

# Hyperfiction,

script

An original script  
by Gabriel García  
and Mauricio Loza

2023. EXT. DAT. GUILLERMO' HOUSE. CIUDAD DE LOS PERIODISTAS.  
MADRID. HD CAMERA. PANORAMIC VIEW 1080p.

GUILLERMO (57) appears from behind sitting on a chair in front  
of a mirror. He is holding a BETACAM camera from the 1980s.

WE CUT TO A SHOT FROM BEHIND THE MIRROR.

SQUARE SHOT (WITH MIRROR SPARKLES). Guillermo sits in front of  
the camera, looking at the viewer.

GUILLE (V.O)

My name is Guillermo López, and  
I am going to tell you a story.  
Perhaps some of you will think  
it is fiction. Perhaps, some  
others will think it is real.  
However, both of you will be  
partially right.

#### **CVLTO presents**

Videos of Spain in the 80's interspersed with scenes from  
Guillermo's camera from the same period; images of his family,  
his father leaving with cameras around his neck and notebooks in  
his hand. Everyday moments at the Lopez' home. Others are  
historical archive videos: the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Cold  
War, etc.

GUILLE (V.O)

My father was a journalist in  
Spain back in the eighties. His  
name was Armando López and  
during that period he covered  
for Radio Nacional de España an  
event that had the world on  
edge: the end of the Cold War  
between the United States and  
the Soviet Union.  
By the middle of the decade,  
there was still great tension  
between the two nations and  
everybody feared the worst: the  
outbreak of World War III. We  
knew that with nuclear weapons  
it could be the end. For  
everyone. The end of the world.

The apocalypse.

I was seventeen years old then  
and, like my father, I wanted to  
be a journalist.

CUT TO

Video of the faculty of journalism seen from afar.  
Video of the entrance of the faculty: students cheerfully  
entering through the main door.

GUILLE (V.O)

But my grades were not enough to  
get into college. It was a  
terrible moment for me.  
I felt I was letting my family  
and especially my father down.

Images of the university recorded from the inside of a moving  
car.

GUILLE (V.O)

To mitigate my frustration I  
began studying image and sound  
and became a camera technician.

CUT TO

1985. EXT. DAY. CIUDAD DE LOS PERIODISTAS. MADRID. [BETACAM]

PACO MENÉNDEZ (19) and JUAN DELCÁN (19) are seen with their  
backs turned to the camera, walking through the Ciudad de los  
Periodistas neighborhood. They are talking and gesticulating  
enthusiastically. Paco is holding a book in his hand. We Zoom in  
on the book.

CUT TO

Close-up of the table in Juan's room. Paco's hand leaves the  
book on the table, next to the Amstrad CPC keyboard. The shot of  
the book is maintained and the title can be seen: "El nombre de  
la rosa" (The name of the rose).

GUILLE (V.O)

But in 1986, in the middle of my

studies, something happened.  
Two of my best friends, Paco  
Menéndez and Juan Delcán, told  
me something incredible. They  
were going to lock themselves in  
a room in Juan's apartment to  
make "the best videogame in the  
world". It would be the  
adaptation of "The Name of the  
Rose" by Umberto Eco.

CUT TO

2023. INT. DAY. GUILLE'S STUDY. CIUDAD DE LOS PERIODISTAS. [HD.  
CAMERA. SUBJECTIVE VIEW]

Guillermo enters, camera in hand, into his studio; a room of about fifteen square meters with a table attached to the wall, which has a computer and a printer. The shelves are filled with books and photographs of family and friends. There are also framed newspaper clippings containing articles by his father, and photographs of him in different scenarios related to his profession. In the studio, cameras and video cameras from different periods (from the 1980s to 2023) are scattered around. The general order of the place is that of an "orderly chaos," Guille seems to be in the middle of a project. There are post-its placed around the screen, papers piled up near the computer, next to which there is a switched-off Amstrad CPC. Also a couple of TV sets from the 80s. On the desk you can see an edition of "The Name of the Rose" and several BETACAM videotapes piled up.

*Note: when the heading GUILLE (OFF) appears, it refers to the voice-over of the current Guillermo of 2023, speaking as the narrator of the documentary.*

GUILLE (OFF)

When my friends told me about their plans, I felt something special. I recognized what my father always called "the call of a story". Something you feel in your guts that compels you to witness an event in order to chronicle it. So, without thinking, I asked them if I

could stay with them while they programmed the game. I would bring my camera and record the whole process. I would be their documentarist. And they agreed [laughs], who wouldn't agree to be filmed while doing what they consider the most important thing in the world!

Guillermo takes one of the tapes, inserts it into a VHS adapter and inserts it into the VCR.

GUILLE (OFF)

I lived with them for nine months, recording everything I thought was important.

1985. INT. DAY. JUAN DELCÁN'S HOUSE. CIUDAD DE LOS PERIODISTAS. MADRID. TV1. [BETACAM]

On TV1, one of the two TV sets on Guille's desk, there appear the first images of Paco and Guillermo. They are sitting with their backs to a table where there is an AMSTRAD CPC and a pile of papers scattered about. Stuck on the walls, there is drawing material, magazines, maps and pages of books.

GUILLE (OFF)

When they were done, I picked up my tapes and went home.

CUT TO

2023. INT. DAY. GUILLE'S STUDY. CIUDAD DE LOS PERIODISTAS. [HD CAMERA. SUBJECTIVE VIEW]

Guillermo picks up another of the tapes from the pile and holds it in his hands. He looks at it for a few seconds as he twirls it between his fingers.

GUILLE (OFF)

Thirty-five years have passed since then and things have changed a lot.  
Well, not all of them.

The two TV sets [TV1][TV2] and the AMSTRAD CPC screen behind

Guillermo show the same atomic mushroom explosion.

GUILLE (OFF)

The doomsday clock is again approaching midnight and, in a way, as it happened to my father, that alarm worked on me as a trigger. Like a warning that now it is time, so I have opened my drawer again.

Guillermo takes the video game cassette next to the Amstrad keyboard, takes it out and inserts it into the AMSTRAD CPC keyboard deck.

GUILLE (OFF)

Here's the thing: "The Abbey of Crime" is not only the story of two friends making the best video game in the world, but, as if it were a piece of a huge Russian doll, the game belongs to a much larger story that is already more than two thousand years old.

[CREDITS]

Close-ups of the creation of the video game. Papers being cut out, pencils drawing characters and abbeys are intermingled with images of computer screens presenting the different states of development of the videogame. Computer code, fingers typing, etc. Meanwhile, text introducing the main characters appears superimposed. The scene ends with a zenithal shot that shows the complete scene of Paco and Juan working in their room. Slow zoom in the direction of the book "The name of the rose" that's close to the keyboard which then diverts in the direction of the screen, where William and Adso are seen walking on a black background. The faces of the friends are reflected on the screen.

[SUPERIMPOSED]

**HYPERFICTION**

2023. EXT. DAY. CIUDAD DE LOS PERIODISTAS. [HD CAMERA. SUBJECTIVE VIEW]

Guillermo records his footsteps while he takes a stroll through the city. With a camera movement he shows that in his left hand he is carrying a wicker basket. Then he focuses on the street again, which is in the outskirts of the neighborhood. Nearby there is an open field where an urban stream runs, which flows into a vaulted arched tunnel that goes into a hill. He goes towards it and it stops at the entrance.

GUILLE (OFF)  
(you can hear the wind  
and the street sounds)  
I am what could call in simple  
terms a hunter of ideas.

Guillermo enters the tunnel and focuses on a clump of grass on the bank of the stream where a group of indeterminate mushrooms similar to chanterelles grow. He takes out a knife and carefully begins to cut them off at the root and put them in the basket. After this, he leaves the tunnel, returning to the street.

GUILLE (OFF)  
I have always thought of ideas  
as the inhabitants of a realm  
different from our own. A dark  
and dreary place, but at the  
same time full of fertility.  
Therefore, we, the seekers of  
stories, have the obligation to  
go into it and snatch them from  
there. To abduct them and bring  
them to our world, where they  
can thrive and take deeper root.  
Perhaps this is why we build  
fictions; as mythical places to  
lure them out of their exile and  
have them live there.

Guillermo focuses on the tunnel from the outside while maintaining the shot. Close-up of the place where the mushrooms Guillermo has just cut were, where some still remain. Close-up of the cut mushroom stem where some spores emerge from and volatilize and mix with the air.

GUILLE (OFF)  
Not long ago, however, a group  
of people suggested that it were

the ideas that were actually calling to us from their viscosity. They were the ones who, with their siren songs, persuaded us to build a world for them, making us believe that they would inhabit it at ease, but hiding that, in reality, they had a dark secret, as dark as the place from which they came. *Who knows*, maybe it is not me who is hunting ideas, maybe the ideas are hunting me...

CUT TO

2023. EXT. DAY. CIUDAD DE LOS PERIODISTAS. GUILLERMO'S KITCHEN.  
[HD CAMERA. SUBJECTIVE VIEW]

Close-up of a frying pan in which Guillermo is sautéing mushrooms. CUT TO Close-up of Guillermo's mouth, popping a mouthful of mushrooms into his mouth and chewing.

GUILLE (CONT'D)

Our fictions are only a passing place, because the final destination of ideas, the one they really want to reach, is our reality.

This idea was first exposed by a group of philosophers who called themselves the C.C.R.U. They called it: HYPERSTITION.

CUT TO A.I. ANIMATION MIXED WITH TRADITIONAL ANIMATION

YEAR 80 A.D. INT. Night. ISLAND OF PATMOS. JOHN'S CAVE.

Close-up of a puddle of water reflecting the silhouette of a seated monk. Next to it is a group of mushrooms very similar to the ones Guillermo was just eating. Pan to the left. JOHN OF PATMOS (62) appears writing in a manuscript. He is dressed in a white robe partially covered by a brown tunic. His hair and beard are long.

GUILLE (OFF)



Our story begins with a man named John who was a Christian in 80 A.D., persecuted for his beliefs and exiled to the island of Patmos.

Detail shot of the mushrooms expelling a burst of spores that volatilize in the air. Through a panning shot, we follow the trajectory of these spores until we see them enter the nostrils of the monk, who inhales them as he breathes.

ANIMATION MADE WITH SILHOUETTES ON A BACKGROUND (IN THE STYLE OF THE OLD CHINESE SHADOW THEATERS)

Images of God approaching John and transmitting to him the revelatory vision. Fade to images of the Apocalypse; total war between men, whose ghostly silhouettes rise after death, to be received by God at the Day of Reckoning.

GUILLE (OFF)

One day, a vision came to John: God appeared to him and told him something simultaneously wonderful and terrible. In the course of a thousand years Jesus Christ would return, but before that a great war would break out. The final battle between good and evil, which would happen in a place called Armageddon.

Captivated by this idea, John wrote it down in a book he called Revelation, which would end up being, with the passage of time, the one to end the Bible.

Through Christian preachers and later the Church itself, John's idea became increasingly bigger, permeating strongly in the minds of the time.

The closer the year 1000 approached, the more the anxiety

of those who expected the end of  
the world.

BACK TO ANIMATION. A.I. MIXED WITH TRADITIONAL ANIMATION

7TH CENTURY A.D. INT. NIGHT. SANTO TORIBIO MONASTERY.

General shot of the monastery. Slow zoom to the window, in which we can see the silhouette of the BEATUS OF LIÉBANA (47) writing on a lectern. To his right is a mirror. Zoom towards the cell of the Beatus, who is seated with his back turned while writing. On the lectern there is an inkwell and a pile of parchment sheets. Behind it can be seen a bowl with mushrooms of the species "Amanita Muscaria".

GUILLE (OFF)

But it was in the 7th century  
that our idea took its first  
great leap from myth to reality.  
And it did so through a second  
book. A work that was nothing  
but an interpretation of John's  
Revelation. It was written by a  
Cantabrian monk who became known  
as the Beatus of Liébana.

ANIMATION MADE IN THE STYLE OF MEDIEVAL ILLUMINATED BOOK  
ILLUSTRATIONS MIXED WITH A.I. ANIMATION.

Sound of swords, fire and raging men and horses. Shot of the Beatus de Liébana writing. Fade out to other monks in other monasteries. Close-up of different scrolls being written and illuminated, depicting images of war and fantastic creatures. Zoom to one of the figures fighting against the Christians: a Muslim with turban, beard, profiled eyes and penetrating gaze.

GUILLE (OFF)

The beatus wrote that codex  
locked in his cell with the firm  
conviction that this was a  
necessary piece to continue the  
work of the revelation. Its  
purpose was straightforward: to  
prepare men and women for the  
imminent arrival of the end of  
times.

The book caused such a furor that illuminated copies of the codex began to be commissioned, thirty-five in total; versions that not only described the apocalyptic process but also showed it with terrible images that would remain forever imprinted in the collective mind of the Christian world.

The idea that captivated John, jumped -through the Beatus- from word to image, taking a firm step in its quest to become real. And it did so through the interpretation of those books: Christians, obsessed with the Apocalypse, saw the need to find an enemy on Earth. A representative of the Antichrist. They soon found him in the faith with which they disputed both territory and religion: the Muslims.

The Beatus had become a book of war.

Its message was clear: the battle between good and evil, the second coming of Jesus and the establishment of the new Jerusalem on Earth.

BACK TO TRADITIONAL ANIMATION  
10TH CENTURY A.D. MONASTERY OF SILOS, BURGOS.

A map of the Iberian Peninsula shows on it the growing shadow of a cross imposing itself on a territory covered by the Islamic symbol of the crescent moon and the star. Close-up of the monastery of Silos. Close-up of a monk writing on a lectern. Close-up of the scroll, showing a seven-headed serpent coiling and attacking a man with armor and sword.

Shortly before the arrival of the dreaded date, one of the

most enigmatic copies of the Beatus of Liébana was created in the monastery of Silos, in Burgos. A beautiful illuminated codex whose apocalyptic imagery seemed to contain the reverential terror of the End of Times in all its splendor. The horrible beast of the Antichrist writhed in the form of a seven-headed serpent and the Seven Plagues seemed to take on a life of their own in those vignettes ornamented with vivid colors.

Although the year 1000 did not bring with it the end of the world, that copy of the Beatus contained our main idea, waiting, perhaps, for a more propitious moment to end its hibernation.

13TH CENTURY EXT/INT. NIGHT. BURGOS. MONASTERY OF SILOS.

Detail shot of the monastery. Fade to general shot of a door ajar which is opened by a bony hand, giving way to the face of Jorge de Burgos. Zoom to his face, which, with a serious gesture, looks sideways from behind the door. Cut to a general shot of a library in which Jorge's silhouette advances cautiously. Close-up of Jorge's hand closing the Beato de Liébana, which is open on a lectern. Close-up of Jorge's hands getting the book under his tunic. Cut to a general shot of the library, where Jorge's silhouette advances rapid and stealthy.

This moment took place in the 13th century, when a monk named Jorge -who would later be known as Jorge de Burgos-, taking advantage of his stay and influence in that monastery, stole this copy, as well as seven other copies of the thirty-five copies mentioned above, to take them to his place

of residence, an abbey located  
in the foothills of a mountain  
somewhere in northern Italy.

FADE TO

13TH CENTURY EXT/INT. WINTER NIGHT. ABBEY IN ITALY.

General shot of abbey under a blanket of snow. Cut to general shot of Jorge de Burgos on the pulpit, giving his brothers an incendiary speech while gesticulating energetically. Medium shot of Jorge in full speech.

What his comrades -the rest of  
the monks- did not know was  
that, as it happened in the  
country from which he stole it,  
that book, more than an augur,  
would be an artifact of chaos in  
which our apocalyptic idea was  
hidden, eager for a propitious  
scenario to become real once and  
for all, and that Jorge had  
become its agent.

BACK TO LIVE ACTION

1980 INT. DAY. UMBERTO ECO'S OFFICE. MILAN. ITALY.

General shot of Umberto Eco's office. He is sitting on his desk with his back to the camera, writing on an Olivetti Lettera. In front of him is a mirror. On the table is an orderly chaos of books, manuscripts, photocopies and medieval objects. On one of the lecterns on the table, to his left, we see one of these manuscripts opened by a page containing a scene from Bosch's Garden of Delights where a giant mushroom can be seen next to a lion, two goats and two persons.

Zoom in on the writer, who stops typing, impetuously takes the page out of the machine and puts it in front of his face and then carefully places it on the manuscript on his right. When Zoom has reached the pile of papers, the title can be read:

L'ABBAZIA DEL CRIMINE  
UMBERTO ECO

GUILLE (CONT'D)

But was this story true? This is  
how Umberto Eco describes it in  
one of his historical fictions,

which is supposedly inspired by a 13th century manuscript, in which a Benedictine monk recounts his experiences: this monk is Adso of Melk and the book is called "The Name of the Rose". Although, when he finished writing it, it provisionally had a more... conventional name: The Abbey of Crime

MADRID. CIUDAD DE LOS PERIODISTAS. 2023. GUILLERMO STUDY. EXT. DAY.

Guillermo still has the video game cassette in his hand, which he puts in its corresponding box and closes it. With the other hand he takes a book titled "APOCALIPSIS DE SAN JUAN". When he opens it, inside there is a square cavity cut out on the 12x6 cm pages. Guillermo inserts the cassette inside the book and closes it.

My research of this idea's journey is what has finally led me to open the drawer where I keep my old videotapes once again. Because only now have I realized that the moments I caught in them captured the precise moment in which the seed of the Apocalypse took a new leap, and this time not to another book, but to a reality whose territory and whose rules we still do not understand at all: the digital world. And that it would do it through my friends and their apocryphal adaptation of "The Name of the Rose," the videogame": "The Abbey of Crime".

CUT TO

TITLE APPEARS ON THE SCREEN:

# 1. APOCALYPSE

1985. EXT. NIGHT. MADRID. CIUDAD DE LOS PERIODISTAS. JUAN DELCÁN'S HOUSE. [BETACAM]

General shot of Ciudad de los periodistas.

TITLE APPEARS ON THE SCREEN:

"JUAN DELCÁN'S HOUSE. AVENIDA DE LOS PERIODISTAS. MADRID. 1985"

1985. EXT. NIGHT. MADRID. CIUDAD DE LOS PERIODISTAS. STAIRS TO JUAN DELCÁN'S APARTMENT. ELEVATOR [BETACAM]

GUILLE (19) turns on the video camera and focuses on his image reflected in the elevator mirror. He is dressed in a brown Franciscan robe, clearly taken from a costume store, with the hood on. As he unbuttons it, you can see his street clothes (jeans and a gray polo shirt). He is holding a book.

GUILLE

Year of the Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-five. Genesis. Today is the day when the most important videogame in history will begin to take shape. The adaptation of "The Name of the Rose" that Umberto Eco doesn't want you to see.

He puts his hand on the mirror, opening his fingers and staring at the lens, with a solemn gesture.

GUILLE (CONT'D)

The Abbey of Crime

He lifts the book (a paperback edition of The Name of the Rose) with his left hand so that it is within the shots he is recording.

GUILLE (CONT'D)

Having reached the end of my poor sinner's life, I, Guillermo de Lopezville, am about to record in this video the wondrous and terrible deeds

that I happened to observe in my youth.

Guille exits the elevator, camera in hand, and walks down the corridor of the 14th floor in the dark. At the end, he sees the light coming from one of the doors of the apartments, which is ajar. Guille's voice is a little breathy because he is walking at the same time he is talking.

GUILLE (CONT'D)

Today... we will meet its protagonists:  
those who... have seen fit to lock  
themselves in this cell... without  
windows... just as the ancient scribes  
did.

Guille's hand pushes the door and he enters the apartment. As he passes by the sideboard, he stops and directs the camera to the mirror, where he sees himself reflected again, and then focuses on the drawing hanging next to it. A pencil sketch showing a Franciscan monk resting a hand on a mirror while looking sternly at the viewer. At the top is written "The abbey of crime".

Guille starts walking again, crossing the darkened living room and focusing on the hallway leading to the bedrooms. One of the doors is open and the light from inside is projected on the floor of the corridor. Guille moves forward, enters the room and focuses on its interior. For an instant, two figures with their backs turned are faintly visible.

CUT TO

2023. INT. DAY. LOS ANGELES. JUAN DELCÁN'S CURRENT RESIDENCE.

JUAN DELCÁN (54)

Hi, I'm Juan Delcán, co-creator with Paco Menéndez of a videogame from the 80's called The Abbey of Crime.

CUT TO

1985. INT. NIGHT. MADRID. CIUDAD DE LOS PERIODISTAS. JUAN DELCÁN' ROOM. [BETACAM]

Guille takes a medium shot of Juan Delcán.



JUAN DELCÁN (19)

Hi, I'm Juan Delcán, co-creator with Paco Menéndez of a videogame that will be called The Abbey of Crime...

CUT TO

2023. INT. DAY. LOS ÁNGELES. JUAN DELCÁN'S CURRENT RESIDENCE.

JUAN DELCÁN (54)

It took nine months. We were very young... full of illusions... very pretentious... wanting to reinvent the wheel...

CUT TO

1985. INT. NIGHT. MADRID. CIUDAD DE LOS PERIODISTAS. JUAN DELCÁN'S ROOM. [BETACAM]

JUAN DELCÁN (19)

We are going to do it in this room. We hope it won't take more than a few months. And... well, we think it's going to be a very innovative video game, that...

PACO MENÉNDEZ (O.C)

The best video game in the world.

Paco looks in Juan's direction with a half smile. Guille then does a quick pan to focus on Paco.

GUILLE (O.C)

What's that?

PACO MENÉNDEZ

The best video game in the world. What Juan wanted to say... (he pauses to laugh a little bit)  
... what Juan wanted to say is that it is going to be the best videogame in the world.

Everyone laughs as Guille ZOOMS OUT to get both Juan and Paco in the shot for the first time.

JUAN DELCÁN

Well, I don't know if I'm that optimistic, but... it's going to be very good for sure.

Paco looks at Juan knowingly, smiling and holding his gaze in silence for a few seconds. Juan reciprocates, smiling as well.

GUILLE (O.C)

Alright, let's see. So, what is this video game about? What do you want to achieve?

JUAN DELCÁN

Well, I think it's better that Paco explains this to you, as he came up with the idea...

Guille ZOOMS IN on Paco, who intertwines his fingers and looks up, purses his lips and catches his breath to answer.

PACO MENÉNDEZ

Okay... "The Abbey of Crime" is an adaptation of "The Name of the Rose", which is a book by Umberto Eco, an Italian writer. The book is set in the Middle Ages, in the 13th century, in an abbey in Italy where some monks begin to die mysteriously, and the abbot decides to call a very intelligent Franciscan friar named William, to investigate the case.

GUILLE (O.C)

Wow, that's a coincidence...

Paco nods with a half smile.

PACO MENÉNDEZ

And, well, Guillermo arrives with his disciple Adso, who is another monk, very young, and the two of them start to investigate.

GUILLE (O.C)

Alright... but why do the monks die? Who is the murderer?

PACO MENÉNDEZ

Well, I can't tell you that because I would give it all away.

Paco pans to focus Juan.

JUAN DELCÁN

Right, it would ruin the mystery. But we can tell you that at that time something like that was a very bad sign. Like a bad omen.

GUILLE (O.C)

Why?

JUAN DELCÁN

Well, back then everybody (the Christians, at least) were obsessed with the end of the world and... You know, the coming of the Antichrist, the battle between Good and Evil....

GUILLE (O.C)

But, why was it a bad omen?

JUAN DELCÁN

Well. There was an old, blind monk in the abbey who...

Paco slaps him on the arm as he looks at him with his eyes wide open. Guille does a quick pan to catch this gesture and immediately turns back to Juan.

JUAN DELCÁN

Easy, easy, I'm not going to say anything, man!

Paco remains silent with the same gesture on his face, which he ends up relaxing by raising his eyebrows and smiling slightly.

He then puts his index finger to his lips as a sign of silence.  
Guille ZOOMS OUT to bring them both back into focus.

PACO MENÉNDEZ  
(looking at Guillermo)  
Better if you cut that part. Just in  
case.

GUILLE (O.C)  
Well, don't worry this video won't come  
out until you're living in Hollywood and  
swimming in a pool of money.

Everyone laughs.

PACO MENÉNDEZ  
Oh, no, I wouldn't even go to the United  
States. I'd better stay here. (He looks  
back at Juan). Well, go on, but watch  
what you say, eh?

JUAN DELCÁN  
Don't you worry. Well, as I was saying,  
one of the monks of the abbey, whose name  
was Jorge and who was very old and  
already blind, was obsessed with the end  
of the world and he kept telling everyone  
about it. That the end is near, that the  
Antichrist is coming and all that...  
Besides, this monk was Spanish!

GUILLE (O.C)  
No shit.

PACO MENÉNDEZ  
Yes, he came from... Fuck, where was he  
from...

JUAN DELCÁN  
From Silos, from the monastery of Silos,  
in Burgos. In fact, in the book he is  
called Jorge of Burgos.

CUT TO

2023. EXT. DAY. BURGOS. MONASTERY OF SILOS.

TITLE: "RAYCO GONZÁLEZ. SEMIOTICS PROFESOR AT LA UNIVERSIDAD DE BURGOS AND UMBERTO ECO'S DISCIPLE".

Rayco is sitting down, in silence. A sound technician places the microphone on him. He combs his hair a little. He settles into the seat and looks around distractedly.

CUT TO

1985. INT. NIGHT. MADRID. CIUDAD DE LOS PERIODISTAS. JUAN DELCÁN'S ROOM. [BETACAM]

PACO MENÉNDEZ

(Opening his eyes wide and raising his hands, trying to imitate the voice of an old man)

;The Apocalypse!

CUT TO

Interview with Rayco González. Doctor in philosophy by the U.C.M of Madrid.

*(Note: in the final cut you will not hear the questions but the interviewee's answers. The answers to these questions will not necessarily be in this segment or in this order and their place will be defined in the final cut).*

1. In *The Name of the Rose* the apocalypse is intimately linked to millenarianism, where does Eco's interest in heretical and millenarian movements such as the Joachimites, the spiritualists and the Fraticelli come from?

2. Outside the millenarian historical context, what was Eco's relationship with the idea of the end of the world?

3. Inside the labyrinth, in *The Name of the Rose*, we find several copies of Hispanic apocalypses, among them the *Beatus of Liébana*. Why Eco's interest in the Hispanic interpretations of the apocalypse?

4. Another very interesting idea in the novel is the library as an image of the world, which Eco takes from Jorge Luis Borges (The Library of Babel), whose blindness has always been said to have its double in the character of Jorge de Burgos, who is also blind. Are these reflections of reality intentional, that is, does the novel try to be a mirror of the world?

5. At one point in the novel the idea that the abbey could be a mirror of the world is mentioned. Given the reflections between the novel and our reality, could the abbey be considered a mirror of the medieval world?

6. Speaking of mirrors, how important is it that it is precisely a mirror that serves as the entrance to the center of the labyrinth? Could it be said that it is the entrance to another world or to the "next level" in videogame jargon?

7. Now, if the library is the image of the world, what would the labyrinth that runs through it be?

7a. At least since Borges, the mirror and the labyrinth appear together, as if they were a constellation of inseparable ideas. Why do ideas manifest themselves in these constellations and seem to be transmitted in these clusters?

8. Umberto Eco was one of the originators of the term hyperreality, even before Jean Baudrillard, who developed the concept from the point of view of philosophy. How could hyperreality be defined from Eco's point of view?

9. Back in the seventies Eco spoke of hyperreality as a trend in North American culture. Now that it has engulfed the entire planet through capitalism and the media, what are the consequences?

10. If hyperreality entails the confusion of the false and the true and the real and the fictional, could we say that by perfectly combining the historical with the fictional, The Name of the Rose is no longer a hyperreality but a hyperfiction?

CUT TO

Interview with Rebecca Romney, independent rare book specialist.

*(Note: in the final cut you will not hear the questions but the interviewee's answers. The answers to these questions will not necessarily be in this segment or in this order and their place will be defined in the final cut).*

1. I understand you have had a deep and lasting relationship with Umberto Eco's work. How did you come across his books and why was it so relevant to you?

2. In *The Name of the Rose*, Eco speaks of the Abbey's library as a place where an imperceptible dialogue takes place, a centuries long dialogue between parchments and books that have survived the deaths of those that produced them. Adso sees books and their ideas as if they were somewhat alive. ¿Do you believe the ideas we leave behind in our books, the worlds we imagine in them, can end up changing this world?

3. What do you think was Eco's relationship with the idea of the end of the world?

4. Inside the labyrinth, in *The Name of the Rose*, we find several copies of Hispanic apocalypses, among them the *Beatus of Liébana*. Why Eco's interest in the Hispanic interpretations of the apocalypse?

5. What is the importance of the *Beatus of Liebana's* commentary within the apocalyptic genre?

6. Another very interesting idea in the novel is the library as an image of the world, which Eco takes from Jorge Luis Borges (*The Library of Babel*), whose blindness has always been said to have its double in the character of Jorge de Burgos, who is also blind. Are these reflections of reality intentional, that is, does the novel try to be a symbolic mirror of the world?

7. At one point in the novel the idea that the abbey could be a mirror of the world is mentioned. Given the reflections between the novel and our reality, could the abbey be considered a mirror of the medieval world?

8. Speaking of mirrors, how important is it that it is precisely a mirror that serves as the entrance to the center of the labyrinth? Could it be said that it is the entrance to another world or to the "next level" in videogame jargon?

9. Now, if the library is the image of the world, what would the labyrinth that runs through it be?

10. At least since Borges, the mirror and the labyrinth appear together, as if they were a constellation of inseparable ideas. Why do you think ideas manifest themselves in these constellations and seem to be transmitted in these clusters?

## 2. GENESIS

1985. INT. NIGHT. MADRID. CIUDAD DE LOS PERIODISTAS. JUAN DELCÁN'S ROOM. [BETACAM]

Guille is on the floor. He has put his video camera on the table, focusing on the figures of Paco and Juan. Juan spreads an A1 size paper on the table, formed by other smaller papers, pieced together with tape. They are yellow and marked with a red millimeter grid and are drawn with what look like the plans of an abbey, where the different compartments are marked.

Paco and Juan stare at the plans in silence for a while.

GUILLE (OFF)

If the Apocalypse was the end of the World and was at the end of the Bible, the Genesis was the origin of all things and was at the beginning. It began with this sentence:

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; And God said, Let there be light: and there was light."

Back to the table in Juan's room

JUAN DELCÁN

So, everything will happen indoors.

Both are silent again.

PACO MENÉNDEZ

Yes, everything happens inside.

A new silence



CUT TO

1985. INT. DAY. MADRID. CIUDAD DE LOS PERIODISTAS. JUAN DELCÁN'S LIVING ROOM. [BETACAM]

Guille focuses from behind on Paco, who is looking out the window. His arms hang languidly at his sides, but from time to time he contracts them and makes a gesture with his hands, as if he were typing on an invisible keyboard.

CUT TO

1985. INT. NIGHT. MADRID. CIUDAD DE LOS PERIODISTAS. JUAN DELCÁN'S ROOM. [BETACAM]

Guille is behind the table, filming Paco and Juan in a low down shot.

They both look at the map in silence for a few seconds.

JUAN DELCÁN

The library is the only one made of diagonals.

Both fall silent again

PACO MENÉNDEZ

And the center is an octagon

Another silence.

PACO MENÉNDEZ

We have to rotate it.

JUAN DELCÁN

And the octagon?

PACO MENÉNDEZ

That too.

New Silence

GUILLE (O.C)  
What's going on?

Paco responds without looking up from the map.

PACO MENÉNDEZ  
We can't draw diagonals

GUILLE (O.C)  
In the map?

PACO MENÉNDEZ  
Yes

New silence. Guille slowly ZOOMS IN towards Paco's face.

GUILLE (O.C)  
Why?

PACO MENÉNDEZ  
Because we would waste space.

New silence. Guille ZOOMS OUT putting both of them back in the same shot. Paco scribbles in the air with his hand while he stares at the map.

PACO MENÉNDEZ  
Because we would waste memory. If all the towers are orthogonal... they fit together well, like the pieces of a puzzle, but if we put a building diagonally we would have empty spaces that we could not take advantage of.

GUILLE (O.C)  
You would waste memory?

PACO MENÉNDEZ  
Yeah, computer memory.

GUILLE (O.C)

But, in what sense? Do computers have a short memory span? Do they forget what maps look like?

Paco smiles trying to stifle a laugh, all without looking up from the map.

PACO MENÉNDEZ

No, let's see. Memory is storage capacity.

Paco stares at the map while he remains pensive.

PACO MENÉNDEZ

Alright, so, imagine that you have to create the World, but instead of the whole universe you only have... you only have a plot of a thousand square meters... (draws an imaginary square in the air with his eyes lost in the map) ...and you have to put everything there: men, animals, trees, the sky, the clouds... everything. Well, that plot is the sixty-four Ks we have to make this world fit in. So we have to optimize the space as much as possible.

There is silence while Paco is still holding his gaze on the map. Then he stretches out his arms and, placing his hands on the papee, leans on them.

GUILLE (O.C)

Do you feel like God?

Paco, without budging an inch, looks away from the map and rests his eyes on Guille, raising his eyebrows. He holds his gaze for a few seconds and smiles without opening his mouth, expelling air through his nose. Then he turns his head towards himself, shaking his head, still smiling.

JUAN DELCÁN (O.C)

The God of a tiny world. Not bad, huh?

Paco stares at the map again.

PACO MENÉNDEZ

I am no god. I'm just a programmer. A Brilliant one at that, but just a programmer (smiles mischievously while looking at Juan).

CUT TO

Montage of images of Paco and Juan at different times during the first days of the creation of the video game: unfolding maps, opening notebooks, scribbling and talking to each other.

GUILLE (OFF)

At least at the time I knew Paco and Juan, they were not religious guys. Quite the opposite. Paco, although enthusiastic and affable with people, tended to be very rational and calculating. Now, with the passage of time, I can't help but see certain spiritual hints behind their discourse. I suppose that computing was Paco's way of understanding the world, of ordering it. And the world, the cosmos, is literally that, an "ordering". In a way, I think they were both creating a reality from scratch. The work of developing a custom world was much more complex than that of previous video games, where the goal was to advance in a straight line, eliminate the obstacles that prevented you from reaching your goal, and just get there. That was all.

CUT TO

Mauricio Loza. Digital Gnosticism and Transhumanism

*(Note: in the final cut you will not hear the questions but the interviewee's answers. The answers to these questions will not necessarily be in this segment or in this order and their place will be defined in the final cut).*

1. What is Gnosticism?
2. Why is Gnosticism useful in explaining science and technology?
3. Why, if religion and technology are usually considered as opposites, do these kinds of coincidences appear?
4. Why might the programming of a video game seem to be a magical or religious act?
5. What is transhumanism?
6. Where does the idea of building a God or becoming gods come from?
7. So the idea of being gods is inseparable from the idea of being able to create a representation that is indistinguishable from reality?

CUT TO

1985. INT. NIGHT. MADRID. CIUDAD DE LOS PERIODISTAS. JUAN DELCÁN'S ROOM. [BETACAM]

Guille, up on a chair, focuses on the crowns of Paco and Juan's heads as they work on the labyrinth's plan. Juan, with the tip of a pencil, but without touching the paper, advances in different ways through the streets of a few sketched labyrinths that both have drawn.

FADE TO

Perched on a chair, Guille focuses on Juan from behind as he looks out the window. In front of him is the street, where people and cars pass by in the distance.

CUT TO

Guille records Juan scribbling in a grid notebook. In it there are some glued transparent acetates that, like tabs, he uncovers to show the drawings underneath.

GUILLE (O.C)

What are you doing?

JUAN

I am designing the characters of the abbey.

Guille approaches to take a close-up of the notebook. Juan continues drawing without looking up.

GUILLE (O.C)

Who is he?

JUAN

This is Berengar. One of the monks.

GUILLE (O.C)

Why do you have to draw it in little squares?

JUAN

They are called *pixels*. They are the smallest units in which a graphic can be displayed on the computer.

GUILLE (O.C)

Like atoms?

JUAN

Well, not exactly, but something like that. In the end they cannot be divided, so they are something like the "bricks" with which the graphics are built.

GUILLE (O.C)

I see

JUAN

It is kind of making a Roman mosaic, but here there are only two possible colors: black or white.

We move on to a shot in which Juan has drawn in a small notebook

the different figures of William of Baskerville walking, so that by turning the pages quickly, we get the illusion of seeing him in motion.

GUILLE (OFF)

In recent years I have had the feeling that, in part, Paco and Juan will be remembered as one of the pioneers in the development of small 'artificial intelligences.' As if they had discovered in the digital sea one of the first primordial soups and had given their characters the necessary spark for them to take their first steps.

We see different shots of the couple working on paper. Talking, doodling and discussing the work.

GUILLE (OFF)

It made sense to me that they felt like gods, or at least demiurges.

CUT TO

Interview with Professor Fernando Sáez Pérez. Artificial Intelligence

*(Note: in the final footage you will not hear the questions but the interviewee's answers).*

1. By the 1980s, how developed was the field of artificial intelligence?
2. How much of this knowledge was applied to video games, in particular to non-player characters like the ones we see in *The Abbey of Crime*?
3. Could we say that *The Abbey* was a pioneer in programming this type of behaviors in its characters?
4. As I understand it, the artificial intelligence of the time was very limited, very rigid, but this has been changing in recent decades. How have advances in the field affected the behavior of the characters in today's video games?
5. As far as I know, artificial intelligence applied to video games is a field of development apart from academic AI that is

mostly based on techniques such as pathfinding and decision tree diagrams, what other artificial intelligence techniques have been involved in the history of video games?

6. After retiring from the world of video games, Paco Menendez dedicated himself to other projects, among them the development of an intelligent matrix memory that he baptized PALOMA. What is this technology and why did it captivate Paco's attention?

We see the image of the Amstrad CPC screen, where William of Baskerville appears walking through the Abbey.

CUT TO

1985. INT. NIGHT. MADRID. CIUDAD DE LOS PERIODISTAS. JUAN DELCÁN'S ROOM. [BETACAM]

GUILLE (OFF)

The Abbey of Crime put an end to the linearity of previous video games. It gave the player one of the first open worlds, where the player's avatar could move with relative freedom. And an open world is a world in which one can get lost. A labyrinth without walls. Or maybe one with digital walls...

WE RETURN TO

INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR FERNANDO SÁEZ PÉREZ

7. Perhaps one of the most peculiar characteristics of The Abbey of Crime is that it was one of the first open virtual worlds where the player could move, within limits, at will, where he or she could collect clues in an abbey and a labyrinth to solve a crime. How difficult was it to pack all this world into 64K?

8. A few years ago I read that they were using the world of Minecraft, an open virtual world, as a training ground for artificial intelligences to develop an interior representation of a three-dimensional space for more complex tasks such as driving a remote-controlled car. How likely is it that an intelligence can develop these capabilities using a virtual environment such as a video game?

9. On the other hand, I have read that artificial intelligence



is also being applied to learn how people play video games in order to immerse them more deeply in them. Are these ethical implications of AI being contemplated by developers?

### 3. ACTS & FACTS

1985. INT. NIGHT. MADRID. CIUDAD DE LOS PERIODISTAS. JUAN DELCÁN'S ROOM. [BETACAM]

Guille focuses on the computer screen on which Paco is working. He manages to focus on Paco's reflection on it, so that the lines of code are superimposed on the reflection of his head. Then the screen jumps and the figure of William of Baskerville appears walking, without background. Only his figure.

GUILLE (O.C)  
Who is that?

PACO  
William of Baskerville.

GUILLE (O.C)  
You have finally brought him to life.

PACO  
Well, I'm just replicating what Juan has passed me. I actually just program the sequence so that the different images form an animation.

GUILLE (O.C)  
Where is he going?

PACO  
Wherever you tell him to.

There is silence while Guille holds the shot of William of Baskerville moving his legs as if he were walking for a few seconds, but without moving from his place.

CUT TO

Guille focuses on Juan, who is with a draftsman's square and a

triangle making parallel lines without stopping. He ZOOMS IN until the pencil is practically out of focus and we can barely appreciate a mechanical movement of several shapeless elements, which we recognize only because a few seconds ago we had a general shot of the scene.

CUT TO

Guille focuses through the living room window to the outside. Little by little he ZOOMS IN towards the street, until he stops on the people who are walking by.

GUILLE (OFF)  
Where are they going?

CUT TO

Guille focuses on the mirror in the room, where he captures the reflection of Paco and Juan working at the table. He shifts the camera angle so that both the scene and its reflection are in the same shot, duplicating the image.

GUILLE (OFF)  
The copy of the copy of the copy. My friends were creating a recreation of Umberto Eco's vision of the vision of the monk Adso of Melk, who, in turn, saw the world through the eyes of his master. A master who had learned to observe life thanks to the vision of so many other masters centuries ago. This story increasingly resembled a Russian doll where one event is contained within another.

Watching them work, I couldn't help but wonder, how much of "The Name of the Rose" is in this video game and how much of their own vision? Undoubtedly, although those monks made up of tiny digital squares were intended to be a replica of those that walked among the pages of Umberto Eco's, in reality they were not. In the same way that we are not our parents nor our grandparents. There was something terribly original about

what they were doing, but back then I couldn't put it into words.

CUT TO

Juan is sitting in a chair, waiting to be interviewed. He holds the drawing that was hung at the entrance at the beginning of the documentary, and in which a monk is represented (still in black and white) with his hand on a mirror.

GUILLE (O.C)

So, this is going to be the cover of the video game, yes?

JUAN DELCÁN

That's right. Well, a color version needs to be done, which will be bigger, but yes. It will be more or less like this.

GUILLE (O.C)

What does it represent?

JUAN DELCÁN

It's William of Baskerville, the main character putting his hand on a mirror. I'm not going to explain why because I would end up giving away whole plot, but... I can tell you that the mirror in general is a very important object in the book, as it is also in the video game.

GUILLE (O.C)

Why?

JUAN DELCÁN

Well, the mirror represents the other side. It is the reflection of ourselves, but the image that it returns is not exactly ours... I don't know if I am explaining myself clearly.

GUILLE (O.C)

(Silent)

Hmm... What do you mean it's not us? Is it

someone else who is reflected?

JUAN DELCÁN

No, no, it is us. But a part that we know less about. (Juan looks up as he purses his lips and exhales through his nose.) What we see on the other side of the mirror is real, but it is a different reality from the one we know. It's like looking at a dream.

CUT TO

2014. INT. DAY. BARCELONA. RETROBARCELONA CONFERENCE. RETRO VIDEO GAMES SYMPOSIUM IN WHICH JUAN DELCÁN WAS INVITED TO TALK ABOUT THE ABBEY OF CRIME. (ACTUAL TRANSCRIPT)

JUAN DELCÁN (46)

Mirrors are something that I have wondered about all my life. It's something I can't seem to wrap my head around. We've dealt with mirrors since we are little and we take them for granted. A mirror is a mirror. I mean, you see yourself reflected and that's that. But what the hell! I mean, this is incredible. If you think about it, it is as if it were a world behind what you are seeing. It's something that I don't quite understand, neither how it works nor why it works, its just something that happens...

CUT TO

1985. 15:35 P.M. INT. DAY. MADRID. CIUDAD DE LOS PERIODISTAS. JUAN DELCÁN'S ROOM. [BETACAM]

Guille focuses on the sofa in the living room where Paco and Juan are. Paco is lying on his back, half asleep and moving his fingers in the air, as if he were typing.

Guille pans the camera and focuses on the sofa next door, where Juan is also lying on his back, but he is asleep. Guille then ZOOMS IN until Juan's face fills the entire screen. Guille records Juan's face for a few seconds, who only inhales and

exhales slightly.

FADE TO  
JUAN'S DREAM

Juan is in a white room, where the color is so bright that there seem to be no walls, except for the presence of a mirror in one of them. There are some shelves, also white, with dark items on them; they are mechanical devices whose function we ignore. The mirror is approximately 70 x 50 cm and has a gold painted baroque frame.

JUAN DELCÁN (46) RETROBARCELONA 2014  
NARRATION

In 1999, Paco came to me in a dream. And in this dream, he was leading me by the hand into a futuristic room...

Juan is dressed in white pants, white sweater, white sneakers and a white cap. He walks slowly towards the mirror and stands in front of it, then stretches out his hand and inserts it into the glass. His arm goes in, generating the kind of ripples that would occur if he were putting his arm in the water. However, these waves are pixelated and cause the image to go through slight distortions, in the form of glitches. Juan slowly takes his arm out of the mirror, as if he were holding something in his hand. By partially removing it, we see for a few tenths of a second something similar to the body of a bird with white feathers. The image is cut without giving us time to specify what it is.

JUAN DELCÁN (46) RETROBARCELONA 2014  
NARRATION

...and soon I woke up. This was... Well, almost fifteen years ago. Since then I have been collecting all kinds of data, because I know that this is coming. That we are going to have virtual mirrors. There's kind of a pseudo... There's a set of elements that are bringing this thing closer. This is why I have a fascination with mirrors. The cover of the game, those of you who have had the opportunity to see it, is William with his hand resting on a mirror looking at you, and in some way what he is talking about

is... the duality of what we consider to  
be "real" .

CUT TO

1985. 15:35 P.M. INT. DAY. MADRID. CIUDAD DE LOS PERIODISTAS.  
JUAN DELCÁN'S ROOM. [BETACAM]

Guille focuses on Juan's face in the foreground, who opens his eyes, because he has just woken up. Guille gets on his feet to focus on the large horizontal mirror above the sofa and thus be in a better position to put Juan lying down along with Paco's reflection in the same shot.

For a few seconds Juan remains pensive, looking up. Then he cocks his head and looks in Paco's direction. Guille ZOOMS IN towards Paco's face until getting a close-up. He is still awake, on his back, thoughtful, and this time with his hands folded and resting on his face. He then perceives Juan's movement, turns his head and looks at him, smiling. Guille pans to take a close-up of Juan's face. He smiles too. Guille ZOOMS OUT and puts them both back in a general shot. The two hold their gaze for a few seconds.

FADE TO

Succession of images of Paco while he is programming on the computer. Green lines of code run rapidly as he types.

GUILLE (OFF)

At that time, much more than now,  
watching someone program was a thing of  
magic. It was difficult for me to find  
the relationship between those lines of  
code and what happened in the actual  
video game. In my head it worked like a  
giant spell that made everything work.

In 1988, one year after "The Abbey of  
Crime" was released, the Human Genome  
Organization (HUGO) was created, whose  
objective was to map the genome, or, in  
other words , the observation of the  
instructions that each human has within  
herself and that largely determines what  
she is and does. In his own way, Paco was  
doing something very similar to this.

Those lines of code were the genes of William, of Adso, of Berengar. They determined what they are and what they were going to do at any given moment. These monks, however, had limited activity. Something similar to what one of those first protozoa would do in the primordial soup: move forward, eat, rest... However, what would happen if, as with those first living beings, we let them evolve?

CUT TO

INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR FERNANDO SÁEZ PÉREZ

10. If we let artificial intelligences inhabit the virtual world of a huge video game, would it be possible for them to evolve in their own way, to begin to develop abilities that their creators could not foresee, until they reached the "ghost in the machine" scenario?

CUT TO

1985. INT. DAY. MADRID. CIUDAD DE LOS PERIODISTAS. JUAN DELCÁN'S ROOM. [BETACAM]

Images of Paco programming and Juan drawing. Both are at the same table and from time to time they talk, directing their gazes to the drawing or to the screen depending on their need.

GUILLE (OFF)

Like pioneering digital gods, my friends were setting the tone for creating a kind of digital "life." If you think I'm exaggerating, let me show you the meaning of the word "life" according to Wikipedia:

"from a biological point of view the term life implies the capacities of organization, growth, metabolism, response to external stimuli, reproduction (and in some definitions) and death".

Now, let me show you Jorge of Burgos.

We see a montage of images of Jorge on the screen, going through the motions of walking without leaving the spot.

GUILLE (OFF)

Jorge eats, responds to external stimuli, organizes himself, reproduces (well, he doesn't reproduce because he is a monk) and dies.

According to our digital logic, the monks of "The Abbey of Crime" are alive. And not only that, they also have an internal code that defines their behavior. That being said, what are Paco and Juan then?

CUT TO

Guille focuses on the mirror in Juan's room, where you can see both friends working on the reflection. He then pans back to the actual scene. He approaches Paco, who is writing code.

GUILLE (O.C)

What are you doing?

PACO

I'm writing the character's routines

GUILLE (O.C)

What does that mean?

PACO

I'm programming their behavior. I tell them what they have to do depending on the moment and the stage in which they are.

GUILLE (O.C)

Who has programmed you?

Paco then remains silent for a while. He then raises his eyebrows and tilts his head.

PACO MENÉNDEZ



I don't know. My parents, I guess.

GUILLE (O.C)  
Do you believe in God?

Paco looks at the camera with a half smile.

CUT TO

Guille focuses on the screen in the foreground, where the monks located on the main altar appear. The text "Let us pray" appears on the lower part of the screen. He then ZOOMS OUT and then zooms in on Paco's head, which is seen from behind.

GUILLE (O.C)  
Who are they praying to?

Guille holds the shot for a few seconds.

PACO  
Well. They are supposed to pray to God.  
(Continues typing.)

CUT TO

Interview with Mauricio Loza

8. What would a Digital God be like? Could Google or some other artificial intelligence become what we humans understand by god?

CUT TO

Interview with Rodney Ascher. Simulation Theory

*(Note: in the final footage you will not hear the questions but the interviewee's answers).*

1. In a nutshell. What is simulation theory?

2. In a way, I see simulation theory as inseparable from popular culture, especially videogames and science-fiction. Why do you think it is gaining more traction with the public lately? I'm thinking along the lines of your documentary as well as in Black Mirror's San Junipero, for example.

3. So, what do you think is the appeal of this theory for people right now?

4. I understand that the goal of *A glitch in the matrix* was to present many points of view regarding the hypothesis. But do you personally believe that we are living in a simulation?

5. Since videogames are simulations, they are especially well-suited to explain simulation theory. What impact do you think videogames have had on the rise of this theory?

6. The idea of devising a game so real that is indistinguishable from reality has a lot to do with becoming gods ourselves, so, in a way, whoever it was that programmed and designed the simulation we are living in must be our God. "The Programmer" or "architect" so to speak. This is a heavily creationist and monotheistic account of reality. Do you think that simulation theory is culturally biased?

7. To me, the idea that we are living in a simulation has an evident relationship with certain Western religious ideas, such as gnosticism which posits that we are living in a false creation devised by a lesser or blind deity. This has led me to think about simulation theory as "techgnosis," a religious idea disguised as modern technology. Did you find this sort of thinking common among the people you interviewed for *A Glitch in the Matrix*? (these religious overtones, is it something they would openly accept?)

8. One of the main implications of simulation theory is that free will becomes irrelevant, for if this is not base reality I may well be a non-playing character, a puppet hanging from someone else's strings and it doesn't matter if I don't have real agency in the world. I'm simply not responsible. Do you think this is a debilitating way of looking at the world?

9. There may also be religious overtones to this lack of free-will, you just do as your god-programmer tells you to do and never overstep your program. Do you think that simulation theory may become a new religion?

10. One of the most interesting takes on simulation theory is

presented in David Cronenberg's *eXistenZ* in which even if you're a playing character you'll have to behave in a certain automatic way to advance in the game, you'll have to let yourself be controlled, to go along, so to speak, to complete the game. Do you believe that in real life we may have become a mix of player and NPG?

11. According to Mark Fisher, this mixture of player and non-player reflects the nature of jobs such as answering phones in a call center, in which you become sort of a biolinguistic interface for a large corporation but have no real agency. Do you think many people are feeling alienated in their lives and resort to simulation theory as a coping mechanism to explain what they are going through?

12. In this sense simulation theory could provide a model for the lack of agency in late capitalism. Seen in this light, Do you think that videogames and other simulations like VR could provide an explanation for our current social and psychological conditions?

CUT TO

Interview with Anna Greenspan. Professor of Contemporary Global Media and NYU Shanghai

*(Note: in the final footage you will not hear the questions but the interviewee's answers).*

1. In a nutshell. What is simulation theory?

2. In a way, I see simulation theory as inseparable from popular culture, especially videogames and science-fiction. Why do you think it is gaining more traction with the public lately? I'm thinking along the lines of your documentary as well as in *Black Mirror's* San Junipero, for example.

3. So, what do you think is the appeal of this theory for people right now?

4. Since videogames are simulations, they are especially well-suited to explain simulation theory. What impact do you think videogames have had on the rise of this theory?

5. The idea of devising a game so real that is indistinguishable from reality has a lot to do with becoming gods ourselves, so, in a way, whoever it was that programmed and designed the simulation we are living in must be our God. "The Programmer" or "architect" so to speak. This is a heavily creationist and monotheistic account of reality. Do you think that simulation theory is culturally biased?

6. To me, the idea that we are living in a simulation has an evident relationship with certain Western religious ideas, such as gnosticism which posits that we are living in a false creation devised by a lesser or blind deity. This has led me to think about simulation theory as "techgnosis," a religious idea disguised as modern technology. Did you find this sort of thinking common among the people who believe in this theory? (these religious overtones, is it something they would openly accept?)

7. One of the main implications of simulation theory is that free will becomes irrelevant, for if this is not base reality I may well be a non-playing character, a puppet hanging from someone else's strings and it doesn't matter if I don't have real agency in the world. I'm simply not responsible. Do you think this is a debilitating way of looking at the world?

8. There may also be religious overtones to this lack of free-will, you just do as your god-programmer tells you to do and never overstep your program. Do you think that simulation theory may become a new religion?

9. One of the most interesting takes on simulation theory is presented in David Cronenberg's *existenZ* in which even if you're a playing character you'll have to behave in a certain automatic way to advance in the game, you'll have to let yourself be controlled, to go along, so to speak, to complete the game. Do you believe that in real life we may have become a mix of player and NPG?

10. According to Mark Fisher, this mixture of player and non-player reflects the nature of jobs such as answering phones in a call center, in which you become sort of a biolinguistic interface for a large corporation but have no real agency. Do you think many people are feeling alienated in their lives and resort to simulation theory as a coping mechanism to explain what they are going through?

11. In this sense simulation theory could provide a model for the lack of agency in late capitalism. Seen in this light, Do you think that videogames and other simulations like VR could provide an explanation for our current social and psychological conditions?

## 4. GOSPEL

1985. INT. NIGHT. MADRID. CIUDAD DE LOS PERIODISTAS. JUAN DELCÁN'S ROOM. [BETACAM]

Guille focuses on Juan's screen, while he is controlling Adso, who is moving through the abbey. Guille ZOOMS OUT until he sees Juan from behind, who has on the table, in front of him, a paper copy of the abbey with incomprehensible notes. Juan scribbles with the pencil pointing coordinates on it.

GUILLE (O.C)  
What are you doing?

JUAN  
I think I've got it, I fucking got it.

GUILLE (O.C)  
What do you mean?

JUAN  
Alright, cut.

CUT TO

Juan is in the same chair as in the previous shot, but now he has turned around, so that the screen is behind him. He has the map from previous shot in his hand, unfolded towards Guille so that he can focus on it.

JUAN  
Ok, so this is the abbey. We see it in isometric perspective, right?

GUILLE (O.C)

What's that? What do you mean?

JUAN

It's a kind of perspective. An illusion really, it's not real because it has no vanishing point and...

GUILLE (O.C)

Vanishing what?

Juan takes a breath while looking up, exhaling.

JUAN

Ok, let's see. We're looking at things like... like from a bird's view, okay? Like we're looking at the abbey from above, but not from the top, but from like a forty-five degree angle, right? Something like that (shows a sketch with the perspective he's talking about and a monk in it).

The thing is that there are already other games that use this perspective, but they need to resort to tricks so that we can continue to see the characters. For example, what was the name of this jail escape game... what was it called...

PACO (O.C)

The Great Scape.

JUAN

That's the one. What that game did so you could see the character when he went behind a wall, was that it would remove the wall, okay? it made her disappear. I don't want to do that because this is an abbey. It has stone walls and I want the person playing to get that feeling. If we make them disappear, it won't look robust. The walls must always be visible. Now this just occurred to me: we rotate the perspective. (John shows several drawings where the same room is seen from

different angles) You see it? We put cameras in the corners of each room so that we can turn our point of view and see the monks at all times. As if we were shooting a movie with several cameras.

PACO (O.C)

Brilliant

Guille pans to focus on Paco.

GUILLE (O.C)

How?

PACO

Brilliant. It's a brilliant idea. I also think that this has never been done, so people are going to freak out.

Guille ZOOMS OUT so that the two friends come into view. They both look at each other and high five.

GUILLE (O.C)

Ok, but wouldn't it be a bit difficult to find your way with so many angle changes?

PACO

Who cares, fuck orientation! This has to be the hardest video game in the world. Apart from the best, of course.

JUAN

Yes, also, think about reality. If you are inside an abbey, the moment you walk through several rooms and enter through doors that are oriented towards different points... You will become disoriented! Because you're going to lose any point of reference. So the same thing has to happen here.

There's a silence

JUAN

If people get lost, let them get lost!

CUT TO

Guille records Juan from the front. He is leaning over the table, scribbling on a map with the floor plan of the labyrinth drawn on it. From time to time he draws coordinates. At other times he walks along some of the streets of the labyrinth with his pencil and leaves notes in a notebook next to him.

GUILLE (O.C)

That's the labyrinth, right?

JUAN

Yes

GUILLE (O.C)

It seems quite large.

JUAN

It is. The question is how we're going to get it into 64K.

GUILLE (O.C)

And this labyrinth, like the abbey, is it also going to change perspective as you go along, right?

JUAN

Yes. Besides, since it is dark and they are moving with torches, the idea is that only the area where they are in is illuminated. That way the feeling of disorientation will be total.

GUILLE (OFF)

In retrospect, one of the most original features of the game is that although there was still a goal, in The Abbey there were many different ways to achieve it. That is, you could move freely around and do certain things before or after. And this configuration was exactly what Umberto Eco proposed in "The Name of the



Rose": a unicursal labyrinth where you had to carefully find your path, like leaving breadcrumbs, or a thread.

Guille takes a few steps back, so that he stands behind the table, leaving the screens between him and the friends, who are now in the shot.

GUILLE (O.C)

Do you think anyone will beat the game?

PACO

Well, maybe. The important thing is that we like it and that we enjoy doing it.

GUILLE (O.C)

Why "The Abbey of Crime"? I mean, isn't it a complicated book for a video game?

PACO

Possibly, yeah. Actually that is my intention. I want my program to have a plot as complicated as the novel's. The abbey is a bit of a detective game; you have to think a lot, it is not too difficult to get around, the important thing is to think.

GUILLE (O.C)

The game is not about killing, but there is someone who kills, isn't there?

PACO

Yes, but not the main characters. William and Adso have to figure out who the killer is through reason, not by shooting the bad guys. I think that's something that's never been done in a video game.

CUT TO

Interview with Ramiro Sanchiz.

1. I understand you were a fan of video games and in particular The Abbey of Crime in the 1980s, what is your memory of the game

and what made it so memorable for you?

2. In your work, and in particular in *Las Imitaciones*, I feel that the figure of the labyrinth is essential to the journey that the novel proposes. In fact, I would say that I felt I was arriving at the center of a Borgesian labyrinth, where hedges and walls are replaced by ruins. What is the importance of the labyrinth in your work?

3. What would you say is the importance of the labyrinth as a literary "character" in Borges' fiction and in his offshoots such as *The Name of the Rose* and *The Abbey of Crime*?

4. If we follow Borges' idea of the library as an image of the world, what would the labyrinth be?

4a. One of my favorite phrases in *Las imitaciones* is: "In a labyrinth there is no outside, but perhaps there is a center". What does this center represent?

5. How important is it that it is precisely a mirror, another Borgesian image, that serves as the entrance to the center of the labyrinth? Could it be said that it is the entrance to another world or to the "next level" in the jargon of videogames?

6. The labyrinth always hides a secret or a revelation, sometimes in the form of a monster. What would you say is the "monster" in the labyrinth of *The Name of the Rose* and *The Abbey of Crime*?

7. Your work also abounds with references to the idea of mind or intelligence as an emergent phenomenon resulting from the complexity of a system. How do you think this concept applies to the idea of artificial intelligence?

8. In *Las imitaciones* you develop the idea of the simulation of a world and of ultra-complex situations as a way to create a hive mind or artificial intelligence. Do you think that video games are a viable way to create new forms of intelligence?

9. How feasible do you think it is that we are living in one of these simulations?

9a. Seen this way, the God of this simulation, the programmer, becomes its demiurge. How do you see this intersection between spirituality and technology?

9b. Understood as proto-intelligences trapped in 64k of memory, the characters in The Abbey of Crime would perceive their world as "real." Now, if we were to leave them inhabiting the virtual world of a huge video game, would it be possible for them to evolve in their own way, to start developing abilities that their creators could not foresee until they reach the "ghost in the machine" scenario?

10. In terms of artificial intelligence, is it enough for an artificial entity to "look" intelligent to be declared as such?

11. How would you define hyperstition?

11a. We understand The Abbey of Crime as a hyperstitional object that belongs to the apocalyptic lineage of books like The Beatus of Liébana and The Name of the Rose, a vehicle for the apocalypse to penetrate into the digital world. From your experience as the Spanish translator of Nick Land, how does apocalypse function within the framework of hyperstition?

11b. A hyperstition does not penetrate the real by itself but through a series of feedback loops that accelerate and bring a fiction into reality. How does this process work?

12. About Y2K or Y2K, the CCRU says that "information technology has surreptitiously installed the first intrinsically apocalyptic calendar in history." Do you think Y2K can be characterized as the entrance of the apocalypse into the digital world?

CUT TO

1985. 15:00 P.M. INT. DAY. MADRID. CIUDAD DE LOS PERIODISTAS. JUAN DELCÁN'S LIVING ROOM. [BETACAM]

The three friends are eating pizza while watching television. On TVE2, because of the 70th anniversary of the apparitions of the Virgin of Fatima, they are presenting the speech that Pope John Paul II gave on March 25, 1984 in St. Peter's Square in Rome, on the occasion of the festivity of the Annunciation and the closing of the Jubilee Year of Redemption. The Pope says the

following words:

JUAN PABLO II

"O Immaculate Heart! Help us to overcome the horrors of evil, which so easily takes root in the hearts of modern men, the evil, which in its immeasurable effects already weighs upon our present and seems to foreclose our future. Deliver us from famine and war. Deliver us from nuclear war, from unimaginable self-destruction, deliver us from all wars!

Guille takes a close-up of the TV set while Juan and Paco talk about the Jorge of Burgos' character in the background. Both conversations overlap.

Guille then turns to get a general shot of the two friends (Paco is cutting the pizza with a circular blade pizza cutter) and continues ZOOMING IN towards the pizza being cut. He holds the shot while Paco cuts, separates and distributes the slices.

CUT TO

1985. INT. DUSK. MADRID. CIUDAD DE LOS PERIODISTAS. JUAN DELCÁN'S ROOM. [BETACAM]

Guille focuses on the terrace window. A heavy downpour is falling. The sky is leaden and the last rays of sun are hidden behind the clouds. He ZOOMS OUT to the street, which is empty.

CUT TO

1985. INT. NIGHT. MADRID. CIUDAD DE LOS PERIODISTAS. JUAN DELCÁN ROOM. [BETACAM]

Guille focuses on Juan, who is consulting *The Name of the Rose*. He is leafing through it until he stops on a specific page.

JUAN

I've got it.

GUILLE (O.C)

What have you got?

JUAN

Shush, wait.  
Alright, write this down!

PACO

Coming (starts typing on his computer).

Guille circles around Juan until he is behind him. Then he focuses on him, so that Paco is in the background while he writes.

JUAN

'For those who lack eyes to see,' the blind man said. 'The ways of the Antichrist are slow and tortuous) He arrives when we do not expect him: not because the calculation suggested by the apostle was mistaken, but because we have not learned the art.' Then he cried, in a very loud voice, his face turned toward the hall, making the ceiling of the scriptorium re-echo: 'He is coming! Do not waste your last days laughing at little monsters with spotted skins and twisted tails! Do not squander the last seven days!'

PACO

Okay, we need to scale it down, but it's brilliant.

Guille makes ZOOM IN to Paco's face.

GUILLE (O.C)

What is?

Paco looks at the camera with his usual knowing smile.

PACO

You just met Jorge de Burgos at the same time as Adso and William.

GUILLE (O.C)

The old blind man you were talking about?

PACO

The old blind man himself

GUILLE (O.C)

So you're programming the time when they first meet, right?

PACO

Yes.

Guille rotates around Paco's axis until he brings them both back into focus, so that Paco is in the foreground and Juan in the background.

GUILLE (OFF)

I have thought about this for years and I think it is one of the most relevant moments in the development of the video game.

CUT TO

Paco and Juan talk about how to reinterpret Jorge de Burgos' phrase.

GUILLE (OFF)

Paco and Juan had chosen the passage from the chapter entitled First Day AFTER NONES, in which Jorge de Burgos makes his first appearance in the novel. William and Adso were investigating in the library the first death of the abbey; that of miniaturist Adelmo. He was a great illuminator who, however, has a peculiarity that infuriates old Jorge: his pastime is drawing fantastic figures of characters out of hell. The way he draws them reaches a level of surrealism that provokes the admiration and above all the laughter of the other monks. The blind man cannot stand laughter, because he considers it an act of irreverence

towards God, so he shows up on the scene to reprove such an attitude, at which point the protagonists meet him. Before taking his leave, he ends with a lapidary phrase that not only abruptly introduces the idea of the Apocalypse in the book itself, but also in the adaptation of Paco and Juan.

His prediction is a response to the words of William, who reproaches him that the year 1000 has already passed and that it makes no sense to continue preaching the Apocalypse of John, when such a date has already happened without there having been an end of the world, to which the old man replies:

"The ways of the Antichrist are slow and tortuous) He arrives when we do not expect him: not because the calculation suggested by the apostle was mistaken, but because we have not learned the art."

In this way, the blind man manages to find an argument that could make the date of the end of time stall as long as the prophet wished, because the art of deciphering prophecy is not exact.

CUT TO

Guille's camera enters through the computer screen, so that it penetrates the abbey.

WE SWITCH TO TRADITIONAL ANIMATION (IN GREEN MONOCHROME)

We see Adso, William and the rest of the monks going about their routine activities in the abbey. They stand at the altar, singing Gregorian chants and praying. After a few seconds, the camera pans up to show us the frescoes, in which we see a "Pantocrator" God holding -instead of the Gospels- a laptop computer.

GUILLE (OFF)

Allow me to propose an exercise of imagination. Imagine that the video game

"The Abbey of Crime" is a mirror.

Now imagine that the computer screen is the glass in which these sort of digital copies of Umberto Eco's monks are reflected. These creatures resemble the originals, but they are different.

In a way, they are simpler copies, with a less complex inner life and more rudimentary instructions. Similarly, they live in an abbey, not the original abbey, but a digital copy, more compressed, isometric and subject to its own rules. (sometimes the image suffers a distortion in which the scenery and characters are briefly pixelated).

If we follow this logic, we can understand that these monks, when they pray, they pray to their creator. To a god that they know has shaped their existence but that, however, they have never really seen. But their imagination allows them to draw him in frescoes that, due to a problem of perspective, we cannot see. Most probably these frescoes represent God as a Pantocrator in his full majesty, inside a divine almond with the book of the Gospels. Although, perhaps, this book contains some "sacred lines" quite different from the original ones.

(LSD: Run" *Abadiadelcrimen* can be read)

CUT TO  
TRADITIONAL ANIMATION

Jorge de Burgos is at the top of the pulpit preaching in an incendiary manner to the rest of the monks.

GUILLE (OFF)

Let us now imagine the avatar of the blind Jorge de Burgos. This pixelated old man who is now warning his fellows of the end of time, what end is he talking about



exactly? It would be sensible to think that the end of the world he is talking about will also be subject to his own rules. It would be not so much an analog end of the world, but a digital one.

Now, think back. At the beginning of this documentary, we talked about the CCRU's theory of *hyperstition*, according to which an idea generated in the world of fiction could have the capacity, using human beings as a bridge, to make the leap to our reality. We also talked about how, through the mediation of John of Patmos, of the Beatus of Liebana and then of Umberto Eco, the Apocalypse reached us in book form. Now, for the first time, this idea, through this imperfect copy of the blind man, reaches the digital world.

JORGE DE BURGOS

Listen to my words: 'The ways of the Antichrist are slow and tortuous) He arrives when we do not expect him. Do not squander the last days!'

GUILLE (OFF)

Would you believe me if I told you that Jorge was right and that the digital apocalypse was about to happen in his reality and, therefore, in ours?

CUT TO

Montage in which images that support what is told below follow one after another. Computer screens of the time with the last dates of the century, images of survivalists, people pillaging supermarkets, blackouts, planes falling from the sky, etc...

GUILLE (CONT'D)

It was in 1980, the year of publication of *The Name of the Rose*, that a problem that computer scientist Bob Reiner had been trying to warn about for more than twenty years began to be noticed. As early as the 1960s, computer storage was

very expensive (about a dollar per bit) and most of the programs running on them were designed for short-term operation, so that only two digits were used to record the year. Thus, all programs literally had their days numbered. The furthest date that any of them could display was the year 99, so that, supposedly, with the arrival of the year 2000 they would all set their marker back to 00, thus assuming that we would return to the year 1900. From a theoretical perspective, computer scientists like Reiner warned that this could crash any system that relied on one of these computers, causing all sorts of unexpected effects.

So panic grows as the year 2000 approaches, largely because of the extreme alarmism with which the media of the time decides to report it, which already speaks openly of a "digital apocalypse". The consequences are limitless; total network collapse; electricity and food shortages, lack of fuel, airplanes falling from the sky, etc. In short, the end of the world as we know it and a return to the stone age.

Reactions are not long in the coming. The most alarmists go so far as to create shelters to store food, water, weapons and even backup power generators. Likewise, entire families withdraw large sums of money from banks in anticipation of the collapse of the banking system.

However, when the year 2000 arrives, as happened in the year 1000, there is no apocalypse and the damage recorded, although of medium severity in some countries, does not cause the predicted meltdown.

In general, today the global memory of this event is that it was an exaggeration

and that, as is always the case with end-of-the-world predictions, it did not come true. But, in this case, the reality is a bit different from our memory. The Clinton administration alone spent billions of dollars to upgrade computer systems so that nothing would happen. Something similar happened in the rest of the world. Thus, we can say that, although it was not as serious as the most pessimistic predictions, the truth is that the so-called Y2K did not become a more serious problem precisely because of the early predictions of the computer scientists who alerted the governments. In a way, the prophecies mitigated the apocalypse.

Images of the digital world of the abbey succumbing to Y2K, digital chaos among the monks who begin to suffer glitches until the program crashes and returns to a black screen with source code.

GUILLE (OFF)

Going back to the logic of the abbey video game as the digital mirror of "The Name of the Rose", this suggestive poetic license allows us to see the digital Jorge de Burgos as an augur who predicted the end of his own world.

The Y2K, says the CCRU, "It occurs in advance of itself, punctually switches to an unknown climate, and spreads contagiously through networks. Modelling it adds complexity and noise (which feed it). Though entirely semiotic, it already amounts to the most expensive accident in history (whatever happens). \$3.6 trillion and counting. "

CUT TO

Interview with Fernando Sáez Pérez.

11. Another topic we would like to discuss is the so-called Y2K,

which was treated in the media as a global computer systems meltdown, a sort of digital apocalypse. How likely was this scenario and what could have been the consequences if no measures had been taken?

CUT TO

Interview with Mauricio Loza:

[TITLE]  
"OTHER APOCALYPSES"

MAURICIO

I would say a very particular type of "infocalypse" that implies a saturation of information and disinformation such that communication between individuals and institutions becomes very difficult or almost impossible, and this is already happening, the circuits are saturated with information. The point is that preventing this type of infocalypse is much more complex than what had to be done to prevent Y2K, in which an adjustment was made to the complexity of digital systems relative to that of the higher level in which they are embedded, that is, two digits were added to reflect more truthfully how the passage of time is counted in the real world. Now, what would be the necessary adjustment to avoid the infocalypse? I would say a cleaning of the "communicative circuits", but how to achieve this is another matter..

SWITCH TO TRADITIONAL PIXEL GREEN ANIMATION.

We see how Jorge de Burgos, struggling with William, throws the candle he carries with him, causing some of the nearby parchments to ignite and begin to burn, spreading the fire to other places.

The monks run in panic through the abbey, holding their hands to their heads, hurriedly carrying buckets of water and taking objects and books from the library.

GUILLE (OFF)

Somehow it is as if *The Abbey of Crime* had brought collapse to the virtual world. As if the video game was a hyperstitional object, a fiction that served as a carrier for the seed of the end of the world to enter its realm, a first attempt at a "digital apocalypse."

This in turn highlights the connection between hyperstition and apocalypse, which is the hyperstitional idea par excellence and allegedly comes from the outside to close the cycle of history. If this is true, that is, if "The Abbey of Crime" is a hyperstitional object that has been using a lineage of authors to spread this idea, then it should be able to find new carriers to reproduce itself in new fictions.

CUT TO

Interview with Francisco Jota-Pérez and Amy Ireland.

He appears sitting in the chair where he will be interviewed. A technician places the microphone on him.

*(Note: in the final footage you will not hear the questions but the interviewee's answers).*

1. From your books I think I can guess that you are a fan of videogames. What is your memory of "The Abbey of Crime"?
2. How would you define hyperstition?
3. In another interview you talk about hyperstitional ideas as "software-ideas". What do you mean by this simile?
4. Do you think there is a relationship between the "self-executability" of hyperstitional objects and software itself? Because if so, video games could be seen as a potential petri dish for hyperstitions.
5. According to Iván Mendizabal, beyond being representations,

video games have become a way of fabricating new individual and collective enunciations. Do you think that video games, understood as simulations, are a way of understanding subjectivity and agency in digital culture?

6. In this sense, simulation theory could provide a model for the lack of agency in late capitalism. Seen in this light, do you think video games and other simulations such as VR could provide an explanation to understand our social conditions?

7. In another of your books you talk about Polybius, an arcade game from the 1980s that supposedly never existed but by way of hype (or retro-hype) was manufactured in 2017. How could the hyperstitional process be described in the case of this video game?

8. What would you say is the relationship between hyperstition and apocalypse?

9. If we understand apocalypse in its original etymology, as a "revelation", what does hyperstition reveal, an intervention from outside, a divine or demonic invasion?

10. As I understand it, a hyperstition does not penetrate the real by itself but through a series of feedback loops that accelerate and bring a fiction into reality. How does this process work?

11. Since a hyperstitional object is an aggregate of accelerations and feedbacks, it tends to produce more and more derivative objects that embody variations of the original object. Is this why we see a "lineage" (Apocalypse, Beatus of Liébana, The Name of the Rose, The Abbey of Crime, Bandersnatch) along a historical timeline?

12. Understood as proto-intelligences trapped in 64k of memory, the characters in The Abbey of Crime would perceive their world as "real". Now, if we were to leave them inhabiting the virtual world of a huge video game, would it be possible for them to evolve in their own way, to start developing abilities that their creators could not foresee until they reached the "ghost in the machine" scenario?

13. Regarding Y2K, the CCRU says that "information technology has surreptitiously installed the first intrinsically

apocalyptic calendar in history". Do you think Y2K can be characterized as the entrance of the apocalypse into the digital world?

## 5. EPISTLE

Images of modern prophets, survivalists and conspiracy theorists launching their slogans, etc.

Graphic examples of the mentioned films.

Collage of people in the marches against the pandemic with banners saying "this episode of Black Mirror sucks".

GUILLE (OFF)

The arrival of the new millennium has rekindled widespread anxiety about the end of time. After Y2K, new forecasts for the end of the world are beginning to arrive from prophets and specialists in the Mayan revisions and Nostradamus. In a way, it can be said that the Western mentality, which is based on Christianity, tends to revisit the Apocalypse from time to time. Even, in some cases, to desire it and, in the most constructive examples, to make art out of it.

In the last two decades, cinema has seen how apocalyptic plots have evolved into the so-called "dystopian fictions", with this genre going from a minority niche in the 20th century, with titles such as the adaptation of George Orwell's "1984" or Terry Gilliam's "Brazil" to stratospheric audiences; from the Zombie apocalypse of Walking Dead to authoritarian dystopias such as "The Handmaid's Tale", "The Hunger Games" or "Squid Game".

However, one of these dystopias has left a particular imprint in the 21st century. It is the series "Black Mirror" by writer and producer Charlie Brooker. In this five-season series, we contemplate different scenarios in which technology immerses human beings in a universe in

which they end up losing track of where reality ends and fiction begins. In other words, it presents us with different hyperreal episodes, in which fictional and dystopian elements end up colonizing the real world.

CUT TO

Images from the "Bandersnatch" episode reinforcing Guillermo's words.

GUILLE (OFF)

One of these episodes, actually a feature film in its own right, is called "Bandersnatch" and has become the first interactive episode of modern television, in which the viewer can make some decisions on behalf of the protagonist, thus being able to arrive at different scenarios depending on these choices.

Due to circumstances outside of my control, I didn't see it until 2021, and when I did, I couldn't get over my amazement. The story of "Bandersnatch", in many aspects bears an incredible resemblance to the life and work of Paco Menéndez and Juan Delcán. The parallels between this episode's character and those of Paco and Juan go far beyond mere coincidence.

The series is set in the year 1984, a year before the creation of "The Abbey of Crime". The episode tells the story of Stefan Butler, a young programmer who decides to adapt a literary bestseller by the fictional writer Jerome F. Davies called Bandersnatch, something very similar to what Paco did with Umberto Eco's "The Name of the Rose".

Stefan presents his videogame to the distributor Tuckersoft, which decides to hire him, although he insists on programming the game from home. The



reason is that he needs to concentrate and that, being a theoretical game inspired by a book, he would get distracted if he worked with more people. Paco programmed "La abadía del crimen" at his friend Juan's house for the same reason, and later he was hired by Opera Soft to make the adaptations to the rest of the systems and then distribute the video game.

At Tuckersoft, Stefan meets Colin Ritman, another programmer who ends up helping him to find the inspiration to finish the game by inviting him to his house, Paco Menéndez also finishes programming the game at his friend Juan Delcán's house. Juan's house, located on Avenida de los Periodistas, also bears a certain resemblance to the Trellick Tower, the building where Colin lives in London. In both cases, the apartment is on one of the top floors.

When Stefan shows the game to the people at Tuckersoft, it is revealed that the main environment is a labyrinth, a setting that also occupies a large part of The Abbey of Crime. In the series the boss emphasizes the three-dimensional appearance of the environment, something similar to what happens in the setting of The Abbey, where the use of isometric perspective and the change of angle were a novelty.

On the other hand, in the Bandersnatch video game, the player has to constantly make decisions that will lead him in one direction or another, although the final outcomes are all very similar. Exactly what happens in Umberto Eco's multicursal labyrinth, where several paths can be taken, but to always arrive at the same place.

Additionally, on a number of occasions,

when Stefan falls asleep in his bed, he dreams that, entering through the mirror in his bathroom, he travels back in time, jumping to past events in his life. The mirror plays a crucial role in both "The Name of the Rose" and "The Abbey of Crime", since it is the symbolic element that Adso and William also have to pass through in order to access the "dimension" in which Jorge de Burgos finds himself. This scenario is also the final screen of the video game.

In one of the possible outcomes of Bandersnatch, already in the present, Colin Ritman's daughter finds Stefan's video game in a box and decides to do a remake. In 2004 Mael Pazos and Antonio Giner also released a remake of "The Abbey of Crime".

Jerome David, the fictional writer who wrote the novel on which the Bandersnatch game is based, ends up obsessed with symbols. Umberto Eco not only wrote "The Name of the Rose" (the book on which Paco was inspired to program The Abbey of Crime) but was one of the world's leading experts in semiotics, i.e. the science that studies the different sign systems that enable communication between individuals.

As a result of this obsession, Jerome ends up going mad to the point of not being able to distinguish reality from the fictions he has created, and he ends up killing his wife. Umberto Eco was also an expert on hyperreality, a concept that designates the inability to distinguish reality from fantasy, especially in technologically advanced postmodern cultures, a definition that could very well be the synopsis of Black Mirror.

It seems that the connection between the two writers, the real one and the

fictional one, is the one that could be established between the act and the consequence. Eco's knowledge would seem to be able to explain in detail what happened to Jerome F. Davis.

How is all this possible?

CUT TO INTERVIEW WITH JOTA-PÉREZ

10. From the point of view of hyperstition, how would you explain the coincidences (if they are such) between *The Abbey of Crime* and *Bandersnatch*? Wouldn't it be a reverse hyperstition, a "hypostition" perhaps?

GUILLE (OFF)

From the perspective of hyperstition, the idea seems to twist here to unsuspected limits. If Charlie Brooker knew the story of Paco Menéndez, this would be the confirmation that my friends and their video game were the inspiration for one of the most relevant chapters of 21st century fiction. However, it may also be that Charlie Brooker had never heard of this story, which leads to an even stranger scenario: how could a true story have colonized a fiction without its author being aware of it? Could this be a case of reverse hyperstition in which reality penetrates a fiction without its carrier's knowledge?

CUT TO INTERVIEW WITH RAYCO

11. From the point of view of hyperreality, what would it be that reality begins to creep into fiction, not as a conscious or unconscious influence but as a constellation of facts that seem to have a life of their own? would this constitute a hyperreality in its own right (a "truth" or fact that becomes "false" or fictitious)?

CUT TO INTERVIEW WITH SANCHIZ

13. Since hyperstition works through feedback loops from fiction to reality, how likely is it that the reverse direction, from reality to fiction, is an integral part of the hyperstitional feedback loop, i.e., a "hypostition" that feeds and accelerates the passage from fiction to reality?

(otra forma de formular esta pregunta es:)

How likely is it that reality sneaks into fiction in a sort of "hypostition," only to turn around and return to the cycle from fiction to reality?

GUILLE (OFF)

Perhaps we are trapped in perpetual cycles that take us from reality to fiction and, then, from fiction to reality. If this is so, fiction could no longer be considered as simply false or imaginary. According to Mark Fisher, fiction could be considered artificial, but "the Real, far from being opposed to the artificial, is composed of it." Reality and fiction constantly support one another.

CUT TO

Interview with Charlie Brooker, creator of Black Mirror.

1. I understand you've had a longstanding relation with the videogame world, starting with your career as cartoonist and journalist at CeX and PCZone. Was this time an influence in the development of Black Mirror episodes that feature videogames such as Playtest, USS Callister and Bandersnatch?

2. I'm amazed at the philosophical depth of episodes like San Junipero that hint towards a takeover of religious themes by technology. And because of this, at times there's a gnostic feel to these episodes, such as in USS Callister when you say that the videogame is "bubble universe ruled by an asshole god." Are these references intended as commentary on the relationship between technology and religion?

2a. There's also a line by Colin Ritman in Bandersnatch that

fits perfectly with the gnostic ethos. He says: "I've given you the knowledge, I've set you free," that is actually what gnosis means, a type of knowledge to help you escape from a fake reality. So, was this an overt reference to gnostic doctrine?

3. In general simulations have the potential to disconnect ourselves from reality and that makes them especially dangerous. Is this why you feel there's such a dystopic potential in video games?

4. There are a lot of references and easter eggs throughout the series, and also some references to other movies and TV shows, like *The Thirteenth Floor* and *Star Trek*. Beyond pleasing Black Mirror fans, are these tributes to the shows and movies that influenced you?

5. For me, one of the most enthralling features of *Bandersnatch* is its ability to mix different levels of reality in a single package, so that the *Bandersnatch* video game and the "movie as a videogame" become echoes of one another. So for example we have the difficulties in Stefan's life become a sort of maze as the one the player is faced with in the *Bandersnatch* game, or Jerome F. Davis going mad while writing the *Bandersnatch* novel and Stefan going mad while programming the game. How did you get the idea to mix these levels of reality through a fictitious video game?

6. Seeing as you are one for tributes, Black Mirror has lots of those, I always thought of *Bandersnatch* as a sort of homage to the 8-bit era of video games. Back in the day, did you ever play the Spanish game *The Abbey of Crime*?

7. We have found an incredible amount of similarities between *The Abbey of Crime* and *Bandersnatch* and we wanted to ask you if any of them were intended as homages or if, even more incredibly, they are true coincidences. Would you mind if we review them?

7a. Ok, first: Both *Bandersnatch* (the videogame) and *The Abbey of Crime* feature labyrinths as an essential part of their structure.

7b. Both *Bandersnatch* and *The Abbey of Crime* are based on books, real in the case of Umberto Eco and fictitious in the case of

Jerome F. Davis. Both books rely heavily on the use of symbols.

7c. Both Bandersnatch (the series) and The Abbey of Crime feature mirrors at the center of the maze that allow the characters to unravel the mystery.

8. Now there are a series of coincidences that have to do with the life of Paco Menendez, one of the creators of The Abbey of Crime, that closely resemble Bandersnatch. I'll review them and you tell me what you think:

8a. Both Stefan and Paco program the respective creations at home arguing that it would be hard to concentrate in an office environment.

8b. Both Bandersnatch (the series) and the making of The Abbey of Crime feature important modernist landmarks in the respective cities, the Trellick tower in London and la Ciudad de los Periodistas in Madrid.

9. Black Mirror has also touched on topics such as simulation theory in episodes like San Junipero, in which old people are allowed to test a simulation in which they can live for all eternity. What are your thoughts on simulation theory, do you believe we could be living in a simulation or that we might arrive there some time in the future?

10. I always felt you were a step away from describing Simulation Theory in Bandersnatch, especially when Stefan is in his room about to break down asking "Who's there?" "Who's doing this?" Were you hinting in this direction?

11. Colin Ritman is also pretty convinced he is living in a simulation and therefore that he lacks true agency. Do you find this way of looking at the world debilitating?

## 6. HYPERSTITION

1985. INT. DAY. CIUDAD DE LOS PERIODISTAS. MADRID. JUAN DELCÁN ROOM. TV1. [BETACAM]

Paco is sitting by his computer. Juan's sketches seem to have

gotten out of control and already take up a large part of the small room. They are taped to the walls and ceiling with tape and thumbtacks, creating a chaotic yet orderly map of all the annotations and drawings necessary for the execution of the video game.

Paco is sitting at his desk, which is also surrounded by papers, books and computer gadgets.

Juan is sitting next to him going over his notebook, but at the same time attentive to the interview that is about to take place.

Guille is sitting in front of the two and, keeping Paco in the foreground, begins to speak.

GUILLE

Why do you make video games?

PACO

(Scratching his head and looking at the floor).

Well, what I really like is programming. I'm more of an engineer than a computer scientist, so even though I make video games now, what I'd really like to do is high-level research, specifically in artificial intelligence.

GUILLE

But (he laughs), why do you make video games?

PACO

Ah, right (he laughs). I guess I make them because I can develop as a programmer and because I like to test myself, but I also like that people can think differently because of my work. At the beginning, with Sir Fred, and with almost all the video games I saw, everything was more about reaching a goal in a linear way. With the Abbey I want to do something different. Something that hasn't been seen before. I want people to think. I don't want them to just shoot at

the enemy, jump over a ditch or dodge some danger.  
I also want to innovate, to do something that hasn't been done before.

GUILLE

You said before that it would be your last videogame, but that it would be your best. Why are you retiring so soon?

PACO

Well, it's not really retirement. It's a change, that's all. As I told you, I have the soul of an engineer, so sooner or later I will end up being one full time.

GUILLE

What would you change about the world of video games?

PACO

Well... Now it's all about marketing. More time is spent thinking about how to sell a videogame than actually making it. In addition, times are getting shorter and it is very difficult to devote all the attention they need.

GUILLE

But, at the end of the day marketing will make them sell more and you can make more money.

PACO

I prefer people's recognition to money.

GUILLE

What will you do in the future?

PACO

Mmmh... (pauses and looks down for a few seconds). I may go into memory design.

Paco's image freezes



GUILLE (OFF)

"I prefer people's recognition to money."  
[emphasis added] This is perhaps the most famous phrase that Paco has left us; I didn't remember it and when I dusted off the tapes I realized how many times I have said it, especially in difficult moments.

CUT TO

Guille's camera focuses on the book "The name of the Rose" in the foreground, which is on Paco and Juan's office desk. In the background they are working, out of focus.

GUILLE (OFF)

It was precisely this phrase that suggested to me the last section of this documentary. Is it possible that the mythology of "The Name of the Rose" has also permeated the lives of its two protagonists? Can its influence reach such an extent?

The camera advances towards them, ending in a close-up of Paco, who has his back to the camera and is typing.

GUILLE (OFF)

Maybe it's me who is confusing fact with fiction and, as happened to Adso of Melk, "I don't even know what I'm saying anymore", but, after all, this is a speculative story, so I won't leave it on the back burner.  
Let's take a look at Paco's career.

An infographic splits the screen in three, showing the different stages, supporting what Guillermo says.

In his early days as an engineer, Paco worked on a circuit designer called SOPHOS, which he distributed from	Then came his video game days, which, after starting with some more conventional titles such as Sir Fred, culminated with the	Finally, Paco returned to engineering and designed a memory called PALOMA, i.e. "PARallel LOGic MACHine". This
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the Mr. Chip academy run by his father. The name "Sophos" is a term of Greek origin whose main meaning is "practical ability to perform certain tasks".	development of "The Abbey of Crime".	memory, in his words, would revolutionize the world of computing, because it would lower the manufacturing costs of personal computers, making it easier to bring technology to everyone.
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GUILLE (OFF)

Looking at this trajectory in perspective, I became aware of the parallels of Paco's life with the millenarianism of Joachim de Fiore, which Eco mentions in "The Name of the Rose". According to de Fiore, history was divided into three ages:

The age of the father, pre-Christian and the era of the law...	...that of the son, which corresponded to Christianity...	...and that of the holy spirit, which would come after tribulations and apocalyptic wars.
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In a similar way, Paco started with SOPHOS (a term from pre-Christian Greece)	continued with "The abbey of crime" (Christianity and its apocalyptic outcome)	and ended with PALOMA (symbolically an animal that is identified with the holy spirit).
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GUILLE (OFF)

It is as if Paco's career path, on a symbolic level, had replicated the evolution of apocalyptic millenarianism. One more doll for the matryoshka of "The Abbey of Crime".

Now, let's do a new imagination exercise: let's take a look at Paco's latest project; the matrix memory PALOMA.

The third screen on the right (corresponding to PALOMA) slides to the left, displacing the others and occupying the entire screen.

GUILLE (OFF)

Its revolutionary system was based on a simple idea: that the computer's memory, in addition to storing data, would also execute instructions simultaneously, a task that had always been the exclusive responsibility of the processor.

We move on to a 3D animation made by computer graphics in which the abbey of "The name of the rose" is shown, being compared with the printed circuit structure of an Amstrad CPC memory. Both are seen in isometric perspective, as if they were buildings, so that they can be compared on equal terms.

GUILLE (OFF)

Now let's take a look at the floor plan of Umberto Eco's abbey. In it, each of the buildings has a specific function, something similar to what happens on a printed circuit board. Thus, the abbot's quarters correspond to the processor, since this is where the final decisions affecting the abbey are made. The scriptorium, where scribes copy codices and illuminate manuscripts, could be the analog of the graphics board, that is, where ideas take visual form. Finally, the library corresponds to the memory, that is, the place where all data is stored. The interaction of this data goes through a myriad of assembled circuits, something hardly understandable by an ordinary mind, save for that of an expert. Something very similar to what happens in the labyrinth under the library.

Images of the video game characters are superimposed on the 3D abbey, so that the comparison can be better understood.

GUILLE (CONT'D)

If you remember the plot of "The Abbey of

Crime", although the ultimate power of the abbey lies in the abbot Abbone (the processor), there is a shadow power housed in the library (the memory): the blind monk Jorge de Burgos, who, on a number of occasions exerts such an influence over the rest of the monks that he clearly disputes his power with that the abbot rightfully holds. This analogy corresponds exactly to what Paco's design proposes; that the memory relieves the processor of its processing load. Or, put in another way, that the librarian makes decisions to take the load off the Abbot.

Of course, Paco did not consciously intend this symbolism, but it serves as an example of the strange way that ideas sometimes colonize our reality.

And, speaking of circuits. If the Apocalypse is a circuit that seeks to close the cycle of history, how could we keep it open and avoid or at least delay the end?

CUT TO INTERVIEW WITH SANCHIZ, *where we present only the answer to this question:*

Q: If according to Nick Land and the CCRU the Apocalypse is the event that comes to close the cycle of history, how can we keep its loop open and delay the end?

CUT TO INTERVIEW WITH JOTA-PÉREZ

Q: If according to Nick Land and the CCRU the Apocalypse is the event that comes to close the cycle of history, how can we keep its loop open and delay the end?

TRADITIONAL ANIMATION

1999. EXT. DAY. SEVILLA. PACO MENÉNDEZ'S APARTMENT.

Paco is at his desk, drawing and writing on one of his many pieces of paper on the table. The walls are covered with drawings of printed circuit boards and incomprehensible numbers.

In front of him he has a computer on with source code written on the screen.

ZOOM from behind Paco to his computer screen.

GUILLE (OFF)

After finishing The Abbey of Crime, the memory PALOMA was Paco's last project, which he developed entirely in the city of Seville, where he went to look for the investment to carry it out.

FADE TO

TRADITIONAL GREEN PHOSPHOR ANIMATION

Back shot of a monk illuminating a scroll in the scriptorium.  
ZOOM towards him.

GUILLE (OFF)

Sadly, in October 1999 Paco died, leaving his project unfinished after almost ten years of study.

A sound of flames and screams begins to emerge. The ground trembles. The monk puts down his pen, grips the lectern and looks up.

GUILLE (OFF)

A few, very few days before the arrival of the second millennium, the pixelated monks of the abbey feel something inside them. They feel that their programmer, their maker, is no longer with them.

General shot of the scriptorium where some of the monks leave their lecterns in agitation and start talking to each other. Others run out. The camera pans above until it reaches the vault of the enclosure, in which we can observe the fresco of a Pantocrator with the face of Paco. A crack emerges from the right, tearing the image in two.

GUILLE (OFF)

Then, only then are they aware that their little world is beyond salvation. That the promised end of time has come.

The scribe monk then lowers his head and makes his saintly bow.

FADE TO BLACK. We only hear Guillermo.

I recall that, on one occasion, Juan, remembering his friend Paco, told me the following:

"If life were a video game where you can learn from your mistakes and try to do better, I would go to Seville, with a couple of beers in hand."

I wished with all my soul that it had done so.

CUT TO

1999. EXT. DAY. SEVILLA. PACO MENÉNDEZ'S APARTMENT.

General shot of Paco at his desk. He is typing on the computer with his eyes fixed on the screen. The image freezes.

GUILLE (OFF)

As I said at the beginning, some of you may think this story is fiction while others may think it is real. Or why not both? Whatever the case may be, it must have an ending. The question is, who decides what it will be?

We can see the following prompt in green phosphor:

A: JUAN GOES TO SEVILLE	B: JUAN DOES NOT GO TO SEVILLE
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A cursor appears, clicking on the option A

The image resumes its animation. The doorbell rings. Paco looks at the door with his usual half smile and gets up to open it. As he does so, Juan Delcán is on the other side with a six-pack of beer and a smile from ear to ear. Paco smiles back and the two melt into a heartfelt embrace.

CUT TO

The silhouette of Paco and Juan is projected on the terrace through the curtains of the room. Both are toasting with beers, chatting animatedly and laughing.

GUILLE (OFF)

In my version of the story, Paco finishes his PALOMA project with Juan's help.

CUT TO

2000. INT. NIGHT. MADRID. CIUDAD DE LOS PERIODISTAS. JUAN DELCÁN'S ROOM.

Juan is at his desk drawing a picture of a pixelated dove. Below it is the name PALOMA.

GUILLE (OFF)

In my version, Paco's memory revolutionizes the technological panorama, achieving, as he himself had predicted, to lower the cost of personal computers to such an extent that no one is left behind in the use of technology and, therefore, of the Internet. However, would we be prepared for this alternative future? What use would we make of a tool designed for peace?

General shot of [TV1] and [TV2] in Paco's room in Sevilla. Cut to the two screens of Stefan's desk in Bandersnatch. Cut to the two screens in Guille's studio (which we saw at the beginning of the documentary), where two scenarios are shown simultaneously.

<p>A: CLOSE APOCALYPSE LOOP (end of the world) --- A cursor appears, pressing the A option.</p>	<p>B: DO NOT CLOSE APOCALYPSE LOOP (no end of the world) --- A cursor appears, pressing the B option.</p>
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Simultaneously, on both screens we see each timeline unfold, one in which the end of the real world becomes an echo of the end of the digital world of Y2K (PALOMA is used to create war simulations that lead to war), and another in which civilization continues (PALOMA is used to democratize technology). As these sequences unfold, the credits are interspersed.

DIRECTED BY GABRIEL GARCÍA

<p>PALOMA circuits being integrated into the computers of defense ministries of several countries.</p>	<p>A child in India using a laptop, which in turn merges with images of other children and young people of other races and classes in the same position.</p>
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WRITTEN BY GABRIEL GARCÍA AND MAURICIO LOZA

<p>Computers running simulations of different war scenarios.</p>	<p>Groups of boys and girls using PALOMA technology to implement projects to bring clean water to remote rural areas.</p>
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A CVLTO PRODUCTION

<p>Fast-motion sequence in which Option A war games lead to a nuclear apocalypse.      ---      NUCLEAR MUSHROOM</p>	<p>Fast motion sequence in which the evolution of technology advances rapidly, ending with the image of a forest.      ---      BEAUTIFUL EDIBLE MUSHROOM</p>
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GUILLE (OFF)  
 Who does it depend on?

CUT TO the black screen where the following command appears in green phosphor:

<p>A. RESTART CYCLE OF HISTORY?      ---      APOCALYPSE</p>	<p>B. DO NOT RESTART CYCLE OF HISTORY?      ---      NON-APOCALYPSE</p>
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GUILLE (OFF)  
 Perhaps, before making a decision, we would do well not to forget history. After all, we are not machines but, like them, we sometimes have memory problems. Not this time.



TO THE MEMORY OF PACO MENÉNDEZ  
1967-1999

THE END