Postcolonial Co-Ordinary Literature and the Web 2.0/3.0
“Thinking Back” within Transmediatic Knowledge

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1. Social Hybridology

a. The Hybrid: Brief Historical and Social Background

The concepts of “postcolonial literature” and “transmedia” are crossed by a common idea, hybridization. Hybridization refers to a mode of knowledge and action associated with the hybrid, which denotes the interstices, the network of relationships, the places and instances that, while merging their essences and experiences, generate new productions and reproductions of themselves.

Indeed, the hybrid is the essence of almost everything that exists. Nothing is pure, either in nature or in society. Since Antiquity, this term has been associated with the idea of mixing, heterogeneity, mestizaje, monstrosity, etc. One of its genealogic roots is the Latin word *hybrida*, used to categorize the offspring of the cross-breeding of a wild boar and a domestic female pig. The term gradually acquired the meaning of mixing two or more things of a different nature, in various areas of practice and in diverse branches of knowledge. For example, in biology, in the conception of life itself, a child is seen as a hybrid of two natures, male and female. In society, mediation is a hybrid of two polar entities, be they the individual and society, the human and the machine, or other combinations. Accordingly, mediating theories turn out to be hybrids emerging from various polar theories or even from mediating theories themselves.

We live today in a hybrid, intercultural society where different and even opposite concepts of identity merge in novel ways. Already in his 1930 essays on *The Dialogic Imagination* (English translation 1981), Mikhail Bakhtin noticed that, in modern cultures, the very emergence of meaning derives, among other conditions, from the hybrid nature of language itself, its *polyglossia*. This awareness of hybridity calls into question the classical dichotomies that shaped our traditional understanding of cultures. In *Narrative Innovation and Cultural Rewriting in the Cold War Era and After* (2001), Marcel Cornis-Pope applies this idea to the cultural and literary creation of the post-World War Two period, pointing out the extent to which the traditional dualities of race, gender, class, and narratological oppositions such as Realism / Formalism, and imitation / invention, are interrogated and transcended by post-war writers attentive to hybrid intercrossings. Artur Matuck takes a similar position in “Tecnologias digitais e o futuro da escrita” (Digital Technologies and the Future of Writing; 2009), arguing that “The decodification of this hybrid reality needs an open and enhanced perception that becomes available only through a reformulation of the fundamental structures that inform human beings, culture, history, the planet, identities, scientific creation, and language itself” (293). In his turn, Peter Anders, mentioned elsewhere in the present volume, emphasizes the significance of “cybrids” for contemporary culture, defining them as combinations of physical, symbolic or electronic digital images; or as hybrids between mediated entities and physical ones; or, finally, as mergers between the physical and the electronic (“Towards an Architecture of the Mind,” 2001).
Beyond the blogosphere, a hybridsphere exists nowadays, in particular inside cyberspace and in cybertime. This emerging and immersive virtual space consists of sites or blogs with a variegated nature. For example, Hybrilog, an experimental blog I have published since 2006, was built not only from various related media, as a mere hypermedia system, but by using diverse blogs with different natures. What has resulted is a virtual space sui generis, characterized by a hybridization of media and not just by the simple hypermediatic connection among them (see Andrade, Hybrilog). More specifically, Hybrilog consists of six different types of blog: a classic text blog; a blog including videos, named “vlog”; a third blog, containing video-poetry, named “pvlog” (from the juxtaposition of “p” for poetry and “vi” for video, followed by the abbreviation “log”); another blog containing digital art, called “artlog”; a fifth blog where hypermedia works were included, called “hyplog”; and finally, a sixth blog displaying games, or “gamelog.”

While very useful to multimedia expression, hybridity is also central to postcolonial studies. In our postcolonial age, literary texts and even scientific writing (historical, sociological, etc.) increasingly display a hybrid nature. As I have argued more than a decade ago, two major modes of writing are increasingly confronting each other: “univocal writing and hybrid writing.” Unlike univocal writing, hybrid writing “demands, openly or not, the impurity, the contact coinciding with the contract, contamination through communication. Indeed, this writing of fusion considers that such processes, ambiguous (i.e., mixed) but also ambiguous underlying hybrid writing, have become nowadays, more and more, the polysemic manner of social relations” (Andrade, “A unidade e a hibridação das escritas” 8). A practical example of this experimental writing in literature is the GeoNeoLogic Novel (2009), a project I will describe later in this chapter.

Briefly, literary and scientific writings may metamorphose in the short term into what I call Social Hybridology. This new knowledge strategy can be understood not only as (a), a reflection on the hybrid, but also as (b), a hybrid itself. In other words, Social Hybridology is a genre of Hermeneutics using different forms of interpretation (sometimes opposite in nature) and aiming at a deeper understanding of the various literacies in existence today, literacies that are themselves often hybridized.

“Literacy” can be defined as a set of reading and writing strategies regarding a specific mode of knowledge. In addition to the regimes of reading and writing in a national or “mother” language, today we are witnessing a proliferation of diverse social literacies inherent to multiple languages operating in our postcolonial contemporaneity. We can thus speak of a scientific, technological, artistic, etc. literacy. For instance, literary and cultural literacies are ways of reading and writing specific cultural and literary languages.

At the confluence of these incommensurable literacies, Social Hybridology is emerging as a unique way of knowing, reading, and writing in our contemporary postcolonial cultures, especially within social networks. Social networks do not include only digital social networks, but also, as Georg Simmel has argued, webs of social relations and interpersonal interaction that have occurred in all societies in history. For example, while studying human conflicts, Simmel depicts either, (a) the objective relations (opposition, competition, etc.) among interests such as those of noblemen and the king in thirteenth century’s Europe; or (b) intersubjective relationships among individuals, such as love (24). He also provides a deeper reflection on the form of social webs (125).
Social Hybridology is a heuristic term that reflects on hybrid processes, structures, contexts, practices, creatures, and objects that do not just proliferate in our societies, but are fundamental constituent modes of the entire social fabric. It provides both a literacy of the hybrid and a new kind of knowledge of past and present (post)colonial scenes.

b. Hybridity / Postcolonialism

Hybridity is viewed by several schools of thought and many practitioners of literature to be one of the main weapons against colonialism. This is especially true of theorists of postcolonialism such as Edward Said and Homi Bhabha, sociologists and anthropologists working in Cultural Studies such as Stuart Hall and Néstor García Canclini, and postcolonial writers or representatives of “magic realism” such as Isabel Allende, Gabriel García Márquez, Salman Rushdie, and Milan Kundera. For instance, Stuart Hall (1996) has attributed a “crisis of identity” (1–17) to our intercultural world, consisting in a decline of traditional identities and the rise of new forms of identification. In Consumers and Citizens: Globalization and Multicultural Conflicts (2001), Canclini emphasizes the fact that hybridization provides a passage from multiculturality to interculturality, creating intersections and transactions among different identities. Building on these perspectives, we can consider that, hybrid literacies are a necessary condition for the deconstruction of colonial discourse and the subsequent reconstruction of postcolonial literacies and literatures.

In the present article, I will attempt to articulate the hybrid literacies of digital forms of expression. Digital literacy comprises a social hermeneutics (reading) articulated with a social rhetorics (writing) and involving a digital savoir. However, hybrid literacies are not mere additions to other (“simpler”) literacies. For example, a postcolonial literacy cannot be understood only as the juxtaposition of “western” and “eastern literacies,” the first one allegedly based on a more rational reading/writing regime than the second one. Rather, hybrid literacies usually operate through complex and multiple kinds of competences and performances, activated by social-cultural agents, involving reading and writing not just within their own cultures, but also and mainly in alien cultures. Indeed, hybrid literacies often work in order to develop multivoicalities of otherness. This means that the understanding of the other is based not just on the process of reading and/or writing about other cultures in an abstract way, but also on interpreting the meanings of everyday communication acts in a more concrete way. Public understanding of cultures leads to better public communication among cultures, and the other way around.

2. Alterities and Alternatives

a. From the Same to the Other: Alternatives of Otherness

We have become aware that literature and its writing/reading strategies increasingly unfold in various social and discursive dimensions — legal, geographic, political, historical, anthropological, and sociological. In the era of globalization and postcolonial/network societies, these dimensions are connected transversely by multiple urban cultural identities and alterities. To understand these articulations more deeply, we will examine how contemporary otherness has been interpreted by several authors from various parts of the globe and from diverse schools of thought.
According to Arjun Appadurai (Modernity at Large; Appadurai et al., Feelings Are Always Local), the Other is always present in our contemporary urbanscapes. This Other may be an immigrant but also a distant neighbor. Anyone who lives in the city and any unusual occurrence can become, under certain circumstances, foreign to us. Appadurai situates cultural life within a globalized space, while also inserting it in the minimal dimension of our everyday and more intimate lives. A similar connection to intersubjectivity in the interrelation with others can be found in Emmanuel Levinas’s thinking (see Alterity and Transcendence), especially when he describes interpersonal relationships as the basis of our transcendence. Such interpersonal relationships are established through the defense of individual rights, which are deeply linked to the rights of others.

One of the most salient postmodern thinkers, Jean Baudrillard, questions where the Other is today. Together with Marc Guillaume, he has identified in Radical Alterity (2008) multiple socio-cultural areas where a radical otherness circulates, such as in artificial intelligence, the experience of the early explorers, modern photography, or on the streets of Venice. Picking up the idea of “radical exoticism” proposed by Victor Segalen (on Segalen’s concept, see Forsdick, ch. 2), Baudrillard and Guillaume apply it to mass media, to pseudonyms, and to the advent of a primitive society in the future. The Other, being unable to communicate, can nevertheless enable the understanding of communication itself.

b. Socio-Historical Interculturality and Cultural Alterities
In short, are we witnessing today encounters or clashes between the Same and the Other, within cultural arenas? Such dialogues and/or clashes of identities can be understood also but not solely in terms of multiculturalism. The prefix “multi” suggests a process that merely juxtaposes varied ethnicities and cultures in our postcolonial societies. By contrast, the “clash of civilizations,” posited by Samuel Huntington, emerges as a result of — among other causes — the decolonization and migration of large masses of population from peripheral countries to core central countries. This often involves some intercultural conflict. Taking into account the complex cultural interactions in the postcolonial age, I prefer to use the term interculturalism in lieu of multiculturalism, to emphasize the dynamic and dialectical interaction among societies at the economic, political, and cultural levels. Associated with interculturalism, the term interculturality denotes the plural exchanges and hybridizations among different cultures, which take place today on an unprecedented scale, even in the West.

To invoke again Néstor García Canclini, an author of reference for the school of Cultural Studies in Latin America, in his most significant work, Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity (1995), he argues that cultural policies need to address the pernicious effects of globalization. In particular, under the new conditions, Canclini questions how Latin America can compete in the global market without losing its cultural identity. For him, contemporary cultures are essentially “hybrid cultures.” They include, among other elements, both the critical high arts (for example, the literature of Jorge Luis Borges and Octavio Paz), and alternative artistic expressions (Chicano movies, graffiti, etc.). Extending these ideas, Canclini traces in Consumers and Citizens (2001) the effects that urban development, consumerism, and the media inexorably have on the global citizen in our societies. The postmodern citizen-consumer should not be understood just in terms of citizenship and consumption identities at national level, but through a transnational, multicultural, and multilingual positioning as part of the
network of global markets. National cultures have to be rethought in the context of transnational interactions that expand the notions of citizenship and participation.


In our postcolonial societies, a central question pervades most conversations about peace: how can we invoke peace in a world where, since the end of the Cold War, we have witnessed endless foci of local conflicts that have often acquired global dimensions? In reflecting on this situation, we are able to confront two essential concepts and subsidiary questions: what are peacefulness and/or pacification, and how can they be included in the new and sometimes unprecedented forms of conflictuality?

It is a common sense observation to say that major debates ensue from major challenges. If there is an answer to the question of peacefulness, it derives in large part from the debate over conflict. That is, the best way to talk about peace is to think about the latest planetary disputes, particularly those not yet completely understood, such as the transnational cyberwarfare taking over the internet and other networks. We need to promote new ways for citizen participation that allow a greater understanding among peoples. We also need to reflect critically on globalization itself, which has generated two opposed trends: (a) one leading to the fundamentalization of societies, including democratic ones; (b) the other promoting intercultural democratization. The latter process is more visible today through the development of public opinion in many non-Western countries, including some Muslim ones. Certain devices of Web 2.0 (the blogosphere, wikis, digital social webs) or Web 3.0 (e.g., the Semantic Logical social networks) have provided platforms for contradictory phenomena that have included both cyberterrorism and participatory communication among global citizens.

An in-depth discussion of these phenomena is too complex to be attempted here. My article is intended to call attention to them and serve as a quick background for some of these processes. For a broader discussion of the articulation between peacefulness and conflictuality, see my online article posted at the Wars for Peace site (<https://sites.google.com/site/peace-warsenglish>) with its Portuguese version, Guerras para a Paz (<http://sites.google.com/site/peaceswars>).

3. Cyberspace, Cybertime and Web 2.0

a. It's Time for Cybertime

"Web 2.0" has been defined as a new mediascape corresponding to an emerging stage of the Internet which includes at least 3 main characteristics:

1. The software to be activated by a user is resident in the server of the site that provides a given service. Thus, the web surfer can use this "social software" freely on that site, without having to acquire or install it on his or her personal computer.
2. The user participates actively in the production of the information contents. For example, he or she is able to send comments to texts presented online, as in a blog, or even propose
his or her own original texts. This can be done in several ways: as a comment to a blog post or through “social bookmarking,” which is the association of “tags” or meaningful concepts to a web page or other internet piece of information.

3. The sharing of information within social digital networks, such as Facebook, Twitter or YouTube.

The Web 2.0 can provide novel ways of communication. First of all, cyberspace cannot exist without cybertime. The latter concept has been defined as a set of diachronic processes occurring in cyberspace, such as the web users’ interactive rhythms, e-university’s research timings, or .com’s deadlines (see Andrade, “Sociologia [Interdimensional] da Internet,” 1996). A sociology of information and documentation (see Andrade, “Para uma Sociologia da Documentação,” 1985) must take into account this crucial point. And if these temporal processes were important in the first moments of the Internet, they have become even more so since 1997 when Web 2.0 emerged, creating new practices and meanings.

The centrality of cybertime on the Internet and within the Web 2.0 arena can be recognized, for example, inside a blog, the first information genre that announced this second internet era. A blog foregrounds at least two central diachronic properties: (a) structurally, the dichotomy “blog’s post / comment” occurs in a question or statement / answer temporal chain; and (b), a blog’s content is mainly about contemporary events. We should remember that news stories are based essentially in time. Likewise, the information distilled in the Internet and Web 2.0’s cybertime has a vanishing nature. Therefore, in the context of Media Studies or Cultural Studies, it makes sense to reflect on the sociology of the blogosphere (see my 2006 article, “Sociologia da Blogosfera”). Some of these phenomena, connected with common writing (see below) and cybertime, have been studied at the University of Lisbon, including virtual photographic elements in Second Life (see my art. “O Fotográfico virtual no Second Life,” 2008), the discourses created by some Web 2.0 services, like the Wikipedia discourse about YouTube (see my art. “Web 2.0 e reflexividade,” 2008), as well as the social “plurichotomies,” social “hybrichotomies,” and social “fuzzychotomies” that are built through images circulating in Web 2.0’s cybertime. These are discussed in my article “Imagem e Web 2.0,” (2007), but also below.

b. Web 2.0, Lay Storytelling and Common Writing Society

Ben McConnell and Jackie Huba (2006), among other authors, have tried to define the contemporary social mediascape, pointing out the inevitable democratization of the Internet media that is taking place with regard to the writing of messages and not just their reading. In fact, the instruments that produce and diffuse the most varied contents of social media are being reappropriated progressively by lay citizens. In the miniscule spaces and times of daily life, ordinary people, in addition to consuming classical media, manipulate and distribute the media generated, maintained, and shared collectively by incommensurable users (user-generated media) like blogs, podcasts, and so on.

In our contemporary postcolonial societies and cultures such democratization is associated with a hybridization of media. This refers to a blending or fusion of two or more media resulting in a hybrimestone which exhibits a revamped nature, different from the preceding ones. We will focus here on two hybridized activities, writing and research. The first is associated more with Web 2.0, the second with Web 3.0.
Let me start with a general question that will lead to a theoretical hypothesis:

**Question 1:** Are we witnessing the emergence of a citizen-writer, a serious competitor to today’s professional writers and expert literary critics? Before trying to answer this question, I want to quote Edward Said’s reflections on writers and literature in *Humanism and Democratic Criticism* (2004): “The literary text derives, true enough, from the assumed privacy and solitude of the individual writer, but the tension between that privileged location and the social location of the writer is ever present” (74). In an earlier section of this essay, Said argued that:

> Expertise as a distancing device has gotten out of control, especially in some academic forms of expression, to the extent that they have become antidemocratic and even anti-intellectual. At the heart of what I have been calling resistance in humanism — the first part of this being reception and reading — is critique, and critique is always restlessly self-clarifying in search of freedom, enlightenment, more agency, and certainly not their opposites. (73)

Applying this and similar reflections to postcolonial societies, where technology is prevalent, we can articulate the following supposition:

**Theoretical hypothesis 1:** The mobile internet is the new hip in information technologies. Cell phones and blogs have been used during the last decade to report on the bombings at the Atocha Madrid railway station (2004), Saddam Hussein’s execution, the Arab Spring (2010), or the Ukrainian crisis (2014). The act of commenting, of telling small stories about these events and filming them was, in itself, a mass media event of an unprecedented nature. The recording of the event and its conversion into public stories and news in blogs was performed by ordinary citizens and not by mass media professionals. In this way, common citizens have transformed themselves into alternative writers, reporters, or photographers of everyday events.

We witness today the emergence of a common practice of writing, made publicly available by citizen-writers in blogs and other pages of the Internet. This and other related processes contribute to the advent of a corresponding writerly society. In fact, the so-called Web 2.0 promises fresh autonomy to common citizens in the production and dissemination of messages, news, and other content with the help of cell phones, blogs, etc. My theoretical hypothesis is connected to this developing context. So is my working hypothesis below.

**Working hypothesis 1:** It is increasingly likely that digital socio-discursive devices and correspondent common methodologies (social software, social bookmarking, mobile internet, etc.) have contributed to the rise of a writing citizenship, implemented by ordinary citizens and not just by writing experts.

To test my working hypothesis, let us examine what happens on a daily basis in Web 2.0 cybertime. For example, in Del.icio.us (<http://delicious.com/>), after the information is searched, catalogued, indexed, analyzed, interpreted, and shared, employing tags and other common methodologies, the “infonaut” can use the new content produced collectively on line, for writing original messages. The infonaut can write his/her own informed stories and opinions based on those produced by the information society or can deconstruct/ reconstruct them anew. In this context, a couple of new questions arise.

**Question 2:** As a result of these changes, will social life become in part a constant process of reading and writing, online and offline?
Question 3: And what will the future of writing professionals and experts be, in the era of the internet and Web 2.0, or in the new versions of cyberspace and cybertime that will emerge?

To answer these questions, other working hypotheses need to be framed.

Working Hypothesis 2: As a result of the spreading of a common practice of writing, the activities of educational institutions, foundations, laboratories, museums, and other organizations or associations related to writing information are expected to accommodate new goals and practices.

Working Hypothesis 3: Old media and writing professions, classifications, and distinctions (like “screen writer,” “media author,” “producer,” “director,” “creative director,” “newspaper reporter,” “TV anchor,” and even “research journalist”) will fade and, in some extreme cases, disappear. The very nature of what we call “media,” and all the related communicative, informational, and formative processes, will be affected in the deepest way.

c. A Case of Common Writing and Co-Ordinary Literature/Journalism within the Female Blogosphere

Because of suffocating social and cultural conditions, women writers in the past were often limited to interiorized projects which were difficult if not impossible to make public. Cynthia Huff (2005) has undertaken a review of the autobiographical writings produced by women from the Middle Ages to the present, reflecting on the women authors’ values which did not necessarily correspond with those of the male-dominated society. The texts analyzed by Huff are essentially memoirs, autobiographies, soap operas, letters, religious archives, anthologies, deportation narratives, web pages, zines, and other alternative magazines. Whether historical or contemporary, they are analyzed through the theoretical perspectives of Cultural Studies, feminism, postmodernism, and New Historicism.

As noted above, blogs were the first instruments that facilitated the coming of the Web 2.0. Much of the pioneering work in this area was done by female cultural agents. The case of the Internet consultant Rebecca Blood is paradigmatic. Her Weblog Handbook, published in 2002, was the first book to explain in a systematic way how blogs work. In this text, Rebecca Blood assumes the role of a mentor, supplying advice on how to define a credible strategy in the blogosphere. As part of her facilitating role, she engages in a dialogue on blog culture and the underlying ethics and etiquette. Blog culture, although influenced by other sectors of mass culture, also conditions them. Rebecca Blood watches our life occurring on line in cyberspace, and advises us on the best ways to persuade digital readers to visit a blog. She also alerts us to some of the dangers of cyberspace.

Rebecca Blood’s example has been followed by many other women who joined the blogosphere. Two types of contributions are most obvious: on the one hand, a number of authors wrote on the methodology of blog construction; on the other, the blog has been used as a vehicle for ordinary peoples’ writing, in a practice that balances everyday journalism and what we may call “co-ordinary literature.” The term “ordinary” underscores the fact that the writing is done by lay people and not just by professionals and experts. Thus, ordinary writing is opposed to “extra-ordinary” or professional writing. The prefix “co” emphasizes the fact that such writing is often done collectively, in co-operation and in a shared common sense style. This lay literature can be considered a paradigmatic collective expression in our postcolonial and transmediatic global world.
One of the most insightful authors who wrote on the methodology of blog construction is Susannah Gardner. She is a digital journalist, multimedia author, and instructor, who in 2005 issued Buzz Marketing with Blogs, a manual for the publication, advertising, and marketing of blogs in the popular “How to” collection “for Dummies.” The same year, Wendy Atterberry and Sarah Hatter coordinated an anthology of texts about the specific writing of blogs, praised by readers for their female perspective on writing. Margaret Mason, contributor to the magazines The Morning News and New York Times, recently won the “Best Business Blog of the Year” prize, awarded by the magazines Business Week and Forbes, for her Mighty Girl personal blog which she has run since 2000 (see <http://mightygirl.com/about/>). In the book she published in 2006 (No One Cares What You Had for Lunch: 100 Ideas for Your Blog), she related blogs to lifestyles, including habits of eating.

The second type of writing in this area is significantly different from the first one, which in a sense can be described as a type of “peaceful context writing.” By contrast, the second direction, which emphasizes everyday journalism and “co-ordinary literature,” unfolds in the more turbulent arena of continuous microwars endemic to the postcolonial era, reminding us of the theatrical and dramatic nature of our societies.

The blog I am going to present below was written in the style of what could be called postcolonial common writing, a mode of writing that arises from a situation of postcolonialism that both challenges and perpetuates certain colonial vestiges. This analysis will allow us to test Hypothesis 1 (see above). We will focus on a paradigmatic blog within the global postcolonial arena that has emerged recently in and on Iraq. It was launched by a 25-year old Iraqi girl who signed “Riverbend,” a citizen-writer who illustrates the ordinary writing society and, in particular, the co-ordinary literary culture. The blog is written from a female perspective, which ascribes to it a secondary marginality in addition to its non-Western voice.

This influential blog was converted into a book in 2005, under the title Baghdad Burning: Girl Blog from Iraq. The blog was inaugurated in August 2003, four months after Saddam Hussein’s fall. Its female author adopted the pseudonym Riverbend to avoid detection. The notoriety that this blogger reached competed with that of the Iraqi Salam Pax, who, in his blog Where Is Raed (2002–2004), offered an insider’s testimony about the situation in Iraq. Before the second Iraq war, Riverbend was a middle-class woman and a professional computer science programmer. After the start of armed hostilities, she became unemployed and restricted her life to the relative safety of her house. She did not manage to return to active professional life, partly because the Iraqi society could not ensure a woman’s safety in the workplace. She left her home rarely, with her head protected and with a male escort.

As Edward Said states in Humanism and Democratic Criticism, “What I have been calling humanistic resistance therefore needs to occur in longer forms, longer essays, longer periods of reflection, so that the early history of Saddam Hussein’s government (always referred to deliberately as his ‘regime’), for example, can emerge in all its sordid detail…” (77). In this perspective, the Iraqi woman’s comments, stories, and criticisms presented in a co-ordinary literary style, express the frustration, rage, and sarcasm of the blogger with regard to the situation she lived through in occupied Baghdad. She emphasizes four central aspects. The first is her report on the sometimes dramatic situations of everyday life in time of war. For example, she notes the intermittent lack of essential goods such as electricity and water, but also the unexpected explosions
and restrictions to movement in the space of the city. Some stories are unusual, like a family getting up in the middle of the night, when the water and the electricity return momentarily, to wash clothes and to send e-mails.

The second aspect of this blog’s writing deals with real-time life stories involving those responsible for the political situation in Baghdad: the Bush administration and the Iraqi government during that period, but also the Islamic fundamentalists who took advantage of the chaos in postwar Iraq. As the blogger suggests, this confused situation brought an end to the secular Iraqi society. To demonstrate this, the blogger offers reports about her neighbors and relatives. Some of them are missing persons, others have had their houses destroyed by American raids. Numerous children were kidnapped regularly by Iraqi militias to be sold, with the purpose of collecting funds for their troops; some survivors seek, without success, to bury their dead in overcrowded cemeteries.

The third problem addressed by Riverbend is the culture of her country. Similar to a writer, a journalist, or a sociologist in an exercise of everyday reflexivity, she discusses women’s situation in Iraq. She writes about their mourning rituals, the state of education in Iraq, or the symbolic meaning of the fruit of palm trees. Having been born in a hybrid family, with both Shia and Sunni members, she reminds her readers that, before the war, some mutual tolerance existed between the two religious factions — a somewhat debatable assertion. She also adds that some women’s rights were recognized in the secular society of Hassam Hussein’s Iraq.

The fourth central theme concerns the mass media. The critical eye of the blogger focuses, for example, on the American and Al Jazeera television stations and newspapers. Ironically, she proposes a sort of reality show that would include several Bush supporters of the war, who would be placed in Iraqi homes to better appreciate, in loco, the effects of the war. This is clearly an imaginative example of postcolonial common writing that uses to its advantage the tools of a transmediatic blog.

Riverbend’s blog has become a ubiquitous success. The first broader legitimation of this blog came with its republication in the form of a book (2005), adding thousands of new devoted readers around the world. The second proof of its success was the fact that it won third prize in the 2005 prominent Lettre Ulysses Award competition for the Art of Literary Reportage. World recognition came with the publication of a new book in 2006, Baghdad Burning II: More Girl Blog from Iraq, expanding the earlier one.

This example makes clear that we need to focus more of our studies on the common writing available on the Web, and on related subjects, such as those concerning Web 2.0 and the blogosphere within the global information arena. Such studies will clarify what forms cyber-time has taken so far, its variations and types (including, for instance, postcolonial cybertime). They will also help us understand the configurations of cybertime in the near future. We will be able to focus on new kinds of global and local communities, made up of ordinary citizens as producers of a more democratic writing society.
4. Web 3.0: A New Arena for Postcolonial Literature and Common Writing

a. Web 3.0: The Semantic Web

To better situate the Web 2.0 uses of digital devices, mentioned earlier, I will introduce briefly the more recent new urban virtual scape, which offers a new postcolonial setting within which alterities are hybridized in new ways.

As I have argued above, Web 2.0 represents a sort of second age of the Internet, which has had notable development since 2001, after the attack on the New York Twin Towers triggered the development of blogs and other participative/collaborative sites. In addition to reading information, users of this new web can write content, for instance posts and comments in blogs, or send messages to other users in digital social networks. That is why Web 2.0 is also called a “reading/writing internet.”

Web 3.0 offers a new style of production and reception of information, knowledge and meaning. It has been called a Semantic Web because its main aim is to construct sites and networks with their own underlying model of knowledge and meaning rendered manifest and described. Within these semantic sites, the meaningful relationships among nodes of information and sections of knowledge are explicated. During the last few years, some of these relationships were already performed manually in Web 2.0, in the form of a tag (a descriptive meaningful concept, term or word) that a writer or reader could associate with some text in a web page, or post in a blog or to entire sites. These tags can be described as metadata, data about data. In the Semantic Web, the use of metadata is more generalized than in Web 2.0. There are already several examples of semantic sites in cyberspace and in cybertime, such as FreeBase, Semantic Media Wiki, etc. An example closer to our field could be a semantic web site (or semantic wiki) on postcolonial literature: this website could mark the relationship between a page entitled “literature” and another page named “postcolonial literature.” This is a simple relationship, describing an “inheritance” or a “hierarchy” between two familiar concepts. “Literature” is the more general concept, so it would occupy a broader level within the knowledge model than “postcolonial literature.”

After organizing a set of concepts in adequate structures, if we decide to access the page “literature,” for example, and want to see some more related information, the site software should be able to automatically extract specific pages focused on particular types of literature (“postcolonial,” “transmedial,” “co-ordinary,” etc.) or more general pages on culture, for example. In addition to such hierarchical relationships between data, associationist relationships would also become easily accessible, for example a page including content on “postcolonial visual arts.”

For examples of Web 3.0 possibilities, please consult the following social semantic sites:


These sites were constructed as part of a project coordinated by me at the University of Lisbon, called Public Communication of Art (see the Appendix, Social Semantic Sites).
b. Semantic-Logical Social/Human Sciences and Methodologies
In a postcolonial context, if common knowledge grows in relevance, science faces deep transformations as well. For instance, a research group at the University of Lisbon is developing specific semantic-logical methodologies for reading and writing texts and images, within a perspective that combines Semantic-Logical Sociology, History, and Literacy Criticism associated with Web 3.0 processes (see Andrade, Sociologia Semântico-Lógica da Web 2.0/3.0; also Novela GeoNeoLógica nº 1).

Such tools operate by defining hybrid ontologies with adequate software. Hybrid ontologies consist of hybrid and mediating concepts, articulated by an alphabet of interconceptual and argumentative relationships extracted from different logical systems, such as analogic, formal, dialectical, Boolean, and fuzzy logics (see Andrade, "O Alfabeto de Relações Universais,” 2007). This may lead to the deconstruction and reconstruction of our scientific universe of methods for searching and researching meaning, e.g., through semantic and logical webs constituted by metadata defined for such a purpose. We have designated such webs with the term transchotomies (Andrade, “Imagem e Web 2.0”). Briefly, transchotomies are constellations of three or more interlinked concepts that challenge dichotomies, hierarchies, and taxonomies, which we associate with the paradigm of modernity. They connect various substantive and semantic meanings to different sorts and styles of logic, such as fuzzy logic, hybrid relations, and so on.

Transchotomies are also distinct from “folksonomies” that can be described as constellations of concepts forged by common people, in consulting a blog or participating in a digital social network. In the next sections, I will present a few theoretical developments in this area and test them on some empirical literary projects.

c. Common Webs of Conflict and Meaning
I will begin by posing a new question regarding intercultural communication on Web 3.0.

**Question 4:** In postcolonial and transmediatic societies, and specifically within Web 3.0, are we witnessing the rise of a citizen-researcher, accomplice of and sometimes hybridized with the citizen-writer associated with Web 2.0 (the reading-writing Internet)? Are both types serious competitors for today's academic researchers and professional writers?

If we consider history, at least since the advent of Realism and the later Naturalism, a fiction writer like Émile Zola based his work on intense research regarding cultural and fictional sources. Similarly, academic writers have often used what we may call academic media (typically books, papers, seminars, lessons, etc.). Today, average people write increasingly more, researching and telling stories through blogs and social media, but applying different strategies than those of professional writers.

**Theoretical hypothesis 4:** An important direction stimulated by Web 2.0 and enhanced through Web 3.0 has been a type of common research carried out by ordinary people with social software like Google and other search engines, or with Del.icio.us mainly through the use of social bookmarking. In this global process, common “tags” included in Del.icio.us and the collective concepts being created as a part of Wikipedia — to name just a few examples — are replacing the former scientific and literary “concepts.” This production of new kinds of concepts accompanies a new common methodology of research that includes ordinary queries within a “fieldwork” that expands to a corpus of “documents.” This fieldwork no longer represents
a scientific “statistical sample,” as a sub-set of the “statistical universe,” but encompasses now the plenitude of the real universe. One effect of this new communicative process is the emergence of citizen-researchers who set up, through common research, a sort of “research society” (Andrade, “A sociedade da investigação e do jornalismo”).

In this regard, we can formulate the following thesis: in addition to reading and writing specific types of knowledge, the common concepts (a central term in the sociological phenomenology of Alfred Schutz) used by common people from different cultural backgrounds on a daily basis may be one of the keys for mutual understanding between different cultures. The term “common” can be considered here with both the connotations of “ordinary” and “collective.” In other words, common knowledge can work as one of the grounds for intercommunication among diverse world visions. Indeed, common knowledge is often visual, aural, or gestural, attributes that constitute, in some ways, universal languages. In textual messages, we may seek the underlying logical languages that are often more similar across different cultures than we think; at other times, these languages offer us dimensions that we can use to establish connections between different forms of thought and culture.

Therefore, the “clash of civilizations,” to use again Samuel Huntington’s concept, often takes the form of a conflict of meanings. As Homi Bhabha has argued, discursive resistance against colonialism often relies on mobilizing hybridity. In the process knowledge “denied” by the colonialisH power returns and may suggest alternative “rules of recognition” for the contemporary postcolonial societies and cultures (The Location of Culture 114). This idea can be useful, especially if we articulate it with the more political approach to resistance advocated by Edward Said and others.

d. “Thinking Back” and Re-Conceptualizing the Postcolonial

Thus, for example, we should not limit our thinking (both everyday ordinary thinking and scientific reflection) to the oppositions “identity/difference,” “power/non power,” “colonizer/colonized,” and so on. These dichotomies are still useful, but they are not sufficient to grasp the complexity of our age.

As mentioned before, Marcel Cornis-Pope (Narrative Innovation and Cultural Rewriting) discusses the use of classical sociocultural dichotomies that have shaped modernity in literature and in literary criticism. In this context, I will argue that hierarchies, taxonomies and dichotomies, among other concept “constellations,” are predominant ways of organizing ideas within our Western and modernist system of thought, based to a great extent on Aristotelian and Cartesian analytical philosophies and formal logic. Yet our own work considers also the possibility of thinking beyond modern oppositions. In similar ways to the postcolonial writers who “re-read,” “re-write,” or “write back,” common citizens express themselves often by “thinking back” or re-conceptualizing common concepts. The phrase “thinking back” must be associated here not only with the recapturing of the past, but also with the delineating and/or the recapturing of an alternative present and future.

Ordinary people do not use only common concepts, but also common relationships among these concepts, which are not restricted to dichotomies or taxonomies. For example, users of Web 2.0 may resort to a common word as a “tag” to characterize the main meaning of a web page or of a blog post, often in a personal way that deviates from standardized signification
or use. The site automatically gathers the tags of all visitors in a “tag cloud,” a semantic web that translates visually the relative frequency of some of the words used in the tagging process. In this context, tagging may be considered a form of common conceptualization, or even a manifestation of an ordinary literary genre.

e. Interconceptual Relationships and Transchotomies

We should make clear, however, that tagging does not accomplish the task of writing common relationships. We need a theoretical and practical process of detecting, circumscribing, and interpreting these common relationships. In a previous essay (“O Alfabeto de Relações Universais”), I described what I called an “Alphabet of Interconceptual Relationships.” This “alphabet,” instead of constituting a collection of phonic letters to form words and sentences, gathers the main relationships within and among several genres of logic, to originate “semantic sentences” that display an explicit logic. This approach can be applied to content and discourse analysis within sociological research, literary criticism, and so on. Texts can be segmented and analyzed through a set of interconceptual links that work, within the discursive analysis of a text or corpus of texts, as units that measure semantic/logical relationships among concepts.

More specifically, these links are selected and extracted from formal/analytic logic (developed by Aristotle, Descartes, and others), dialectical logic (structured by Heraclitus, Hegel, Marx), Boolean logic (the two states “connected-o/disconnected-o” undergirding computer systems), but also from fuzzy logic (used in Artificial Intelligence) and pre-modern or analogic logic (used in magic thought). The articulation of these logics allows for some interplay between Western and Eastern systems of meaning, in the everyday context of social and cultural communication. As a practical example, we can read and interpret a novel written by Gabriel García Márquez or by other Magic Realist writers in terms of their hybrid hermeneutics that interplays several logics. For example, we could argue that Márquez hybridizes an analogic logic (that translates the magical dimension), with a dialectical logic (focusing on the realistic conflictual dimension of the narrative) and a fuzzy logic (as when a magic realist novel is read within a blog, where the relationship writer/reader acquires a fuzzy dimension, as I will show below).

This type of fuzziness is one of the semantic characteristics of the emerging constellations of meaning at the confluence of literary with the social and the digital. As mentioned before, these clusters are named “transchotomies” and they may be defined as constellations of interlinked concepts that can “think back,” through new logics that work beyond the conceptual organization of modernity’s knowledge and power, founded mainly on dichotomies, taxonomies, and hierarchies. For example, “trichotomies” are constellations of three interlinked concepts that challenge dual webs of social meaning. A “love triangle” in a novel or movie suggests an alternative to the conventional family institution and sexual order.

Transchotomies include other genres such as “fuzzychotomies,” “hybrichotomies,” and “cybrichotomies.” Fuzzychotomies are semantic webs that establish random connections between ideas. For example, in a blog, when a user writes a post, he/she can receive an answer from anyone who is connected to the Internet. Thus, the user establishes a random or fuzzy relationship between his/her message and another meaning that the representative of another culture or group may suggest inside the comment message.
Hybrichotomies are semantic constellations that articulate meanings from different natures or cultures. For example, a photograph taken by a tourist in a peripheral non-Western cultural scape can be transported by him to a First World country and shown in a private place like his home or at a public site like his work place. Such a nomadic exchange of “cultural scapes” (Appadurai, “Global Ethnoscapes” 191–210), may act as a translation between the “language games” (Wittgenstein) residing in distant civilizations. Indeed, this intercultural circulation of messages can constitute webs of meaning that approximate or separate different cultures. In so doing, these global interconnections facilitate a communication of intercultural processes.

Finally, cybrichotomies bind actors, objects, or the practices presented, to a real context, on the one hand, and to a virtual context like a computer or Internet message, on the other. Thus, a cybrichotomy is a sort of conceptual constellation derived from the mix between the physical and the electronic that defines the “cybrid,” in Peter Anders’s sense of the term (see especially his “Cybrids,” 1998). In my last example, if a tourist uses a laptop or a mobile phone linked to the Internet to show his photos, he may establish new meanings that relate the hybrid to the cybrid. In other words, different cultural (physical and digital) connotations are related through a digital device that interconnects several physical and social contexts.

f. Transmediatic Knowledge and Co-Ordinary Literature
As I have tried to demonstrate, these new methodologies of thought can be applied in sociological theory and methodology, as well as within a Transmediatic Social Science perspective, an approach that uses different media for scientific work. The transchotomies were tested in a study of art museum visitors at an art exhibition hosted by the Museu Berardo in Lisbon, from March 1st through May 18th, 2010. During this event, data from respondents was collected through a multi-touch multimedia table, with a multi-touch questionnaire and a thrichotomies game built on three ideas, concepts, or objects related to one another. In the multi-touch questionnaire, visitors answered touching the options in question. In the thrichotomies game, the visitors chose, by touch, three possibly connected artworks and, if they were right, they received some points. This was a transmediatic method since it used visual, tactile and aural devices (for further detail, see Andrade, Sociologia Semântico-Lógica da Web 2.0/3.0 na sociedade da investigação and the semantic site Public Communication of Arts).

The GeoNeoLogic Novel No. 1

Among other approaches, we tried to forge a transmediatic literature using diverse media, as exemplified through the project called the GeoNeoLogic Novel (see Figure 1 and, in Works Cited, Andrade, GeoNeoLogic Novel No. 1; see also the social semantic site, Experimental Books, that introduces an eponymous collection, which I coordinate for the Caleidoscópio Publishing House, Lisbon). This is a new genre of novel, whose characters are placed in real geographic locations where they interact with a computer virtual world. The GeoNeoLogic Novel is organized in the form of a deixis, a concept taken from Greek philosophy which interrelates time, space, and the logos activated by a subject or subjects that move across the space-time continuum.
Thus, both the *deixis* and the experimental literary work can be considered as thrichoto-
mies. “Geo” denotes the spatial or synchronic dimension, “Neo” signifies the innovative time
within a diachronic dimension, and “Logical” is related to *logos* and can be understood as “re-
ason,” “language,” and “discourse” in this case mobilized by subjects intervening in the plot and
building characters arcs inside this fiction.

![Image](image.png)

**Figure 1.** The GeoNeoLogic Novel: Hybrimeda within Transmediatic Literature

**Plot and Interface**

In terms of content and plot, this experimental novel revolves around a traumatic event: the
author’s death, shot by an ordinary citizen in the street (scenes 6 to 8). During the course of the
novel, through dialogue, the characters try to figure out who will replace of the vanished author.
The substitute could be the reader, as reader-oriented theories have suggested. It is equally plau-
sible that anyone in real or virtual life could replace the author; any social or cultural actor can
emerge in the course of this novel, as a candidate to embody the character-author.

The GeoNeoLogic Novel is structured as a *deixis* in the following way:

1. **TIME:** If we examine the above image of the GeoNeoLogic Novel, we note that the date
   and time of photographs taken of the characters (people in the real world, etc.), are regis-
tered at the top left.

2. **SPACE:** Just below the narrative’s temporal or diachronic data, there is an indication of the
   spatial or synchronic data that names the location of these characters in the real world.
   When a GeoNeoLogic Novel scene is enabled on a computer connected to the Internet,
   the map on the right takes us to the corresponding spatial location, at global, national, or
   local level, in the latter case including the exact place on a city street. This confluence of
   real and virtual (digitally narrated) space-times, retrieves and reappies the concept of the
   “chronotope,” developed by Mikhail Bakhtin, to the hybridization of the real and virtual.
3. THE SUBJECTS’S LOGOS: In the GeoNeoLogic Novel, the characters can be common social actors, known, recognized or unknown persons, without excluding the author himself, or even animals, objects, and places of action. They actualize the Logos dimension by using different languages, discourses, or counter-discourses. For example, the author of GeoNeoLogic Novel suggests the following, through his own character, within the novel itself:

“(…) I think we must remake the author’s genealogy that Michel Foucault focused on, into a kind of author’s Geo-Neology. [...] In this case, ‘Geo’ means seeking the author all over the places and routes of social life in the world, to discover where he appears, sometimes transformed into hybrid or cybrid forms. ‘Neologia’ here means that if the author died, in whole or in part, we need to know which new alternative names for the author emerge today.”

A Characters’ Novel

Within this demanding journey, old and new types of fictional characters, sometimes hybridized among them, may appear inside the GeoNeoLogic Novel. For instance: (a) some classical characters, such as epic heroes, co-protagonists, mentors, allies, antagonists, guardians, tricksters, heralds, etc.; (b) some alternative characters, such as anti-heroes (as in Dostoevsky), common heroes, helpers of the common heroes, alternative heroes, or helpers of alternative heroes; and (c) various hybrid characters, such as reader-authors, author-actors, etc.

Fernando Pessoa himself (see Figure 1, left, below) speaking through the voice of a character graffiti, says: “[…] beyond my heteronyms as an author, I now have multiple heteronyms as a common social actor, like any other person or any character in a story, novel or romance.” In the context of the GeoNeoLogic Novel, Pessoa refers to heteronyms that emerge from the various representations of his person in graffiti or in other incarnations across the public spaces of the city. Therefore, the GeoNeoLogic Novel is not so much an Author’s Novel, nor a Reader’s Novel, but essentially a Character’s Novel, in which characters can rebel against the author.

g. Web 3.0 Novel

The research on co-ordinary literature in a postcolonial world could use some instruments already developed on the Internet by the Public Communication of Art project mentioned above. Social semantic sites have a lot of potential in this regard. As an example, please consult Wars for Peace and the Web 3.0 Novel (see Appendix of Social Semantic Sites); please examine also Figure 2 below.

The Web 3.0 Novel is an internet modality of the GeoNeoLogic Novel that uses new devices of literary production associated with Web 3.0 as semantic sites, interactive literature windows, several paratexts like word clouds, social semantic indexes, meta-semantic indexes, and so on, that can be observed and activated within the mentioned site.

The Web 3.0 Novel can operate as a modality within the GeoNeoLogic Novel No. 1. Because of its complicity with Social Sciences and Humanities, this genre of experimental literature can also be applied as a mode of Sociological Hermeneutics. In terms of the form of the novel, as in the case of other GeoNeoLogic Novel modalities like the e-book novel and the movie novel, the Web 3.0 Novel is also a prototype, this time resident on the Internet, which can be further
improved and presented in Flash or other formats. In the Web 3.0 Novel, the process of collaboration between the first constitutive author (the “seminal author”) and the reader or second, third, etc., co-author involves the following steps:

- **Step 1: Reading**

Through a browser (Firefox, Safari, Chrome, etc.), go to the Web 3.0 Novel internet address (<https://sites.google.com/site/web3novelenglish/>). There, you can either do a web reading or a visual reading, mainly from interactive links and graphic diagrams of the novel, which introduce the following embodiments and critical devices:

**Web 3.0 Novel Scenes**

The actual scenes of the novel are usually the only socio-structural parts available in traditional novels. For the moment, the Web 3.0 Novel has benefited from reduced publication, only three of its original fifty-nine scenes are shown on its website; however, this novel is “being continued” in its paper publication where the scenes are to be featured in full (see Andrade, GeoNeoLogic Novel #1). Other embodiments and literary devices are also available, in whole or in part, either in the printed novel or in the online Web 3.0 Novel resident on the site. They are:
Definition of the Web 3.0 Novel's Main Features

Building on the concept of intertextuality, Gérard Genette names paratexts those texts that introduce, prepare or complement the reading of the main text of a work, literary or otherwise: for example the Preface, the Table of Contents, the Abstract or the Index (Paratexts 1). The Web 3.0 Novel makes extensive use of paratexts of various kinds, concerning: (a) the definition of the novel; (b) its modes of displaying the information about its social context, knowledge in general, literary networks, etc.; (c) the meta-semantic index. Such paratexts are included in the web novel itself, as some of its constituent parts. Thus, the GeoNeoLogic Novel No. 1, and in particular the Web 3 Novel, function as meta-novels, that is, they reflect upon themselves before the reader and institutional critics do so.

I will define the “semantic-logic ontology” of a novel as a socio-literary web of texts and paratexts used in this novel. For example, the GeoNeoLogic Novel is an intertextual web novel to be developed in later versions under various forms (book novel, e-book novel, movie novel, Web 3 novel, mobile novel, etc.). An “ontology” is a semantic network of concepts articulated by linguistic and logical relationships of various kinds (hierarchical, associative, synonymy relationships, etc.). The semantic meanings associated with concepts in networks are also socially defined, and these definitions are based on social and logical relationships.

In other words, a social semantic-logical ontology is a particular case of networks, organized by grids of social and semantic-logical relations. These configurations articulate not only people, but also the meanings of the content that people build when traveling across these networks. In this sense, the Web 3 Novel can be considered a social semantic-logical novel.

An Introduction to the Reading Modes of the Web 3.0 Novel

The Web 3.0 Novel site is structured as a digital social network made up of the novel’s scenes and of the ideas associated with them. By clicking on the corresponding pages for each of the nodes in the network, the player sees the following content and structural elements of the web:

- a brief description of the concept shown at each node of the network;
- the closer semantic context of each concept, or where this word is inserted in terms of meaning. Such context is accessible by clicking the concept’s image, shown in graphical map form. In addition to these two reading anchors for the novel, another way of reading it consists of searching for terms in the novel, using the “Search” command located in the upper right corner of each page. More details concerning the basic ways of reading within various modalities (e-book novel, movie novel, Web 3 novel) can be found in the section on the e-book novel displayed on this site.
Information on the Social and Sociological Context of the Web 3.0 Novel

This information concerns in particular the cultural and literary dimensions, but also the new configurations of knowledge that are emerging within the Semantic Web and which are used in the Web 3.0 Novel. Such new paradigms of knowledge (including literary knowledge) are developed inside the book published in paper form (see Andrade, the GeoNeoLogic Novel No. 1). For example, the social and sociological context of the novel is shown, partly, in the photographs included in the pages of this site and in the book; they visually inform the reader about events, writers, readers, literary cult objects, spellings, alphabets, signatures, specific author's fonts, history and stories of literature, and so on. In addition to images, the interactive literature windows provide information about literature in the form of text and other media (see Section 4 of this social semantic site, entitled “Literature Interactive Windows”).

- Step 2: Reading-Writing

In the present 1.0 version of the Web Novel, the process of collaborative reading-writing is similar to the modalities of reading-writing the GeoNeoLogic novel in its other forms, such as the e-book novel or movie novel. Among other communication strategies, it is possible for a reader to create email messages to the first chronologic author (pjoandrade@gmail.com), and send him the text and attachments.

In later versions of the Web 3.0 Novel, a reader can participate in collective writing sessions on certain dates advertised on the site. This can be accomplished either directly on the site or through digital social networks such as Facebook, Twitter or YouTube. However, in addition to e-mail messages, one can review the novel and its paratexts also through social networks, through links inside the literature interactive windows.

5. Conclusion

But how can we to move from the above considerations to a deeper postcolonial analysis? While there is no definitive answer to this question, important work has already been done or planned. In addition to some of the connections with postcolonial ideas mentioned earlier in this essay, other projects within postcolonial social and human sciences are possible, projects that would reflect on the postcolonial literature produced through new media by representatives of different cultural perspectives. One of the goals of such projects should be trying to connect the ways of reading and writing, but also the practices of common conceptualizing and relating developed by the inhabitants of diverse cultural scapes using intermedia within the Internet (e.g., passing posts and comments in blogs, wikis, or other Web 2.0 and Web 3.0 devices). For this purpose, we can use the interactive devices accessible through the GeoNeoLogic Novel and Web 3.0 Novel and, more generally, the digital devices of social participation and literary achievement residing inside the Social Semantic Sites mentioned above.

As part of these and other projects, and in order to understand cultural differences in the use of new media in postcolonial societies and cultures, we must also consider the phenomenon...
of alterity. A research project oriented towards these issues is currently in progress. The empirical phase of this project, which is scheduled to start in 2015, will develop among other methodologies:

a. a "strangeness" or "otherness" scale, applied to a corpus of Internet common messages including some fictional elements such as telling stories in a given urban environment like Lisbon, Braga (Portugal), or other urban scapes;

b. documentary data will be also collected, focused on common writing (journals, poems, kinds of popular literature, etc.) from the different population profiles described under (c);

c. interviews with the following segments of the urban population:
   - inhabitants of a quarter or another city zone (who represent the more integrated social actors);
   - tourists visiting that place (representing agents with some degree of strangeness);
   - and immigrants (subjects with the strongest level of alterity or otherness).

In so doing, we will be able to articulate more closely theory with empirical work, defining concrete strategies and expressions of postcolonial literacy connected in some ways to an everyday secular literature forged by different alterities. And, while noting that cyberspace and cybertime are already being deconstructed and reconstructed through Web 3.0 (across semantic webs which connect content inside web pages, blogs, wikis, social networks, messages shared by avatars in Second Life, etc.), we would focus within this digital space on a type of transmediated co-ordinary literature built through various semantic webs developed on a daily basis by common people of diverse backgrounds and cultures.

Finally, we need to ask how this Semantic-Logical paradigm, applied to Social and Human Sciences as well as to Literary Criticism, helps us better understand this new social reality, using the articulations of Science, Technology, and Art. We should ask further how we will be able to communicate this epistemological tsunami, which our reflections on contemporaneity could provoke, to scientific, technological, artistic, and other audiences? A working hypothesis includes — as suggested above — an interdisciplinary perspective that combines a Semantic-Logical Sociology with anthropological work, emphasizing hybrid ontologies and an alphabet of interconceptual relationships. Procedurally, this perspective makes use of Semantic-Logical methodologies based on GeoNeoLogic methods, among other devices. These scientific, technological, and artistic devices could contribute to an important practical objective in our contemporary world, allowing ordinary people to manage research and learning in a more autonomous way.

This somewhat open but still rigorous epistemological, theoretical, and methodological agenda may help reduce visual and digital illiteracy by stimulating the participation of actors from diverse realms of society, cultures, and spheres of knowledge across our postcolonial planet. Eventually, our contemporary cultures, which are usually described as "postmodern" or "late modern," could also be described as "post-method" or at least "pluri-method."

To conclude, within postcolonial societies and cultures, increasingly more common agents are challenging the power of experts in all social areas (economic, political, cultural, etc.), providing modes of "thinking back." Through micro searches using the Google search engine or other methods, ordinary people often originate research involving actions, ideas, concepts,
methodologies, and devices promoting discovery and even innovation. These common actors share in the process of hybridization between, on the one hand, their common knowledge and micro research and, on the other hand, the professionalized literary, artistic, technological, and scientific production. In the new social arena and postcolonial landscape, every individual and culture can access research procedures and methods, contributing in a collaborative way to a common fund of knowledge. In so doing, the common citizen is emerging as a sort of “co-ordinary writer,” “lay artist,” “ordinary technician,” and “common scientist” — in other words a competing and complementary figure to the professional writer, artist, technician, or scientist. As these social and cultural processes move forward, it is conceivable that the frontier between expert and non-expert knowledge and action will fade to a degree, with the planet becoming a huge research community or at least a space for open socio-intellectual flows and mobilities.

Appendix: Social Semantic Sites

A. Sociology / Visual Arts:
Comunicação Pública da Arte https://sites.google.com/site/compubarte/
Public Communication of Art https://sites.google.com/site/compubartenglish/
Guerras para a Paz https://sites.google.com/site/peaceswars/
Wars for Peace https://sites.google.com/site/peacewarsenglish

B. Hypermedia / Literature
Livros Experimentais: https://sites.google.com/site/livrosexperimentais/
Experimental Books: https://sites.google.com/site/livrosexperimentaisenglish/
Novela Rede 3: https://sites.google.com/site/web3novel/
Web 3 Novel: https://sites.google.com/site/web3novelenglish/
“Articulate Flesh: D. H. Lawrence and the Modern Media Ecology,” essay contributed by Michael Wutz (Weber State University, USA), discusses the paradoxical case of the writer D. H. Lawrence, who both used and resisted the post-print modern technologies of his era. According to Wutz, Lawrence had a paradoxical relationship with the new media emerging at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, writing against what he saw as the de-spiritualizing effects of mechanization in postprint media such as the phonograph, photography, film, and, above all, the radio. At the same time, Lawrence showed a genuine desire to engage critically the new technologies of communication, resisting their mind- and body-numbing effects while also wondering about their potential for reconnecting us with physical reality. As Wutz suggests, Lawrence’s pronouncements mix a conservative strain of thinking with a critical reflection on the mediascape of modernity, anticipating the conflicted position of contemporary writers toward the utopian promise of hypertext and multimedia hybridity.

Part Two offers a regional and intercultural mapping of the recent multimedia cultures of Europe in relation to other geocultural areas that have impacted it, one that — while recognizing the global pressures and trends in the visual and performative media — also foregrounds the distinctive features of cultural subregions. Central Europe and Russia receive significant attention because of their alternative mapping and rewriting of paradigms from Western Europe. Other regions highlighted are Scandinavia and Southern Europe. The section begins with Yra van Dijks’s (University of Leiden) article entitled “Picking Up the Pieces: History and Memory in European Digital Literature.” Focusing on the central role of history in printed and digital literature, van Dijks exemplifies with “documentary” digital works from the Netherlands, France, England, and Canada, against a broader intertextual context that includes also German, Bosnian, and Turkish examples of writing. As van Dijks argues, the burden of historical representation disrupts narrative diegesis, inviting cross-genre and multimedia treatments that mix the archival, the personal, the historical, and the subjective. These works offer a fragmentary and subjective representation of historical material rather than any kind of truth or closure.

In “Postcolonial Co-Ordinary Literature and the Web 2.0/3.0: ‘Thinking Back’ within Transmediatic Knowledge,” Pedro José Oliveira de Andrade (Research Center on Communication and Society, Institute of Social Sciences, University of Minho, Portugal) emphasizes the role that hybrid literacies play in a postcolonial redefinition of Europe. In his view, hybrid literacies are a necessary condition for the deconstruction of colonial discourse and the subsequent reconstruction of postcolonial literacies and literatures. As part of this process, Andrade argues for multiple kinds of competences that emphasize reading and writing not just within one’s own culture, but also in the cultures of others. Digital literacy plays a particularly important role in this, allowing us to emphasize the multivocalities of this otherness as well as the interaction between different traditions of literacy, Western and Eastern, national and transnational, verbal and mediatic. Andrade exemplifies the concept of transmediatic literature with a number of projects he has been involved in, such as the Web 3.0 Novel as a modality of what he calls the “GeoNeoLogic Novel” (see the latter sections of his essay), which mixes theory with empirical field work, promoting an approach that is at once regional and global.

Eva Middelaer (Utrecht University) brings together transnational digital networks, migration, and gender issues in relation to the performance of religious identities. Entitled “Agency
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Contributors

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