

IMAGES OF THE APOCALYPSE IN LATIN AMERICAN HARDBOILED: PRETERIST, FUTURIST, AND POSTMODERN INTERPRETATIONS

OSVALDO DI PAOLO*

ABSTRACT. The end of the world is a millennial archetype, which has become quite popular in recent times. The current obsession with the destruction of the planet is also present in hardboiled literature. A great number of the XXI Century hardboiled genre presents an apocalyptic view that fluctuates between a vague moan and a deadly explosion. In this particular case, the urban landscapes of Medellín, Havana, and Buenos Aires are seen as chaotic and disheartening, immersed in irrational and catastrophic violence, heralding the destruction of these Latin American cities. In order to prove my thesis, I analyze *Rosario Tijeras* (2000) by Jorge Franco, *Yesterday's Mist* (2005) by Leonardo Padura, *Holly City* (2010) by Guillermo Orsi and *77* (2009) by Guillermo Saccomanno. From each text, I present a summary of the story in order to reveal the apocalyptic tendencies in the novels, along with the social implications they convey.

KEY WORDS: hardboiled, apocalypse, Latin American fiction

The destruction of the World is a contemporary enigma and concern, either unuttered or manifested in cultural productions—cinema, television, literature, plastic arts—of the new millennium. For example, the apocalypse is the main theme of the sixth season of the television program *Dexter* (2011). Dexter, a policeman and vigilante killer, chases a murderer who recreates the atrocious deaths mentioned in the Apocalypse of John. On the big screen, the blockbuster *2012* (2009), directed by Roland Emmerich, explores the Mayan prediction that the world will come to an end. Similarly, in the field of plastic arts, the work of Russian artist Vladimir Manyuhin centers on this subject as well.

A popular genre *par excellence*, the *novela negra hispanoamericana*—contemporary Hispanic hardboiled fiction—also manifests the unrest associated with being curious and fearful of nearing end.¹ The novels *Rosario*

* OSVALDO DI PAOLO (PhD) is Professor of Latin American Literature at Austin Peay State University in Clarksville, Tennessee. E-mail: dipaoloo@apsu.edu

1 Starting in the late 1950s, the hardboiled genre in Spanish American countries has become undoubtedly popular. At that time, the traditional detective novel, in which a detective offered a rational explanation to an enigma, was transformed gradually into

Tijeras (2000), by Jorge Franco, *La neblina de ayer* (“Yesterday’s Mist”, 2005), by Leonardo Padura, 77, by Guillermo Saccomanno, and *Ciudad santa* (“Holy City”, 2010), by Guillermo Orsi, are examples of this. In all of these stories, the urban landscape is seen as chaotic and disheartening, immersed in irrational and catastrophic violence, heralding the destruction of Medellín, Havana and Buenos Aires. These novels share an apocalyptic outlook, the form of which fluctuates between a vague moan and a deadly explosion.

The idea of the future annihilation of the world was first entertained by Zoroaster, an Iranian prophet who lived between the years 1400 and 1000 BC. According to Zoroastrianism, there are two opposing forces in the universe: Ahura Mazda, representative of Evil and predecessor of the Judeo-Christian figure of Satan, and Ahriman, representative of Good. Zoroaster believed that the world was a great battle field and that, one day, the war would come to an end in a great fight, the *Zoroastrian Armageddon*, between Ahura Mazda and Ahriman (Lewis, 2001: 4).²

This ancient archetype of the end of times can also be found in Judaism and Islam, which predict the arrival of a judgment day. Christianity discusses the notion in the Apocalypse of John, one of the most mysterious parts of the New Testament, and in St Augustine’s *City of God*. In his book, Augustine proposes a symbolic reading of this book of the Bible, attempting to depart from the traditional view of apocalyptic millennialism³, an eschatological early Christian belief that the Kingdom of Christ would last one thousand years and would end with the coming of the Antichrist and his defeat in a final battle. The Final Judgment, the destruction of the world and everlasting life in Paradise would then follow (Montero, 2001: 155).

Hispanic hardboiled fiction through the inclusion of sharp social criticism in an attempt to denounce certain aspects of society and through a pessimistic view of the future (nothing can be solved or changed). In the Spanish American world, Argentine writer Rodolfo Walsh and his counterparts, the Mexican Rafael Bernal and the Spanish Eduardo Mendoza, were pioneers in this new approach and are probably its best known representatives, their respective novels being iconic of the genre: *Operación masacre* (“Operation Massacre”, 1957), *El complot mongol* (“The Mongol Conspiracy”, 1969) and *La verdad sobre el caso Savolta* (“The Truth about the Savolta Case”, 1975).

- 2 In *Satanism Today*, James Lewis notes: “Zoroastrianism differs from the other monotheisms in its conceptualization of the genesis of Satan. Mainstream Judaism, Christianity, and Islam all view Satan as a fallen angel who was cast out of heaven... By way of contrast, Ahriman is believed to be very much on par with Ahura Mazda. They even created the world together, which explains why the world is such a mixture of good and bad” (Lewis, 2001: 4).
- 3 Bishop St. Augustine (354-430) is known as “Doctor and Father of the Church” for having written a variety of theological texts aimed at refuting the idea that Christ would return in a thousand years. In his book *City of God*, he proposes an allegorical interpretation of the millennium, without establishing a date for the second coming of Christ (Saragozá, 1997: 68).

Throughout the centuries, many catastrophic historical events have been interpreted as apocalyptic, such as the Black Death (1348), the Hundred Years' War (1337-1453) and the Fall of Constantinople in 1453 (Carbajal, 2000: 90). Even Christopher Columbus wrote, in the sixteenth century, that "only 150 years remain[ed] until the... end of the world." Martin Luther, on his part, is quoted as having said that "we have reached the time of the white horse of the Apocalypse. This world will not last any longer... than another hundred years" (Delumeau, 2000: 118). As of the last decade of the 20th century, this apocalyptic concern has been expressed by the Heaven's Gate cult⁴, the Order of the Solar Temple⁵, Uganda's Religious Movement, Harold Camping, an Evangelist minister and Oakland radio broadcaster who predicted the end would come on 21 May 2011, and of course, the notorious Mayan prophecy that set 2012 as the year of the fatal cataclysm.⁶

As previously stated, the idea that the apocalypse may be near is also explored in contemporary hardboiled fiction; and rightly so, since—as hardboiled fiction literary critics, writers and readers will agree—this genre best reflects the problems that society faces today. For instance, they present violence, corruption, and socioeconomic or political crises. In the words of writer Juan Sasturain, Hispanic hardboiled fiction is "a form of literature stemming from the crisis in contemporary society... because in each and every one of these [novels] there is a comprehensive structure that describes the world by means of its most destructive contradictions" (quoted in Laforgue, 1996: 223). Juan Martini, on his part, deems it impossible not to recognize the conflicts "stalking and preying upon contemporary man: he who lives and suffers under a social ordering governed by the despotism of

4 The members of Heaven's Gate lived together at Rancho Santa Fe, an affluent CDP in San Diego County, California. In "Heaven's Gate: The End?", Wendy Gale Robinson explains that "on March 26, 1997, the bodies of 21 women and 18 men, ranging in age from 26-72, were discovered in various stages of decomposition. Several days before, they had ingested applesauce or pudding laced with barbiturates and a shot of vodka, and they had submitted to suffocation from plastic bags placed over their heads. They were identically dressed in unisex black shirts, pants, and Nikes, and had purple shrouds placed across their faces. Many of the men had been castrated. Nevertheless still frustrated with their bodies, they chose to leave their 'earthly containers' behind in San Diego to join aliens who would take them to the Next Level with a newly embodied life" (Robinson, 1997: 1).

5 The Order of the Solar Temple is a cult founded by Dr. Luc Jouret, responsible for mass suicides. The first one took place "on 4 October 1994 in Cheiry and Salvan, two idyllic Swiss villages. Forty-eight people were burned to death. On 23 December 1995, sixteen additional bodies, including those of three children, were also found charred at a wood in the French Alps, in the Grenoble region" (Miranda Matos, 2004: 1).

6 For a better understanding of the concept of *apocalypse*, refer to *Apocalipsis: la angustia del fin del mundo* ("The Apocalypse: Anguish over the End of the World"), by Emilio Carbajal.

economic interests and by violence, the most obvious—and most dramatic expression—of the struggles for power in any of its forms” (Laforgue, 1996: 222).

But before moving on to other apocalyptic outlooks and signs, it is essential to establish the meaning of the word *apocalypse*, as it is used in this essay. When speaking of the *apocalypse*, I refer to the revelation and the acknowledgement of the destruction of the world as we know it, incorporating both the secular and the Christian positions. For theologian John McArthur, *apokalypsis* (revelation) means “‘to be become visible’... it is a front-page story of the future of the world written by someone who has seen it all” (McArthur, 2010: 25). By *Christian apocalypse*, I mean St. Augustine’s opposition to millennialism, which regarded the birth of Christ as the beginning of His one-thousand-year Kingdom, followed by the Final Judgment and the reaching of the Holy City. St. Augustine advocates for a symbolic reading of the biblical text (Carbajal, 2000: 88).

Secular apocalypse, in turn, dates back to the 18th century’s Enlightenment and French Revolution. At that time, people started to diverge from a literal interpretation of biblical prophecies and their fulfillment, questioning the authority of both Church and Monarchy. The secular idea of apocalypse evolved alongside the growing advancement of modern civilization, a crisis in morality and the terror instilled by the World Wars, until it became impregnated with the postmodern view, which, by refusing to give any final answers, causes “melancholic moods” and disillusionment, with no hope in the future (Carbajal, 2000: 96). Thus, the novels presented in the following pages do not exclusively explore a singular religious or secular view of the apocalypse. Instead, they feed on both positions to question and reflect on the end of the world and human life.

Rosario Tijeras: Violence, Power and Control in a (Post)apocalyptic World

Rosario Tijeras was the first contemporary Hispanic hardboiled novel of the new millennium to win the Hammett Prize⁷. Without revealing the actual date of events, the narrator takes us back to the Medellín of the 1990s, when drug trafficking became a serious issue for Colombia. The story is told by an intradiegetic narrator, Antonio, who Rosario familiarly calls *parcero*, meaning *friend* in Colombian slang. According to Antonio, Rosario received the nickname *Tijeras* (“Scissors”) because, as a child, she would attack her

7 The Hammett Prize is awarded to the best contemporary Hispanic hardboiled novel. The idea for the award arose during the Noir Week of Gijón, a festival aimed at promoting hardboiled fiction. The first ceremony took place in 1988, the recipient being Paco Ignacio Taibo II for his book *La vida misma* (“Real Life”).

teachers with her mother's scissors and because, later on, she used the same tool to castrate the man who raped her.

Antonio is a friend of Emilio's; they both belong to the Medellín upper classes, while the girl comes from a poor family living in one of the shanty towns surrounding the city. The two men meet Rosario at a nightclub and fall in love with her at first sight. While Antonio keeps his feelings to himself, never telling Rosario he loves her, Emilio becomes the teenager's official boyfriend. They all become close friends and eventually learn that Rosario is a hitwoman.⁸ She works for a drug cartel and takes part in the bloody struggle for power of the drug-trafficking world. Danger and death are undeniable realities: the lives of these young men are at risk. Rosario herself loses her brother Johnefe and her ex-boyfriend Ferney to the violence triggered by the drug business.

Rosario's life is a living hell, which she cannot escape, since she murders people for money. Her suffering becomes obvious when, after killing someone, she isolates herself for some time and turns to bingeing food. Although introverted about her job, Emilio and Antonio know that, every time she puts on weight, she is dealing with the guilt from having committed a crime. Drug trafficking being a volatile business, her bosses eventually decide to get rid of her. So the condo Antonio and Rosario are staying in gets raided. *Los duros* ("the tough guys"), as *parcero* calls them, end up murdering Rosario.

In Colombia, the exponential growth of drug trafficking costs the lives of innocent young people and of those who break the law by getting involved with the cartels. Armed groups of outlaws in the communes are key to safeguard the business—making, distributing and selling the drug, as well as protecting the dealers—to settle scores and to wage vendettas (Yarce, 2007: 1). Rosario illustrates this when she tells Antonio: "it's war, *parcero*, war. It was time to fight back." The girl adds that that is why the cartel had hired Ferney, her ex-boyfriend, and Johnefe, her brother: it needed more muscle on the street. She also explains that, when the *capos* ("lords") of the cartel realized that the two men were turning into professional killers, they got promoted, "started doing very well for themselves, changing motorbikes" and building a second floor to their house (Franco, 2000: 59). However, the city became violent, unsafe and apocalyptic, as part of the self-destructive process of the Medellín society. In Rosario's words: "the city had heated up.

8 In *Medellín: 20 años de llanto en las calles* ("Medellín: 20 Years of Tears on the Streets"), Elizabeth Yarce points out that the word *sicario* ("hitman") comes from *sicarius*, which was used "in ancient Rome to designate young hired killers, whose weapon of choice was a dagger or a knife (*sica* meaning *point*). The Medellín Cartel adopted the figure" (Yarce, 2007: 1).

The sorrow was suffocating. We were up to our necks in bodies. Every day, a several hundred pound bomb would wake us up, leaving the same number of people charred and the buildings like skeletons” (Franco, 2000: 65).

Antonio also realizes that newspaper articles at the time were all about “the hundreds of boys found dead in Medellín every morning” (Franco, 2000: 147). In an article published in the newspaper *El Colombiano*, with the headline *Medellín: 20 años de llanto en las calles* (“Medellín: 20 Years of Tears on the Streets”), Elizabeth Yarce reports that, in two decades, more than 40,000 youths ages fourteen to sixteen were killed in the city due to armed conflict. She adds that, in the early 90s, a war over territory broke out in the poorest communes and that “this situation, coupled with the spread of drug trafficking, led to a record murder rate in the city in 1991 and 1992: 444 for every 100,000 inhabitants, according to the statistics of the now-dismantled *Asesoría de Paz y Convivencia de Medellín* (‘Medellín Agency for Peace and Co-existence’).” DECYPOL statistics (Colombian Department of Criminological Studies and Identification) indicate that there have been an exorbitant number of homicides in the new millennium as well. While, in December 2000, the murder rate was 150 for every 100,000 inhabitants, the figure rose to 200 in 2001 (Yarce, 2007: 1).⁹

This violence and destruction hint at a profound desperation, typical of the secular and postmodern apocalypse. Medellín appears unstable and dangerous. Antonio relates the story of Rosario with sadness and acknowledges: “it was Rosario who hurled us [Emilio and me] into the world, who forked our road, who showed us that life was different from the picture that we had been painted” (Franco, 2000: 88). Antonio and Emilio are from the upper-classes and have bourgeois values; Rosario Tijeras lifts the veil off their eyes by introducing them to the chaos, death and social disintegration of her surroundings.

In “Apocalypse, Millennium, and Utopia Today”, Krishan Kumar states that the current idea of apocalypse is a melancholic feeling rising from the impossibility of visualizing a promising future. He views the apocalypse as a “moan” rather than an “explosion”: “it is a version of the Apocalypse that focuses obsessively on the end, with no expectations of a new beginning” (Kumar, 1998: 243). The characters in Franco’s novel embody such a feeling.

9 Yarce compares Medellín to other Latin American cities and reaches the conclusion that “in Santiago de Chile, there are three deaths for every 100,000 inhabitants; in Mexico City, 14; in Buenos Aires, 34, and in Bogotá, 36; in Medellín, in 2001, there were 220 (an average of 12 deaths a day)” (Yarce, 2007: 1).

Rosario Tijeras experiences anguish and chaos, to which her own religion offers no solution, therefore turning to Satanism.¹⁰ The narrator explains that she “would put on white foundation and paint her lips and eyes black.... She wore black... and from her neck hung an inverted cross” (Franco, 2000: 68).¹¹ The hitwoman admits that she thinks the devil is a *bacán* (great, a *bon vivant*) and tells *parcero* that Johnefe believed Lucifer was generous. Apocalypse scholars, such as John McArthur, argue that one cannot be neutral in the “cosmic battle” between good and evil. Evidently, these hitmen feel themselves to be Satan’s associates, which links the secular apocalypse explored in the novel to the religious one.

The site of the battle seems to be Medellín. It is as though the sixth trumpet of the Apocalypse of John was being blown by this society. John explains that even after three plagues had wiped out one third of humanity, the survivors did not repent: they did not regret having committed homicides and thefts, and continued to worship demons (Apocalypse 9:13-21). Similarly and in spite of the countless deaths of innocent people and of youths related to the drug business, Rosario does not alter her life style. It is only when she herself is being chased by hitmen that she starts thinking about deviating from her self-destructive path and vows: “I won’t be bad anymore, *parcero*” (Franco, 2007: 107). A promise she never fulfills. In the end, the hitwoman admits: “many times I’ve promised you that I would change, but I always go back to the same, it’s true... it’s strong, stronger than me and it makes me do things I don’t wanna” (Franco, 2007: 150).

Her inability to change and her identification with Satanism suggest Rosario is affected by demonic forces, which take the form of attacks by her drug-dealing enemies and ultimately destroy her. The story ends in pessimism and nostalgia: there can be no happy ending. In contrast, in the Apocalypse, the satanic killing announced by the sixth trumpet is followed by the coming of Christ and the ensuing hope of a better future, which the seventh trumpet heralds. Franco’s secular apocalypse, however, sees the future as hopelessly depressing.¹²

10 The theme of satanic worshipping and alternative spiritual practices is present in many hardboiled novels. See Juan Hernández de Luna’s *Cadáver de ciudad* (“City Corpse”, 2006).

11 Rosario’s boyfriend tells Antonio that Medellín satanic groups sacrifice children: “they kidnap them and put them in an altar and cut their necks and drink their blood” (Franco, 2000: 69). Likewise, in *Cadáver de ciudad* (“City Corpse”), by Hernández de Luna, children are sacrificed to the devil.

12 In the words of Umberto Eco: “for a religious mind, the end of times is an episode, a rite of passage leading to the radiant city, the Heavenly Jerusalem. For a secular mind, it is the end of everything and, therefore, it tends to reject it, which is regrettable, since reflecting on death should be the core of all philosophy” (quoted in Carbajal, 2000: 97).

***La neblina del ayer* (“Yesterday’s Mist”):
(Post)apocalyptic Virulence**

While Franco’s novel centers on the violent crimes of hitmen during the drug war in Colombia, Padura’s novel revolves around two homicides committed by the same killer: one after the second coup d’état by Fulgencio Batista (1901-1973), between 1952 and 1959, and another one in the 21st century.¹³ The person in charge of solving the crime is Mario Conde, a retired policeman who becomes a dealer of antique books.

Conde discovers a valuable private library, owned by the influential Montes de Oca family. Alcides Montes de Oca’s bourgeois dreams had crumbled with Batista’s coup and he had been forced to immigrate to the United States. From that time onwards, his secretary and mistress had lived in the Montes de Oca mansion. Alcides had had two illegitimate sons with her, Dionisio and Amalia Ferrer, who are looking to sell the books to avoid being affected by the government’s food rationing policy.

Among the rare collection, Conde finds a photograph of a 1950s *bolero* singer and falls in love with her beauty. He becomes obsessed with discovering her identity and eventually finds out that her name was Violeta del Río and that she had been another one of Alcides’ mistresses, who had supposedly committed suicide. Conde combs Cuba’s lower-class neighborhoods and comes across a prostitute who used to be friends with the charming singer. The woman tells him that Alcides and two friends of his, Louis Mally and Lansky, had had a prostitution ring and that she suspects Violeta was in fact murdered. At the same time, Dionisio is found dead in the Montes de Oca library. Since Conde and his partner are the main suspects, the retired policeman decides to continue with his investigation in order to prove their innocence. His decision is also prompted, of course, by his infatuation with the singer, whose voice he has been able to hear, having come across one of her records. Conde investigates Violeta’s murder and reflects on the luxury and the amount of cash flowing in the island under capitalism. He eventually links her death to Dionisio’s, which took place in a wore-down, deteriorated and apocalyptic Cuba brought about by the change of regime.

Conde has a hunch that Alcides’s daughter and her mother, Nemesia, can help solve both murders. He demands to speak to Alcides’s former sec-

13 Fulgencio Batista was a Cuban dictator, who, in 1933, “organized a military coup (the “Sergeants’ Revolt”), consolidated his power, and became President (1940-1944). In 1952 he overthrew President Prio Socorras, and ruled as a dictator until his overthrow by Fidel Castro (January 1959), when he found refuge in the Dominican Republic” (Lenman, 2000: 80). The narrator of *La neblina de ayer* (“Yesterday’s Mist”) does not specify whether the events in the 21st century take place during Fidel Castro’s administration (1959-2008) or his brother Raúl’s (2008-present).

retary and Amalia takes him to her mother's room. They find her almost dead, tied up by Amalia, who had kept her there without any water or food. Finally, the girl confesses to killing Violeta, her father's last mistress, to prevent him from leaving Cuba with her. She moreover confesses to her brother's murder, prompted by his discovery of some letters written by Nemesia, in which she related her suspicions about her daughter and, ultimately, her discovery that Amalia had poisoned the singer.

Apart from his obsession with Violeta, the antique books dealer is a somber, gray man. He is in anguish over the irreparably lost, pre-revolutionary Cuba and disillusioned with the country, which has not reached its goals of equality and prosperity.¹⁴ He expresses his feelings to one of his friends: "Havana used to be insane: I think it was the liveliest city in the world. The hell with Paris or New York!" (Padura, 2005: 88). Likewise, in a conversation with another friend, he complains that, after the Revolution, they "were made to believe that [they] were all equal and that the world would be better." His friend's reply is: "they've been ripped off, I swear. There are people everywhere who are less equal than others and the world is going from bad to worse. Right here... there are people right now who are getting rich, the right way and the wrong way" (Padura, 2005: 45).

The virus of corruption and violence has infected the core of Havana society. A former colleague of Conde's, Manolo exemplifies this with a comment. He tells Conde he cannot begin to explain the state of things: "muggings on every corner, drugs up in your face, robberies are a plague, corruption is like weed, you won't get rid of it no matter how much you pull up, and don't even get me started on pimping and pornography" (Padura, 2005: 105).

Although the Cuban Revolution attempted to eradicate prostitution, corruption and gambling, to implement agricultural reforms and to make citizens respect the Constitution, many 21st century Cubans feel their situation is merely a perpetuation of past misfortunes (José Gómez Navarro, 1998: 318). In *The Transparency of Evil: Essays on Extreme Phenomena* (1989), Jean Baudrillard maintains that modernity has led mankind to total confusion, which contaminates every facet of the human being, including the political, economic and artistic ones. In "Prophylaxis and Virulence", one of the essays from this book, Baudrillard declares man to be an irrational virus that ruins the transparency of the universe. He also believes genetic and

14 Andrés Amorós was perhaps the first scholar to characterize the figure of the contemporary Hispanic hardboiled fiction detective. In "Novela policíaca" ("Crime Fiction"), an essay from the book *Introducción a la novela contemporánea* ("An Introduction to Contemporary Novel"), Amorós explains that the hardboiled investigator is a "dark figure, a gray man, not too different from those against whom he fights, made human by his little quirks" (Amorós, 1974: 127).

social disorders are comparable: “the very same thing happens to the social body... a situation comparable to the genetic disorder that occurs at the cellular level, again occasioned by overprotection, overcoding, overmanagement. The social system, just like the biological body, loses its natural defences in precise proportion to the growing sophistication of its prostheses” (Baudrillard, 2000: 35).

Conde quits his job as a policeman because he wants to get away from “the invincible weaknesses of the human soul—even of the souls which claimed to have the power and the responsibility of justice on their side” (Padura, 2005: 103). The former detective wants to escape the social virus propagated by mankind. That is why he becomes an honest dealer of antique books, who even asks Dionisio, with “a dose of dignity his very blood demanded at the time”, not to sell the most valuable items (Padura, 2005: 28).

In spite of his honesty and, in a wider context, of Fidel Castro’s government program— aimed at obliterating corruption, immorality, gambling, robbery, illiteracy, illness, hunger, exploitation and injustice—the virus is still active in contemporary Cuban society (quoted in Quirk, 1995: 22). These are anomalous symptoms to be found at the basis of the system; they “represent a reactive virulence designed to counter... a political overmanagement of the social body” (Baudrillard, 2000: 36). When Conde and his friends visit Havana’s Chinese Quarter looking for Silvano Quintero, an antique records dealer, they recognize the social virus in that part of the city. The narrator points out that its inhabitants’ “main occupation is breaking into homes, pushing whores onto tourists and, of course, selling drugs” (Padura, 2005: 141). He adds that they live in such a state of poverty that they “become aggressive and cynical, like creatures devoid of any type of hope” (Padura, 2005: 138).

The hopelessness pervading Havana is the result of the frustration felt by its citizens before and after the Revolution. Many citizens find that the drastic sociopolitical change brought about by Fidel Castro amounts to the destruction of a familiar world. It is a radical change that can be interpreted as apocalyptic. Nemesia, Amelia’s mother, describes it so. In a letter to Alcides, she acknowledges: “I’m experiencing an all too turbulent history: everything crumbles and new myths rise; some heads roll and everything is rebaptized... for the first time I’m afraid the situation will turn really tragic and, above all, irreversible. Is this the true end of the world?” (Padura, 2005: 93). The apocalyptic feelings expressed by Alcides’s former secretary at the time of the coup d’état resurface in the characters living in the 21st century.

In *Postmodern Apocalypse: Theory and Cultural Practice at the End*, Richard Dellamora speculates the apocalypse is an endless horizon: “it can imply

mere repetition, a ceaseless doing again of deeds that issue in frustration and failure. This last possibility helps explain a pervasive sense of unease in contemporary existence... the genre of apocalypse includes a concept of repetition that permits the writing of new stories about the end” (Delamora, 1995: xii). In turn, Jean Baudrillard argues, in “The Anorexic Ruins”, that contemporary society has become something nuclear, vaporized, remote and lost. He maintains that “the explosion has already occurred; the bomb is only a metaphor now” (Baudrillard, 1989: 34). Just as Nemesia foresees the end of the world back in 1959, Conde, in the 21st century, asks his friend Manolo: “What’s going on, Manolo? D’ you think the end of the world is really coming? Why are people getting more and more fucked up?” (Padura, 2005: 105). His friend sighs and responds that he keeps asking himself the same questions. In his words:

It must be there are too many people that don’t wanna work anymore in life and look for an easy way out. There’s many, too many who grew up watching half the country steal, forge, embezzle, and by now it’s the most natural thing in the world to them and they do it like it’s nothing bad at all. But the most terrible thing is the violence: they don’t respect anything and when they want something they get it whatever way they can (Padura, 2005: 105).

It would seem that, as stated by Baudrillard, it is human beings themselves who taint every chance of progress, violently and without realizing the extent of the damage, being wrapped up in a vicious circle, foreseeing their end and regarding themselves as witnesses of the last stages of human life on Earth. Conde repeatedly wonders whether the end of the world might not be near and suspects that man is a “specimen in rapid danger of extinction... a testimony to genetic failure”, somewhere between the vanished world of the glamorous Cuba of the 1930s and the disintegrating present—riddled with violence, marked by scarcity and food rationing (Padura, 2005: 205).

While in Franco’s *Rosario Tijeras*, Medellín is a city crammed with the skeletons of blown-up buildings and hundreds of corpses, the Cuba of the new millennium described in *La neblina de ayer* (“Yesterday’s Mist”) has a post-apocalyptic landscape. The narrator characterizes it as “postwar, filled with deep cavities and debris, with buildings on precarious balancing acts, wounded by irreparable cracks... with overflowed waste containers like infectious peaks”... Conde is overcome by the chaos; the spectacle of the city tells him he is “in the presence of a world at the verge of a hardly avoidable Apocalypse” (Padura, 2005: 208).

The demoralizing and daunting atmosphere of a neighborhood he is exploring also prompts him to remark on the violence, historical frustration and everyday erosion of moral values experienced by the population. He is

sorry to hear “the sounds of the ferocious trumpets of the Apocalypse, willing to forever stifle amongst them a person’s capacity for ethical discernment, making them into a primal being, only fit to fight and even kill to survive” (Padura, 2005: 310). It is the picture of a secular apocalypse, since Conde has no faith in Catholicism and often states his belief that mankind is alone in the world, and that there is no God. At the same time, he criticizes those who turn to religion and to other rituals in search of “false” hope. In *Rosario Tijeras*, the protagonist becomes a Satanist; in this novel, the crisis in the island drives people to “the confessional booths at the churches and sittings with *santeros*, spiritualists, cartomancers, seers and *babalawos*” (Padura, 2005: 210).¹⁵

The search for comfort in spirituality, the loss of morality, hunger, corruption and the rise in violence are all signs which the characters see as apocalyptic. Conde and his friends draw a line between the past and the present, failing to acknowledge that these signs are recurrent. Because the apocalypse is in fact a circular notion. Both the years prior to the Revolution and those following it have eroded people to such an extent that they believe the end is near.

***Ciudad santa* (“Holy City”): An Ideal City within a “Real” and Corrupted One**

Guillermo Orsi’s *Ciudad santa* (“Holy City”) is set in Buenos Aires and shows a range of characters from different social milieus. The novel may be read as a whole—the reader connecting individual experiences by the various characters—or as separate stories, unique and personal, about lost souls in a decrepit world. It is a collage, made up of the lives of the main characters and of other voices, joining in to terrify the reader with a macabre prose and a succession of demoralizing images.

One of the protagonists, Verónica Beruti, is a lawyer whose husband died during the Argentine transition towards democracy, after the deposition of the military government that ruled the country between 1976 and 1983. Her husband was a policeman, murdered for handing over compromising information to the judicial system, concerning some of his colleagues who had been involved in the genocide ordered by the military. Verónica represents Ana Torrente, a Bolivian beauty queen who came to Buenos Aires with the dream of leaving behind the third-world decadence of her own country, but who ends up infatuating policemen and climbing up the power ladder of the drug industry.

15 *Babalawo* is a Yoruba word meaning *Priest of Ifá*. Babalawos are said to predict the future (Saldívar-Arellano, 2010: 116).

Ana is joined by her brother, Jaguar, who senselessly decapitates Ana's victims and takes refuge in *Tierra Santa* ("Holy Land"), a religious theme park in the "holy" city of Buenos Aires. Another character is Pacagoya, a Paraguayan national, occasional lover of Verónica's and tour guide on a cruise liner that had to make a stop in Buenos Aires for repairs. He is a man without scruples that satisfies his passengers' every need, selling them drugs and even prostituting himself to both men and women.

Within the group of federal and Buenos Aires provincial policemen described in the story, there are two particularly worth mentioning: Oso Berlusconi and deputy inspector Walter Carroza. Berlusconi is another one of Miss Bolivia's lovers. He brags about having participated in the torture and murder of Argentine citizens during the last military dictatorship. He is also responsible for the kidnap and death of four foreign couples of millionaires, who were on board the broken down cruise liner *Queen of Storms*. Three of them were CEOs at multinational companies; the remaining one, Osmar Arredri, was the boss of a powerful Medellín cartel.

Carroza also has sexual relations with the beauty queen. Although he had no part in the genocide of the late 1970s—in the course of his investigation on the kidnapping of the foreign nationals—he does "make an arrangement" with Sirena Mondragón, the Colombian drug-dealer's girlfriend. In fear of being murdered like Arredri, she promises to give Carroza, Verónica and *El Tío*, an Argentine cartel lord, millions of dollars.

Orsi's novel offers a prophetic and a non-prophetic apocalyptic view of Buenos Aires. In *Lamb's Supper: The Mass as Heaven on Earth*, Scott Hahn explains that, if taken literally, the Bible's Apocalypse relates to the fall of the city of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD (Hahn, 1999: 93). This would be a preterist interpretation of the text, the word *Preterism* deriving from the Latin *praeter* or "bygone", and could reflect either current events or those that took place in the near past from a non-prophetic outlook (Edinger, 1992: 8).

The text, attributed to the apostle John, describes the corruption of ancient Jerusalem and compares it to a prostitute "drunk with the blood of the saints and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus" (Apocalypse 17:6).¹⁶ Moreover, it is worth remembering that it was Jerusalem authorities who decided the fate of Christ and that the city was a place in which early Christians were persecuted (*Acts* 6:8-14, 7:57-60, 8:1-3). Allegorically, the apostle John calls Jerusalem *Sodom* and *Egypt*, these being places of opposition to the divine plan. In "Apocalypse Then!", Scott Hahn explains: "Sodom stood in the way of God's covenant plan with Abraham; Egypt stood in the way of His

16 Other Old Testament texts also make this comparison. For further reference, see Ezekiel 16:2-6-3, 23:2-49; Jeremiah 2:20, 3:3; and Isaiah 1:21.

covenant plan for Moses and Israel. Now, it's Jerusalem's turn to oppose God, as its leaders persecute the Apostles and the Church" (Hahn, 1999: 95).

This preterist view of the Apocalypse is idealistically or symbolically represented in *Ciudad santa* ("Holy City"). Buenos Aires has become the Jerusalem of old, a corrupted city that deserves being destroyed. In the text, the narrator relates how Pacagoya, the tour guide, wakes up to the sight of a Buenos Aires that seems to be the Holy City of Jerusalem (Orsi, 2009: 73) and deputy inspector Carroza, in a conversation with another policeman on the decapitated bodies they have been finding, says "Buenos Aires is, more than ever, a holy city" (Orsi, 2009: 152). They are both ironically referring to the Jerusalem that deserves destruction.

Orsi's story offers a succession of maddening and abhorrent images and events. To Carroza, the city equals corpses and the information on the police radio makes this clear: "male with deep slash wound on Cuzco St, dismembered female by Sarmiento railroad tracks... fight among St. Cajetan worshippers"; "badly wounded young male, street fight with one dead, raped female with no vital signs in ditch" (Orsi, 2009: 144). The policeman also dwells on the city's nightclubs that "become crowded with dancers and the emergency rooms at the hospitals with stoners in shock and people with gunshot wounds and blunt force traumas."

Similarly, the narrator describes the city's market as "a Persian market for outdoor smuggling and thieving... Buenos Aires is a jungle without Tarzans; an artificial garden where roses and jasmines are plastic, where the rich live in neighborhoods built on ruins or corpses" (Orsi, 2009: 27, 32). Each one of the characters offers a terrifying view of the city; even Miss Bolivia gets disappointed when she realizes Buenos Aires is not the Paris of the South, a place where even taxi drivers spoke French, as she believed it to be, and she tells herself: "you've been lied to... Buenos Aires is as filled with colored assholes as any crumbled down city in Bolivia or Peru" (Orsi, 2009: 38). Violence, drugs, poverty, unscrupulousness, corruption and unchecked ambition prevail and obliterate any attempt at fraternity.

The maddening city of Buenos Aires is contrasted with a holy city inside of it: the theme park *Tierra Santa* ("Holy Land"), located near the airport. To the narrator, this is indeed a holy city, however unreal and unreachable—a "cardboard pulp Jerusalem" (Orsi, 2009: 7). It is in this artificial city that Jaguar the decapitator lives. Jaguar uses the skulls of his sister's victims to build himself an altar in search of resurrection and eternal life. He wants to craft his very own Mount Golgotha, the word *Golgotha* meaning "mount of skulls" (Orsi, 2009: 300). It seems as though Jaguar equates Buenos Aires with Sodom, Egypt or the accursed Jerusalem, riddled with misfortune. He does not want to live in it because there is no salvation there. He shall have

to search for eternal life in a new Jerusalem, the Jerusalem that will rise after the Apocalypse. This speaks of a futuristic interpretation of the Bible.

In “The Grand Final Catastrophe”, George Edinger states that a valid interpretation of the Apocalypse is “the futurist interpretation... the text of Revelation refers to events around the Return of Christ, coming sometime in the future” (Edinger, 1992: 9). Buenos Aires is lost, doomed; utter destruction is upon it. Jaguar knows it and so takes refuge in *Tierra Santa* (“Holy Land”). Deputy inspector Carroza knows it too. In a conversation with a colleague, who believes Jaguar is dead, Carroza reflects: “nobody dies forever, *Escocés*. Take Jesus, think of the scare he gave the Galilean Jews” (Orsi, 2009: 152). This remark relates to the apocalypse: the destruction of the world as we know it. It clearly states the possibility of a second coming of Christ, a scare for many, as Carroza puts it. But it also brings about hope, the chance that Buenos Aires will rise from the ashes and become a celestial city, the Jerusalem described in the last part of the Apocalypse.¹⁷

77: Genocide, Collective Dehumanization and the Catastrophe of the “Great Damage”

Guillermo Saccomanno’s novel 77 explores the subject of Argentina’s 1976-1983 military dictatorship, also taken up by Orsi’s *Ciudad santa* (“Holy City”). This book describes the life of Professor Gómez during 1977, the most dangerous year of state terrorism. Looking to understand the chaos that surrounds him, he visits an astrologer / seer / mentalist by the name of Doktor Joseph Lutz, an occultist who studies the prophecies of Krumm Heller (1876-1949).¹⁸ Gómez continues with his spiritual research, turning to *I Ching* and hermetic astrology. Meanwhile, one of the Professor’s neighbors begins to cast spells on him, burning hair and leaving a dead toad on his door handle.

Gómez is homosexual and, while picking up male prostitutes, he witnesses kidnappings and other forms of violence infesting the streets of Buenos Aires. His students are not safe from it either. One of them, Esteban, is arrested by the military during the Professor’s Argentine Literature course. He himself is detained by the police for quarreling with a casual boyfriend. He then meets Walter, a policeman involved in the military dictatorship, who becomes his lover. Through him, the professor tries to find out what

17 In the fourth part of the Apocalypse, the narrator sees a new city rising as a symbol of a brand-new Church: “I also saw the holy city, a new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” (Apocalypse 21:4).

18 In *The Unknown God: W. T. Smith and the Thelemites*, Martin Starr points out that Krumm Heller goes by the mystic name of Huiracocha. Heller was a representative of the German Sovereign Sanctuary of the Ancient and Primitive Rite and is best known for his 1930 book *Logos Mantram Magia* (Starr, 2003: 76).

has happened to Esteban. On her part, Esteban's mother, Azucena, angrily casts spells on General Videla, *de facto* President of Argentina.

Around that same time, Gómez encounters Martín, the son of a friend, Delia, who had been killed during the 1955 dictatorship. Martín asks him to take a letter to the guerrilla leader in Rosario, a city in the Province of Santa Fe, to which he agrees. On Gomez's return, Martín's pregnant girlfriend, *La Colo*, a political activist like her boyfriend, moves in with him while Martín continues his fight against the government. One day, the Professor reads in the paper that the boy has been killed by the military. Some days later, he reads of Walter's "heroic" death fighting the guerrilla. Having described the horrific events that took place in 1977, Gómez ends his story with an account of the trials held after the return of democracy, when many people who had committed murders and acts of torture during the dictatorship were brought to justice.

For those persecuted by the military government, that period of fear, uncertainty, kidnappings, torture and murder was very much apocalyptic. The professor gives testimony to this. He explains that in 1977 "terror and poverty were everywhere... it was impossible not to see it, feel it." He also remarks that "God, if he had ever existed, had died. It was more useful asking help of charlatans passing as miracle workers. Deolinda Correa or Pancho Sierra gave one more hope" (Saccomanno, 2008: 15).¹⁹

It is clear that the professor has lost his faith in God, just as the inhabitants of Ephesus had. According to the Apocalypse, its people had stopped believing in the Lord: "Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love" (2:4). On the same subject, John McArthur, in his analysis of John's Apocalypse, notes that those who do not believe in God cannot understand the spiritual dimension that surrounds them, or interpret future realities (McArthur, 2010: 29).

In search of answers, the Professor turns to other forms of belief. He decides to visit a seer, Doktor Joseph Lutz, who tells him that the energy of the cosmos has led him to his door, since he is "hungry for knowledge" of "matters relating to the cosmic mystery" (Saccomanno, 2008: 22). The pro-

19 Pancho Sierra (1831-1891) was known as the holy gaucho of the city of Pergamino. In his book *Cultos y canonizaciones populares de Argentina* ("Popular Cults and Canonizations of Argentina"), Félix Coluccio says he is believed to have had "exceptional powers" and that people still worship at his grave, since his gifts did not end with his death (98-100). Regarding Deodolina Correa, aka *La Difunta Correa*, Roque Pichetto explains that "her miracles, now well known, are described all throughout the Province of San Juan: local poets and singers speak of her in their verses and songs, country people ask for her protection during harvest time, drivers, to whom she is indebted, think of her as their patroness, make dangerous journeys through the mountain ranges and ravines under her guard, mothers who are too weak to feed their babies fervently pray to her to make their empty breasts fill with milk" (Pichetto, 1994: 95).

tagonist is trying to make sense of the dreadful reality in which he is immersed, having witnessed so many human rights violations.

The seer tells him that what is going on in Argentina is “the Great Damage and is nothing new. It’s part of the thunder announcing catastrophic changes on the planet... the Great Damage has already arrived in the country” (Saccomanno, 2008: 42). It is, in fact, the beginning of the end, as though one of the seals of the Apocalypse had been broken and destruction and violence had ensued. John the Apostle describes how, after the breaking of the fourth seal, a voice announced “power was given to them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth” (Apocalypse 6:8). These are the evils the Professor recognizes.

Lutz also thinks the genocide is proof that the end is at hand and that, to “the worshipers of power, the youths carry out the designs of the Antichrist. The military are the Holy Inquisition. To them, torture is exorcism” (Saccomanno, 2008: 42). With his irony, the seer is supporting the guerrilla and criticizing the military, who falsely believe that God is on their side. Many biblical passages warn of the coming of false prophets. For example, in Jeremiah 14:14 the Lord says: “The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart.”

The military justify the murders by saying they are for the sake of peace and safety, in pursuit of national security. In *La doctrina militar de seguridad nacional* (“The Military Doctrine of National Security”), Roberto Calvo argues that for “the Chilean military, national security means structuring the potential of a country, so that it can be developed while fully exercising sovereignty and independence from both inside and outside forces” (Calvo, 1979: 66). In turn, General O. G. Villegas believes “there can be no safety without progress, nor progress without safety” (Villegas, 1968: 8).²⁰ In other words, those in power justify genocide under the pretext of a need for progress, peace, and stability to build the future of a nation.

The same happened with Adolf Hitler. In *Mein Kampf*, he vowed to be a peaceful man, which France and England initially believed (McArthur, 2010: 183). The Apocalypse itself warns of the false peace brought about by the breaking of the first seal.²¹ What is more, some believe the first horse-

20 Refer to Villegas, “Seguridad, política y estrategia” (“Safety, Politics and Strategy”), in *Temas Militares* (“Military Matters”) 4 (1968).

21 John the Apostle wrote: “And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer” (Apocalypse 6:1-2).

man to be the Antichrist, who, in order to deceive people, creates the appearance of peace, which is soon followed by hunger, war and death (McArthur, 2010: 184).

Faced with uncertainty and with the false pretenses of the military government, several characters in the novel try alternative spiritual practices. The mother of the Professor's missing student also consults a seer, in an attempt to locate her son. The narrator reacts to this with a comment: "witchcraft, tarot, the stars: any trick will do to give parents back their lost hope" (Saccomanno, 2008: 202). While Lutz tells Gómez the military view guerrilla members as the Antichrist, the woman's seer says that, in spite of the young rebels' idealism, 1977 is a bad year for spiritual people because "there are dark wizards in power. Powerful ones" (Saccomanno, 2008: 202). While walking out of the fortune teller's office, her secretary tells the boy's mother and father: "many others come here looking for answers but the magic of the dark wizards is so strong that the seer can't make anything out" (Saccomanno, 2008: 206). It is clear that the narrator's and the seers' intention is to portray the military as a negative, apocalyptic force responsible for the genocide.

Not only the parents of the missing student take refuge in other types of spirituality: Gómez, on his part, talks to his friend Bodhi Dharma about *The Hermetic Circle*, the collection of letters between Hermann Hesse and C. G. Jung. His friend quotes Hesse: "Nothing ever happens by chance... This is the Hermetic Circle" (Saccomanno, 2007: 25). Bodhi insinuates that the genocide and the horror caused by the dictatorship are part of a plan. Following John the Apostle, one could think that state violence and its consequences are merely another manifestation of evil within the world's apocalyptic reality. From the perspective of the aforementioned philosophers, expressed in their letters to each other, which Miguel Serrano has included in his book *C. G. Jung and Hermann Hesse: A Record of Two Friendships*, Gómez could be exploring the two human tendencies described in Hesse's *Narcissus and Goldmund*, and in his *Siddhartha*.

As already seen, the Professor indirectly helps those acquaintances and students of his who take action against the dictatorship, and he acknowledges it, explaining that he admires them because he realizes he himself only contemplates the horror while taking a walk across the city at night. Serrano notes that Hesse's *Narcissus and Goldmund* represent "two essential tendencies in man—contemplation and action" (Serrano, 1966: 7). In a similar manner, "Siddhartha and Govinda represent the opposed characteristics of devotion and rebellion" (Serrano, 1966: 7).

At first sight, the professor seems to be but a witness of the genocide, due to his failure to join Esteban and other acquaintances in their rebellion. In John's Apocalypse, there is no room for hesitation, no gray areas. There

are only two sides: Good and Evil. Gómez, however, joins the side of Good indirectly, attempting to thwart the plans of the “dark wizards”. Moreover, giving testimony of events purges him of the guilt of having failed to take affirmative action to stand up for his beliefs. In the end, the act of writing helps him understand why he stayed in the country during this period: to aid and protect the victims of persecution.

Conclusions

Across Latin America, Contemporary Hispanic hardboiled fiction manifests the preoccupation with the destruction of the world. The cities of Medellín, Buenos Aires, and Havana are chaotic enclaves immersed in irrational and catastrophic violence. In Colombia, the drug trafficking unleashes death and destruction, and Medellín suffocates its inhabitants with sorrow, a typical symptom of the secular postmodern apocalypse. On a religious note, it seems as if the sixth trumpet had been blown, but the survivors do not repent. They continue to kill each other and turn to Satanism.

In regards to Havana, the virus of corruption and violence infects the Cuban society before and after the Castro Revolution. This results in hopelessness and frustration. Both political and economic systems are presented as apocalyptic. The fear of a near apocalypse seems to repeat itself. It is a vicious circle that keeps Cubans demoralized and in danger of extinction. Moreover, they turn to alternative forms of spirituality in order to suffice their lack of faith. The Havana of today is no different from the corrupted Cuba of the 1930's. Poverty, violence and dilapidation invade the city. Consequently, Cubans feel that they are on the verge of an avoidable apocalypse. The Cuban Revolution has not solved its problems.

Buenos Aires is no different from Medellín and Havana. On the one hand, the genocide of the 1970's was perceived as the destruction of a country where blood and violence prevailed. On the other hand, the 21st century has brought more poverty and crime. The Argentine capital is compared with the ancient Jerusalem that must be destroyed. At the same time, Buenos Aires and its inhabitants exude a postmodern anguish that heralds that the end is near. Ironically, a religious themed park is contrasted to the real city, accentuating the need for destruction and renewal of this Latin American capital.

Through the study of hardboiled fiction, emanates an endless horizon of destruction, fear and hopelessness. If drug trafficking, revolutions and dictatorships were the apocalyptic themes of the past, different explosions continue to occur. New stories about the end emerge—crime, insecurity, poverty, globalization, drug trade, corruption—and perpetuate images of discontent, nostalgia and anxiety, those of which reinforce the collective imaginary of the apocalypse.

References

- Amorós, Andrés. "Novela policíaca". In Andrés Amorós, ed., *Introducción a la novela contemporánea*, 125-28. Madrid: Cátedra, 1974.
- Baudrillard, Jean. *La transparencia del mal: ensayos sobre fenómenos extremos*. Translated by Joaquín Jordá. Barcelona: Anagrama, 1991.
- _____. "Prophilaxis and Virulence." In Neil Badmington, ed., *Posthumanism*, 32-37. New York, NY: Palgrave, 2000.
- _____. "The Anorexic Ruins." In Dietmar Kamper and Christoph Wulf, eds., *Looking Back at the End of the World*, 29-39. New York, NY: Semiotext, 1989.
- Bernal, Rafael. *El complot mongol*. México: Joaquín Ortíz, 2008.
- Calvo, Roberto. *La doctrina militar de seguridad nacional*. Caracas: Bello, 1979.
- Carbajal, Emilio. "Apocalipsis. La angustia del fin del mundo o la esperanza de los mil años de felicidad." In Elio Masferrer, ed., *Ritos y creencias del nuevo milenio: una perspectiva transcultural*, 83-101. México: Aler, 2000.
- Coluccio, Félix. *Cultos y canonizaciones populares de Argentina*. Buenos Aires: Ediciones del Sol, 2007.
- Dellamora, Richard. *Postmodern Apocalypse: Theory and Cultural Practice at the End*. Philadelphia, PA: Pennsylvania University Press, 1995.
- Delumeau, Jean. "El apocalipsis recreado." In Jean-Claude Carrière, ed., *El fin de los tiempos*, 69-127. Barcelona: Círculo de Lectores, 2000.
- Dexter*. Directed by John Dhal. Producers: Sarah Colleton and John Goldwyn. 2011.
- 2012*. Directed by Roland Emmerich. Producers: Columbia Pictures. 2009.
- Edinger, George. *Archetype of the Apocalypse: Divine Vengeance, Terrorism and the End of the World*. Chicago, IL: Open Court, 1992.
- Franco, Jorge. *Rosario Tijeras*. New York, NY: Siete cuentos, 2000.
- Garrido Saragozá, Juan José. *El pensamiento de los padres de la iglesia*. Madrid: Akal, 1997.
- Gómez Navarro, José. *Historia universal*. México: Addison, 1998.
- Hahn, Scott. *Lamb's Supper: The Mass as Heaven on Earth*. New York, NY: Doubleday, 1999.
- Kumar, Krishan. "El apocalipsis, el milenio y la utopía en la actualidad." In Malcom Bull, ed., *La teoría del Apocalipsis y los fines del mundo*, 239-50. México: Fondo de Cultura, 1998.
- Laforgue, Jorge. *Asesinos de papel*. Buenos Aires: Colihue, 1996.
- Lenman, Bruce. *Chambers Dictionary of World History*. London: Chambers, 2000.
- Lewis, James. *Satanism Today*. Santa Bárbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2001.
- McArthur, John. *Comentario del nuevo testamento: Apocalipsis*. Buenos Aires: Portavoz, 2010.
- Mendoza, Eduardo. *La verdad sobre el caso Savolta*. Madrid: Alhambra, 1988.

- Miranda Matos, Enid. "Sectas destructivas: terrorismo religioso." *Escenarios sectarios peligrosos*. Aug. 2004 www.victimasectas.com/Terrorismo/Orden-TemploSolar.html. October 1, 2011.
- Montero, Santiago. *El milenarismo: la percepción del tiempo en las culturas antiguas*. Madrid: Complutense, 2001.
- Orsi, Guillermo. *Ciudad santa*. Córdoba, Argentina: Almuzara, 2009.
- Padura, Leonardo. *La neblina del ayer*. Barcelona: Tusquets, 2005.
- Pichetto, Roque Jacinto. *Brochazos mendocinos: relatos históricos, tradiciones cuyanas, cuadros de Mendoza, anécdotas mendozinas*. Mendoza: Ediciones D'Accurzio, 1994.
- Quirk, Robert. *Fidel Castro*. New York, NY: Norton, 1995.
- Robinson, Wendy Gale. "Heaven's Gate: The End." *JMC* 3 (1997): 15-35.
- Saccomanno, Guillermo. 77. Buenos Aires: Planeta, 2008. Impreso.
- Saldívar-Arellano, Juan Manuel. *Nuevas formas de adoración y culto*. Veracruz: Visión Libros, 2010.
- San Agustín. *La ciudad de Dios*. Madrid: Imprenta Real, 1973.
- Serrano, Miguel. *C. G. Jung and Hermann Hesse: A Record of Two Friendships*. London: Routledge, 1966.
- Starr, Martin. *Unknown God: W.T. Smith and the Thelemites*. Bowlingbrook, IL: Teitan, 2003.
- Taibo II, Ignacio. *La vida misma*. México: Planeta, 1990.
- Villegas, Osiris Guillermo. "Seguridad, política y estrategia." *Temas Militares* 4 (1968): 25-49.
- Walsh, Rodolfo. *Operación masacre*. Buenos Aires: Planeta, 1994.
- Wulf, Christoph. "The Temporality of World-Views and Self-Image." In Dietmar Kamper and Christoph Wulf, eds., *Looking Back on the End of the World*, 49-64. Translated by David Antal. New York, NY: Semiotext, 1989.
- Yarce, Elizabeth. "Medellín: 20 años de llanto en las calles." Series El Colombiano, 2007. Noviembre 2011. http://www.elcolombiano.com/proyectos/serieselcolombiano/textos/.conflicto_urbano/bandas.htm.