

Not These Bones: Apocalyptic Satire in Baroque Spain and the Cold War United States

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En el cementerio, junto a la puerta de la iglesia [...] Juan Gómez Rojo el mozo dijo que aquellos huesos que estaban por allí de los muertos no eran los que habían de resucitar. “Pongo por caso que viene un perro y se los come y después los caga. ¿Cómo han de resucitar? No, sino que Dios no ha menester sino decir ‘hágase esto’ y así se hará, más no porque han de ser estos los que han de resucitar.”

(In the cemetery, by the door of the church [...] Juan Gómez Rojo the younger said that those bones of the dead that were there were not the ones that would be resurrected. “Say for instance a dog comes and eats them, and later shits them out again. How can they be resurrected? No, although God has only to say, ‘So be it,’ for it to be done, that still does not mean that these are the bones that will be resurrected.”)

— Domingo Molero denouncing his neighbor Juan Gómez Rojo to the Inquisition, May 4th, 1588 (Archivo Diocesano de Cuenca, Inquisición, Libro 326, fol 73r)¹

A Literary Practice's Menippean Roots; The Minor Strategy of The Baroque

This essay examines “apocalyptic satire,” a literary practice whose importance for modern fiction is insufficiently understood. The term “practice” is preferred here because this mode of writing is defined by its disruption of language’s mimetic and ideological functions, rather than any specific set of formal or semantic features.² Nonetheless, its affinity with the *menippea* will be acknowledged from the outset. By apocalyptic satire I will mean any serio-ludic writing, regardless of genre, that deploys prophecy, revelation, and imagery of world destruction/renewal both to skeptically mock Christian eschatology and, at the same time, to co-opt its energy for the author’s own critical project.³ In addition to the visionary element, these texts combine three features: 1) objectification of language that draws attention to itself, flattening the projection of a stable, cohesive fictional world; 2) laughter that is strangely displaced or disembodied; and 3) the destabilization of ideology, achieved largely through the first two features working in tandem. Self-referentiality of language creates an effect of unraveling the revealed, transcendent truth. Laughter then shatters the flattened caricature of a world, which breaks apart into mediated fragments, producing a foreshortened apocalypse.⁴ However, this practice is more than a mere turning-inward of literature upon itself, typical of both baroque and later, postmodern experimentation; what is toyed with is the ultimate destiny of humanity, a theme that cannot fail to have serious consequences, no matter how playfully it is handled. The complex interplay of these mutually reinforcing elements will become clearer through specific instances.

On the one hand, then, apocalyptic satire mockingly deploys imagery of world-threatening catastrophe to attack moral certitude, undermining the power of revealed truth to inspire fear. Simultaneously, however, these satirists proclaim another apocalypse, a comic-parodic one to be sure, but one that half-jokingly promises liberation. The instances examined below do not constitute complete literary works. Rather, apocalyptic satire glimmers in a larger work, creating a heightening of its impact; it may seem to pervade a text, but even then it only bursts fully forth at specific moments.

The most frequent habitat, as it were, within which to find apocalyptic satire, is the classical genre of the *menippea*, named for Menippus (third century BCE), whose own writings have been lost, but who inspired Seneca, Horace, Varro, and, especially, Lucian.⁵ Northrup Frye’s initial characterization remains a helpful starting point:

[M]ost people would call *Gulliver's Travels* fiction but not a novel. [...] [W]e are turning from the novel to this form, whatever it is, when we turn from Rousseau's *Emile* to Voltaire's *Candide* [...] Its existence is easy enough to demonstrate, and no one will challenge the statement that the literary ancestry of *Gulliver's Travels* and *Candide* runs through Rabelais and Erasmus to Lucian. (*Anatomy* 308–09)

“Menippean satire,” Frye continues, “deals less with people as such than with mental attitudes” (309). “This is the favorite form of Erasmus, and is common in Voltaire;” its “loose-jointed” narrative allows “the free play of intellectual fancy” (310). The most common framework for the menippea is the fantastic voyage, for example, to heaven (as in Lucian's *Icaromenippus*) or the underworld (his *Cataplus*). For Bakhtin, the other leading theorist of the menippea, “the clamping principle” binding “all these heterogeneous elements into the organic whole [is...] a carnival sense of the world” (134). The grotesque imagery and scatological humor found in this genre is a carnivalesque inversion of Christian asceticism's privileging of the spirit over the flesh. Sixteenth-century humanists discovered in it a framework for “moral-psychological experimentation” (116) outside any definite theological framework. This allowed them to explore abnormal states, dreams, insanity, voyages to the beyond and, particularly, “disputes over ‘ultimate questions’ of worldview” (119). The Renaissance menippea playfully carves out a space, then, for speculation and inquiry beyond the dogmatic control of the Church. Thomas More indulges in such speculation, for example, in his *Utopia*. Around the time of the Council of Trent (1545–1563), however, satirists begin responding to the looming foreclosure on this humanist opening by more aggressively marking their dissent from the ultimately eschatological basis of Christian empire; thus emerges apocalyptic satire.⁶

A broad context for the on-going emergence of such apocalyptic satire after Trent is supplied by Castillo and Egginton's notion, in *Medialogies* (2016), of early modernity as the “first age of inflationary media.” Media, as McLuhan understood it (“the extensions of man [sic]”), includes technological developments related to the increased speed and scale of human activity, not simply to the field of communication. The Renaissance saw a vast increase in human power—“inflationary media” thus encompasses not only the printing press, perspective in painting, and theatrical staging, as Castillo and Egginton emphasize, but also the conquest of time and distance by the galleon, the telescope, and the compass; the extension of coercive physical force through the use of gunpowder in firearms; and inflation, too, of the medium of money itself, through the influx of precious metals from the New World. Initially, me-

dia inflation in all these senses weakened existing structures of power, making possible, for example, the Reformation and the growth of the merchant class. But, in a pattern that would be repeated in “the second age of inflationary media” (our own time), the resulting crisis in power relations gave rise to the elaboration of new projects designed to capture and harness the surplus of power and wealth: confessionalization in Catholic and Protestant Europe; centralization of state power through bureaucracy and litigiousness; and, in the aesthetic sphere, the Baroque.⁷

Within this context, I wish to view early modern apocalyptic satire as a practice that undermines the broadest claims of those trying to put the genie of inflationary media back into the bottle, i.e. back into stable structures of social and political hierarchy. Christian eschatology undergirds those claims through insistence on the fight against the Muslim “infidel,” the conquest and colonization of so-called “heathen” lands, and the repression of religious liberty at home. Apocalyptic satire does not attempt to refute the eschatological view of history, but rather to undermine it from within by using self-referential language to disarm its mimetic force; by deploying uncontrolled laughter to sabotage its ability to inspire fear; and, ultimately, by clouding its ideological clarity. The larger cultural strategy to which this practice belongs is what Egginton has termed, drawing on Deleuze and Guattari’s model of “minor literature” (*littérature mineure*), the “minor strategy of the Baroque.” For Egginton, the major strategy of the Baroque posits a truth beyond representation, inaccessible but ostensibly necessary, toward which the work gestures.⁸ The minor strategy inverts this movement, focusing attention “on the concrete reality of mediation itself,” producing “a thought, an art, a literature, or a politics that does not deny the real, but focuses on how the media are themselves real even while they try to make us believe that their reality, the reality in which we live, is always somewhere else” (8). As Egginton puts it a propos of Góngora, “the minor strategy [...] disturbs and threatens the very foundations of the Baroque’s major strategy and those institutions deploying it” (60).⁹ These effects will be examined below in instances of apocalyptic satire, first, in Cervantes, one of the authors Egginton uses to exemplify the minor strategy, then in Quevedo, in the satirical prose farces known as *Sueños* (*Dreams*). From apocalyptic satire of the Baroque, I will move to a consideration of several writers in the Cold War United States before concluding with a consideration of what is at stake, not only in these practices of writing, but in the reading practices they make possible.

Disorienting Laughter in Cervantes's Parody of the Inquisitorial *Auto de Fe*

Salió en esto, de través, un ministro, y llegándose a Sancho le echó una ropa de bocací negro encima, toda pintada con llamas de fuego, y quitándole la caperuza le puso en la cabeza una corozá, al modo de las que sacan los penitenciados por el Santo Oficio, y djóle al oído que no descosiese los labios, porque le echarían una mordaza o le quitarían la vida. Mirábase Sancho de arriba abajo, veíase ardiendo en llamas, pero como no le quemaban no las estimaba en dos ardites. Quitóse la corozá, viola pintada de diablos; volviósela a poner, diciendo entre sí:

— Aun bien que ni ellas me abrasan ni ellos me llevan. Mirábale también don Quijote, y aunque el temor le tenía suspensos los sentidos, no dejó de reírse de ver la figura de Sancho. (*Don Quijote*, II.69, 1185-86)

(At this moment an official came out of nowhere and, going over to Sancho, threw a black robe over him, painted all over with flames, and, removing his cap, put a cone-shaped hat on his head like the ones worn by penitents of the Holy Office; he whispered into his ear not to unbutton his lips or they would gag him or take his life. Sancho looked himself up and down and saw he was enveloped in flames, but as they didn't burn, he didn't care two cents' worth. He took off the conical hat, saw it painted with devils; put it on again, saying to himself: "As long as those don't burn me and these don't carry me off.")

Don Quixote looked at him, too, and
although his senses were suspended by
fear, he did not fail to laugh at the figure
of Sancho.)¹⁰

Decades ago, James A. Parr interpreted *Don Quixote* as a menippean satire against, as he variously put it, “utopian evasionism” (xvi) or “illusory certainty” (162); its strategies subvert narrative authority in ways that link it to “many more narrative traditions than just the arbitrarily privileged one called the novel” (164). Accordingly, Parr considers it closest, among Cervantes’s other works, to *The Dialogue of the Dogs* (xv). For sharpness of bite, were we to add a third title it would undoubtedly be *The Altarpiece of Wonders*. Mock-prophetic moments figure prominently in all three of these texts. Biblical events predominate among the fraudulent “revelations” in *The Altarpiece of Wonders*, among them providential rain from the Jordan River, which Chanfalla promises will turn a woman’s face like shining silver, and a man’s beard golden.¹¹ In *The Dialogue of the Dogs*, Berganza takes Cañizares’s prophecy seriously as a revelation that the dogs will “return” to human form at some future time, when a “poderosa mano para hacello” (a hand powerful enough to do so) will “derribar los soberbios levantados, / y alzar a los humildes abatidos” (338) (overthrow the mighty / and raise up the humble who have been put down). Cipi3n debunks this idea, however, proclaiming the “real” meaning of the prophecy to be just a game of bowling, in which standing pins are knocked over, and fallen ones set back up (347). In Part One of *Don Quixote*, revelation is parodied in the form of “supernatural” signs of the chivalric mission, such as the “lunar pardo con ciertos cabellos a manera de cerdas” (tan-colored mole with bristly hairs) that Dorotea (as Princess Micomicona) says her father prophesied the hero destined to restore her kingdom would have below his left shoulder (I.30). Fake prophecy abounds in Part Two: the Cave of Montesinos, where the enchanted ballad characters await Don Quixote’s arrival like the dead awaiting the Last Judgement (II.23); Maese Pedro’s monkey, who “divines” the past and present, not the future (II.25); Merlin’s prophecy of the disenchantment of Dulcinea through the flagellation of Sancho’s buttocks (II.35); and the talking head in Antonio Moreno’s house in Barcelona, a conjurer’s trick finally dismantled by order of the Inquisition (II.62).¹²

In all three of these texts, moreover, the materiality of language is deliberately collapsed into empty self-referentiality. It is through words alone that Chanfalla conjures up the Biblical scenes of his nonexistent spectacle. The dogs are miraculously gifted with the power of speech, although the

frame tale, *The Deceitful Marriage*, casts this “miracle” as the product of either Campuzano’s delirium or his wit. The entire text of *Don Quixote* from Chapter 9 of Part One forward is the translation from Arabic into Spanish of an unreliable history written by a “lying” Muslim chronicler, whose final farewell to his pen reminds the reader that the whole thing was never more than a trail of ink.¹³ To show the complex interplay of these and other features of apocalyptic satire in Cervantes, I will examine a single, key instance from *Don Quixote* of the convergence of the mock-prophetic, self-referential flattening of signs, displaced laughter, and ideological disorientation: the parodic treatment of the Inquisition in the final chapters, in Part Two, Chapters 69–70 and 73.

Returning to their village from Barcelona, Don Quixote and Sancho are overtaken by a troop of armed men and brought, in chapter 69, to the courtyard of the ducal palace, where a makeshift stage with bleachers has been set up, as a public square would be prepared for an *auto de fe*. Altisidora, ostensibly dead of lovesickness for Don Quixote, lies on a bier before the platform where the Duke and Duchess are seated, crowned like monarchs. They dress Sancho in the flame-covered robe and conical hat the Holy Office imposes on its penitents. This is a travesty, then, of the Inquisition’s presumption of power, not just over life and death, but over salvation and damnation.¹⁴ When Sancho realizes the inquisitorial flames do not burn, and the demons on his hat do not carry him off, he scorns the empty symbols of this power, which refer to nothing outside themselves. Even Don Quixote, in the midst at his astonishment at participating in this strange spectacle, cannot help laughing out loud at the ridiculousness of it. Mockery of ecclesiastical authority over otherworldliness does not end, however, with the reduction of the accoutrements of the Holy Office to signifying only their own ludicrous manipulation of parishioners’ fears. Slaps and pinches are administered to Sancho for the “resurrection” of Altisidora. Cervantes goes beyond a burlesque of Purgatory (*pace* Sullivan) to mock the entire idea of the Resurrection of the flesh. In the next chapter, the “resurrected” Altisidora tells of her Lucianesque visit to the underworld, where she saw the demons playing football, kicking around Avelaneda’s *Quixote* instead of a ball. In the same pages, then, where Cervantes puts the pseudonymous author of the spurious continuation in his place, Don Quixote and Altisidora deride one another for their vanity and presumption, and Cide Hamete proclaims that the Duke and Duchess show themselves to be just about as crazy as their guests. Laughter shoots out in all directions like the spokes of a wheel, radiating from the central burlesque of the solemn inquisitorial ceremony.

Even this is not all, for Sancho, before leaving, asks the Duke and Duchess for the robe and conical hat, adornments which he puts on his donkey as

he and Don Quixote arrive at their village in chapter 73, the second-to-last chapter of the work. The local boys, “lince no escusados” (unremitting lynxes—that is, sharp-eyed, as we readers should be), note the conical hat and run to see him, commenting that he is “más galán que Mingo” (more dapper than Mingo). The boys, together with the priest and barber, accompany them into and through the town, until they arrive at Don Quixote’s house. In this makeshift procession, an ass is paraded through the streets dressed as a penitent, inverting the usual practice of the penitent being paraded *on* the ass. Cervantes, precisely at the moment he brings his characters full circle back to where they began, reminds us that at the beginning of the work these two men sallied forth immediately following the parody of an inquisition trial (the scrutiny of Don Quixote’s library). The same characters are gathered, priest, barber, Quixote, Sancho, ass, and Rocinante—who is described by the boys as “más flaca hoy que *el primer día*” (II.73, emphasis added) (skinner than on the *first day*), remitting us deliberately to the beginning of Part One. An equivalence is set up between the sweep of the work as a whole and the parading of an ass through the town with the inquisitorial *coroza* on its head. Make what you will, lynx-eyed reader, of this thumbing of the author’s nose at ideological certitude, as represented by the “fearsome” Holy Office.¹⁵ The worst the Inquisition manages to do in this whole work is burn a few chivalric romances and parade around a “penitent” donkey. But Cervantes appropriates the erstwhile “fearsome threat” of the Holy Office to subject to leveling ridicule all the beautiful, noble sentiments placed at one time or another in Don Quixote’s mouth, no matter how sacred, no matter how patriotic.

Apocalyptic Satire in Quevedo’s *Sueños*

The reason Milton wrote in fetters when he wrote of Angels & God, and at liberty when of Devils & Hell, is because he was a true Poet and of the Devil’s party without knowing it.

—William Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (ca. 1790–93)

In his *Sueños*, Quevedo provides the outstanding examples of apocalyptic satire in Spanish. Well-versed in the classical tradition, he understands that satire serves to correct folly and vice, and indeed he makes the rhetorical gesture of criticizing corruption, abuse of power, and hypocrisy.¹⁶ Nonetheless, to the attentive reader of his *serio-ludere* writings, what he actually puts into

practice is a parody of didactic discourse, which enacts a deconstruction of any ideological foundation from which moral judgements could be rendered. This practice aligns Quevedo with the minor strategy of the Baroque, for by it he undermines the claims of the hegemonic classes of Spain to a monopoly on access to ultimate truth. Even if the major strategy of the Baroque only places a frame around the abyss, it was still meant to be *their* frame; yet the relentless skepticism of the *Sueños* renders such pretense absurd: “no se sabe nada” (nothing is known) announces Quevedo in the prologue of *El mundo por de dentro* (*The World from Inside*), “y aun esto no se sabe de cierto, que a saberse ya se supiera algo; sospéchase” (271) (and even that is not known for sure, since, after all, that would be knowing something; we *suspect* it).¹⁷ Yet Quevedo is absent from Egginton’s discussion of the baroque minor strategy, presumably due to his avowal of Christian theocracy, not to mention the misogyny, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, and violent rejection of homoeroticism with which his work is rife. How to square, then, Quevedo’s literary practice in such works with his reactionary positions elsewhere?

The *Sueños* might be recuperated for the baroque major strategy by suggesting that the confusion induced in his readers is designed to make us feel the need for an authority figure, somewhat in the vein of Calderón’s *La vida es sueño*.¹⁸ Yet Calderón’s play is unquestionably a coherent structure through which to contemplate the abyss, and this cannot be said, as we will see, of *El mundo por de dentro* or *Sueño del juicio final*. Certainly, we always have the option of bracketing off the question of intentionality, as Egginton does when discussing Baena’s and Castillo’s readings of *Persiles and Sigismunda* (28–29), or as Blake does even more bluntly when he says Milton was “of the Devil’s party [i.e. anti-authoritarian] without knowing it” (35). Another approach is to recognize that here, as in other jocose writings, Quevedo makes deliberate use of his sharp wit as a tool to enhance his own reputation and a weapon for attacking rivals, thereby inserting himself simultaneously, as Carlos M. Gutiérrez would have it, into “los campos literario y de poder” (201) (the fields of literature and power). Mariscal went further, suggesting that the tensions between subject positions in Quevedo’s burlesque poetry and prose reflected underlying contradictions in the social structure of seventeenth-century Spain (133–34). Both Gutiérrez’s and Mariscal’s approaches essentially explain the fissures in Quevedo’s works as a consequence of the circumstances in which he wrote.¹⁹ Without by any means abandoning their historicism, I would like to supplement it here with a consideration of Jameson’s claim, at the end of *The Political Unconscious*, that modern cultural production always involves both an “ideological” and a “utopian” dimension (286–92). Jameson considers “utopian” the inevitable element of group solidarity without which no class consciousness could exist as such. Yet the utopian side of Quevedo’s

satire would seem to be the exact opposite: not solidarity with members of his own class, but a nihilistic rejection of solidarity with *any* group, which “undercuts the very foundations of social cohesion” (García-Bryce 118). Thus Quevedo’s *Sueños* reveal apocalyptic satire as a discursive practice that finds the point at which the will to power undoes itself, becoming a nihilistic will to mutual liberation, both for himself and his readers.²⁰

Unlike *Don Quixote*, the *Sueños* are full-fledged menippean satires, replete with apocalyptic motifs. The primary narrative frame is the fantastic journey to the underworld, heightened by a mock-prophetic element. For example, in *Sueño del juicio final* (*Dream of the Last Judgment*), the menippean journey is hybridized with a parody of the Valley of Dry Bones from *Ezekiel*: “as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them...” (37:7–8). The narrator of *Sueño del juicio final* hears the trumpet announcing the Last Judgment and witnesses a burlesque Resurrection:

Halló el son obediencia en los mármoles y oído en los muertos, y así al pronto comenzó a moverse toda la tierra y a dar licencia a los güesos, que andaban ya unos en busca de otros; [...] A cuál faltaba un brazo, a cuál un ojo; y diome risa ver la diversidad de figuras y admiróme la providencia de Dios en que estando barajados unos con otros, nadie por yerro de cuenta se ponía las piernas ni los miembros de los vecinos. (93–95)

(The sound found obedience in marble tombs and an ear among the dead, and on the instant the earth began to move, giving license to the bones, which now began to go around looking for each other. [...] Some were missing an arm, some an eye, and it made me laugh to see the variety of figures, and I was amazed at the providence of God, that although they were all shuffled up together, no one got mixed up and put on the legs or other members of their neighbors.)

In *Sueño de la muerte* (*The Dream of Death*), the narrator meets, among many in the land of the dead, Enrique de Villena, dissolved/preserved in a solution inside a large glass jar (*redoma*). Villena was reputed a necromancer in life; in death he is a mock-prophet, interrogating the narrator about the state of things

in Spain, so he can decide whether the time has come for him to return to the world of the living (346–60). In the same *Sueño*, Pe(d)ro Grullo, a figure of oral tradition, absurdly “prophesies” in rhyme things that must necessarily happen, e.g. “si lloviere hará lodos” (364) (when it rains there will be mud) or “serán seis dos veces tres” (368) (six will be two times three).

All the features of apocalyptic satire are present in each of the *Sueños*, though the emphasis varies. Objectification of language is accomplished through the constant punning and verbal pyrotechnics that are a hallmark of Quevedo’s burlesque style. Display of wit is part of his purpose, as we have seen, and the reader of the *Sueños* often feels he is incapable of passing up any opportunity for wordplay. The most elaborate and explicit thematization of self-referential linguistic signs comes in the *El sueño de la muerte* (*The Dream of Death*), when the narrator meets a series of personifications of proverbial expressions: *el Rey que rabió*, Agrajes (“Now you’ll see, said Agrajes”), Pero Grullo, “the Other one” (*como dijo el Otro . . .*), Cochitehervite, Trochimochi, Marizápalos, Mari Rabadilla, “Marta and Her Chickens,” and many others, including a series of mock saints (St. Macarro, St. Ciruelo, St. Porro, St. Jarro, etc.). These “characters” complain about how the living bandy about their names. Rather than the souls of dead people who formerly lived, they are fictional literalizations of linguistic phrases. Words create beings to correspond to them, not the other way around; they personify, not Platonic abstractions (Truth, Justice, Virtue, God, and the like), but mere empty phrases people use without thinking about what they are saying. Playful though it may be, Quevedo’s satirical nominalism undercuts the major baroque strategy, implying that dogmatism generates metaphysical entities out of signifiers without referents.

The *Sueños* are burlesque texts, intended to amuse, but when they actually narrate the act of laughing, it takes on unexpected twists, mixing strangely with emotions of fear, confusion, and lament. Laughter can be suddenly transformed to fear, as when, at the beginning of the *Sueño de la muerte*, the narrator, visited by Death, does not at first recognize her. “No me espantó; suspendióme, y no sin risa, porque bien mirado era figura donosa” (327) (I wasn’t frightened, only held in suspense, and not without laughter, since, properly viewed, she was an amusing figure); but when she tells him she is Death, “quedé pasmado, y apenas abrigué en el corazón algún aliento para respirar, y muy torpe de lengua” (327) (I was stunned, with barely enough air left in my breast to breathe, and quite tongue-tied). Disjunctive laughter is associated with undervaluing what really matters, as in the “muerte de risa” (death by laughter) of those who did not repent when alive, considering their sins “cosa de risa” (338) (a laughing matter). In one rare instance of intradiegetic laughter, the narrator of the *Sueño del infierno* overhears “grandes carcajadas” (great cackles) and goes to see what’s behind this “risa en el infierno, cosa tan

nueva” (197) (laughter in Hell, such a novelty). It turns out to be a crowd of devils ridiculing two *hidalgos* who expect their privileges of noble birth to protect them from damnation, or at least provide them dignity in Hell. The source for this scene is Lucian’s *Cataplus*, in which the tyrant Megapenthes, making the journey across the Styx, is offended at being treated just like everyone else.²¹ Here, the devils’ laughter sets up a contrast that is the opposite of those damned for “death by laughter,” since these *hidalgos* have *overvalued* their social status on earth, of no importance in the afterlife. Laughter as incongruity is also emphasized at the end of *Sueño del juicio final*, where the narrator, having witnessed Christ’s departure for Heaven with the elect, remains behind to see, in a deep cave (in fact the maw of Hell), a man of letters, a scribe, a miser, a doctor, a pharmacist, and some constables, all suffering different forms of poetic justice. “Diome tanta risa ver esto que me despartaron las carcajadas, y fue mucho quedar de tan triste sueño más alegre que espantado” (133) (It made me laugh so hard to see this that my own cackling woke me up, and it was something to come out of such a sad dream more merry than frightened).

Laughter in the *Sueños* thus functions to underscore the ideological disorientation that lies at the heart of these texts. They vacillate in a peculiar way between free-wheeling irreverent burlesque and moral edification. Because they play so relentlessly with material relating to the ultimate meanings and value of human life (salvation vs. damnation, virtue vs. vice, cynicism vs. trust, revealed truth vs. dissembling), the reader can never finally come to rest on one side or the other of the tension between serious and ludic. If we try to read them as social satire, we are impeded by the purely comic effect of overgeneralizations based on stereotypes concerning tailors, scribes, doctors, and a host of other trades and professions; if we read them as mere hilarity, we are confronted by the serious issues of moral depravity they raise. In some *Sueños*, the intensity of this back-and-forth builds up until the narrator suddenly finds himself bursting out on one side or the other—laughter wakes him from the *Sueño del juicio final* (133), but he escapes the *Sueño del infierno* “como espantado” (269) (in a fright). In others, the tension is overwhelming; at the end of both *Sueño de la muerte* and *El mundo por de dentro* (in the longer version of *Juguetes de la niñez*) he ends up “cansado” (405, 502) (exhausted).

El mundo por de dentro (*The World from the Inside*) is the *Sueño* in which ideological certainty is most thoroughly undermined, by means of a self-undercutting parody of satirical didacticism. Rhetorically, the text is structured around the gesture of unmasking hypocrisy. The naïve narrator takes things at face value, while the personified figure of *Desengaño* (Disillusionment) reveals the truth behind appearances. But the distinction between innocent

gullibility and enlightened understanding breaks down, as both the narrator and Desengaño fail to live up their respective roles.²² As the text proceeds, the initial descriptions of the appearances by which the narrator is taken in are increasingly contaminated by the awareness of the hypocrisy they veil. For example, even before Desengaño disabuses the narrator concerning the widow's lack of sincerity, the narrator comments: "entonces advertí que las mujeres se purgan en un pésame destos, pues por los ojos y narices echan cuanto mal tienen" (290) (at that moment I realized women purge themselves at these vigils, since they expel through their eyes and noses any toxins they have). Yet immediately *after* this cynical remark, he launches into extended praise for the widow's devotion to her husband. Despite being rebuked by Desengaño, the narrator repeats the same pattern of providing an initial description that reveals awareness of what is really going on in the scene, then naïvely praising the false "appearance." In the coda added by Quevedo for the *Juguete de la niñez* version of this text, Desengaño turns out to be, not a detached sage trying to open the narrator's eyes, but a maliciously cruel, grotesque figure who laughs gleefully as he shatters illusions: "El viejo se limpiaba las lagañas, y daba unas carcajadas sin dientes, con tantos dobleces de mejillas, que se arremetían a sollozos mirando mi confusión" (499) (The old man wiped the crusty rheum from his eyes and cackled toothlessly, with so many folds in his cheeks he broke down sobbing [with laughter], seeing my bewilderment). In this coda, Desengaño shows the narrator a *cuerda* ("cord" or "rope," but also, in a telling pun, "sane"), which reveals the true nature of all who pass under it. By means of this device, Quevedo pushes the contradictory nature of the social still further. Frank openness and malicious deception are just the reversible inside and outside of a Möbius strip. All interaction has these two reversible sides, including the very text we are reading; the narrator admits that he is no exception: "lo veo por mí, que ahora escribo este discruso, diciendo es para entretener, y por debajo de la cuerda doy un jabón muy bueno a los que prometí halagos muy sazonados" (502) (I see it in myself, as I am writing this discourse, claiming it is to entertain, and below the cord I am sticking it to the folks whose praises I promised to sing). Not surprisingly, this *Sueño* ends with the narrator collapsing *into* sleep, overwhelmed by the dizzying moral confusion into which the deconstruction of edifying discourse has plunged him:

Con esto—el viejo me dijo—forzoso es que descanses, que el choque de tantas admiraciones y de tantos desengaños fatigan el seso y temo se te desconcierte la imaginación. Reposa un poco, para que lo que resta te enseñe y no te atormente.

Yo tal estaba, di conmigo en el sueño y en el suelo, obediente y cansado.
(502)

“At this point,” the old man told me, “you need to rest, for the shock of so many revelations and disillusionments tires the brain, and I am afraid your imagination may come unhinged. Repose a bit, so the remainder will teach, rather than torment you.”

I was in such a state, I threw myself on the ground and into sleep, obedient and exhausted.)

By the end of *El mundo por de dentro*, the edifying discourse on which the text was based has come unraveled. Having gained the narrator’s trust, *Desengaño* unmask appearances, not to reveal a deeper truth, but to subvert the very pretense of any vantage point from which to launch a disinterested critique. Quevedo has played the same trick on his readers, revealing that the discourse of satire participates in the corruption it purports to unveil. The ground on which moral judgment rests has been irrevocably shaken. The resulting earthquake, though, is only a mock-apocalypse, which hints that the alarmist threats of Counter-Reformation ideologues are mere manipulations of fears they themselves have implanted.²³

Apocalyptic Satire in the Cold War United States²⁴

They asked me what I thought of the atomic bomb. I said I had not been able to take any interest in it.

[...] What is the use, if they are really as destructive as all that there is nothing left and if there is nothing there nobody to be interested and nothing to be interested about. If they are not as destructive as all that then they are just a little more or less destructive than other things and that means that in spite of all destruction there are always lots left on this earth to be interested or to be willing [...]. They think they are interested about the atomic bomb

but they really are not not any more than I
 am. Really not. They may be a little scared,
 I am not so scared, there is so much to be
 scared of so what is the use of bothering
 to be scared, and if you are not scared the
 atomic bomb is not interesting.

Everybody gets so much information
 all day long that they lose their common
 sense. They listen so much that they forget
 to be natural. This is a nice story.

—Gertrude Stein, “Reflection on the
 Atomic Bomb” (1946)

As soon as the question of apocalyptic satire during the Cold War is raised, the nuclear arms race and the strategic deterrent of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) naturally come to mind.²⁵ Gallows humor, under these circumstances, might be dismissed as an evasion, or merely the consolation of at least not being quite so alone in the face of terrifying danger. However, the laughter we find in examples of apocalyptic satire from the period goes further, serving to undermine the ideological foundation of the Arms Race, just as we saw in the Baroque minor/miner strategy vis-à-vis the Counter-reformation. Alongside the looming threat of nuclear war, anti-communist witch hunts and blacklisting contributed to a stifling atmosphere in which counter-hegemonic projects, including the Civil Rights movement and the anti-war movement, were stigmatized. Beyond the specific confrontation with the Soviet Union, the largely unexamined, unchallenged legacy of European colonialism continued to underwrite the defense of the so-called “Free World” with bombs that could supposedly destroy all life on the planet many times over. Since our “enemies” also had those bombs, we dug holes in our backyards or practiced hiding under our desks at school.²⁶ Fear gripped American cultural life, imposing a consensus that made inconformity difficult to express directly in the public sphere. The result was a flourishing of indirect, “minor” attacks in which apocalyptic satire played a significant role.

Paul Goodman’s *The Empire City* (begun circa 1940, completed 1959) is a menippea in the tradition of Erasmus, Cervantes, and Swift, dealing, as per Frye’s definition, “less with people as such than with mental attitudes” (309).²⁷ Epic in sweep, satiric in tone, it unites between the covers of a single volume

three earlier works by the idiosyncratic anarchist—*The Grand Piano* (1942), *The State of Nature* (1946), and *The Dead of Spring* (1950)—, along with a new Book Four, *The Holy Terror*, and a truncated Book Five, *Here Begins*.²⁸ Anticipating the central argument of *Growing Up Absurd* (1960), an indictment of U.S. society destined to become the blueprint of the Counterculture, Goodman has his characters ask themselves, “which way shall we go crazy, by dissenting or by conforming?” (332). Unable to adapt to life in the stultifying 1940s and 1950s, they constitute themselves as a diffuse utopian community, spanning three generations, whose alternative cultural practices include arson, rigging a bomb to a piano, levitation, ritualized beatings (not unlike Palahniuk’s *Fight Club*), release of wild animals from a zoo, and other unconventional acts, which deliberately sabotage the symbolic systems through which everyday experience is endowed with significance.²⁹ Hugo Eliphaz, a “magnate” who runs a department store that circulates goods through barter and gift-giving, keeps a ledger of these transactions in which the entries consist only of zeroes, without integers; he keeps close track, nonetheless, of how many places those zeroes occupy (84–85). Minetta Tyler, a free-lance psychotherapist-cum-social worker, organizes picketers with blank sandwich boards to protest without specifying what against (512–13, 525–29). Their opposition employs paradoxical reformulations of conventional language: Eliphaz prophesies that “the duration will last longer than the war” (154–55, 189, 270); his friends set about to “wage the peace” (215); they plan to insinuate sympathizers into the armed forces by “weeding them in” (173–74). Their against-the-grain usage inverts the categories of unreflective speech, a reversal of Althusserian ideological interpolation that lifts inconformity beyond mere eccentricity.

Nihilism predominates in these “annals of our open conspiracy” (330): “when enough was destroyed, the decks would be cleared for action” (266). Despite apocalyptic calls for the “end of the world” (297) or “a new heaven and a new earth” (304, 397), the characters find themselves incapable of bringing about the change they seek. The “hard problem” they face is that they do not know any other way to live; they discover within themselves the very limitations they are striving to overcome. Goodman concretizes this failure in a section titled “The Prophecy of Eliphaz,” where, as spokesman for the group, Eliphaz proclaims “Fall upside down” and later, “Fall upside down” (277, 285). The words “fall upside down” when he speaks them, a metaphorical play with objectified language reminiscent of the personification of proverbial phrases in *Sueño de la muerte*, creating a figurative equivalent of the critique of conventional expressions running throughout *The Empire City*.³⁰ On occasions, incongruous laughter punctuates such moments of impasse. In “The Moral Equivalent of War,” the characters assemble to propose ways to “wage the peace,” only to

find that “their peaceable equivalent for the war turned out to be precisely – the war.” They “burst out laughing [...] boisterously” (220). In Book Four, *The Holy Terror*, which does not so much conclude *The Empire City* as wind it down, Lothario and Horatio, remembering the release of the zoo animals from their cages, are seized by a fit of laughter: “Tears ran out of their eyes. They began to be in a panic. [...] They became frightened and stopped short” (435). They were laughing, the narrator explains, “at the frame of things collapsing into nothing,” and “they stopped because they were becoming confused” (436). Such baffled or misplaced laughter, when explicitly associated, as here, with the loss of moral orientation or ideological clarity, enacts the destructive-critical work of apocalyptic satire.

Irreverent imagery and laughter play a more positive role in the chapter titled “The Mission of St. Wayward,” with which Goodman opened the brief Book Five, *Here Begins*. Lothair’s son Wayward, who represents a new generation, is endowed with unusual powers. He sneaks into the Cloisters Museum in Manhattan at night; the Unicorn emerges from one of the famous tapestries, and carries him on its back through the air to Ireland, where he recites a 278-line narrative poem on how St. Patrick had banished, not just the snakes, but “every lively cock” (602). The last truly virile male dives, “with a merry laugh into Lough Neagh,” where he awaits the prophesied time when Ireland will throw off the shackles of the priesthood and he can reemerge from his suspended animation, much like Enrique de Villena in Quevedo’s *Sueño de la muerte*. Wayward finds this “Laughing Laddy of Lough Neagh,” and tells him the day long ago foretold has arrived at last, when “Ireland will begin to recover her sanity” (612). The two youths postpone this mission, however, until after a trip to sunny Venice, where they mount the roof of San Marco and name the four Byzantine horses that adorn it: Beginning, Success, Fame, and . . . Death. The fourth horse’s being named Death, in addition to slightly dampening their youthful exuberance, explicitly links the scene to the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, who appear when the Lamb opens the first four seals on the scroll in *Revelation* 6:1–8. Enigmatic as it may be, this final apocalypse, whose agents are a “laughing laddie” and a “wayward” saint, provides a note of hopeful humor on which to end *The Empire City*. The younger generation—which would indeed heed Goodman’s prophetic words in large numbers during the decade to come—here abandons the United States to seek renewal in an internationalist vision.

African American apocalyptic satire of the 1950s and 1960s challenges the white power elite’s representation of society, history, politics, and religion as a system shoring up racial hierarchy.³¹ In *Invisible Man* (1952) Ralph Ellison depicts the unravelling of that representation over the course of one individual lifetime. The elements of apocalyptic satire are established in the

“Prologue,” a menippean underworld journey in which the unnamed narrator-protagonist, listening to a record after smoking marijuana, descends, “like Dante” (9), into the depths of Louis Armstrong’s blaring trumpet, a distant echo of the blast announcing the Last Judgment.³² In his dreamlike vision, he witnesses a “final judgment,” as it were, on slavery, in which Old Aunt Nelly bemoans her master’s death, while the sons he “gave” her laugh upstairs. She hated him, but she loved him; she just loved “freedom” more (11). The narrator finds this comprehensible (“I am acquainted with ambivalence” 10), but as the contradiction intensifies (“I laughs too, but I moans too” 11), and finally the emotions fuse, the laughter becomes “too loud and moan-like for me.” He asks her what “freedom” is, and she admits she has forgotten the meaning of the key linguistic sign underpinning the judgment against slavery. When she thinks about it, “It gits my head to spinning. [. . .] Ever’ time I starts to walk my head gits to swirling and I falls down” (11). This ideological disorientation resulting from displaced laughter and collapse of signification, typical of apocalyptic satire, will be experienced by the narrator himself many times over the course of the novel’s 581 pages, often with prophetic overtones.

Like *Don Quixote* before it, *Invisible Man* deploys both novelistic and menippean macro-strategies, shifting back and forth between these mimetic/narrative modes.³³ The narrator enters each new situation with a strong sense of reality, then begins to feel ill-at-ease, overtaken by eerie feelings, as if it were all a dream, or a plot. It is the character’s isolation that allows Ellison to pull this off. There is a cyclic movement to this collapse of the transparency of the novelistic prose that precisely mimics, though surely without Ellison’s being aware of it, the movement in Quevedo’s *El mundo por de dentro*. Each time the narrator thinks he has achieved some clarity, he discovers that this, too, is a veil, behind which some other falsehood lies. Gradually the men of authority and power he has trusted, black as well as white, establishment and radical, come to form a series in his mind: the white trustee of a historically black college, the black president of that school, the white industrialist he works for when he arrives in New York, the white leader of “the Brotherhood” (a fictionalized version of the Communist Party)—he realizes that they have all been deceiving him for their own purposes.³⁴

Only as the novel is drawing to a close does the narrator recognize his “bottomless capacity for being a fool” (559). During a fictionalization of the Harlem Riots of 1943, whose apocalyptic elements include four horsemen, he comes upon seven bodies of white women hung from lampposts; startled, he stumbles over the bones of a physician’s skeleton, “the skull rolling away from the backbone” (556) in a reversal of Ezekiel’s vision of the bones arising.³⁵ Looking closer, he realizes the bodies are only mannequins—he has mistaken lifeless symbolic representations for human bodies. “Expecting the

relief of laughter,” he is surprised to find himself “suddenly more devastated by the humor than by the horror” (556), in a formulation that clearly aligns a displacement of laughter—here its explicit absence—with the breakdown of the mimetic illusion and a sudden ideological disorientation: the revelation that *desengaño* is not enlightenment, but only a hall of receding mirrors (“my bottomless capacity for being a fool”). Freed of the illusion that he can ever truly be freed of illusion, he withdraws underground to “hibernate,” while trying, vainly, to overcome the collapse of representation—his invisibility—through writing:

The very act of trying to put it all down has confused me and negated some of the anger and some of the bitterness. So it is that now I denounce and defend, or feel prepared to defend. I condemn and affirm, say no and say yes, say yes and say no. (579)

Just as in Quevedo’s *Sueños*, the rhetoric of revelation cancels itself out, though in this very exhaustion of the pretense of speaking prophetically, an opening toward mutual liberation appears, best expressed in Ellison’s justly famous final line: “Who knows but that, on the lower frequencies, I speak for you?” (581).

Kathy Acker’s *Don Quixote, Which Was a Dream* (1986) is a postmodern, minepean nightmare, in which sexual desire is intertwined with the desire for a better society; fear of world destruction is linked to fear of loneliness and abandonment; and critique of U.S. foreign policy is bound up with critique of patriarchy. Reflecting Deleuze and Guattari’s first feature of minor literature, deterritorialized language, Acker’s *Quixote* is constructed entirely by rewriting other texts: “being born into and part of a male world, she had no speech of her own. All she could do was read male texts which weren’t hers” (39). Language is also objectified by describing many of the characters, including Don Quixote’s sidekick, as well as Nixon and Kissinger, as dogs, who “woof,” “bark,” and “howl.” Acker’s Don Quixote is a woman who, after an abortion, conceives of “the most insane idea that woman can think of. Which is to love. [. . .] By loving another person, she would right every manner of political, social, and individual wrong” (9). The First Part closely parallels Cervantes’s text. A Second Part follows, based on other intertexts, from which Don Quixote is absent (perhaps as in the interpolated tales of Cervantes’s Part One, Chapters 32–42). In the Third Part, she is launched into an explicitly political space, much as Cervantes’s hero in his third sally.³⁶ The heroine acquires a new quest: to attack the United States in order to “save” it (from itself), first by taking on Richard Nixon, then by battling “the religious white men.” In the

last pages, “Don Quixote’s Dream,” an intriguing coda, the Spanish Republic is presented as a utopian society (“my dream or model”), an alternative future to be brought back from the past (201–7).

Within this overall arc, various apocalyptic moments occur, featuring prophetic imagery of world-ending catastrophe. In “Texts of Wars for Those Who Live in Silence” (69–77), fragments from the B-movie *Godzilla vs. Megalona* (1973), in which an undersea civilization provoked by nuclear testing (Seatopia) threatens to destroy the earth, are spliced into commentary about the imperialist role of the United States in the Cold War, particularly vis-à-vis Central America, culminating in a vision of the birth of the Antichrist. In the next section, a rewriting of Frank Wedekind’s Lulu cycle, Schön prophesies sarcastically, “My world is rotting [. . .] sooner or later the world is going to end. When the world ends, there’ll be no more air. That’s why it’s important to pollute the air now. Before it’s too late” (81). In Part Three, in a section titled “Don Quixote in America, the Land of Freedom” (101–25), the Angel of Death visits Richard Nixon and his wife Pat while they are making love. Don Quixote tries, to no avail, to save the United States, her enchanted Dulcinea. Examining the colonial era of American history, she discovers that the United States was hypocritical, corrupt, and intolerant from its earliest inception, thus her project is pointless; she agrees to her canine sidekick’s promptings to abandon the country altogether, just as Goodman’s St. Wayward had done before her. This gesture of giving up on the United States occasions the evocation of the Spanish Republic at the book’s end.

The longest sustained apocalyptic moment is “The Last Adventure: Until This Book Will Begin Again” (175–201), which ambiguously marks Don Quixote’s exile or death. Melding Haitian voodoo, African ritual and folktale, and two mock-prophetic Cervantean texts, the *Dialogue of the Dogs* and the Cave of Montesinos episode of *Don Quixote*, Acker forges a scene of portents and magical beings, sorcerers, prophets, and talking dogs. Continually punning on knight/night, she superimposes Don Quixote’s demise with the night of *The Dialogue of the Dogs*, “the end of time prior to the morning” (193), harbinger of the New Heaven and New Earth proclaimed in *Revelation 21:1*.³⁷ Two apocalyptic projects collide as the “old male creep” (i.e. Montesinos) warns that the power elite “are determined on total annihilation” (190), while Don Quixote counters with her own vision “of the end of the world [. . .] of landlords [. . .] the world of death” (198). The chapter culminates with her return to Spain across the sea as mimesis collapses: “By this day of total disarmament, in our total naïveté in our total gleaming helplessness I am sailing over the crumbling European waters” (200).

Ideological confusion is embodied in the text through Don Quixote’s madness. The dogs tell her, “Because you were mad, no one could scare or

humble you. Nihilistic autistic knight, neither religious men nor the image of the Virgin Mary could scare you” (195–96). So she veers between poles of isolation (autism) and political action (nihilism), according to her success or failure in founding a new language by means of which to forge an alternative community:

‘These words sit on the edges of meanings and aren’t properly grammatical. For when there is no country, no community, the speaker’s unsure of which language to use, how to speak, if it’s possible to speak. Language is community. Dogs, I’m now inventing a community for you and me.’ (191)

The night ended or shitted again. ‘I wanted to find a meaning or myth or language that was mine, rather than those which try to control me; but language is communal and here is no community. (194–95)

The k/night ended or shitted. Is the vision authentically eschatological (the prophesied “end”) or just scatological (a dog-knight shitting)? There may be a “resurrection” (a future) of some kind, but not for these bones.

In Acker’s deconstruction of the language of the possessors and reconstruction of the language/community of the dispossessed, laughter is weaponized. The “Old male creep” of the Cave of Montesinos is enchanted (read: ideologically enthralled), and tells Don Quixote that she is the one “who can make me giggle.” He further explains, “You’re the one who can show us how to be pointless or dream. For you, night, live in the clouds” (185). Thus the visionary is equated to the buffoon, the essential equivalency on which all apocalyptic satire rests. In a Haitian church in which “all ways were allowed,” Don Quixote is exhorted to laugh and to sing. “Laugh now, my baby: it is almost morning . . . [. . .] It is necessary to sing, that is to be mad, because otherwise you have to live with the straights, the compromisers, the mealy-mouths, the reality-deniers, the laughter-killers” (193).

The ideological disorientation induced by this mad laughter is framed by the final section, “Don Quixote’s Dream,” in which, having rejected this world, she proclaims, not the supernatural vision of the New Heaven and New Earth of *Revelation*, but excerpts from Gabriel Jackson’s *The Spanish Republic and the Civil War*. “Being dead,” Don Quixote writes, from beyond the grave, “Now I’m going to speak directly. [. . .] It is for you, freaks, my loves, I am writing and it is about you” (201–202). Her purpose is to create, out of the ruins of the collapsed U.S. society, a community and a language, the

model for which would be the anarcho-syndicalism of the Spanish Republic of the 1930s:

Many of the early anarchists leaders resembled the mendicant friars of former centuries: abstemious wanderers, proud to possess little and to be under-dogs. [...] They were motivated by that inner certainty which by its very being denies human leadership and any hierarchy except for that of gentleness and kindness. The anarchist, being nights, were knights. (204–5)³⁸

The book cannot end, however, on this note of ideological certainty and solemn avowal of a utopian model, for that would be a fall back into the non-satirical apocalyptic it dismantles. Acker adds one more nightmare vision, in which God speaks to Don Quixote like Yahweh to Job out of the whirlwind. After a torrent of satanic blasphemy against Himself, God adds, “Since I am no more, forget Me. Forget morality. Forget about saving the world. Make Me up” (207). Don Quixote, confused and exhausted from her visions, awakes in the book’s final passage, uncannily reminiscent of the endings of Quevedo’s *Sueños*:

‘As I walked along beside Rocinante, I thought about God for one more minute and forgot it. I closed my eyes, head drooping, like a person drunk for so long she no longer knows she’s drunk, and then, drunk, awoke to the world which lay before me.’ (207)

Goodman, Ellison, and Acker are just a few of many examples that could be cited, for apocalyptic satire was a hallmark of cultural production in the United States during the Cold War. The Beats cultivate it (e.g. “Howl,” *Naked Lunch*), as do African-American writers (LeRoi Jones, Ishmael Reed, Gil Scott-Heron), and experimenters with metafiction (Barth, Coover, Pynchon); it is frequent in the experimental cinema of the 1950s and 1960s (Stan Brakhage, Ron Rice, Jack Smith, and Kenneth Anger), as well as in some independent film later (Gilliam’s *Brazil* is from 1985, still the Cold War); it can be found in protest music (e.g. Dylan’s “Talking World War III Blues” and “Bob Dylan’s 115th Dream,”), in Pop Art (Rauschenberg), and in the “New Journalism” (*The Armies of the Night*, *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, *Slouching Toward Bethlehem*); it underlies, really, the entire Counterculture as a move-

ment.³⁹ Further, the analysis of the examples given here is cursory, the point being less to provide exhaustive readings than to articulate a certain configuration which indeed could be shown to repeat itself endlessly in the echo chamber of nuclear standoff and covert operations. Co-opting the prophetic religious sensibility enshrined at the heart of mainstream Protestantism, these artists' mock-apocalypse is tinged with a nihilistic impulse toward socio-political change. The post-war United States was the epicenter of the second age of inflationary media, which began with the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (in accordance with McLuhan's understanding of media, atomic and nuclear weapons, too, are "extensions of man"), and continues today. Television and computers, both introduced into wide use during the Cold War, complete the initial set of new technologies generating the sense of unreality Egginton and Castillo associate with the current "crisis" provoked by media inflation. Early Modern Spain responded to the potential for liberation and empowerment of the proliferation of media by the one-two punch of Counter Reformation and Inquisition. The anti-communism of the 1950s, largely directed at media industries—TV and movies—along with the fear-mongering through encouraging preparedness for nuclear war (fallout shelters, air raid drills) were strategies of containment, not just of the overblown Communist "menace," but of the expanding power of media for liberation. Literary texts of the sort we are considering here deployed satire, particularly apocalyptic satire, as a tactic for disassembling this containment, at the same time as they modeled the liberating power of language for their readers. They posed a real threat to the post-war reestablishment of stable structures of power. So what happened? To a significant degree, as I will argue in concluding this essay, literary studies stepped in to ensure such satire was disarmed, prevented from having the impact its authors envisioned.⁴⁰

Conclusion: Apocalypse, Now and Forever

Philosophers have hitherto only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it.

—Karl Marx, *Theses on Feuerbach* (1845)

When I was first introduced to the work of Foucault and Deleuze, it

was very political; it was about what was happening to the economy and about changing the political system. By the time it was taken up by the American academy, the politics had gone to hell. It became an exercise for some professors to make their careers. You know, it's just more of the same: the culture is there to uphold the post capitalist society, and the idea that art has nothing to do with politics is a wonderful construction in order to mask the deep political significance that art has – to uphold the empire in terms of its representation as well as its actual structure.

—Kathy Acker, interviewed by Ellen G. Friedman

During the period that saw the rise of apocalyptic satire in the United States, literary theory strove, in the name of the autonomy of art, to shore up the gash that had been torn, by literary and artistic critique, in the “consensus reality” justifying the Cold War.⁴¹ In *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957), Frye situates prophecy and apocalypse, as generic forms, beyond the basic narrative genres of romance, novel, confession, and anatomy (i.e. menippea). The Bible, with all its incorporated narrative forms, exists at the limit of literature, for it is “more” than a literary work (315, 326). On the *symbolic* plane, however, Frye assigns the apocalyptic a crucial function underwriting the autonomy of art:

Apocalypse means revelation, and when art becomes apocalyptic, it reveals. But it reveals only on its own terms, and in its own forms: it does not describe or represent a separate content of revelation. (125)

Apocalyptic imagery in literature has an internal, regulatory role, consolidating the separation of art from anything that might resemble direct intervention in society. The pact that guarantees artistic freedom cuts creative work off from real-world consequences. Frye's discipline of literary studies is haunted by the double fear of complicity with Fascism/Nazism, and of the Communist “threat”: “no religious or political myth is either valuable or valid unless it assumes the autonomy of culture, which may be provisionally defined as the total body of *imaginative* hypothesis in a society and its tradition” (127, emphasis added).

Like Frye before him, Frank Kermode, writing in 1965, forecloses on political consequences for nihilistic/prophetic fiction. In “The Modern Apocalypse,” the fourth lecture of *The Sense of an Ending*, he downplays anxiety over nuclear war as just another instance of the “modern sense of crisis” (93).⁴² After setting aside “bogus apocalypse” (i.e. apocalyptic satire) and “demotic apocalypse” (evidently, mass movements of social unrest) (96), Kermode goes on to explain that at their best, such “crisis-feelings” can contribute to serious literature, but only if the writer “does not take it literally” (98), for to do so leads to authoritarianism of one stripe or another. Yeats, Pound, and Wyndham Lewis are his poster children for how wrong art goes when it makes the mistake of taking its own apocalyptic pretensions as something more than a literary trope which must be tempered by the “clerkly skepticism” (an oft repeated phrase) of those sanguine enough to take impending doom with quite a large grain of salt. He distinguishes between two modernisms, an earlier one, grounded in tradition, epitomized by T. S. Eliot and James Joyce, and a newer one, still current when he was writing, which he considers “schismatic” in its rejection of earlier literature. Though Kermode acknowledges that Beckett and Burroughs write in a satirical vein, scoffing at the very eschatological imagery they deploy in *Watt* and *Naked Lunch*, his approach allows him to dismiss the brash nihilism of their tone as, ultimately, posturing. They are trying to break with the literary past, not the extra-literary present. If they do so within the decorous bounds of “extensions, in a recognizable sense, of a shared language,” their work, though not as profound a departure as they believe, may be significant; but insofar as they are striving to do more than that, “they more often fail” (123).

Without explicitly focusing on the apocalyptic *per se*, a few years later Paul de Man defended cordoning-off literary nihilism when he analyzed the perpetual crisis of modern literature as a consequence of its engagement, not with social and political circumstances, but with the ghosts of its own past. In “Literary History and Literary Modernity” (1969) the desire for radical change associated with the will to be modern is a gesture that, paradoxically, repeats itself in each generation of writers. It is an impulse that only “*seems* to lead outside literature” (153, emphasis added), whereas in reality its quarrel is with literature as it has existed up until the present, because moderns necessarily assert themselves against tradition. What the writer may experience as a desire to have an impact on society, is allegorized by de Man as “the temptation of modernity to move outside art, its nostalgia for the immediacy, the facticity of entities that are in contact with the present” (158–59), due precisely to an impulse to “escape from a condition that is felt to be unbearable” (162), namely, its own temporal fixity. Inevitably, however, literature, to remain itself, must return to “its own mode of being,” viz. the sequence of

instantiations of this very “aporia” (164). This sequence, then, is the real subject of any authentic literary history. No matter how nihilistic or apocalyptic in tone, we can rest assured in the knowledge that insofar as writers in their work remain true to their vocation—and thus hold any interest for scholars or students—that work will take up its place in an autonomous literary order. In a famous twist at the end of his essay, de Man broadens the significance of this paradoxical temporality to encompass all historiography: “If we extend this notion beyond literature, it merely confirms that the bases for historical knowledge are not empirical facts but written texts, even if these texts masquerade in the guise of wars or revolutions” (165).

The “clerkly skepticism” shared by Frye, Kermode, and de Man about the truth-value of master narratives, including historiographical ones, refuses to acknowledge a difference between seriously claiming the power of revelation to impose one’s own authority dogmatically, and mocking it in order to harness its residual force for one’s own liberation and that of others. True, the minor strategy of the Baroque undermines the claim of any representation to be *about* some exterior truth greater than itself, which could be experienced in plenitude, as fully self-present, if only we could get “beyond” the mimetic. Cultural “texts” and politico-historical “realities” are indeed a Möbius strip of interchangeable figurations, but for that very reason, an alteration of one alters the other, and an intervention at the level of textual practice already *is* a transformation in the public, political sphere. Deconstruction, too, is an ideological intervention, no matter how strenuous its disavowal. Although de Man and Jacques Derrida were notorious “partners in crime” during the heyday of the Yale School, there is a fundamental divergence between their approaches in this regard, acknowledged by de Man himself in his interview with Stefan Rosso, when he explained that he had “a tendency to put upon texts an inherent authority, which is stronger, I think, than Derrida is willing to put on them. I assume, as a working hypothesis [...] that the text *knows* in an absolute way what it’s doing” (118). This vesting of the text with final authority over its own sealing-off from other texts or non-verbal phenomena, due to an *absolute knowledge* of its own processes, amounts to something more than a “working hypothesis.” In practice, rejection of apocalypticism became a dogma. It transformed, in Acker’s terms, work that was “about what [is] happening to the economy and about changing the political system” into “an exercise for some professors to make their careers, [...] uphold the post capitalist society, and [...] mask the deep political significance that art has” (“A Conversation with Kathy Acker” 20).

In “No Apocalypse, Not Now,” Derrida describes nuclear war as a “fable,” in terms that do not appear incompatible, at first, with de Man’s reduction of

“wars and revolutions” to texts:

For the moment, today [...] nuclear war has not occurred; it has existence only through what is said of it, only where it is talked about. Some might call it a fable, then, a pure invention: in the sense in which it is said that a myth, an image, a fiction, a utopia, a rhetorical figure, a fantasy, a phantasm, are inventions. (23)

This specular existence of nuclear war leads Derrida to disavow its threatened apocalypse: there is nothing to reveal, it is only a name. Yet *in the name of* this name, outrageously, true believers who know of something worth “more than life,” more than the survival of the human species itself, are ready to risk destruction “with no remainder” (30–31). (At this moment Derrida, in a parenthesis, reminds us of the McCarthy-era slogan, “better dead than Red,” underscoring the ideological orientation of the hierarchy of values to which he refers.) Despite this remainderless destruction, these believers imagine themselves surviving it, and theorize how their side could “prevail” in the event of a nuclear war:

As individual or community, the master has to survive in order to enjoy the symbolic profit (in mind and consciousness) from death risked or endured. He takes risks and he dies in the name of something which is worth more than life, but something which will still be able to bear his name in life, in a residue of living support. That is what made Bataille laugh: the master has to live on in order to cash in on and enjoy the benefits of the death risk he has risked. (“No Apocalypse, Not Now” 30)

Their apocalypticism is likened to the Hegelian “reserve” Derrida deconstructed in a 1967 essay, “From Restricted to General Economy,” where Bataille’s laughter, directed at the Hegelian dialectic, was a “burst” that caused the Master’s pretense to lordship to collapse, not by arguing against it and without itself appearing, but by rendering that pretension ridiculous. “The burst of laughter is the almost-nothing into which meaning sinks” (“From Restricted to General Economy” 256). This is indeed the disembodied laughter we are accustomed to find in moments of apocalyptic satire, for it produces the familiar ideological disorientation: “laughter which is confused, in the simulacrum, with the opening of the sacred” (257). The demystification this laughter initiates is described as “interminable” by Derrida

in another essay from the early 1980s, “Of an Apocalyptic Tone Recently Adopted in Philosophy”:

We continue to denounce the impostor apostles [...] the pomposity of all those charged with a historic mission. [...] This demystification must be led as far as possible, and the task is not modest. It is interminable, because no one can exhaust the overdeterminations and the indeterminations of the apocalyptic stratagems. (29)

Nonetheless, he acknowledges that he himself has sometimes been branded a practitioner of a certain apocalypticism. He further acknowledges the seductiveness of demystification and suggests that its willingness or ability to acknowledge its own complicity with what it unmasks is one of the ways deconstruction differs from “enlightenment.” Baroque *desengaño* is close to deconstruction in this sense, at least as practiced by Quevedo in *El mundo por de dentro*: “y yo lo veo por mí, que ahora escribo este discurso” (502) (and I see it in myself, as I am writing this discourse). Derrida closes by issuing an invitation to his audience, in the form of an extended consideration of the motif “Come” in his texts (31–35). It is a call, still affirmative and apocalyptic in tone, yet no longer committed to any programmatic or ideological goal, “neither a desire nor an order, neither a prayer nor a request” (34). It does not lead, and definitely not towards any pre-determined goal. Derrida himself engages, as it were, in apocalyptic satire in his ironic, seductive evocation of “the apocalypse *without* apocalypse” (35).⁴³

Derrida invites his readers or listeners to participate in a project of constructing something new, “beyond” apocalypse, in the empty space opened up by a displaced burst of laughter that collapses all transcendental pretensions. He gestures, like Acker at the end of her *Don Quixote*, toward a quasi-utopian recovery of community that steadfastly refuses to allow itself to be reduced to any specifiable interpolation of the reader by ideology. Apocalyptic satire thus inverts de Man’s aporia of the literary returning to its gesture of separating itself from any present, including that of its readers, real or imagined. It is the counterpart and complement of the affirmation of autonomy without which art could not hold its own in the public sphere; for without the puncturing moment of apocalyptic satire it could not, either, reaffirm itself as an *intervention* in public discourse. The instantiations of this practice we have examined here do not form a chain of influences, by any means, but are part of a loose tradition dating back to the beginning of modern literature as a recognizably distinct cultural activity. They share in a commitment to maintain, from within

the autonomy of the literary field, a stance toward reality—or better, *against* “reality,” the illusion of a single representational schematics with a monopoly on truth. Early modern examples of apocalyptic satire are not influences, per se, at least not in any straightforward sense, but rather antecedents. They are part of a modern tradition of engaged writing that bears little resemblance, it would seem, to the one described by Paul de Man in his seminal essays, yet which can lay equal claim to defining a set of cultural practices associated with the label “literature.”⁴⁴

Apocalyptic satire, then, denotes a literary practice in which writers run the risk of undermining their own authority and relinquishing their autonomy, in order to seek that point of convergence with the vulnerabilities of their audience, toward whom they are turned in solidarity, motivated by a deep-seated sense of disaffection regarding the bill of goods we have all been sold in modern life generally, the Nuclear Age in particular. This turns out to be as true for Cervantes and even Quevedo as it is for Goodman, Ellison, and Acker. It bears mentioning that these are all writers who, each on his or her own terms, are concerned with exercising that authority, with “having an impact.” In spite of this desire, and arguably as a check upon it, they risk rendering their work, quite literally, inconsequential, by creating effects of collapsing referentiality, laughter that undermines signification, and ideological disorientation. The only thing that can protect them from this danger, and thus “save” these texts for an approach to writing that could be called, in any sense, engaged (*engagé*), is a certain practice of reading. The very last thing I wish to do here is to say that I am engaged in such a reading practice.

Notes

1. This is from a *libro de testificaciones*. Juan Gómez Rojo was not prosecuted by the Inquisition for his irreverent skepticism. Stuart B. Schwartz’s *All Can Be Saved* offers a detailed study of similar instances of irreverence.
2. “Practice” is used here in the sense developed in Kristeva’s *The Revolution in Poetic Language*. Particularly relevant is the chapter on “laughter as practice” in Lauréamont, which culminates in the declaration that “Every practice which produces something new (a new device) is a practice of laughter” (225).
3. The mock-prophetic tone of much postmodern/postcolonial writing has brought both “satirical apocalypse” and “apocalyptic satire” into critical parlance over the last couple of decades, although the notion’s inherent ambiguity leads to inconsistent use. Cook uses the former term to describe Melville’s *The Confidence-Man* as “a satirical figuration of the Second Coming of Christ” (74). Musgrave theorizes “the apocalyptic universe of Menippean satire” as a “grotesque metaphysics at work: a vision of the

world [...] which does not admit definitive interpretation” (104). Mifdal, writing on Algerian novelist Tahhar Wattar, employs the term “apocalyptic satire” in a sense very close to Musgrave’s, and my own: “[Wattar] portrays the despair and the powerlessness of the movements of change in the Arab World that are doubly crippled by their tendency to transcend reality by exalting past norms, and by their tendency to adopt an escapist apocalyptic eschatology. The ironic parody that permeates the text is meant to put into question both tendencies as they fail to apprehend the real and trigger action to change the reality” (168). In “Apocalyptic Satire, James II and Transubstantiation,” Weinbrot means something rather different by the term, almost the opposite, in fact: he uses it to refer to eighteenth-century English satirists who take an urgent, strident tone because of their own fear of impending collapse.

4. In addition to Kristeva’s “laughter as practice” (217–25) and Bakhtin’s “cosmic laughter” (*Rabelais* 336), one must take into account Kayser’s important discussion of grotesque or infernal laughter, often marked by situations in which “someone laughs when laughter is out of place,” due to “the onslaught of an alien, inhuman power” (197).
5. For reasons not unrelated to the larger argument here concerning literature and politics, menippean satire is undergoing a revival in twenty-first-century literary studies. Weinbrot began the trend with his historical survey; Musgrave’s *Grotesque Anatomies* makes innovative use of this genre concept to discuss a marvelous range of texts, from Pope’s *Dunciad* to Eliot’s *The Waste Land*, and from Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* to Derrida’s *The Post Card*.
6. The first clear instance is in Rabelais, the “frozen words” episode, chapters 55 and 56 of Book Four of *Pantagruel* (1548), which draws, in Kathryn Banks’s reading, on the power of prophecy to proclaim the autonomy of author and reader to engage in hermeneutics free of dogmatic constraints.
7. Of course, this is Maravall’s Baroque as “una cultura dirigida.” Kagan has demonstrated the role of increased litigation in the expansion of monarchical power. Benasser analyzes confessionalization and the Spanish monarchy, while the specific role of the Inquisition in confessionalization is discussed by Martínez Millán (121–54).
8. There is no better example than Calderón’s *La vida es sueño* (*Life Is a Dream*): “the ultimate ethical formulation of the major baroque strategy: the real is out there, and the knowledge of its predominance [...] must govern our actions in the here and now, in this ephemeral world of appearances” (89). Cascardi describes in similar terms the operation of *La vida es sueño* to instill a desire for control into the Baroque subject in “Allegories of Power in Calderón.”
9. In Deleuze and Guattari’s coinage, on which Egginton’s concept of “minor strategy” is based, we should not fail to catch the pun in the original French: a *littérature mineur* is “minor,” in the sense that it is the literature of a minority culture—their model is Kafka, a Czech Jew who wrote in German—but it is also “miner,” insofar as it undermines the presuppositions of the major culture from within, sabotaging it. Thus they have recourse, in discussing Kafka, to metaphors of burrowing and digging under, and

to their theory of the rhizome, which flourishes beneath the surface and then bursts forth unexpectedly elsewhere.

10. Having compared several translations of this passage, I chose to use my own. Though not very idiomatic in English, the calque of *suspender* is important here, given Maravall's focus on *suspensión* as a fundamental technique of Baroque aesthetics (220).
11. Gerli pioneered the analysis of this text as a critique of Lope's theater. I have previously insisted on the relevance, for Cervantes's deconstruction of revealed presence in the *Retablo*, of Lope's use of the effect of presence brought about by the "técnica de la cortina," in his *comedias de santos* ("Ese tan borrado sobreescrito"). Independently of one another, Castillo and Egginton have long insisted on the importance of this *entremés*, which now features prominently in their account of how "reality bleeds" in our age of media inflation (*Medialogies* 31–33, 55, 166, 178, 193, 225).
12. This does not exhaust instances of the mock-prophetic in Cervantes. Worthy of mention, as well, are the travesty of providential signs of world conquest in episode of the Barbaric Isle, which opens *Persiles and Sigismunda* [1617], and the extended burlesque of pagan deities in *El viaje del Parnaso* [1614].
13. Moreover, López-Baralt has suggestively equated Cide Hamete's pen, hung up to dry, with a travesty of the Divine Pen (Al-qalam al-a'lā) by means of which God created the universe.
14. For Redondo, "ese modo de jugar con los atributos y penas inquisitoriales [es] una invitación a reflexionar sobre los auténticos valores del cristianismo, cuando en España impera la ideología represiva de la Contrarreforma, con la consiguiente exaltación de las manifestaciones externas de la religión católica" (62) (this way of playing with inquisitorial insignia and punishments [is] an invitation to reflect on the authentic values of Christianity, at a time when the repressive ideology of the Counter-Reformation was dominant in Spain, with the corresponding exaltation of the external manifestations of the Catholic faith).
15. Dopico Black discusses the satire of the Inquisition in *Don Quixote* I.6. Manuel Peña Díaz considers the same chapter in the broader context of Cervantes's treatment of censorship in general.
16. Lía Schwartz Lerner's study provides the most authoritative historico-philological context for Quevedo's satire.
17. While it is included in the Works Cited for the convenience of readers unable to manage Quevedo's Spanish, I do not follow Britton's translation of the *Sueños*, as it fails to capture the tone and nuance of the text's irony.
18. This model of the Baroque is masterfully articulated in Cascardi's "The Subject of Control."
19. García-Bryce also reads the tensions within Quevedo's work as a reflection of a historical crisis: "as one of the most belligerent authors of a conflicted time, Quevedo highlights the historical and ideological pressures affecting the performance-centered *antiguo regimen*" (3).
20. This situates Quevedo, at least as a burlesque writer, closest in spirit to libertarian

anarchism, for example Max Stirner, so pitilessly lampooned by Marx in *The German Ideology* (See my “En ambas posaderas”).

21. Though Zappala argues against the image of Quevedo as the “Luciano español,” he acknowledges that the *Sueños* contain borrowings from Lucian’s menippean works (204–06). Morreale views more favorably the idea of an intimate sympathy between the two writers.
22. This inconsistency has long been noted by scholars working on *El mundo por de dentro*. Nolting-Hauff attributes it, oddly, to Quevedo’s impulse toward “superclaridad” (283). Díaz-Migoyo sees the initial descriptions as “points of reference” combining both the “before” and “after” viewpoints, and derives their ambiguity from that role (131–32), but without addressing the incoherence that results. My position is closest to Pérez Lasheras’s in *Fustigat mores*, in that I also believe Quevedo and other baroque practitioners of the satiric-burlesque ultimately end up sacrificing the didactic-moral efficacy of their writing: “La utilización del humor como medio—sátira—o como fin—literatura burlesca—es la base de la desintegración genérica de la sátira en el siglo XVII” (187) (The utilization of humor as both a means—satire—and as an end in itself—burlesque literature—is the basis the generic disintegration of satire in the sixteenth century). I see this sacrifice, however, at least in Quevedo’s case, as part of a deeper satire against cheap, dogmatic didacticism. This is what aligns him with the baroque minor strategy.
23. García-Bryce reads *La hora de todos* along similar lines, though, to be sure, with a much more thorough-going integration within Quevedo’s work. She explicitly contrasts Quevedo’s foreshortened apocalypse, in which “no revelation is yielded,” with Calderón’s “use of *mise-en-abîme* toward a constructive aesthetic and ethical self-awareness” in *La vida es sueño* (133).
24. By jumping from the Baroque to the Cold War, I do not wish to give the impression that there is no apocalyptic satire in between, as there most surely is, in every modern period. Particularly relevant here is the role of satire in the sense of impending crisis in turn-of-the-century Vienna, analyzed by Timms in his book on Karl Kraus as an apocalyptic satirist. But we are not concerned with direct influence or linear continuity; and to insist on uniform “coverage” would be to fall back into a history of literature as an autonomous field, cut off from other aspects of life.
25. According to Deudney, Donald Brennan, a strategist with the Hudson Institute, coined the term “mutual assured destruction” and the acronym MAD in 1962 (80). Nonetheless, the logic to which the term refers undergirded U.S. and Soviet Cold War policy from August 1949, when the U.S.S.R. first detonated a nuclear device.
26. As late as 1961, Paul Goodman’s son was suspended from Bronx Science High School for refusing to participate in drills that involved, in at least one instance, holding a book over one’s head (*The Society I Live in Is Mine* 41).
27. Stilley analyzes *The Empire City* as a menippean satire, attempting in the process to defend it against critics who had failed to appreciate it because they insisted on reading it as a novel.

28. In his 2001 edition, Taylor Stoehr removed *Here Begins*, in accordance with what he perceived were Goodman's original intentions (xxvi–xxvii). In so doing, unfortunately, he removed one of the clearest examples of apocalyptic satire in the tetralogy as Goodman originally published it.
29. Goodman described the project in these terms in an interview with Studs Terkel: "What I try to do in *The Empire City* [. . .] is to take the idea of Don Quixote [. . .] and turn it upside down. Although noble, the Don was rather cracked, moving around in a society where people, most of them peasants, were rather commonsensical. What I do is the reverse: I say the society that any reasonable person lives in today is pretty cracked; and I attempt to bring together a group of characters who are as sane as hammers, calling every spade a spade and acting according to their considered desires which, if they lead into trouble, they reflect on prudently and change. [. . .] Naturally, living in a crazy society, many of the things the group does seem rather weird." (Quoted in Stoehr, xix.)
30. Goodman is attempting something similar to what Heidegger meant by the technique, later appropriated by Derrida, of crossing out words in the text, thereby placing *sous rature* (under erasure) terms he could not avoid, but wished to disavow in their conventional meanings (Spivak, xiv–xviii).
31. In this regard, Malcolm X's use of the term "brainwashed," which appears some three dozen times in his *Autobiography* (1965), is exemplary. He sarcastically re-appropriates a coinage originally introduced into English in the 1950s, to accuse the Chinese of using new techniques of "mind control" to indoctrinate U.S. prisoners of war against their will during the Korean War (Marks 125–26). For Malcolm X, black men in the United States were brainwashed to believe in and accept the racial hierarchy that established their inferiority. For Burroughs, too, writing before 1959, conventional socialization amounts to brainwashing: "'What I'm getting at, Doc, is how can you expect a body to be healthy with its brains washed out? . . . Or put it another way. Can a subject be healthy *in absentia* by proxy already?'" (116–17).
32. Looney analyzes the emergence of the allusion to Dante through multiple drafts of the "Prologue" (87–104), arguing that the prophetic mode of *Invisible Man* is ultimately forged "by the fusion of American and European models with Dante at the gates to the European literary world" (103).
33. *Invisible Man*'s menippean roots reach into *Notes from Underground*, one of the texts Bakhtin uses to exemplify the menippean element in Dostoyevsky (154–55). This intertextuality has been most thoroughly analyzed by Cope, who includes a review of earlier discussions of Ellison's indebtedness to Dostoyevsky.
34. Montgomery identifies the Brotherhood' ideology with that of the Communist Party, despite Ellison's disavowal, in *Shadow and Act*, of any explicit intention of associating the two (46). Moreover, Ellison limits himself to telling *The Paris Review* interviewer that "I didn't identify the Brotherhood's as the C.P." (*Collected Essays* 221), meaning, I take it, that he did not choose to make the association explicit, however obvious it might have been to most readers.

35. The apocalyptic elements are analyzed in detail by Maxine Lavon Montgomery (40–51). Lewicki also discusses apocalypse in *Invisible Man*, though without bringing up its satirical dimension (47–58). In a very suggestive essay whose insights go well beyond *Invisible Man*, Robinson describes the novel as “a pilgrimage punctuated by apocalypse” (7). Ishmael Reed’s *The Freelance Pallbearers* is an outrageous menippean satire structured around an extreme parody of *Invisible Man*. Recognizing the apocalyptic overtones of Ellison’s depiction of the Harlem Riot, Reed incorporated burlesques of the Four Horsemen into the corresponding section of his book along with other references to “the Nazarene apocalypse,” discussed by Lee (177).
36. Beginning with Walsh, a number of scholars have demonstrated Acker’s engagement with Cervantes’s text, culminating in studies by Medeiros-Lichem and Rolando Pérez. Pérez explicitly rejects commentators who argue “that her *Don Quixote* has little or nothing to do with Cervantes’ novel. [...] But this is wrong [...] The synthetically disjunctive relation between DQ1 and DQ2 enrich them both” (97). Linda S. Kauffman offers an extended comparison between Acker’s *Don Quixote* and William Vollman’s *Whores for Gloria*, another postmodern apocalyptic novel that appropriates Cervantes’s magnum opus for its own purposes (208–27).
37. Forcione’s interpretation of *Coloquio de los perros*, based on Biblical allusion and Christian mythology, associates the night with descent into apocalyptic evil, and the dawn with restoration of grace (59–99, 131–145).
38. Acker re-writes here a passage from Jackson (18–19), from which, notably, she has removed the phrase “utopian ideals.”
39. The satirical aspect of apocalyptic imagery in Beat writers, especially Burroughs and Ginsburg, is amply attested in Lardas’s *The Bop Apocalypse*. P. Adams Sitney’s *Visionary Film* discusses the experimental filmmakers of the 1960s in terms that clarify their inclusion here.
40. I address this role here by looking at the content of a few key, influential essays. More broadly, however, this story is linked to CIA-backed funding for a depoliticization of literature that insidiously extended its influence into many areas, including, as Bennett has shown, the teaching of creative writing and the underlying understanding of the appropriate role of the fiction writer (“showing” over “telling”). Saunders’s vast pioneering study of the CIA’s “cultural cold war” remains the most important work in this field, but Wilford provides a valuable domestic focus, and now Joel Whitney’s *Finks* fills gaps in Saunders’s account (especially concerning *The Paris Review*), as well as giving new details about the Latin American context.
41. I take the term “consensus reality” from Bruce Sterling’s interesting essay proposing the constructed genre category “slipstream.”
42. For Tony Jackson, *The Sense of an Ending* is an “exemplary Cold War work of literary criticism” (330), profoundly marked by awareness of the nuclear threat, despite its author’s disavowal. “Kermode wants to convince us that the contemporary sense of an ending is comfortably familiar, but it is not really that way at all” (331). Roland Vésigö admirably paraphrases the retreat into an aesthetic understanding of apocalypse in *The*

- Sense of an Ending*: “Modernism [in Kermode’s view] was right to use apocalyptic fictions to rejuvenate poetic language. But it was absolutely wrong to reduce these fictions to myths that tried to change the world to conform to these fictions” (120).
43. In fact, Musgrave includes an entire chapter on Derrida as a writer of menippean satire in *Grotesque Anatomies*.
44. While not interested in reviving sterile attempts at defining the “literary” in some restrictive way that turns it into a vaguely surreptitious honorific, I do here mean to obliquely evoke Sartre’s assertion of *engagement* as a defining quality of the writer’s vocation in *What Is Literature?*

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