

**Post-Digital Remixes and Carnavalesque Relinkings:
Eduardo Navas's *Goobalization***

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The U.S.-Salvadoran media artist, critic, theorist and curator, Eduardo Navas, has been involved in a variety of on- and off-line art projects since the mid 1990s that explore crossovers between art, culture and (new) media. In addition to mobilizing new media technologies for creative purposes—such as his most recent online work, *Poemita* (2010), which uses Twitter for writing experimental poetry—Navas's work also places particular focus upon the re-mixing of already existing source texts and images afforded by digital media. His *Diary of a Star* (2004–2007), for instance, takes up Andy Warhol's diaries and turns them into a blog to which Navas has added hyperlinks, commentary and a “meta-diary,” and which, taken as a whole, aim to explore, in the words of Navas himself, “the activity of web-surfing as part of a new social space” (“Context for the Project *Goobalization*”). Similarly, Navas's “The Quixote” (2000), is a re-working of Jorge Luis Borges's famous story, “Pierre Menard, autor del *Quijote*” (1939). Whereas Borges's story was an (ironic) investigation into the issues of re-writing and the re-signification of texts when transferred to new contexts, Navas's playful reworking (in which translations and versions of Borges's tale are superimposed over images of Cervantes's novel) makes use of digital technology to comment on and problematize these same notions.¹ Moreover, if this short story has been analyzed by critics in relation to virtuality—being described by Jonathan Stuart Boulter as Borges's “most celebrated analysis of the simulacrum” (362)—then Navas's reworking is one which engages with the problematics of the virtual and of on/offline presence as foreshadowed by Borges's tale.² In a similar vein, a further example of Navas's constructive re-cycling can be found in his 2002 work *Plástico_2002_Update*, an animated Flash project which re-cycles the salsa

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song “Plástico” by Willie Colón and Rubén Blades, and juxtaposes the lyrics with statistics of the Americas as of 2002. In the words of Navas, the aim of this work is to “reevaluate emancipatory narratives that have affected Latin Americans” and, through the juxtaposition of statistical data with the lyrics, provide “a metaphoric commentary on how hopeful gestures can quickly become absorbed by our current state of globalization” (*Plastico*)—again illustrating how original sources are taken up and reworked by Navas in order to critically re-evaluate them.

Navas’s work, then, has a particular interest in the reworking and recycling of existing sources as enabled by new media technologies, with the frequent aim of drawing out inconsistencies, shedding light on new meanings, and exploring the power relations hidden in the interconnections between the various sources he re-uses. This article will focus on what is arguably his most politicized of such recyclings—those to be found in his online animation trilogy, *Goobalization* (2005–2007)—and will explore how this trilogy, in its remixing and recycling of existing images in complex and innovative ways, encourages the viewer to engage critically with the images s/he sees, and to analyze the complex interrelations between them. The article starts, therefore, with a brief consideration of the structural, visual and aural features of Navas’s trilogy, and then proceeds to engage with Navas’s remix theory (as expounded in several of his theoretical publications) as a framework through which to approach his work, in conjunction with Latin American theorizations of the copy. The article subsequently moves on to a detailed study of the *Goobalization* animations themselves, first discussing the four structural axes of the works, and following with a detailed analysis of three key configurations in each of the animations.

The *Goobalization* trilogy consists of three short Flash/Quicktime videos which are created from images downloaded from the Internet that are then reworked in complex and challenging ways.³ These images—some photographs, others posters, logos or drawings—are arranged horizontally across the screen, and constantly fade in and out, with each image lingering for an average of five seconds before disappearing, only to be replaced by a subsequent image. The images are also superimposed upon each other and overlapping, meaning that at no point during the animation do we see any one individual image clearly and distinctly; instead, we glimpse traces of the previous image still visible under the new one, and the edges of one image block out or obscure parts of another one. In terms of their spatial organization on the screen, the images are broadly categorized under four terms—“surveillance,” “difference,” “resistance” and “globalization”—which occupy the four corners of the screen and are signaled in red font (a more detailed discussion of these terms follows). This spatial organization, which runs conterminously with the chronological one, means that the viewer is forced into new modes of viewing: the viewer has to “read” the

piece not just sequentially, from the beginning of the video to the end, but also spatially, across the four axes.

In addition to the images, each animation also has audio accompanying it, but this is not an explanatory voice-over guiding us through the visuals; instead, it is a sound that resembles static or rhythmic tapping, repeated on a loop throughout the video. Such a post-digital sound, which appears to be recycled static—that is, the recycling of the remnants from the digital—represents what has been defined in contemporary music studies as the “post-digital aesthetic,” an aesthetic which, in the words of musicologist Kim Cascone, functions by incorporating the “failure of digital technology” into music (13). Navas’s audio here can thus be understood as a post-digital audio, since it is based on the scraps or by-products of the digital age. This encourages us to reflect differently on the images with which we are presented for several reasons: first, because it refuses to offer us an explicatory voice-over, Navas’s post-digital sound forces us to create our own explanatory connections as we engage with the images. Second, if post-digital music, as Cascone has shown, enables artists to “explore new territories for content by capturing and examining the area beyond the boundary of “normal” functions and uses of software” (14), then here Navas’s use of post-digital remnants has its parallel in the way it encourages us to explore how the images in the videos are presented beyond their “normal” boundaries and re-used in new contexts. Third and finally, Navas’s use of post-digital sound also impacts the images that we see since it implies that we should, too, consider the images presented as the remnants or scraps of digital—in this case, as the remnants or scraps of the Google Image search engine—and, concomitantly, to go beyond the boundaries of the officially-sanctioned meaning of each image, considering instead the resistant, contestatory ways in which they are recombined.

As is clear from this brief analysis of the visual, spatial and aural features which structure the trilogy, Navas’s emphasis is on the recombining of existing images, an emphasis which can be read through both his own theorizations on Remix Theory, and through discussions in Latin(o) American studies on the status of the copy. Regarding the first of these, Navas’s contributions to the embryonic field of Remix Theory (in particular his website <remixtheory.net>) provide arguably the most theoretically robust approach to that theory to date.⁴ Drawing on remix techniques in music and DJ culture, Navas has developed the notion of remix as representing the aesthetics of the Internet, due to the latter’s dependence on sampling, copying and pasting in order to function as a network (*Turbulence*). For Navas, the fundamental feature in remix culture on the Internet is the crucial role that the user plays in “activating” the work; he draws up a taxonomy of differing versions of remix with what he terms “reflexive remix” involving “allegoriz[ing] and extend[ing] the aesthetic of sampling,” and relying on a strategy which “demands that the viewer reflect

on the meaning of the work and its sources” (*Turbulence*).⁵ In many ways, the notions that Navas presents in order to define reflexive remix can be applied to his own work; if, as Navas argues, reflexive remix means that “the roles of the author and user (reader) are questioned in order to make clear the critical position of this work” (*Turbulence* 8), then the notion of remix applies to the *Goobalization* trilogy, in the way in which the videos require active participation by the reader/user in order to construct the meaning of the work. As can be seen above, the visual, spatial, and aural structuring features of the project challenge the viewer to decipher the meaning of the work: given the lack of explanatory voice-over; the fact that the images constantly fade in and out; that the images are superimposed, requiring the viewer to “read” through several layers of images; and that the viewer has to attempt to “read” the images in the light of the four axes simultaneously with the chronological progression, the reader is constantly having to read differently, placing him/her into the role of co-creator of meaning. These features combined force the viewer to abandon conventional, linear viewing/reading strategies and to undertake a critical and constructive engagement with the material.

Of course, Navas’s statements on the role of the reader/user here are not new; there are many parallels with theories already put forward by scholars in contemporary hypertext and hypermedia theory from the mid-1990s onwards, such as Michael Joyce’s assertion that “the reader gives birth to the true electronic text” (180) and that “hypertext narrative asserts the authority of the individual reader” (194). Similarly, George P. Landow’s notion of hypertext as creating “an active, even intrusive reader [who] infringes on the power of the writer” (90), as expounded in his seminal volume on hypertext, shares many concerns with Navas’s proposals for the active reader/viewer of reflexive remix. What is new, however, is Navas’s insistence on *remix* as enabling this active role of the reader; in other words, that it is precisely through the recombining and re-mashing of already-existing sources that greater autonomy and agency is generated for the reader.⁶ In this way, Navas’s theorizations on remix, and the way in which he enacts these theorizations in the *Goobalization* trilogy as analyzed below, can be seen to parallel notions of mashup cultures, which for Sonvilla-Weiss can be considered as a “coevolving, oscillating membrane of user-generated content . . . and mass media” (9). Mashup culture represents the interface that Navas explores—namely, the use of mass media images, which are then selected through a mass media giant (Google), in order to create a new, resistant content through Navas’s reflexive remix. The concept of remix (as developed by Navas), and parallel concepts being developed in mashup cultures, prove illuminating when evaluating the *Goobalization* trilogy, since these animations function through the selection and remixing of available images which are recycled in resistant ways, and which, through the

challenging interface via which they are presented, force the viewer/user into a more active and critical role.

It is these insistences of remix—on the reworking of “originals,” and on the way in which the act of copying enables a “type of ‘collage’ that makes new media work possible” (Navas, *Turbulence*)—that leads me to the second of the strands: that of the copy as one of the central paradigms of (Latin) American thought. Whilst Navas’s Remix Theory is not explicitly framed as a Latin American discourse—and indeed, many of his publications are in English—his arguments have some illuminating parallels with the theories of Roberto Schwartz, Lidia Santos, Nelly Richard and others, regarding (Latin) America and the copy. Schwartz, in his influential collection of essays, *Misplaced Ideas*, talked about the way in which Latin Americans “constantly experience the artificial, inauthentic and imitative nature of our cultural life” (1), whilst critiquing the “commonplace idea” of the copy as secondary to the original (6). Similarly, Santos has noted that “the copy was an ideologeme long used in the Latin American essay” from the nineteenth century onwards (169), thus suggesting the copy as a fundamental paradigm of Latin American thought—examples of which can be seen, for instance, in Domingo Sarmiento’s reliance on European models in his *Facundo: civilización y barbarie*, or José Enrique Rodó’s re-working of Shakespearean paradigms in order to define Latin American identity in *Ariel*, to name but two such examples.

Nelly Richard, meanwhile, has written extensively on the copy as the proper of Latin America. She discusses Latin American identity as a “collage of identities in transit” (*Transference* 458)—an idea of collage which resonates with Navas’s theories on collage in new media art as mentioned above. Richard argues that the periphery’s strategy of citation works both to debate Latin American ideologies of the origin as stability, and to disarticulate the myths of the metropolis. Regarding the markers which recur in all Latin American aesthetic production, Richard argues that “each image is the image of a copy, recycled until its originality (the cult of the exclusivity of the model as origin and perfection) degenerates into substitution and bastardization” and mentions the “sum total of rhetorical maneuvers (parody, irony, and reappropriation) that a subordinate culture must fine-tune to mock the colonial sanction” (*Postmodernity* 230–31). Richard’s notions here prove illuminating when considering Navas’s resistant recycling of copies via his reflexive remix—the rhetorical maneuvers of Navas’s work, as will be discussed in detail below, demonstrate Richard’s conception of “reappropriation,” in the way in which he reappropriates existing images in order to mock and critique institutionalized power relations and global hegemonies. Moreover, Richard has related this notion of reappropriation to the rhetorical device of relinking: talking of the periphery’s use of the copy, Richard argues that it involves “relinking in a carnivalesque manner” (Richard, *Transference* 458).

Such a notion of carnivalesque linking—where carnivalesque is understood in the Bakhtinian sense of the de-privileging of the dominant order through inversion, mockery and “uncrowning” (Bakhtin 217)—in many ways exemplifies *Goobalization*’s re-cycling and re-linking of images in new and contestatory ways.⁷

What all of these scholars (and others like them) have argued is that (Latin) American cultural life and self-expression is predicated on the remobilization of existing paradigms and “originals.” Herein lies the potential of the (critically or reflexively) remixed copy: as a way of talking back—or remixing back—to the metropolis, the copy, whilst never standing outside the dominant order, can provide commentaries on that same order, and can also pick apart its internal logic. It is in this sense that the two theoretical strands—remix theory in new media art, and the copy in (Latin) American thought—come together; where, for Richard and others, Latin American use of the copy responds to and critiques “the peripheral extension of models centrally promoted by the metropolitan networks” (Richard, *Peripheries* 158), Navas’s use of the copy engages in a similar critique, but one which is directed at globalized power structures. In this way, although the *Goobalization* trilogy does not comment on Latin American identity per se, its critique lies, as will be analyzed below, in the resistance to neo-imperialistic conditions of globalization, to global brands, to multinationals and corporatism, which its reflexive recycling of copies enacts.

This notion of reflexive remix, and of Richard’s concept of the “collage of identities in transit” is inherent in the very title of Navas’s work, which recombines two terms—the brand name of Google, and the socio-economic phenomenon of globalization—to produce a compelling neologism: *goobalization*. A brief introductory text by Navas, which accompanies the trilogy, explains his term, stating that it reflects “how Google plays a large role as the preferred tool to promote global activities” whilst at the same time “it can be used to resist and question the same activities by creating differences” (*Context*). Here, Navas’s comments on Google chime with those of scholars such as Kate Milberry and Steve Anderson, who have demonstrated the way in which Google attempts to function as a hegemonic globalizing tool. Milberry and Anderson coin the term “the Google layer” to refer to the multiplicity of Google platforms which “constrains and commodifies users” range of motion within a narrow, privatized slice of the world wide web, and functions to “consolidat[e] corporate power online” (393; 397). Google is, therefore, much more than simply a search engine; it is a corporate Internet giant whose activities represent the functioning of globalization. Navas’s remixing of the Google brand name, in which the concept of globalization is, literally, embedded within the brand name, illustrates the way in which Google functions to exercise control over and constrain Internet content; Google is thus made to stand as a synecdoche for globalization. At the same time, given that Navas achieves his critique

through resistant remixing, and that the contents of the trilogy themselves are generated by Navas's use of Google Image, the *Goobalization* animations demonstrate Richard's definitions of the contestatory use of the copy: in this case, Navas is using the tools provided by globalization (Google) to contest the global system.

Following on from his brief introductory comment on his neologism, Navas then provides a short gloss of each of the four key terms he has chosen to structure his work. Regarding the first of these, Navas defines the term "globalization" as consisting of "international activities largely influenced, promoted, or enacted by major corporations," as a result of which "cultural exchange has also become possible," but which usually take place "in contingency to commercial interests" (*Contexts*). Navas's take here chimes with that elaborated in recent years by scholars of globalization, itself a hotly debated term that has been the subject of hundreds of scholarly publications. As Kellner has shown, theorists on globalization tend to be polarized between those for whom "it is a cover concept for global capitalism and imperialism and is accordingly condemned as another form of the imposition of the logic of capital and the market on ever more regions of the world and spheres of life," and others for whom "it is the continuation of modernization and a force of progress, increased wealth, freedom, democracy, and happiness" (286). Eschewing to such polarized views, Kellner argues that instead we should "avoid both technological and economic determinism and all one-sided optics of globalization in favor of a view that theorizes globalization as a highly complex, contradictory, and thus ambiguous set of institutions and social relations, as well as one involving flows of goods, services, ideas, technologies, cultural forms, and people" (286). If, as part of this process, Kellner has shown that "globalization both is imposed from above and yet can be contested and reconfigured from below" (286), then Navas's use of the term as a structuring feature for his work engages with this sense of globalization as a double-edged sword: by recycling images of globalized brands (themselves facilitated by the global media giant Google), in resistant ways, Navas's praxis serves as an example of Kellner's "globalization from below" which can contest the "globalization from above" (293).

Following on from "globalization," the second term, "surveillance" concerns, in Navas's words, "the ability by corporations, institutions, governments, as well as hackers, to oversee online activity either for commercial or political purposes" (*Contexts*). Navas's choice of term here, whilst initially appearing somewhat tangential to the concept of *goobalization* (as representative of Internet technologies and globalization), is in fact central to the very notion and functioning of the Internet itself. As scholars have shown, the Internet as a medium has its origins in the U.S. Defense Department's ARPA (Advanced Research Projects Agency), in particular projects such as their ARPANET computer network, and in early

systems developed by RAND Corporation on behalf of the U.S. Air Force in the late 1960s. Given that in the context of the Cold War, the developing technology was put to use for surveillance in predicting and surviving nuclear attack (in the words of Illka Tuomi, “where the interests of national security and technology met” [65])—and that many of the protocols still used for contemporary Internet communication are based on those of ARPA-funded researchers, the notion of surveillance is thus central to the very genesis of the Internet itself as medium.⁸ In this way, Navas’s brief statement on surveillance, and his use of the term as one of his structuring axes, provides a commentary on the very origins of Internet technologies, and encourages us to consider the ways in which digital art works (including the *Goobalization* trilogy itself) may engage with, or potentially contest, this surveillance.

The third term selected by Navas is “resistance,” and is glossed by Navas with explicit reference to the theories of the French philosopher and sociologist Michel Foucault. Navas explains that:

Resistance was chosen following the theories of Michel Foucault to reflect upon the terms globalization and surveillance. Resistance can be thought of as a critical position useful to examine institutions as power structures. The term should not be thought of in opposition to the other two terms, but rather as complementary to them. Resistance when considered from this point of view can become a constructive concept that can lead to power-shifts. (*Context*)

Navas’s brief comments here can be explicated via closer attention to Foucault’s theories, in particular the latter’s oft-cited assertions on the relationship between power and resistance, as expounded in the volumes comprising his seminal work, *The History of Sexuality*. In the first volume of this work (first published in French under the title *Histoire de la sexualité: la volonté de savoir* in 1976), Foucault discusses the relation between power and resistance, concluding that “where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power” (95). This notion of Foucault’s (in which power is no longer conceptualized as a hydraulic force operating in opposition to resistance, but in which resistance is generated along nodal points within power structures themselves), is highly illuminating with regard to Navas’s work, in particular with respect to the way in which such a conceptualization of power/resistance provides opportunities for re- or counter-appropriation. As Catherine Mills has usefully glossed Foucault, if Foucault argued that there was no clear distinction between those discourses that operate “on the side of power” and those that operate against it, with discourses instead being conceived of as “tactical elements or blocks operating in the field of force relations” (101), then such a conceptualization

means that “the very same discursive elements can be utilized for both hegemonic and counter-hegemonic purposes” (Mills 262). The notions set out here by Foucault of “tactical elements or blocks,” and explicated by Mills as “(re)appropriation” prove enlightening when considering Navas’s work; were we to read “images” for “discourses” here (and, indeed, Foucault’s understanding of “discourse” applies to imagery, myth and ideology, as much as to the written or spoken word), the application to Navas’s work becomes clear. Navas makes use of discourse/images as tactical elements, with his *Goobalization* trilogy illustrating how what are often hegemonic images in their original contexts can be put to use for counter-hegemonic purposes.

Finally, the fourth term in Navas’s structure—“difference”—is described by Navas as one which “complements resistance” since it is the reason why “resistance can be effective,” and both terms—difference and resistance—“can be considered useful forms to keep globalization and surveillance in check” (*Contexts*). Whilst this final term is more loosely defined than the other three, its significance lies in the implicit assumption of difference as difference to a hegemonic norm; it is for this reason that difference has the possibility to be mobilized by resistance. That said, and going beyond Navas’s statement (which defines difference as a contestatory force), as sociologists and economists have shown, difference is not purely oppositional, but can also be mobilized by globalization for its own ends. In the process known as “glocalization,” for instance, a term first coined by Roland Robertson in 1994 and described by Jonathan Matusitz and Maya Forrester as the ways in which multinational corporations “cater to local tastes and differences and show cultural flexibility in order to boost customer appeal” (155), difference can be mobilized in the interests of corporate giants or state powers. Difference is, thus, arguably more complex than Navas’s introductory gloss would allow, and indeed, in the course of the animations themselves, difference is shown to be both oppositional *and* complicit with globalized power structures.

These four structuring terms thus, from the outset, frame the content of the *Goobalization* animations, and encourage us in our viewing to be constantly evaluating the mutual imbrications of these terms. Regarding the first of the animations, *Goobalization I* combines a variety of images that are loosely grouped around these four areas of the screen. Images included in the “surveillance” quarter of the screen (top left-hand corner) include several different shots of CCTV cameras, a mobile surveillance unit, and the office of a private investigator; images of “resistance” (bottom left-hand corner) include a masked figure reading out message and a diagram of an electronic circuit containing the word “resistance”; images of “difference” (top right-hand corner) include various images of different races, including a photograph of a Japanese child and a sepia engraving of a Sikh; whilst images of “globalization” (bottom right-hand corner) include photographs of

people carrying flags and a caricature of Uncle Sam's feet resting on the globe.

The various images comprising this animation encourage the viewer to explore the four categories and to engage in his/her own analysis of how the categories are inter-related. The fact that these four areas are overlapping, that the images which belong to each area are superimposed, and that they do not fit neatly into any one area of the screen, forces us to start drawing our own connections between the four areas as we view the work. Moreover, their overlaps and superimpositions illustrate the inherent structures of power that Navas hinted at in his introduction, and that Foucault has detailed at length, as discussed above; just as Foucault argued against a hydraulic conception of power, Navas's work literalizes this relationship, demonstrating how these apparently oppositional terms (such as, for instance, surveillance *versus* resistance) are in fact overlapping and, at times, mutually supportive (surveillance *and* resistance).

This illustrated compellingly throughout *Goobalization I*. For instance, at approximately mid-point in the animation, we are presented with three intersecting images (Fig. 1): a cartoon entitled "Problems of Globalization Illustrated"; an image of a house and gardens taken with a night-sight camera; and a photograph of a protest march. These three images taken together maintain some of the aura of their original production, whilst at the same time produce new and complex significations in Navas's remix.⁹ Regarding the first of these, the cartoon depicts three U.S. tourists discussing their travels around Europe, with speech bubbles declaring "We got these cool hats at Niketown in Paris," "and this great shirt at the Disney Store in London," and "after we had a great dinner at McDonald's in Rome, we found these neat shorts at the Gap!" Signed "M Wuerker," it is a reproduction of a cartoon by Matt Wuerker—presently editorial cartoonist at *Politico.com*—and which was published in 2002 in alternative weekly newspapers around the United States.¹⁰ The depiction of the tourists in the cartoon, and the dialogue that takes place between them, clearly function as an ironic commentary on both the parochial mindset of U.S. citizens abroad, and on the pernicious effects that globalization has on cultural diversity.



Figure 1. Image from Eduardo Navas's *Goobalization I*.

The image of a house and gardens (taken with a night-sight camera), meanwhile, framed as it is within the “surveillance” corner of the screen, illustrates how, due to technological advances such as night-sight vision, personal freedom and individual privacy are under threat. Moreover, this image of surveillance represents not only one particular facet of invasive technologies, but more broadly, suggests surveillance as integral to the very functioning of new media technologies themselves, since the image (and the surveillance it represents) is only ever possible through technological advances in thermal imaging and image intensification technologies which make night-sight vision possible. In this sense, we can extrapolate from this image a commentary on the way in which surveillance is integral to the very workings of the Internet itself, representing what Michael Zimmer has termed the “infrastructure of dataveillance” (77). Drawing on Roger A. Clarke’s coining of the term “dataveillance” as the ways in which IT systems are used in the monitoring of people, Zimmer argues that advanced information technologies and computer databases “facilitate the collection and exchange of information about individuals” and contribute to a “rapidly emerging ‘soft cage’ of everyday digital surveillance” (Zimmer 77). Significantly, Zimmer’s study takes as its particular focus the Google search engine—the source of Navas’s images, and subject of his (complicitous) critique throughout the *Goobalization* trilogy—and, giving a detailed

explanation of the feedback loop in which Google monitors and aggregates the results of every Web search performed, Zimmer argues that Google has created a “sophisticated infrastructure of dataveillance” (Zimmer 91) which enables the “technological gaze of everyday surveillance, inflaming a growing environment of discipline and social control” (78). Like the panopticon (which this image recalls and on which Zimmer’s analysis draws)—the all-seeing gaze of the night-sight camera that ensures perpetual scrutiny of the individual— dataveillance thus represents the coming-together of advanced technologies and surveillance in troubling ways.

Finally, the third of these images, a photograph of *Résistance Internationale* protesters carrying placards saying “contre la guerre” (against the war), shows one of the recent protest marches organized by *Résistance Internationale*, a French protest group active in anti-globalization, anti-capitalism and anti-war campaigns, which was launched by the MAS (Mouvement pour une Alternative Socialiste). This particular protest march, held by the protest group in 2004 in protest against the Iraq war, represents resistance to the intervention by Western (and predominantly U.S.-backed) powers in the affairs of a sovereign state; in this sense, resistance is conceived of as resistance to a dominant power.¹¹

Yet, in addition to their original significance or “aura,” these three images, presented in conjunction, invite us to consider new meanings and reflect on new interconnections. For instance, the overlap between the cartoon and the night-sight image, in which the right-hand edge of the image obscures the left-hand side of the cartoon, invites us to consider how global corporatism as represented by Gap and McDonald’s in the “globalization” corner is linked to corporate use of technologies in the “surveillance” corner, a notion which can be usefully explicated via the concept of technocapitalism. If technocapitalism is, to follow Luis Suarez-Villa’s definition, the way in which “the rapid and unprecedented global flows of investment capital supported by innovations in software, communications, and electronics” function to “dynam[ize] the accumulation of capital” (19), then database technologies provide the backbone for the operations of global corporate giants such as Gap and McDonald’s. The coming together of these two images can thus be read as a metaphor for technocapitalism, for the way in which technological advances (dataveillance) contribute to and uphold the conditions of production for advanced capitalism and global corporatism.

At the same time, and conversely, given that the photograph of the protest march falls broadly into the “resistance” corner, but also overlaps with “globalization,” we are encouraged to consider how resistance may be fostered by the same term (globalization) that it is resisting.¹² It is notable in this regard, for instance, how the very title of the protest group itself, stating its *international* resistance, is evidence of the way in which globalized technologies have enabled the mobilization of protest groups worldwide. As John W. Meyer has observed with regard to the functioning

of so-called “anti-globalization” groups, “much effective ‘anti-globalization’ activity is in fact itself organized on a global scale and addresses global issues” (262). The conjunction of these two images thus suggests the ways in which the anti-globalization movement uses globalized technologies for its own purposes, a fact which is, moreover, born out by the activities of *Résistance Internationale*, who make extensive use of Internet technologies in promoting their activities and in networking with other groups.¹³ In this way, the confluence of images in this screen shot, as throughout the animation, provide for multiple chains of thought and interconnections, both mobilizing the original meanings or “aura” of the images, and at the same time suggesting new meanings and interpretations.

Similarly, images in the second animation, *Goobalization II*, provide for some illuminating and provocative conjunctions. Images in the various segments of the screen are similar to those used in *Goobalization I*, with helicopters, airplanes and CCTV cameras representing “surveillance”; art works and images of different racial and ethnic groups representing “difference”; a Shell petrol station, battery-farmed chickens and a neon Coca-Cola sign representing “globalization”; and street protests and electronic devices representing “resistance,” amongst others. As an example of the productive confluences of images in this work, the moment in which the following four images coincide, approximately half-way through the animation, is particularly thought-provoking (Fig. 2): a photograph of a helicopter, under the “surveillance” corner; a diagram of the World Wide Web and LAN networks under the “globalization” corner; an image of neural network mapping under the “difference” corner; and an image from a computer game under the “resistance” corner.

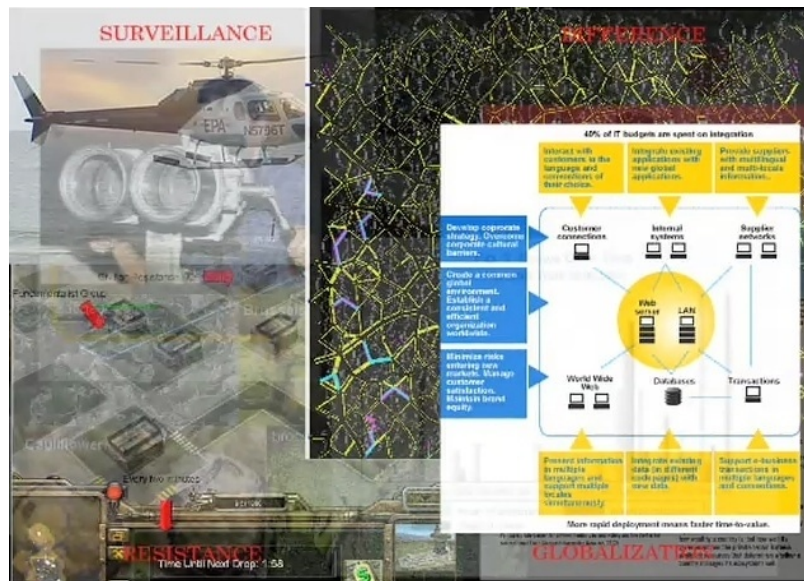


Figure 2. Image from Eduardo Navas's *Goobalization II*.

The constituent images of this constellation provide for illuminating commentaries on the four key terms of Nava's work. The first image—that of the helicopter—may at first sight appear to be a sinister reminder of state-backed surveillance, particularly considering Navas's constant questioning of power relations throughout this trilogy. In fact, on closer inspection the letters “EPA” are visible—the logo of the U.S. Environment Protection Agency—suggesting perhaps how surveillance may be mobilized for positive purposes. The second image, that of an artificial neural network, represents a computational model used to process information by means of mathematical algorithms. The third image, a diagram showing the use of IT budgets and mapping the relationship between Internet and LAN networks, displays the very backbone of Internet technologies framed within specifically commercial terms, with regard to improving a business model. Finally the fourth image is a grey-scale image of a computer game, which positions its user as commander of a force, with two groups—“fundamentalist group” and “civilian resistance”—marked out for his/her attention. This image is most probably taken from *Left Behind: Eternal Forces*, a videogame produced by the right-wing Christian corporation, Left Behind, in which the user, playing the part of the commanding forces in an apocalyptic New York, must attempt to forcibly convert the population to Christianity or eradicate them.

Regarding the way in which Navas resignifies these images, his use of the image from the computer game in a new context invites us to rethink the encoding of resistance in the original source. If games such as *Left Behind* interpolate the user as the crusader against pockets of (implicitly evil) fundamentalism, then civilian resistance (here Navas's spatial organization, in which this image overlaps with that in the "globalization" section), invites us to instead consider whether this resistance may in fact be resistance to an (implicitly evil) globalizing force. In this sense, Navas's placing of this image suggests a potentially positive image that re-encodes the original, in which resistance is framed as resistance to U.S. neo-imperialism and to the "global war on terror" mentality.¹⁴ At the same time, the "aura" or original significance of the original is still visible, and reminds us of the way in which notions of resistance (in this case, fundamentalist groups and civilian resistance) may be recuperated by corporatism and globalization for entertainment and consumer consumption. As in many of the other images Navas chooses, then, resistance is never simply oppositional or unproblematic; instead, his work engages in a partial re-encoding whilst maintaining an awareness of the mutual imbrication of terms rather than their strict opposition.

Regarding the images in the "difference" and "globalization" corners, meanwhile, these images, whilst superficially different, in effect undertake two different types of the same process, namely mapping: neural network mapping, and computer network mapping. Indeed, the substantial overlap between the two in visual terms—there is a strong graphic matching between the two "webs" represented—suggests that there is a parallel conceptual overlap, rather than direct contradistinction, between the terms "globalization" and "difference."¹⁵ These overlapping maps suggest the ways in which the Internet, as well as being a tool of globalization (and thus, implicitly, of homogenization) as the image represents, also enables difference (and thus heterogeneity and multiplicity). Indeed, the overlap here, and other similar ones throughout this animation, suggest the ways in which globalization, far from being a purely homogenizing process—a stance that Boaventura de Sousa Santos has critiqued as a "determinist fallacy" when thinking about globalization (395)—is in fact multiple and complex. At the same time, given that the "globalization" image of computer networks almost completely blocks out the image in the "difference" corner—partially eclipsing it—Navas implies that globalization, in the form of corporatism and striving for increased efficiency, may be in danger of eclipsing difference and diversity. In this way, the confluence of images as enacted by Navas is greater than the sum of the constituent parts, and it is in their reflexive reworking where we find new and thought-provoking commentaries on our contemporary world.

The third and final animation in the series, *Goobalization III*, again follows the same format as the first two, with the structural axes of

“surveillance,” “difference,” “resistance” and “globalization” providing the setting for the flow of images. Here, images under the “surveillance” axis include an electrified perimeter fence with watch tower, a teddy bear with a hidden camera for an eye, and images taken through night-sight technology; images under “globalization” include an inflatable globe, Chinese basketball players, a Ferrari and a McDonald’s “super size” meal; images under resistance include a rock band, a poster advertising “music of resistance” and boxers in a ring; whilst images under “difference” include a box of oranges with one red apple on top, and photographs of people of different races.

Whilst again there are many confluences throughout the animation that provide for fruitful reflections on the configuration of goobalization in the contemporary world, one example will be taken here for analysis. At approximately two-thirds of the way into the animation, we see the coming together of the following images: under “surveillance,” two large satellite receivers; under “difference,” an activist poster showing a kneeling man sowing a small plant with the title “you can make a difference”; under “globalization,” a pair of Gap jeans; and under “resistance” a photograph of workers harvesting rice in a paddy field (Fig. 3).



Figure 3. Image from Eduardo Navas’s *Goobalization III*.

Regarding the first of these images, the satellite receivers are doubly-encoded, representing both surveillance (and, hence, sinister state or corporate powers), and also the very backbone of the new media technologies themselves. The second image, meanwhile, the activist poster, uses the well-known environmentalist slogan to campaign for people to care for nature and engage in replanting the (urban) environment. The third image, that in the “globalization” quarter, at first sight appears to be a photograph of a standard product of a leading global brand (Gap), although on closer inspection reveals elements of resistance to be at work. Finally, the fourth image shows agricultural workers engaged in close contact with the soil, harvesting the rice by hand as they bend over the crops, their faces obscured by the wide-brimmed hats they wear.

The confluence of these images provides for reflection on the interconnections between the activities depicted. The official Gap image in the photograph has been doctored in order to insert a message of resistance, since, below the information telling us about the manufacturer and style (“Gap”; “boot cut”), an additional label has been inserted bearing the words “made in a sweatshop.” This resistant potential is indicated spatially by Navas’s organization of the images, since the “resistance” image impinges on the “globalization” image, partially covering up the image of the jeans. Navas’s spatial organization here thus flags up the inequalities and exploitation that allow corporations such as Gap to sell their globalized products, providing a resistant take on this global brand. In addition to this, this overlap between the two images, bringing together a photograph of the jeans and a photograph of workers in a paddy field—reminds us that it is in these very same peripheral locations (China, India, Bangladesh), where such sweat shops are commonly located.

Similarly, the images in the “difference” and “resistance” zones complement each other, since both are images of low-tech, labor-intensive agriculture, depicting sowing and harvesting by hand. The implication made by this visual parallel is that making a difference—in this case, helping the environment by sowing plants—is also a matter of resistance to technocapitalism and globalization. At the same time, the dominance of the image in the “surveillance” corner—both in spatial terms in the way it overlaps with all three of the other corners of the screen, and in visual terms due to the abundance of rich reds and oranges which drown out the paler colors of the other sections—suggests that surveillance (as a synecdoche for dataveillance or, more broadly, digital technologies) is integral to all the other corners. Difference and resistance, therefore, are shown to be counterparts to globalization and surveillance, whilst at the same time being (partially) enabled by those very same phenomena: this spatial and visual encoding suggests, for instance, the ways in which the “make a difference” campaign is enabled by Internet technologies. In this way, the recombining of images in this one moment, as with others throughout the animations,

provides for reflections on the interconnectedness of the four categories, and reveals how the original auras are visible at the same time as new meanings are elaborated.

These are just some selected screen shots of the *Goobalization* trilogy, which, as a whole, engages in a contestatory, reflexive remixing of copies, and requires active construction on the part of the viewer throughout to read across the four axes and establish the interconnections between the constituent images. Whilst not by any means the only net.art or online work to engage in recycling of existing content—Navas’s praxis has its parallels in Gustavo Romano’s *Hyperbody*, or Marta Patricia Niño’s recycling of weblinks in her *Relational Border Map*, for instance—what is perhaps most compelling in Navas is the way in which new and unexpected meanings arise from the recombinations of existing images and sources. Read through notions of the critically reworked copy and carnivalesque re-linking, the *Goobalization* animations thus serve as examples of reflexive remix in which the conventional roles of the author and reader/viewer are challenged, and the work itself takes on a contestatory position vis-à-vis the power relations it exposes.

Notes

1. I am here bracketing the term “ironic” to acknowledge the fact that Borges scholars have disagreed over the extent to which the story is an ironic anecdote or a serious philosophical treatise. See, for instance Mabel Basterrechea (221) for a discussion of the changing critical approaches to this story over time.
2. More broadly, it is worth noting the frequency with which Borges’s works are cited in scholars as examples of hypertext fiction *avant la lettre* and of envisioning the Internet before its development; see, for instance Hayles, Sassón-Henry, de Toro, and Herbrechter and Callus, amongst others.
3. The videos are available in both Flash and Quicktime format. The Quicktime versions were used for the purposes of this article, although they are identical to the Flash versions.
4. The relevance of Navas’s theories beyond the context of his own work is evidenced by the fact that his theories have already been taken up by scholars in a variety of contexts, including a special issue of *Fibre Culture Journal* (2009) dedicated to the subject of remix in which two of the articles reference Navas explicitly as a leading expert in the field (Ross Rudesch Harley’s article on Australian contemporary art, and Lisa Gye’s article on scholarly research papers in the context of remix theory, respectively); and also by the fact that his theories have been included in several recent anthologies, such as Stefan Sonvilla-Weiss’s edited volume on *Mashup Cultures* which includes a chapter by Navas on “Regressive and Reflexive Mashups in Sampling Culture.”
5. The other two categories defined by Navas are “extended remix” and “selective remix” which involve making a longer version of an original composition, and adding parts to an original composition, respectively (*Turbulence*).

6. In my use of the term “re-mashing,” I am here relying on Stefan Sonvilla-Weiss’s definition of “mashup cultures” as a term which combines web technology—the “combination of data or functionality from two or more external sources to create a new service”—with a “metaphor for parallel and co-existing ways of thinking and acting rather than exclusionary, causal and reductionist principles” (8). In this way, I understand re-mashing to engage with this double sense of mashup culture, in which it is not just the technological combination of sources, but also the facilitation of new ways of reading and interpreting, that proves central to re-mashing.
7. Indeed, it is worth noting how Bakhtin’s notions of the carnivalesque have been employed by a variety of scholars for their postcolonial contestatory potential; see, for instance, Robert Stam’s *Subversive Pleasures*, in particular Chapter 4, “Of Cannibals and Carnivals”; or Timothy Weiss’s study of V. S. Naipaul, which uses Bakhtin’s theories (including his notions of the carnival) to discuss the author’s equivocalness towards colonial power.
8. See Tuomi, in particular Chapter Four, “The Making of the Internet,” for a detailed description of the military origins of the Internet.
9. I am here implicitly referencing Navas’s arguments regarding reflexive remix (themselves drawing on Benjamin), namely that the “spectacular aura” of an original work of art is both immediately recognizable *and* challenged by reflexive remixing (*Turbulence*). In this way, the “aura” represents, in this case, the original and officially-sanctioned meaning of the image that is then remixed in Navas’s work.
10. *Politico.com* is a U.S. newspaper with a particular focus on political issues, which was launched in 2007 by two former journalists of the *Washington Post*.
11. The image in its original setting can be seen at: www.socialisme.be/psl/avril04.html.
12. My reading here chimes with Hudson’s observations on Navas’s work, namely that these animations “highlight the imbrications of purportedly oppositional discourses” and “animate ways that anti-globalization discourses are appropriated by agents of globalization, as well as the inverse” (93). Whilst I disagree with his definition of Navas’s work as a “database documentary” (in my view, the *Goobalization* trilogy is more properly a digital art work), the notion of the mutual imbrication of discourses is a useful one when analyzing *Goobalization*.
13. See, for instance, *Résistance Internationale*’s website (www.gauche.be/resist/fr/), and blog (www.resistance-internationale.blogspot.com) which include communiqués, a calendar of upcoming protest events, video files, resources, and links to other international organizations with which they share affiliations and concerns.
14. I am here, of course, making reference to George W. Bush’s infamous phrase “the war on terror” which was framed in the context of a “global terror network,” during a televised address to Congress on the 20th of September, 2001, and which led to the U.S. Defense Department’s “Global War on Terror” (GWOT) operation (see CNN for a full transcript of this speech).
15. I am here drawing on Bordwell and Thompson’s definition of the “graphic match” in film art in which “shapes, colors, overall composition [...] in shot A may be picked up in the composition of shot B” (275).

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