# From Page to Screen: Latin American Digital Literature

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In the opening paragraph of his seminal book *Gramophone, Film, Typewriting*, Friedrich Kittler famously stated "media determine our situation, which – in spite or because of it – deserves a description" (1999: xxxix). This means, roughly speaking, that the network of technologies and institutions that allow a given culture to select, conserve and process information, determines the nature of that culture. A medium is not just a communication channel that conveys a somehow unchanged 'content'; on the contrary, the materiality of a (new) medium entirely reshapes the cultural artefacts, practices and institutions through which we construct meaning. The emergence of new technologies thus leads to the emergence of new *epistemes*, and literature is, in that sense, a privileged territory in which to understand, explore –and also explode– the cognitive and social changes brought about by a new medium.

Sometimes it makes sense to spell out the obvious: the print book, which until the digital revolution had been the traditional receptacle of what we understand as literature, "is like a computer program in that it is a technology" (Hayles 57) –and only one step in a history of transitions in which an old medium has been replaced by a new one, each of which reconfigures what we understand and experience as literature. The book as a material medium is the result of several leaps that literature has undergone throughout its history from one medium to another, from orality to writing, from manuscript codex to printed book and, recently, from mechanically generated print to electronic textuality. The term 'leap' here does not mean that literature just leaves behind the previous form to become something new from scratch; rather, the process resembles a cannibalistic creature that appropriates "the

accumulated knowledge embedded in genres, poetic conventions, narrative structures, figurative tropes" of the past, to "inform the performances of the new medium" (Hayles 59), or, to use Bolter and Grusin's (2000) words, every new medium *remediates* the old ones by incorporating them into its own texture.

In a minimalist formulation, literature has moved from the printed characters of the page in a book to the computer screen. While 'reading' essentially meant turning pages and following letters sequentially, rarely accompanied by images, 'reading' on the screen turns into a multi-layered experience, in which the signs are multiplied – not only words or letters, but also still and moving images and sounds – and the role of the reader unfolds as she interacts with the computer.

This seemingly simple displacement brings about complex changes. On the one hand, it entails the emergence of a new form that has been differently termed as "electronic literature", "computer-based" or "digital literature" – the terminology varies. On the other hand, the displacement from page to screen is not restricted to the specificity of digital-born texts, but affects the whole literary field: under the impact of the digital, for example, the instances of legitimation are no longer deposited in traditional institutions such as the literary critic, or, in the editor who, when deciding whether to publish a book, is the first to sanction its literary value. Even the loss of the traditional place for purchasing books – the bookshop – , where advice would be provided by the diligent bookseller, entails a displacement in terms of legitimation – now it is an Amazon algorithm that recommends us what to buy.

The Electronic Literature Organization (ELO) defines 'electronic literature' as "works with an important literary aspect that take advantage of the capabilities and contexts provided by the stand-alone or networked computer" (https://eliterature.org/about). In a similar vein, Katherine Hayles contrasts 'digital-borne' and 'digital-born' literature at the

core of her definition: “Electronic literature, generally considered to exclude print literature that has been digitized, is by contrast ‘digital born’, a first-generation digital object created on a computer and (usually) meant to be read on a computer (3). Hayles highlights that ELO’s definition is “slightly tautological”, in that it assumes “pre-existing knowledge of what constitutes an important literary aspect” (3). Yet this is precisely what is called into question by digital works, since, as Hayles outlines, many electronic literature texts do not have recognizable words, virtually all have important visual components, and many have sonic –or others– effects as well. The loss of pre-eminence of the verbal component of a literary text leads Hayles to propose the broader category of “the literary” instead of “literature”, for “creative artworks that interrogates the histories, contexts, and productions of literature, including as well the verbal art of literature proper” (4). Thus, electronic literature represents not just the emergence of a new modality that can be confined to a corner or ‘niche’ of literature, but, on the contrary, an interrogation of the ontology of literature or “the literary”, i.e. what literature is today, in a digital landscape. The digital places literature in a *state of transition*, from an established or recognizable mode to a “trading zone” “in which different vocabularies, expertise, and expectations come together to see what might emerge from their intercourse” (Hayles 4).

Reading in the new medium requires the reader to perform operations that go far beyond sequentially turning pages and interpreting text. Reading becomes an interactive practice in which the distinction between writer and reader is blurred – as the term *wreader* describes. Interaction between the user and the interface is thus one of the key traits to define the medium-specificity of digital writing, but, precisely because it is so central, it has become an all-encompassing term that obscures the phenomenon rather than illuminating it. As George Landow puts it, “[interaction and interactivity] have been used so often and so badly that they have little exact meaning anymore” (41). Not all interaction, therefore, is equally

significant in the production of digital literature, as Espen Aarseth (1997) points out, who, by coining the term "ergodic literature", emphasizes that the interaction between user and interface must suppose a degree of effort that is absent in a trivial exchange. "In ergodic literature – underlines Aarseth – nontrivial effort is required to allow the reader to traverse the text" (1). The decisions that the reader makes – in following this or that link, in meaningfully combining the sounds, images and letters, in overcoming the disorientation – contribute to construct the text as much as the rules proposed by the 'author', which places both on an equal level and turns the relatively fixed meaning of the work into an open multiplicity.

Digital literature exposes the operations that are necessary for meaning construction, and one effective way to show them is through *frustrating* the expected ways to which the reader is used – one simple and frequent instance is by frustrating the linearity of the plot, in the Aristotelian sense, and spatializing temporality. Meaning as open and unstable, the blurring of boundaries between author and reader understood as occupying two radically different positions, or the critique of the work as a closed and self-sufficient entity are not, naturally, a novelty brought about by digital writing. These issues have been at the core of postructuralism and deconstruction, although they have mostly been discussed in relation to the Western canon. What digital writing does, as George Landow exposed in the highly influential *Hyptertext. The Convergence of Contemporary Literary Theory and Technology* (1992), republished as *Hypertext 3.0: Critical Theory and New Media in an Era of Gobalization* (2006) is to put theory into practice. In Landow's approach, critical theory illuminates our experience of hypermedia and vice versa; a natural convergence occurs, a "shock of recognition", in which the rhizomatic and decentered text finally comes alive.

## Digital literature and/in Latin America

Is digital literature a global phenomenon? The possibility or necessity of a national or regional inscription of digital literature – as suggested in the title of this article – is a disputed issue. Some critics affirm that digital literature is essentially global and difficult to confine to the clear-cut boundaries of countries or regions. In discussing this topic, Leonardo Flores (2017) questions narratives of national and regional literary traditions when it comes to electronic literature, arguing that the most meaningful connections are to be found in digital technologies and international influences. Digital literature written in Latin America establishes a dialogue with a global territory – and the changing landscape of technological evolution – more than with regional issues, traditions and language. Flores wonders: "en una era de globalización acelerada, ¿Se puede distinguir la literatura electrónica estadounidense, latinoamericana, caribeña de la europea?" [in an era of accelerated globalization, is it possible to distinguish electronic literature from the US, Latin America and the Caribbean from European Literature?] and answers: "la literatura electrónica es electrónica antes de ser caribeña o latinoamericana, aunque sin negar los temas y tradiciones culturales que han formado al autor" [electronic literature is electronic prior to being Caribbean or Latin American, though without denying the cultural traditions and concerns/topics that have shaped the author] (Flores 9).

Flores proposes to distinguish different phases of development instead of different geographical areas: the first phase is that of 'acercamiento', in which a culture 'imagines' works that would actually have a more effective inscription in digital media – the examples proposed are *Ficciones* (1944) by Jorge Luis Borges or *Rayuela* (1963) by Julio Cortázar.

The second and third phases refer to a progressive exploration and mastery of the possibilities offered by the medium, which also include one –relative– institutionalization: the formation of networks, the emergence of a specialized criticism, the addition of digital literature to curricula, and the creation of anthologies or festivals. A significant difference regarding the degree of institutionalization can be observed in the institutions founded to promote, curate and preserve digital literature: while the *Electronic Literature Organization* (ELO), the most important in the field was founded in 1999, the *Latin American Electronic Literature Network*, which brings together Latin American artists, academics and collectives (litElat) was founded just recently, in 2015.

From a perspective that emphasizes *rupture* instead of *continuities* – the central debate on the digital as novelty or the digital as continuation of forms previously practiced in print literature, such as *El jardín de los senderos que se bifurcan* or *Rayuela* would demonstrate – the cultural specificity seems to lose importance in the face of global and deterritorialized codes. When Flores describes the fourth and last phase, that of "adoption" – which is, in fact, an ongoing phase in which electronic literature is gaining a broader audience beyond the *niche* of experimentation – he affirms that electronic literature "está acercándose a la cuarta fase en Europa y EE. UU" [is approaching the 4th phase in Europe and the United States] (7), which tacitly places the development of digital literature in Latin America one step behind them. Thus, in the postnational scene, regions still seem to count, and the place of Latin America as *delayed* in relation to the temporality of the 'new' resonates strongly with the long debate on Latin America's temporal 'time lag' and incomplete modernity.

Claire Taylor and Thea Pitman hold another view, and emphasize continuity instead of rupture and novelty. In their book *Latin American Identity in Online Cultural Production* (2013), they focus on "the transformations or continuations that cultural products and

practices such as hypertext fictions, net.art, blogs and online performance art, as well as web-based projects that go beyond generic boundaries, perform with respect to a series of prominent Latin American(ist) discourses" (1). The discourses and conceptualizations of Latin American-nes analysed in their book are "the mapping of the entity called 'Latin America'; the Lettered City as defining the dissemination of power in the emergent Latin American nations; the magical real as encapsulated in the narration of the settlement of Macondo; the discourse of racial mixing or *mestizaje*; the dichotomy of civilisation versus barbarism; and the concept and practice of revolution" (23).

The issue of locatedness is one of the central contemporary dilemmas in Internet Studies. The importance of Latin American online cultural practices is that it is in these practices where some of the most fruitful and critical engagements with this dilemma can be found (Taylor and Pitman 2). Therefore, online cultural practices from Latin America, far from being detached from the location where they are produced, engage critically –by adapting, articulating, transmuting – with the discourses that have been central in the history of Latin American literature and the construction –or deconstruction– of cultural identity. In this line, the authors reject the thesis that globalization can be equated to cultural homogeneity; new media are not always the main tool of global or "informational" capitalism – to use Castells' words – and do not always result in the imposition of a globalised, homogenised identity. On the contrary, "information and communication technologies as a motor for globalisation, can (…) provide greater room for expression of local identities, or for identities that negotiate between the local and the global" (Claire and Pitman 11). Thus, digital works exist – and have to be read – as constant dialogues that are both synchronic and diachronic: "diachronic dialogue with prior existing literary, cultural and artistic forms, and synchronic dialogue with contemporary, offline and online concerns" (14) – such as the close relationship between some digital works and digital activism demonstrates.

The discussion about the specificity of Latin American digital writing relates to the debate about the validity of Latin Americanism as a field of studies: in the transnational or postnational contemporary landscape, is it still valid to insist on area studies? Online practices clearly problematize location since "a work may be produced by authors/creators from a variety of different geographical locations, hosted in another one, and consumed/recreated by users in yet other ones" (19). Online positions are, in this sense, not attached to fixed points, but mobile, dispersed and multiple. Nevertheless, this does not necessarily mean that the concept of region has been superseded, or that cultural and national identities no longer matter in what is frequently termed a 'postnational' landscape. Rather, as Taylor and Pitman suggest, it is the classic concept of region that has to be rethink, one in which identity, territory and citizenship are no longer tightly bound together (20). With this in mind, mapping Latin American digital practices – or digital literature – relies not on assigning fixed points of production or consumption, but on tracing the dialogues that these works establish with central Latin American issues and concerns as well as their engagement with a cultural tradition that is considered as belonging/specific to the region. To put it differently, to assign the label "Latin American" to a digital work is a matter of the cultural dialogue within which the author decides to place the work, rather than a matter of specific technological codes and digital practices. The work's 'language' is not only the interplay – as it is commonly addressed – between human and computer languages, but also between cultural and computer codes; a culture that is here embedded in Spanish and its long, complex, and heterogeneous but *located*, matrix.

Finally, Claudia Kozak (2107) also rejects approaches that associate technological issues with novelty. Her hypothesis is that because of its location – not only geographical but concerning economic underdevelopment, interculturalism and glocalization – "Latin American electronic literature tightens an imaginary string which could be called

'technological modernization'" (56). This implies a critical approach to the ideology of technological modernization, which in many cases tends to obscure the inequalities and power relations that inflect technology. Unlike digital works created in other parts of the world, in Latin America the issues of power and social inequality, as well as the difficult negotiation of interculturality, and the paradoxes of globalization are at the core of the reflection. Latin American digital literature is not naïvely fascinated with technology: it knows that for many people global informational developments do not necessarily imply any improvement. As Kozak argues, while on the one hand, these works "don't refuse to be part of the global informational world", on the other – and here lies their specificity – "they discuss from within 'how to be together' in a world which also contains many exclusions" (56).

## A (Brief) Kaleidoscope of Digital Literature in Latin America

According to Claudia Kozak, the first Latin American electronic literature works are *IBM* (1966) by Argentinean Omar Gancedo and *Le tombeau de Mallarme* (1972) by Brazilian Erthos Albino de Souza. *IBM* consists of a three short poems codified in IBM cards, while *Le tombeau de Mallarme* are a series of ten visual poems printed by a computer after the manipulation of software prepared for temperature measurement (Kozak 58). These two brief texts, which inaugurated digital production, were to be followed during the '80s by several experimentations that include works such as "Soneto só prá vê" (1982) by Daniel Santiago / Luciano Moreira (Brazil), a visual poem generated by programming in TAL/II language, "Pulsar" (1984) by Augusto de Campos / Olhar Eletrônico (Brazil), a computer-generated animation of a visual poem by Augusto de Campos, or "Fotomontaje/Poema madi" by Ladislao Pablo Györi (Argentina) (Kozak 2019).

In the ‘90s, and with the opening of the Internet to the public space, digital works multiplied exponentially. One of the characteristics of digital literature is the multiplicity of genres that are grouped under this category. On the one hand, it is possible to assign two great modes or affiliations to the classic genres of narrative and poetry; on the other hand, generic proliferation cannot be reduced to the divisions of traditional genres because the components and operations that produce digital texts exceed verbal signs and reading as the operation of turning the page until the end of the book. Thus, among the genres of electronic literature are those best known and most developed in Latin America – such as digital poetry and hypertext fiction – but also works that include automatic text generation or collaborative online creation. An empirical taxonomy of digital literature must include not only the classic generic distinctions, but also other components: a) its *media*, which answers the question ‘how do we access the object?’ (for example through an application, CD- CD-ROM/DVD-ROM/USB key/Floppy Disk, Virtual Reality Gear, Installation, Mobile Phone, Tablet/Ipad, Internet); b) its *format*, which responds to the question ‘what shapes the object?’ and refers to the various formal elements or media that can be found within the indexed object (such as graphs, text/image/sound generators, codes, animated images, music, video/film/short film, scanned text, sound/soundscape, voice, RSS/syndication, hypertext); c) its *interactivity*, which refers to the type of interaction that the object affords (such as multiple choice navigation, activation, image manipulation, text manipulation, random display, position tracker, generation without data insertion) (Laboratoire NT2 ALN/NT2, http://nt2.uqam.ca). In each work, the combination of particular media, diverse formats and different degrees of interaction renders classification difficult, pointing precisely to a disturbance of formerly established boundaries as one of the main characteristics of digital writing. “What cyberliterature means today in Latin America – says Martín-Barbero – is precisely the

melting down (and relaunching) of the world of languages and literature, of oralities and writings", a melting down through which "the relations between aesthetics and politics are being re-thought and re-made" (xii).

As it is impossible to review many texts of electronic literature within the limited scope of this article, in what follows I focus on three examples from different genres. Although it is problematic to speak about a canon in Latin American digital writing, these texts stand out not only because they have received sustained critic attention, but also because they have been selected for the third anthology of the Electronic Literature Organization, which acts as an organ of legitimization in the production of digital writing.

**Hypertext fiction**

*Gabriella Infinita,* by Colombian author Jaime Alejandro Rodríguez is one of the most analysed works in the Latin American production. The work has experienced different transitions, from its origin as a print book (1995), to being turned into a hypertext (1999), to finally becoming a hypermedia (2003) (in the hypermedia narrative, authorship is shared with Carlos Roberto Torres, who is in charge of visual design and interactivity). It is thus interesting to compare the different versions and assess the 'evolution' of some potentialities that were inscribed in the print version and actualized in the digital one.
Following the description provided on the web-page ( https://www.javeriana.edu.co) , the work is structured as follows:

The first screen of *Gabriella Infinita* shows an animation in which the abstract figure of a pregnant woman appears against the background of the city of Bogotá. Then, on the main screen, a simple animation serves as an indication to "enter". When clicking on the entry arrow, another screen opens, that, with the image of different doors, suggests three

accesses to the hypermedia: “Ruinas”, “Mudanza” and “Revelaciones”. By clicking on each of these doors, the reader get access to new screens. The background of ‘Ruinas’ is the silhouette of the city of Bogotá, on which four “buttons” appear, where the reader finds the description of Gabriella's journey from her apartment to Federico's room.

Clicking on “Mudanza” the reader sees various objects that can be found in different places "room" in Federico’s room (photos, papers, a raincoat, knick-knacks, a table, etc.). When reading this set of small texts, the reader learns about Gabriella's move and the memories and reflections that come from contact with Federico's objects.

Finally, “Revelaciones” prolongs the game of finding objects, but this time, when clicking on each of them (a videotape, a book, a computer screen, a diskette, a folder of notes, etc.), the reader finds audiovisual material. A video, music, as well as some background noises and voices, constitute the narrative environment of this part. Apart from this difference in content, this part of the narrative clearly suggests that Gabriella's move has become a message, a revelation. Here, there is also a fourth door at the lower right corner of the page. When clicking on it, a new window opens that contains an “epilogue” of the story, and offers the possibility of hearing Gabriella’s voice.

Hypermedia also offers the reader the possibility to “complete” the story by sending contributions – from stories or personal chronicles with the theme of the narrative, to data and essays about the environment recreated by the novel, that is the 1970s in Colombia – to the Guestbook.

The city in which the story takes place can be clearly identified as Bogotá, through transparent references such as Plaza de Lourdes, Calle Diecinueve or Avenida Central, although the city as such is never named. It is a post-apocalyptic scenario, a city attacked by unidentified forces, in which buses burn in the street, bombs are heard, and the inhabitants try to seek shelter or flee. This dystopian scenario can be interpreted both as an anticipation and

as a reference to Colombia's recent past, more specifically to the Bogotazo, a series of riots that occurred in the Colombian capital following the assassination of the Liberal Party leader, Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, on 9 April 1948. This date marks the beginning of the period known as "La violencia", which would last for ten years, although with the emergence of the country's armed conflict its consequences extend beyond this date. In addition to a reading of this dystopian space as an inscription of the spectres of violence of the recent past, post-apocalyptic Colombia can be framed in the present as a devastation produced by the effects of late capitalism's neoliberal policies. In a rhizomatic narrative, without beginning or end, devastation appears as a constant state, with no possibility of redemption. "In this sense, this futuristic city and the images of devastation it contains function as allegories for the devastation wreaked by neoliberal policies on its inhabitants, and, more broadly, on the opportunity for oppositional practice" (Taylor and Pitman 92). In addition, the combination of images, and audios in "Revelaciones", with voices that recount the revolutionary projects of the '70s, contribute to creating an anachronistic temporality that impels the reader not only to decide about the links between the different characters of history – thus reconstructing a possible history – but also to re-signify the trajectories that link the multiple violences of the past, the present and the possible future of the city. The trajectories are not linear, neither in the fictional construction of the hypertext, nor in the complex trajectories of Latin American history, something the reader is invited to explore as he / she tries to construct the dispersal of the text.

In this sense, Gabriella, the main character, constitutes an incarnation of the ideal reader – the *wreader* – which turns the text into a metafictional reflection on hypertext. The reader enters the text following the actions by Gabriella, whose disorientation is a mirror of the reader's own. Gabriella faces an enigma that she must solve – the disappearance of Federico – and for that she moves – both physically and mentally – trying to assign meaning

to the objects she finds, striving to reconstruct a story. The objects multiply and disperse, instead of converging, a parallel image of the reader's activity of moving between the different lexias and objects of the text. It is important to note, as Taylor and Pitman emphasize, that this ideal reader of the hypertext is embodied in a woman, who, from the beginning onwards, is "overwhelmingly corporeal": "images abound of her material, heavy, bodily status, with frequent references to corporeality, as the reader is given descriptions of her tears, sweat, pregnancy, heavy belly and so forth" (98). By contrast, Federico is "weightless, vacant, incorporeal; remove literally absent from the narrative" (98). This polarized gendered dichotomy not only points to the digitally embodied space – rejecting those days in which the Internet was conceived of as a disembodied territory – but it corrects the Cortázar's distinction between "lector hembra" and "lector macho" in *Rayuela*, which is always considered as the privileged precursor of hypertext narrative, and well beyond Latin American literature. The place of the reader conceived as passive / female versus active / male is switched in this scenario: "in hypertext fiction the male author-god figure is defunct, and it is the female reader-creator who gains power" (Taylor and Pitman 99).

**Digital Poetry**

Digital Poetry has been another essential territory of experimentation in Latin America. Many performances of digital poetry stress the physicality of the act of reading, in which the articulation of sounds is necessary not only to decode the written signs but, more fundamentally, to create them. *Grita* (2005) by the Peruvian poet José Aburto is an interactive sound poem that requests a verbal performance from the reader. The work consists of three pieces of minimalistic interactive electronic poetry. The third one, as the title indicates, requires that the observer scream into a microphone in order for the verses to appear, and conversely, the verses disappears as the reader stops shouting. On the next

scream, the poem is replaced by a new one. The work thus demands then an excessive orality, which can function as a sort of liberation or catharsis. As it happens in many works of electronic literature, the temporality of reading is altered: the poem titillates and disappears before it can be read, the letters fall apart from the phrases and our efforts to put them in their place is futile – as in *Screen,* by Robert Coover. As Katherine Hayles describes, commenting the work *Lexia to Perplexia* (124),

> The impression is not that the eye moves but rather that the text moves while the eye remains (more or less) stationary. Agency is thus distributed differently than with the print page where the reader controls the pace of reading and rate at which pages turn. (…) the work proceeds at speeds rarely coinciding with a comfortable reading rate, either lingering longer than the reading requires or flashing by so quickly one must strain to catch all the words. The effect is to introduce a disruptive temporality into the spatiality of the (presumptive) page, converting it into a hybrid form in which spatiality and temporality compete for dominance in the place of reading (Hayles 125)

If, on the one hand, *Grita* can be read in line with the performances of reading beyond any locatedness, on the other, the cry can 'recuperate' a cultural inscription through language and other signs. In this sense, the description in the ELO Directory is interesting, as it links the scream with the history and the present of the region, at the same time as it welcomes "anyone who wants to experiment with it":

> It is remarkable that the translation of the initial and external, organic cry, by the machine is always transformed into a poem in Spanish. Certainly, we do not find in this technopoesis any allusion to a specific nation, but there is a reference to the

> power of Spanish nowadays, suggesting a Latin-American zone that makes the poem's performance possible. Traditions, conquests, revolutions: the cry is the way to express the primal articulation of words, the red color of the interface, the imperative that tells us what to do with the work. The poem welcomes the cries of those who come as guests searching for this refuge, and although the results are always in Spanish, this language is hospitable to anyone who wants to experiment with it. (http://directory.eliterature.org/individual-work/5011) (Electronic Literature Directory, Individual Work *Grita).*

A different example of locatedeness, as well as the primacy of the voice – although here by post-human entities – can be found in *The IP Poetry Project* by Argentinean artist Gustavo Romano.

Three robots, which appear as mouths inside of acoustic boxes, reproduce textual fragments randomly retrieved from the Internet, using a database of phonemes pre-recorded by the voice of Romano himself. Although the reproduced fragments are random, Romano usually establishes a relationship between the place where the installation is mounted and the fragments retrieved from the Internet, which function as comments about the place. In her analysis of the work, Claudia Kozak examines how the installation carried out for the "I Biennial of the End of the World" in Ushuaia in April 2007, transformed the apparently non-significant character of the random fragments by interacting with the location where the installation was placed. While on the one hand the conjunction between the landscape of the 'end of the world' - the wind, the desolation - and the awkward 'inhumanity' of the robots creates a disturbing experience of the "unknown", on the other, it triggers "the memory of other endings closely related to the history of the place as well" (70). This history is that of the disappearance of the original inhabitants of Ushuaia, the Selk'nam (Onas), a history of forgetting and loss.

Automatons randomly reciting words from the Internet can paradoxically turn into the voice of lost populations, since the vanished language of the poems can resonate with the vanished language of the Selk'nam people. To hear the automatons' senseless words pronounced in that location, can unexpectedly lead us, as Kozak proposes, "to hear the unsaid" (70). The voices that have been vanished from the territory of Latin America can resonate spectrally in the poems recited by the 'voices' of post-human entities at the end of the world.

**Algorithmic Politics**

The last work presents an intertwining of off-line and on-line territories with an activist drive. *The 27th/El 27* (2013) by the Mexican artist Eugenio Tisselli is a piece of electronic literature where an algorithm operates directly on the text of Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution, which deals with the ownership of land, water and natural resources. In 1917, this article declared all land to be the property of the people, but in 1992, in the context of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the article was modified to give the State the right to sell natural resources to private entities. In Tisselli's own words:

> Each time the New York Stock Exchange Composite Index (Symbol: ^NYA) closes with a positive percent variation, a fragment of the 27th article of the Mexican Constitution is automatically translated into English. The work was inspired by the ideas of necrocapitalism (and its unstoppable advancement in Mexico) and algorithmic politics as the only way to fully realize its objectives ("Statement", Electronic Literature Organization, http://collection.eliterature.org/3/work.html?work=the-27th )

This work, thus, combines algorithmic politics, 'transference' and 'translation' to construct a powerful allegory of the complicity between necrocapitalism, violence, and language, in which 'code' is both the foundation of these operations, as well as the tool used to resist them.

## Conclusion

Digital literature is a practice in transition. Two of the main challenges it faces in the current landscape relates to the transition from a relative niche of experimentation to reaching a wider audience, and from a global digital cultural homogeneity to cultural specificities. The first one involves a tension between complicity and resistance. As David Cicoricco points out: "Must electronic lit operate in a mode of complicity, connecting to its audience through the same means and media to which they are already connected? […] Or, does electronic lit operate as an art of resistance […]?" (quoted in Bourchardon 2019)

The second one involves a tension over the role played by translation. As Serge Bouchardon (2019) points out, a translator can operate according to different logics, either trying to bring the reader closer to the original text, thus stressing cultural diversity or, on the contrary, diluting cultural references so that a global audience can identify with the work – a tension between domestication and foreignization. Regarding the problematics of e-literature, he wonders:

> How is this tension expressed in digital literature, in a digital space where, according to some, we always feel "at home"? What signification is taken on by linguistic frontiers in this space, should it no longer be one of cultural differences? Moreover, how is such cultural diversity expressed? Is it uniquely through the linguistic dimension of digital literature? (Bouchardon https://electronicbookreview.com/essay/mind-the-gap-10-gaps-for-digital-literature/)

The fact that “digital literature is not merely based on words but also on gestures and animations” can “reinforce the impact of cultural specificities and the importance of taking these into consideration” (Bouchardon 2019). In other words, it implies wondering to what extent the *codes* upon which digital literature is created and executed are culturally inflicted and what value do we attach to those differences in the current global scene.

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