



12

## **A REVIEW ON APOCALYPTIC THEMES EMBEDDED IN POSTMODERN WRITINGS**

*David Paul & G. Alan  
Vellore Institute of Technology,  
Chennai, TN, India*

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### **Abstract:**

*This article reviews postmodern fiction and non-fictions with apocalyptic themes. Postmodern authors increasingly adopt apocalypse as their theme especially after catastrophe such as World Trade Centre attack that occurred in the United States of America. Though all postmodern works of art do not entirely succumb to apocalyptic themes, there are unobserved novels that are apocalyptic in theme. In several of the works, the concepts of trauma and apocalypse are used. The apocalypse and postmodernism are incorporated in the present article.*

**Keywords:** *Postmodernism, Apocalypse, Catastrophe, Covid-19, Trauma, etc.*

The constant disasters in the world, including the Covid-19 pandemic brings the need for postmodern and apocalyptic writings. They demonstrate the stories of traumatic catastrophe and its aftermath. Postmodern apocalyptic novels aim at representing the society's trouble due to the catastrophe. They play an important role in defining the people's disastrous encounters. Despite the postmodern tenets, these novels are a reflection of the apocalyptic perspective on the world. In postmodern literature and art, apocalyptic themes are often explored in a more cynical and ironic manner, often serving as a commentary on the perceived fragility of the present society and the potential for its downfall. This can be seen in works such as Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*, which explores the aftermath of a catastrophic event through the perspective of a father and son, or Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, which imagines a future in which women are treated as reproductive property.

### **Postapocalyptic themes embedded in Postmodern Novels**

Postmodernism is a departure from modernism. It is far from understanding without the comprehension of modernism. Peter Childs (2000), in his pivotal text, *Modernism* published by Routledge offers a concise analysis of the most vital literary innovations of the past few years. He provides an account of the 'pan-European' roots of the numerous revolutions in art, film, and aesthetic theory, as well as the major literary transformations that occurred in the novel, poetry, and theatre. A brief introduction to some of the 'paterfamilias' of modernism, including Marx, Darwin, Freud, Nietzsche, Saussure, and Einstein, is also provided before moving on to a discussion of various genres, including the novel, short story, poetry, theatre, art, and film. The writing is more careful and the material examines various writers. *The Garden Party* by Katherine Mansfield and *Women in Love* by Susan Lawrence are both discussed in the chapter on gender. *The Good Soldier* and *Heart of Darkness* are examined in terms of epistemology and narrative. *The Return of the Soldier* by Rebecca West and *Mrs. Dalloway* are both examined in a chapter on identity and war. The chapter on sex and race examines William Faulkner and Nella Larsen. James Joyce's *A Passage to India*, W. B. Yeats' *Leda* and *the Swan*, and other works are discussed under the section on symbolism and language. As well, many other authors and their works are discussed.



Similarly, Varun Begley (2005) is a prominent book on Modernism. Investigating plays from 1958 to 1996, Varun Begley's text argues that Pinter's work simultaneously personifies the modernist principle of nullification and the more fluid aesthetics of the postmodern. Pinter is arguably one of the most popular and puzzling of modern dramatists writing in English. His plays prefigured, then chronicled, the crumbling divide between modernism and its historical 'others: ' popular entertainment, politically committed art, and technological mass culture. Begley showcases Pinter's work by applying the methods and problems of cultural studies discourse. Viewing his plays as a series of responses to fundamental aesthetic and political questions within modernism, Begley argues that, collectively, they narrate a prehistory of the postmodern.

And Habib (2011) provides a succinct and commanding outline of the progress of Western literary criticism and theory from the Classical period to the present day. An essential and intellectually stimulating introduction to the history of literary criticism and theory introduces the major texts, movements, and figures of literary criticism. It provides the historical context and displays the interconnectedness between various theories.

Elizabeth K. Rosen (2008), in his work, *Apocalyptic Transformation: Apocalypse and the Postmodern Imagination*, discovers the elements of apocalyptic narrative in postmodern fiction. Rosen launches how postmodernism adapts secular apocalypse. Rosen takes the reader through the basic precepts of the apocalyptic narrative and displays these components at work in its literary tradition so as to assure the familiarity with the precepts. The majority of the book provides examples from contemporary graphic novels such as Watchmen, to Vonnegut's Galapagos, to Gilliam's 12 Monkeys. Rosen exposes the apocalyptic narrative at work in postmodern texts and film, and how the postmodern approach or tools of deconstruction, and plurality attempt to inform readers of the existence of this narrative. Rosen does a detailed study of postmodernism's impact on apocalyptic narratives. She applies historical and postmodern concepts of apocalypse to a few texts.

The novel, *Falling Man* is written in the postmodern style. It displays that there is a September 11 attack and also a life after wards. That life of the people unable to liberate from the repercussions is portrayed. *Falling Man* is a brilliant, essential novel about the event that outlines turn-of-the-century America. It begins with the attacked World Trade Centre towers, known as 9/11 attack and tracks the aftermath of this global tremor in the lives of the people. The character Keith, walks out of the ruins into a life that he'd always imagined belonged to everyone but him. Then Lianne, his estranged wife, memory-haunted, trying to reconcile two versions of the same shadowy man. And their small son Justin, standing at the window, scanning the sky for more planes. These are lives choreographed by loss, grief and the enormous force of history. They are mentally traumatized and attempts to get out of the aftermath of catastrophe.

Peter Boxall (2006) in *Don DeLillo: The Possibility of Fiction* is one the few available books of criticism on the subject. This monograph presents the fullest account to date of Don DeLillo's writing, situating his composition within a wider analysis of the condition of contemporary fiction, and dealing with his entire work in relation to contemporary political and economic concerns for the first time.

Felman Shoshana (2002), in his book entitled *Trials and Trauma in 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, argues that the decree of collective traumas in the 20th century altered both culture and law. This transformation took place through legal cases that put history itself on trial, and that provided a stage for the expression of the persecuted, the historically expressionless. Investigating legal events that tried to repair the crimes and injuries of history, Felman reveals the juridical unconscious of trials and vividly demonstrates how this juridical unconscious is bound up with the logic of the trauma that a trial tries to articulate and contain but so often re-enacts and repeats. Moving from texts by Arendt, Benjamin, Freud, Zola, and Tolstoy to the Dreyfus and Nuremberg trials, as well as the trials of O. J. Simpson



and Adolf Eichmann, the book presents the collective traumas in 20<sup>th</sup> century. Thereby, the significance of trauma is expressed.

Apocalyptic themes refer to the idea of an impending global disaster or end of the world. These themes are often found in literature, film, and other forms of media, and often explore the consequences of human actions on a global scale. Apocalyptic themes can be seen as a response to the rapid changes and uncertainty of the modern world, as well as a reflection of our deepest fears and anxieties.

In postmodernism, apocalyptic themes are often used to challenge the idea of progress and the belief in human superiority. By depicting the potential consequences of our actions, postmodernists can critique our beliefs and assumptions about the world, and prompt us to consider alternative perspectives and ways of being.

To conclude, both postmodernism and the apocalypse as two different domains have undergone comprehensive investigation. According to the sources, contemporary study is concentrated on the intersection between postmodern and apocalypse. The analysis of postmodern literature, both fiction and non-fiction, demonstrates the importance of the postmodern apocalypse and the ongoing tragedy in the world. So, postmodernism and apocalyptic themes can be seen as intersecting in their investigation of the collapse of traditional structures and values, and the potential for societal and personal disaster.

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**To Cite the Article:** Paul, David, Alan, G., "A Review on Apocalyptic Themes Embedded in Postmodern Writings". *Literary Cognizance*, III-3 (December, 2022): 69-71. Web.