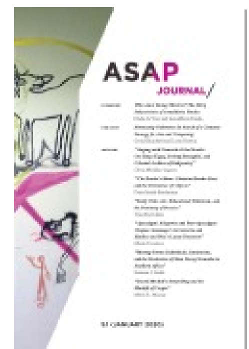
Apocalyptic Allegories and Post-Apocalyptic Utopias: Saramago's *A Caverna* and Sánchez and Pita's *Lunar Braceros*

Micah Donohue

ASAP/Journal, Volume 5, Number 1, January 2020, pp. 129-151 (Article)



Published by Johns Hopkins University Press
DOI: https://doi.org/10.1353/asa.2020.0005

For additional information about this article
https://muse.jhu.edu/article/755034

[This content has been declared free to read by the pubisher during the COVID-19 pandemic.]

Micah Donohue

APOCALYPTIC ALLEGORIES AND POST-APOCALYPTIC UTOPIAS:

SARAMAGO'S *A CAVERNA* AND SÁNCHEZ AND PITA'S *LUNAR BRACEROS*

The twenty-first century has witnessed a planet in crisis. Seemingly every day, new life-ending disasters threaten existence in local and global contexts. As startling reflection, as incisive critique, apocalyptic art has resurged in what JESSICA HURLEY *and* DAN SINYKIN *call a "privileged form for engaging the central aesthetic-political problems of our time: crises that feel like they exceed human scale, human agency, human understanding."*[1] *The two novels that I discuss in this essay—*JOSÉ SARAMAGO'S A Caverna *(2000;* The Cave *[2002]) and* ROSAURA SÁNCHEZ *and* BEATRICE PITA'S Lunar Braceros 2125–2148 *(2009)—are works of apocalyptic science fiction (sf) that depict crisis and catastrophe on regional and planetary scales.*[2] *Although both novels imagine futures on the brink of ruin, their images of environmental and social collapse function as allegories for utopian renewal and transformation. As* CHARLES M. TUNG, ANDREW TATE, *and* SHARAE DECKARD *(among other scholars) have observed,*

MICAH DONOHUE *is an Assistant Professor of English in the Department of Languages and Literature at Eastern New Mexico University. His current book project explores the Gothic, utopian/dystopian, and apocalyptic dimensions of (US-Mexican) borderlands science fiction. His work has been published in journals such as* Science Fiction Studies, Comparative American Studies, Hispanófila, *and* The Comparatist. *He holds a PhD in comparative literature from Pennsylvania State University.*

ASAP/Journal, Vol. 5.1 (2020): 129-152
© 2020 Johns Hopkins University Press.

apocalyptic art can turn solipsistically inward, generating nothing more than "visions of the end of the world."[3] *But in other works, and in particular those created from within or about culturally marginalized communities forced daily to resist cataclysmic realities, apocalypse often figures as a "disruption which enables the re-emergence of utopia as desire and future."*[4] A Caverna *and* Lunar Braceros *are apocalyptic in this latter sense.* SARAMAGO'S *apocalyptic visions dialogue continually with his experiences during and after the* SALAZAR *dictatorship in Portugal, and* SÁNCHEZ *and* PITA'S *work returns to Latin American and Latinx histories of (resisted) oppression to reimagine the present and the future.*[5] *Both novels are allegories of constantly imperiled but never extinguished utopian hope.*

"

. . . the imagery of disaster in* A Caverna *and* Lunar Braceros *functions allegorically not as an emblem of hopelessness but as a symbol for the dire need to re-create society as it currently exists.

"

That is, the imagery of disaster in *A Caverna* and *Lunar Braceros* functions allegorically not as an emblem of hopelessness but as a symbol for the dire need to re-create society as it currently exists. The novels are less about ruined futures or alternative presents (although those are foregrounded in their narratives) than they are ultimately concerned with the "imaginary reconstitution of society," the key function of utopia according to Ruth Levitas.[6] It is a utopian longing for a better world that compels the protagonists of Saramago's novel, the Algor family, to flee the "Centro" [Center]: a microcosm of global capital that has ravaged the unnamed town and surrounding countryside where Cipriano Algor lives with his daughter and her husband. No less than Saramago, Sánchez and Pita have scripted a novel that transforms an apocalyptic future into a locus of "utopian energy," into a "space that makes other sorts of world imagination possible."[7] Set in the twenty-second century, *Lunar Braceros* contrasts the ecological and political havoc that the reckless "accumulation of capital" has wreaked on the Americas, the planet, and the moon with the potentially world-changing resistance of the novel's principal characters: Lydia, one of the eponymous "lunar braceros," and her teenage son Pedro.[8] Sánchez, Pita, and Saramago

> ***Foregrounding the allegorical dimensions of apocalyptic art allows for apocalypse as an aesthetic . . . to be reconsidered in ways that emphasize its long history and contemporary development into a sociopolitical art form and hermeneutic of the present.***

revitalize—in ways that accord with and build on Hurley's and Sinykin's call for a "revaluation of apocalypse"—the world-transforming and revelatory aesthetics of apocalypse in allegorical form.[9] Foregrounding the allegorical dimensions of apocalyptic art allows for apocalypse as an aesthetic (and, in this essay, specifically as a literary genre) to be reconsidered in ways that emphasize its long history and contemporary development into a sociopolitical art form and hermeneutic of the present. *A Caverna* and *Lunar Braceros* engage that history at the same time as they exemplify the interpretive and literary significance of apocalyptic allegories in the twenty-first century.

This essay develops its argument for the revitalization of allegorical critique as a means to uncover and decipher forms of utopian hope within apocalyptic sf through a contrapuntal reading of *A Caverna* and *Lunar Braceros*, a comparison that juxtaposes Latinx and Portuguese texts (emerging from literary traditions that historically have been underrepresented in studies of apocalypse) to emphasize the cross-cultural and multilingual dimensions of apocalyptic literature.[10] Apocalypse, a literal revelation, constitutes an ever-renewing endpoint of allegory, which demands that its readers uncover but also evaluate and interpret its contents. *A Caverna* and *Lunar Braceros* portray the end of the world (in the localized sense of the end of the world as Algor has known it in Saramago's novel, and in the imminence of planetary collapse in Sánchez and Pita's) first to critique the sociocultural conditions that have enabled those disasters, and second to imagine—to invite the reader to imagine—post-apocalyptic utopias beyond the texts' (beyond today's) catastrophic horizons. As Cathryn Josefina Merla-Watson and B. V. Olguín have claimed about "Latin@ sci-fi" generally, and Olguín has argued specifically about *Lunar Braceros*, such works, even at their "most bleak, terrifying, and dystopic," nonetheless "project a utopian spirit through the genre's capacity for incisive social critique."[11] (Silvia

Amorim makes much the same point about utopia and critique in Saramago's novels, which she reads as particularly striking examples of twentieth-century Portuguese literary trends.[12]) *A Caverna* and *Lunar Braceros* weave "minor" and "major" strands of apocalyptic discourse—to borrow James Edward Ford III's brilliant distinction—into allegorical texts that disguise "incisive social critique" and utopian hope within their tightly focused and panoramic displays of historical, present-day, and future catastrophes.[13]

From radically different points of departure (whose marked differences constitute the grounds for their comparison, as Natalie Melas might say, grounds that stretch from the subterranean in Saramago to the planetary and lunar in Sánchez and Pita), both novels quest after what Saramago has called—in simultaneous over- and understatement—"a utopia máxima."[14] This ultimate utopia is distinguished not by its grand political programs, architectural marvels, or scientific discoveries (although it may include these), but rather by its being a space where "o ser humano respeite o ser humano"—where human beings respect one another.[15] It is the struggle for such respect, and for a world in which it could flourish, that Lydia and her son Pedro commit themselves to in *Lunar Braceros*, and it is toward the possibility of both that the Algors flee at the end of *A Caverna*.

Like other contemporary works of apocalyptic fiction and environmental sf, *A Caverna* and *Lunar Braceros* intensify crisis into disaster and its aftermath. They do so in order to propel transformative energy along allegorical channels that direct the reader's critical attention to the present in all its dystopian precariousness and utopian possibilities. *A Caverna* and *Lunar Braceros* exemplify and demand our sustained attention to what is often overlooked or taken for granted: specifically allegorical representations of utopian hope in apocalyptic sf.[16] As apocalyptic allegories that harbor post-apocalyptic utopias, *Lunar Braceros* and *A Caverna* evince the need to preserve futurity as a "radical displacement" into an allegorical and utopian elsewhere, not to escape the present, but to reimagine it, and through that creative-critical labor, to begin remaking it.[17] *Lunar Braceros* narrates the apocalypse of Western modernity taken to its catastrophic extreme, but it also allegorically encodes utopian hope that "the world" is *not* "fully fucked," and that new (noncapitalist, nonecocidal, nonracist, and nonheteronormative) worlds are possible.[18] It is in such a hopeful and utopian sense that Saramago insists that in the first decades of the twenty-first century we need to

“

. . . Lunar Braceros and A Caverna evince the need to preserve futurity as a "radical displacement" into an allegorical and utopian elsewhere, not to escape the present, but to reimagine it, and through that creative-critical labor, to begin remaking it.

”

return to an "old" form that is finding new life in apocalyptic sf. "Precisamos, pois, de voltar à alegoria"—we need, then, to return to allegory.[19]

RETURNING TO ALLEGORY: APOCALYPTIC SF

Fredric Jameson has suggested that "it may be well to think of the Utopian impulse and its hermeneutic in terms of allegory."[20] Behind Jameson's suggestion stands Ernst Bloch's utopian theories, his "principle of hope" [*Prinzip Hoffnung*], and his belief that "allegory contains the archetypes of transitoriness, which is why its meaning is always directed towards *Alteritas*."[21] The *Alteritas* that Bloch highlights, and Jameson makes constitutive of utopia and its interpretation, bridges utopian allegory to apocalypse and sf, the literature of "alterity," writes China Miévelle.[22] Of course not all sf is explicitly allegorical (Seo-Young Chu has emphatically made this point), but in its alterity (the *allos* in allegory), sf inevitably shares in the "otherness" that characterizes allegorical composition.[23] In his seventh-century *Etymologiae*, the Bishop Isidore of Seville famously wrote that "allegory is 'other-speech'": *allegoria est alieniloquium*.[24] That description might be re-rendered and inverted (after all, *inversio* is another word for allegory) in sf terms as the language of aliens is allegory.[25] Utopian, science-fictional, and allegorical narratives contrast other worlds with this one in varying degrees of mimesis that range from realistic verisimilitude to utter estrangement in order to prompt apocalypse, that is, an "uncovering," a "disclosing," a "revelation"—all translations of ἀποκάλυψις, *apokalypsis*—in the reader.

Sf is apocalyptic, as allegory is, in its demand for interpretation and revelation, "for isn't the best SF about clairvoyance—literally, clear seeing—of what's hidden yet advancing upon us?"[26] Perhaps Darko Suvin overstates his case, but his point about clairvoyance does resonate with similar statements

Apocalypse, as "clairvoyance" and as revelation, constitutes the perpetually self-renewing goal of allegorical sf.

about the revelatory function of sf made by Ursula K. Le Guin, Samuel R. Delany, Cixin Liu, Margaret Atwood, and Kim Stanley Robinson.[27] Regardless, the key term of Suvin's question, "clairvoyance," spotlights the poetic and interpretive relationship between sf, allegory, and apocalypse: one leads ceaselessly to the other in an inexhaustible play of obscuring from and revealing to sight and understanding. Apocalypse, as "clairvoyance" and as revelation, constitutes the perpetually self-renewing goal of allegorical sf. The disguises and unveilings of allegory, and the trope's semantic tiers of manifest content and latent meanings, prefigure and require acts of apocalyptic interpretation. But as Brenda Machosky writes, allegory "always remains open-ended," as does sf.[28] This refusal of closure ensures allegory's capacity to generate revelations and to produce interpretations is unlimited.

The Mexican poet Octavio Paz understood this. "Ver una alegoría es interpretarla" [To see an allegory is to interpret it], he wrote in one of his many essays on poetry.[29] Paz also knew that interpretation (the glow of clairvoyance) was never definite: each rereading of the text sheds new light and casts new shadows on its allegorical content. Too often misconstrued as a one-to-one process of coding and decoding, allegory confronts interpretation and composition—poetics and hermeneutics—to create chiaroscuro texts lit by the waxing and waning lights, as well as the evanescent flashes, of apocalyptic understanding. A gradually diffused clarity, a slow coming-to-light characterizes Saramago's writing, claims Ursula K. Le Guin.

In the introduction that she wrote for the e-book *The Complete Novels of José Saramago* (2010)—an essay that she expanded and later republished in *Words Are My Matter* (2016)—Le Guin characterizes Saramago's literature as profoundly allegorical. His novels are a "revelation of mystery," she writes: the mystery of the world as it is—and as it might someday be.[30] *A Caverna*—and the same might be said to varying degrees for all of Saramago's novels—attempts to "revelar o oculto," which Margaret Jull Costa renders into English in the most allegorical of terms as "uncovering what is concealed."[31] *A Caverna* both "uncovers" the mundane violence of market-driven capitalism—a market that

destroys Cipriano Algor's family business—and reveals what may yet emerge from within an economic system that, like the nameless city of the novel, has grown ubiquitous: a different world and different people to inhabit it.

The possibility of utopian transformation—the imaginary or the actual reconstitution of society—is a theme that Saramago continually returns to. Saramago begins "Science-Fiction I," an early poem that he published in the 1960s, with the lines:

> Talvez o nosso mundo se convexe
> Na matriz positiva doutra esfera.
> [Perhaps our world will convex
> In the positive matrix of another sphere.[32]]

These cautiously optimistic lines emblematize Saramago's work as a novelist. However dark his novels may be—and novels like *A Caverna*, *Ensaio sobre a cegueira* (1995; *Blindness* [1997], and *Ensaio sobre a lucidez* (2004; *Seeing* [2006]) are grim indeed—they never exclude the world-transforming possibility of this poem's "perhaps." The hope for an "outra esfera" emerging from the not quite fully wrecked "matriz" of this world reappears in *A Caverna*. (This couplet could very well have supplied a contrapuntal epigraph for the novel alongside the lines from Plato's *Republic*—"Que estrenha cena descreves e que estranhos prisioneiros, São iguais a nós" [What a strange scene you describe and what strange prisoners, They are just like us]—that Saramago quotes at the beginning of *A Caverna*.[33]) A similar hope galvanizes the narrative trajectory of *Lunar Braceros*, which concludes with the beginning of a global revolution, and both novels end on the optative note of "talvez."

A Caverna and *Lunar Braceros* safeguard the utopian hope for a better world, but neither Saramago nor Sánchez and Pita "attempt to dogmatically prefigure the future," a doomed effort as Marx long ago realized.[34] Sánchez and Pita have adopted a "Marxist-inflected" approach to literature, and they apply a "Marxist lens" to interpreting twenty-first-century Latinx culture.[35] Saramago, *mutatis mutandis*, has long advocated for a similarly Marxist-inflected approach to culture, literature, and politics. "Marx," Saramago insisted in 2008, "nunca teve tanta razão como hoje" [has never been so right as today]. But he also argues, and Sánchez and Pita would surely agree with this, that "resuscitating" Marx isn't enough: he has to be reinterpreted in culturally relevant and historically

specific ways.[36] It is in this revisionist sense that *A Caverna* and *Lunar Braceros* construct "new world[s] through criticism of the old," and that the novels have been described as Marxist critical interventions.[37] When Saramago insisted on a return to allegory, as he did after the publication of his best-known novel, *Ensaio sobre a cegeuira*, he described that allegorical turn after a Marxist fashion. Saramago opposes allegory, in a manner consonant with ideology and alienation critique, to "realistic" descriptions of the world—descriptions that disguise and reinforce (rather than apocalyptically revealing and challenging the existence of) the socioeconomic structures dominating everyday life. Saramago's novels, and particularly those written during his so-called allegorical phase, share a common "intention" [*intenção*] to reveal "the world for what it is" [*que . . . é o mundo*].[38] Novels such as *A Caverna* and *Lunar Braceros* attempt to depict "the world more clearly" through their apocalyptic allegories.[39]

Rosaura Sánchez and Beatrice Pita also "return" to allegory to stage a critique of an ever more dystopian world. In *Lunar Braceros*, however, they are less interested in demystifying the ideological nature of what Fredric Jameson calls "the world space of multinational capital" (which might, in admittedly general terms, be called Saramago's project) than they are in adapting Jameson's theory of national allegory to apocalyptic and utopian ends.[40] In "Third World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism" (1986), Jameson provocatively insists that "the story of the private individual is always an allegory of the embattled situation of the public third-world culture and society."[41] Sánchez and Pita reconfigure that claim through their own work on the political allegories of María Amparo Ruiz de Burton, comprehensive knowledge of Latinx and Latin American history, and their intimate familiarity with the sf imaginary to produce a transnational allegory set in the apocalyptic future of *Lunar Braceros*. The novel constellates the stories of multiple individuals, most of whom are people of color and of Latinx descent, in order to cast light on the racist and colonial underpinnings of globalization, and to show the terrible (ongoing) environmental consequences of untrammeled capitalism. Reading *A Caverna* and *Lunar Braceros* in counterpoint casts into sharp relief the many catastrophes bearing down on the present. Both novels apocalyptically reveal "que é o mundo" that it might be reimagined, and then remade.

"Our struggle will be the beginning of a different world," proclaim the revolutionaries in *Lunar Braceros*, and that different world, that "other sphere" as

Saramago writes in his sf poem, will be a better one.[42] The protagonists of *Lunar Braceros* launch a utopian assault on "the hegemonic economy of the world" that has redrawn the global cartography into a handful of transnational business states.[43] The chief of these is Cali-Texas, "home" for most of the characters in the novel. Sánchez and Pita's novel plots a transformative movement inward toward the text's financial center (Cali-Texas) from the figurative margins of *Lunar Braceros*: first the moon, and then another "alternative space," Chinganaza, an Indian technoagricultural commune hidden in the South American rainforests. *A Caverna* depicts the opposite trajectory. The protagonist Cipriano Algor and his family escape to the margins of the text's alephlike microcosm of global capital: the commercial "Centro" that "cresce todos os dias" [grows every day].[44] Both novels, however, are ultimately less concerned with the uncertain futures of their characters (will the revolution succeed? will Algor find a yet more humane world?) than they are invested in revealing, critiquing, and imagining alternatives to our more uncertain present.

Destruction and revelation converge in the apocalyptic allegories that Sánchez, Pita, and Saramago have written. The near future in *Lunar Braceros* and *A Caverna's* alternative present are science fictional extrapolations of contemporary environmental and economic crises that are meant to reveal—to cast light on, in the "clairvoyant" sense of Suvin and Le Guin—worsening realities. But as Walter Benjamin has argued, allegory does not end with "the contemplation of bones" or other ruins, but rather in the "idea of resurrection"; and Sánchez, Pita, and Saramago all end their novels with figures of hope and utopian transformation.[45] In the next section of this essay, to which I turn now, I discuss how *Lunar Braceros* and *A Caverna* exemplify a utopian impetus that galvanizes the allegories at work within apocalyptic sf.

AFTER APOCALYPSE: UTOPIA

The figure of "resurrection" [*Auferstehung*] in *The Origins of German Tragic Drama* provides the dialectical counterpart to a cadaverous image from earlier in Benjamin's work. "In allegory," he writes, "the observer is confronted with the *facies hippocratica* of history as petrified, primordial landscape."[46] In German, Benjamin has "erstarrte Urlandschaft" for the primordial landscape, an image that fossilizes the primeval scene and seems to turn time into a lifeless loop, connecting as it does with the "facies hippocratica," symbol of doomed futurity and

approaching death. Benjamin revisits this paradoxical conjunction in the J convolute of the unfinished *Arcades Project*, when he writes: "In the final analysis, the image of petrified unrest [*erstarrten Unruhe*] called up by allegory, is a historical image."[47] Benjamin transforms allegory into "petrified" history and history into "petrified unrest," descriptions intertextually linked by the repetition of *erstarrt*. Although translated as "petrified" in both cases, the adjective should also be read in its sense of "ossified," as the word prefigures in *German Tragic Drama* the claim that allegory finally abandons the contemplation of "bones" [*der Gebeine*] to fix instead on the idea of resurrection. The *Alteritas* of allegory includes and escapes from the oxymoron of history's frozen unrest into the inchoate present, and *Auferstehung* should be understood in a material (rather than eschatological or soteriological) fashion as the renovation of Benjamin's *Jetztzeit*, the here-and-now of the world.

Benjamin's dialectical image of an "erstarrte Urlandschaft" (and the *Auferstehung* of the present it leads to) finds itself reflected in the final pages of *A Caverna*, which also "resurrects" an ossified primal scene: the Allegory of the Cave in book VII of Plato's *Republic* (514a–517e). But in the apocalyptic allegories of *A Caverna* and *Lunar Braceros*, and in apocalyptic sf more generally, the pendular swing of time switches from predominantly past↔present, symbolized by Benjamin's (by Klee's) Angel with its face "turned toward the past," to present↔future.[48] The shift reorients *Auferstehung* more toward the future in the hope that the present world might yet arise from under the ruins that have piled up but have still not entombed it completely. This change in temporality resonates with Charles M. Tung's realization, made through his own revisionist reading of Benjamin's Angel of History, that an "imagination of alternatives," and alternative futures, "is more urgent now than ever."[49] Saramago speaks to this utopian "resurrection of the present" in *Ensaio sobre a ceguiera*, when the novel's protagonist proclaims the *resurgence* of the city's devastated population.[50] In *A Caverna*, the imagery of resurrection is reconfigured in secular form through Cipriano Algor's descent into and ascent from the recently discovered tableau of Plato's cave that has lurked in darkness underneath the commercial "Centro" as its invisible foundation.

By the end of the novel, Cipriano has found himself living in the Center as a retiree of sorts. His pottery business failed after the Center canceled its contracts with him, and the plan he hatches with his daughter, Marta, to manufacture

novelty dolls similarly fails after the Center's reports on the clay figurines are not favorable. *A Caverna* depicts, tenderheartedly but implacably, "a catastrófica situação" [the catastrophic situation] of traditional modes of production such as the earthenware pottery practiced by the Algors, an artisanal vocation that the Center (which prefers the malleability and homogeneity of plastics) is in the process of rendering obsolete.[51] Left with no other options, he agrees to move in with his daughter and son-in-law Marçal, recently promoted to a residential guard at the Center—a promotion that comes with the perk of onsite living quarters. The road from the small village where Cipriano has lived his entire life to the Center winds through a landscape of devastation. Descriptions of the once verdant countryside repeat throughout the novel, and each time Saramago emphasizes how manufacturing plants, refineries, warehouses, and greenhouses have scarred the terrain. Cipriano is particularly sensitive to the so-called Green Belt, former farmland that still produces grains and vegetables but now entirely from within artificially lit and heated buildings. "E é isto que chamam Cintura Verde, pensou, a esta desolação" [And this is what they call the Green Belt, he thought, this desolation].[52] The "desolação" of the Green Belt prefigures in inverted form the desolation of the Center, and both combine to form a dystopian environment that Cipriano will eventually try to escape.

The Green Belt externalizes the destructive and unnatural consequences of production in the region, but the Center internalizes and attempts to disguise those same consequences behind garish shop fronts and virtual reality entertainment centers. The inhabitants of the Center have become so habituated to their increasingly artificial existence that many choose apartments with windows that cannot be opened facing the interior of the shopping complex, and most prefer to experience—and pay for—"sensações naturais" [natural sensations] artificially produced in different Nature attractions.[53] When Marta remarks that the snow and wind and rain of the attraction "não é nada que não se veja todos os dias lá fora" [that's nothing you can't see every day outside], Cipriano agrees, and relates that he said much the same thing to a grizzled veteran of the Center, who responded, "Tenho pena de si, nunca poderá entender" [I feel sorry for you, you just don't understand].[54] The substitution of simulacra and spectacle for substance, and the alienation in the Marxist sense of *Entfremdung* that it entails, achieves its negative apotheosis in the discovery of Plato's cave below the lowest basements of the Center. When Cipriano descends there, he experiences the harrowing shock of an uncanny recognition. The nightmare of Plato's

unearthed cave, an excavated allegory that doubles as the novel's title, contains Cipriano himself, his family, and his entire world.

"Que pesadelo é este" [what is this nightmare], wonders Cipriano as he makes his way into the dig site. What he sees is a tableau mort of mummified bodies—three men, three women—sitting on a stone bench. Though lit only by the small lantern that Cipriano carries, the scene is limned narratively with language that reflects but also transforms Socrates's dialogue with Glaucon in the *Republic*. The remnants of the "bonds" [*ataduras*] that constrained the mesmerized spectators are still visible, and behind them Cipriano notices "uma grande mancha negra" [a large black stain] where once a fire had burned and cast moving shadows on the cave's wall that faced them.[55] From the title and epigraph on, the trajectory of the novel has led to this intertextual irruption of Plato into the "reality" of Cipriano's world (creating a mise-en-abyme and meta-allegorical narrative structure for the reader in the process). Cipriano knows what he's seeing "cannot be real" [*não pode ser real*], and yet it is, and he cannot fool himself into believing it's an "illusion" [*ilusão*] or a "dream" [*sonho*].[56] Worse still, Cipriano recognizes himself and everything he knows in the dimly lit space around him. Later, as he describes what he saw to his daughter, he insists that the mummified figures, the "prisoners" from the novel's epigraph, "somos nós, eu, tu, o Marçal, o Centro todo, provavelmente o mundo" [are us, me, you, Marçal, the whole Center, probably the world].[57] Like Plato's allegory, and again unlike it, the cave reveals "a verdade das coisas" [the truth of things] through the allegorical interplay of light and dark, fire and shadows.[58]

What David G. Frier calls an "eco literario" [literary echo] of the *Republic* VII, 514a–517a, where "the shadows" of "artificial objects" pass for "reality," is more than a "recriação" [recreation] of Plato's text, insists José N. Ornelas.[59] Saramago recreates Plato's archetypal scene, but he inverts it even as he repeats it. Plato's nameless denizen ascends from the darkness to gradually habituate himself to the solar light of formal truth only to return below and try to rationalize his fellow prisoners away from the dark. But it is in the shadows (created, in a sense, by the small lantern) that "the truth of things" becomes evident to Cirpriano. And it is a harrowing truth: "somos nós." Again, this echoes even as it distorts Plato's "strange prisoners . . . like to us." For in the *Republic*, the recognition of imprisonment initiates a process of (literal and figurative) enlightenment that will culminate, as Socrates shifts from the allegory

back to his overall project, in a city of truth ruled by philosopher kings. In *A Caverna*, however, Cipriano's growing awareness of his own situation—his imprisonment and gradual mummification—leads to no "grand" political or metaphysical "epiphany," as Le Guin might say, but rather culminates in a biological, animal-like flight response.[60] "Vocês decidirão a vossa vida" [You must decide what to do with your own lives], Cipriano says to his family (and Saramago writes to his readers), "eu vou-me embora" [but I'm leaving].[61] Rather than have Cipriano ascend from a cave that has become a crypt to confront the inhabitants of the Center with the parallels between their situation and that of the "erstarrte Urlandschaft" below them, Saramago writes a different conclusion for Cipriano and his family. They pile their belongings into a battered van and flee, leaving the Center—which a billboard proclaims will soon be featuring the "atracção exclusiva" [exclusive attraction] of Plato's Cave—behind them.[62]

Although the attempted escape is likely to fail (as the juggernaut-like Center relentlessly expands), Cipriano nevertheless focalizes the "manifest injustice" of the Center and the forces of globalization, the worst "excesses of a capitalist system," that the Center allegorizes.[63] His flight points out the need, an urgent need that Saramago did not believe was restricted to the pages of his novel, to reconstitute the ethical, economic, and technological structures of a market-driven society that allegorically encodes the "sistema cruel" [cruel system] of global capital.[64] However threatened it may be, hope for Levitas's utopian "reconstitution of society" exists in the blank space that follows the last word of Saramago's apocalyptic allegory. It is that hope that turns the novel's characters away from "the contemplation of bones" underneath the Center and toward Benjamin's "resurrection," an *Auferstehung* of the present for the sake of the future.

> ***"However threatened it may be, hope . . . exists in the blank space that follows the last word of Saramago's apocalyptic allegory."***

While Saramago's novel ends with a flight toward hope, Sánchez and Pita's *Lunar Braceros* concludes with a hopeful image of return. In fact, over the circling course of the novel, *Lunar Braceros* enacts multiple returns: geographic, temporal, and narrative. The protagonist's son Pedro, in an analeptic rehearsal of the novel's beginning, sends a message to his "tío," or uncle. He announces his intention to return to Cali-Texas, "find his

mom and dad," and "join them in the struggle" to revolutionize and transform the world, to create a new beginning in other words.[65] While the narrative trajectories of *A Caverna* and *Lunar Braceros* invert one another, moving from flight to return, both novels exemplify utopian goals of social transformation through their use of apocalyptic allegory. In their introduction to María Amparo Ruiz de Burton's *Who Would Have Thought It* (1872), republished by Arte Público Press in 1995, Sánchez and Pita describe the early Latinx novel as "an allegory of the modernization of the U.S. attained through plunder, corruption and war."[66] In *Lunar Braceros*, the first novel that Sánchez and Pita have cowritten, the two authors construct an apocalyptic allegory that portrays the "plunder, corruption and war" of a vastly modified United States. In the twenty-second century, the USA has split along an East/West axis between a puppet state of the NIO (or New Imperial Order, a "consortia" of the world's "ten dominant multinational" corporations) and Cali-Texas, the planet's dominant economic power.[67]

Lunar Braceros consists of recorded messages, mostly from Lydia, a programmer turned activist, to her son, Pedro. At a formal level, these messages constellate narrative fragments, a kaleidoscopic array of points-of-view, and global and off-planet locations into a collagelike epistolary text that superimposes postmodern and rascuache aesthetics.[68] In terms of plot, the messages reveal the story of how Lydia was forced to work on the moon as a "lowly lunar bracero" to avoid a lengthy prison sentence for state-deemed "terrorist" (i.e., social protest) activities.[69] In the near future, environmental calamities resulting from overproduction of nuclear and chemical waste have ravaged the planet and threaten to make it inhospitable. "Ecologically," Lydia explains, "the planet is one enormous haz-mat zone."[70] As it does in many other works of contemporary apocalyptic literature, the trope of ecocatastrophe plays a central role in *Lunar Braceros*. To ameliorate that devastation, and to contain the surplus waste that could no longer be stored on earth, "the moon became one more spatial fix for capital."[71] Once on the moon, Lydia helps lead a rebellion against the economic interests of Cali-Texas, a revolt that forces the lunar braceros to flee to Chinganaza, hidden in what remains of the Amazon rainforest.

Unlike Saramago, who provides no refuge for the Algors (except for a nebulous *out there* that may not and, sadly, likely will not prove exempt from the Center's control), Sánchez and Pita intentionally create in Chinganaza a utopian counterpoint to the dystopian violence and terror of the twenty-second century. In particular,

Chinganaza represents the environmental, ideological, and communal opposite of the Reservations, "prison labor camps" in Cali-Texas where social undesirables are confined in the "new police state."[72] Under the guidance of Guamán the Elder, the "commons" of Chinganaza has flourished as one of the few remaining sites of "equality and tolerance for difference," the respect of Saramago's "utopia máxima," in the world.[73] Despite its remote setting, and its preservation (its celebration) of Indigenous—particularly Incan—lifeways, Chinganaza endorses no Luddite rejection of technology. Rather the opposite. Hackers from Chinganaza, aided by the recently arrived Lunar Braceros, work in concert with an Anonymous-like "anarcho group that was setting up a global communication center linking anticapitalist movements throughout the world."[74] Despite the precariousness of Chinganaza—"a tiny bubble in a turbulent world" continually threatened by the economic and environmental depredations of the NIO—the commune provides a ray of hope for Sánchez and Pita's embattled characters.[75]

"Sanchez and Pita's speculative synthesis of a revolutionary, multiracial, anti-capitalist insurgency has an important locus in the majority-[I]ndigenous commune of Chinganaza," writes B. V. Olguín. The fusion of "an agrarian utopia with hyper-technological realities," Chinganaza represents a humane and eco-conscious alternative in *Lunar Braceros* to the dehumanizing and environmentally disastrous consequences of globalization allegorically coded into the sprawl of Cali-Texas.[76] "Pedro, you will need to remember this alternative space in which you were born," Lydia tells her son, "and recall always that space is a product of social relations. . . . I want you never to forget this particular place, our commons, and that it represents a rejection of everything that is hegemonic and dominated by capital relations."[77] Chinganaza, Lydia makes clear, refuses absolutely the neoliberal tenets of globalization, but it also represents (to repeat Lydia's word) a great deal more than that. As Lysa Rivera writes, *Lunar Braceros* "imagines the future of labor exploitation along the borderlands while it simultaneously re-tells a deeper colonial history."[78] Chinganaza reinscribes, even as it contests, the colonial and capitalist history of the Americas at the same time as it gestures to the precontact Indigenous past and a possible future not overdetermined by the myriad catastrophes of modernist history and (still ongoing) colonialism. In this, *Lunar Braceros* narratively accomplishes what the Argentinian-Mexican philosopher Enrique Dussel has theorized as a "transmodern" world, a world in which social, political, and ethical ideals are rethought and enacted from historically marginalized positions.[79]

Chinganaza juxtaposes, in order to dialectically combine, what Mexican essayist Alfonso Reyes calls anticipatory and retrospective utopias (in the latter, utopia looks forward to imagined futures, and in the former, to golden ages of the past).[80] The utopian past and future tenses combine in Chinganaza: the commune exemplifies the "unlikely combinations" that typify the combinatorial poetics of Latin American and Latinx sf.[81] The Andean past, preserved and updated in the technoagrarian commune, will serve as a "model," Lydia tells Pedro, "for you and others like you to build a new beginning elsewhere."[82] That model fuses, in a burst of utopian energy, Reyes's two utopias and Dussel's transmodern world into a paradigm of a better future located in a literal and allegorical elsewhere. Literal in that Pedro leaves Chinganaza to travel north in a desperate bid to incite revolution and reform—along the lines of the "model" of his home—in Cali-Texas, whose constantly expanding (Center-like) shadow has begun to darken even the cyberpastoral of Chinganaza. Allegorical in that utopia and sf have always entailed speaking from or about an elsewhere, and Lydia's and Pedro's "nanotext" letters stitch together the moon and earth, Chinganaza and Cali-Texas, and the past, present, and future. Those juxtapositions serve to counterpoint vying narratives of destruction and re-creation, burial and resurrection. As Pedro journeys home, he moves toward utopia, just as Algor did, albeit in a different direction, and for radically different reasons. But both characters, and both novels, hold out hope for the *Auferstehung*, what Levitas would call the reconstitution, of the present (theirs, ours): the resting point, finally, of allegory's temporal swing. The fictive catastrophes and destructive apocalypses of their imagined futures flash like hazard lights for the world today. Darko Suvin describes sf as "a diagnosis, a warning, a call to understanding."[83] But more than just warnings, apocalyptic allegories are revelations; they are "clairvoyant" texts that reveal possible transformations of the world, and not just its looming destruction.

"

. . . More than just warnings, apocalyptic allegories are . . . "clairvoyant" texts that reveal possible transformations of the world, and not just its looming destruction.

"

NEGATING THE "NEGATION OF APOCALYPSE": AN OPEN CONCLUSION

In a recent essay, Rebecca Evans argues for "an open apocalypse, one that threatens, but does not resolve neatly in a cathartic finality."[84] The apocalyptic allegories and post-apocalyptic utopias of *A Caverna* and *Lunar Braceros* exemplify the openness and lack of resolution that Evans emphasizes. In its call for openness, and in the broadening of futurity beyond predetermined ends entailed by that openness, Evan's essay also spotlights how many works of environmental and apocalyptic sf (of which I take Saramago's and Sánchez and Pita's novels to be particularly striking examples) resist a counterdiscourse in apocalypse studies, that of the negation of apocalypse and the denial of revelation, futurity, and utopian hope.

In the current era of climate change, nuclear peril, and (continual) global human rights abuses, the meaning of apocalypse has fundamentally changed, writes the French philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy. What once signified "unveiling" and "revelation," now "révèle qu'il n'y a rien [à] reveler" [reveals that there is nothing to reveal].[85] Utopian critic Krishan Kumar writes in a similar vein that "apocalyptic thought today seems singularly unhopeful of, or indifferent to, a new beginning." Apocalypse, continues Kumar, "proclaims endings without beginnings" and "global catastrophes without any real hope that we will survive these."[86] The Anthropocene confronts planetary life with "la menace d'une apocalypse ouvrant sur rien, sur la négation de l'apocalypse" [the threat of an apocalypse that opens onto nothing, onto the negation of apocalypse], writes Nancy.[87] This antiutopian, decidedly antiallegorical paring down of apocalypse to destruction alone is what Saramago and Sánchez and Pita reject in *A Caverna* and *Lunar Braceros*. They negate, in other words, Nancy's "negation of apocalypse."

Very much in the spirit of Evans's "openness," *A Caverna* and *Lunar Braceros* fold that negation into their narratives as a perpetual threat to—but by no means as the guaranteed victor over—the allegorized expressions of utopian hope that they also include. It is the one-sidedness of Nancy's position, and his refusal of optative, utopian futurity (and his refusal should be read, here, in synecdochal terms of a larger discursive trend), that Saramago, Sánchez, and Pita can be said

to refuse. Their novels encompass but ultimately deny the validity of assertions like Nancy's:

> Our thinking must no longer be either about crisis or plan. But we know no other model for thinking about the "better." Ever since we have wanted a "better," ever since we have wanted to change and ameliorate the world and humankind, we have only thought in terms of regeneration or new generation: Remake or make a better world and humankind.[88]

A Caverna and *Lunar Braceros* safeguard the "project" [*projet*], that is also a "projection" into the future, that Nancy abandons, just as the novels preserve the utopian of "remaking the world and its inhabitants better" [*refaire . . . un monde et un homme meilleurs*] than they are today. Apocalypse as revelation, and allegory as the unveiling of post-apocalyptic utopian hope, is necessary now more than ever, a fact that Saramago, Sánchez, and Pita have underscored in *A Caverna* and *Lunar Braceros*. Their novels are departure points and signposts toward the elsewhere of Saramago's "utopia máxima" and the "different world" of Lydia, Pedro, and the rest of the Lunar Braceros. *A Caverna* and *Lunar Braceros* are oriented toward transformation: the change they seek today has been projected into the future in the allegorical form of utopian and apocalyptic hope.

“**A Caverna** ***and*** **Lunar Braceros** ***are oriented toward transformation: the change they seek today has been projected into the future in the allegorical form of utopian and apocalyptic hope.***”

Notes

[1] Jessica Hurley and Dan Sinykin, "Apocalypse: Introduction," *ASAP/Journal* 3, no. 3 (2018): 456.

[2] José Saramago, *A Caverna* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2001); English translations follow *The Cave*, trans. Margaret Jull Costa (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2002); Rosaura Sánchez and Beatrice Pita, *Lunar Braceros 2125–2148* (National City, CA: Calaca Press, 2009). Whenever possible in this essay, I rely on published translations; these will be indicated in the notes. Unattributed translations are my own.

[3] Charles M. Tung, "The Angel of Alternate History and Apocalyptic Hope," *ASAP/Journal* 3, no. 3 (2018): 551. See also Andrew Tate, *Apocalyptic Fiction* (London:

Bloomsbury Academic, 2017); and Sharae Deckard, *Paradise Discourse, Imperialism, and Globalization: Exploiting Eden* (New York: Routledge, 2010).

[4] Deckard, *Paradise Discourse*, 196.

[5] For the most recent discussion of Saramago's historically situated apocalypticism, see Carlo Salzani, "Correcting History: Apocalypticism, Messianism and Saramago's Philosophy of History," in *Saramago's Philosophical Heritage*, ed. Carlo Salzani and Kristof K. P. Vanhoutte (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 19–38. For the ways in which *Lunar Braceros* accomplishes a "retemporalization of the present and the recovery of futurity as hope," see Mathias Nilges, "The Dialectics of Presence and Futurity in the Contemporary U.S. Latino/a Novel," in *Dialectical Imaginaries: Materialist Approaches to U.S. Latino/a Literature in the Age of Neoliberalism*, ed. Marcial González and Carlos Gallego (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2018), 217–40.

[6] Ruth Levitas, "The Imaginary Reconstitution of Society: Utopia as Method," in *Utopia Method Vision: The Use Value of Social Dreaming*, ed. Tom Moylan and Raffaella Baccolini (Oxford, UK: Peter Lang, 2007), 47.

[7] Jacqueline M. Hidalgo, *Revelation in Aztlán: Scriptures, Utopias, and the Chicano Movement* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 14.

[8] Sánchez and Pita, *Lunar Braceros*, 31. "Lunar Bracero" combines the exploitative and racist history of the U.S.-Mexican Bracero labor program with the futuristic redeployment of such exploitative labor to the moon.

[9] Hurley and Sinykin, "Apocalypse: Introduction," 453.

[10] Recently, more critical attention than ever has been paid to the science-fictional, speculative, and apocalyptic dimensions of Latinx literature. See, for example, "Imagining the Future of Latinx Speculative Fictions," a cluster of articles edited by Renee Hudston and published in 2019 on *ASAP/J*'s open-access platform: asapjournal.com/imagining-the-futures-of-latinx-speculative-fictions-renee-hudson/. This essay contributes to that scholarship by calling attention to the specifically allegorical and utopian dimensions of Latinx apocalyptic fiction.

[11] Cathryn Josefina Merla-Watson and B. V. Olguín, "Altermundos: Reassessing the Past, Present, and Future of the Chican@ and Latin@ Speculative Arts," in *Altermundos: Latin@ Speculative Literature, Film, and Popular Culture*, ed. Cathryn Josefina Merla-Watson and B. V. Olguín (Los Angeles: UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center Press, 2017), 6.

[12] Silvia Amorim, *José Saramago: Art, théorie et éthique du roman* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2010), 49.

[13] James Edward Ford III, "When Disaster Strikes: On the Apocalyptic Tone of 1990s Hip Hop," *ASAP/Journal* 3, no. 3 (2018): 597–601.

[14] Natalie Melas, "Grounds for Comparison," in *All the Difference in the World: Postcoloniality and the Ends of Comparison* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), 1–43; José Saramago, *nas suas palavras*, ed. Fernando Gómez Aguilera (Lisbon: Caminho, 2010), 315.

[15] Saramago, *nas suas palavras*, 315.

[16] It should be noted, if only in passing, that discussions of allegorical representations of dystopia have not been lacking in apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic sf. Thus, Heather Hicks compellingly and representatively argues that the genres narratively portray "the collapse of modernity itself." Hicks, *The Post-Apocalyptic Novel in the Twenty-First Century: Modernity beyond Salvage* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 2.

[17] Jon Whitman, "A Retrospective Forward: Interpretation, Allegory, and Historical Change," *Interpretation and Allegory: Antiquity to the Modern Period*, ed. Jon Whitman (Leiden, Belgium: Brill, 2003), 23.

[18] Sánchez and Pita, *Lunar Braceros*, 21.

[19] Saramago, *nas suas palavras*, 254.

[20] Fredric Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions* (New York: Verso, 2007), 4.

[21] Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, trans. Neville Plaice, et al., vol. 1 (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1986), 176.

[22] China Miéville, afterword to *Red Planets: Marxism and Science Fiction*, ed. Mark Bould and China Miéville (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2009), 244.

[23] Seo-Young Chu, "What Science Fiction Is *Not*: Allegory," in *Do Metaphors Dream of Literal Sleep? A Science-Fictional Theory of Representation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 75–80.

[24] *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, ed. Stephen A. Barney, et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 63.

[25] *The Institutio Oratoria of Quintilian*, vol. 3, trans. H. E. Butler (New York: GP Putnam's Sons, 1922), 326–27.

[26] Darko Suvin, "Afterword: With Sober, Estranged Eyes," in *Learning from Other Worlds: Estrangement, Cognition, and the Politics of Science Fiction and Utopia*, ed. Patrick Parrinder (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), 237.

[27] Ursula K. Le Guin, introduction to *The Left Hand of Darkness* (New York: Ace, 2010), xiv-xv; Samuel R. Delany, *Starboard Wine: More Notes on the Language of Science Fiction* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2012), 13; Cixin Liu, author's postscript to *The Three-Body Problem*, trans. Ken Liu (2006; New York: Tor, 2014), 394; Margaret Atwood, *In Other Worlds: SF and the Human Imagination* (New York: Anchor, 2011), 20–21, 88–90; and Kim Stanley Robinson, "Afterword: Still, I'm Reluctant to Call This Pessimism," in *Green Planets: Ecology and Science Fiction*, ed. Gerry Canavan and Kim Stanley Robinson (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2014), 246–47.

[28] Brenda Machosky, *Structures of Appearing: Allegory and the Work of Literature* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 20.

[29] Octavio Paz, "Contar y cantar: sobre el poema extenso," *Vuelta* 115 (June 1986): 13.

[30] Ursula K. Le Guin, "Examples of Dignity: Thoughts on the Work of José Saramago," in *Words Are My Matter: Writings about Life and Books, 2000–2016* (Easthampton, UK: Small Beer Press, 2016), 154.

[31] Saramago, *A Caverna*, 83; *The Cave*, 67.

[32] José Saramago, *Poesía completa* (Buenos Aires: Alfaguara, 2005), 104. Far from being an outlier in Saramago's work, this poem (and its "sequel," "Science-Fiction II"), as Horácio Costa makes clear in *José Saramago: O período formativo* (Lisbon: Caminho, 1997), 68–69, is indicative of Saramago's career-spanning interest in futuristic and sf themes.

[33] The lines that Saramago quotes from *The Republic* are found in Book VII (at 515a) in the edition of the work included in *Plato: The Collected Dialogues, Including the Letters*, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 747.

[34] Karl Marx, "For a Ruthless Criticism of Everything Existing," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: Norton, 1978), 13.

[35] Rosaura Sánchez and Beatrice Pita, "Marxism, Materialism, and Latino/a Literature: What Is at Stake?," in González and Gallego, *Dialectical Imaginaries*, 22. See also Sánchez's interview with Jesús Rosales in *Thinking en español: Interviews with Critics of Chicana/o Literature* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2014), 182–83.

[36] Saramago, *nas suas palavras*, 388–89.

[37] Marx, "For a Ruthless Criticism," 13. B. V. Olguín describes *Lunar Braceros* as a "Marxist speculative intervention" in "Contrapuntal Cyborgs? The Ideological Limits and Revolutionary Potential of Latin@ Science Fiction," in Merla-Watson and Olguín, *Altermundos*, 137. For a discussion of Saramago's Marxist interventions, and how those interventions function as a "means of identifying what is wrong with the society in which we live," see David G. Frier, *The Novels of José Saramago: Echoes from the Past, Pathways into the Future* (Cardiff, UK: University of Wales Press, 2007), 136.

[38] Saramago, *nas suas palavras*, 325. For a discussion of Saramago's "allegorical turn," see José Ornelas, "José Saramago—Apresentação geral da obra," *Ciências Humanas e Sociais em Revista* 33, no. 2 (2011): 202.

[39] Le Guin, "Examples of Dignity," 154.

[40] Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 54.

[41] Fredric Jameson, "Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism," *Social Text* 15 (Autumn 1986): 69.

[42] Sánchez and Pita, *Lunar Braceros*, 118.

[43] Ibid., 11.

[44] Saramago, *A Caverna* 281; *The Cave*, 243.

[45] Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. John Osborne (1928; London: Verso, 2009), 233.

[46] Ibid., 166; for the German phrase in the following sentence, see *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiel*, in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1.1, ed. Rolf Tiedemann and Herman Schweppenhäuser (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1991), 343.

[47] Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 366; for the German, see *Das*

Passagen-Werk in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 5.1, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1991), 463.

[48] Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn, ed. (New York: Schocken, 2007), 257.

[49] Tung, "Angel of Alternate History," 551.

[50] José Saramago, *Ensaio sobre a cegueira* (1995; Lisbon: Caminho, 2008), 287; English translations follow *Blindness*, trans. Giovanni Pontiero (San Diego: Harcourt, 1999), 302.

[51] Saramago, *A Caverna*, 96; *The Cave*, 80.

[52] Ibid., 253; 218.

[53] Ibid., 312; 273.

[54] Ibid., 314; 274–75.

[55] Ibid., 332–34; 291–93.

[56] Ibid., 333; 293.

[57] Ibid., 334–35; 294.

[58] Ibid., 332; 292.

[59] David G. Frier, "Viagem para as ilhas do Sul: uma leitura de *A Caverna* de José Saramago," *Veredas* 5 (2002): 41; Plato, *Republic*, in Hamilton and Cairns, *Collected Dialogues*, 748; Ornelas, "José Saramago," 204.

[60] Le Guin, "Examples of Dignity," 154.

[61] Saramago, *A Caverna*, 335; *The Cave*, 294.

[62] Ibid., 350; 307.

[63] Hania A. M. Nashef, "Specters of Doom: Saramago's Dystopias in *Blindness* and *The Cave*," *Orbis Litterarum* 70, no. 3 (2015): 218.

[64] Saramago, *nas suas palavras*, 326.

[65] Sánchez and Pita, *Lunar Braceros*, 20.

[66] Sánchez and Pita, introduction to *Who Would Have Thought It?*, by María Amparo Ruiz de Burton, ed. Rosaura Sánchez and Beatrice Pita (Houston: Arte Público Press, 1995), lviii.

[67] Sánchez and Pita, *Lunar Braceros*, 11.

[68] For a recent discussion of rascuache (or "rasquache") aesthetics, see Ella Maria Diaz, "A Genealogy of Rasquache and Camp: Luis Alfaro and the Royal Chicano Air Force," *ASAP/Journal* 2, no. 1 (2017): 105–29. For Sánchez's own discussion of the intersections between Chicanx literature and postmodern aesthetics, see "Postmodernism and Chicano Literature," *Aztlán* 18, no. 2 (1989): 1–14.

[69] Sánchez and Pita, *Lunar Braceros*, 8.

[70] Ibid., 13.

[71] Ibid., 16.

[72] Ibid., 19.

[73] Ibid., 25, 21.

[74] Ibid., 114.

[75] Ibid., 119.

[76] Olguín, "Contrapuntal Cyborgs?," Merla-Watson and Olguín, *Altermundos*, 138, 140.

[77] Sánchez and Pita, *Lunar Braceros*, 25.

[78] Lysa Rivera, "Future Histories and Cyborg Labor: Reading Borderlands Science Fiction after NAFTA," *Science Fiction Studies* 39, no. 3 (2012): 427.

[79] Enrique Dussel, "Sistema-Mundo y 'Trans'-Modernidad," in *Hacia una filosofía política crítica*, ed. Juan Antonio Senent (Bilbão: Desclée de Brouwer, 2001), 387–407.

[80] Alfonso Reyes, *No hay tal lugar*, in *Obras completas*, vol. 11 (Mexico City: FCE, 1997), 341.

[81] J. Andrew Brown and M. Elizabeth Ginway, introduction to *Latin American Science Fiction: Theory and Practice*, ed. M. Elizabeth Ginway and J. Andrew Brown (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 2, 10.

[82] Sánchez and Pita, *Lunar Braceros*, 25–26.

[83] Darko Suvin, *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction: On the Poetics and History of a Literary Genre*, ed. Gerry Canavan (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1979), 12.

[84] Rebecca M. Evans, "The Best of Times, the Worst of Times, the End of Times?: The Uses and Abuses of Environmental Apocalypse," *ASAP/Journal* 3, no. 3 (2018): 502–03.

[85] Jean-Luc Nancy, *L'É quivalence des catastrophes (Après Fukushima)* (Paris: Galilée, 2012), 39; English translations follow *After Fukushima: The Equivalence of Catastrophes*, trans. Charlotte Mandell (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015), 20–21.

[86] Krishan Kumar, "The Ends of Utopia" *New Literary History* 41, no. 3 (Summer 2010): 561.

[87] Nancy, *L'É quivalence*, 39; *Equivalence*, 21.

[88] Ibid., 58; 35.