The End of the World

An Introduction to the Apocalypse
Key Concepts

• **Apocalypse**
  - From the Greek word ἀποκάλυψις (apokalupsis/apokálypsis)
    - Reveal; Uncover; Unveil

• **Apocalyptic**
  - A literary genre originating in early Jewish text about the end of the world.
    - John of Patmos, Daniel, Ezekiel, 1 Enoch

**Apocalypse**: “A genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial, insofar as it involves another, supernatural world.”

Four Horseman of the Apocalypse

(Conquest/Pestilence – War – Famine – Death)
Key Concepts

• **Eschatology**
  • From the Greek word ἔσχατος (eschatos)
    • The Last; Farthest
    • The study of the last days and how the world ends.

• **Eschatological**
  • Concerning the end times

• **Apocrypha**
  • Unofficial religious texts, often of uncertain origin

Dead Sea Scrolls fragment
Key Concepts

• **Symbology**
  • The study of symbols and their significance (both hidden and plain).
    • The number of the Beast (616, 666)

• **Cipher**
  • A code used to hide the true meaning of a message.
    • Beast with seven heads and ten horns

• **Seer/Prophet**
  • Someone who is given the ability to see the future or receive divine messages.
    • 3 Wise Men given vision of the birth of Jesus

WAW (VAV) 6
Apocalyptic Variations

Religious Apocalypse

Secular Apocalypse

• Zombie Apocalypse
• Robot Apocalypse
• Nuclear Apocalypse

Global Pandemic

Ecological Disaster (Climate/Volcano)

Alien Encounter

Cosmic Event (Asteroid, Solar Flares)

General Catastrophe (Y2K, 2012)
Apocalypse in Pop Culture

Here are a few of the places we can see apocalyptic ideas in action.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>US Politics</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>International affairs</th>
<th>Environment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biblical literalism</td>
<td>Judgement Day</td>
<td>War in Middle East</td>
<td>Species extinction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for Israel</td>
<td>Anti Christ &amp; the Beast</td>
<td>Nuclear Threats</td>
<td>Climate Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doomsday preppers</td>
<td>“666”</td>
<td>UN/World Government</td>
<td>Hurricanes/Wildfires</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Early Apocalypse Stories

- Stories about the destruction or end of the world are common
  - Flood or other divine destruction - Babylonian, Persian, Egyptian texts

- Apocalyptic literature emerged in early Jewish texts (~3rd C. BCE)
  - Book of Daniel (7-12)
  - 1 Enoch
  - 4 Ezra
  - Apocalypse of Paul & Apocalypse of Peter

- Many from apocryphal texts (Dead Sea Scrolls, Nag Hammadi Codex)
# Receiving the Apocalypse

**DREAMS**
- Prophet or seer is shown visions of the apocalypse (Daniel)
- Angel helps interpret visions
- Symbolic language & images

**HEAVENLY VISIONS**
- Prophet or seer is taken up to Heaven to see events unfolding (John of Patmos)
- Angel guides seer, sometimes also explains events
- Symbolic language & images
Interpreting the Apocalypse

• A fundamental challenge in making sense of apocalyptic literature is how we interpret and understand the content of these stories.

• **Literal vs Symbolic**
  • How should we understand apocalyptic literature?

• **Past vs Present**
  • Where do we locate the message of apocalyptic stories?
Harold Camping predicts the end of the world - May 21, 2011
Public Opinion & the Apocalypse

2006 Pew Research Poll

Among U.S. Christians...

Do you believe in the second coming of Jesus Christ?
- Yes: 79%
- No: 17%
- D.K./Ref.: 4%

Do you believe that Jesus will return to Earth in your lifetime?
- Yes: 20%
- No: 39%
- Unknown: 14%
- D.K./Ref.: 6%

Is the time of the second coming revealed in biblical prophecies?
- Yes: 33%
- No: 40%
- D.K./Ref.: 6%

Before the second coming, the world situation will...
- Worsen: 34%
- Unknown: 4%
- D.K./Ref.: 4%

Can peoples and nations affect when Christ returns?
- Yes: 23%
- No: 50%
- D.K./Ref.: 6%

2006 Pew Research Poll

Opinions of Christians about the Second Coming of Jesus Christ

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Believe in 2nd coming</th>
<th>Time of Christ’s return in Bible</th>
<th>In your lifetime</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Protestant</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>36</td>
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<tr>
<td>White evangelical</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White mainline</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black Protestant</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Catholic</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White non-Hispanic</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bible is...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literal word of God</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word of God, not literal</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Public Opinion & the Apocalypse

2014 PRRI & AAR Survey

FIGURE 9. The severity of recent natural disasters is evidence of...

[Bar chart showing percentages of responses regarding evidence of global climate change and the Bible calling “the end times” across different demographics.]

Source: PRRI/AAR, Religion, Values, and Climate Change Survey, November 2014
Public Opinion & the Apocalypse

Do you believe that the world will end during your lifetime? (2012, by country)

- Turkey: 22%
- United States: 22%
- South Africa: 21%
- Indonesia: 19%
- Mexico: 19%
- Argentina: 19%
- China: 16%
- Japan: 15%
- Poland: 16%
- Hungary: 14%
- Australia: 13%

Additional Information:
Worldwide, Iowa, March 6 to 20, 2012; 3,262*: 18 years and older

* Source: Ipsos 2018

© Statista 2018
Public Opinion & the Apocalypse

Which of these apocalyptic movies depicts events that could happen in the next 25 years? (2012 Survey)

- The Day After Tomorrow: 37%
- Armageddon: 31%
- 2012: 30%
- Independence Day: 19%
- The Day the Earth Stood Still: 19%
- I Am Legend: 15%
- The Stand: 10%
- Waterworld: 9%
- Planet of the Apes: 7%
- Other: 20%

Source: National Geographic
© Statista 2018

Additional Information:
United States; 1,007 respondents
The End of History?


  • With the fall of Communism and the end of the Cold War, Western liberal democracy and global capitalism was the final political-economic system.

  • No new political ideas or institutions would need to be invented, so the key driver of human progress and modernity had finally come to an end.

  “Have we in fact reached the end of history? Are there, in other words, any fundamental “contradictions” in human life that cannot be resolved in the context of modern liberalism, that would be resolvable by an alternative political-economic structure?”
The Apocalyptic Decade

The Last Myth authors argue there was a surge in apocalyptic ideas and worries starting in 21st century:

- Y2K (Dec 31, 1999)
- 9/11 (2001)
- Hurricane Katrina (2005)
- Great Recession (2007-2008)
- Mayan Prophecy (Dec 31, 2012)
Y2K “Millennium Bug”

The first and the last Apocalypse
20\textsuperscript{th}-21\textsuperscript{st} century
Y2K

• Began as a worry about the 2-digit end dates (YY) used by computers.

• Although over-hyped as a potential disaster, global efforts to fix the date problem ensured no major problems occurred.

• How should we view Y2K?
  • A technological hoax 😞
  • A successfully averted disaster 😊

• Lasting public skepticism from Y2K evident today in climate debates.
The Rapture Index

• RaptureReady.com created in mid-1980s by Todd Strandberg
• “the prophetic speedometer of end-times activity”
Rapture Index (Jan 2020)

184
“fasten your seat belts”

42 indicators, expanded to 45

Rapture Index

100 and Below: Slow prophetic activity
100 to 130: Moderate prophetic activity
130 to 160: Heavy prophetic activity
Above 160: Fasten your seat belts

Records
All-Time High: 189 (October 10, 2016)
All-Time Low: 58 (December 12, 1993)
Traffic Overview

Total Visits

On desktop & mobile web, in the last 6 months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Rapture Ready</th>
<th>CSU Chico</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jul'19</td>
<td>500K</td>
<td>700K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug'19</td>
<td>700K</td>
<td>1.1M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep'19</td>
<td>900K</td>
<td>1.4M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct'19</td>
<td>1.2M</td>
<td>1.5M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov'19</td>
<td>1.1M</td>
<td>1.3M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec'19</td>
<td>1.0M</td>
<td>1.2M</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Rapture Ready</th>
<th>CSU Chico</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Visits</td>
<td>813.27K</td>
<td>1.22M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avg. Visit Duration</td>
<td>00:05:06</td>
<td>00:09:40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pages per Visit</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>10.51</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bounce Rate</td>
<td>45.99%</td>
<td>23.53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Similarweb.com
The Late Great Planet Earth
The Late Great Planet Earth
The Late Great Planet Earth

- Book by Hal Lindsey (1973)
  - Movie narrated by Orson Wells (1976)

- Had a major impact on 70s cultural politics.
- #1 NY Times best-seller in non-fiction.
- 35+ million copies sold by 1999, 50+ languages.
- Marks a revival of Evangelical cultural politics.
**THE RAPTURE!!!**

Jesus promised that His people who are living when He comes, will go from earth to heaven without dying. (Rev. 6:12)

**THE ANTI-CHRIST!**

As I watched the Lamb opened the scroll...and there before me was a white horse...and its rider carried a sword. (Rev. 6:12)

He'll charm the whole world into worshipping him!!!

But he'll turn out to be bad news for everybody!!!

A curse!!!

Just like Larry Norman's great song...two men walking up a hill...one disappears and one's left standing still...I wish we'd all been ready!!!

A Secular Tipping Point

- By 2000s global warming took on aspects of a secular apocalypse.
- “Climate Apocalypse” drew on pre-existing religious language/ideas.
- Visions of the “end times” now based on scientific predictions.
  - Prophetic predictions > Scientific predictions
  - Concerns about species extinction, extreme weather, rising sea levels
Josh Fox: What We Have to Do to Prevent Climate Apocalypse

The ‘Gasland’ director talks to AlterNet about the dangers of fracking, his new film and how you can be a part of the solution.

By Reynard Loki / AlterNet | January 22, 2016

The so-called fracking revolution has transformed America’s energy landscape. With more than 100,000 oil and gas wells drilled and fracked since 2005, the nation has secured cheap and plentiful energy, forcing a drop in natural gas prices. The oil giant BP believes that with this...
CLIMATE TIPPING POINTS

The world has already crossed nine 'tipping points' that will lead to catastrophic climate change, scientists have warned.

1. Amazon rainforest
   Frequent droughts

2. Arctic sea ice
   Massive losses

3. Atlantic circulation
   A slowdown since 1950s

4. Boreal forest
   Increase in fires

5. Coral reef
   Mass die-offs

6. Greenland ice sheet
   Ice loss accelerating

7. Permafrost
   Melting

8. West Antarctic ice sheet
   Ice loss accelerating

9. Wilkes Basin
   East Antarctica ice loss accelerating
Climate Apocalypse

Concerns about “the end” shift to naturalistic explanations.
  • No place for Heaven/Hell in secular narrative
  • No salvation or “Second Coming” for believers

#1) End of the world = End of civilization
  • Modern industrial lifestyle threatened
  • Narrative of “Progress & Modernity” questioned
    • Connection with ideas from Francis Fukuyama and Charles Taylor

#2) End of the world = Ecological Destruction
  • Future of humanity requires protecting planet
  • Loss of global biodiversity threatens evolutionary survival
Apocalyptic Worldviews

Religious Apocalypse

Secular Apocalypse

Pop Culture Apocalypse
Coping with Apocalypse

Apocalyptic ideas now influence all our media & popular culture.

TV & Movies
Books
Music
Video Games
Comics
Social Clubs
Education & Research
Government & Politics
Business
Apocalyptic Fiction Examples

• The Planet of the Apes
• The Road
• World War Z
• Avengers: Endgame
• X Men: Apocalypse
• The Last Man on Earth
• The Walking Dead
• The Handmaid’s Tale
• The Good Place
• Good Omens
Remixing the Apocalypse

Apocalypse Playlists Includes...

- Songs for the Apocalypse
- Post-Apocalyptic Music 10 Hours
- Soft Apocalypse - A Solarpunk Music Mix
- 🎵 Zombie Post Apocalypse Music Mix 2 [1 Hour]
- DRAGON'S WRATH | Intense Dark Apocalyptic Battle Mix | 1 Hour Epic Music
- 8 Hours of Dark Ambient from Iron Cthulhu Apocalypse (original music, not a curated mix)
Apocalypse Without Religion

I want to leave you with a question to ponder from Steven D. Greydanus article on ‘The Secular Apocalypse’:

“What can believers and nonbelievers say to one another at the end of the world? That is part of the challenge facing us all in our secular apocalyptic moment.”

Take a few minutes and think about how you might answer this question.
Weekly Assignment Reminder

• Remember to check our class Blackboard regularly for updates, announcements, and other related class information...

• Have you done the weekly readings and watched any associated videos? Weekly readings are listed on the Class Schedule page.

• Complete the intro discussion post video assignment for Week 1. Due on Thu, August 27 by end of the day (11:59 pm PST) in Blackboard.