

---

## Networks of Collaboration and Creation in Latin American Digital Literature

Carolina Gainza

*Universidad Diego Portales*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb>



Part of the [Digital Humanities Commons](#), [Interactive Arts Commons](#), [Latin American Literature Commons](#), and the [Other Arts and Humanities Commons](#)

Dedicated to the dissemination of scholarly and professional information, [Purdue University Press](#) selects, develops, and distributes quality resources in several key subject areas for which its parent university is famous, including business, technology, health, veterinary medicine, and other selected disciplines in the humanities and sciences.

*CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture*, the peer-reviewed, full-text, and open-access learned journal in the humanities and social sciences, publishes new scholarship following tenets of the discipline of comparative literature and the field of cultural studies designated as "comparative cultural studies." Publications in the journal are indexed in the Annual Bibliography of English Language and Literature (Chadwyck-Healey), the Arts and Humanities Citation Index (Thomson Reuters ISI), the Humanities Index (Wilson), Humanities International Complete (EBSCO), the International Bibliography of the Modern Language Association of America, and Scopus (Elsevier). The journal is affiliated with the Purdue University Press monograph series of Books in Comparative Cultural Studies. Contact: <[clcweb@purdue.edu](mailto:clcweb@purdue.edu)>

---

### Recommended Citation

Gainza, Carolina. "Networks of Collaboration and Creation in Latin American Digital Literature." *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture* 19.1 (2017): <<https://doi.org/10.7771/1481-4374.2918>>

This text has been double-blind peer reviewed by 2+1 experts in the field.

The above text, published by Purdue University Press ©Purdue University, has been downloaded 317 times as of 11/07/19.

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact [epubs@purdue.edu](mailto:epubs@purdue.edu) for additional information.

This is an Open Access journal. This means that it uses a funding model that does not charge readers or their institutions for access. Readers may freely read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to the full texts of articles. This journal is covered under the [CC BY-NC-ND license](#).

*CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture*, the peer-reviewed, full-text, and open-access learned journal in the humanities and social sciences, publishes new scholarship following tenets of the discipline of comparative literature and the field of cultural studies designated as "comparative cultural studies." In addition to the publication of articles, the journal publishes review articles of scholarly books and publishes research material in its *Library Series*. Publications in the journal are indexed in the Annual Bibliography of English Language and Literature (Chadwyck-Healey), the Arts and Humanities Citation Index (Thomson Reuters ISI), the Humanities Index (Wilson), Humanities International Complete (EBSCO), the International Bibliography of the Modern Language Association of America, and Scopus (Elsevier). The journal is affiliated with the Purdue University Press monograph series of Books in Comparative Cultural Studies. Contact: <[clcweb@purdue.edu](mailto:clcweb@purdue.edu)>

---

**Volume 19 Issue 1 (March 2017) Article 1**  
**Carolina Gainza,**  
**"Networks of Collaboration and Creation in Latin American Digital Literature "**  
<<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol19/iss1/1>>

---

Contents of **CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture 19.1 (2017)**  
<<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol19/iss1/>>

---

**Abstract:** In her article "Networks of Collaboration and Creation in Latin American Digital Literature" Carolina Gainza examines how production and reception of literature have been affected by digital technology, with special emphasis on issues related to Latin American digital literature. Gainza analyzes Jaime Alejandro Rodriguez's *Narratopedia*, Doménico Chiappe's *La Huella de Cosmos*, and Leonardo Valencia's and Eugenio Tiselli's *El Libro Flotante* in order to highlight collective practices of creation involved in digital productions. Through the discussion of these issues, Gainza offers an overview of ongoing changes wrought by digital technology in contemporary Latin American digital culture.

**Carolina GAINZA**

## **Networks of Collaboration and Creation in Latin American Digital Literature**

What is digital literature? By this term, I mean neither digitalized books nor books that have had any digital procedure involved in their production. Otherwise, all contemporary literature should be called "digital." Furthermore, I do not use the term "electronic," as most authors do when talking about this phenomena, because "electronic" refers to technologies such as radio, television, and other "analog" technologies which are important to understand the digital phenomenon, but are also different from digital technologies in many ways. The impact of digital technology on literature is apparent not only as a thematic topic or as narrative or poetic effects, but as a materiality that changed literature's modes of production, creation, circulation and reception. Hence, thinkers such as Katherine Hayles (2008), George Landow (2003) and Espen Aarseth (1997) are correct when emphasizing this aspect. The materiality of digital technologies and their language has given birth to new literary creations, some that were potentiated by the uses of new technologies (e.g., hypertexts) and others that are born digital (e.g., generative texts, twitter literature, among others).

Manipulability is one of the main characteristics of the digital. Digital language makes possible the endless manipulation of texts, music, images, and other cultural production. This has allowed remixing, sampling, re-writing, copying, plagiarism, and other techniques and practices to acquire an important role in digital creativity, as Kenneth Goldsmith describes in his book *Uncreative Writing* (2011). Digital literature refers to literature that has been created to be read in an electronic device, but, more importantly, it has certain characteristics, such as manipulability, modularity, and variability (Manovich, *El Lenguaje 65*), that make the digital space the only one in which it can exist. We are talking about literature that can be moved, played with, changed, disposed in different ways, and that cannot be translated into a book format without losing its meaning. In addition, the digital format allows for collective participation and writing, which would be almost impossible to do in the book format. From this definition, I will use digital literature and cybertext indistinctly through the article.

In Latin America, digital literature is a relatively new phenomenon. In the analysis of Latin American digital texts, I have considered both their material composition as well as aspects of authorship and reception practices. Materiality here refers to the technologies that have been used by the author in the production of the digital text. Depending on the technology used in digital narratives, we find texts that range from simple productions—like hypertext based productions—to more complex texts that include music, images, moving text, and many different kinds of software. Thus, the effects produced in readers can be aesthetically varied, depending on the technologies used in their production. Hayles, one of the most renowned theorists in the field of digital literature, concentrates mostly on the material aspect in her attempt to classify digital literature. She argues that "major genres in the canon of electronic literature emerge not only from different ways in which the user experiences them, but also from the structure and specificity of the underlying code" (*Electronic Literature 5*). She proposes that what makes digital literature distinctive from print literature is that the former was 'born digital.' Digitally born literature, as Hayles argues, "cannot be accessed until it is performed by properly executed code" (*Electronic Literature 5*). The author wants to emphasize that digital literature is not only a matter of a different experience in terms of reception and production, but that digital texts have to be analyzed in relation to their materiality, which involves the language of codes.

Although it is true that the specificity of the medium is a main component in the study of digital literature, the sole attention to the material element of the texts is not enough to grasp some features that are specific to these productions, especially in a region where the introduction and the uses of new technologies are strongly related to politics. For example, the neo-Zapatist movement and the students' movement in Latin America, especially the one in Chile, are only some of the most well known examples of how digital technologies have been appropriated for political purposes and how digital technologies were not only a 'materiality' for mobilization, but an important actor among the strategies of resistance. In digital literature, we can find works that can be highly innovative technologically but in which the readers' participation can be restricted to following a series of links or clicking on different images (this can be seen especially in hypertext based productions). In this case, we can see interaction, but not participation. Nevertheless, even in texts where readers are invited to follow reading paths, their experience of reading is different than the one of reading a printed book. In interactive fiction, from hypertexts to hypermedia, readers have the experience of creating their own story, and, in this sense, they can put themselves in the author's shoes. In addition, given the manipulability of the algorithmic language of the digital, we can potentially intervene any digital text, even if they are copyrighted, as we can see in many re-writings extensions of the stories and remixes that circulate on the web. In this sense, digital literature makes visible the existence of collective intelligences visible. This phenomenon in which the reader is at the same time author has resulted in the birth of a new "subject": the w-reader or prosumer, who is at the center of what Henry Jenkins has called "convergence culture" (*Convergence Culture*).

Given that, readers of digital texts not only create meaning from reading, as we do in print, but they actually affect literature in their material aspects, by intervening in its structure. This is why I propose a model for the classification of digital texts that combines three elements: materiality, production, and practices of reception. Although the authors' decisions and the technologies used in the production of the text affect the levels of readers' interaction or participation, there are reception practices that go beyond the authors' control, as we exposed in the last paragraph. As some authors emphasize, most cybertexts work as games, where readers' choices interact with the narration

produced by the author (Aarseth, *Cybertext*; Galloway, *Gaming*). In this regard, the narrative is only activated and produced when the reader interacts with the digital literary object by activating its codes.

In texts controlled by an author, readers can find ways to participate beyond the author's control, because in the online world every text available is a potential subject of intervention. The readers of such texts usually create their own communities of followers, where they comment on the texts, add links, extend the plots, or practice a form of literary criticism. We face a different kind of reception practice when authors decide to relinquish control of the narrative to allow the participation of other people in the creative process. In this case, the narrative cannot be attributed to one author, because while any person can propose the idea for a given narrative, the other participants are the ones who develop the plots, arguments, and characters, which in turn are discussed and modified by the collectivity. In these collective productions, it is possible to see clearly how different actors are sharing ideas and participating in the production of a common narrative.

Although in this analysis I only include texts which are considered "open" in terms of the practices of collective collaboration involved in their production, I would like to make clear that even the more "closed texts," where readers are given the "illusion" of participation, are the result of collective forms of creation. As Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri affirm, "This production of the common tends today to be central to every form of social production, no matter how locally circumscribed, and it is, in fact, the primary characteristic of the new forms of labor today..." (*Multitude* xv). In this regard, Doménico Chiappe proposes that, by definition, every hypermedia text is produced collectively ("Creative Processes" 212-26). The production of digital texts should be understood as the result of a collective intelligence, a group composed of writers, designers, computer programmers, software specialists, plastic artists, photographers, and other creative minds. It is true that, to a certain extent, we could say the same about printed literature. However, this common production was privatized by the imposition of intellectual property rights and licenses centered on the individual author. The introduction of digital technologies in literary production and the formation of networks of cooperation facilitate and make more evident a kind of work that has been practiced for a long time in literature, which was restricted by the introduction and further reinforcement of copyright.

People involved in literary production form a network of collective intelligences that has the option to create closed or open works. Thus, I emphasize that, despite the variations in the level of the actors' involvement, digital literature is intrinsically a practice of collective creation. Therefore, there is no individual mind that can get all the credit for the literary production, but rather, it belongs to the group of minds that work on it. In a different dimension, the final outcome of collective production can be privatized (by the imposition of copyrights, for example) or liberated, so that it may be shared and improved upon by anybody who wants to get involved. However, as I stated, even if a text has copyright, the materiality of the digital sphere makes texts available for potential interventions.

One of the collective experiences that I would like to highlight is Jaime Alejandro Rodríguez's project *Narratopedia*. Rodríguez has written two hypermedias: the hypermedia production *Gabriella Infinita* and the interactive fiction *Golpe de Gracia*. *Narratopedia* is a different project. Its main purpose is to contribute to the formation of a collective intelligence, as well as to the observation of its processes of development. The experiment starts in 2007, defined as a literary workshop. In 2010 a new technological platform for *Narratopedia* is made available, providing additional spaces for the collaborative work among readers, writers, contributors, theorists, and software developers. The interface is divided into two vertical frames. The left frame shows the different options for participation. Here, people can collaborate by publishing text, images, or videos that can be commented on and discussed by other participants. Participants can even discuss the technology that supports *Narratopedia*. Further, *Narratopedia* provides a space to discuss current research in cyberculture, new narrative forms, and the impact of technologies in education, among other activities. The right frame displays the most recent posts, allowing participants to track the process of participation in all sections of the website.

Although *Narratopedia* contributes to the formation of a network of different people creating something in common and developing spaces for collective production, there is something in this project that, from a traditional point of view, could be described as a problem. Given the multiplicity of means and topics for creation, it is almost impossible to observe an explicit connection between the stories written. Everyone writes his or her own story, and although everybody can participate and comment on each other's writing, what ultimately can be observed is an overwhelming diversity of stories. However, we have to remember that the multitude described by Hardt and Negri has no center. When approaching these apparently disorganized organizations we have to keep in mind that "If one looks inside a network, however, one can see that it is indeed organized, rational and creative. It has swarm intelligence" (Hardt and Negri, *Multitude* 91). Indeed, from the outside, *Narratopedia* can appear shapeless and disjointed. However, it is organized in a network where these different creative agents, although producing very different narratives, are able to interact with each other by contributing to projects started by others, commenting on them, producing theories, and collaborating together for the existence of this collective project. This networked organization facilitates communication and sharing among people participating in the project, because the collective work allows for the creation of new social relationships, and, at the same time, these social relationships encourage the people's engagement in the collective work.

*La Huella de Cosmos* exemplifies a different experience of collaborative work. The project was directed by Peruvian-Venezuelan writer and journalist Doménico Chiappe, and sponsored by Escuela Superior de Artes y Espectáculos de Madrid. It was developed between June and December of 2005, and involved a community of writers and readers, wherein the readers participated in a forum as commentators, discussants, and idea-contributors for the plots proposed by Chiappe. In this regard,

the process of creation worked in a similar manner to the production of open software, whereby the creator of software posts his or her production in collective forums where everyone involved discusses the plots and can suggest modifications. In the forum of the hypermedia, the director-editor proposes plots and edits the resulting texts to give them coherence, but the ones who ultimately develop the plots through active participation are the readers.

Materially, the novel's structure is based mainly on hypertext. In some parts of the novel, such as chapter three, we can listen to background music, and if we click on some images we are directed to different texts. The novel's plot is about how Aitor, a philosopher of the digital age, creates a fictional character brought to life, Cosmos. The nine chapters of the novel describe the search for Cosmos, who was brought into the real world in order to allow Aitor to enter cyberspace. In the real world, Aitor has fallen into a coma and his friends blame Cosmos so they set out to find Cosmos in order to bring Aitor back to life. This is no easy task because Cosmos is a cyborg that can take any form depending on the desires of the people who happen to be thinking about him or her at any given moment. He is a character that has escaped the control of its creator and, in doing so, poses a threat to the real world. This last idea can be taken as a metaphor of what is currently happening with narratives in the online world, where sharing and new writing practices have become a threat for some institutions, such as intellectual property and literature itself.

Currently, *La Huella de Cosmos* is a closed narrative and it has not been available online since 2015. The "closure" refers to the moment when the "facilitator" and the sponsored institution decided to freeze the production of it, giving it an end. However, as I have proposed, if someone would like to extend the narrative it could be easily done online in another webpage or other online platform. Nevertheless, the most threatening fact about digital production is its disappearance from the Internet. The novel is not available anymore, and now we have to face another important discussion regarding how we can preserve digital literature. How can we access this novel in the future? We can find references to the novel in some digital repositories, such as Biblioteca Virtual Cervantes and Electronic Literature Knowledge Base (ELMCIP), but the novel itself currently exists only as a code, perhaps saved, in some of the authors' computers. Most likely, this immaterial production—is immaterial because code, in this case, is pure information not yet activated by a reader—is not going to work on any electronic devices in the future, since the software where it can be run will probably be obsolete. This is only one example of a problem regarding the preservation of digital works that we are currently facing, where lot of valuable material that carries information about our culture could be lost or fall into obsolescence. Some initiatives, such as the Electronic Literature Collection, have done a great work in preserving digital literature. Nevertheless, most of the works included in this collection come from North American or European authors. It seems that, with few exceptions, digital literature from other places is not being taken seriously. In the case of Latin America, there is an important amount of creation in this field, in digital poetry, narrative and other genres, from authors such as Belén Gache, Jaime Alejandro Rodríguez, Eugenio Tiselli, Santiago Ortiz, Carlos Labbé, among many others.

A different case from *La Huella* is the web related to *El Libro Flotante de Caytran Dölpfin*. This is the second novel of the Ecuadorian writer Leonardo Valencia, which was published as a printed book in 2006. The novel poses a reflection on the process of re-writing, plagiarism, and authorship. The narrator, Iván Romano, describes the process of writing a book based on the fragments of another book, Caytran Dölpfin's *Estuario*, where there is some speculation regarding its origins related to a practice of plagiarism. This process of rewriting is combined with the narration of the life experiences of the different characters living in Guayaquil, Ecuador. In the novel, Romano comments on some of the fragments contained in Dölpfin's book, while describing how Guayaquil came to be submerged in water one day when the tide came in but never ebbed out, flooding the lowest parts of the city. The title of Dölpfin's novel represents an estuary of fragments or, in Deleuze and Guattari's terms (2009), a rhizome of the fragments coming from other narrations as well as the ones created through the commentaries made by Romano.

Eugenio Tiselli, a Mexican digital poet, in partnership with Valencia decided to create a website linked to the novel to extend the process of continuous creation started in the novel. Thus, they designed a model for collective participation based on the addition of fragments to the ones already contained in *Estuario* and commented upon by Romano in the novel. On the website, readers can comment on the fragments, just like the character Iván Romano does in the book. They can introduce distortions as well, which can be effectuated in three ways: distortion by substitution (the substitution of words in the fragments), complete distortion (the complete distortion of all the words in the fragments), and distortion by editing (free edition of fragments). Finally, readers are invited to add "apocryphal" fragments, which appear neither in *Estuario* nor *El Libro Flotante*. Thus, the reader can choose to be a commentator of the text or an active participant in the process of creation of a network of fragments. The idea proposed by Valencia and Tiselli is to produce a floating text instead of a fixed text in a printed book.

In these texts we can identify three modes in which the digital becomes a platform for collective creation. *Narratopedia* uses new technologies to become a web site that functions as a repository for a diversity of narratives and as a space where authors can connect, collaborate and comment on each other writings. In this sense, internet works here as a platform for circulating narratives, as well as a platform of creation. *La Huella* is an example of a literary project in which new technologies became a tool that potentiates collective writing, making it easier to organize the process of creation. Finally, in *El Libro Flotante*, digital technologies become a platform for creation, where any person can participate extending a narrative that existed in print. I would like to stress that in these experiences of creation, especially in this last work, we can find the potential of digital technologies related to a type of appropriation in which readers, if we can still call them that, participate in a cultural

experience where everything is potentially hacked, even closed and copyright protected narratives. Certainly, the texts we are dealing with are hard to identify with what traditionally has been understood as "literature." As Roger Chartier proposes, the digital revolution has no precedents in the history of humanity, because it not only modifies the material composition of texts, but also the forms of production, circulation and reception of literature (*Actas del seminario Internacional* 34). Following Chartier's statement, I propose that it is necessary to complement the analysis of the materiality of digital technologies with the study of the processes of collective creation and practices of collaboration, which clearly affect the way that texts are produced, circulated and received.

At this point, I would like to highlight that it is no coincidence that these collective projects, which subvert literary creation and even some aspects of intellectual property come from projects of Latin American writers. The literary works mentioned emphasize collaboration in the process of creation through the appropriation of new technologies, re-signifying them. These literatures become spaces for negotiation of the meanings of these technologies in the context of globalization, a process that affects not only how we conceive these tools, but how literary experimentation in Latin America connects and dialogs with the construction of identity, cultural and literary traditions, politics and new forms of creation: "Latin American online works are frequently involved in the negotiation between on- and offline spaces, and between old and new cultural forms" (Pitman and Taylor, *Latin American Identity* 22). In this sense, Latin American digital works have a tactical component, where technologies, in the case of the works studied here, pose conflictive issues regarding the mechanisms of creation, emphasizing collaboration, but, and I think that this is the most relevant issue here, property over intellectual production. This last issue is crucial for the argument I am trying to develop in this analysis. As Thea Pitman and Claire Taylor argue in their work, Latin American online cultural production makes a tactical use of new media technologies (*Latin American Identity*). Many digital literary works by Latin American writers point to the issue of property related to literary works, where the former would negatively affect the process of creation, especially in the online context. In the literary works we have seen here, collaborative creation seems to be a crucial characteristic of how digital culture works, where even the more closed works, even the ones protected with copyright, can be "hacked." We can comment, extend, modify, and distribute each other's narratives, as people do in *Narratopedia*, *La Huella*, and *El Libro Flotante*. In the works of other Latin American authors, such as Belén Gaché, Milton Laüfer, Carlos Labbé and Carlos Cociña, to name only a few, we can find examples of re-writing, plagiarism and "hacking" literary tradition, potentially or actually happening in their poetics and narratives. The hypertextual structure of the digital technologies used as structure for these new narratives, also become a way to decentralize dominant discourses about creation, process in which the roles of readers and authors are reconfigured and negotiated.

The discussion about collaboration, appropriation and property is relevant in the context of the Latin American Cultural Studies tradition. Latin American digital literature is not a mere copy of what has been done in other places, especially in the United States (Martín Barbero "Forward"; Pitman and Taylor *Latin American Identity*). The political aspect regarding the critique to the intellectual property issue, by creating spaces for collective and collaborative writing, different modes of appropriation and 'cultural hacking', gives distinct meanings to the processes of resignification of digital technologies. In other words, technologies are being used as platforms of creation, a process in which writing and politics become connected in the formation of spaces for subverting the imposed forms of creation of, as Angel Rama called it, the 'lettered city' (*La ciudad letrada*). The discussion developed by the group of authors involved in the analysis of Latin American (post)colonialism—such as Walter Dignolo, Enrique Dussel, and Anibal Quijano—offers a specific connotation to the process of appropriation and resignification of technologies in the context of Latin American digital literature related to the development of actions of resistance and construction of identity.

I mentioned the free software movement at the beginning of this article because I think it has been one of the precursors of and direct inspirations for the different movements of free culture that promote a shared commonwealth. In this context, information and communication technologies have played a decisive role. The uses of these technologies promote the construction of networks of production, creation, and solidarity. Given that these networks are grounded in common production, they break to different degrees with the barriers of intellectual property. In this regard, Hardt and Negri propose, "In the newly dominant forms of production that involve information, codes, knowledge, images and affects, for example, producers increasingly require a high degree of freedom as well as open access to the common, especially in its social forms, such as communication networks, information banks, and cultural circuits" (*Commonwealth* x). The collective work observed in the digital texts that I have discussed is a consequence of these new forms of collective production.

Although a fundamental component, technology is only the material basis that makes the construction of networks possible. What we can see in collective productions is a symbiotic relationship between the production of subjectivity and the production of the common. The collective experiences observed in the analyzed cybertexts, affect the production of subjectivity through practices of collaboration that are possible thanks to the use of technology. Participants have appropriated technology in creative ways, and the resultant collective literary work suggests a critique of the privatization of knowledge and of the creative processes that informational capitalism tends to enforce. Indeed, Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA), Protect IP Act (PIPA), and Transpacific Partnership (TPP)—being the last ones that affect Latin America in very negative ways regarding Intellectual Property—are only three examples of how intellectual property is one of the main issues at play in the expansion of informational capitalism. In this regard, we argue that digital writing practices, such as the ones analyzed here, disrupt the unidirectional relation between media enterprises and social actors in the current capitalist context, producing new subjectivities that shape technology and common practices in a given culture.

Hence, digital literature in Latin America should be understood as a space of negotiation, where different forms of subjects, social relationships and collaborative collectivities are being produced. In *Narratopedia* we see the production of different narratives, a collective production by different subjects. However, one problem that emerges from our analysis of *Narratopedia* is the actual communication among extremely divergent narratives and creative subjectivities participating in the project; namely, it seems that there is no connection among them. We have a variety of stories, but it seems that there are no networks of cooperation able to really produce something in common. We have to recognize, however, that they are experimenting with the potentialities of digital communities, creating a space to observe how collective intelligence may work and organize itself. Furthermore, as I stated earlier in the analysis, we have to keep in mind that most of the new forces of resistance to capitalism are also new forms of organization. They are not dictated by any form of centralized control and they are fundamentally based on networks of communication, which is the case of this digital production.

*El Libro Flotante* points to collaborative writing in which participant's primary function is to comment on or distort the fragments in Caytran Dölpfin's book, or to add new ones. The novel itself and its digital continuation can be interpreted as an infinite act of rewriting or an infinite exercise of revision. The reader is called to be a writer, to participate in the extension of the novel's fragments, something that is very characteristic of the potential of digital technologies. Furthermore, readers assume the role of the main character in the novel, Iván Romano. This exercise of collaborative writing contributes to decentralize the role of the author as someone unique and original, but, and more essential to our argument, it shows the potential of the relationship between writing and digital technologies to go beyond intellectual property chains. The idea of the novel does not belong to anyone in particular, not to Romano and, perhaps, not even to Dölpfin, who might not even have existed (as the fictional character in *Don Quixote*, Cide Hamete Benengeli). Certainly the book's author is Leonardo Valencia, but what happened in the digital space is the result of an intelligence that worked collaboratively. A radicalization of the former exercise can be seen in fanfiction, in which even the division between production, circulation, and reception is blurred.

The third kind of collective production, exemplified in *La Huella de Cosmos*, is a more controlled example of the production of the common. One person, Chiappe in this case, acts as 'facilitator', who usually initiates the project and proposes some ideas for the narration to facilitate the collective process of collaboration. In this experience, subjects are not creating a collection of narratives, like in *Narratopedia*, or extending a novel, like in *El Libro Flotante*, but rather a coherent and unified narrative produced collaboratively through the interaction of different singularities. The participants are united not only by their enthusiasm for the production of the narrative or their common interest in literature, but also, and in my opinion most importantly, by their active participation in the production of a cybernovel of which they are neither merely passive readers, like in books, nor interactive readers, like the ones that we can observe in other digital works such as hypermedia. Unlike the other works analyzed, *La Huella* has an end, and when that happened, the process of collaborative creation ended. In this sense, this is a closed narrative, because it does not allow the intervention of others in the narrative, not even to be extended or rewritten. The webpage has a copyright logo, which we can infer protects the content of the novel. In consequence, the problem of this digital experience is not its organization, not even its closure by an end, but its introduction into the logic of intellectual property. However, as I proposed, every artistic work that enters into the digital space becomes a potential target for "cultural hacking."

Although some of these digital narratives are more closed than others, which situate them in different points of the spectrum of collective production, we have seen that they subvert the role of the author and the system of intellectual property, as institutions strongly attached to modern literature. The subjects that I have called "facilitators" propose some initial topics or ideas to produce a narrative collectively; afterwards, they open those ideas to people who want to participate in the process of collaboration. This is totally different from the regimen of private property, which constitutes the basis of capitalism. In this sense, the digital text that I presented above reflects the influence of free software ethics, being produced through the sharing of ideas, experiences, and different narratives, of which there is no individual author that could be said to own the narrative. People are allowed to take the ideas contained in a narrative and expand upon them or create something new from them. Thus, against what we can define as a new process of capitalist accumulation based on the privatization of immaterial production, such as intellectual property, we find in digital literature experiences of collective collaboration that challenge the process of privatization and, at the same time, produce new forms of the common.

In this sense, it is possible to connect digital literature to the larger movement of Free Culture. Both express a conflict with notions of intellectual property by proposing alternative forms of social relations of production than those favored by capitalism. As I proposed, it is especially significant how the subversion posed by these digital productions connect with the analysis of the postcolonial condition of Latin America. Taking into account the fact that literature has always been a space where subjects can think and reinvent themselves, digital literature becomes, in the context of the region, a place where subjects are creating new narratives and socio-cultural imaginaries. The collaborative element found in both the production and reception of digital texts can become a resistant element with political effects that can be a threat to the mechanisms of control found in informational capitalism.

One could say that the production of the common could also be appropriated as a "free gift" that reinforces the dominant system. By "free gifts" I am referring to the idea of surplus value. However, Hardt and Negri suggest that in the current context of informational capitalism, we cannot understand surplus value as it was defined by Marx (*Imperio* 40). Tony Smith (2012) argues that what is

problematic about the commons-based production is that it is produced outside the capital-wage labor relations. Indeed, people freely choose to engage in common based productions and they usually spend their spare time working on this. Given that capitalism is still the dominant form of production those engaged in common based productions are, at the end, working for capital for free. In this regard, Hardt and Negri propose, "The common, in other words, has become the locus of surplus value. Exploitation is the private appropriation of part or all of the value that has been produced as common" (*Multitude* 150). Then, the danger around collective productions is that ideas, information, and knowledge circulating freely, can be easily incorporated within capitalist circuits. One of the challenges of free culture, then, is to create mechanisms to escape from these circuits. Creative Commons is a prime example of alternatives to the copyright system of intellectual property. Certainly, for capitalism, Free Culture is an easy target for appropriation, especially since capitalism is a system that relies on the productivity of labor, especially on the "free gifts" of surplus labor provided by the labor force (Smith, "Is Socialism Relevant" 2012). However, we have to pay attention to the creative attacks from subjects that dislocate the order imposed by the system of power and take them as points of departure to evaluate the alternatives that they can contain. Indeed, this is what we can see in the Latin American digital works discussed in the paper.

To summarize, I intended to show in this article some examples of Latin American digital literature where we can explore different experiences that are intrinsically related to a mode of production that is becoming increasingly dominant. However, although every narrative reflects to some extent the predominant mode of production and the relations of production derived from it, at the same time we can find spaces of resistance within them. I propose that people working collectively and collaboratively in experiences such as *Narratopedia*, *La Huella de Cosmos* and *El Libro Flotante* form a *multitude*, using Hardt and Negri's terminology. I argue that these projects are developed thanks to the actions of a set of singularities working together to produce something in common, without being reduced to sameness. In this sense, digital literature can be conceived as a production of the common that creates social relationships and networks of cooperation among different people willing to share their ideas. Thus, it is important to explore these spaces of creation formed along new social relationships in order to understand the type of subjectivities involved in these productions and how they are forming worldviews and alternative networks of cooperation that can pose a threat to the mechanisms of control used by informational capitalism. More than concluding, it was my aim to open questions about Latin American digital culture as a place to explore new forms of social relations, spaces of negotiation of identity and resistance elements, in which digital technologies acquire new meanings.

#### Works Cited

- Aarseth, Espen. *Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature*. Baltimore: The John Hopkins UP, 1997.
- Chartier, Roger. "Leer la lectura." *Plan Nacional de Fomento de la Lectura. Actas del seminario Internacional, ¿Qué leer? ¿Cómo leer? Perspectivas sobre lectura en la infancia*. Santiago: Ministerio de Educación, 2013. 29-46.
- Chiappe, Doménico. "Creative Processes in Hypermedia Literature: Single Purpose, Multiple Authors." *Latin America Cyberculture and Cyberliterature*. Ed. Claire Taylor, and Thea Pitman. Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 2007. 216-26.
- Deleuze, Gilles and Felix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2009.
- Galloway, Alexander. *Gaming: Essays on Algorithmic Culture*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2006.
- Goldsmith, Kenneth. *Uncreative Writing: Managing Language in the Digital Age*. New York: Columbia UP, 2011.
- Hardt, Michael, and Antonio Negri. *Imperio*. Buenos Aires: Paidós, 2006.
- Hardt, Michael, and Antonio Negri. *Commonwealth*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 2009.
- Hardt, Michael, and Antonio Negri. *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*. New York: Penguin Books, 2005.
- Hayles, Katherine. *Electronic Literature: New Horizons for The Literary*. Notre Dame: U Notre Dame P, 2008.
- Hellekson, Karen and Kristina Busse. *Fan Fiction and Fan Communities in the Age of Internet*. United States: McFarland, 2006.
- Hellekson, Karen and Kristina Busse. *The Fan Fiction Studies Reader*. Iowa: U of Iowa P, 2014.
- Jamison, Anne. *FIC. Why Fanfiction Is Taking Over the World*. Dallas: Smart Pop, 2013.
- Jenkins, Henry. *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*. New York: NYU Press, 2005.
- Jenkins, Henry. *Fans, Blogueros and Videojuegos*. España: Ediciones Paidós Ibérica, 2009.
- Joyce, Michael. *Afternoon, a Story*. Watertown, MA: Eastgate Systems, 1990.
- Landow, George. *Hypertext 3.0: Critical Theory and New media in an Era of Globalization*. Baltimore: The John Hopkins UP, 2006.
- Manovich, Lev. *El Lenguaje de los Nuevos Medios: La Imagen en la Era Digital*. Barcelona: Paidós, 2005.
- Martín-Barbero, Jesús. "Forward: Latin American Cyberliterature: From the Lettered City to the Creativity of its Citizens." *Latin America Cyberculture and Cyberliterature*. Ed. Claire Taylor and Thea Pitman. Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 2007. xi- xv.
- Pitman, Thea and Claire Taylor. *Latin American Identity in Online Cultural Production*. New York: Routledge, 2013.
- Rama, Angel. *La ciudad letrada*. Santiago: Tajarar, 2004.
- Raley, Rita. *Tactical Media*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2009.
- Rodríguez, Jaime Alejandro. *Narratopedia*. (2015): <<http://www.narratopedia.net>>.
- Smith, Tony. "Is Socialism Relevant in the 'Networked Information Age?' A Critical Assessment of the Wealth of Networks." *Taking Socialism Seriously*. Ed. Richard Schmitt and Anatole Anton. Lenham: Lexington Books, 2012. 157-86.
- Stallman, Richard. *Software libre para una sociedad libre*. Madrid: Traficantes de Sueños, 2004.
- Valencia, Leonardo and Eugenio Tiselli. *El Libro Flotante de Caytran Dölpfin. libroflotante.net* (2015): <<http://www.libroflotante.net>>.

Note: This work was supported by Fondo Nacional De Desarrollo Científico y Tecnológico (11140247).



Author's profile: Carolina Gainza teaches electronic literature, cultural and literary theory at the Universidad Diego Portales (Santiago, Chile). She is the main editor of the journals, *Revista Laboratorio* ([revistalaboratorio.udp.cl](http://revistalaboratorio.udp.cl)), and *Laboratorio de Escrituras* ([www.laboratoriodeescrituras.cl](http://www.laboratoriodeescrituras.cl)). Her foremost research interests are related to digital humanities, digital cultures and digital literature in Latin America. Gainza's latest publications include: "Literatura chilena en digital: mapas, estéticas y conceptualizaciones," *Revista Chilena de Literatura* (2016), and "¿Cómo leemos un texto hipertextual?: una exploración de la lectura de literatura digital." *Revista de Humanidades* (Co-authored with Paloma Domínguez, 2017). She is currently pursuing research on digital culture in Chile (<http://culturadigitalchile.cl/>). Email: <<mailto:carolina.gainza@udp.cl>>