

## **SCIENCE FICTION AND THE POST-APOCALYPTIC GENRE IN AMERICAN LITERATURE**

**Vinita Yadav<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Manisha Yadav<sup>2</sup>**

**Department of English**

**<sup>1,2</sup>OPJS University, Churu (Rajasthan) – India**

### **Abstract**

The post-apocalyptic theme of survival centers on the 'present' state in the world, and how the characters in the novels are adapting to living in a crumbled world. As indicated by the Bible, the apocalypse is the purifying of earth and the "happening to God's kingdom". It's a conviction shared by the greater part of the real religions today, which all component a kind of apocalypse or a judgment situation where the 'good' is at last triumphing over 'evil'. The apocalypse, therefore, has since turned into the apocalypse situation where the majority of the world's populace is slaughtered. As we find in fiction, the explanations behind the apocalypse can be because of more common contemporary issues like the 'Cold War' and it's conceivable result situation. The fortunate not many that stay must survive a tormented world and endure the results of the apocalypse—be it a nuclear war, pestilence or elemental disaster. It places humans in a circumstance they would prefer not to be in, for example, ending up without essential commodities and resource, yet at the same time they stick to life using any and all means of survival. The "objective" of the post-apocalyptic situation can be said to be restoring development, and recovering the world to its pre-apocalypse state. This is the general agreement of answers for the apocalypse—particularly in the 1950s fiction. As mentioned before, nonetheless, this isn't a simple undertaking. There are numerous outside and inside powers that demonstrate a test. So in this article we studied the science fiction and the post-apocalyptic genre in American literature

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Every one of the protagonists of these novels have recollections of the manner in which life used to be, and regularly think back to how good life used to be. Survival is one of the most pressing inquiries of the post-apocalyptic fiction as it is worried about remaining alive in an antagonistic environment and having or attempting to gather seek after what's to come. Be that as it may, when survival clashes with morals it turns into an issue. In the fictional post-apocalyptic world, survival intends to fulfill the essential needs and continue living. Contingent upon the apocalyptic occasion, at least one element might be harmed: the air and water might be contaminated because of nuclear aftermath, and on the grounds that processing plants and stores have in all probability been destroyed or may be non-functional (e.g. loss of manpower, power failure, disease) food and beverages are difficult to find. Constrained supplies drive survivors to create survival techniques. These procedures may incorporate methods for securing extra supplies (e.g. chasing, developing produce, exchanging, stealing), as well as taking out other survivors to anchor more supplies. The expression "survival of the fittest", begat by Herbert Spencer and all the more remarkably connected in the transformative thoughts of Darwinism, where species adjust to their environment and the most grounded proceed on, can likewise be utilized in a post-apocalyptic setting. For example does the post-apocalyptic setting enable a survivor to end the life of another human being keeping in mind the end goal to survive? Does that mean—the best risk towards man in a post-apocalyptic setting is really man himself? Provided that this is true, for what reason does self-centeredness prevail over hospitality?

With the world destroyed, both innovation and populace is set back and food is by and large rare, scavenging for provisions turns into a crucial activity whether you are moving, for example, in *The Road*, or remaining in one place, for example, in Matheson's *I am Legend* (1954). Max Brooks can't pressure enough the significance of being prepared and having a good supply of both medicinal and consumable things in case of apocalypse; "You will convey your doctor's facility, storeroom, and ordnance on your back". In *The Road* we rapidly discover that the father and the child are pulling a shopping basket, loaded up with different supplies, with them on their excursion. This is additionally plainly shown in the motion picture. In *I am Legend* the protagonist gets by sustaining himself in his home. Experience has shown him that the creatures have shortcomings and by transforming these into survival strategies he remains safe during the evening, and is thereby allowed to search for survival-supplies and thin the vampires' numbers amid the day. Scavenging is likewise a strategy utilized in many post-apocalyptic motion picture accounts. In "28 Days Later", where a virus known as the "rage" has contaminated the majority and assumed control over all of England, the not many that stay uninfected search stores for food and packaged or canned fluids to drink. While everything has been devoured, they either need to travel or hazard another store-assault to get more supplies. In "The Book of Eli" clean water and food have been rationed because of limited supplies, thereby making it significant, however you can purchase or exchange for it in a couple of wasteland settlements "in the event that you have the coin".

## **2. EVIL AND ITS POST-APOCALYPTIC MANIFESTATION**

Evil in literature is normally depicted as the opponent of a gothic, repulsiveness or wrongdoing novel however the element of evil can be considerably more. Evil is sometimes portrayed as a supernatural power (zombies, vampires) and dependably as immoral. It is additionally a subject in both psychology and theory. The gothic novel presents masses that would work as the prompt/evident evil of the content, for example, the Frankenstein monster, ghosts of the Otranto stronghold, and Mr. Hyde. By close-perusing the texts that component such monsters, for example, those chose for this thesis, the perusers will find that these monsters are present to unwind another evil; the evil of man.

The protagonists in the chose texts witness some genuinely evil acts, and this is the evil that is incited by the apocalypse. David Gilmore, in his book *Monsters: Evil Beings, Mythical Beasts and All Manner of Imaginary Terror* (2003), examines the diverse imaginary monsters in history and literature. In the last part of the book entitled "Our monsters, ourselves" Gilmore presents a few properties of an evil being/monster, one of these being the demonstration of human flesh consumption. Gilmore builds up prior in the book that all monsters eat humans and one of their most prominent resources is a "yawning, rapacious mouth". By giving humans the traits of monsters, the humans turn evil. Monsters are a formation of man, and in the meantime, a transformation in man. A dialog can result while expressing that the demonstration of human flesh consumption is 'evil'. In certain innate cultures the act of savagery is viewed as the standard. The demonstration of barbarianism is still viewed as unnatural in many parts of the world. The inhuman demonstrations in the chose texts turn out to be of a murderous sort, subsequently alluding to these goes about as evil and criminal. The OED site expresses that the descriptive word evil is "the antithesis of good. Morally corrupted, bad, fiendish, horrible" A philosophical school of figured (Kant) will likewise be connected in questions concerning moral, morals and evil ideas. These meanings of 'evil' by the OED will be utilized, alongside Gilmore's monster/evil traits, as rules while talking about evil in the chose texts, and how evil in man is activated by the apocalypse.

### **3. THE ZOMBIE – WALKING DEATH**

The zombie is a fictional monster and to manage fictional creatures, we should swing to fictional sources. There are numerous zombie composes in fiction and the zombie compose presented in *The Walking Dead* is the first urban zombie. These are the zombies run of the mill of the George Romero movies: moderate and cumbersome, yet deadly in numbers. Other zombie composes incorporate the 'modern zombie', who is a quick running, weapon toting zombie, and zombies with various, enchanted capacities and super-knowledge. Most zombies share one noteworthy element and that is to eat human flesh. Another essential factor is that they are vivified cadavers, except for the Caribbean sedate prompted voodoo zombie. The OED characterizes a 'zombie' as a: "soulless cadaver said to be resuscitated by witchcraft (in the West Indies and Southern conditions of America)", while Dictionary.com characterizes the word zombie as: "the body of a dead individual given the similarity of life, however quiet and will-less, by a supernatural power, more often than not for some evil reason" . The zombie fantasy begins from the Caribbean. In voodoo ministers would transform casualties into zombie slaves by utilizing witchcraft. Be that as it may, the (fictional) viral zombies, similar to the ones present in *The Walking Dead*, are bodies (or living individuals) infected with a virus and revived, and stalking the humans to fulfill their appetite. These zombies are frequently made for war purposes as well as human experimentation by the government, for the most part with evil aims. Further on in this thesis, the word 'zombie' will be utilized to delineate the creatures from *The Walking Dead*.

Remembering that these are simply fictional creatures, Max Brooks has conveyed some vital 'certainties' in his book *The Zombie Survival Handbook* (2004) with respect to the zombies in view of literature and movies. There is nothing prevalent about the zombie properties; they share a similar quality and speed controlled by the 'host'. The main ways they are better than humans are that they are not prone to getting exhausted or winded, they don't react to agony, and they don't suffocate or suffocate. Their insight is gone as the brain is infected. The main need a zombie has is the need to nourish. Because of this they are not extremely shrewd and need coordination, and this is the greatest favorable position the humans have over them. Since the zombies are the bearers of the disease, they likewise can contaminate others and thereby make more zombies. As per the 'evil' rules, the zombie is a monster. Moreover, Kant's reasoning on what an aware, judicious being is, does not agree to the zombie. Upon death the zombie loses its soundness and soul which then makes it inhuman. Despite the fact that they are casualties of a torment they have progressed toward becoming monsters and a risk to humanity in the post-apocalyptic wasteland, which is the reason it is acknowledged to murder them. In any case, while the zombies of *The Walking Dead* are plainly monsters, they additionally work like an impetus to show the most exceedingly bad in survivors, for example, the Governor.

### **4. THE VAMPIRE – A CLASSIC MONSTER**

The vampire is a great literary monster that was acquainted with prominent literature in 1819 by John William Polidori with his short-story "The Vampire". The OED expresses that the 'vampire' is: "A preternatural being of dangerous nature (in the first and the typical type of the conviction, a vivified carcass), expected to look for nourishment, or do hurt, by sucking the blood of resting people; a man or lady strangely invested with comparable propensities", and the main delineation of this animal is dated to 1734 when the word 'vampire' showed up in an English accumulation of notes called *The Harleian Miscellany*. The vampire fables or legend can most likely be followed further back by investigating local texts from the root place of this fantasy. The best known portrayal of the vampire

or Dracula is Bram Stoker's novel Dracula (1897). This novel has set the benchmark for the vampire fantasy, for example, no appearance in mirrors, passing on if presented to daylight, must rest in claim soil, no resilience for garlic and so forth., and these are similar tenets taken after by the vampires in I am Legend

Following the rules/criteria we can safely say that the vampires in I am Legend are monsters as they feed on humans, are immoral and revived dead. The prominent distinction between the vampires in I am Legend is that the "genuine vampires" are dead and vivified. As indicated by Kant's logic this makes it worthy to slaughter these vampires. In spite of the fact that Neville doesn't eat any humans, despite everything he shows up as the enemy to the infected individuals since he kills them. He is headed to this demonstration by the apocalypse.

### **5. THE CANNIBAL – A MONSTROUS NECESSITY?**

The Road does not have any quick monster or brute that stalks the post-apocalyptic wasteland and murders the general population. It delineates the edginess of man, of craving, by depicting the act of cannibalism over and over. By Gilmore's rules the act of cannibalism is, be that as it may, the quality of a monster. We may contend that these offenders just did this to survive. . In such manner, be that as it may, we should talk about what constitutes good or bad survival techniques. What we can see so far is that the post-apocalyptic setting triggers the survival nature in man. In light of the fictional setting, he or she should pick a survival procedure of good as well as bad techniques in view of his or her own particular moral code. Good survival procedures incorporate elements that attention on long haul survival and the beginning and flourishing of a new society: future through solidarity. Bad survival procedures incorporate elements that attention on self-centeredness, the survival of one and nihilism; everything is permitted to survive. In view of this, on the off chance that you are a practitioner of 'bad' survival, which incorporates killing individuals as well as eating individuals, you are viewed as a criminal. In the event that you kill someone to eat them, you fundamentally end a life to drag out your own which is egotism. This kind of morals does not concern a future in light of cultivated values, just narrow-mindedness.

It is essential to note, however, that there is a contrast between necro-cannibalism (eating the body of someone who is now dead) and homicidal-cannibalism; the last is constantly viewed as a wrongdoing, while the first is viewed as unnatural and edgy; uncanny. The Road presents the possibility of being eaten high. The apocalyptic occasion has rendered the world free of creatures to chase and yields to eat. The father and child express that they will never be so frantic as to endeavor the act of cannibalism. Notwithstanding, we could contend this is the survival of the fittest utilizing the Spencer-parable. Valid as that might be, however, the Spencer-statement centers around life span and the fittest in a more extended point of view. The killing of your companion may give you nourishment for another week, yet you should likewise keep living with manslaughter and cannibalism on your conscience. This likewise prompts an issue what to do one week from now, and the week after that: will you receive the life of a cannibal? Killing another survivor to eat may drag out your life, yet it wrecks your humanity and thereby rendering you more like a monster. Therefore The Road demonstrates that the apocalypse can start a transformation in individuals making them the 'monsters' of this novel.

## **6. THE BANDIT – THE CRIMINALS OF THE POST-APOCALYPSE**

'Bandit' is a term grabbed while encountering "DayZ". The Zombie Survival Guide likewise mentions these bandits as "modern-day barbarians":

With the total collapse of law and order, small bands of individuals emerge to assert their authority. Looters, bandits and common thugs prey on survivors, taking what they want and indulging in whatever pleasure they can find.[...] These modern-day barbarians became such because of their disrespect of the law, their hatred of organization, their choice of destruction over creation. Their nihilistic, parasitic existence feeds off the riches of others instead of producing their own. This mentality prevents them from settling down and building a new life.

It is a term that effortlessly fits into other fictions of the post-apocalyptic genre, for example the chose texts. The most ideal approach to clarify a bandit is that he is a criminal inside the post-apocalyptic setting. Since there are no principles or administering bodies in the post-apocalyptic world, he can't be characterized as a criminal. In pre-apocalyptic time a bandit would be represented as a criminal; one that resists guidelines and laws. By applying present-world standards and laws to the post-apocalyptic setting, a bandit is characterized by disrupting these norms. The father in *The Road* sees each other survivor as a bandit, which is the reason he is so mindful. The Governor in *The Walking Dead* is additionally viewed as a bandit. This epitomizes how a video amusement term can without much of a stretch be connected to novels inside the genre.

The term 'bandit' is progressively talked about particularly inside the "DayZ"- community. This is on account of players, who are every one of a piece of the post-apocalyptic experience, needed to safeguard their actions. "DayZ" is a plot-free video amusement that spotlights on entirely surviving the post-apocalypse. This enables the players to do what they it would be ideal if you and recast themselves into roles that fit the post-apocalyptic world. It presents the player with a clean slate to shape and mold how he/she satisfies. The player, just represented by a screen-name, will develop notoriety to be dreaded or cherished by the community. Sometimes this implies killing other players, and other times this implies overstating ethical values for role-playing. The post-apocalyptic wasteland is bereft of every single composed law and guidelines. It appears to make rules official, a government needs to exist. Be that as it may, an arrangement of unwritten principles has been built up to characterize a 'bandit' or bad survival, and these depend on the standards from the old world.

The arguments in "DayZ" rotate around killing other players and stealing supplies or vehicles. A few players see stealing supplies as an ethically wrong act and after that brand that player as a 'bandit'. Others contend that the main bandit-capable offense is killing another survivor, however then once more, a few players legitimize it by saying it was a 'revenge kill' or 'bandit kill'. There are degrees of murder in our present world (manslaughter, coincidental murder, wrongdoing of passion and so forth.), however they are for the most part never less violations. Contending that scavenging for provisions and stealing vehicles is the act of a bandit is a false notion that numerous players fall into. Abusing the limited number of provisions put in the amusement world or in a literary setting isn't an act of bad survival, yet absolutely surviving. The widespread run in the post-apocalyptic wasteland is by all accounts when a family or occupant empties their home (either by death or travel), their residual belonging inside the house wind up accessible for all (rescuing). Similarly as in present life, there are degrees of wrongdoing inside the post-apocalyptic setting also, yet a few violations are constantly thought about violations, specifically murders.

## 7. SURVIVAL CHOICES

Each novel, motion picture or videogame in the post-apocalyptic genre portrays survival. The texts present how the world and its populace would work if the apocalypse 'resets' the world because of human blunder, voracity or a flopping in ethics (playing 'God', technological apocalypse and so forth.) itself. The OED expresses that "ethics" is the science of morals: an arrangement of moral standards or principles of direct. The beginning of progress depends on ethics and humanity, and without these two key elements a conceivable society couldn't be made. Exchanging rules from the pre-apocalyptic time into the post-apocalyptic setting and essentially keeps surviving by the old morals and laws makes you a good guy. The idea of evil and survival procedure can be connected together. On the off chance that one complies with the standards and laws of the old world, one can't be characterized as a "bandit". The decision of what methodology to get by inside the post-apocalyptic wasteland depends on ethics and how to act when you can never again be legitimately judged by your actions. Does, for example, the absence of law enforcement imply that killing is currently permitted? Does the vanishing of the governmental body mean "no more laws"? Both yes and no; there are nobody to police and sentence the bandits of the post-apocalyptic wasteland. The framework of the society is gone which has caused insurgency. Survivors will even now contain their moral code and ethics, which will disclose to them that manslaughter isn't right, yet this is the place the bandit disagrees.

At the point when put in a situation you've never experienced, you ad lib. Improvisation, on the off chance that it works, turns into a customary propensity — it is a method for survival. In *The Road* we encounter how miserable the circumstance is through the eyes of two survivors. The father and the child coordinate to settle on the best decisions which assist them with surviving longer and keep in contact with their humanity through old world tenets. While the father sees each other survivor as a conceivable bandit and displays extraordinary alert, he has confirmed that he and his child won't wind up like them. Neville, however, is isolated; he needs to settle on every one of the decisions all alone, which are made exclusively in light of his future and his survival. For reasons unknown, his decisions transform him into the plain thing he was endeavoring to ward off. This demonstrates the vampires, zombies, noxious environment and the urgent need of food in post-apocalyptic settings are insignificant literary devices used to display the genuine idea of man and what he/she is fit for in a frantic, fictional circumstance.

As indicated by Bould and Vint, apocalyptic fiction utilizes the apocalypse situation to modify and redesign society. Among the slag of the old world there is a possibility of a new human progress, of something good. The convictions that the old world laws and ethics are expected to reestablish development are the convictions of a good guy; a good survivor. In *I am Legend* the protagonist Neville trusts that he is the last man – and trust – on the planet. When he experiences the other survivor, Ruth, he begins to trust that there is yet seek after a new human progress. In the last pages of the novel, in any case, Neville is caught and understands that he isn't the last protector of the human race, however actually the oddball; the bandit. Neville is now determined by any expectation of a new social order and re-establishment of the human race, however when in all actuality push onto him he acknowledges his destiny and role as the bandit.

The topic of conceivable fates is frequently talked about in the TV-arrangement variant of *The Walking Dead* (2010) and also the comic book/realistic novel. While the protagonist Rick centers on long haul survival, issues follow when his wife Lori all of a sudden ends up pregnant. Lori contends

this is anything but a world to bring another child up in and setting up new lives. Her argument is reasonable as the world is currently loaded up with walking dead, and to live is to survive, yet Rick does not concur with her thought of 'surrendering' and has seeks after a new future society. The comic book/realistic novel problematized living in a post-apocalyptic world by addressing survival and 'why continue onward'. These same thoughts are found in *The Road* when the father and the mother examine what's to come. Their son has quite recently been conceived, and simply like Lori the mother does not have any desire to bring a child up in the post-apocalyptic world. The mother is without expectation and departs from her family, leaving the father to bring up the son and to get by simply both of them. The father considers it to be his business to secure his son and remain alive looking for trust, while the mother has no expectation and needs them all to 'accept death as their lover.

## **8. THE EVIL OF MAN**

There are different schools of considerations about the thought of evil and how it works in association with man. Moral universalism analyzes what is usually considered as evil among all humans while moral relativism expresses that the agreement of good and evil is a result of local culture, prejudice and custom. Nietzsche contends that there are different types of goodness and, therefore, evil, while others express that good and evil are components inside the human that are nourished by actions performed. The survivors in these texts are compelled to settle on troublesome moral decisions in the post-apocalypse. Is cannibalism something that could be acknowledged as 'alright' in the new post-apocalyptic setting? Kant's reasoning states that nothing could really compare to surviving (holding oneself), however never to the detriment of others. Be that as it may, when a human is dead, it stops to be a reasonable being, therefore, as indicated by Kant's theory; necro-cannibalism could be permitted.

By Kant's theory, murder and assault is something that is characterized as evil all around. Homicidal-cannibalism is additionally viewed as evil as Kant expresses that "humans are never to be utilized as a way to achieve an objective". Survivors pick distinctive survival systems, provoking disagreement among the survivors concerning what is morally good or bad. The creators present the general population of these texts (*The Road*, *I am Legend* and *the Walking Dead*) as being extraordinary; some trust that killing is acknowledged, while others consider it to be a wrongdoing. This thesis will manage murder, assault and torment as acts of wrongdoing and being immoral. The act of cannibalism (homicidal) is likewise viewed as a wrongdoing while necro-cannibalism is considered exceptionally uncanny and desperate.

## **9. CONCLUSION**

In a large number of these fictions, there is dependably a band of individuals that live outside of what is viewed as 'standard' standards if such even exist post-apocalypse. For the most part, however, these individuals put stock in absolute disorder and do however they see fit remain alive and continue surviving in the wasteland, regardless of whether that way to shed 'conventional' moral codes and humanity. These are the offenders of the post-apocalyptic sub-genre and frequently dreaded by the (assuming any) respectful settlements. Be that as it may, we may make the inquiry whether crooks can even exist in a rebellious world. The appropriate response is that when managing a fictional post-apocalyptic setting, perusers more often than not make a difference their present genuine morals to the situations, which are frequently the premise whereupon numerous characters judge their kindred men. Characters in light without bounds tend to even now utilize the tenets from the pre-apocalypse as they

will probably restore or reestablish human progress: they try to make a new society in view of guidelines from the old one. In any case, decides that appear to not hurt anyone can be marginally bowed, for example, by scavenging for provisions in abandoned houses.

## REFERENCES

- [1]. Stevens, George, dir., *Shane*, U.S.A., Paramount Pictures, 1953.
- [2]. Tatum, Stephen, *Cormac McCarthy's All the Pretty Horses* (New York/London: Continuum Press, 2002).
- [3]. Turner, Frederick Jackson, „The Significance of the Frontier in American History“, in John Mack Faragher (commentary), *Rereading Frederick Jackson Turner: 'The Significance of the Frontier in American History' and Other Essays* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1994).
- [4]. Van der Kolk, Bessel A., and McFarlane Alexander C., *Traumatic Stress* (New York: The Guildford Press, 1996).
- [5]. Wister, Owen, *The Virginian* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 1998.
- [6]. Wegner, John, „Wars and the Rumours of Wars“ in Cormac McCarthy“s Border Trilogy“, in E. Arnold and D. Luce (eds.), *A Cormac McCarthy Companion: The Border Trilogy* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2001), 73-91.
- [7]. Wilhelmus, T., „Ranches of Isolation“ *Hudson Review*, Vol.48, No.1, (1995), 145-152.
- [8]. Woodward, Richard B., „Cormac McCarthy“s Venomous Fiction“, in *The New York Times*, 19th April 1992, also, <http://www.nytimes.com/books/98/05/17/specials/mccarthy-venom.html> accessed 21/11/12.
- [9]. Worster, Donald, *Under Western Skies: Nature and History in the American West* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).