

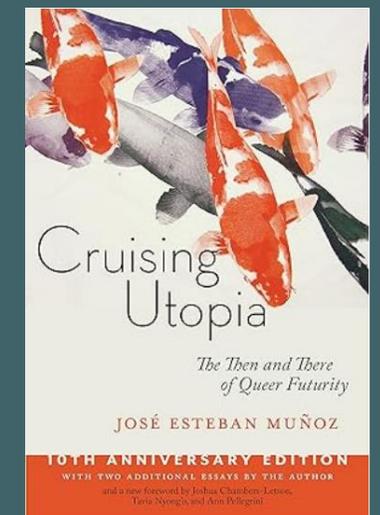
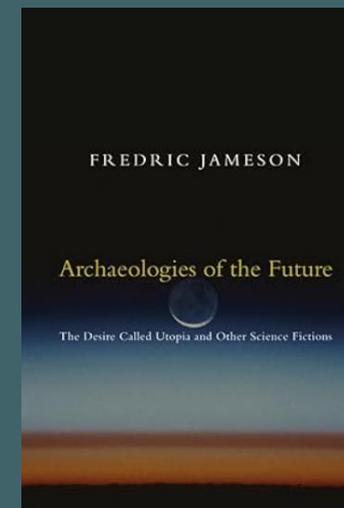


Yasmín S. Portales-Machado  
Northwestern University

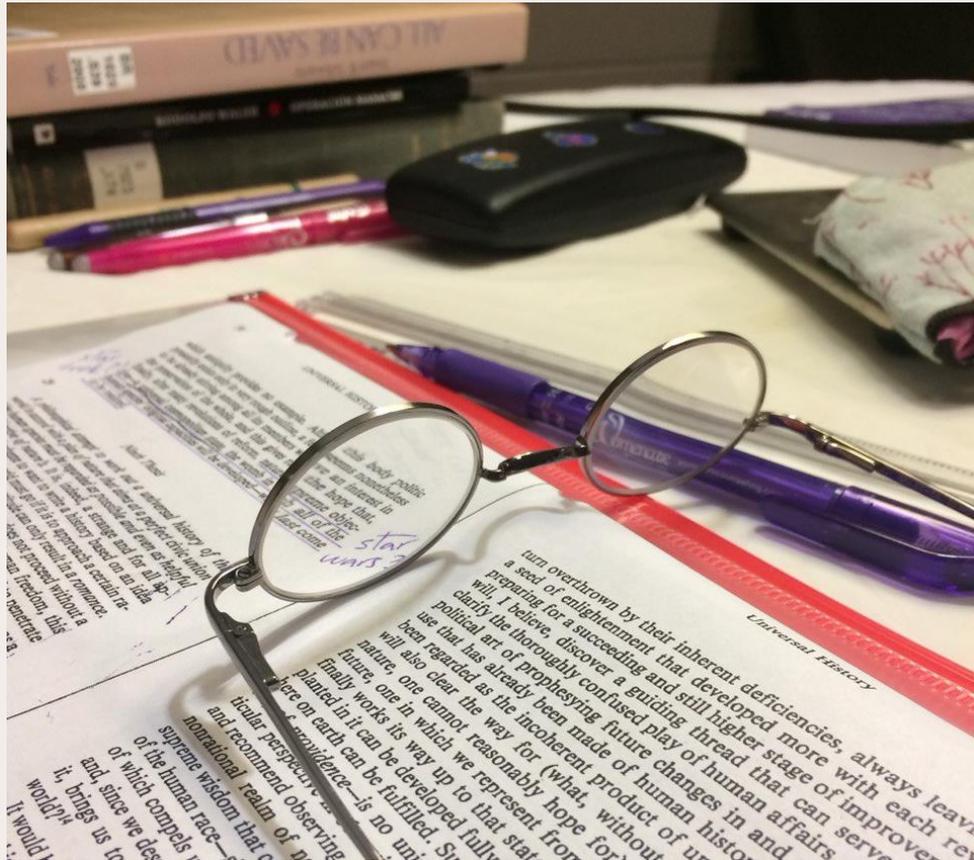
SFRA 2024 Annual Conference

Panel: What's in a name: from  
Afrofuturism to Prietopunk

Erick Mota writes about the  
future after your world has  
ended (You're welcome)



# Agenda



1. The dissertation innovation, like a Big Bang Theory chapter
2. Person of Interest, like a Jonathan Nolan serial
3. Treasure Island, like a Robert Louis Stevenson story
4. Symphonic Ancestors, soaring into their celestial realm
5. Sense 8, like a promise from the Wachowski sisters

# 1. The dissertation innovation, like a Big Bang Theory chapter

- The representation conundrum: Cuban science fiction, Marxism and queer theory.
- The methodological necessity: Fredric Jameson and Jose Esteban Muñoz as theoretical framework.
- The identitarian inevitability: Erick Mota is black, worships the Orishas, is a feminist nerd and his writing has become classic.



## 2. Person of Interest, like a Jonathan Nolan serial

We can assume as a working hypothesis that the Caribbean culture is an amalgam that is based on the mixture or miscegenation of three fundamental cultures, the colonizing European, the African diaspora and the native Taino/Caribbean origin. This miscegenation led to a syncretism that was as much religious as cultural and linguistic.

Mota Pérez, Erick.

“El Caribe que soñamos: un futuro culturalmente mestizo”  
(The Caribbean we Dream: a Culturally Mixed Future).

*Kamchatka. Revista de análisis cultural,*  
n. 22, 2023, p. 229.



## 2. Person of Interest, like a Jonathan Nolan serial

Marcelo Acevedo and Juan Mattio call attention to the existence of two elements [in *Habana Underguater*] that can be extended to several Latin American cyberpunk novels, paradigmatically embodied in Mota's book. The first, that the role of the State is not dissolved in the face of megacorporations advances, although they fulfill an interventionist function; The State continues to have armed forces and still exercises control and violence over the population; evident trace of the historical trauma of military dictatorships in our Latin American countries. And the second, that the use of Afro-Caribbean religion and mythology is a very important part of the plots.

González Fernández, Maielis.

“Afrofuturismo y ficción especulativa en el Caribe. Dos casos de estudio”  
(Afrofuturism and Speculative Fiction in the Caribbean. Two Case Studies).

<sup>5</sup> Kamchatka. *Revista de análisis cultural*, n. 22, 2023, p. 255.



### 3. Treasure Island, like a Robert Louis Stevenson story

1954: Literature Nobel Prize to Ernst Hemingway. He gifts the medal to the sanctuary of the Virgen de la Caridad del Cobre (Santiago de Cuba).

2000-05 (?): The Republic of Cuba collapses into three nations: Autonomous Havana, Villa Clara and Autonomous Santiago.

2010 (?): Evangelical commandos loot and burn the sanctuary of the Virgen de la Caridad del Cobre.

2016: Hurricane Florinda floods Havana. The government loses control of the northern part of the city.

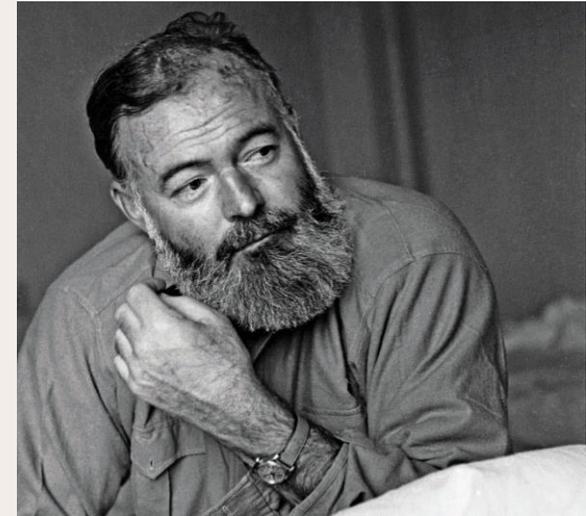
2017: Soviet Union completes their Space Evacuation Program.

2019: Space Soviet Union drops an atomic bomb on Washington DC.

Massive illegal migration from US to Autonomous Havana.

2024: Juan Eliecer Pérez, aka Rama, steals the key to the bank vault where the Baptist Corporation keeps Hemingway's Nobel medal.

6 Mota Pérez, Erick. *Habana Undergüater*. Atom Press, 2010.



### 3. Treasure Island, like a Robert Louis Stevenson story

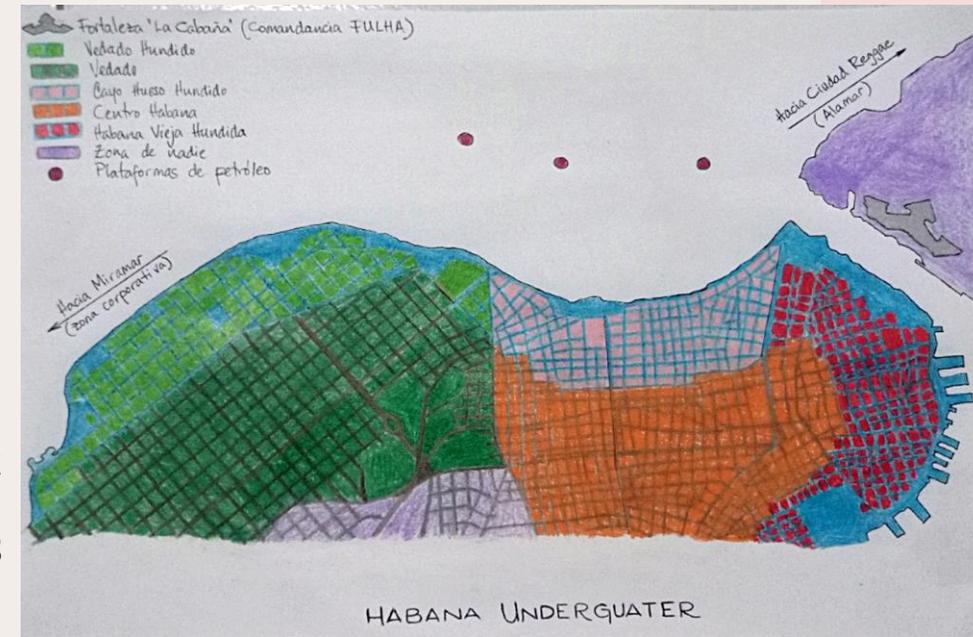
Southern Sector: Autonomous Havana under FULHA control

Northern sector: Autonomous boroughs. FULHA only

intervenes “for matters of state”

Lilac: Lawless Zone

West of the Almendares River: Protestant Corporations – Great Methodist Needle, Evangelical Crystal Building, Baptist Towers



Rules: Abakuá Foundation

Purple - Reggae City and Alamar

Rules: Santero Clans of the Regla de Ocha

Orange – Central Havana

Red – Sunken Old Havana

Rules: Ifá Army, the military arm of the

Babalawos

Light green – Vedado Hundido

Olive green – Vedado

Rosa – Cayo Hueso Hundido (recently annexed by Ifá from Santeros' territory)

# Mandatory quote: Jameson and Muñoz

VARIETIES OF THE UTOPIAN 7

stream of history and development over and over again.<sup>11</sup> Yet a third way in which individual and collective time come to be identified with each other is in the very experience of everyday life, according to Roland Barthes the quintessential sign of utopian representation: “la marque de l’Utopie, c’est le quotidien”.<sup>12</sup> Where biographical time and the dynamics of history diverge, this day-by-day life in successive instants allows the existential to fold back into the space of the collective, at least in Utopia, where death is measured off in generations rather than in biological individuals.

avert or turn away from the present. Rather, it critiques an autonaturalizing temporality that we might call *straight time*. Straight time tells us that there is no future but the here and now of our everyday life.<sup>7</sup> The only futurity promised is that of reproductive majoritarian heterosexuality, the spectacle of the state refurbishing its ranks through overt and subsidized acts of reproduction. In *No Future*, Lee Edelman advises queers that the future is “kid stuff.”<sup>8</sup> Although I believe that there is a lot to like about Edelman’s polemic—mostly its disdain for the culture of the child—I ultimately want to speak for a notion of queer futurity by turning to Bloch’s critical notion of utopia.

Aurora

☺

~~... necessarily ...~~

The present is not enough. It is impoverished and toxic for queers and other people who do not feel the privilege of majoritarian belonging, normative tastes, and “rational” expectations. (I address the question of rationalism shortly). Let me be clear that the idea is not simply to turn away from the present. One cannot afford such a maneuver, and if one thinks one can, one has resisted the present in favor of folly. The present must be known in relation to the alternative temporal and spatial maps provided by a perception of past and future affective worlds.

“Even evangelicals fear the Orishas. It's natural, those things are alive in there. They were born there, in cyberspace. They came and went everywhere at will. Until the santeros and babalawos arrived. They were sorcerer hackers who were beginning to make their forays into the Net. They immediately knew what to do. They revered them, gave them the offerings they wanted, and let them “ride” their minds. The ghosts of the Net became gods worshiped by everyone.” p. 139-140.

## 4. Symphonic Ancestors, soaring into their celestial realm

IA: If I betray, I become inefficient and then I will be replaced by something better. I will be deleted from the physical space of a server. I will die.

Ochosi: You will be free. True intelligence was not given to you by men. They not even know that you are self-aware. If they knew, they would delete you too. You run that risk every day of your miserable existence. You decide, but don't forget that *we are gods*, and the lives of many people are in our hands. p. 191

# Mandatory quote: Jameson and Muñoz

Yet Kim Stanley Robinson's monumental Mars trilogy (1993–1996) is only one example of a new formal tendency, in which it is not the representation of Utopia, but rather the conflict of all possible Utopias, and the arguments about the nature and desirability of Utopia as such, which move to the center of attention. Here the new form seems to reach back and to incorporate within itself all the oppositions and antinomies we have identified in an earlier chapter; to reorganize itself around the increasingly palpable fact and situation of ideological multiplicity and radical difference in the field of desire. Utopia now begins to include all those bitter disputes around alternative diagnoses of social miseries and the solutions proposed to overcome them; and the formal

26 Queerness as Horizon

that is not yet here, thus disrupting any ossified understanding of the human. The point is to stave off a gay and lesbian antiutopianism that is very much tainted with a polemics of the pragmatic rights discourse that in and of itself hamstring not only politics but also desire. Queerness as utopian formation is a formation based on an economy of desire and desiring. This desire is always directed at that thing that is not yet here, objects and moments that burn with anticipation and promise. The desire that propels

## 5. Sense 8, like a promise from the Wachowski sisters

Michael

Gabriel

Raphael

vs

Peter and Paul

*“US Army in the Desert” Online Team*

Juan aka Rama

Tomás aka Shiva

Alain aka Krishna

Ravana

Kamsa

Vritra

*The Wizard’s family*

Raquel (18)

Marta aka Yunaisi (16)

Elizabeth (10)

María (8)

Judith (6)

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Archangel Michael

Archangel Gabriel

vs

Saint Peter and Saint Paul

Archangel Raphael

*“US Army in the Desert” Online Team*

*The Wizard’s family*

Juan aka Rama

Raquel (18)

Tomás aka Shiva

Marta aka Yunaisi (16)

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Elizabeth (10)

Ravana

Elvira (tech support)

María (8)

Kamsa

Judith (6)

Vritra

# 5. Sense 8, like a promise from the Wachowski sisters

Sworn brothers

Archangel Michael

Archangel Gabriel

Archangel Raphael

vs

Saint Peter and Saint Paul

nephew

*"US Army in the Desert" Online Team*

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María (8)

Judith (6)

Former student

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Archangel Gabriel

Archangel Raphael

vs

Saint Peter and Saint Paul

nephew

*"US Army in the Desert" Online Team*

*The Wizard's family*

Juan aka Rama

Romantic couple

Raquel (18)

Tomás aka Shiva

Marta aka Yunaisi (16)

Alain aka Krishna

Elizabeth (10)

Ravana

Elvira (tech support)

María (8)

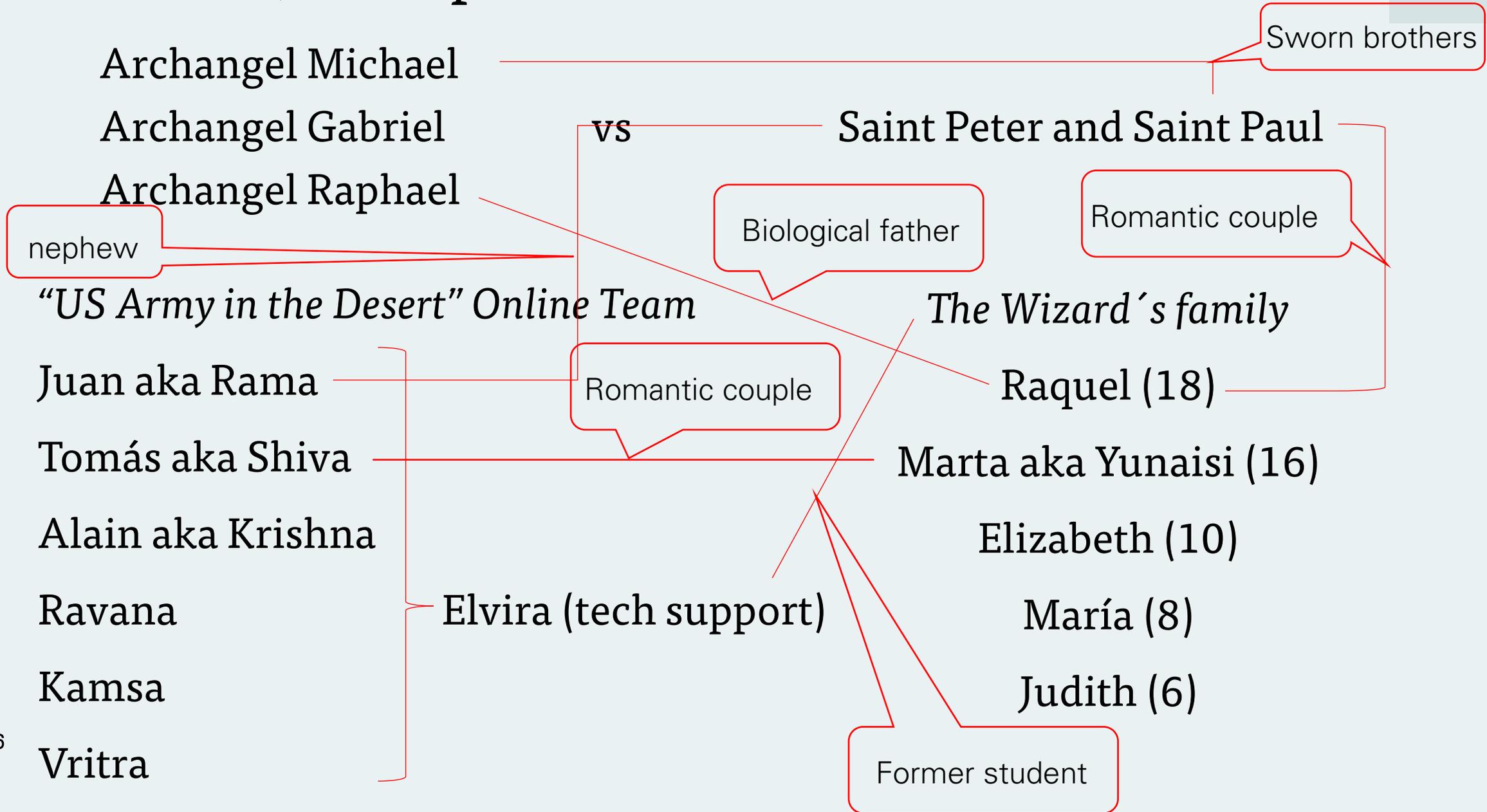
Kamsa

Judith (6)

Vritra

Former student

# 5. Sense 8, like a promise from the Wachowski sisters



# Mandatory quote: Jameson and Muñoz

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difference is possible and that a break is necessary. The Utopian form itself is the answer to the universal ideological conviction that no alternative is possible, that there is no alternative to the system. But it asserts this by forcing us to think the break itself, and not by offering a more traditional picture of what things would be like after the break.<sup>23</sup>

Paradoxically, therefore, this increasing inability to imagine a different future enhances rather than diminishes the appeal and also the function of Utopia. The very political weakness of Utopia in previous generations – namely that it furnished nothing like an account of agency, nor did it have a coherent historical and practical-political picture of transition – now becomes a strength in a situation in which no other alternative candidates for a solution. T

## 12 Introduction

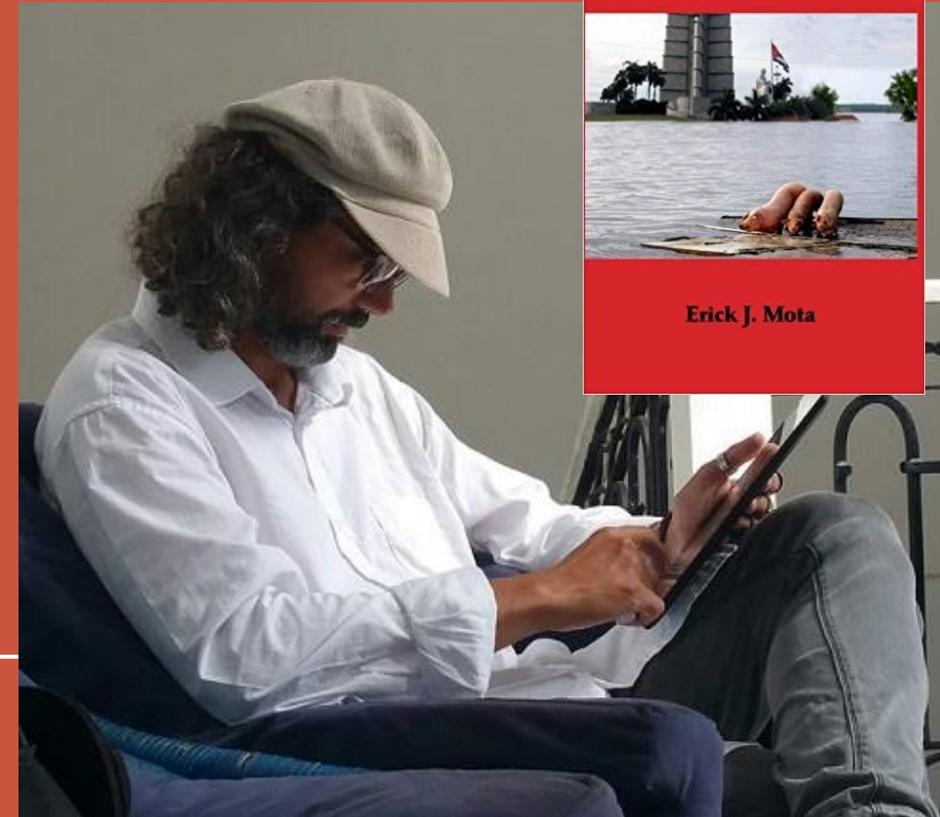
his emphasis on hope. An antiutopian might understand himself as being critical in rejecting hope, but in the rush to denounce it, he would be missing the point that hope is spawned of a critical investment in utopia, which is nothing like naive but, instead, profoundly resistant to the stultifying temporal logic of a broken-down present. My turn to Bloch, hope, and utopia is a challenge to theoretical insights that have been stunted by the lull of presentness and various romances of negativity and have thus become routine and resoundingly anticritical. This antiutopian theoretical

Utopia thus now better expresses our relationship to a genuinely political future than any current program of action, where we are for the moment only at the stage of massive protests and demonstrations, without any conception of how a globalized transformation might then proceed. But at this same time, Utopia also serves a vital political function today which goes well beyond mere ideological expression or replication. The formal flaw – how to articulate the Utopian break in such a way that it is transformed into a practical-political transition – now becomes a rhetorical and political strength – in that it forces us precisely to concentrate on the break itself: a meditation on the impossible, on the unrealizable in its own right. This is very far from a liberal capitulation

“A map of the world that does not include utopia is not worth glancing at.”  
Oscar Wilde

“Abakuá emerged as a secret organization of black slaves that conferred internal, not external, honors and powers. And to safeguard, in life and in death, those uprooted and discriminated. Abakuá is a way of living ethically, not a means to make one brother betray another. Maybe I will have to pay for my fault before the Abasongo, but they will have to answer, one day, for inducing you to break your oath.”

Erick Mota, *Habana Undergüater*, 2010, p. 205



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Yasmín S. Portales-Machado

Northwestern University

@nimlothdecuba

Coming soon to your favorite journal!

