. Published in 2008, three years after the appearance of the first novel of the trilogy, *Nocilla Dream*, this text has a similar structure in that it is made up of 112 numbered vignettes that are a calaidescope of short narratives, scientific musings and random ideas attributed to other sources. Like *Nocilla Dream*, superficially very little attention is given to the author as it provides a brief biographical snippet at the beginning and an invitation at the end of the book to visit the author's blog site. What calls my attention to this novel in particular are three things: the significant number of vignettes attributed to other sources and its effect on the text, a curious connection along the lines of a "literary déjà vu" between certain vignettes, and finally the content of an email transcript included at the end of the book in the "aclaraciones y créditos" section.

Of the 112 vignettes that make up the novel, 29 are specifically attributed to someone else. To give the reader an idea of what this looks like I have included below an example of one of the shorter vignettes in the text and to whom it is attributed.

¿Aún eres punk?: Eso creo, sí.

Entrevista a Bobby Gillespie, cantante y letrista

de Primal Scream, *El pop después del fin del pop*,

In addition, of the 25 unnumbered vignettes in the epilogue, 14 of them are attributed to another source. As a point of comparison, in the first novel, *Nocilla Dream*, 21 of the 113 vignettes were attributed to someone else. For the sake of clarification, it is important to note that these are explicit, at-the-end-of-the-vignette references to another source like in the example above. This is highlighted because the number of attributed sources in *Nocilla Dream* is probably higher if we were to take into consideration those that are based on someone else's ideas but are not specifically referenced in the vignette and only alluded to in the "aclaraciones y créditos" section at the end. Not to mention the "perceived" resonances that certain stories or musings might have with another source: the curious interplay of the "collective and personal fictions" that the author references in *Nocilla Dream*. What happens to the reading experience when all of this is brought together is, I would argue, very similar to the reading experience online (in particular on main search engine pages like Yahoo or MSN) and how that experience seems to challenge authorship and credibility. Let me explain.

If you have ever surfed the web and spent a significant amount of time on the Yahoo or MSN homepage for example, it would become immediately clear that getting access to information is not as simple as scrolling and clicking. That is because in the digital landscape, real estate is valuable, which has led to the growth of increasingly more creative and even deceptive methods to entice readers/viewers into clicking on the "sponsored" ads that are embedded within the pages instead of a valid link to an article or information. The reading experience on the web is a bit like a landmine field in that sense because in the pursuit for news and information those efforts are challenged and

disrupted by these “sponsored ads” that look just like a real, credible news source but are actually a marketing gimmick at best or a virus at worst. But the challenge of course is that these ads occupy and share the same space as the “real” news that we are after and I would argue that as that space has become more communal and the creative efforts of marketers that much more sophisticated, the line between “news” and “advertising,” between a “credible source” and a “fake source” has become more blurry. In that blurriness, I argue, it can be seen how the credibility of sources and authorship have been undermined and replaced with the growth of “fake news” and shared, authorless information.

A similar experience plays itself out in this novel. As the reader begins to flip his or her way through the pages and get accustomed to the structure of vignettes, the constant back and forth between random narratives, scientific musings and ideas attributed to other sources begins to stand out as a salient characteristic of the novel. By standing out I mean that at some point I would argue that the line between the attributed and non-attributed sources is blurred, the ideas expressed in both start to look a lot alike, and the result is the impression that perhaps it doesn’t really matter where the ideas came from or to whom they were attributed. It becomes another manifestation of the absence of the “Author-God” that Barthes talks about in that all we are left with are ideas and gestures that have always already been. The author can only imitate instead of creating an original.

The second component of the text that warrants interest is the way in which certain vignettes are repeated and expanded upon throughout the novel, in particular some that are attributed to other sources, the effect of which is to create a reading

experience marked by a feeling of “Didn’t I already see something like this earlier?” which in turn underscores the ways in which the text addresses the issue of authorship/copyright. There does not appear to be an established norm that addresses how much material from other sources an author can introduce into his or her own work but it does happen and, as the initial paragraph of this chapter points out, it can have consequences like a book being pulled from the shelves for copyright infringement.

In the case of *Nocilla Experience*, more than 25% is the result of ideas attributed to other sources. And amidst that 25% there are numerous instances when the text repeatedly references the same source. For example, interviews with musicians from the book *El pop después del fin del pop* are referenced nine times while word for word textual reproductions from the novel *Rayuela* are presented on three separate occasions. In another instance lines from the movie *Apocalypse Now* by Francis Ford Coppola are reproduced and not only is it referenced word for word five times, but each reproduction repeats the same lines and then adds some more to it, as if in doing so the novel flirted with the boundaries of how much material one is allowed to reproduce without it causing problems. When I say “problems” what I am referring to in the most egregious sense would be a case of plagiarism. But in order for that to happen a writer would essentially need to try and pass someone else’s work on as his or her own by reproducing ideas word for word without attributing them to the real source, which is not what happens here.

But it is what happened to 17-year-old German literary phenom Helene Hegemann in early 2010 when it was discovered that her first novel, “Axolotl Roadkill,” which was on Spiegel magazine’s best-sellers list and a finalist for a major book prize, had actually reproduced material from a lesser known novel, in one instance lifting an

entire page from that other novel with few if any changes. Critics attacked her for plagiarism. Yet at the same time her book was nominated as a finalist for a \$20,000 prize from the Leipzig Book Fair and much to the astonishment of critics, the jury actually knew about the plagiarism charges prior to nominating the book. In that sense, this case finds itself in a collision between two polarized perspectives: that of the old guard of the literary tradition in a country that holds in high esteem its literary figures of Goethe and Grass on the one hand and a generation of youth whose DJs and artists sample freely from everything available and even breathe new life and creativity into the old forms. Such was the response of Ms. Hegemann to the charges of plagiarism when she declared: “It’s mixing, not plagiarism. There’s no such thing as originality anyway. Just authenticity” (Kulish,1).

In the particular case of Fernández Mallo, something similar yet different plays itself out because in general all of the sources are mentioned and the material accurately attributed. But, their coexistence with the numerous other narratives about random, seemingly insignificant individuals makes the novel begin to look a bit like a crossword puzzle in which different vignettes echo each other and the reader annotates in the margins to which vignette one points or which one is a repeat of a previous one, etc. And once again the coexistence of both attributed and unattributed material, of ideas assumed to be verifiable and others that probably stem from the imagination, creates a textual environment in which the source or validity of some idea/book/happening doesn’t really matter, for in the digital world so many of those hierarchies have been abolished in favor of the free and open exchange of ideas. It’s not so much that the author doesn’t exist as much as they have taken a less visible role in the literary creation. In my estimation,

instead of leaving a void or crisis of meaning and interpretation, this has actually opened the text to a whole host of new and interesting interpretations precisely because it is breaking away from its creator. An “author” in the sense of an artist as the source of an original creation is replaced with an anthologist, an editor, or as I will propose in the next chapter, with a “re-wreader” who creates a “re-wreaderly” text.

The final element of the novel that warrants attention is the content of an email that appears at the end of the novel in the “Aclaraciones y créditos” section. In the email, a certain “David Torres” writes to “Agustín” to let him know that he has just finished reading his new novel *Nocilla Experience* and he noticed something serious about it: one of his characters employs almost the same ideas of another character from a different book by Bolaño. The entire translated email is reproduced here:

Hello Agustín. I returned from Cuba and I just read your *Nocilla* this afternoon. There is something serious though that I don't know if you did intentionally: the character that hangs up formulas with clothes pins. In the novel by Bolaño, *2666*, in the second part, some dude hangs mathematics books up by the clothes line to let the ideas air out. Your character uses almost the exact same terms. I imagine that you have not read the book but it is one of those coincidences that just blows, or like Borges would say, forms part of a secret order.

Hugs, David.

What draws the reader's attention to this particular segment is not only how it points to that possibility of some component of a text echoing that of a completely different text, supposedly unintentionally, but also the reference to Borges, a looming literary figure in

the Nocilla novels and one of the most significant literary points of reference for ideas related to both intertextuality and playfulness about authorship and literature in general.

When looked at through the lens of how this novel has been considered so far, it becomes clear that this is a text preoccupied with issues of authorship and literature that plays itself out via a technologically inspired structure, what I have referred to in other moments as a “techxtual poetics” or “internetized text” characterized by snippets, bytes and torrents which lead to an environment of fragmentation. The email at the end is perhaps the culmination of much of what I have been trying to examine in these last few pages in the sense that on the one hand I have addressed the specifically attributed sources (citations if you will) and the implications of their presence within a work (how they challenge our understanding of authorship and search for origins), but on the other hand I have on a few occasions alluded to the “perceived” sources or the “feeling that something was lifted from somewhere else” without being completely sure. The idea of specifically citing information or ideas or words from other texts and introducing them into one’s own is an interesting yet potentially polemical practice that I think warrants another example for analysis.

The distinction of a “citation/quote” as opposed to “appropriation” is key to this next analysis because the former specifically references its source while the latter may draw inspiration or ideas from a source for the purpose of constructing something new. One only needs to think about all of the chivalric citations in *Don Quijote* as a prime example of a writer appropriating the ideas of other texts. Even dialogues between texts (what is today understood as intertextuality) is an inherent part of every novel as suggested by Gérard Genette in his theoretical text *Palimpsests* (1982). In this book,

Genette points toward the presence of a citation within a text (in quotation marks and with the name of the author) as a basic and clear type of “transtextuality.” At the same time though, citations tend to appear in texts rather sporadically: either as an epigraph or within the text for a specific purpose to clarify or underscore an idea. In the case of Fernández Mallo, however, and another writer from this generation Vicente Luis Mora, the citation is applied rather unconventionally as it takes on a level of protagonism rarely seen in novels.

Take for example Vicente Luis Mora’s 2007 novel *Circular 07: Las afueras*, which contains around 150 direct citations spread out over 215 pages of text. The novel has a similar structure to the novels of Fernández Mallo in that it is composed of a variety of snippets (dialogues, monologues, emails, SMS, poems and essays) of all natures that create a fragmented literary landscape. The title of each vignette is a particular street, monument or space within the cities of Madrid and Cordoba. Mora describes his novel as an “ongoing novel” and an attempt to create what he calls a “total novel” in the sense that what he has tried to capture are the cities of Madrid and Córdoba and all their streets, people, languages and stories. But what becomes immediately clear is the structure of this novel, and especially the quotes, which call a lot of attention to themselves. So prominent is the citation here, however, that early on in the novel the supposed narrator plants a small note in parentheses: “In this book, the words in italics are mine” (33) as if to try and carve out a space of his or her own amidst a textual environment dominated by citations. It’s more, the writer employs the term “bibliomaquias” to refer to elements of the novel that were produced exclusively out of citations/quotes from other sources. In the “bibliomaquias” of Mora, authorship is not so much the product of some individual

genius or originality but more the product of selecting and combining elements from existing texts and sources (a re-wreader/postpoet/Homo Sampler for example). As Alice Pantel so accurately suggests in her article “When the Author Becomes a Hacker”:

The writer, in these cases, becomes a composer of texts and everything indicates that this citational aesthetic is similar to [...] the ancient activity that consisted of cutting and pasting pieces of paper, an activity that is facilitated today not only by the vast amount of texts available on the Internet, but also the technological functions of copy and paste that are available in almost every program for editing text. (62)

And one of the best examples of this approach to the construction of a novel is found in the vignette “Calle Troya” where eight citations from different sources are brought together. It spans three pages (154-156) in the book so it is difficult to reproduce it here in its entirety, but I think it is helpful if I provide a condensed, translated version of it here so as to be able to make a couple of additional observations:

Calle Troya

We have been reading a footnote with a microscope,
waiting for it to turn into a novel

Rem Koolhaas, *Junkspace*

1

Upon crossing the clearance of Silver hill one can see at the top the little hut of the security guard that is in charge of watching the route; [...]

Railroad Manual for Madrid to Aranjuez, by G. and A, Madrid, 1851

2

An absurd, brilliant and hungry Madrid

Valle-Inclán, *Luces de bohemia*, 1908

3

Madrid, 1937,
in the Angel square the women
sewed and sang with their children[...],

Octavio Paz, *Piedra de sol*

4

The brighteners, the swinging automobiles of fortune, move forward, between zigzagging,
to the honest and rickety taxis, chipped, asthmatic [...]

Camilo José Cela, *Café de artistas y otros cuentos*, 1969

5

In the second half of the decade of the 80s, the city of Madrid experienced a notable process
of economic growth, associated with the full integration of Spain into the European Union
[...]

Jordi Borja and Manuel Castells, *Local y Global*, 1997

6

These processes have consecrated a decisive change in the social structure of urban space
in Madrid marked by the difference between a bourgeoisie center and a proletariat
periphery [...]

Jesús Leal, “Cambio social y desigualdad espacial en el área metropolitana de
Madrid (1986-1991),” *Economía y sociedad*, núm. 10, 1994

7

Madrid is a wrinkled rug from a club [...]

Jesús Urcey, *La profesión de Judas*, 2000

The structure of the vignette is what immediately demands the reader’s attention as it
presents a fragmented series of quotes from different sources followed by the name of the
author. Upon closer inspection of the content though, the fragmented nature of the
vignette seems to have manifested itself in the content as well, given that the authors are

from different centuries, countries and disciplines. A reader might wonder: What does Rem Koolhaas (a contemporary Dutch architect) have to do with Octavio Paz (a Mexican poet and writer) and Jordi Borja (Spanish professor and urban geographer)?

Despite the initial impression of dissonance between the presented sources, a careful reading of the snippets reveals that what unifies them is the thematic: a preoccupation with the relationship between people and cities and Madrid in particular. But I don't believe that it is the thematic unification that makes this vignette of particular interest. Instead, I think it is its structure, its "citationality" (a work that is constructed out of citations from other sources), that warrants more attention precisely because of the way it plants questions around the nature of writing and authorship. Let me explain.

On a very fundamental level, a quote or citation represents an extraction of some element from its original source and its insertion into a new space. When that takes place, two interesting things happen. On the one hand, the quote retains some element of, some *aura* or *trace* of the source, the author's body of literary work in general and the cultural environment that made it possible. When it is reinserted into a new space, however, a change takes place because while it still retains traces of the *trace* (a Derridian observation no doubt), it also comes into contact with the material of the new space which alters it at the same time that the new space is altered by the presence of the quote. In the case of this vignette then, a quote from Octavio Paz carries with it both its literary and authorial auras/traces while at the same time it displaces that aura/trace as the quote becomes a part of a new context (in this case the literary world of Vicente Luis Mora) in which it dialogues with the other elements in the poem and novel.

For Jacques Derrida, in his essay “Signature Event Context,” (1977) writing in general, along with the citation and the accompanying signature of the author, are something of a “radical absence of presence” in that at the very moment of writing or signing the word or signature is destined for some other time and space and some other meaning. For structuralists/poststructuralists, generally speaking, the world is structured around binary oppositions that tend to privilege one term over another. Of particular importance to Derrida is the idea of logocentrism which has tended to favor the spoken word over the written word. What happens though, according to Derrida, is that neither the spoken nor the written word will ever be an exact, explicit representation of pure thought because in both instances the interlocutor/reader is the source of the creation of meaning and the interpretation of thought at that point is always already a second or third degree. And so in the case of writing, Derrida suggests that an author is always writing for someone who is not immediately present to him which in turn problematizes the endeavor of writing:

What holds for the receiver holds also, for the same reasons, for the sender or the producer. To write is to produce a mark that will constitute a sort of machine which is productive in turn, and which my future disappearance will not, in principle, hinder its functioning, offering things and itself to be read and to be rewritten [...]. For a writing to be a writing it must continue to ‘act’ and to be readable even when what is called the author of the writing no longer answers for what he has written, for what he seems to have signed [...] (8)

In that sense then, for Derrida, the written word is dependent upon its repeatability (what Derrida calls “iterability”) as the determining factor in its path to the reader, that

unknown, undeterminable individual responsible for decoding the message of the sender. In addition to writing, the signature is also another instance of an “absent presence” in the sense that it is an absence that the author has left others to see.

By definition, a written signature implies the actual or empirical non-presence of the signifier [...] Such is the enigmatic originality of every signature. In order for the tethering to the source to occur, what must be retained is the absolute singularity of a signature-event, and a signature-form: the pure reproducibility of a pure event. (20)

In the act of attaching a signature, one underscores the condition that it is done in the present but with the anticipation that in the moment of inscription the presence in that signature will no longer be present. In other words, a signature, much like a text, via its “iterability,” is constantly pointing away from itself, constantly deferring an attempt at meaning or source. And what I think the poem “Calle Troya” by Vicente Luis Mora demonstrates rather nicely is the peculiar nature of the written word and the signature, captured here in the use of the quote, in that a signature by its very nature must be recognizable and repeatable. But what happens is that the minute the signature becomes recognizable and repeatable, it opens itself up to being copied and displaced. In that sense, the copying and pasting of quotes to build a vignette in the novel by Vicente Luis Mora shows that while a signature is supposed to underscore the presence of an authentic original inscription, it at the same time becomes mutable into an inauthentic or new copy.

In identifying this peculiar nature of the signature, I think Derrida locates in the signature a possible mechanism for undermining or destabilizing the binary system that privileges one term over another. That is to say, the signature, propelled into a state of

constant deferment (at once an absolute single event yet at the same time repeatable) becomes a site in which the reader is invited to engage with the playful tension that arises out of disentangling the term from its traditional binary opposition. If it happens with the signature, it also begins to permeate the quotes and then the rest of the novel, at which point a reader becomes keenly aware that what a novel like this manifests in some small way is the infinite play of deconstruction in which privileged terms are untethered from the extremes in favor of a constant deferment of stable meaning and authentic sources. That in turn gives rise to a textual environment in which copies and quotes might momentarily enjoy the status of originals and sources only to be deferred once again in the infinite play of deconstruction.

In general, it is precisely this interplay between an abundance of citations and unattributed ones, those narratives, musings, descriptions and random vignettes like the previous example, that make novels like this an interesting site for the exploration of reading and writing in the digital age. The way in which they blend so many elements from so many different sources, especially the Internet, perhaps explains the reason they lure us toward the digital and the world-wide-web or at least to the idea that we think we have seen them before or that we could simply “find” them via a quick Google search. Whatever the case may be, the result of that interplay is that we get a glimpse into what the literature of the future may look like on the one hand but it also makes us begin to question the understanding of authorship and what if any consequences that change may have for bigger issues like copyright, something that we will analyze in more detail when we take a look at Fernández Mallo’s perhaps most controversial publication *El hacedor de Borges (Remake)*.

In the novel called *Algunas ideas buenísimas que el mundo se va a perder* by Alberto Olmos, there is perhaps an even more provocative challenge to the understanding of authorship and what constitutes a novel. As the reader begins to flip through its pages, he or she finds an incredibly diverse form that brings together the material from different blogs, visited websites, web searches, Tweets, spam emails supposedly from individuals of the third world, traditional emails, references to Wikipedia and instant messages. The reading experience might follow a thread in which for 3-5 pages the reader is immersed inside the blog written by “Eritrea” or “@jeeper,” then it presents an image of a search bar from Google with a word typed into it, only to then flip the page to find more than fifty entries from Twitter. The most concise way to describe this work is to call it a simulation of navigating the Internet.

What makes it so provocative, however, is the way in which it appears as though the text were composed by simply “copying” digital material directly from the Internet (which is not typically associated with literariness nor “authority” for that matter). That material is then reintroduced into the printed form where it is paginated and almost instantly acquires or at least opens itself up to the dynamics of print culture and the nature of literature. The tension that this “repackaging” causes becomes the site of “rethinking” because in its form it distances the author from her/his nostalgic role as creator or “Author-God” and points toward the idea of “scriptor” or compiler, which in turn points toward Foucault’s idea of the author as a purely textual construction.

The section at the end of the novel, “Nota del editor y créditos” actually speaks to some of these issues. A certain “Alberto Olmos” writes about how the widespread freedom of the Internet inspired him to want to write something that recollected a

plurality of voices, that reflected the experience of “websurfing” but without the weight and expectations of a true literary production. Instead, his objective was to write something full of honesty because as he so correctly recognizes, “The literary, often times, lies on the paper on which it is printed” (297). To realize that objective Olmos says that he tried to stray away from most sites that had a literary slant to them and instead sought out those that had a more documentary feel to them so as to make possible his goal of making a “literature that doesn’t know itself as such” (297). But this endeavor, according to Olmos, could not simply become that of the anthologist who compiles a host of documents and reproduces them within the confines of a book. No, to truly capture the experience of navigating the web the novel also had to include all of the more minor and mundane elements (spam emails, google searches, Tweets, etc), what Olmos refers to as a “confession of cookies” (298) that is essentially the digital footprint, if you will, of all the different websites that he visited. And so, what the reader learns via this editor’s note is that the text is the synthesis of extracts of blogs and the writer’s/anthologist’s digital footprint.

As the reader continues his or her way through editor’s note, it is revealed that Olmos would like to thank a group of collaborators not only for their authorial contributions but for their help in identifying interesting texts to include in the novel as well. Then, in the transition to the “créditos” section a single word at the top of the page calls the reader’s attention: *autores* (authors). Immediately below is a list of numerous individuals along with their biographical information, their screen name and their corresponding blog. This triggers an almost instant moment of reflection and meditation

on the meaning of authorship and how the book seems to destabilize if not completely undermine how one understands an author and a work.

What complicated things for me as a researcher even more, and of course much of this owes itself to the lens through which I read these interneticized texts (for not only do they constantly point the reader to a world outside the novel, specifically the world-wide-web, but that world is an incredibly fluid and unstable world defined as much by its sense of anonymity as its ephemerality), was the realization that as I attempted to visit the web addresses provided that would lead me to the blogspots, I received an error message that the website could not be found. Upon further investigation, it was revealed to me that the website that once hosted all of the blogspots referenced in the novel was no longer active and had been completely shut down, wiping away any trace of the blogs.

This I believe is the real challenge to some elements of literary theory because it disturbs the established understandings of forms and genres (the qualities by which we would consider it a “work” in the Foucaultian sense) and destabilizes our understanding of authorship. Can we even talk about an “author” when the material of more than 140 “voices” represented in the text via their blogs, Tweets and instant messages has simply been “copypasted” from the digital world into print culture? What do we make of the “nota del editor y créditos” section in which we see to whom some of the material has been attributed but then learn that much of that digital material has vanished forever?

I think it can be unsettling if not disturbing to some individuals (and publishers for that matter) to witness an invasion of “literary privacy” on the part of digital media. A novel like *Algunas ideas buenísimas que el mundo se va a perder*, one whose title embodies the very essence of a preoccupation with the ephemeral nature of the digital,

represents a challenge not only to print culture but to the ideological and economic interests that support it as an established institution precisely because it undermines the idea of “author” and provokes the reader to “think” by introducing digital media into the sacred literary space. But at the same time the intrusion of the digital onto the literary, as demonstrated by this novel, carries with it its own baggage as it relates to the ephemerality of the digital world along with a not-so-clearly defined sense of authorial rights. If not for the written word like that captured here the material of the blogspots is perhaps truly gone forever. On the other hand, in the playful world of literature one has to be open to the possibility that that material never existed digitally to begin with, nor the “authors” to whom it was attributed. One only needs to recall the fictitious citations that populate the short stories of Jorge Luis Borges as an example of how playful inclusions documenting fiction force a reader to meditate on the nature of authorship, not to mention origins. Or perhaps the preoccupation with authorship should not even matter anymore and we should let the “novels” be read and interpreted for their relationship to other “texts” and what they represent in the mind of the reader, independent of who the writer/author was. That seems akin to something that Borges would say and that Agustín Fernández Mallo probably had in mind when he published the next book that will be analyzed, perhaps one of the most controversial of those discussed in this chapter.

The publication of *El hacedor de Borges (Remake)* by Fernández Mallo should not come as much of a surprise given the latent significance that this particular text and Borges as an author have had in some of his other novels. In the first novel of the Nocilla trilogy, *Nocilla Dream*, for example, there are five separate vignettes dedicated to the narrative of a certain “Rudolfo,” a truck driver, who carries a copy of *El hacedor* by

Borges in his back pocket everywhere he goes. In *Nocilla Experience* there is a reference to Borges in the epilogue in which Borges is described as a source for the supposedly coincidental nature by which certain literary components manifest themselves almost identically in different texts (this was referenced earlier in the email that was transcribed in its entirety). That constant, lurking presence of an important literary figure coupled with the fragmented, interneticized nature of these novels seems like fertile ground for the birth of a novel with a polemical title such as *El hacedor de Borges (Remake)*. Polemical in the sense that not only does it reference the work of one of the most important literary figures of the twentieth century, but it also brings to mind two other important instances of authorial intrigue: the second part of *Don Quijote* and Borges's short story "Pierre Menard, autor del Quijote." In fact, it seems like an appropriate and interesting approach to this text if we were to comment on it through the lens of these two precursors.

Cervantes published the first part of *Don Quijote* in 1605. Over the course of the next eight years he worked on a 12-part novella collection called *Las novelas ejemplares* which was published in 1613. A forward to that collection introduced not only the new work, but also promised readers that there were plans for a continuation of the famed Gentleman of La Mancha book. But just one year after the publication of *Las novelas ejemplares* and the aforementioned forward, a volume of mysterious origin, published by a certain Alonso Fernández de Avellaneda, made its way onto the market. It probably shouldn't have come as a surprise either given the way in which Cervantes ended the first part by basically leaving the door open to another part with the words: "with hope for the third adventure of Don Quijote." Not only that, the inclusion of an ill-remembered verse

from *Orlando Furioso* opens the door to the possibility of a different author as well. Considered within the context of many of the ideas being discussed here, especially as they relate to the nature of authorship and the ideas of Derrida, it would be interesting to look at this “copy” or “fake edition” as perhaps more privileged than the version written shortly after by Cervantes. That is to say, in the destabilization of hierarchies instead of privileging the “original” it would in turn be momentarily the fake copy. It is believed that the Avellaneda version lit a fire under Cervantes who managed to pen a “real” Part II that was published the year after in 1615. In it, not only did he incorporate the Avellaneda scandal as a part of the literary construct, but he also criticized the fake edition for its poor quality and failure to completely understand the characters and story in the original.

More than three hundred years later, Borges published the short story “Pierre Menard, autor del *Quijote*,” a fictionalized literary review/essay about a fictionalized twentieth-century French writer whose “other” work was a “writing” of Cervantes’ novel *Don Quijote*. But Menard’s efforts were not focused on simply “rewriting” or “translating” the *Quijote*. Instead, he set out to master the original language and actually write the lines word for word in such a way that it would be the *Quijote* itself. Then some fifty years later Agustín Fernández Mallo publishes *El hacedor de Borges (Remake)*. In the original text, Borges brings together a sometimes fantastical compilation of stories, poems and reflections assumedly of his own creation. In the new text, Fernández Mallo reproduces the order and title of each of the Borges stories but changes the content (the majority of the content is changed but the prologue is almost identical save for a few very minor changes and there are moments where other texts from Borges are reproduced within the new content). In another instance, he appropriates Borges the author to convert

him into a character while at the same time offering himself to the same playfulness that is reflective of the story “Borges y yo”: “Borges vive, se deja vivir, para que yo pueda seguir tramando en él mi literatura.”

On other occasions Fernández Mallo takes ideas and phrases from the original but then imbues the text with a photograph, a digital image from Google maps, a link on the world-wide-web or YouTube or something as random and unexpected as a fragment of .002% of all the communications (including phone calls, texts, emails and emergency calls) that were received and emanated from the Twin Towers on Sept. 11, 2001 (made available interestingly enough by Wikileaks). In the subsequent chapter I plan to do a more in-depth analysis of a specific part of this novel, so for now I will focus my ideas on some more general characteristics about the novel and how they relate to its broader relationship with Borges’s original and Cervantes’s *Quijote*.

In the “Nota del autor” section at the end of this novel, the reader learns about the existence of something that no other book that has been analyzed here pointed toward and that is a digital version of the book. Actually, it is suggested that there is a digital version and an “enhanced digital version” to be read on devices that allow video, sound and internet streaming. The author includes brief summaries of what the videos on the “enhanced digital version” look like as well as a list of links to YouTube videos that accompany some of the other stories and poems (the links are active as of April 2018 but I am yet to be able to find or acquire either the digital or the enhanced version of the text). However it is viewed, to publish a “remake” of a well-known text by one of the most important literary figures in the world is sure to cause controversy in the publishing

world and renew debates and opinions about the nature of authorship and writing in the circles of literary critics.

What takes place in Borges' story about Pierre Menard is that the narrative is turned into a self-reflexive discourse in which the idea of "originality" is not the result of the plot but the way in which the statements are arranged and organized in the text. It could be said that perhaps Fernández Mallo had something similar in mind when he published *El hacedor de Borges (Remake)* for despite appropriating the title, the names and order of the sections, in addition to the prologue and some other elements from the original, the bulk of the content is different from that of the original. For Jara Calles in her dissertation *Literatura de las nuevas tecnologías* (2011), given the dynamics of the contemporary landscape along with the attitudes and competencies of the artists who choose to write within that context, instead of talking about the idea of "originality" we should think instead about "innovation" or "singular creativity" (72). And later on, she adds that one of the principal characteristics of the novels by Fernández Mallo is the way he appropriates material and repackages it according to his own interests: "That would be one of the common traits in the works of Agustín Fernández Mallo, where a constant appropriation of different materials takes place, in an attitude closely related to contemporary artistry, that would pass through the mechanisms of manufacturing and DIY culture mentioned earlier" (519).

In an interview sometime after his book was removed from bookstores because of the copyright infringement claim by Borges' widow, Fernández Mallo expressed his sense of surprise about the matter and points toward the difference between the legal and aesthetic side of things. In respect to the legal issue, Fernández Mallo admits to feeling

the anger of Kodama and never thought that it would be necessary to ask for permission to pay homage to someone who he sees as one of his maestros. The reason? For Fernández Mallo, Borges was one of the first authors to use the same technique of appropriation and rewriting.

In a separate interview around the same time in 2011 with Javier Rodríguez of *El País*, Fernández Mallo argued that what was really being criticized and questioned here is a “literary technique that consists of taking a legacy and transforming it” (Rodríguez, 1). The “great paradox” here is that “Borges was one of its biggest exponents.” The Spanish writer goes on to remind us that the technique is all too common in the plastic arts and that even in literature it does not suppose anything too particularly disconcerting for the reader. As an example he points toward the case of Cabrera Infante: “In his book *Exorcismos de esti(l)o*, he makes a remake of the epilogue from *El hacedor*, titling it “Epilogolipo,” in which he only changes a few words. I believe that is a precedent that legitimizes my work as well, a type of moral jurisprudence if you will.” He continues: “Critics and the public alike understood perfectly my homage to Borges, beyond whether or not they liked it. It surprises me that someone who admits to not having read the book asks for it to be removed from bookstores.” And then adds that at no time did he attempt to hide the sources for his “rewriting” for “It’s in the title” (1).

Continuing the exploration of authorship through the lens of these texts, the element of self-reflexivity stands out as an interesting aspect to consider. In each of these works there are multiple layers of self-reflexive discourse that are transmitted by the fictionalization of both known and unknown authors, visible and invisible works, and writings and rewritings of texts. The way in which they are addressed in these texts

complicates our understanding of these categories. This in turn seems to point us once again to the ideas of Foucault in his 1968 essay “What is an Author?” in which he challenged the Barthesian notion of the work as a site of unity by examining the space occupied by the “author.” Foucault argues that authorship is a function and that only certain texts possess this “author-function” because instead of being an indefinite source of significations he actually serves a limiting function, what Foucault calls the “principle of thrift in the proliferation of meaning” (230). The author steps in to reduce the threat of infinite meanings. Foucault reacts to that reductive tendency on the part of the author and points toward a form of culture in which fiction as such would not be limited and instead be free from the grip of the author and discourses would develop in what he calls the “anonymity of a murmur” (230). I would argue that Fernández Mallo’s work represents one artistic artifact in that liberation of the literary, that point in time referred to by Foucault when texts are not constrained by the author function but instead open to the indefinite possibilities of rewritings and reappropriations in an age of the emergence of “re-writers” and “re-reading.”

Each of the previous approaches to *El hacedor de Borges (Remake)* through the lens of its resonance with “Pierre Menard, autor del Quijote” and the *Quijote* has attempted to provide insight into the challenges to authorship and writing that a work like Fernández Mallo’s *El hacedor de Borges (Remake)* presents. Even though the *Quijote* of Pierre Menard and the *Quijote* of Cervantes look identical, much like certain elements of *El hacedor* of Borges and *El hacedor de Borges (Remake)* by Fernández Mallo, if one considers both the differing authorial aims and the socio-historical conditions of Cervantes and Menard, Borges and Fernández Mallo, it would seem that there are two

different works. At the same time, though, to simply ignore the authorial intentions of each of them and focus solely on the text itself, it would seem that there is just one work with a multiplicity of possible interpretations. It should not be overlooked that perhaps one of the more interesting parts of Borges's short story is the moment when the reader sees the comparison of two identical passages, one taken from Cervantes's text and the other from Menard's version. Upon presenting both versions, the narrator comments that "The contrast in style is also vivid. The archaic style of Menard—quite foreign, after all—suffers from a certain affectation. Not so that of his forerunner, who handles with ease the current Spanish of his time" (Borges, 69). In the case of a comparison between Borges's text and that of Fernández Mallo, in particular the almost identical nature of the prologue and the section called "*Borges y yo*," while there is not a narrator like the kind present in Pierre Menard to turn to for comment or insight, it is nonetheless interesting to think that the same observation from the former might be applicable to the latter in the sense that any attempt at "rewriting" another text is bound to be plagued by a "certain affectation." Despite the disruptive nature of these parasitic texts and regardless of the interpretation applied to them, what is really being challenged and questioned in them is the very nature of authorship and readership as they are understood today.

What can be seen, then, after meditating upon this through Foucault's ideas about freeing texts from the tyranny of the author function, is that what is at stake here is not simply a question of reversing or disrupting the chronology of authorship and influence but something more along the lines of a challenge to the semantic order. That is to say, these novels raise questions about not only authorship and writing but the relationship between authors/writers and their works. Jara Calles interprets some of Fernández

Mallo's text via the lens of "second hand thought" (an idea proposed by Luis Macías) which implies that some of these writers are simply putting their individualized touch on original works:

[...]the idea of 'second hand' appears to bring to light the aesthetic condition in which to situate these works; in so much as they could be understood as spaces of cohabitation of content that is not always original, but that does appear personalized by way of the discursive translation that these authors apply to them.
(546)

Which then begs the following questions: is the Borges who writes "Pierre Menard" an author or a writer? Is the Menard who writes the *Quijote* an author or a writer in the process of writing? Is the Fernández Mallo who writes *El hacedor de Borges (Remake)* an author or a writer? Or are he and the others something more along the lines of a "wreader" (the blend of "writer" and "reader," coined by George Landow, which refers to a reader that interacts with a work of hypermedia and takes on some of the functions of the writer) or a "re-wreader" who creates "re-wreaderly" texts as I will propose in the next chapter?

And then there are the bigger questions like to whom does the *Quijote* as a source of meaning belong: Cervantes, Borges, Menard? To whom does *El hacedor* belong: Borges? Fernández Mallo? What status is ascribed to the host of traces that constitute the author (the names, the quotations, the references, the footnotes and the personal pronouns)? Through the lens of reader response theory one would need to look at the reader as representing a sort of interpretational repository, a grey area between the poles of passive reception and active generation of meaning. Borges himself meditates on this

idea of the relationship between works, authors and readers in a short essay titled “Kafka and his Precursors” (1951). In it, Borges suggests that “In the critics’ vocabulary, the word “precursor” is indispensable, but it should be cleansed of all connotation of polemics or rivalry. The fact is that every writer creates his own precursors. His work modifies our conception of the past, as it will modify the future” (38).

What Borges does in this essay is to playfully revise the principal argument of T.S. Eliot’s work “Tradition and the Individual Talent.”²⁹ Borges argues that Kafka completely disrupts our notion of literary history by suggesting that several texts (Zeno’s ‘Paradox Against Movement,’ a parable by Kierkegaard, to name just two), despite being published well before Kafka, are retroactively influenced by him via prolepsis. In that sense, Kafka’s work not only exerts some influence over subsequent authors but also modifies our understanding of the past. Harold Bloom in his 1973 seminal work *The Anxiety of Influence* also reflects on the relationship between writers and their predecessors. In this text, Bloom argues that in their quest for originality, writers battle it out with the literary spectres of the past. He reads Percy Shelley as striving to reinvent poetic form by contending with the precedent set forth by both Wordsworth and Milton.

²⁹ In this well-known essay published in 1919, Eliot presents two significant perspectives on writers and their work. He suggests that the writing of poetry should be “impersonal” and disconnected from the personality of its writer and that the idea of “tradition” is based on the importance of history to writing and understanding poetry. For Eliot, past works of art are part of what he sees as an order or a “tradition” but that order is always being modified by new works which in turn alter the “tradition” in order to make room for itself. In Eliot’s view, a poet needs to be very familiar with all of literary history, not just the immediate past nor just the literature of one’s own country because, in his view, the “past should be altered by the present as much as the present is altered by the past.” Eliot’s second point is perhaps his most polemic in the sense that once a poet is completely aware and familiar with the literary past, it becomes a sort of medium or repository for the poetic expression. That is to say, a poet sheds his or her own personality for the sake of the poetic past and then through immense concentration and study is able to create what he calls a new “art emotion.”

He reads Wallace Stevens as updating T.S. Eliot's elevated poetic diction, and so on. For Bloom, literary influence consists of polemic and rivalry.

Taking the influence of the theories put forth by both Borges and Bloom, it is my argument that some of the writers of the Nocilla Generation (perhaps Fernández Mallo more than any other) utilize their novels as a space to not only engage with and literarily reproduce new technologies like surfing the Internet, but they also create a textual space in which to explore some of the tensions and theoretical divergences between the idea of artistic precedence/influence and our understanding of authorship. Furthermore, I would argue that several authors of the Nocilla Generation (both Fernández Mallo and Olmos in particular), advance an alternative theory to both Borges and Bloom, one that positions the writer as the literary equivalent of a “digital re-wreader” (perhaps writing “re-wreaderly texts), an active reader/writer who reappropriates, reassembles and rewrites digital and literary information in an attempt to address a contemporary audience. For his part, Agustín Fernández Mallo in an interview captured in the article “Tiempo topológico en *Proyecto Nocilla* y en *Postpoesía*,” alluded to such an idea when he talked about the approach that he took to writing. Mallo has said that, “When I sit down to write I don't think ‘I'm a writer, I'm going to write,’ rather I sit down in front of my keyboard and recycle all of that information from low and high culture—terms that already seem anachronic in and of themselves—without worrying what material I am using nor the origin or source of that material in time and space” (57). In that sense, the interneticized texts that have been identified and analyzed offer an additional way of understanding literary influence and authorship because throughout these fictions, influence comes not

only from the past (as in Bloom's conception), or from an anticipated future text (as in Borges's model) but also from the cultural and digital present.

By positioning both digital and literary sources on the same textual plane, not only does it give rise to the tension that has been highlighted as it relates to copyright/copyleft, but I would argue that some of these authors conceive of these digital and literary sources, by way of the influence of internet culture and the prominence of the snippet in the digital age, as endlessly appropriable pockets of information to be shared, reassembled and rewritten in order to suit particular artistic needs and interests. Everything, precisely because of the digital age and the Internet has either become or is in the process of becoming sharable/appropriable/manipulable and in that transformation the artist now seems to be free to pick and choose at will from the fragments of that network in order to later reassemble them into some artistic artifact, regardless of their origin or copyright status. For Jara Calles, some of this appropriation of material from disparate sources is the result of "contemporary craftwork" and "do-it-yourself" processes (519). But I would argue that in their deployment of interneticized texts with their broad and apparently seamless textual networks, these writers have built upon a new digital model of influence in which both digital and literary sources function via a "digital wreader" model of textual interconnectivity.

What I have attempted to show and argue over the course of this chapter is that interneticized texts from some Nocilla Generation authors challenge both the nature of the literary production and our understanding of authorship/copyright. The catalyst for much of the tension that these texts produce owes itself to the fact that they combine the literary with the digital, bringing together the cultural practices of the Internet (where

sharing, re-Tweeting, reposting, etc. are widely acceptable practices) and the historical rigidity of the printed book where attributing, referencing and copyright tend to reign supreme. In some of the initial examples by Alberto Olmos, Vicente Luis Mora and Agustín Fernández Mallo, I showed how the interneticized text, via both explicit and implicit examples, gave rise to a literary space in which authorship was either challenged, abolished or replaced by the role of an editor/compiler/copy-paster instead of an author. In the transition to one of the most polemic novels, *El hacedor de Borges (Remake)*, what I hoped to suggest, albeit perhaps implicitly, was that because of the “techxtually poetic” landscape in which these novels are born, one in which the digital invades the print culture and the snippet is the predominant element, it was fertile ground for the publication of that polemic work precisely because the boundaries of authorship and copyright are under siege in the digital age.

This position leaves us with two opposing ways of looking at this trajectory in general and Fernández Mallo’s polemical text in particular. If we return once again to the ideas put forth by Borges, we could say that he articulated an early understanding of reader response theory in the sense that any given text will signify or behave in accordance with the reader and the broader society and age in which it is read. In that sense, Borges’s essay-story represents a response of sorts to the idea of a “universality” of literature, which presumes the possibility of an ideal, mystical space where canonical works of literature stand side by side in some permanent and unchangeable state. For Borges, a work should be seen within the confines of certain temporal and historical conditions and only once it has given itself over to the mechanisms of that space can the work open itself up to the possibility of spreading beyond those initial borders and

gathering new interpretations and misinterpretations. In that sense, a the *Quijote* written today, or by a Pierre Menard, and an *El hacedor* written today, or by Agustín Fernández Mallo, means something entirely different than a *Don Quijote* written four hundred years ago or an *El hacedor* written fifty years ago, even if the words are identical. So from a Borgesian literary theory perspective we can interpret some of these interneticized texts in general and Fernández Mallo's *El hacedor de Borges (Remake)* in particular as a reinvigoration of the work, a sort of "rewriting" of the past to address a contemporary audience. That is to say, Borges seems to suggest that ultimately all great works of literature are corrupted by the passage of time and once they have served their purpose they are relegated to the dusty, isolated corner of the library perhaps never to be seen or read again. The only way to revive that standing and return it to some sense of "existence" and relevance is the "rewriting" of it by subsequent generations, like the case of Pierre Menard and Fernández Mallo.

But at the same time this observation appears to presuppose some sense of chronology and an appreciation for the past and its influence and I would argue that some of that historical baggage is waning if not almost non-existent in the digital age and consequently I don't think the texts that I have analyzed lend themselves that nicely to that explanation. That is to say, it is my position that in the move away from print culture to the digital world those elements that used to provide indications of authorship, time and reference, are falling by the wayside as cultural artefacts of all times and places become immediately interchangeable in the digital universe. In that sense, I think we see something that would be akin to what Eloy Fernández Porta refers to in his book *Homo Sampler* as "RealTime" or "Sampled Time." In this experience, the conventional

understanding of Time as governed by things like Swatch watches is rejected in favor of one in which the artist figure “homo sampler” is able to collect, manipulate and recompose disparate elements from different times into a new artistic expression, just like the DJs who sample music from different times and genres. But in the case of these writers, instead of “samplers,” which still enjoys a close connotation to the field of music, I would argue for something that speaks to the practices of readers and writers and that for me is best captured in the idea of “wreaders,” coined by George Landow, or “re-wreaders,” something that I will expand upon in the next chapter.

For now, the idea that I want to articulate is that perhaps at no other time in history have we had so many active readers and writers, especially as they relate to the use of smart phones, messaging apps and social media. Individuals are reading, publishing, posting, Tweeting, reTweeting and reposting material in quantities and at paces not seen at any other moment in history. And this technological landscape has, in my opinion, not only destabilized the idea of copyright and given rise to other licenses like copyleft and Creative Common, but it has also given rise to a different kind of “wreader” than the kind originally proposed by Landow, perhaps more appropriately understood now as a “re-wreader” who sifts through the seemingly endless supply of cultural and artistic artefacts, many of them almost completely disconnected from the hierarchical system of print culture, to create and compose their own artistic expressions, regardless of the nature of the material or where it comes from. In a digital world dominated by snippets, bits and torrents it is probably only a matter of time before publications like the ones analyzed here by these “re-writers” no longer seem polemical nor out of the ordinary.

CHAPTER 3: “RE-WREADERS AND THEIR RE-WREADERLY TEXTS”

Searching for the word “wreader” on the Internet is an interesting experience in neologisms and algorithms. If we type in “wreader” on Google and hit search, we get 92,100 results. The first one, “wreader - Wiktionary” is a link to “Wiktionary.org” and provides the definition of “a blend of writer and reader. A reader who interacts with a work of hypermedia so as to take on some of the functions of a writer” coined by George Landow. The second result, “GitHub - googlearchive/wReader-app: RSS Reader written using ...” is a link to “Github”³⁰ in which it explains that “wReader is a simple web feed reader implemented as a Chrome Platform app using AngularJS.” The next three hits, “The Wreader - Digital Reading Network,” “This Is Not a Hypertext, But... - CTheory.net,” and “George Landow (professor) - Wikipedia,” are once again related to Landow’s idea of “wreader” and are essentially either contextualizations of that term or an additional definition of it. The next result, “wReader” appears to be some sort of programming language in Github with a picture of a sad panda bear. The following two hits, “Heartland W Reader 1 - Eyeglasses At America's Best Contacts ...” go to an online eye glass store promoting a pair of “Heartland Wreaders” as “classy eyeglasses that are going to be the envy of many. With their deep wine color, classic design, and feminine

³⁰ Github is a web-based hosting service that is mostly used for computer code. Founded in 2008, it provides access control and several collaboration features such as bug tracking, feature requests, task management and wikis for every project. While not specifically related to any of the texts analyzed here, it is interesting to note that Github offers plans for both private and public repositories and free accounts which are commonly used to host open-source software projects, something akin to the idea of copyleft and Creative Commons discussed in the previous chapter.

temples, these Heartland WReaders 1 are elegant and beautiful.” After this we find a link, “wreader Archive | Health Affairs Blog,” to a blog by a certain “wreader” within the website “healthaffairs.org” but the blogger has not posted anything recently. The final hit on the first page of results, “Web App Code Lab - Pete LePage,” is a link to a “Web app code lab” by a certain Pete LePage. About halfway through that page I saw the words “wReader” at the bottom next to an image of a sad panda bear (similar to the one that appeared in a previous result).

After reviewing the first ten results it occurred to me that it would be interesting, and it was something that I had never done before, to see what the last hit of the supposed 92,100 results would look like. I began clicking through the pages and simply scanning the ten results that appeared on each page for anything that looked relevant to the notion of “wreaders.” It quickly became apparent that the term “wreader” for the purposes of this project (the one that George Landow identified as a blend of reader in writer in which the reader interacts with hypermedia to take on some of the characteristics of a writer) would not return that many hits but instead hits for all sorts of variations of the letters that make up “wreader:” Wreader’s Digest, a Twitter account for someone named Sally Wreader, a wReader app from the iTunes store in China, a “Domesday Book” translated by someone named W. Reader, the webpage for a faculty member named Jonathan W. Reader, a house for sale in Illinois on 200 W. Reader St. and an Amazon.com page for a book by William W. Reader. This random array of hits repeated itself over and over as I made my way through 33 pages of Google search results (10 hits per page) until I clicked on the 34th page when a message appeared at the bottom that I had never seen before:

“In order to show you the most relevant results, we have omitted some entries very similar to the 339 already displayed. If you like, you can repeat the search with the omitted results included.”

Out of curiosity, naturally, I clicked on it and began again the search for the last hit. This time, instead of stopping at the 34th page, it stopped at the 44th page. Except this time it contained no message nor would it let me go any further. The search had simply come to an end.

This little experiment raised several relevant observations for the focus of this last chapter in which I will explore the idea of “re-wreaders and their re-wreaderly texts.” First, on a very basic level, Google did not return many “hits” for the word “wreader” as it is being referenced in this project except for the initial search result that references the definition given by Landow. For the sake of comparison, a search for “wreader” on Yahoo returned 12,500 results while the MLA database only returned three search results with none of the articles looking at it through the lens of Spanish literature. This I believe underscores not only some of the uniqueness of this particular project but also the fact that the idea of a “wreader” is still something relatively new that is yet to fully insert itself into popular not to mention critical parlance. An interesting aside to this observation (and one that is directly related to this project) is that if I changed the Google search to “wreaderly” the search engine recognized the blend of “readerly” and “writerly” by offering me the following message: “Did you mean: readerly or writerly?” As a result, it in turn returned an abundance of hits (286,000) related to both terms (terms that we will look more closely at later on).

Second, there exists today a perhaps naïve assumption that the world-wide-web is able to find everything and if it can't then whatever we were looking for doesn't exist (one only needs to think about the reaches of Google maps to give us unprecedented visual access to spaces all around the world; the power of deep web people finders like "pipI" to locate anyone; the ubiquity of social media sites and their ability to give followers glimpses into their personal lives; the growth of digital libraries via projects like the Gutenberg Project; and the overall power of search engines to tap into databanks and information centers of all kinds).

This impression is only exacerbated today by the advent of smartphones which have virtually placed "the world in our hands" and become almost the de facto means by which individuals access and contribute to the vast amounts of data on the world-wide-web. Not only does this new device allow every individual to self-publish via a comments section, blog, Facebook page or Twitter account but it has placed in the hands of the individual a device that is at once phone, computer, camera, GPS navigator and portal to the internet. But what we learned via this little experiment is that despite the feeling that the world-wide-web is able to find everything, algorithms can only do so much and some search engines essentially censure or reduce the number of hits we have access to. That in turn raises the specter of not only the incompleteness of the world-wide-web but also its ephemerality in the sense that at any given moment a link can simply be dead or removed, lost forever in the digital wasteland. That is similar to what we saw in an earlier chapter in the case of *Algunas cosas buenisimas que el mundo se va a perder* by Alberto Olmos, in which digital references cited within the text were "lost" forever when the host of the material shuttered its servers.

Third, so tight is the connection now between individuals and their smartphones and by extension the world-wide-web, that it seems like the line between the non-digital and digital worlds is increasingly more blurry if not in the process of eroding. Take, for example, the curious little message on the Windows 10 start button screen that probably goes completely unnoticed by most users but sends a powerful yet subtle message about the way we engage with our digital devices. One click on the start button opens up a window where all of a user's "tiles" (essentially buttons to all of the different programs and apps that a user might engage with on a regular basis) are visible and in the top left hand side of that array reside the words: "Life at a glance." It could almost be said that all that was solid is now melting into apps and snippets. Not only are our lives increasingly more digitized but the cultural practices of the internet (principally the almost limitless exchange of information via sharing, downloading, posting, re-posting, replying, copylefting, etc.) are slowly undermining what we would call the non-digital cultural practices (buying, lending, publishing, copyrighting). In the recently published book *The Future of Writing* (2014) edited by John Potts, Kate Eltham argues that the demarcation between our physical and digital lives is becoming more permeable and with time it will disappear altogether. Her chapter: "When the Web is the World," points toward a not-so-distant time of a "networked reality" in which books and stories can no longer be bounded by digital or physical containers. Instead, for Eltham, the future of publishing will depend on the ability of the writer to creatively address the relationships between all the nodes on the network, between stories and people, data and metadata.

Finally, and this is an observation that was probably lurking there all along but still surprised me a bit and that is in the process of making my way through the search

results, it started to feel as though I were a “re-wreader” sifting through the raw material of the digital universe in the process of composing a re-wreaderly text. That is to say, the books by Agustín Fernández Mallo along with the internet-inspired text by Alberto Olmos were manifestations of the web experience in the way that they either brought together a myriad of seemingly disparate snippets and bytes from the web or attempted to explicitly reproduce the experience of surfing the web via reproductions of search pages, emails, text messaging and blogs. As I scanned through the search results I began to imagine the creation of a book that would take each individual search result, click on it to reveal more details, and then simply copy/paste that material onto a page. That detailed search information would be something similar to the vignettes that we saw in the previous texts where as readers we searched for assumed connections or moments of meaning amidst a seemingly disparate collection of digital data only to find none.

As I mentioned in the initial chapter, the bringing together of seemingly disconnected material by Fernández Mallo, for example, was seen by Christine Henseler as an act of “remixing” material into a “mash-up.” I tend to agree with many of her observations, especially as they relate to the ways in which these books challenge our understanding of literature and authorship and seek to engage with different media technologies. But “remix” and “mash-up” still resonate rather strongly with music and while they do point toward the idea of bringing together disparate elements and they are not limited exclusively to music, I would argue that the notions of “re-writers and their re-writerly texts” offers an alternative lens through which to see them, perhaps even richer because of the way in which they embody the pillars of both the digital and the written. To fully appreciate this suggestion and the idea of “re-writers and their re-

wreaderly texts” though, it is necessary to trace the origins of these words, to conduct a “genealogy of terms” if you will, before exploring in more detail the premise of this final chapter.

So we begin with the emergence of hypertext, which in turn leads to the coinage of the word “wreader” by George Landow. The incredible growth of the internet today has surely exceeded early understandings of hypertext and its potential influence on reading and writing. Coupled with the omnipresence of smartphones and social media, we could be living in a time of unprecedented numbers of both readers and writers given the ease with which digital material is shared and posted. For example, just on New Year’s Eve alone, users worldwide of the texting app Whatsapp published more than 75 billion messages.³¹ That notwithstanding, the digital landscape some twenty-five years ago was vastly different and what George Landow saw in hypertext was not only its destabilizing powers but more interesting yet the possibility to explore some of the key tenets of poststructuralism: “What is perhaps most interesting about hypertext...is not that it may fulfill certain claims of structuralist and poststructuralist criticism but that it provides a rich means of testing them” (11). Specifically, Landow saw the importance of hypertext as it related to Derrida’s notion of “decentering” and Barthes’ “readerly versus writerly” texts: “Hypertext technology has much in common with some major points of contemporary literary and semiotic theory, particularly with Derrida’s emphasis on decentering and Barthes’s conception of the readerly versus the writerly text” (33-4). Landow takes Theodore H. Nelson, a pioneer of information technology as well as a

³¹ See the website venturebeat.com/2018/01/03/whatsapp-sets-new-messaging-record-75-billion-on-new-years-eve/

philosopher and sociologist, as his point of departure for and understanding of hypertext. After taking a computer programming course, Nelson began to think about a way to create a document management system as a way to organize his ideas and notes. It is said that as he began to work on the system, he applied his experience as a filmmaker and the conception of complex motion picture effects, moving from one shot to another. Out of that experience, he conceived of the idea of hypertext, which he understood as “non-sequential writing—text that branches and allows choices to the reader. It is best read on an interactive screen. As popularly conceived, this is a series of text chunks connected by links which offer the reader different pathways” (2). For Landow, hypertext denotes “text composed of blocks of text—what Barthes terms *lexia*—and the electronic links that join them” (4).

If we were to look for a textual, print-based manifestation of the underlying elements of hypertext, we don't have to look much further than a scholarly article. Take for example an article on Borges's “Pierre Menard Autor del Quijote.” The article begins with what we would call the main text and as one continues to read it is inevitable that we encounter a number or symbol that suggests the presence of a foot—or endnote, which in turn invites the reader to leave the body of the main text to read that note which itself could contain a citation of passages from “Pierre Menard” that presumably supports that author's argument. The note could also point us toward additional information or other sources, influences or similarities in other literary texts. In each case, the reader can essentially follow the “link” to another text indicated by the note and in some instances move out of the scholarly article entirely. After breaking from the main text to consult additional resources or explore a tangent in more depth, the reader can then return to the

main text to continue reading until he finds another note which would simply initiate the process all over again. Despite being able to explore certain “links” introduced by specific notes, the scholarly article in the print medium continues to anchor itself in the spatial limitations of print culture which obfuscate our ability to both see and access the sources to which the article may point. It could be said that the printed text that serves as the point of departure, despite containing elements that point to sources outside itself, still holds a privileged if not dominant position because the inherent spatial requirements necessary to explore those outside sources complicate and even hinder the reader’s ability to see them.

This kind of reading experience represents the basic underlying components of hypertext. What makes the actual hypertext experience different, though, is that it bridges the spatial gap inherent to the print-based medium in favor of almost instant, immediate access. Instead of needing to consult an outside source or track down the notes that appear in a scholarly article for example, the reader of hypertext on a computer screen can simply click on the corresponding notes which in turn instantly bring into view the material contained in that note. What’s more, hypertext would allow the entire text of “Pierre Menard” to be embedded via a note and accessed immediately to prove or disprove a point. If we continue the analogy using the scholarly journal, we see that in both instances the scholarly journal positions itself within a field of relations. In the case of the print medium, many of those relations (accessed via notes) are either kept out of sight or are difficult to follow because in print technology the referenced material in the notes is spatially distant from the references to them. One must often leave the main body of the text at a minimum but often leave completely the entire article to then consult an

external source. Electronic hypertext, on the other hand, makes all of those references easy to access because the entire field of relations, previously obscured in the print medium, is now instantly and immediately available via digital links.

Because of this change in the accessibility of the material and the ease with which a reader can now orientate him or herself in the field of relations of the scholarly journal, both the experience of reading and ultimately the nature of that which is read are altered. For example, if we had access to an electronic hypertext system in which our “Pierre Menard” article was linked to all the other materials it cited, it would exist as part of a much larger system in which perhaps the totality might mean more than the individual document. That is to say, the field of relations is laid bare and in that “laying bare” we begin to see the scholarly journal in a new light as it moves out of its rather isolated and spatially specific context in print medium (either on a bookshelf or inside an academic journal) and into the broader context of the electronically accessible field of relations. And when that shift happens, something changes in the experience of both reading and the nature of the text itself. What I argue within this context, and this is an important step in getting toward our destination of “re-writers and their re-writerly texts,” is that in the move from print to digital, from a rather isolated position in the field of relations to an entirely open and interconnected one, the boundaries between the reader and the writer, are blurred or destabilized.

This significant shift is accentuated even more when the seemingly infinite field of relations so common in the world-wide-web is reintroduced back into the confines of the print medium where it catalyzes a textual tension of perhaps unprecedented proportions. That is to say, if at some point the literary text resided within a literary field

of relations between other literary texts (intertextuality), something that both Cervantes and Borges demonstrate masterfully, with the emergence of the world-wide-web and its permeation into literature, that field of relations is expanded exponentially. These new “internetized texts” and their “techxtual poetics” point toward a text that takes on even more importance when all of the weight of the vastness of the digital world is reintroduced into a print medium, in this case a book, where the tension between openness and closure, between the world-wide-web and print-based intertextuality, creates a techxtually poetic environment in which the reader is pulled in seemingly opposing directions yet perhaps comfortably at ease, simply enjoying the tension.

It is within this environment that we situate the 1994 book *Hyper/Text/Theory*, a compilation of articles on the nature of hypertextual reading and its implications for literary theory. In it, George Landow gives us one of the first uses of the word “wreader.” For Landow, the emergence of the “wreader” is born out of the curious interplay between reader and writer in the hypertextual environment in which the previously established roles of each are destabilized. This is such because:

The particular importance of network textuality, that is, textuality written, stored, and read on a computer network, appears when technology transforms readers into reader-authors or ‘wreaders,’ because any contribution, any change in the web created by one reader, quickly becomes available to other readers. The ability to write within a particular web in turn transforms comments from private notes, such as one takes in the margins of one’s own copy of a text, into public statements that, especially within educational settings, have powerfully democratizing effects. (14)

The “wreader” then, according to Landow, is as much a producer of the text as a consumer of it. This new class of reader-writer brings together both the production and the consumption of texts in a self-contained process. And the textual production of a “wreader,” then, would be a “wreaderly” text; one that essentially invites, if not necessitates, active participation from the “wreader” in the textual production. One illustration of this is the wiki: an online program that allows for synchronous interaction between individuals and text. One person can post text, and any other individual can log in to the program and edit that text. Richard Kahn and Douglas Kellner write about the nature of wikis and state that they are texts “in process, with viewers able to trace and investigate how the [digital] archive has grown over time, which users have made changes, and what exactly they have contributed” (718).

In literature, this new kind of wreader searches through *lexias* to locate and identify threads of connected meaning that were not necessarily determined or intended by the author. Textual interpretation becomes then a kind of “rewriting” in the sense that on an individual level a particular wreader mediates the relationship between the text, author and culture while on a collective level a given community navigates through not only the reading of a particular text but also its interpretative habits and ideological views. Reading and writing, now fused in the figure of the “wreader,” become almost inseparable, part of a textual practice that both interprets and rewrites the text at the same time.

As the previous examples suggest, in addition to hypertext blurring the lines between reader and writer and giving rise to what Landow calls “wreaders,” they also call attention to the nature of the text itself and specifically they instantiate particular qualities

of what Barthes referred to as “writerly” or “ideal texts.” In his 1970 book *S/Z*, Barthes develops a position on the nature of reading and writing via a contrast between two kinds of text: the “readerly” and the “writerly.” Barthes argues that most of our texts are “readerly texts.” These texts are what he calls the “classic texts” and are presented in a linear, traditional manner that in general follow the established norms in both style and content. “Readerly” texts are most popular because they invite a narrow interpretation – the reader can easily uncover the text’s pre-determined meaning. Meaning is both fixed and pre-determined so as to ensure that the reader is simply a site in which to receive information because with the “readerly” text “the reader is thereby plunged into a kind of idleness—he is intransitive, he is in short, serious: instead of functioning himself, instead of gaining access to the magic of the signifier, to the pleasure of writing, he is left with no more than the poor freedom to accept or reject the text...” (4). These kinds of texts tend to be closed texts then, working to hide any elements that might open the text to multiple meanings by defaulting to the use of standard representations and dominant signifying practices. As a result, “readerly” texts serve the interests of commercialized entities in the literary establishment who uphold the view of texts as disposable commercial commodities. They are, as Barthes suggests, “what can be read, but not written” (4).

By contrast, “writerly” texts (and I will argue later on that there is something of both the “readerly” and “writerly” in the “re-wreaderly”) are the texts that we would struggle to find because “the writerly text is not a thing, we would have a hard time finding it in the bookstore” (5). With the writerly text, the reader, previously relegated to an inactive position of reception, is now in a position of control that plays an active role

in the construction of meaning. In the writerly text, according to Barthes, “the goal of literary work (of literature as work) is to make the reader no longer a consumer but a producer of the text” (4). The stable meaning of the “readerly” text is replaced by a proliferation of meanings and a liberation of narrative structure. Writerly texts resist closure and coherence, requiring much more interpretive effort. They involve an unfamiliar discourse that is difficult to decipher. For Barthes, the “writerly” text is the dominant mode in modern mythological culture in which particular forms of representation continually blur the division between the real and the artificial, between the reader and the writer, the read and the written:

[. . .] the networks are many and interact, without any one of them being able to surpass the rest; this text is a galaxy of signifiers, not a structure of signifieds; it has no beginning; it is reversible; we gain access to it by several entrances, none of which can be authoritatively declared to be the main one; the codes it mobilizes extend as far as the eye can reach, they are indeterminable . . . ; the systems of meaning can take over this absolutely plural text, but their number is never closed, based as it is on the infinity of language. (5)

In the writerly text there is a multiplicity of cultural and other ideological codes for the reader to uncover because “the writerly text is a perpetual present, upon which no consequent language (which would inevitably make it past) can be superimposed...before the infinite play of the world is traversed, intersected, stopped, plasticized by some singular system (Ideology, Genus, Criticism)...” (5). For Barthes, this is essentially “ourselves writing,” a self-conscious expression aware of the difference between artifice and reality. The “writerly” text destabilizes the reader’s expectations precisely because

the reader is now an active producer of meaning instead of a passive recipient. By destabilizing the roles and turning the reader into the writer, the writerly text challenges the commercial nature of the text as a disposable commodity.

So how do Barthes's ideas about the "readerly" and "writerly" texts fit in with our exploration of hypertext, "wreaders" "re-wreaders," "wreaderly" and "re-wreaderly" texts? I suggest that in order to fully understand the idea of "re-wreaders and their re-wreaderly texts" a complete recognition of and appreciation for the underlying terms is essential. That is to say, the suggestion that these are "re-wreaders and their re-wreaderly texts" departs from a "palimpsestual perspective"³² in the sense that in the term "wreader" there also exists simultaneously "reader" and "writer" just like "wreaderly" should instantly trigger "readerly" and "writerly." But what distinguishes this lengthy exploration of terms is the addition of the prefix "re" to each of these words. With the addition of the prefix "re" to these words I propose that we fully exploit the "palimpsestual proliferation" implied with the multiple layers of these terms. First, "re" underscores the "re-insertion" of the "reader-writer-wreader/readerly-writerly-wreaderly" into the printed text. Second, it also intentionally yet subtly captures the idea of e-wreader" (a clear play on the idea of the "e-reader" which refers to essentially any handheld digital device capable of serving as a medium by which to read digitalized texts

³² The term "palimpsest" has both paleographic and literary importance, most notably perhaps in the case of Gerard Genette's *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree* (1982). In its application in this project, the term is understood as it is presented by the University of Chicago School of Media webpage, where they underscore the two-fold nature of the palimpsest in that it "preserves the distinctness of individual texts, while exposing the contamination of one by the other. Therefore, even though the process of layering which creates a palimpsest was born out of a need to erase and destroy previous texts, the re-emergence of those destroyed texts renders a structure that privileges heterogeneity and diversity." In other words, I apply the term palimpsest here as an indication toward, or invitation to read multiple terms wrapped inside one overarching term all at the same time with a simultaneous appreciation for both the derived words and the new term itself.

that in turn exemplifies the curious interplay between the digital and print media that these texts manifest). Third, in its amplification of the “palimpsestual perspective” it also magnifies an underlying void and sense of insufficiency expressed not only in the instability of the terms themselves but also in the very nature of the hyphen as well (the hyphen in and of itself speaks to a kind of void which simply underscores the difficulty in naming not only these texts but the authors/artist/editors/composers/re-writers that make them). Finally, “re” is used in its intended sense of meaning “again” or “back” to highlight the many ways in which these texts remake, rewrite, reintroduce, repeat, re-appropriate, and refer back to other elements in other texts or internet based platforms. It is this blended state, what might be called a proliferation of the “palimpsestual perspective,” that I think most accurately speaks to the changing landscape of the reader and the writer. Historically they have been two very authoritative terms, but they are no longer sufficient on their own to name the creator of these re-writerly texts.

In previous chapters certain texts from the Nocilla “re-writers” were analyzed to show the way in which they created an “Internetized text” through a “techxual poetics.” Via the introduction of digital elements like web searches, emails, Tweets, blogs and instant messages, the “internetized text” becomes a unique textual environment not only because of its content and digitally inspired structure but also because of the way in which it challenges and destabilizes the literary production as it is traditionally understood as well as notions of authorship. To further develop this line of thought and explore the dynamics of a “re-writer and a re-writerly text” in greater detail, I want to look at a story from Agustín Fernández Mallo’s *El hacedor de Borges (Remake)*.

As suggested in the previous chapter, Fernández Mallo scandalized the publishing market in Spain when he created a “remake” of Borges’s *El hacedor* published more than fifty years earlier. The *remake* version shares the original title, uses the same titles for all of the stories/vignettes, reproduces almost verbatim both the original prologue and epilogue, and sprinkles the remaining stories with snippets taken from the original. For Fernández Mallo, this text holds great significance for him because Borges was his literary model. In an interview in 2011, Fernández Mallo defended his book and his respect for Borges:

That’s why re-writing it was so important to me. There will certainly be those who see it as a sign of disrespect because there are people who appropriate things from other individuals as if they were theirs. But Borges, I have treated him with the utmost respect. Some will like it or not like it, but no one can attack the *remake*, because all of the literature that Borges did was a *remake*. He dedicated himself to rewriting the history of literature, from Homer to science fiction novels. Borges was the first to say that there is nothing original and that all literature is an exercise in re-writing. That is what I have done. The important thing is to be original in the re-writing. (1)

But as we should recall, Borges’s widow did not see it the same way and forced the book to be removed from the bookshelves. Whichever side of the equation folks align themselves with, the textual environment created by Fernández Mallo is one that not only challenges notions of authorship by introducing a high degree of appropriation from the original text but it also represents fertile textual terrain in which to explore the idea of a

“re-wreader and his re-wreaderly text” because of the way in which it also interacts with technology.

Perhaps the longest and most ambitious of the Borges stories that Fernández Mallo “remakes” is the one titled *Mutaciones*. In the Borges original, the story encompasses slightly less than half of a page and expresses disappointment with how different objects have been transformed into symbols: the arrow is no longer an object that is launched from a bow but instead something used to indicate a direction; a lasso that once flew in the air to corral bulls was now an adornment on a horseman’s mount; the cross on which a god once suffered for the sins of mankind was now just a simple adornment in a cemetery. It concludes with the idea that there is not a single object on earth that oblivion doesn’t erase or memory doesn’t alter and “no one knows into what images it will be translated in the future” (798).

In the *Remake* version, the *Mutaciones* story encompasses forty-one pages and is actually made up of three separate stories that explore the idea of “mutaciones” via conceptual projects of the past: *Un recorrido por los monumentos de Passaic 2009* (Robert Smithson in New Jersey, 1967); *Un recorrido por los monumentos de Ascó* (outside of a nuclear power plant in Tarragona); *Un recorrido por los monumentos de La aventura* (on the Italian island Lisca Bianca where in 1959 Michelangelo Antonioni shot the film *L’avventura*, in which a group of friends visits the island and shortly after arriving one of them (Anna) disappears and is never found or seen again.) The objects of the *remake* here are three important projects in the history of conceptual art, science and film, each of which could be seen as a challenge to the dominant discourses in their respective fields. One of these in particular, the first one, is an especially interesting case

in which to explore the idea of “re-writers and their re-writerly texts” because of the way in which it is developed out of the “re-writerly” recipe of technology, literature, art and any other cultural/artistic material (original or appropriated) that the re-writer decides to include in the palimpsestual layering of the text.

When Fernández Mallo proposes to “remake” the wanderings of Robert Smithson, he sets out to do it the way only a re-writer would choose to: virtually. In the original, the year was 1967 and Robert Smithson, well-known for his *land art* works, set out on a wandering through an area called Passaic outside of New York. It was something similar to the psychogeographic meanderings undertaken by Guy Debord and his friends in Paris in the sixties in the sense that Smithson, armed with his camera and a small notebook, wandered around the streets of Passaic documenting different “monuments” that called his attention. Except what he ended up taking pictures of were not what we would typically refer to as monuments but more along the lines of places that held little interest or aesthetic value: a bridge, a highway construction zone and a sandbox.

More than forty years after this initial “recorrido,” Fernández Mallo sets out to remake Borges’s *El hacedor* and within that text he also decides to “revisit” the sites explored by Smithson. Except instead of physically visiting the “monuments” by travelling to the United States, Fernández Mallo sits down in front of his computer and repeats the original “recorrido” in Google Maps, using the different functions (map view, satellite view and street view) to orientate himself in the neighborhood. In that sense, even before we enter into the details of the text, the narrative process represents numerous palimpsestual layers of the re-writerly text in the sense that not only is there an appropriation of the title of Borges’s book *El hacedor* and the story “Mutaciones,” but

also the experience of Smithson, which in turn is recreated in the digitally appropriated environment of Google Maps.

The first paragraph of the *remake* version, albeit different from the original by Smithson, still looks and feels very similar in the sense that each of them use specific, detailed information to set the stage for embarking on the meandering. In the Smithson text:

On Saturday, September 30, 1967, I went to the Port Authority Building on 41st and 8th Avenue. I bought a copy of the *New York Times* and a Signet paperback called *Earthworks* by Brian W. Aldiss. Next, I went to ticket booth 21 and purchased a one-way ticket to Passaic. After that, I went up to the upper bus level (platform 173) and boarded the number 30 bus of the Intercity Transportation Co. (56)

In the Fernández Mallo version:

New York City, the year 2009, toward the end of July, 7:00 am, mosquito bites. In the street outside the Puerto Ricans already have the music in their cars at full blast. I direct the fan to where I am sitting now. I prepare the material, make sure that the cellphone is all charged up in order to be able to take a good collection of photos during my walk (I have a pre-established route, but within it I will improvise too; I don't even know if I will find anything that motivates me enough to take a picture of it). (58)

The second paragraph, which begins with the word “antecedents,” provides a brief summary of the creative experience undertaken by Robert Smithson in 1967 and how his

little wandering around session turned into the publication of an article/essay in the magazine *Artforum*. With the transition to the third paragraph, the narrative once again returns to the first-person of the opening paragraph who describes in more detail how the experience of revisiting Smithson's experience will take place:

I turn on the iMac and, as soon as it boots up, I take a picture with my Nokia N85 cellphone of the map that will serve as my guide. The map contains the itinerary and the 4 points (in green) in which on that day in 1967 Smithson took the 4 photographs that he would end up incorporating into the work already cited. The map is reproduced in a book to the left of me, on the desk, *Mirror-Travels: Robert Smithson and History*, by Jennifer L. Roberts. The picture that I just took is blurry so I take another one. (photo n.1) (59)

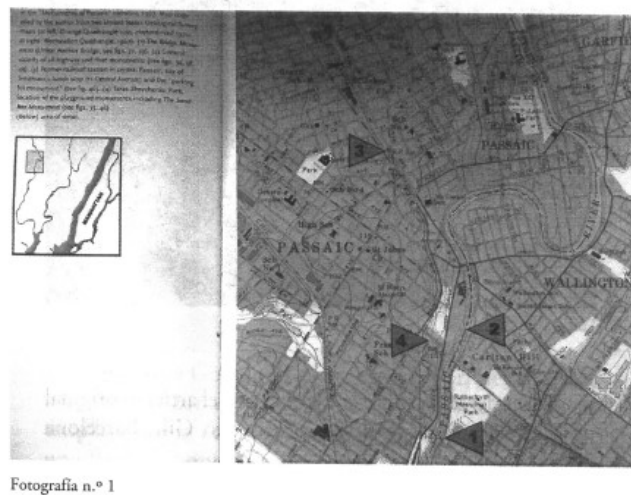


Figure 1: An illustration from “Mutaciones” in El hacedor de Borges (Remake)

The image reproduced inside the text is what looks to be the digital photo taken by the narrator's mobile phone of a map that appears inside the book by Jennifer Roberts. Its

presence in the narration is another element that adds to the multiple layers of the creative process playing itself out here. In addition to the echoes of Borges and Smithson as sources for literary material, we now have this curious interplay between media, in this case between a book and a cellphone. The source of the photo of the map is a book which is recaptured by the lens of a cellphone which in turn is reproduced once again inside the confines of a book.

The fourth paragraph continues with the narration in first-person and we read for the first time that all of the preparation for a trip, described in great detail in the first paragraph, does not actually manifest itself physically but instead virtually. In other words, this “remake” of the Smithson “recorrido” will take place via Google Maps:

After that I type in Google the words “Passaic, New Jersey.” Without much difficulty I find in Google Maps the actual plan for the zone that corresponds to what was the itinerary followed by Smithson. I focus my cellphone on the screen and take a picture (photo n.2). I compare it with the other picture from the book and I see that I am in the right place. (60).

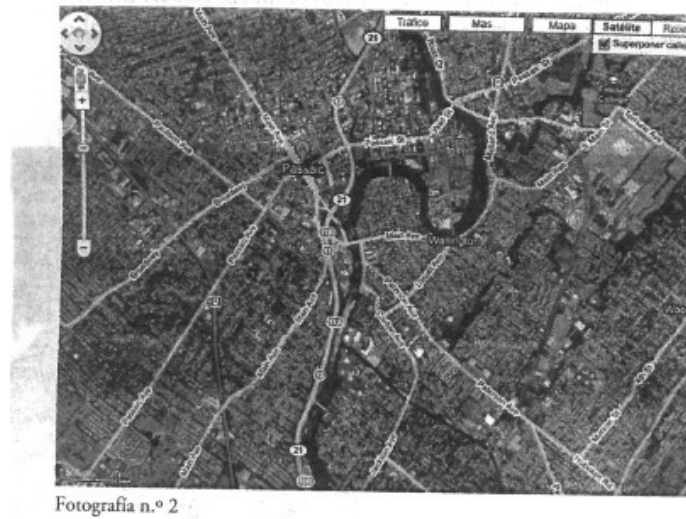


Figure 2: An illustration from “Mutaciones” in El hacedor de Borges (Remake)

Immediately below the reproduction of the photo of the Smithsonian itinerary taken by the narrator via Google Maps, we find one more important detail that not only contributes to the layering effect of all the different sources and mediums, but captures very well, I think, the “re-wreader at work” on his re-wreaderly text:

To my right, on the table, I have the original article by Smithsonian in Spanish (edited by Gustavo Gili, Barcelona, 2006) in which I read:

First Stop: The Bridge

The bus passed right over the first monument. I pulled the cord to request a stop and got out of the bus at the corner of Union Avenue and River Drive [...]. (60)

What makes this last element so interesting, in my opinion, is how it recreates a visual image of a re-wreader at work. Up to this point, we have already highlighted how the text

builds on multiple layers of both sources and media. Here, we can see perhaps the pinnacle of the layering effect in the sense that in just the first five paragraphs of this particular story we can already identify numerous sources and media at play at the disposal of the re-wreader. As far as sources of material are concerned we can readily identify Borges, Smithson and Roberts along with the Smithson original text translated into Spanish by Gustavo Gili in 2006.

On top of that, we have the effect of navigating those sources via multiple media like the book, computer, cellphone and Google Maps. Taken together it looks like we are peering into the re-writers studio in which multiple sources and mediums are just an arms-length away from the creative energies of the re-writer and his re-writerly text. In the image of the re-writer we can see the proliferation of the “palimpsestual perspective” on full display in the “reader” of books (by Borges, Smithson and Roberts), the “writer” of fiction (in the first person singular as the narrator), the “writer” of spaces (via the interaction with Google Maps of Smithson’s itinerary) and finally the “re-writer” of texts (played out by the “remaking” of Borges’s *El hacedor*, the reproduction of the Smithson text inside this text, the rewriting of the Smithson experience by revisiting the monuments virtually via Google Maps, and ultimately the creation of a “re-creation” of all the aforementioned sources/media).

Once the stage has been set by detailing his project and the materials that he will use (a computer, some books and the camera from his cellphone), the narrator builds his story out of a systematic comparison between Smithson’s original text and photographs (reproduced in the two texts on either side of the narrator’s computer table) and those of his own production. To distinguish one from the other, the re-writer reproduces the

Smithson text in italics and his photos in black and white while the photos of the re-wreader's experience via Google Maps appear in color. The convergence of these two experiences, Smithson's original and Fernández Mallo's virtual one, becomes the foundation from which the fictional material for this story will arise. The reader enters into a sort of heterotopic space in the Foucaultian sense, an "other" space of mirror texts, photos from Google Maps, and seemingly incompatible sources and mediums that converge to problematize the order of things (especially as it relates to our understanding of literature and authorship) by destabilizing the ground upon which it is built.

The entrance into this fictional heterotopic space of photographs and text is marked by the shift from the more technical descriptions of the first five paragraphs to a more literary reflection on the part of the narrator. It plays itself out in the narrative of the first stop on the itinerary which is a bridge: "The sun of midday gives a cinematographic character to the place, without shadows, overexposed, converting the bridge and the river into a physical reality, overexposed as well [...] Below, the river lies like a giant movie that doesn't show anything else except a continuous black and green image" (62). In this brief citation we can see how the narrator adopts a more reflective position in which he turns to more literary resources via the use of the simile that changes the water below the bridge into a giant movie screen. The shift underscores a burgeoning intimacy between the narrator and the spaces he is exploring via Google Maps, one that will intensify as the narrative continues.

A significant step in that growing familiarity with the virtual spaces that the narrator is exploring is the moment he decides to move from the birds-eye-view of the "satellite" option in Google Maps to the option called "street view." This alteration,

which takes place in the second stop of the Smithson itinerary, creates a much more intimate experience of the space because it lets the narrator virtually walk the streets via Google Maps. He lands at the intersection of Passaic Street and Main Avenue. And with that virtual landing, the relationship between narrator and virtual space takes on an unexpected twist. Now, from the perspective of “street view,” the blurry figures of unidentified individuals that happened to be captured by the Google Maps camera in the moment that it was canvassing the area, become characters with whom the narrator interacts. In the picture below from Google Maps, taken by the narrator with his cellphone, a blurry figure appears on the left hand side. Under the impression that this individual has seen him take the picture, the narrator walks over to her to ask her if she is from Passaic and if she knows of Robert Smithson. She says “yes” that she was born in Passaic but does not know anything about Mr. Smithson.

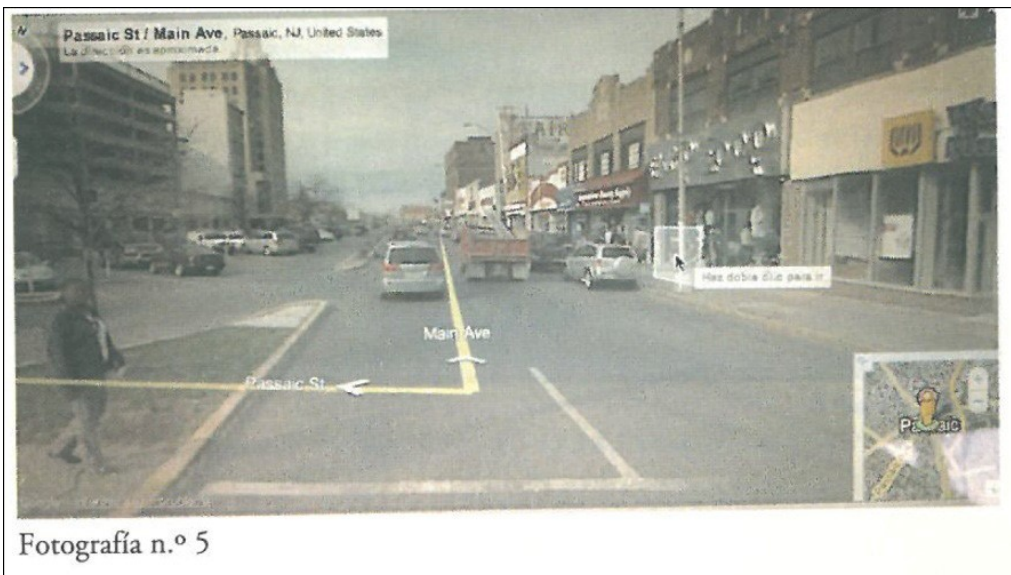


Figure 3: An illustration from “Mutaciones” in El hacedor de Borges (Remake)

From this moment on, the narrator continues to engage with the virtual environment as if he were actually navigating the space much like Smithson did in his itinerary captured in his original text. Except unlike Smithson, who tended to focus his textual reflections on the technical description of the monuments that he was photographing, the narrator of the *remake* tends to focus more on the space itself, choosing to comment on random things or engage with different individuals in the cartographic world of Google Maps: all the stop lights in the images are green, the surprising number of shops that sell clothes, the lack of traffic, how a security guard cuts off his attempts to gain access to a particular space, how the spaces seem to have changed since Smithson but at the same time they still feel as though they were mirror images of each other. Only when he arrives at the last stop on the Smithson itinerary, the one called the “Sandbox monument,” do we learn that the narrator’s mission to virtually retrace the artist’s steps will not finish the same way.

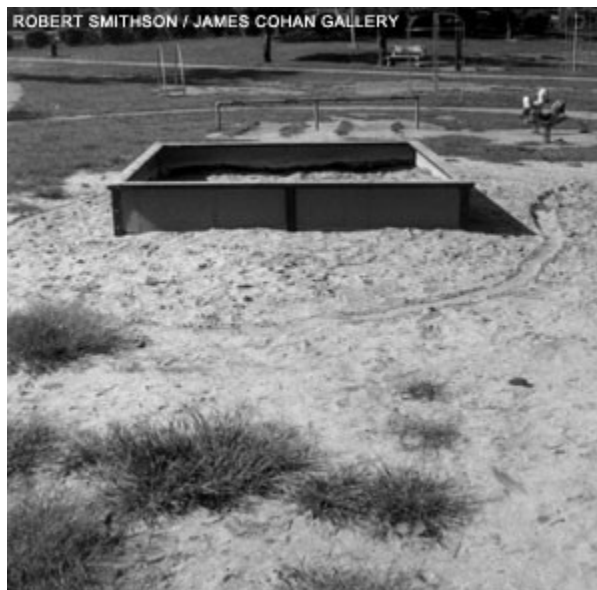


Figure 4: An illustration of Robert Smithson’s “Sandbox Monument”

It turns out that the park that housed the sandbox in the Smithson original does not exist in Google Maps and so cannot be experienced by the narrator. Upon realizing its

absence, the narrator breaks momentarily with this narrative thread to go to the refrigerator for something to drink only to take up the narrative thread again, this time to give a fictional account of finding the sandbox. In a final act of playful irony, the narrator, despite utilizing lots of factual material to build his “psicoGooglegráfico” trip (maps, photos and technical descriptions), gives a fictional account of finding the sandbox. Amidst the barren landscape that once housed the park that he was looking for, the narrator declares that “I see it over there, alone, square and full” (74). He moves closer to it and then finds an old park bench. He declares that “it seems to have been made just for me” (74).

Seated on the park bench he muses about the passage of time, calling it “tiempo palimisesto” and how his virtual trip has been a “viaje psicoGooglegráfico” (a clear play on the idea of the “psychogeographical” referenced earlier.) The story ends with the narrator inside the sandbox drawing circles in the sand with his feet. This final moment of playfulness is reminiscent of another of Smithson’s creations, *Spiral Jetty*, the giant spiral of sand and rocks in the middle of a lake in Utah.



Figure 5: An illustration of Roberts Smithson’s “Spiral Jetty”

In this final “re-creation” of a re-creation of a creation within another re-creation (re-wreader, Google maps, Smithson original, *El hacedor de Borges (Remake)*), the quintessential analogy of the Chinese boxes operating at the same time like mirrors, the destabilizing effects of the re-wreader and his re-wreaderly text are on full display. If on the one hand Smithson created *land art* pieces out of natural elements like sand, stone, dirt, water and salt, the writer Fernández Mallo, acting like the literary mirror of the Smithson artistic creation, builds fictions out of digital artifacts, existing texts, computer programs, maps and photos.

The possibility for this “remake” within the *Remake* then is made possible by a curious convergence of all the different tools at the artist’s disposal: Google Maps, a computer, a cellphone, a camera, other literary texts and the artist’s own experience of reality. In that convergence, and in particular in the scene when the artist imitates the Smithson creation of something in the sand, the divisions between all the simulacra operating in this experience disappear. The creation in the sand, at once a reproduction of the Smithson figure, also looks like something of a labyrinth, which is itself one of the ideas upon which Borges has meditated so deeply in many of his works. In that sense, this final scene of “Mutaciones” represents a playing out of the proliferation of the “palimpsestual perspective” in that the fusion in the final figure is a bringing together of all three layers in the re-wreaderly text: that of Borges, Smithson and Google Maps. And if we continue this line of thought related to maps, I think there is an interesting observation to be made between this last analysis and Borges’s fable of the cartographers. Let me explain.

In Borges's original *El hacedor* he includes a story called "Del rigor en la ciencia," a fable about an Empire that took the Art of Cartography to such great lengths that they made a detailed map that covered the entire territory of the Empire. Over time, successive generations were less enthusiastic about maps and let them wither away under the scorching sun and freezing winters. The narrator in Fernández Mallo's story is similarly enthusiastic about the art of map making except in this particular case it is Google Maps, a supposedly precise reproduction of the physical world as we know it (much like the exact map of the territory in Borges's fable), that becomes the tool by which the narrator attempts to retrace an itinerary from another map inside a book. Unfortunately, it too proves to be useless (remember that the last Smithsonian image could not be found on Google Maps), much like the exact replica of the Empire's topography. In the theoretical universe of Jean Baudrillard, a moment like this would point toward the emergence of a "hyperreality." In his 1981 philosophical treatise *Simulacra and Simulation*, Baudrillard takes the Borges fable as a point of departure to develop his theory on hyperreality:

Today abstraction is no longer that of the map, the double, the mirror, or the concept. Simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being, or a substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal. The territory no longer precedes the map, nor does it survive it. It is nevertheless the map that precedes the territory — *precession of simulacra* — that engenders the territory, and if one must return to the fable, today it is the territory whose shreds slowly rot across the extent of the map. It is the real, and not the map, whose vestiges persist here and there in the deserts that are no longer those of the Empire, but ours. *The desert of the real itself.* (1)

Something peculiar happens in the final scene of the “Mutaciones” story when Google Maps is unable to find the sandbox captured by Smithson in his original itinerary. The Smithson original, compiled within the book that sits on the desk of the narrator, is already in itself a “map” of some supposedly “real” space, which in turn the narrator attempts to revisit via Google Maps, a mapping entity in the third degree in itself. The act of bringing together such a multitude of maps delivering different results destabilizes and undermines how well they capture a particular space. As a result, we are perhaps left wondering if the disunity between the maps is a sign that it’s not the maps that are off but that the “real” is in fact fading away.

This idea of the “real” supposedly fading away seems like an interesting segue to talk briefly about the third part of *Mutaciones* because in this instance the narrator does in fact visit in-person the setting for a movie. In the second story within the *Mutaciones* story, the narrator retraces “The Monuments of *L’avventura*,” a 1959 film by Michelangelo Antonioni. In the film, which takes place on the island of Lisca Bianca, a group of friends takes a boat ride to the same island and shortly after arriving one of the women goes missing. For several days the group looks for her but she is never found. In 1983, a team from RAI television set out for Lisca Bianca to reconstruct the first part of the movie. After taking photos and retracing the steps of the actors, the group created a documentary and book called *Falso Retorno*. For Fernández Mallo, this return to the island for a cinematographic investigation was not so much about trying to find the missing woman Anna, but instead to look for the very vestiges of the movie, to “move backward, from ‘fiction’ toward the ‘reality’ of the filming. To make a topography of a fiction called *La aventura*” (83). In that sense, when the narrator himself decides to visit

the island twenty some years later, he does so this time on a different level, a second degree of mutation assuming that *L'avventura* is considered the original cinematographic text.

Armed with his smartphone and the detailed information contained in the book *Falso Ritorno*, the narrator arrives on the island and is able to locate and identify all the places in the movie. As he walks around the island, he does so from the perspective of the movie that he is replaying on his smartphone. That is to say, as he physically retraces the steps of the actress Monica Vitti, he experiences each spot through the lens of the camera that captured the scene that he is at the same time replaying on his smartphone; a curious interplay of different degrees of mutations, digital media and the cinematographic itinerary. To be even clearer, the image is an interesting one in that while he walks around the different places on the island that were used to shoot the film he at the same time digitally follows, always a few steps behind, the different people that appear in the original film that he is replaying on his smartphone. Sometimes he will linger a bit longer in a place and pause the movie so as to not lose the trail of the actors that he is following, especially the figure of Anna played by Monica Vitti. And then at some point in the experience something incredibly interesting happens: the narrator becomes distracted by something in the distance and takes his eyes off the iPhone on which he has been watching the movie. When he looks at it again some minutes later, he realizes that he is out of sync with the movie and that he (physically on the island) and Monica (the actress in the movie whose steps he is retracing) are no longer following each other step by step. He laments that he has lost her.

He decides to return to the little cabin where he had spent the night and shortly before arriving he pulls his smartphone out one more time to turn it off only to find that Monica was back on the screen again. Except this time, instead of him trying to follow her, it was she who appeared to be running, arms open and hair flowing, toward the very spot where the narrator found himself. And right in the very moment when the two should have coincided:

She passed right by, as if she never saw me. I was left speechless. I realized that it was not Anna that Monica was looking for, but me. Only she had arrived 45 years earlier to this spot, I had not even been born, and inevitably she went straight past me. In that moment I looked up into the sky vertically, a cloud covered the island, a cloud that had the same form, the same perimeter, as the island, it was like having a map of the Earth in the sky. (98-99)

This final scene illuminates a couple of interesting ideas. On the one hand, it is another instance in which the re-wreader plays around with different media in such a way that it destabilizes not only our understanding of film and literature in particular but also the nature of “reality” as well. In other words, in this final scene when the narrator and actress Monica Vitti presumably “meet” in one final, magical moment, the text plays out not only a moment of tension between the real and virtual, but at the same time perhaps points toward a more encompassing element of the text of Fernández Mallo: this scene is a microcosm of the re-wreaderly esthetic in the sense that it reflects the “intermedial” nature of these texts as they straddle the line between the real and virtual, between the lived and mediated, between the written/filmic and digital.

What is more, after the failed encounter between the narrator and the actress from the movie, the image of the map in the sky once again points toward a moment of contemplation of maps which in turn recalls their importance in the oeuvre of Borges and how they influence the way we understand reality. That is to say, the image of the map in the clouds seems like not only an interesting connection to the previous story in which the narrator virtually visited the sites of Passaic, but more importantly as a metaphor for reflecting on the nature of the construction of reality. In the mass of clouds in the sky, just like in the mass of objects in the world on the ground, the viewer seems free to see pretty much whatever he or she wants. It just depends on the filter through which the viewer sees the world around him or herself, be that filter “reality,” “hyperreality,” or “virtual reality.” The experience that we might call the “real” is simply the individual, subjective perspective/lens through which we gaze out onto the world around us. The gaze of the narrator in this final scene, directed upward toward the sky, reveals the ephemeral nature of that sense of the “real” in that just as soon as the clouds produce a map of the island, just as quickly it disappears as the clouds change shape.

Returning again to the initial point of comparison between the function of maps in Borges and Fernández Mallo, what I think Borges tries to convey with this fable is that any semblance of mimesis and origin are difficult if not impossible as we are left only with an infinity of traces. In that sense, not only in the literary world of Borges but also in the techxtually poetic world of these re-writers, each inserted book, map, citation, email, Tweet, blog is simply dissolved in another, leaving only traces along the way. Fernández Mallo, just like Borges, constructs a labyrinth-like textual environment which undermines both authorship and authority in order to build a text that behaves more like a

rhizome, or what I have referred to as an interneticized text. Perhaps the most salient feature of these re-wreaderly texts, the ultimate meaning, is the search itself, the search as such.

The analogy of the maps and their preoccupation with origins as well as the survivability of traces/the real/hyperreal, in addition to the possibility of something withering away or being lost forever, seems like an appropriate segue to talk about something that this project has not addressed up to this point. That is: why did the Nocilla authors/re-writers choose to publish their works in print media when they are so influenced by and concerned with technology? Wouldn't one have expected them to publish these works digitally, like in an ebook format? And the questions are particularly germane, seeing as how these texts are so interneticized with their techxtual poetics, not to mention that it seems somewhat ironic that a medium as archaic and traditional as the book, a medium that is supposedly in the last throes of existence, be the medium of choice for these highly digitalized re-writers to create their re-wreaderly texts.

When I began this project and started to see how influenced these writers seemed to be by the Internet and digital culture, I perhaps naively assumed that I would be able to access their texts both in the traditional print format and in some sort of ebook. Much to my surprise, however, they were all exclusively available only in print format (today, one of the Nocilla trilogy books, *Nocilla Lab*, is actually available in an Amazon.com Kindle edition). The one anomaly in the group was *El hacedor de Borges (Remake)*. According to numerous publications Fernández Mallo supposedly made a completely digital version available, with its own links to videos and other digital media. But I have not been able to find nor secure a copy. What I have found though are a host of "digital supplements" to

El hacedor de Borges (Remake), available on the web, in which Fernández Mallo presents a web-based digital contribution to the “remake” of the Borges literary universe. Despite this anomaly, I continue to think that the decision to use the print medium was based on a number of factors.

For one, despite all the calls and proclamations that the book is dead or that literature is over, books and authors still enjoy something of an aura, some element of prestige, that makes being part of that club an attractive element. Not to mention that being a professional writer in Spain is particularly challenging given that piracy on the internet is such a deeply embedded cultural practice which means almost out of necessity these re-writers need to turn to the traditional model of the printed book. Two, the market for digital literature as a genre (like a truly hypertextual textual experience) is just not there yet, not to mention that writing and marketing literature online is still in its infancy. What is more, recent statistics suggest that the sale of ebooks is actually in decline.³³ Three, while there is no overarching sense of nostalgia for a previous moment of time when the book was dominant in any of these texts, the ephemeral nature of the digital does seem to permeate these texts, especially in the case of *Algunas ideas buenisimas que el mundo se va a perder*, where not only the title but numerous digital citations and appropriations embody the fact that the digital can disappear forever at

³³ An article in *The Guardian* on March 14, 2017 declares that “Ebook sales continue to fall as younger generations drive appetite for print” as sales of ebooks in the UK decline by 4% in 2016 while sales of printed books rose by 2%. In the *Los Angeles Times* on May 1, 2017, another article declares that “No, ebooks aren't dying — but their quest to dominate the reading world has hit a speed bump.” According to the article, ebook sales were down in 2016 by 18.7% compared to the previous year and the overall share of the market by ebooks was down to 17.6% from a high of 21.7%. Meanwhile, sales of hardcover books were higher than ebooks in 2016 for the first time in five years.

almost any given moment. That in turn would seem to be a potential catalyst for playing these concerns and ideas out via the printed text. Finally, the destabilizing nature of these re-wreaderly texts simply would not have the same effect on the Internet, for example, that they do in print medium where the tension of the literary production, appropriations and authorship are on full display precisely because they challenge the status quo and insert themselves directly into the literary landscape where they react and respond to every other text in that vast literary labyrinth.

And perhaps no better a literary figure for Fernández Mallo to “remake” than Borges to underscore this point. The experience of reading a re-wreaderly text is a particularly interesting one in the way that it plays around with the creation of fiction. In some sense, as a reader of these texts, our suspension of disbelief, the necessary mindset for the entrance into fiction, is not fully engaged because so much of the interneticized text seems all too familiar to a contemporary reader. The coexistence of random musings, snippets of information, chat logs, instant messages, Tweets, emails, Google searches, blogs, and literary appropriations looks and feels like the relationship that the reader has with the world outside the text. It seduces us with its familiarity.

But when these re-writers start to manipulate those elements by applying them in unexpected or unfamiliar ways or using them in ways that those elements are not capable of yet, it disrupts the experience by triggering the suspension of disbelief, by calling attention to the fictional nature of the text. At first, with Google and the interneticized text, the novel brings the reader closer, displaces or clouds their suspension of disbelief because it seems so familiar, it resonates with the reader’s extra literary experience, that world outside the text. But when they start to play around with those

elements, like the semi-science fiction scene when the narrator of *El hacedor de Borges* (*Remake*) engages in small talk with the blurry individuals captured by the Google Maps cameras when they canvassed that area, it restores that distance again because we realize that it is not a reality but a simulation of something.

And it is precisely that “something” that is so problematic because as readers of the book we know that we have a something but that something is not a writing that is completely recognizable nor readable in a traditional sense because of its re-wreaderly nature. In other words, it is not a writing that lends itself easily to classification (Is it a novel? Is it a docufiction?) nor does it present us with a plot or an overarching objective or meaning. No, it seems to operate on a different level, a re-wreaderly level (or perhaps something more like a “re-wreaderality”) because at the same time it both is and isn’t mimetic, both is and isn’t referential, both is and isn’t related to reality and literature.

This uncertainty around what exactly these texts represent, their tendency to escape definition, is something that Fernández Mallo considers a salient characteristic of “contemporary disciplines” in general and of “postpoesia” in particular: “If there is anything that certain disciplines that can really be called contemporary share, it is the imprecision at the time of identifying them, structuring them and classifying them” (93). As was mentioned in the previous chapter, *Postpoesía: Hacia un nuevo paradigma* (2009), is a lengthy essay in which Fernández Mallo argues that Spanish poetry has fallen behind and in order to essentially reinvent itself and become relevant, to make itself contemporary, it needs to experiment with the sciences. What happens when something like poetry (and for Fernández Mallo this is used broadly to also include “poetics” and literature) begins to experiment, especially with the sciences and information (the essay

refers to much of the information that we are bombarded with today (advertising, social media, random conversations overheard in public, data, etc.) as “junk information” or “spam,” and sees it as a sort of *prima materia* for *postpoesía*) is that it begins to break away from its historic mold, its artistic orthodoxies, and become something entirely new.

In order to make this point, Fernández Mallo departs from the idea of “extrarradio” and its relationship to the works of Tony Smith that appeared in the magazine *Artforum* in 1966. This publication describes how Smith visited a highway construction zone in the outskirts of New York after hours, once everyone took off for the night, and he would drive on the half-finished highway. During that experience, which is seen as one of the origins of *land art* and which Smith described as a type of ecstasy, Smith writes that “it seemed as though there was a reality there that had never before had an artistic expression” (95). This experience in this “extraradial” space, then, becomes one of the hallmarks of the postpoetic experience according to Fernández Mallo precisely because of the way in which two seemingly disparate and unfamiliar things, art and an abandoned, unfinished highway, are fused into something new. Just like the fusion of the poetic and the scientific, the “extraradial” space, equally as unfamiliar and unexpected, opens the door to something new, it “produces an effect of liberation from the numerous points of view that we had about poetry and art” (97).

So, for Fernández Mallo, a reader’s uncertainty and even confusion upon opening up what I have called a “re-wreaderly” text is exactly what one is supposed to feel as seen through the lens of the postpoetic perspective. That is because the postpoetic eschews definition since it both is and isn’t so many things, “the postpoetic is that which is not science, is not poetry (orthodox), is not advertising, is not design, is not architecture, is

not a novel, is not thought...but that, potentially, shares elements from every one of these. It is not known yet what it is, but it is” (97). In now typical re-wreaderly or postpoetic fashion (by appropriating someone else’s words and tweaking them for a different purpose), Fernández Mallo completes his exploration of the postpoetic with the idea of a “*deriva postpoética*” that he coins from the words of Guy Debord.

The concept of “extrarradio” echoes back to the fifties when the Situationist Internationals were utilizing a similar approach, albeit with completely different aims as they were more playfully-political. To carry out their approach, Guy Debord and others invented the idea of *dérive*, which essentially consisted in wandering around the city, either in groups or individually, with the goal of creating a “psychogeographic” map of the itinerary. In his essay, Fernández Mallo plays off of the words of Guy Debord as they relate to *dérive* in order to alter them for the purpose of exploring the idea of a “postpoetic *dérive*.” I will reproduce both citations below so that the transformation of the appropriation can be appreciated:

Among the situationist procedures, *dérive* presents itself as an uninterrupted transitory technique across different spaces. The concept of *dérive* is inextricably tied to the effects of the psychogeographic nature and the assertion of a playfully-constructive behavior that opposes it in every aspect as they relate to the classical notion of a trip or a walk. (99)

Among the postpoetic procedures, the postpoetic *dérive* presents itself as an uninterrupted transitory technique across different spaces: poetry, science, architecture, economics, advertising, etc. The concept of the postpoetic *dérive* is inextricably tied to the effects of the postpoetic nature and the assertion of a

playfully-constructive behavior that opposes it in every aspect as they relate to the classical notion of poetry, science, architecture, economics, advertising, etc. (99)

In this way, not only does Fernández Mallo play out another example of the re-wreaderly text through the alteration of an appropriation, but more importantly, he underscores the destabilizing nature of the postpoetic *dérive* which seeks to create something new out of experimentation with unorthodox spaces. In other words, the fusion of significantly disparate elements (urban space, science, poetry, architecture, advertising, the internet, etc.) is what gives rise to a new form in which all the specific and orthodox functions of poetry and science for example, break down. In their place, is what Tony Smith refers to as a new space “without tradition, without cultural precedents” in which one finds the sense of a “reality that never before had any artistic expression” (101).

If we return once again to the little experiment with which we opened this final chapter, it could be said that there is something unorthodox and artistically expressive about the search results page from the Internet as well. In the process of making my way through these search results, it started to feel as though I were sifting through the raw material of a re-wreader (or postpoet?) in the process of writing a re-wreaderly text. That is to say, the Nocilla books by Agustín Fernández Mallo and the internet inspired text by Alberto Olmos along with the unique text of Vicente Luis Mora were manifestations of the web experience in the way that they either brought together a myriad of seemingly disparate snippets and bytes from the web or attempted to explicitly reproduce the experience of surfing the web via reproductions of search pages, emails, text messaging and blogs.

As I sifted through the search results I began to imagine the creation of a book that would take each individual search result, click on it to reveal more details, and then simply copy/paste that material onto a page. With the accumulation of vignettes, these little snippets of information would either go nowhere (for example, the wikitionary.org citation for George Landow would simply present the context of when he coined the term “wreader,” much like the random scientific musings that populated Fernández Mallo’s books) or they would take on the appearance of representing a more significant thread in the literary framework (for example, one snippet would present the information surrounding the sale of a house on W. Reader St. for a certain amount of money but then in a subsequent snippet later on in the text we would read about the individuals who purchased the home or an event of some perceived importance that happened at the house. Or we would read the reprinted Tweets from the Twitter account of Sally Wreader. This would be similar to the recurring presence of the shoes in the lone poplar tree in *Nocilla Dream* or the Twitter feeds in *Algunas ideas buenísimas que el mundo se va a perder*).

Taken as a whole, the re-wreaderly text becomes a random mix of snippets about science, technology, art, film, stories from the web, literature, appropriations of fiction or any other digital artifact that calls the re-wreader’s attention. It is a text artificially bound by the confines of the book cover as the content of the snippets not only reproduces the visual experience of the Internet but in many instances beckons the reader to go outside the text to the web to either verify a link or familiarize themselves with a topic. Much like a web-surfer navigates his/her way through the web by clicking through the pages so too does the reader of a re-wreaderly text as they figuratively “click” their way through the

pages of the text. What is more, with time the reading experience comes to be a space defined neither exclusively by the weight of the printed word nor the lightness of the digital universe but by the curious interplay of both, a constant yet seemingly natural coming and going between the two. The reader of the re-wreaderly text moves beyond an initial frustration to experience a sense of pleasure in the constant pull of intertextuality and internetization, of the rules of the book and the rules of the web, of the rules of the author and the rules of the re-wreader. The result: a textual space at once strange yet familiar in which a search for meaning, textual stability or origins gives itself over to the pleasure of the search, a search for something or nothing, a search for the search, a search in which all the material of the world (printed and digital) is there to be used and repackaged, freed/separated/torn from the forces of intellectual property rights or copyright.

GENERAL CONCLUSION: IT TEXTS AND THE FUTURE OF IDEAS

This dissertation began by looking at the allure that new technologies like the Internet had for a new group of Spanish writers of the so-called Nocilla Generation. Despite being influenced by and writing about the Internet though, what distinguishes some members of this group is their preference for the more traditional print media. This curious fusion of new and old technologies is what became the principle point of departure for this project, which sought to analyze not only the way in which these writers engaged with new technologies like the Internet in their novels, what I referred to as a “techxtual poetics” in the opening chapter, but perhaps more importantly how the fusion of the Internet and print culture raised interesting preoccupations about literature, authorship and the future of writing.

The Nocilla Generation is a curious literary site because on the one hand it could be said that the engagement with new technologies represents a way for them to distinguish themselves, to become a status symbol of sorts, because of the inherent “newness” in all of today’s constantly changing technologies. This is underscored in the way they are active not only on the literary scene but also on social media, blogs and video sites like YouTube. Not to mention the way in which their texts and their critical positions expressed in essays (like Fernández Mallo’s essay *Postpoesía*) reflect a certain level of frustration with and criticism of the Spanish literary status quo. To a certain degree then, these texts break with the Spanish literary canon in that not only are they highly digitized (skirting the perceived tendency toward “realism” in Spanish literature) but also much more global in nature in the sense that this is not a literature that presents

some specific element of Spanish society nor some unique Spanish character or vision of the world but instead situates itself more in the camp of a globalized literature. Put more succinctly, there is not anything particularly “Spanish” about this literature except for the Castilian language used to write it.

But despite the highly digitized nature of their texts, not to mention the omnipresence of the writers on social media and blogs, many members of this generation have intentionally chosen the printed book as their media of choice for their literature. That decision, one which brings together new and old technologies, is a crucial one for it is that fusion that makes possible the inherent tension between those two technologies which in turn makes possible the lengthy analyses that this project undertook as they relate to the production of literature in the digital age, authorship and the future of writing. As the project delved deeper and deeper into the techxtually inspired literary environment of the Nocilla Generation writers, it became increasingly clearer that not only do these texts engage with new technologies like the Internet, but more importantly they reveal centuries-old concerns about the nature of literature, authorship and writing that are being challenged if not completely undermined in the digital age.

Chapter One explored the idea of “techxtual poetics,” an intentional misspelling that fuses the idea of “technology” and “textual” into one word, in several novels from the Nocilla Generation. After a rather lengthy literary review and a recognition of the inherent challenges in writing about anything related to technology because of the speed with which it changes, the project sought to focus on the idea of an “internetized text” as one of the principal manifestations of a “techxtual poetics.” Perhaps the most important point of departure for this project, when compared with much of the critical

work related to the rise of the digital and literature, is how it focuses on the digital in the printed book instead of the printed book in the digital. That is to say, the tendency for many critical approaches to literature in the digital age has been to look at all the new possibilities for literary production in digital media (blogs, interactive novels, collective real time stories, etc). That tendency has underscored a particular anxiety around the future of the book in the digital age which in turn has spurred an almost constant drum beat of apocalyptic eulogies about the death of the book, the death of the novel and even the death of literature. What I find so particularly interesting about this group of writers, and what makes this project unique in its focus, is how these re-writers eschew some of those anxieties by deliberately engaging with everything that new technologies like the Internet have to offer, but they do it by inserting those technological elements within the confines of the printed book. That playing out of the digital within the printed book, instead of its opposite, is the critical axis for this first chapter.

To arrive at the idea of an “internetized text,” we looked at a couple of liminal examples, *El blog del Inquisidor* by Lorenzo Silva (2008) and Alberto Olmos’ 2014 novel *Alabanza*. While each of these examples showed signs of being inspired and influenced by technology and in particular the Internet (the former presented itself as if it were a blog while the latter centered on the thematic as it developed its storyline out of the act of writing without access to the Internet), their overall composition was shown to still be more “literarily” grounded than technologically motivated. With Alberto Olmos’ 2008 novel *Algunas ideas buenísimas que el mundo se va a perder*, we explored the first explicitly “internetized text” and then the implicitly “internetized text” in the case of Agustín Fernández Mallo’s 2006 novel *Nocilla Dream*. In each example the analysis

sought to demonstrate how the structural composition of these novels along with their content worked together to create a “techxtually poetic” landscape. I then suggested that one of the defining characteristics of this technologically inspired literature is the snippit, a small, digitally captured morsel of information that can easily be copied, extracted and inserted into another digital space.

As a result of this internetization of literature and the preference for the snippit, this project suggested that these texts became the site for a destabilization and questioning of the nature of authorship. That is to say, as the proliferation of data becomes increasingly more frequent and widespread, along with the preference for exchanging smaller and smaller bits of information, the origins of those snippits are lost and as a result the understanding of the author as a source of originality is undermined. To explore this point, this project examined the manifestation of snippits via the use of citations and appropriations in such texts as *Algunas ideas buenísimas que el mundo se va a perder*, *Nocilla Dream*, *Nocilla Experience* and *Circular 07*. In these texts, the citations and appropriations are presented as both real and fictitious, and their usage is one of the hallmark practices of these writers as they navigate a new literary landscape in which traditional understandings of authorship are being challenged as information and literature become digitalized and therefore increasingly more exchangeable and malleable.

If the traditional idea of authorship is being challenged, what is taking its place? I argued in the final chapter that instead of authors it would perhaps be more accurate to look at these texts as the products of “re-wreaders writing re-wreaderly texts.” The base word “wreader” was coined by George Landow and refers to the idea of readers who play

an active role in the writing process online where they can post comments or thoughts directly within the text. I think we are living in a time of such widespread information sharing that almost everything has a hint of “re” to it in the sense that it has been reposted, resent, retweeted, reloaded, etc. I coin the idea of “re-writers” and link it up with the ideas of Roland Barthes about writerly and readerly texts to coin the idea of a “re-writerly” text. To make this point, the project undertook a detailed analysis of a couple of stories within Agustín Fernández Mallo’s polemical publication *El hacedor de Borges (Remake)* and suggested that what defines many of these texts is a preoccupation with the search. In other words, these texts create a textual space at once strange yet familiar in which a search for meaning, textual stability or origins gives itself over to the pleasure of the search, a search for something or nothing, a search for the search, a search in which all the material of the world (printed and digital) is there to be used and repackaged, freed/separated/torn from the forces of intellectual property rights or copyright and reinserted into a different space by the re-writer.

In that sense, the as-yet undiscussed double meaning of the title of this project “iTexts” points us toward another thought provoking implication of these internetized texts. On the one hand, the title was an intentional play on the famous “i” that precedes so many of the ubiquitous products put out by Apple like the iPad, iPod and iMac. When Apple debuted its first “i” product the iMac, co-founder Steve Jobs stated that the “iMac” was the marriage of the excitement of the Internet (the “i”) with the simplicity of the Macintosh (the Mac). Since that moment, the “i” that precedes any word has commonly been understood to represent the Internet. But on the other hand, I also chose that title so that it would point toward a lower case version of the subject pronoun “i” as a subtle but

suggestive gesture to the discourses surrounding the idea of the “Me Generation” and the prominence that the “i” has in Internet culture and in particular social media. That is to say, and I don’t pretend to be able to succinctly develop this idea into anything more than an interesting aside given the countless publications on the subjects of the “Me Generation,” the notion of the “self” in the digital age and the role of social media, but what I also see manifesting itself on some level in these texts is a customized, highly individual literary production that is a reflection of the way in which the individual experiences the Internet.

In other words, I would argue that an inherent element of our digital age, and in particular the way in which the individual interacts with the Internet and social media, is that it is an experience that is incredibly customized and tailored to the perspective and experience of the individual. One’s Internet search habits are tracked so that the browser can provide a customized/personalized searching experience. The articles that we read or the links that we click on are tracked as well which in turn provides the algorithms the necessary feedback that they need to tailor each web browser to the user’s interests. Things show up for us in the virtual environment not coincidentally or randomly, nor even collectively among larger groups of people, but are instead the result of the complex machines and calculations that attempt to predict what it is that might interest us. Our activity on the Internet becomes in some way the building blocks of our virtual genome, or using the language of this project, the massive pile of snippets that are combined to build the customized sense of self that the Internet makes possible.

But it’s not just the individualized experience of the Internet that leaves its mark in these texts but also the effect of how this technology has bridged the gap between time

and space. And I would propose that in allowing for both an individualized experience of the digital world and the compaction of time and space (that the Internet makes possible) opens up in these texts the disruptions that we see in them as they relate to authorship and the nature of writing. Let me explain. In a time prior to the Internet, knowledge, information and literature resided in physical spaces like libraries and were almost exclusively published on paper in books, magazines and newspapers. Time seemed to follow the chronological measurements that we use to track the passage of time and in some sense the past, present and future resided in distinctly separate silos. I would also suggest that there existed something beyond those physical spaces, what Plato called the world of ideas, an undefined space to which minds would direct themselves in moments of thought or creative inspiration, a place out there, outside of books, outside of libraries to which we directed thought, like a collective repository in the sky or a communal intertextual aura.

But today with the Internet those gaps and distances are being challenged as they are now reducible to the smartphone that we hold in our hands or the computer that resides on our desktop. We no longer have to physically visit spaces like libraries, nor hold objects like books in our hands. Nor do we have access to just a fleeting sense of presence as an accessible past and lurking future compete for our attention. And in that transition to being able to essentially hold the world in our hands, albeit a virtual world referred to as the world-wide-web, I argue that not only has our relationship with the world and word changed radically, as demonstrated in the examples of “re-writers and their re-writerly texts,” but we may be ushering in a period that I would call the “end of original ideas.”

As I suggested in the introduction, I believe this generation of writers is uniquely positioned to address these issues precisely because they have intimate and first-hand knowledge of both worlds, print and digital. To use the analogy of Plato's cave, they still remember what life was like outside and before entering the cave unlike our newer generations that very soon will only know life inside the cave. Also, it seems as if instead of contributing to the world of ideas, to the growing body of information and knowledge built over centuries by humans, that technology has caused a revolutionary turn of technological self-referentiality in the sense that it is technology that dictates the ideas.

That is to say, the apparatuses that we hold in our hands engage each of us in different ways, especially according to our age and demographic, but I would argue that for younger generations the apparatus is the main objective in and of itself and not so much the supposed possibilities that that apparatus makes possible. In other words, the apparatus, be it a smartphone or computer, armed with its operating system, programs and applications, essentially directs the user, beckons the user to engage in a certain way: "here's an app for you to post pictures; here's an app for you to find a mate; here's an app for you to send random thoughts," etc. It is a self-contained system designed to be self-referential and in that self-referentiality we can see how the borders of the limits of knowledge/information/creativity are being flirted with because instead of an infinitely growing "world of ideas" that we contributed to and pointed toward in moments of thought and creative expression, we now have a finite, almost hermetic system called the world-wide-web that is controlled and manipulated by the very machines that we use to access it. I argue that those same machines, instead of opening a vast new frontier of

thought in the digital universe, have interrupted if not paralyzed processes of thought that is ushering in a new period that I call the end of original ideas.

This is a bold statement and I don't pretend for it to go unchallenged but I do think that it is a thought provoking idea made visible by the texts that were analyzed in this project. Perhaps at its most basic level, the practices of "remaking" and "appropriating" already in and of themselves point toward a literary environment in which new ideas are being created by "remaking" or "remixing" the ideas of others. By "remaking" something, while there is a sense of newness in the new creation, by recycling ideas from others the argument could be made that that practice points toward some degree of finitude in the realm of ideas, some sense that new ideas are born out of recombining already existing ideas.

The prominence of the snippet in those texts and in particular the use of citations and appropriations laid bare the inner workings of these texts and their affection for using the ideas of others to create new ones, but at the same time suggest in that recycling of ideas perhaps we are running out of them. This last point is where things get a bit complicated because how could we run out of ideas and who would even suggest such a thing? My argument for this statement is based on the belief that with the creation of the Internet and the world-wide-web, and the ability to essentially hold the "world" in our hands and access all the elements of that "world" instantaneously, the effect of exposing the human mind to the infinite vastness of that "world" has had what I think is the unintended reverse effect: it has paralyzed and even shut down thought. Instead of being a catalyst for an amazing and unprecedented intellectual and informational revolution, I would argue that the Internet and the www have provided the illusion that the world is

now a knowable and accessible entity and as a result of that illusion I propose that we are now entering a time in which not only will the prefix “re-“ take on an increasingly more important role but we could be entering a phase that has accelerated the end of original ideas.

Literary theory has not created a significant school or approach since the late twentieth century and only fuels the positions that we are in a post-theoretical period. A recent podcast from the TED Talks series on NPR featured several scientists who argued that while important improvements will continue to be realized in the sciences, in the area of energy and batteries for example, those improvements and changes will be on a much smaller scale as the sciences in general get closer and closer to the limits of the resources used in those areas.

In a recent article in the *Harvard Law Review* called “Are We Running Out of Trademarks? An Empirical Study of Trademark Depletion and Congestion,” writers Barton Beebe and Jeanne C. Fromer investigate the idea that we are running out of words to be trademarked. For the authors, trademark law has always departed from the position that there exists an inexhaustible supply of unclaimed trademarks. But they point toward popular media and a series of articles to suggest that maybe that is no longer the case. A recent *New York Times* article suggests that “[...] almost every naturally occurring word has been claimed, which is why namers so often arrive at portmanteaus (Accenture derives from ‘accent’ and ‘future’) or drop vowels (Flickr and Tumblr) or change letters (Lyft). For its part, Bloomberg View recently ran an article with the headline “We’re Going to Run Out of Company Names.” The article highlighted an entrepreneur’s description of how difficult it was for his company to find a new name for itself: “Every

name we liked, either somebody already had it or it wasn't trademarkable or it meant something pornographic in another language word." Similar articles have been published that describe the difficulties in finding names for beer or breweries, for cosmetics or for musical bands.

Even within technology itself the infinite potential it initially promised seems tenuous at best: we only need to recall the dot.com crash and the unintended social divisions exacerbated by social media as two examples of the limits and consequences of technology like the Internet. While merely anecdotal within this broader argument, I do believe there is something going on with words and ideas and their limits and as I mentioned at the beginning of this argument I would argue that literature as it presents itself in this project is another space in which we are getting closer to those limits. Ultimately, it is much too early to really try and get a handle on the implications and influence of the Internet on cultural bedrocks like literature. For now, readers and writers and editorials might want to make room for more re-writers and their re-writerly texts. Who knows, maybe someday they won't be seen so much as a site of authorial destabilization and literary re-reading as perhaps a once upon a time moment of literary creativity when books and literature and the Internet coexisted originally.

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PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

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Professor of Spanish
- 2003-2004 **University of Colorado at Boulder,**
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Adjunct instructor of Spanish
- 2003 **University of Colorado at Boulder**
Spanish Instructor. The Anderson Language Technology Center (ALTEC)
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PUBLICATIONS

Reviews

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