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**Glitching the State: The Mechanics of Resistance in Ricardo Piglia's *La Ciudad Ausente***

Henry Osman

> La tortura es la culminación de esa aspiración al saber, el grado máximo de la inteligencia institucional.
>
> —Ricardo Piglia, *La Ciudad Ausente*

**Introduction**

Torture is a storytelling device in that it attempts to (re)narrate and extricate the lives of others, often in the name of a potentially fallacious official memory. In the torture chamber, violence is posited as a search for knowledge whose veracity is not always necessary. States around the world have used torture to extract information and reaffirm their own narrative; due to this legacy of state violence, many post-trauma works aim to reveal the extent of the practice and the damage it causes as a form of resistance. This is particularly relevant to contemporary Argentina, where the legacy of state violence, particularly forced disappearances and torture during the military junta's Dirty War (1976-1983), is still being dealt with in the public sphere and in institutions such as the Supreme Court, which last year controversially allowed the early release of hundreds of convicted human rights abuses.[1]

Ricardo Piglia's 1992 novel *La ciudad ausente* uses science fiction to mine

this legacy and examine the after-effects of social trauma in the decades after the end of the junta.[2] In *La ciudad ausente*, Piglia posits torture as the ultimate form of discursive violence and aims to fight torture, and its effects, on a linguistic playing field. The work is set in a dystopic Buenos Aires still under the junta's control, which Piglia uses to examine collective amnesia and reflect upon the language of war and the language of resistance.[3] He does not focus on stories of the dictatorship and the reader does not bear witness to the physical atrocities of the junta; Piglia is working parallel to the *testimonio*, interrogating the broader social effects of torture rather than individual cases.[4] The central narrative of the novel follows Junior, a reporter who is investigating Elena, a cyborg narration machine created by her husband, a fictionalized version of twentieth century Argentine author Macedonio Fernandez. Elena was sent to a psychiatric clinic by the state and then placed inside a museum in an attempt to regulate her; her nature as a narration machine means that she might be able to reveal the truths of state violence to the general public. Interspersed throughout Junior's search for Elena are the small fictions and narratives that Elena produces and, towards the end, an aside about an island where the inhabitant's language is always changing, the only constant being a copy of *Finnegan's Wake*. What unites the various asides are the errors and mistranslations that Elena introduces; the error that I will be focusing on is when she changes the name of the main character in Poe's "William Wilson" to Stephen Stevensen.

Much of the scholarly engagement on *La ciudad ausente* focuses on Elena. Critics such as J. Andrew Brown focus on the cyborg and neobaroque elements of novel while Eva-Lynn Jagoe uses Donna Haraway's classic essay, "The Cyborg Manifesto," to expand upon but also problematize the petrified, frozen, and inorganic femininity of Piglia's women-machines.[5] Others, like Idelber Avelar, use the transformation of Elena into a utopian machine by her husband, Macedonio Fernández, to explore the politics of mourning in the novel.[6] Finally, many have analyzed the novel through the work of French philosopher Gilles Deleuze and psychotherapist Félix Guattari. Eunice Rojas looks at how the "schizophrenic machine" and the schizophrenic narratives it produces subvert the collective amnesia gripping Piglia's Buenos Aires while Ignacio Sánchez Prado looks at the "máquina de narrar" through the Deleuzian war machine.[7]

The central crux of the critical work on Elena, as outlined above, highlights her cyborg nature while glossing over the errors she introduces. Some, like Joanna Page, in "Writing as Resistance in Ricardo Piglia's *La ciudad ausente*," do discuss tactics of resistance in the novel. Page says that resistance is decentralized, amorphous, and undefined.[8] Arguing that writing is the primary act of resistance, Page looks at the role of fiction in the novel and how fictional works order and

define reality. Her focus is on Elena as a literary machine but not as an actual machine. Instead of analyzing Elena's errors and mistranslations, Page isolates how fiction itself troubles reality. Page's explanations of how writing in the novel is an act of resistance are helpful but overlook Elena's own interventions.

In this paper, I will propose a new reading of *La ciudad ausente* through the glitch, a reading that I hope will help explain the peculiarly powerful tactics Elena uses to resist the state. I will focus my analysis on Elena and how her mistranslations of different stories, particularly of "William Wilson" by Edgar Allan Poe, are a critical site of resistance. I argue that these chance errors and malfunctions can be read as a non-agentic political practice. As a starting point, I will recast these errors and mistranslations as glitches in Elena's processing. The glitch reveals the farce of state memory and opens up a space where that memory can be challenged.

After exploring the ways that Piglia deploys the glitch I will begin to theorize what a politics founded in Elena's mistranslations and errors would look like and how such a politics might offer new insight into other post-trauma Argentine works. What makes Elena's mode of resistance unique is that it lacks causality. Elena does not try to err or mistranslate (many of the works she translates and retells are originally in English). She has no specific plan or goal and does not commit these acts with an intent at disrupting the amnesia the population of the fictional Buenos Aires is suffering from.[9]

## A History of the Glitch

Before directly examining the role glitches play in Piglia's text, I will review the history of the word itself. The term glitch is fairly new, a creation of the twentieth century that only entered the English lexicon in the mid-1960s through NASA and the space race. It was originally defined as a small, unforeseen computer error that could still derail a flight. One of the earliest recorded uses of the term glitch was in the 1962 book *Into Orbit,* in which the seven participants in the first human flight into space recount their experiences. John Glenn, one of the astronauts, said that, "Literally, a glitch is a spike or change in voltage in an electrical current."[10] Glenn highlights the transient nature of glitches. In this use it is a moment, not a visible effect, lasting for an almost unnoticeable microsecond. Materiality comes to the forefront when a glitch occurs; it makes us aware of the physicality of technology when it shatters our perception of technology's infallibility. When normal and quotidian objects glitch, we see them in new and often critical ways and transition from being passive viewers to being active in material processes.

Many sources indicate that the word was likely introduced to the English language through the Yiddish *glitch* or *glitsh*, meaning a small slip.[11] Its origin as a physical slip is telling. One could have a *glitsh* on ice, on a staircase, or on a recently washed floor. Slips are also usually chance accidents. One can be tripped but not be slipped. Therefore, we surrender to *glitsh* without knowing exactly what is to come after. This is magnified by how glitches occur but cannot be caused; they are never deliberate.

Over the past few decades, the logic and language of computers has infiltrated our vocabulary and so, in turn, has the word glitch. It can now refer to different types of hardware and software malfunctions, like frozen browsers, unresponsive touchscreens, or sudden computer crashes. At any moment, an error can emerge; glitches mark the ends of our technological capacities. A computer crashes, a webpage does not load, and we wait for our desires to be completed. Yet there is more to the word than a forced wait; one only needs to remember Y2K, when the anticipation of a glitch, the anticipation of *being forced to anticipate,* caused widespread fear. The threat of a glitch can be as powerful as a glitch itself.

New theoretical uses of the word glitch have evolved as the word has become more widely used. While there are few applications of the glitch in literary theory, the glitch is an important motif in contemporary art and especially new media art. Glitch art, which primarily emerged in the 2000s, consists of artistic practices that aestheticize glitches and technological failings. Artists such as JODI, Mishka Henner, Jon Rafman and Antonio Roberts interrogate the glitch in all of its manifestations and primarily work in digital media.[12] They make videos, edit photos, use hypertext and other media that can suffer a glitch, unlike printed paper. The perhaps unique way that glitch art critiques new technologies is summed up by theorist and artist Manon and Temkin who argue that "Glitch art does not 'dirty up' a text, but instead undermines its basic structure. Glitch damage is integral, even when its effects manifest at the surface."[13] The glitch troubles formal aesthetics by attacking the structure and not just the outcome. Works of glitch art have to reflect this troubling. It is not enough to engage with digital aesthetics; one must actively subvert their logic.

There are also many theoretical misgivings surrounding the use of the term glitch in contemporary art. For example, the glitch can become "domesticated" when artistic intent overwhelms the originally random nature of the phenomenon.[14] Similarly, there is the issue of how to represent the glitch. Glitches usually manifest in the binary code and not the physical hardware of a computer, so glitch art is the "realization of immateriality as physicality." Further, in glitch art, "the glitch ceases to be rupture and becomes instead the *signifier of rupture*, and with this transposition to signification [recoding] is a regeneration of the 'norm'—

[Theodor] Adorno's 'bourgeois functionalization.'"[15] As media theorist Michael Betancourt says, a fundamental issue of glitch art is that in rupturing the previous system, a new formalist aesthetic is constructed around the glitch and co-opts its potential. The challenges that a literary theory of the glitch may face are different, but similar issues emerge especially in how machinic glitches are rendered into linguistic errors in the novel. One of the few texts that works towards a more critical theory of the glitch outside of contemporary art is "Elsewhere, After the flood: Glitch Feminism and the Genesis of Glitch Body Politic" by Legacy Russell in *Rhizome*.[16]

In "Elsewhere, After the Flood," Russell looks at the glitch as a means of creating more fluid forms of identity. She bases her analysis in Gender Studies and looks at the glitch as a new mode of identity construction, one that is more specific to our increasingly digital reality: "the glitch encourages a slipping across, beyond, and through the stereotypical materiality of the corpus, extending beyond a coping mechanism in its offering of new transfigurations of corporeal sensuality."[17] Her glitch focuses on how computers mediate sensuality and encourage slippage between genders and identities, especially those constructed online in chatrooms, messages, and social media. Russell focuses on "slipping across, beyond and through," but does not offer a distinct mechanism or an explanation of how this effect is produced.

What Russell does offer is a comparison to queer theory. She posits glitching as queering of the virtual body: "'Glitch' as a term within technocultures is also often placed within a similar category, steeped in negative connotations. The reclamation of *queer* is to material body politic as *glitch* is to digital corporeality."[18] Nevertheless, the glitch is much more than a form of digital queering and has its own distinct formal aspects, particularly that it occurs in spite of human efforts at creating a foolproof program or machine. One can queer but not glitch something; what happens instead is a reproduction of the effects of the glitch but not the event of the glitch.

Russell continues her analysis of the glitch by arguing that the glitch allows us to reconsider and remake our social systems by embracing the "causality of 'error'" but then states that the glitch "may not, in fact, be an error at all, but rather a much-needed erratum. This glitch is a correction to the 'machine,' and, in turn, a positive departure."[19] An erratum is a correction to a written text. In this case, it seems that Russell is trying to characterize the erratum as the consciousness derived from the glitch rather than a glitch itself, further broadening the terms definition.[20] But an error cannot correct another error, although it can make a system's failure more visible. Embracing the erratum is an embrace of causality because an erratum is a planned action. If the glitch is an unforeseen error or a tiny

slip, its power comes from chance. When a human actor "glitches" something they are simply subverting it. I cannot make something glitch—all I can do is magnify it, exacerbate the errors that it reveals and embrace its chaos.

**Glitching the State**

I return to Elena to answer the questions of how the confusion caused by the glitch can become a mode of resistance. As previously stated, the Buenos Aires of the novel exists in a state of collective amnesia and its citizens are oblivious to the crimes of the dictatorship. Elena was designed by Macedonio Fernández to counter state control, functioning as a "female defense machine" against a state that "conoce todas las historias de todos los ciudadanos y retraduce esas historias en nuevas historias que narran el presidente de la República y sus ministro."[21] Elena is an imperfect *máquina de narra*, but it is precisely her imperfection that challenges the state's attempt to subordinate all other histories to its own official one. Instead of straightforwardly narrating and recounting stories, she errs and disrupts seemingly objective and official truths. These errors are unconscious and naturally formed; following my earlier analysis, they are glitches.

Before I delve into my full analysis of what Elena does I want to look at precisely what Elena is. Her cyborg identity is what, in a certain sense, allows her to "glitch." Piglia describes her as post-human: "'¿La máquina es una mujer?' '*Era una mujer.*'"[22] Elena has moved beyond being a "woman" to being something more. In the "Cyborg Manifesto," Donna Haraway defines the cyborg as "a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction."[23] Haraway looks at the cyborg as a creature of social reality and as a creature of fiction. The distinction between these two concepts is important. While social reality may not be far from fiction and they may be co-determinate fields, it is important to look at the cyborg as a function of our lived reality while also seeing how there is a certain fictional, and maybe even utopic, quality to cyborg identities. Elena is fictional not only because she is part of a novel but because she is a machine of fiction that creates new identities and plots. Elena's radical potential emerges when she is understood as a creature of fiction, social reality, and language rather than as just a human-machine.

The resonances between cyborgs and storytelling become even stronger when Haraway discusses Chicana poet Cherríe Moraga and her hybridization of Spanish and English. Moraga explores "the themes of identity when one never possessed the original language" and was "never told the original story."[24] In her poetry she splices Spanish and English, undermining both tongues and causing

their syntaxes to slip. She does not aim to return to an original language nor an Edenic existence; her project is rather to make new languages for a radical new future. Piglia, like Moraga, troubles syntax. This slippage is visible in the last section, "La isla," an island where language is dynamic, changeable, and everyday a new tongue may be spoken. The only constant is a copy of Joyce's *Finnegans Wake,* "que todos consideran un libro sagrado, porque siempre pueden leerlo, sea cual duere el estado de la lengua en que se encuentren."[25]

Suturing two languages or troubling syntax are not traditional types of glitches. However, Haraway's reading of Moraga isolates how cyborg identities are intimately connected to written language. Haraway furthers this point by stating that:

> Writing is pre-eminently the technology of cyborgs, etched surfaces of the late twentieth century. Cyborg politics is the struggle for language and the struggle against perfect communication, against the one code that translates all meaning perfectly, the central dogma of phallogocentrism. That is why cyborg politics insist on noise and advocate pollution, rejoicing in the illegitimate fusions of animal and machine.[26]

Elena exemplifies these characteristics because she prevents "perfect communication" and pollutes the state's circulation of knowledge about the dictatorship and torture. Significantly, she does not struggle for a language but rather for the possibility of other languages through the glitch.

Piglia himself never uses the word "glitch" to refer to the machinic errors that are at the center of the novel. Nevertheless, they are glitches due to their lack of direct causality—Elena does not plan to cause them—and Elena being a machine. Elena's errors are alluded to throughout *La ciudad ausente* but are rarely shown. One of the few examples in the novel is how Elena (mis)translates a story by Edgar Allan Poe:

> Junior empezaba a entender. Al principio la máquina se equivoca. El error es el primer principio. La máquina disgrega <<espontáneamente>> los elementos del cuento de Poe y los transforma en núcleos potenciales de la ficción. Así había surgido la trama inicial. El mito de origen. Todas las historias venían de ahí. El sentido futuro de lo que estaba pasando dependía de ese relato sobre el otro y el porvenir. Lo real estaba definido siempre por lo posible (y no por el ser).[27]

The Spanish verb *disgregar* means to scatter, disperse and break up. In this instance, Elena is spontaneously breaking up Poe's story without putting it back together. Each fragment of the story is then a "potential nucleus of fiction" that is partly freed from the original plot of the story. The fact that she does so spontaneously, without a plan or desire to do so, shows exactly how this is a glitch that undermines attempts to order (to plot) stories. Piglia is at the same time mythologizing these actions as if they were the first act of a cyborgian bible. But instead of a deity deciding to create the world, Elena glitches. The repercussions of these actions are similarly biblical, where Piglia hints at the power of these glitches at shaping "lo real."

The most visible change in Poe's story is that "William Wilson" is now "Stephen Stevensen." Poe's story may just be a short story, but Elena's chance renaming of the protagonist is a highly consequential act. It implies that Elena might be incidentally renaming other files and confusing official memory. If files and stories begin with different letters they are archived in different places and effectively lost. And if the state is unable to track its citizens because their names and basic information are always changing, it loses its ability to control them. Finally, if even names and basic information has been glitched, how can the veracity of government statements on torture, or the economy, or the Falkland war, be trusted? What other titles are wrong? On a deeper level, it shows that text and histories can be rewritten. In the novel, this initial error is described as containing the building blocks of "una ficción virtual."[28]

Moreover, the choice of "William Wilson" out of all of Poe's oeuvre is revealing. "William Wilson" is a tense study of a man who is so embarrassed by his plain name that even in the story he goes by a pseudonym, William Wilson.[29] This palpable sense of shame increases when another boy with the same name enters his school. He is chased by his doppelgänger for years and in multiple countries until he tries to kill his double and ends up stabbing himself. By mistranslating the foundational element of Poe's tale, Elena reveals the malleability of identity. Piglia states that the machine "fabrica réplicas micrópicas, dobles virtuales, William Wilson, Stephen Stevensen. Era otra vez el punto de partida, un anillo en el centro del relato."[30] Stephen Stevensen is the double of a double, the point of departure for a new world. A perfect "núcleo potencial de la ficción."

Elena as machine and Elena as translator, or Elena as a literal cyborg and Elena as a practitioner of cyborg language, are both necessary elements of the glitch because she unites the computer or machinic glitch, where a "0" can replace a "1" and change the output, and the linguistic error and mistranslation. Language is the medium of Elena's resistance and the network through which these

narratives travel. In the novel's mythology, all languages share a single root and are connected by a series of what Piglia calls white nodes:

> Existen zonas de condensación, nudos blancos, es posible desatarlos, abrirlos. Son como mitos—dijo—, que definen la gramática de la experiencia. Todo lo que los lingüisticos nos han enseñado sobre el lenguaje está también en el corazón del materia viviente. El código genético y el código verbal presentan las mismas características. A eso lo llamamos los nudos blancos.[31]

*Los nudos blancos* are "myths" that unite the world on a biological and physical level, claims Piglia. He goes even further, stating that the rules of language apply to the "heart of living matter," allowing stories, in the novel at least, to have the ability to physically shift and perhaps infect the physical world. In translation, the *nudos* lose some of their complexity. In Spanish, *nudo* can mean node but it can also signify knot, implying that they are problems to be solved and untied and also that they are vital points of connection that bind together the world. Further, a knot, unlike a node, can be tied and untied, a subtle transience that may be lost in the English translation. Further, the modernist interludes throughout the novel are where Piglia more fully experiments with language. In one, Elena tells a story about a town where every day a new language is spoken and the only constant is a copy of *Finnegan's Wake*, which is rife with multilingual puns. Is Piglia arguing that Joyce's works are white nodes? That modernism can connect disparate languages and hints towards a more universal grammar? These questions are left open; what is certain is that Piglia uses these asides to further question the perceived stability of (government) language.

Elena's glitches do not create new histories. Rather, they are starting points or potential nuclei, to use Piglia's vocabulary, for a life outside of the bounds of official memory:

> Claro que ahora, después de tantos años y años de tortura sistemática, de campos de concentración destinados a hacer trabajar a los arrepentidos en tareas de información, han triunfado en todos lados y nadie se los va a infiltrar, sólo es posible crear un nudo blanco y empezar de nuevo.[32]

There is a certain sense of hopelessness in this statement in that it is grounded in the impossibility of challenging the state and implies that the only future is by escaping rather than fighting against it. At the same time, it opens up space for

Elena and figures like her, that do not seek to overthrow the state or rebel against it but rather seek to undermine its certainties and demonstrate the possibility that there is another way to live.

There is one final question necessary to understand what Elena is: why was she made? She was not produced to err but her creators did have specific intents. Before I continue, it is important to note that, as other readers of the novel like Jagoe point out, there is ample room here for a feminist critique of Piglia. Elena is controlled and programmed by her husband. She is trapped, lacks agency and is continuously used by men, including Macedonio, Junior, and even Piglia himself. Does she have agency or is she simply a tool? If the glitch is something that happens without control, and without her own input as an agent, then Elena is also trapped by her own mechanism of resistance.

As previously stated, the Buenos Aires of the novel exists in a form of amnesia or willed ignorance of the past. Due to the state's control of knowledge, many are unaware of the government's past crimes. There are two kinds of violence at play here. In the past, the state enacted violence upon its populace. The current violence is discursive because the state has almost total control over the narratives and discourses that define the city and its population. These two forms of violence, though different, intersect most clearly in the torture chamber. Piglia straightforwardly describes the mechanisms of state intelligence towards the end of the novel:

> La inteligencia del estado es básicamente un mecanismo técnico destinado a alterar el criterio de realidad" with "aparatos electrónicos y personalidades electrónicas y ficciones electrónicas y en todos los estados del mundo hay un cerebro japonés que da las órdenes.[33]

Notwithstanding Piglia's reliance on essentializing and orientalizing tropes of Japan, this passage highlights how fiction and narrative are the ultimate elements of control for the centralized modern state. Knowledge is controlled and society is made legible by the state's central "brain." Piglia's description of state control is especially poignant in light of recent worries over big data and government surveillance. The state itself is described as a cyborg entity with electronic apparatuses and brain. Perhaps the chimeric nature of the state (with a male pronoun in Spanish) requires the creation of a chimeric cyborg machine (with a female pronoun, though perhaps if it were published today it would use the neutral "ellx").

Piglia establishes further connections between torture and the telling of

stories when he describes them as being opposite poles on a single spectrum: "[L]a tortura es la culminación de esa aspiración al saber, el grado máximo de la inteligencia institucional."[34] Torture is meant to produce knowledge from people or at least pull it out of them. It searches knowledge but at the same time may lead to false information. However, glitches may prevent this knowledge from being gained and block the state's "aspiración al saber." Glitches do this by warping bodies, obfuscating the state's ability to classify and control them, and by distorting stories themselves. The book is itself a *maquina de narrar* or a *maquina de defensa* because it brings to light weapons of state control.

Accordingly, we must look at what it means to be a defense machine. An offensive tactic would be to directly attack the state by protesting and spreading propaganda. Defense is different because it counteracts the effects of the state without directly attacking it. We see this in how Elena endangers the projects of the state instead of the state itself. Elena *translates* instead of writing and *glitches* instead of creating. The glitch gains its potency precisely because of its defensive characteristics. If Elena produced a counter narrative she would be reproducing the imperative discourse of the state.

## Conclusion

As we trace the myriad definitions of the glitch and its manifestations in Piglia's novel, we see the transformation of the glitch from a mistake into a political act. Originating as a slip in the cog of a machine, a broken piece of metal, or a frozen mechanical element, the glitch has transformed as technology has. I use Piglia's work to create a literary theory of the glitch that arises from the text itself. Elena, as a machine of translation, bridges the divide between the virtual and the machinic glitch because she is a cyborg site of narrative production. With every story and glitch she undermines the dominant narratives and memories of the state. If we think of stories and the written language as intermingled with memory and state power, glitches in language and the written word become glitches in memory, attacks on memory and manipulations of memory. When memory is glitched, new subjectivities arise. The glitch allows people to reflect on how memory is formed and influenced by politics and makes memory, as the medium of experience, visible. The chisel marks of the state can then be seen.

Just as narratives and official histories exist to drive and dominate national conversations, they also exist to be disrupted and in this case glitched. *La ciudad ausente* is an early manifestation of the glitch in mainstream cultural production. It focuses on the glitch in the aftermath of trauma and uses it to reevaluate past

events and how they influence the present. Reading *La ciudad ausente* as a theoretical text, I see the glitch as being a unifying but also divisive mode of resistance. The glitch, at least as it stands in this reading, is a small unforeseen slippage or error in a computer or networked system. It does not have a distinct ideology or politics. The glitch is not an offensive tactic in that it does not propose a new or alternative political system. Instead, it reveals that the state's truth is not exactly true and that other potential narratives and stories exist. There is a danger to a single story, and it must not be forgotten that, "un relato es no otra cosa que la reproducción del orden del mundo en una escala puramente verbal." [35] Following classical definitions, the glitch makes one aware of the computer processes themselves, remembering that it composed of software and hardware. The material is exposed. In a similar manner, the glitch exposes the violence, terror, and torture at the heart of the state and opens up space for narrative self-determination.

A similar ethos can be found in other works from the era, such as the 1998 film *La sonámbula* by director Fernando Spiner and the work of art movements like the Errorist International. In the former, which was co-written by the director and Piglia, a young woman, Eva Rey, has lost her identity due to a leak of a new government chemical.[36] She is taken to a center with other amnesiac victims, but then released as the government hopes she will lead them to a rebel leader. Eva is surveilled by the State and is plugged in to a computer so that even her dreams can be monitored. It comes to pass that she is having dreams of the future, which in turn infect the State's computers. The latter group, the Errorist International, forwarded a politics of error and chance that emerged when a member mistyped "terrorism" and wrote "errorism," which spell check didn't recognize.[37] The Erorrist International's practice extended this tension through a series of performances, writings, and urban interventions in the early 2000s. These works make me wonder about how the glitch might help us look at post-junta cultural production in a new light, as well as the ways the glitch could be applied outside of Argentina, especially as an increasingly connected world now faces new campaigns of misinformation.

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Notes

[1] Werner Pertot, "La plaza del no a vuelta de la impunidad," *Pagina/12,* May 10, 2017, https://www.pagina12.com.ar/36779-la-plaza-del-no-a-la-vuelta-de-la-impunidad.

[2] In 1987 the Law of Due Obedience was passed, which said that officers and officials could not be held accountable for their actions during the junta because they were following orders. These laws were overthrown in 2003. Peter Greste, "Argentina Overturns Amnesty Laws," *BBC News,* August 13, 2003, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/3146379.stm.

[3] Piglia references the government's campaign to support soldiers in the Falkland Islands when in fact the war had already been lost, as well as a lack of discussion of torture and state violence throughout the novel.

[4] Authors such as Alicia Kozameh, Alicia Partnoy, and Horacio Verbtisky are known for their use of the *testimonio*. Some works consist of interviews, some are fictionalized accounts while others are more purely autobiographical. John Beverley's *Testimonio: On the Politics of Truth* is perhaps the seminal work on the genre.

[5] J. Andrew Brown, "Cyborgs, Post-Punk, and the Neobaroque: Ricardo Piglia's La Ciudad Ausente," *Comparative Literature* 61.3 (2001): 316-26. Web. Accessed March 2018; Eva-Lynn Jagoe. "The Disembodied Machine: Matter, Femininity, and the Nation in Ricardo Piglia's "La ciudad ausente," *Latin American Literary Review* 23.45(1995): 5-17.

[6] Fernández was a well-known Argentine writer and mentor of Jorge Luis Borges. His fictional counterpart is a minor character in the novel. Elena is also the name of the Fernández's real wife, who also died young. However, both are heavily fictionalized in Piglia's text.

[7] Rojas, Eunice, "Ricardo Piglia's Schizophrenc Machine: The Madness of Resistance in *La ciudad ausente*," *Hispanet Journal* 6 (2013). Accessed online, February 2018; Ignacio Sánchez Prado, "Reapropriar *La ciudad ausente*: Consideraciones sobre la 'Máquina de Narrar.'" *Colorado Review of Hispanic Studies* (2004), 187-200.

[8] Joanna Page, "Writing as Resistance in Ricardo Piglia's *La ciudad ausente*," *Bulletin of Spanish Studies* 81.3 (2004):343-360.

[9] Piglia discusses how, although Argentina had lost the war to the British, the general population does not know this and continues to send food and blankets to the soldiers (74).

[10] "Glitch," *The American Heritage Dictionary*, 5th ed., 2014. Accessed online February 2018.

[11] William Safire, "On Language: Skewing Metaphors Glitch Query," *The New York Times* 3 March 1980.

[12] Prominent artists who make work about glitches and glitching include Mishka Henner, Jodi, Rosa Menkman, Jon Rafman, and Mathieu St-Pierre, among others.

[13] Hugh S. Manon and Daniel Temkin, "Notes on Glitch," *World Picture, WRONG,* 6 (2011).

[14] Rosa Menkman, "Glitch Studies Manifesto," in *Video Vortex Reader II: Moving Images Beyond Youtube*, Geert Lovink and Rachel Somers, eds. (Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures, 2011).

[15] Michael Betancourt, "Critical Glitches and Glitch Art," Accessed October 2018. http://www.hz-journal.org/n19/betancourt.html, *Hz* 19, 2004.

[16] Legacy Russell, "Elsewhere After the Flood: Glitch Feminism and the Glitch Body Politic." *Rhizome,* 2013. Accessed February 2018. http://rhizome.org/editorial/2013/mar/12/glitch-body-politic/

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Russell, in the same paragraph, claims that the glitch is a "correction" to "economic, racial, social, sexual, and cultural stratification," which she claims is the real error in the world, expanding the definition of the term.

[21] "Nosotros tratamos de construir una réplica microscópica, una máquina de defensa femenina, contra las experiencias y los experimentos y las mentiras del estado." (Piglia, 144); "The State knows all the stories of all the citizens, and retranslates them into new stories that are then told by the president of the republic and his ministers." (Piglia, 143).

[22] "'The machine is a woman?' 'It *was* a woman.'" (Piglia, 28)

[23] Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature.* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 149.

[24] Ibid., 175.

[25] "Which everyone considers a sacred text, because they can always read it, regardless of the state of language in which they find themselves." (Piglia 118)

[26] Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature.* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 176.

[27] "Junior started to understand. At first the machine would get it wrong. Errors are the first beginning. The machine 'spontaneously' breaks up the elements of

Poe's story and transforms them into potential nuclei of fiction. That is how the initial plot emerged. The myth of origin. All the stories came from there. The future meaning of what was occurring depended on that story about the other and what is to come. Reality was defined by the possible (and not by what was)." (Piglia, 83)

[28] "A virtual reality" (42).

[29] Edgar Allan Poe, "William Wilson." *The Fall of the House of Usher and Other Writings: Poems, Tales, Essays and Reviews* (London: Penguin Classics, 2011), 110-130.

[30] "It builds microscopic replicas, virtual doubles, William Wilson, Stephen Stevensen. Once again, this same point of departure, a ring at the center of the story." (Piglia, 88)

[31] "'There are areas of condensation, white nodes, which can be untied, opened up. They are like myths,' he said; 'they define the grammar of experience. Everything the linguists have taught us about language also applies to the heart of living matter. The genetic code and the verbal code present us with the same characteristics. This is what we call the white nodes.'" (Piglia, 62)

[32] "Of course, now, after years and years of systematic torture, of concentration camps designed to make those who have repented perform informational duties, they have won everywhere and can no longer be infiltrated, and the only thing that can be done is to create a white node and start over again." (Piglia, 144)

[33] "The state intelligence is essentially a technical mechanism designed to alter the criteria of reality," with "electronic devices and electronic personalities and electronic fictions and in every State of the world there is a Japanese brain giving orders." (Piglia, 133).

[34] "Torture is the culmination of that desire to know, the maximum degree of institutional intelligence," (Piglia, 144).

[35] "A story is nothing more than a reproduction of the order of the world on a purely verbal scale," (Piglia, 139).

[36] *La sonámbula*, dir. Fernando Spiner, 1998.

[37] Santiago García Navarro, "Interview with Loreto Garín and Fedeico Zukerfeld," *LatinArt.com: An Online Journal of Art and Culture*, January 7, 2006. Accessed February 2015  http://www.latinart.com/aiview.cfm?id=425