{CARAC TERES}

Estudios culturales y críticos de la esfera digital

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Monográfico: Universos transmedia y convergencias narrativas
Monograph: Transmedia Universes and Narrative Convergences

Coordinador: Álvaro Llosa Sanz

EDITORIAL

DELIRIO

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CARACTERES

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Monográfico/Monograph:

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Monográfico/Monograph

Universos transmedia y convergencias narrativas

Transmedia Universes and Narrative Convergences

II. Hacia los universos transmedia: narración, espacios, soportes, convergencias y géneros ficcionales

La poética de la Nocilla: Transmedia Poetics in Agustín Fernández Mallo's Complete Works

La poética de la Nocilla: poética transmedia en la obra de Agustín Fernández Mallo

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ABSTRACT: Moving beyond current applications of transmedia storytelling, this essay looks at the work of Spanish author Agustín Fernández Mallo to explore how his engagement with the media landscape is both a revolution and a contribution to fundamental concepts in contemporary literature such as authorship and narrative structure. On the one hand, transmedia storytelling provides a structure to frame Fernández Mallo's versatile and multimedia production, exploring both the productive semiotic intermedial breakages within works, as well as analyzing his complete production as a whole: one single poetic "work" encapsulated into a transmedia universe composed of multiple autonomous narratives. On the other, the fictionalization of his Author function as a parodied metafictional object within this transmedia universe can shed some light on the role of the writer within a larger network of media convergence and neoliberal enterprises.

RESUMEN: El presente ensayo propone analizar el trabajo del escritor español Agustín Fernández Mallo según la teoría de las narrativas transmedia para explorar cómo su relación con el entorno mediático supone una revolución y una contribución a conceptos fundamentales en la literatura contemporánea como son las nociones de autoría y la estructura literaria. La narrativa transmedia ofrece una estructura para comprender la producción multimedia del autor, explorando las rupturas semióticas que ocurren dentro de su producción, así como comprendiendo toda su producción como parte de una gran obra única encapsulada dentro de un universo poético transmedia. Asimismo, el tratamiento paródico de la ficcionalización del Autor como un objeto metaficivo más dentro de este universo transmedia nos permitirá examinar las posibilidades del escritor dentro de un marco más amplio de convergencia mediática e intereses neoliberales.

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1. Introduction: Expanding the Transmedia Framework

For the past decade or so, studies in the humanities and literature have taken an interest in what some have called "the intermedial turn" (Wolf, 2011: 2) and many have offered topologies to categorize media and their interrelations (Bolter, Gruisin, Elleström, Ryan, Rajewsky, etc.). As we know, in the case of literary studies and when looking at how fiction relates, trespasses, and embeds itself within different media platforms, intermedial narration and transmedia storytelling are just two aspects of this phenomenon.

When looking at how transmedia has been applied to contemporary literature, it has generally been referred to as one of the intrinsic characteristics of electronic fiction, which can incorporate different semiotic performances inside its digital code. In this essay, however, I

claim that we can broadly use this "transmedia" framework to look at some instances of contemporary literature which do not depend exclusively on their performativity on a screen but move in and out of it, creating a narrative universe that jumps from printed book, to film, to a writer's blog and, ultimately, to the figure of the author itself, turning this last subject into an objectified element which is part of a larger transmedia network. Moving away from electronic fiction and returning to a more traditional way of understanding transmedia, I propose we look at the work of Spanish author Agustín Fernández Mallo to explore how his engagement with the media landscape is both a revolution and a contribution to fundamental concepts in contemporary literature such as authorship and narrative structure[1].

Within his work I explore transmedia storytelling in three main ways. First, from a formalist perspective, I am interested in looking at the productive semiotic intermedial breakages in some of his works by exploring the poetic relations created when carrying a story through text and images: drawings, photographs and film. Second, I propose we look at Fernandez Mallo's complete production as a whole: one single "work" encapsulated into a transmedia universe composed of multiple autonomous narratives which, when read together, offer an absolute expressive meaning, creating a shared poetic understanding. What's at stake here is the need for a new theory of textuality, something similar to what Jerome McGann mentioned in *Radiant Textuality* when looking at electronic literature:

> The theory holds two positions: first, that the apparitions of text –its paratexts, bibliographical codes, and all visual features—are as important in the text's signifying programs as the linguistic elements; second, that the social intercourse of texts—the context of their relations—must be conceived an essential part of the "text itself" if one means to gain an adequate critical grasp of the textual situation. (McGann, 2001: 12)

Without necessarily including here the software programs and codes behind the text when it was being created, and moving away from the screen that performs the digital electronic text,

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[1] There seems to be an insurmountable difficulty in defining what a medium is (material, immaterial, channel or artifact?), which makes it almost impossible to delimit its dimensions and interactions. The purpose of this study, thus, is not to attempt a new taxonomy, but to analyze how a particular creator, Agustín Fernández Mallo, generates a poetic universe within his current media ecology. I favor the use of "transmedia" in a broad sense to include different manifestations of intermediality —as the complimentary intersections of several media in one single work—, as well as other media combinations within media convergence, understood here as the media amalgamate that takes place today, taking into consideration the interventions of creators and consumers of media and fiction.

the conjoined reading of Fernández Mallo's poetic universe, calls for a redefinition of textuality to include transmedia poetics, and look at their emerging meanings as multimedia metaphors[2].

Finally, I suggest we not only place Fernández Mallo's material fictions in this poetic universe, but also include the figure of the Author as a productive poetic function in itself. Fernández Mallo's public interventions through his blog posts, interviews, musical and spoken word performances have helped to create a fictional persona, which can be read as a self-reflexive parody of the artist embedded in media convergence. By partially renouncing his agency as a serious creator and turning himself into an object, a product of his own fictions in a radical engagement with modernist metafiction, Agustín Fernández Mallo, Author, floats rhizomatically in a network composed of his multimedia productions. This consumable objectification of the Author itself, hints at the many ways subjectivity and agency are transformed within a larger network of media convergence and neoliberal enterprises.

Generally considered an obliging and apolitical writer in Spanish letters, Agustín Fernández Mallo's subjugation of any political dimension to the importance of aesthetics becomes a "silenciamiento de lo político [que] termina por decantar el proyecto de Fernández Mallo hacia posiciones que no suponen desafío explícito alguno al estado de cosas vigente" (Martín Estudillo & Rodríguez Balbotín, 2012: 150). Talking here about *El hacedor (de Borges) Remake,* Luis Martín-Estudillo and Pablo Rodríguez-Balbotín understand the author's presupposed political situationist posture as pure postmodern play, "un gesto que reafirma su concepción monumental dentro de un canon estético" (2012: 151). Nonetheless, when talking about the author's concern with representation, and its relation between reality and illusion, they locate the main flaw in this author's work: "la belleza que el narrador […] encuentra en diferentes manifestaciones del mundo *post,* un mundo que abraza al *remake* porque parece que ya no cabe imaginar una realidad otra, se basa en el simulacro de lo eterno, capturado mediante distintas tecnologías de la visión" (2012: 159). As I see it, Agustín Fernández Mallo's ideological explorations into spectrality and simulacra can be better understood through the study of his transmedia storytelling techniques, by which he contemplates a metafictional, simulated self, turning his Author function (as Foucault would define it) into a parodied spectrum of the role of the artist as media representation. Evidently, the modernist questioning of consciousness and

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[2] The writer has also made a similar observation about novels that leave the book and make the reader continue reading on a different platform. He describes how a protective shell is created around the book and its multimedia components, which he calls an "exonovel," "that which sustains a novel, providing internal solidity and protection, without which the novel itself is not possible"(Fernández Mallo, 2012: 68).

reality would need to be placed within convergence culture and big media conglomerates. The author's engagement with the network as an intrinsically commercial space that allows him to keep producing in and out of Alfaguara and the parent Grupo PRISA underscores the inevitably problematic relationship that links media technologies and commercial marketing.

2. From *Nocilla Dream* to the Nocilla "Postpoetic" Project

It all started with the publication of *Nocilla Dream* in 2006 by a small local press, Editorial Candaya. What should have been an isolated, experimental work, however, turned into a unexpected massive success for both novel and writer, praised for their experimentalism as a wake up call to the mostly modernist Spanish literary panorama, yet criticized for their use of media technologies and press as a publicity stunt. In the span of a year *Nocilla Dream* won several awards, and Agustín Fernández Mallo became one of the most celebrated new writers of his generation. After signing with Alfaguara, Fernández Mallo published *Nocilla Experience* (2008) and *Nocilla Lab* (2009a) completing what then would be framed as the *Proyecto Nocilla* —Alfaguara published last year a complete edition, binding all three works together.

Much has been said about the impact of the Nocilla Project in Spanish letters, and the subsequent appearance of what some called the *Generación Nocilla* or the *Mutante* writers. Leaving aside the many scholarly attempts to define the group, it was clear that one of the shared elements among their "members" related to their positioning within convergence culture and the use of technology, not only in their writing practice, but also in a broader sense [3]. Within Fernández Mallo's production, its relationship to media convergence has a multiplicity of manifestations, allowing for a radical formal experimentalism, unheard of in its Spanish context.

> No porque este Proyecto de una escritura en construcción refute otras opciones sino porque su
> radicalismo, independencia y novedad abren un espacio extraño por poco previsto; en lugar de

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[3] The group's use of new media technologies to comment on and circulate their work, paired with the unexpected commercial success of Fernández Mallo's novel "enabled a group of authors that had been working and struggling to find a proper distribution channel and the field's attention to have the opportunity to express a view on literature that contests hegemonic currents in the literary field and in turn, is contested from within" (Moreno, 2012: 82). Although I believe that the group's relation to new media technologies goes beyond mere marketing, it is unquestionable that marketing has played an important role in the development of their writing, their individual legitimization, and their establishment as a new movement or group.

> una exploración de las raíces, la memoria o el pasado, Agustín Fernández Mallo se propuso un proyecto más futurista que español: la construcción de un espacio de actualidad desbordada, allí donde la escritura no se debe a la melancolía de la nacionalidad sino a la proyección de una lengua en devenir. (Ortega, 2013: 567)

Opinions such as this have contributed to the understanding of Fernández Mallo as a visionary, speaking in a voice and language of the future. Tweaking Ortega's definition of language as a product of the author's engagement with its surrounding mediality, I suggest that the "language to become" moves beyond its alphabetical representation, echoing a powerful contextual awareness of our convergence culture[4]. These echoes, however, are nothing "to come," but are here already, and Fernández Mallo's relevance resides precisely in looking at them as present, as given, defining him not as a prophet, but as a keen observer of the contemporary moment.

In his controversial essay *Postpoesía. Hacia un nuevo paradigma* (2009b)*,* Fernández Mallo established the need to create "artefactos poéticos que fluyan desde y para la sociedad contemporánea" (2009b: 11). The relationship between this "postpoeta" and her surroundings becomes key, as she is situated in the center of a conflating information network characteristic of developed societies and convergence culture, with all the limitations that that implies within the so-called first world and western civilization. Self-defined as "pragmatic," the postpoeta uses everything in this landscape to recreate contemporary experience: "Los estilos se pervierten en continuas heterotopías y heterocronías. El artista se vale de aquello que hemos llamado pragmatismo para componer obras en las que los signos multiplican sus significados" (Fernández Mallo, 2009b: 184). The borders of this transmedia network are blurred, transforming it into a heterogeneous space that multiplies and collapses the diverse discursive spheres of historical traditions, social systems, and artistic production. As I show throughout this analysis, both the themes and the structure of the Nocilla Project—but also of most of the author's subsequent production—underscore the intermixing of these spheres as a result of media convergence, or today's broader convergence culture.

In his seminal text *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (2006)*,* Henry Jenkins looks at the different ways in which stories and media have converged within big

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[4] John Johnson defines "mediality" as: "a concept that refers to the technological conditions that make specific media possible within a delimited historical epoch and therefore to the cultural and communicational 'setting' within which literature can appear and assume a specific shape and functioning" (Jonhson, 1998: 268-269).

entertainment corporations since the digital revolution. Jenkins explores the shape that stories take when moving between different environments, and understands transmedia storytelling as one narrative that transcends one type of medium, e.g. cinema, and how it unfolds across different platforms like video games, animated films, novels or comic books, that do not simply reproduce or copy one original narration but expand onto the world that was created by providing information to comprehend it as a whole. Transmedia storytelling, now defined as the "art of world making," needs recurring yet autonomous motifs appearing through franchises. "Each franchise entry needs to be self-contained so you don't need to have seen the film to enjoy the game and vice versa. Any given product is a point of entry into the franchise as a whole. Reading across the media sustains a depth of experience that motivates more consumption" (Jenkins, 2006: 96).

He argues that this type of storytelling makes big demands on consumers, as it is expected that they research or get immersed in some of the other media representations of the world to understand it as a whole. As Pierre Lévy understands it, this type of narration is built on collective intelligence that requires a sort of "circuit" of consumers, producers, creators, and critics that sustain the activity of others. The artwork is understood as a "cultural attractor", drawing together and creating "common ground between diverse communities" (Jenkins, 2006: 95). This can also be described as a cultural activator, setting in motion other types of decipherment and elaboration. For a transmedia story to be successful, hence, it has to work as a detachable, dismantleable world, with not one central idea but many, expressed in disconnected images that can attract other creations. Consumers seek to delve into the world they love through immersion in its fictional universe and its characters, rather than following plot or other structural narratives.

Hiroki Azuma, in his book *Otaku: Japan's Database Animals* (2009)*,* observes a similar process of production in Japanese postmodern culture. According to him, the disappearance of the grand narrative model of modernity has been replaced by a database model that presupposes a double layer structure of small narratives (the simulacra) and a grand non-narrative (the database). This underlying database structure would be behind all artistic representation holding the transmedia universe together, while its "narrative" projection would be no more than a superficial projected simulation. Database as grand narrative is incompatible with previous grand narrative definitions set up to consolidate systems of organization and administration of society.

Azuma states that Japanese artistic production has abandoned transcendence, moving towards the production of "small narratives" to be consumed as their incarnated products. He returns to philosopher Alexander Kójeve to explain this change in desire, defining as "animalistic" that which seeks instant gratification via the "consumption" of database-originated works. Rather than desiring in the lacanian sense, animal database desire becomes satiable by consuming superficial projections of one originating database. In our multimedia environment, characters and world creation have superseded the need for a grand structuring narrative. Consumers, knowing this, can easily and freely move through different narrative projects (comic books, novels, anime) and non-narrative objects (illustrations, figurines, objects). "Here, the individual projects are the simulacra, and behind them is the database of characters and settings [...]. Each character is merely a simulacrum, derived from the database" (Azuma, 2009: 53).

Going back to the *Nocilla Project* and Agustín Fernández Mallo's "postpoesía," database narrative arises as that embedded structure holding an all-encompassing sense of poetics. As Julio Ortega observes: "La suma del Proyecto nos permite verla hoy (y el término es inexhausto) como una primera lectura reiterada: siempre es otro objeto, con otra ruta de acceso" (2013: 568). Most of Fernández Mallo's production is deeply interrelated; it correlates themes and ideas across multiple platforms. Characters move through different stories and products—e.g. Sokolov's refurbishing in *Limbo* (49-52) after his key role in *Nocilla Dream* 8 years earlier—and poetic leitmotifs are repeated and projected through different media—"el árbol de los zapatos" as focal point of the literary project and culminating scene in *Proyecto Nocilla,* the movie, which is not an adaptation of the novel, but a supplementary narrative with its own plot and characters. Also, different media are presented within one single work in true intermedial fashion. Yet, within this multimedia chaos, an underlying database holds everything together, acting as one reiterated metaphor for pragmatism in convergence culture, abandoning the teleological ends of modern grand narratives for the poetics of a database per se. If in modernity the outer layer of a work was determined by its inner layer—Grand Narrative—, in our current convergence culture the surface is no longer determined by its inner layer but reveals its many possible expressions. Every fictional work, then, is always a simulated projection. It is in this sense that all surface manifestations, all fictions and poetry, are consumable as a sort of Platonic metaphorical shadow.

3. Transmedia Poetics and the Author Function

It's hard to define the corpus of Agustín Fernández Mallo's work. Looking at the Nocilla Universe itself we see how *Nocilla Dream*, the Project's initial chapter, was only completed by the movie *Proyecto Nocilla. La película* three years later—this movie is accessible through the author's blog, posted on Vimeo. As we know, two narrative "sequels" came out of it; the last one, *Nocilla Lab,* partially in graphic form. Pere Joan, author of the drawings, published a graphic remake of *Nocilla Experience* two years later (*Nocilla Experience. La novela gráfica,* 2011). Simultaneously, Fernández Mallo has been re-editing previous poetry compilations while writing new ones, and has continued posting unpublished texts, poems, and videos on his blog. He also published two major "fictions" in 2011 and 2014, *El hacedor (de Borges), Remake* and *Limbo.* In addition, he collaborates with Eloy Fernández Porta in their spoken word group "Fernández y Fernández" and has edited an album, *Pacas Go Downtown* with his group "Frida Laponia" together with Juan Feliu.

When looking at Fernández Mallo through Foucault's definition of the Author function, we see how the Author, being nothing more concrete than a function of discourse by which we are able to group together and legitimatize a particular body of works, would be limited by its ideological status. The significations of this ideological function are used as a principle of selection to stop the free manipulation, circulation and recomposition of fiction. Paradoxically, when we insist on presenting the author as creative genius within this context

> we make him function in exactly the opposite fashion. One can say that the author is an ideological product, since we represent him as the opposite of his historically real function. (When a historically given function is represented in a figure that inserts it, one has an ideological production.) The author is therefore the ideological figure by which one marks the manner in which we fear the proliferation of meaning. (Foucault, 1979: 119)

If we were to look at Agustín Fernández Mallo's Author creation as an ideological figure in those terms, he would have it take on the role of regulator of his fictions, a role, as Foucault highlights, from the era of industrial, bourgeois society, of individualism and private property (1979: 119). However, given the historical modifications that Foucault started to notice, and seeing their evolution within our convergence culture and today's digital revolution, can we still see the necessity for this author function to remain constant or even to exist? Or have we

indeed begun to treat discourses in the "anonymity of a murmur" as Foucault advocated, looking at fiction and its polysemous texts according to another mode?

> We would no longer hear the questions that have been rehashed for so long: Who really spoke? Is it really he and not someone else? With what authenticity or originality? And what part of his deepest self did he express in his discourse? Instead, there would be other questions, like these: What are the modes of existence of this discourse? Where has it been used, how can it circulate, and who can appropriate it for himself? What are the places in it where there is room for possible subjects? Who can assume these various subject functions? And behind all these questions, we would hear hardly anything but the stirring of an indifference: What difference does it make who is speaking? (Foucault, 1979: 119-120)

Within his own postpoetic production, the pragmatism of the anonymity murmur has been established in Fernández Mallo's works. He has defended the autonomy of texts and their use according to their inner modes and poetics—a claim very similar to Foucault's, remaking, reusing, copying and recreating. By eliminating his agency as author and adopting a fictional simulacra at the level of his fictions, as I will explain, his Author figure itself could be subjected to the murmur treatment and be poeticized by others in a radical way. In *Nocilla Lab* drawn by Pere Joan his persona becomes a character in a sort of intermedial transformation in Rajewsky's terms; just as the complete fictional universe of *Nocilla Experience* has been recreated in Joan's graphic novel of the same title.

All of Fernández Mallo's works include collective participation and borrowed multimedia materials with an anonymous poetic murmur of shared authorship. This bounces back and echoes all of his fictions by reflection on their multimedia nature, and a shared preference for similar themes and characters. Characters move in a situationist drift, remaking, reshaping and trying to redefine the essence of whatever elements they interact with, acting as members of Debord's International Situationism, or echoing Fernández Mallo's definition of *postpoesía*.

The conjoined reading of images and text on the same page and the movement between book and screen that is necessary to understand Fernández Mallo's poetic universe, expresses the need, as I said in the introduction, not to engage in a taxonomy of practices to distinguish between intermediality, transmedia, interstory or multimedia storytelling, but rather to expand our definition of textuality to include multimedia poetics in McGann's paratextual sense, and look at their hybrid emerging meaning as transmedia metaphors in a broad sense.

To explain what I mean by a transmedia metaphor let me return to Cleanth Brooks' praise and definition of metaphor as poetics of contextual relations. "The memorable verses in poetry— even those which seem somehow intrinsically "poetic"—show on inspection that they derive their poetic quality from their relation to a particular context" (Brooks, 1949: 730). Within Fernández Mallo's production, especially when looking at the *Nocilla Project* itself, the flattening of his characters reduced to what some critics have called representational avatars or "sombras de personalidad" (Mora, 2006: 65), allows me to place them on the same level as objects or database-projected shadows in the Universe, all shrinkable to poetic forms. These elements or forms have been removed from their logical context, relocated in a multimedia space to which they relate poetically. Their relocation creates a beautiful new meaning — defamiliarized, to remember Shklovsky's take on this— enabling us to create a special perception of the object. The context, in our case, cannot refer to traditional textuality, but to the multimedia —paratextual— context that transmedia storytelling affords us.

Some of these images are embedded within alphabetic textuality and exploit their poetic value through their thematic relocation such as the famous "árbol de los zapatos" in the middle of the desert in Carson City in *Nocilla Dream* and the relationship that is formed between the tree and the characters that make love in its shade, or fight, or heat up a can of refried beans. These images are evidently suggestive in multiple ways. "None of these meanings cancels out the others. All are relevant, and each meaning contributes to the total meaning. Indeed, there is not a facet of significance which does not receive illumination from the figure" (Brooks, 1949: 740). The figures, sometimes, are embodied in other media, like the poplar tree which also appears in the Nocilla movie. All connotations and allusions are as valid and real as poetic connotations would be in a literary metaphor. To understand them fully, however, we need to expand the metaphorical context beyond alphabetical textuality.

If Brooks believed that each verse completed its meaning according to its reference to the immediate textual context, we observe here an increase in the texture of these contexts; we cannot limit ourselves to symbols, ideograms or surrounding grammar, but need to look at the greater textuality that surrounds them, in their mediality, or as participating elements in media convergence. The immediate context of each verse—each sentence, scene, character—are *other media:* other rewritings, images, videos... that are not presented to us in the hermetic body of a book, but are bound up with our reality; billboards, commercial breaks, etc., that interrupt our daily reading with constant stimuli interrelating with a reading practice that

previously existed in isolation. It all fits into an invisible, open and interconnected, ready to use poetic Web—or real world database. "A un poeta que practique la poesía postpoética poco le importa que a un verso neoclásico le siga la fotografía de un macarrón o una, en apariencia, incomprensible ecuación matemática si esa solución metafóricamente funciona" (Fernández Mallo, 2009b: 36).

Different textures are integrated in a type of literature that does not limit itself to a written imitation of television or a graphic format, but includes them as real transformations of its narrative devices. I am referring here to how, for instance, *Nocilla Lab* abandons its textual format and mutates into a graphic novel on page 169 as previously mentioned. Fernández Mallo chooses to end his trilogy with a comic that acts as a conclusion, but which could also be read as an independent product, next to its textual counterpart, and sharing the same eerie atmosphere of the rest of this author's production.

Nocilla Lab unfolds as graphic novel and alphabetical narration leaves room to visual distribution as a new way to frame the acquisition of informational elements. The first person narrative voice materializes visually into a cartoon character we recognize as Agustín Fernández Mallo, wearing black frame hipster glasses, skinny jeans, and untrimmed hair. We follow him along a beach and across the ocean as far as an oil rig where he meets Enrique Vila-Matas. Vila-Matas offers him a cup of coffee, and tells the traveller a story. This story is also drawn, not narrated, presenting the reader with lines and color to make up for the alphabetic narrative. Descriptive fragments materialize directly as drawing and design, and *Nocilla Lab* carries on in its new texture until the final page.

The use of graphic design and images to expand the Nocilla Universe, is completed with the publication of Pere Joan's *Nocilla Experience. La novela gráfica* in 2011. This work takes Fernández Mallo's 2008 text and translates it visually to graphic form. Plot lines and themes are followed closely by Joan, but all narrative description and atmospheric settings are now controlled by the delineation of visual images. We cannot imagine what a character looks like; we see him. Moreover, the narrative voice that guided us through the story, is deleted; made invisible but for the breaks in each vignette or their position on the page. Narration becomes juxtaposition and montage in the most productive sense, and characters and plot relations are established visually as a map. The graphic novel wouldn't count as a transmedia expansion of the narrative commenced in *Nocilla Experience* but it incorporates, in a new medium, similar

poetic relations to the greater universe of the Project. We could not count it as mere redundancy either, for the new medium allows for the expression of different qualities. We need to talk about expansion, and thus, the meaning of both compared elements in Brook's sense: graphic novel and text.

Fernández Mallo defines his postpoesía as a "scale-free network" where all nodes are moderately connected "todos los elementos que socialmente rodean al poema, pero en especial la totalidad de estéticas artísticas, científicas, mercantiles, son susceptibles de convertirse en nodo, de ahí que la postpoesía sea también la poética de combinar lo que ya existe más un valor añadido. Una sinergía" (Fernández Mallo, 2009b: 163). Collaboration among different authors remaking, decomposing, and recomposing texts becomes essential to understanding this synergy, relating to literature and authorship in a true foucauldian sense. The metaphor moves to the experiencing subject, the reader or viewer, sharing partial authorship. Looking not at who speaks but to who can appropriate a text for himself. Wondering about finding places in each text liable to be assumed by any potential subjects. Bringing to the fore the question of the free circulation of texts: "what difference does it make who is speaking?"

4. Objectified Subjects: Author as Transmedia Specter

The tension of finding a true, unified self behind a text —"what part of his deepest self did he express in his discourse?"— while conceptually recognizing the indifference of this existence, is highlighted by Fernández Mallo's play with self-fictionalization. On the one hand, he creates fictional characters that reflect, simulate and parody his Author persona. On the other, he surrounds his historical real figure with recursive fictional projections, turning his Author function into a commodified specter of itself; all products of the recombination of elements in the Universe's poetic database.

In *Nocilla Experience* we meet Josecho, author of an extraordinary poetry manifesto defining "la narrativa transpoética," a type of hybrid literature that combines science and what is traditionally considered literature. The parallel with Fernandez Mallo's own postpoetic practice is undeniable and Josecho sets himself to enact the very first transpoetic project (in two phases). Stage 1 involves the composition of a novel: "tomando únicamente los inicios, los 3 o 4

primeros párrafos, de novelas ya publicadas, tendría que ir poniéndolos unos detrás de otros, haciéndolos encajar, de manera que el resultado final fuera una nueva novela perfectamente coherente y legible" (Fernández Mallo, 2008: 74). The novel would begin with the opening lines of Shelley's *Frankenstein*, immediately followed by cut and pasted texts from other fields, such as Houllebecq's *Elementary particles, La palude definitiva* by Giorgio Manganelli, or *Atrevida apuesta* by Corín Tellado. Including over 200 titles of universal literature, and ending with the *Quixote*. This proposal for a literary remix, recalls previous conceptualist practices and is obviously not original—nor could it ever be.

Highly intertextual, Josecho's final narrative would be carried out throughout diverse texts like a river that crosses neighboring States. The transpoetic endeavor, however, does not end with the creation of this literary object, but with its inclusion in a larger network of previous relations within the existing commercial superstructure, turning its "writing" into an actual performative act in media convergence.

> El segundo paso en la estrategia de Josecho era hacer una campaña de marketing tampoco nunca vista hasta la fecha en la industria editorial. Sugirió a los ejecutivos de New Directions que inundaran el 50% de las vallas publicitarias de una capital occidental, sólo una, por ejemplo Madrid, con el anuncio del libro y una foto de él mismo posando con ropa y estilo típicos de modelo, todo ello esponsorizado por alguna importante marca de ropa. La fusión entre narrativa y objeto de pasarela entusiasmó aún más a la editorial [...]. Consideraron ese montaje como la perfecta obra de arte contemporáneo. Con atacar de forma espectacular en un solo punto la red socio-informativa, en un solo nodo, en una sola ciudad, ya el resto lo harían las televisiones, las radios y el boca a boca. (Fernández Mallo*, 2008: 75*)

The poetic artifact becomes the dynamic relation that emerges from work, marketing campaign and the transmission of information. Beyond the product itself, what stands out is the performative process of creation in classic conceptual ways. The narrative object, the text in Josecho's novel, is merely one part of a superior narrative, a social-informative network that emerges where literature and performance meet. Josecho decides to participate within the marketing system and create a product that mocks its dynamics, while reveling in the poetic that this juxtaposition of elements provides. We learn at the end of the novel, however, that Josecho's impetus for writing responded not a situationist intervention but as a means to fight his solitude:

> Quedó impresionado por los versos: *la valla publicitaria es otra cosa: no hay/ soledad en un mundo ocupado por un solo objeto*, y entendió que ésa era una perfecta vía posible para salir de su monacal encierro, porque [...] en contra de las apariencias, en contra de lo pregonado por él mismo, no amaba la soledad [...]. Estaba claro que, como decía aquel verso, la valla publicitaria era otra cosa: no podría haber soledad en un mundo ocupado por un solo objeto. Y fue a por ello. (Fernández Mallo, 2008: 89)

Using the same network that causes his solitude and isolation, Josecho chooses to project himself into an object, turn himself into a poetic function and crystallize it on a billboard. The creative subject is truly objectified and made a node of the artistic network, finally contributing to a total sense of transmedia poetry.

Josecho's understanding of transpoetics as an overall intervention in the world that includes the production of art while it commodifies the process of creation and creative agent, forces us to look at Agustín Fernández Mallo's own way of engaging with transmedia practices that blur the lines between author, Author, art and world. His interventions on his blog where he writes about his domestic and private experiences project him as one of his characters as the type of quotidian activities he narrates take on the same nature as the particular Nocilla postpoetic situationism. He talks about his experiments recycling several objects of his life and creating art through them in the same manner he makes his characters behave. Looking beyond the Nocilla Project, it might be pertinent to return to *El hacedor (de Borges), Remake.*

In his short story "Parabola de Cervantes y de Quijote" we see a combination of images and text that explain the narrator's encounter with a mysterious slice of whole-wheat bread lying on the floor of his house as he is going to the bathroom one night. The particularity of this "encounter" has to do with the fact that the slice of bread has a perfectly round circle missing from its center, very much like a donut hole. A few minutes later, he finds a drawing of the same object in his living room. He does not remember ever buying that type of bread or drawing that silhouette, and hence he reaches the conclusion that both objects must represent an alien UFO:

> A ver, no un ovni en sí, afirmar eso es una tontería, sino que es la representación de un ovni, visto en sección. Uno o varios, no sé, seres de otros mundos, por algún método que desconozco, han entrado en casa y me han dejado en el suelo esa rebanada de pan recién hecho que tiene la forma, vista en sección, de un ovni, y después decidieron hacer el retrato del ovni en un papel, para que me diera cuenta de que es un ovni. (Fernández Mallo, 2011: 104)

To prove his point, the narrator takes photographs of both objects and includes them in the text. The narrative voice takes the personal "I" and recounts this fantastic and ridiculous encounter with a suspicious UFO, enhancing the veracity of the story with the incorporation of images to serve as evidence. These images serve as redundant data; they have been previously described and they only add a layer of supposed verisimilitude, which due to the absurdity of the statements that they represent, seems to be also ridiculed. The narrator of this story would be implausible in the real world yet his tone and narrative style resemble the voice of Agustín Fernández Mallo in other instances where the stakes of authority are very different. In his blog, *El hombre que salió de la tarta*, we are used to hearing Agustín express himself in a very similar manner:

> Días después del miércoles 28 de agosto de 2013, tras haber leído con interés y detenimiento el suplemento Cultura/s de La Vanguardia, decidí ponerlo como fondo en el cubo que utilizo para la bolsa de la basura. Mi intención nada tenía que ver con la irreverencia, todo lo contrario […] Lo que yo pretendía era, sencillamente, ver cómo en el transcurso de meses evolucionaba el celuloide -es decir el propio papel- de aquel artículo tan bonito llamado Salvar el Celuloide. Además, la circularidad del cubo de la basura -como las latas de rollos de película-, me pareció ideal, una casualidad que milagrosamente vino en mi ayuda. (Fernandez Mallo, 2014: n.p.)

Immediately after this, he displays six images showing the evolution of the paper as it disintegrates under the trash. The metaphor is extended by the last sentence next to a photograph: "Ahí mismo, en esta última foto lo dice: 'A cineastas y artistas les gustaría conservar la libertad de elegir su técnica según el proyecto a realizar'" (Fernandez Mallo, 2014: n.p.).

The expanded metaphor incorporates the relation between the pictures and the text, as it comments on the article printed on the used newspaper page. The narrative voice repeats the tone of the fiction incorporated in *El hacedor,* a compilation where most narrative voices seem to belong to the same first person narrator. It is tempting to think of that narrator as a fictionalized Agustín Fernández Mallo, in the same way one would want to think of the voice used in the blog as a fictional character in itself, going against the belief of testimonial autobiographical voices that the blog genre boasts. The type of statements about experimental art that the blogger makes are repeated by characters in other clearly fictional works such as *Nocilla Dream* or *Nocilla Experience* as I have already discussed.

To invent a fictional character as author of a blog is no novelty in itself; to claim it as its true identity while publishing on the same blog about professional activities and book launches, problematizes the statement. One can never reach the "true" author as he seems always to be hiding behind a series of fictional representations, a simulated self in the sense we proposed at the beginning of this study. A fiction. A discursive function. We can read Fernández Mallo's blog entries about artistic re-appropriations of trashed newspapers with the same lens we use to read about a narrator re-thinking a slice of bread as an UFO or as an experimental writer in *Nocilla Experience.* All consumable. All objectified. All products of media convergence and today's information society.

Jenkins concludes that "everything about the structure of the modern entertainment industry was designed with one single idea in mind—the construction and enhancement of entertainment franchises" (Jenkins, 2006: 104), which he names synergic storytelling following Ivan Askwith's theory of economic synergy. There are strong economic motives behind transmedia storytelling, and so "increasingly, elements are dropped into the films to create openings that will only be fully exploited through other media" (Jenkins, 2006: 107). Agustín Fernández Mallo engages with the present neoliberal infrastructure in a recursive way by looking at how transmedia storytelling encompasses more than simply telling a story throughout different platforms. The creation of a transmedia universe inhabited by multimedia elements relegates the important of individual stories to secondary, superficial structures, reflecting always a more important database, à la Azuma, with everything incarnating an animalistic way of consuming desire. Agustín Fernández Mallo's ironic turn in this transmedia reality plays with Azuma's idea of simulacra and understands each work as a metaphorical projection of a larger network. The Author is also a simulated projection, consumable together with his fictions: a parodied spectrum of the role of the artist reduced to a media representation in today's convergence society. Transmedia storytelling defined as a way to narrate a story through different media opens itself to a larger, less narrative and more poetic way of understanding multimedia production, serving as a structural playground for artists to create and intervene in the world.

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