



Apocalyptic Literary Science Fiction Case Study: Stephan King's Stand

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Abstract

S. King's (1947) books have been adapted into feature films, miniseries, and comic books. Apocalyptic literature is a genre of prophetic writing that developed in post-Exilic Jewish culture and was popular among millennialist early Christians. "Apocalypse" is a Greek word meaning "revelation", "an unveiling or unfolding of things not previously known and which could not be known apart from the unveiling". As a genre, apocalyptic literature details the authors' visions of the end times as revealed by an angel or other heavenly messenger. The apocalyptic literature of Judaism and Christianity embraces a considerable period, from the centuries following the Babylonian exile down to the close of the Middle Ages. Science fiction is a genre of speculative fiction, typically dealing with imaginative concepts such as advanced science and technology, spaceflight, time travel, and extraterrestrial life. Science fiction often explores the potential consequences of scientific and other innovations, and has been called a "literature of ideas" "Science fiction" is difficult to define, as it includes a wide range of subgenres and themes.

Keywords: Apocalyptic, Literary science fiction, Stephan King's Stand

INTRODUCTION

Modernism is a philosophical movement that, along with cultural trends and changes, arose from wide-scale and far-reaching transformations in Western society during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Among the factors that shaped modernism were the development of modern industrial societies and the rapid growth of cities, followed then by reactions of horror to World War I. Modernism also rejected the certainty of Enlightenment thinking, and many modernists rejected religious belief.

Postmodernism

Postmodernity is the economic or cultural state or condition of society which is said to exist *after* modernity. Some schools of thought hold that modernity ended in the late 20th century- in the 1980s or early 1990s- and that it was replaced by postmodernity, while

others would extend modernity to cover the developments denoted by postmodernity, while some believe that modernity ended after World War II. The idea of the post-modern condition is sometimes characterized as a culture stripped of its capacity to function in any linear or autonomous state as opposed to the progressive mind state of Modernism. Postmodernity can mean a personal response to a postmodern society, the conditions in a society which make it postmodern or the state of being that is associated with a postmodern society as well a historical epoch. In most contexts it should be distinguished from postmodernism, the adoption of postmodern philosophies or traits in art, literature, culture and society. In fact, today, historical perspectives on the developments of postmodern art (postmodernism) and postmodern society (postmodernity) can be best described as two umbrella terms for processes engaged in an ongoing dialectical relationship, the result of which is the evolving world in which we now live:

Table 1. Comparison of Modernism and Postmodernism

Modernism	Postmodernism
Adheres to Western hegemonic values	Contests Western hegemonic values
Focus on the writer	Focus on the reader
Focus on interiority	Focus on exteriority
Alienation	Collective voices
Unreliable narrator	Ironic narrator
Rejection of realism	Ambivalence towards realism
Literature is self-contained	Literature is open and intersexual
High-brow genres	Mixing of high- and low-brow genres
Rejection of literary conventions	Parody of literary conventions
Met fictional	Met fictional
Idiosyncratic language	Simple language

Science fiction

Science fiction is a genre of speculative fiction, typically dealing with imaginative concepts such as advanced science and technology, spaceflight, time travel, and extraterrestrial life. Science fiction often explores the potential consequences of scientific and other innovations, and has been called a "literature of ideas".

Elements

- Undiscovered scientific possibilities such as teleportation, time travel, and faster-than-light travel or communication.
- New and different political and social systems and situations, including utopian, dystopian, post-apocalyptic, or post-scarcity.
- Future history and evolution of humans on earth or on other planets.
- Paranormal abilities such as mind control, telepathy, and telekinesis

Hard and soft science fiction

Hard science fiction is characterized by an emphasis on scientific accuracy. The term was first used in print in 1957 by P. Schuyler Miller in a review of John W. Campbell's *Islands of Space* in *Astounding Science Fiction*. The complementary term fiction first appeared in the late 1970s; referring to the popular distinction between the "hard" (natural) and

"soft" (social) sciences. Science fiction critic Gary Wistful (1980) argues that neither term is part of a rigorous taxonomy ; instead they are approximate ways of characterizing stories those reviewers nor commentators have found useful. Soft science fiction includes works based on social sciences such as psychology, economics, political science, sociology, and anthropology. The term can also describe stories focused primarily on character and emotion.

Apocalypse

Post-apocalyptic fiction is set in a world or civilization after such a disaster. The time frame may be immediately after the catastrophe, focusing on the travails or psychology of survivors, or considerably later often including the theme that the existence of pre catastrophe civilization has been forgotten.

Apocalypse fiction does not portray catastrophes, or disaster, or near disaster that does not result in apocalypse. A threat of an apocalypse does not make a piece of fiction Apocalyptic. For example, *Armageddon* and *Deep Impact* are considered disaster films and not apocalyptic fiction because, although earth and / or human kind are terribly threatened, in the end they manage to avoid destruction. Apocalyptic fiction is not the same as fiction that provides visions of a dystopian future. George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty four* is dystopian fiction, not apocalyptic fiction.

The Apocalypse rules pop culture. Half the biggest literary novels these days are apocalyptic, and meanwhile *The Walking Dead* is a huge hit. Post-apocalyptic stories are what space opera was in the Space Age. But what are they about? Here are 10 types of apocalypses, and what they each signify.

Elements

The following list considers the element that an apocalyptic literary text may include:

Plagues

This one is fairly easy - like a few others on this list; it's based on a real-life fear, of global pandemics and runaway diseases, especially in the age of Ebola paranoia. But it's also based on the dread of globalization, and the notion that crossing borders, and traversing the globe, has become much too easy. And diseases that start in the Third World can travel to Europe and the U.S. with alarming speed. Finally, there's often a hint of paranoia about science, which either created the disease or can't solve it. Paul Faust (2011) *Ten Plagues Narrative in Exodus*.

Slow Apocalypse

the story of social collapse and slow environmental decline. all of the stuff that seems like it might be unsustainable in our current society just sort of falls apart, including the complex economic systems. And everything that relied on cheap fossil fuels. And this is another one that's easy to understand, since it's directly related to our anxieties about the fact that Western, post-industrial society will inevitably collapse- although that's not an apocalypse, it's just the wheel turning as usual. This one often includes a plague of some

sort, and is often the most likely to turn into a Cozy catastrophe. But it can also turn into a Mad Max-kind of thing. Allana Ross (2017) Adaptive Strategies in slow Apocalypse.

Certain People Die or Vanish

Either a certain percentage of the population vanishes or one certain type of person dies, leaving everybody else unscathed (*Y: The Last Man*). Sometimes, this is a plague apocalypse, but often it's just unexplained or the explanation is murky. In Kim Stanley Robinson's (2002) alternate history *The Years of Rice and Salt*, the Black Plague succeeds in wiping out almost the whole population of Europe, leaving the world dominated by Muslims. There are also a ton of fictional gender cedes, which often leave only men or only women alive. These scenarios are usually about showing how indispensable the people who are gone are - without men, or without conservative Christians, the world falls to pieces. They're usually about exploring the dynamics within the group that's still around, showing how they fare on their own and what this reveals about them. Kim Stanley Robinson's (2002) *The Years of Rice and Salt*.

Natural Disasters

This includes items from space (like meteors, comets, rogue planetoids, solar flares) but also volcanoes, tidal waves, global flooding, runaway neutrinos, ice ages, and so on. Occasionally, you'll get a "natural disaster" story where it's our fault, due to our irresponsible meddling - like *The Core*, for example. Or sometimes, these are an attempt to warn us about climate change. But a surprisingly high percentage of the time, these disasters are purely natural and beyond our ability to cause or control. Even so, the message of these disaster scenarios is the same either way - nature is huge and uncontrollable, and we humans are puny and arrogant. We can be smashed like bugs at any time, and we're fools to think otherwise.

Monsters and Aliens

Either giant monsters rise up, like Godzilla, or alien invaders descend on us and lay waste to everything. Either way, we're basically outmatched by creatures we can't destroy, or even understand. These attacks are often somewhat similar to plagues, in that they're merciless and can't be reasoned with - but they're also like natural disasters, because we get to see everything gets trashed. And they definitely play into our fear that we might not be quite as in control as we think we are. But alien invasions, and to lesser extent giant monsters, also speak to our fear of being on the receiving end of colonialism. For Europeans, it's a scary fantasy of what it would be like to have the tables turned and be the colonized, instead of the colonizers. What if our war machines and mechanisms of exerting control finally met their match, and we were the ones with less fire power? (This is based on an oversimplified view of colonialism, but one with a lot of popular acceptance.) Also, the giant monster attack lets us fantasize about throwing one hell of a temper tantrum, as we identify with a Kailua letting loose on a city full of puny humans. Charlie Jane Anders (1980) *The 10 Types of Fictional Apocalypses* (2013).

The viral Apocalypse

Catch up to this apocalypse after most of the damage has already been done. Films like *I am legend* and *doomsday* concern themselves more with survivors than the virus itself. Other films, however, such as 'outbreak', 'contagion' and the television adaptation of Stephen King's *the stand*; illustrate the severity of a world disrupted by awful sickness. It involves lots of phlegm.

Don't mess with Mother Nature. Her wrath leads to apocalypses that are no laughing matter, though their execution on film could lead to a snicker or two. Such is the case with M. night Shyamalan's silly *the happening* in which plants murder us by making us murder ourselves. One could also make a case for the unintentional comedy of Roland Emmerit's 2012; which illustrates an earth that basically gets swallowed by the ocean after some major solar flares.

The Stand

The Stand is a post-apocalyptic horror/fantasy novel by American author Stephen King. *Stephen King's The Stand* (1978), is considered by Most King fans and scholars to be his masterpiece. It is also an exemplary King story about American people that share American ideals, but are faced with various supernatural horrors that figuratively represents the evils lurking underneath the veneer of civilization. In *The Stand*, the U.S.A. is hit by an epidemic that wipes out nearly the entire population. The few survivors are forced to live in a post-apocalyptic world in which the old laws and moral boundaries no longer exist. They are presented with the option to make their own choices about leading a "Good" life or a "Sinful" one.

The survivors unwittingly choose a sinful life and have to redeem themselves by making a stand against evil. *The stand* is in this respect a modern morality play. It presents the protagonists with the choice to do what is right or wrong. When they choose to follow the wrong road they have to redeem themselves. Each of the protagonists is pulled towards either one of two supernatural beings that serve as a moral compass to the characters. Mother Abigail represents good whereas randall Flagg represents evil.

METHODOLOGY

Stephen King's masterpiece *The stand* is one of the greatest literary works in the genre of *apocalyptic* and science fiction. Since this study is based on the thematic study of modernism, science fiction in modern American literature and apocalyptic features of a modern literature and the postmodern to show the position and condition of these modern Man in apocalyptic scientific /fictional apocalyptic modern and postmodern society especially in Stephen King's masterpiece. This study will be descriptive and corpus based study which will analyze Stephen King's masterpiece: *The Stand*. Therefore, this chapter includes an exact description and analysis of the concepts and terminology of literary critical approach.

The Themes of the Stand

Major themes in *The Stand* are mankind's free will and repentance. Similar to *Everyman*, the American people in *The Stand* inherit Adam and Eve's sinful life; even the people that are supposedly innocent are caught up in the epidemic without question and without

suspicion commit sin as a result of this. According to King, consumerism and technology lead to terrible things: "Throughout the greater body of his fiction, Stephen King addresses the dual genies of science and technology gone badly". Stephen King's *The Stand As a Contemporary Morality Play*, Martijn Schurings(2015)

Larry Underwood sat on a bench in Central Park on the morning of June 27, looking into the menagerie. Behind him, Fifth Avenue was crazily jammed with cars, all of them silent now, their owners dead or fled. Farther down Fifth, many of the posh shops were smoking rubble. From where Larry sat he could see a lion, an antelope, a zebra, and some sort of monkey. All but the monkey were dead. They had not died of the flu, Larry judged; they had gotten no food or water for God knew how long, and that had killed them.

The Stand, American culture's dependence on, even addiction to technology is all-pervasive. In the second action, the epidemic wipes out the majority of the world's population and mankind is left without anything of their previous life. It is a victory for evil, but mankind is still alive at that point. The virus influences the survivors as they start to dream about two supernatural beings. One of these beings takes the guise of an old African- American woman, Mother Abigail, who urges the people to come meet her at Hemingford Home, in Nebraska, and travel together to Boulder. King, Stephen. *The Stand: The Complete and Uncut Edition*, 1990.

But earlier this morning Larry had seen him in the park and he was only a crazy old man wearing corduroy pants and zoris and horn-rimmed glasses with one bow taped. Larry had tried to speak to him and the monster-shouter had run in terror, crying back over his shoulder that th monsters would be in the streets at any moment. He had tripped over an ankle-high wire fence and went sprawling on one of the bikepaths with a loud comic thwap! sound, his glasses flying off but not shattering.

The other supernatural being takes the shape of the male red-neck Randall Flagg, who forces and coaxes people into joining his regime, in Las Vegas. Lloyd is one of the first people he coaxes into joining. When Lloyd is imprisoned for a murder he did not commit, he gets the choice to remain in his cell to starve to death, or join Randall Flagg. Others such as Trashcan Man and Julie Lawry start to follow Randall Flagg as well. In turn Stuart Redman meets others who had the dreams as well, and they all collectively decide to follow Mother Abigail's dreams. They eventually reach her home in Nebraska and together they do as she tells. They make a new start in the form of a community in Boulder. Douglas E. *Stephen King, The Art Of Darkness*, 1984.

The second action of *The Stand* is similar to *Everyman* in the sense that the antagonist is passive in pushing the protagonists, the event that pushes the protagonists to Abigail and Flagg is not even caused by him. It can be argued, however, that the antagonist in this action takes the form of the modern technological civilization that Randall Flagg is attempting to embody and advocate once more in Las Vegas. This same technology was in the first place responsible for the virus outbreak that wiped out nearly all of America's population. Within the context of the novel's implicit moral framework, the Superflu becomes a catalyst towards salvation. Civilization is wiped out by the Superflu so that the status quo is reset: a great part of the civilization has been wiped out and as a

consequence of this most technology seems to be disabled. Anthony S. *The Moral Voyages Of Stephen King*. 1989. Rockville: Wildside Press, 2006.

Their friends and relatives were dead or dying. There had been shooting in the streets, there had been an inferno on Fifth Avenue, was it true that Tiffany's was gone, could that be true? Who was going to clean up? Who was going to collect the garbage? Should they get out of New York? They had heard that troops were guarding all the places where one could hope to do this. One woman was terrified that the rats were going to rise up out of the subways and inherit the earth, reminding Larry uneasily of his own thoughts on the day he had first returned to New York.

In the fourth action, the survivors encounter their intercessor in the form of Mother Abigail, who is returned to them but gravely wounded. She warns the group that they need to make a stand against Randall Flagg if they want to survive in the world, otherwise everything they have built up will be lost. In turn, Randall Flagg attempts to maintain control over his group, but he gradually loses control. According to Mother Abigail, she, Stu and the rest of the group have sinned in "pride". According to winter:

The Free Zone, so focused upon ordering its lives, literally fiddles with matches while the totalitarian regime of Randall Flagg readies napalm for its Phantom jets. Only a final visionary experience by Mother Abigail rouses the Free Zone from the comfortable sleep of socialization, provoking "*the stand*. *World of Stephen King*. Eds. Gary Hoppenstand & Ray B. Browne. Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1987.

They had started off across the country in a wheezy old 1968 Mercury that had shot its transmission in Omaha. From there on they would work for a couple of weeks, hitchhike west for a while, work another couple of weeks, then hitchhike some more. For a while they worked on a farm in western Nebraska, just below the panhandle, and one night Larry had lost sixty dollars in a poker game. The next day he'd had to ask Rudy for a loan to tide him over. They had arrived in L.A. a month later, and Larry had been the first to land a job-if you wanted to call washing dishes for the minimum wage working.

Mother Abigail awakens Stu and the others from their isolated dream world, telling him there are bigger issues at hand? If they do not open their eyes and do something, they will have nothing left. At the same time this call for action is also an expression of faith in mankind: "*The Stand* disavows scientific ignorance as the answer. Instead, King is assured by a faith in faith—he does not despair of man" (Winter 65). Within the novel the blame does not lie entirely on technology, but also on men. Despite mankind's moral fragility, and penchant for sin, the plot foregrounds a faith that mankind will be able to right its own wrongs. As much as Mother Abigail is treated like a supernatural being in the novel, she appears much more human than Randall Flagg and this is even emphasized in the fact that she does not only blame Stu and the others for sinning, but also herself. Using Abigail as an intercessor for the community, King pushes Stu and the others to start thinking about traditional values such as friendship, selflessness and above all faith. Abigail she asks them to do blindly as she tells because God has spoken to her.

The Virtues of the Stand:

Mother Abigail represents faith in *The Stand* and she is the intercessor for the survivors. Abigail Freemantle is 108 years old and in her dreams she asks the people to come and see her:

That black man. That servant of the devil. We got the Rockies between us n him, praise God, but they won't keep him back. That's why we got to knit together. In Colorado. God come to me in a dream and showed me where. But we got to be quick, quick as we can, anyway. So you come see me. There's others coming too. She firmly believes she was sent for a purpose by God, similar to Moses and Noah The narrative explains she believes "her place was not to judge God, although she wished He hadn't seen fit to set the cup before her lips that He had" (588).

The narrator reveals that in her thoughts she compares her to the biblical figures mentioned above: "he had sent Moses to mountain-climbing and Noah to boatbuilding; He had seen His own Son nailed up on a Tree. What did He care how miserably afraid Abby Freemantle was of the man with no face, he who stalked her dreams". Abigail lived a simple life at Hemingford Home in Nebraska, and was the daughter of a farmer. Despite having a peaceful life, she had experienced loss to a Great extent. King, Stephen. *The Stand: The Complete and Uncut Edition.*, 1990.

He met Yvonne Wetterlen at a movie theater two blocks from the club where she worked as a topless dancer. When the second show let out, she had been weeping and searching around her seat on the aisle for her purse. It had her driver's license in it, also her checkbook, her union card, he one credit card, a photostat of her birth certificate, and her Social Security card. Although he was positive it had been stolen, Larry did not say so and helped her look for it. And sometimes it seemed they really must live in a world of wonders, because he had found it three rows down just as they were about to give up.

Abigail married multiple times because all her husbands died much sooner than she did. Mother Abigail at first guides Stu and the others to the Free Zone in Boulder and teaches them how to become a community. Eventually her teachings become a part of the community itself. Abigail later goes into the wilderness to search for answers because she claims she lost her connection to God. Much like Moses and Noah, she is tasked to do something and she seems to do it without question regardless of the danger she has to encounter. She later returns from this trip into the wilderness outside of the Free Zone, and all that is left is what the people call a mummy:

The woman on the bed was a skeleton covered with thinly stretched, ash-gray skin. She seemed without sex. Most of her hair was gone; her breasts were gone; her mouth hung unhinged and her breath rasped through it harshly. To Larry, she looked like pictures he had seen of the Yucatán mummies—not decayed but shriveled; cured; dry; ageless. She is no longer Mother Abigail at this point but she has become genderless and ageless, representing not one person now but many. *Allegories Of The Virtues And Vices In Mediaeval Art.* Trans. Alan (1939).

The Dark Man suddenly is gone and only his clothes remain, and the ball flings itself into the cart with the bomb, destroying the city and everyone who is still present in it. His lust for power and the inability to control everything he wants, such as Tom Cullen as well as

Trashcan Man, lead to the destruction of Las Vegas. Lloyd Hen Reid represents Obedience, Randall Flagg keeps dominion over his people whether they like it or not; Lloyd is domesticated and under Flagg's full control. Even before the epidemic Lloyd has always been a right-hand man. He was Poke's right hand man and ended up on death row. Stephen King's *The Stand As a Contemporary Morality Play*, Martijn Schurings (2015).

They lived together for fourteen months, all of it fine until the last six weeks or so, when Yvonne got to be kind of a bitch, and the part of it that summed it all up for Larry was that World Series. He would put in his day at the bookstore, then go over to Johnny McCall's house and the two of them-the whole group only practiced on weekends, because the other two guys had night jobs would work on some new stuff or maybe just hack away at the great oldies, the ones Johnny called "real bar-rippers," tunes like "Nobody but Me" and "Double Shot of My Baby's Love."

Randall Flagg saves him after he turns out to be immune. By accepting Randall's help he becomes Flagg's right-hand man. Compared to all the people from Boulder, Lloyd remains a pawn to do the work of others and never attains freedom.

When Lloyd has to execute Glen, Wisdom, he tells him, "'it's alright, Mr. Hen Reid,' he whispered, 'you don't know any better'". Lloyd fires his gun, killing Wisdom. He does regret his action when he realizes that Glen was right. Unfortunately, Lloyd does not know any better, since he has always executed Flagg's will. While he attempts to break free by telling Flagg, "I didn't do it for you!" Lloyd dies in the nuclear explosion and never escapes the vicious circle of vice. Indirectly, he also kills off Stu's wisdom and leaves Stu dependent on his blind faith for Mother Abigail. In a sense, Lloyd is also responsible for taking a degree of free will from Stu in determining the outcome of the battle. Glen dies as an indirect result of leaving Stu behind. If Stu had joined them it would not have happened, but Stu had no choice in this matter. Like Tom Cullen, Trashcan Man represents the extreme of his society, namely Anarchy. Stephen King's *The Stand As a Contemporary Morality Play*, Martijn Schurings(2015)

His mother had died three days ago. She had been lying on a cot in the hallway of Mercy Hospital when she died, crammed in with thousands of others who were also busy dying. Larry had been kneeling beside her when she went, and he had thought he might go mad, watching his mother die while all around him rose the stench of urine and feces, the hell's babble of the delirious, the choking, the insane, the screams of the bereaved. She hadn't known him at the end; there had been no final moment of recognition. Her chest had finally just stopped in midheave and had settled very slowly, like the weight of an automobile settling down on a flat tire. He had crouched beside her for ten minutes or so, not knowing what to do, thinking in a confused way that he ought to wait until a death certificate was signed or someone asked him what had happened.

CONCLUSION

According to Catalan Dracsineanu in his essay "Stephen king and the role of the intellectual in 20th century society "(2009) says: In his preface to Allan Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind*, Stephen King confesses: "...you do not always feel that you are writing for any of your contemporaries. And according to Harold Bloom:

A condition even of a free society: "the modern replacement for the inalienable rights that used to be the traditional grounds for a free society" (Bloom, *Closing...*, p. 25).

These are great literary masterpieces with a globalized concepts about Man, society, modernity in the medium of *the stand* which Stephen king puts under the question of post/modern Man, freedom, Man's choices and logical deeds and actions in post/modern man.

Regarding the questions of frequency, although it is obvious that Stephen King's apocalyptic and science fictional masterpiece *The Stand* uses the concept of resurrection, doomsday, Man's challenges which are post/modern themes and styles in these novels, and there are also repeated modern, and existentialistic actions in his novels. In Stephen King's apocalyptic and science fictional masterpiece *The Stand* what becomes obvious as the repetitive to happen in the novel is the presence of absence; In this regard, one of the most important concepts i.e. horror and terror that modern Man always scares and fears from that is that of an ideal life that Man has no information about it and its future since if there is no resurrection all of his/her life will be hollow , absurd and empty ; through the novel we hear numerous times that the family wanted to lead a happy ideal life where they could raise happy and healthy children.

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