

https://dspace.org/

Imagining our end: South african apocalyptic fiction

Pitt, Daniela Dina

2018

https://hdl.handle.net/10539/26554

Pitt, Daniela Dina (2018) Imagining our end : South African apocalyptic fiction, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, https://hdl.handle.net/10539/26554

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

INTRODUCTION

"End-time" narratives have created interest and appeal in a variety of contexts, serving different purposes, whether to entertain in their depiction of catastrophic disasters and threatening aliens, or to afford the opportunity for deeper and more serious engagement with preoccupations relating to anxieties in differing contexts, such as socio-political and environmental. How do "End-time" narratives serve a more ethical discourse in the political climate in South Africa between 1972 to 2006? How does apocalyptic[1] rhetoric "leap across the *explosion*, the outbreak of catastrophe, into a future in which catastrophe itself is the past and can no longer be directed and influenced" (Roberts 215)? In this study, I propose to engage with these questions, among others, by providing close contextual readings of five South African novels that span the period from the apartheid era to post-democracy. The central concern in this study is the stylistic choice made by each of these writers in selecting apocalyptic rhetoric in a narrative set in a future, imagined South African space.

A preoccupation with apocalyptic and eschatological narratives has been ongoing for over two millennia. The Book of Revelation tells the story of John of Patmos who, in approximately AD 95, under the rule of the Roman Emperor Domitian, was sentenced to live in exile on the island of Patmos. The seven Christian churches in Asia were at the time a political menace to the Roman Empire, threatening both political power and pagan worship. On Patmos, John felt both isolated and under threat and regarded himself as "the consciousness of the collective"(Heffernan 470). His visions, recorded in the Book of Revelation (1:9), predicted the end of the corrupt Roman world, with the idolaters denied access to God's new eternal city, the New Jerusalem. In its dramatic rendition of the End, the narrative's purpose was to intensify fear for those who were not devout Christians. Its emotively charged cataclysmic discourse, with the promise of redemption, encouraged adherents to stand firm even in the face of intense suffering and probable martyrdom. They were assured that they would be justly vindicated when God would punish their persecutors for eternity, while they would be rewarded in perpetuity in the Kingdom of God.

The Apocalypse, theistic in nature, has instructional potential that has found resonance in secular discourse around socio-political challenges. Speaking on his experiences in Latin America, Chilean theologian Pablo Richard believes that the Book

of Revelation is intended to mould a different world free of the crisis, violence and destruction metaphorically explored in the theistic text. For Richard, the apocalyptic offers a spiritual resistance with a hope of a political utopia, which is free from oppression and poverty so dominant in Latin America. The chaos, which is oppression-driven and is visible in the crisis has, in his view, been spurred by the mythical images of the Book of Revelation. Through this, a collective consciousness, which hopes for liberation, is created [2].

The word "apocalypse" originates from the Greek word *apokolapsis* meaning "revelation" or "unveiling". In theistic terms, the Apocalypse is a revelation encompassing a "systematic doctrine of the last things" and a future in salvation (Heffernan 13). The creation of apocalyptic narratives typified by nightmarish visions and acute moral teachings as a foreclosure to "the End", were developed in every culture from as far back as the earliest creationist myths. Drawing on the grand narrative of the Fall of Man, Judeo-Christian philosophy assessed the human condition as flawed and corrupt. Humankind, within this worldview, lived in a rapid state of decline where even the righteous would have been consigned to confront an existence challenged by the paradox of good and evil. To this end, Apocalypse placed its aspirations on the arrival of a new age, replete with revelatory prophecies, thus enabling humanity to move beyond the cataclysmic end of a historical process. John Hall (2009) traces nascent Apocalyptic thinking to the sacred texts of Zoroastrianism, one of the earliest known monotheistic religions, and suggests that there are significant mutations even as far as the Middle Ages, Reformation and secular revolutions of the last two centuries. In a detailed construct, he brings into focus "an understanding of apocalypse in relation to modernity"(Hall 1). He argues that even though there are marginal shifts of apocalyptic details from early eschatology, there is a stubborn persistence of patterned dystopic thought even in mainstream western apocalyptic thought, evident in both secular and non-secular philosophy. His study makes a convincing case that it is possible to understand the apocalyptic of the historical experience which it contextualises, as it reflects a yearning for socio-political/spiritual dominance that will temper the unreasoned fear of an unknown and speculated end. Hall theorises that from early eschatological narratives to modern western secular apocalyptic philosophy, the pattern continues to be paradoxical in nature moving in a cyclical pattern of destruction and anticipated rebirth[3]. The aspired end, or *eschaton* (from the Greek *eschatos* meaning "end" or "last in sequence") usually marks the end of an evil epoch with the triumphant restoration of God's justice.

While Eschatology reflects "last things", the Apocalypse reflects on the ways towards the new. The redemptive power of the Apocalypse is a revelation, an unveiling of truth through the fabric of one's own delusion within a crisis in history:

> The task of Revelation was to overcome the unbearable tension perceived by the author between what was and what ought to have been. His purpose was to create that tension for readers unaware of it, to heighten it for those who felt it already, and then to overcome it in an act of literary imagination (Collins 141).

In his provocative study, Stephen Smalley (2012) points to the propagandist potential inherent in the biblical text[4]. Working from the Greek text, he maintains that the Book of Revelation in the original Greek translation differs startlingly in style and purpose from the rest of the New Testament. He shows how it is a more dramatic text offering what he refers to as "a diachronic walk through the Last Days and the End with colourful imagery" (Witherton as quoted in Smalley 7). In his view, it is a "grand drama" with the intention to sensationalise and by so doing frighten a society that was confronted with polemics of failing belief, poor conduct and political oppression (Smalley 7). The text, in his view, is a reaction to a political crisis where the church, challenged by "the forces of evil, epitomized by Rome" was threatened by diminished power and control over its dominium (*Ibid.* 3).

Stephen O'Leary (1994) refers to the Apocalypse as a "rhetoric". He suggest that even though its representation is framed by violence and dystopia, it provides a persuasive means to view the destruction and violence as a means to see *beyond* the present as merely oppressive, and an opportunity for understanding that violence is a human error which, if reflected upon, offers the goal of "social change" (O'Leary 90). The Apocalypse, in its comfort and promise of redemption, gives shape and hope to the muddled present. It offers a different version of eschatology to the linear temporality of unfolding events in history, and to the beleaguered it offers comfort for a feasible, long-term future, thus giving shape to the dystopic present.

O'Leary offers a sophisticated rhetorical analysis of secular apocalyptic discourse in his thesis. His argument rests on the importance of persuasive apocalyptic rhetoric and discourse, which, he proposes, can be secondary in importance to the event itself. His study approaches apocalypse as a dramatic text. Using the framework of the theory of rhetoric he asserts that audiences "are moved or persuaded through the interplay of style,

form, content, and context in texts that are both spoken and written"(O'Leary 4). Thought and action thus become affected by rhetoric and its potential to evoke emotions and persuade. "Only rhetoric can turn a disaster, real or perceived, into a sign of the imminent end…apocalypse contextualises disasters as a 'rhetorical use of calamity'", says O'Leary (O'Leary 9). He points out that even though, since its earliest appearance, the prophecy of the End has not materialised, it has continued to evoke interest in and inspire new apocalyptic modes. As a porous text, its potential to move freely in varied contexts with its uncompromising dramatic power has never "lessened the appeal of this discourse"(O'Leary 7). In support of his argument, he explains that in some instances the persuasive power of the apocalyptic rhetoric seems to have outlasted the communities themselves.

If we consider the apocalyptic in this light, then rhetoric, O'Leary claims, requires tight constructs of logical argument not only as "rational creatures, but as actors in a cosmic drama" (O'Leary 16). This opens up new ways to understand the power of the apocalyptic, as it is rhetoric that functions as a particular theodicy, symbolically structured to explore ways of dealing with the problems of "evil". For this O'Leary draws on Kenneth Burke's theory of "dramatism", which he feels is particularly valuable for his study. Burke, an American literary theorist and philosopher, suggests that socio-political rhetorical analysis could assist us in exploring the basis of conflict. O'Leary proposes that the three most important *topoi* for rhetorical analysis are time, evil and authority. Analysing the intrinsic structure and language of the Book of Revelation, O'Leary concludes that it has all the components of a well-formulated drama: suspense, intrigue, emotion and an action-packed dénouement. He proposes Burke's use of the dramatic frames of the tragic and the comic to explain the apocalyptic. The tragic is literal and deterministic with its associations of guilt, fate and sin. Its literal emphasis on a predestined catastrophe is eschatological in bringing an end to history and time, as we know it. Its historical and theistic vision is that the tragic is marked by catastrophe, suffering and final retribution. The comic frame ("Comic" in the sense of Dante's *Divine Comedy* – i.e., that it ends on a positive and uplifting note), which is allegorical in nature, suggests that history is more open-ended and open to human agency. Evil, as understood here, is the by-product of human folly. Once this is recognised and addressed, moral order is restored, as "it offers a goal that recedes even as it is pursued – and harnesses this pursuit as an engine of social change" (O'Leary 90). The tragic-comic framing moves O'Leary to conclude that "comic is best", that eschatology creates a stage where

"rhetoricians must join with theologians, and with all who seek a way out of our current predicament, in reminding humanity that every End is an opportunity for a new beginning" (O'Leary 224). The disruption of quotidian order poses a crisis involving linear notions of time and order. Apocalyptic rhetoric in O'Leary's comic mode reveals the nature of the human folly that caused the dystopia.

Mark Lilla, in the *The Stillborn God* (2007) and *The Reckless Mind* (2016), warns us that, even though apocalyptic historiography seldom goes out of vogue, to adopt a literal apocalyptic view of history can have negative implications. He explains that for millennia, theology and beliefs around the Apocalypse were "the only tongue human beings had for expressing their thoughts about political life" (Lilla 2007, 1). The Apocalypse as an instructive narrative, offered a schematic understanding of time and authority believing that God alone "offer[ed] guidance for political life", so that "we have no choice but to obey him and see that his plans are carried out on earth" (*Ibid.* 2). However, Thomas Hobbes's treatise "Leviathan" (1651) shifted the focus from God's will as revealed to humankind, to humankind's individual choices and beliefs. The "Great Separation" placed a greater responsibility on humankind for "when man speaks about God he is really referring to his own experience, which is all he knows" (*Ibid.* 2). Lilla debates what characterises humankind's experience and concludes, like Hobbes, that it is fear, as humankind's "natural state is to be overwhelmed with anxiety" (*Ibid.* 2). Lilla's theory draws secular apocalyptic into the politics of nostalgia and fear, and leaves humankind at the crossroads. On the one hand, the past is an idealised recollection of a time in history that cannot be repeated. On the other hand, history's trajectory in the crisis moves towards a catastrophe and eschatological fear. Shifting the focus of the Apocalypse from God's will to humankind's choice, apocalyptic rhetoric is instructional in its potential to unveil possible truths about the present, and by so doing, defers eschatology. The dystopian crisis can help us cope with the muddle and seeming chaos - the surreal quality of the present - so that we can find an alternative if the dangers of the time are recognised. Apocalyptic rhetoric in non-theistic terms, is an eschatological "mode of thought and discourse [that] empowers its audience to live in a time of disorientation and disorder" (Brummet as quoted in Gunn & Beard 270).

The Manichean dualism of apocalyptic literature poses an additional concern. This moral dualism is outlined theistically as a distinction between what is "good" (traditional symbol of light and order) and what is sinful or "evil" (traditional symbol of darkness and chaos). It is understood as a persistent choice between selecting a path of

goodness (with its just rewards) as opposed to evil and sin (and its just punishment). The binary proposed by the Book of Revelation is a divide between a physical reality of "heaven" and the reality of earth, which can no longer be read as "the delayed advent of God's political reign, but privatized as *my* personal end, *my* escape from this (unreal) world into the world to come"(my italics) (Ostiovich 52). The individual conscience reduces religion to a matter of private faith comprising a "political core of eschatological hope"(*Ibid. 52*).

Apocalyptic rhetoric needs to be historicised in South Africa, since it is integral to the rise of the Afrikaner nation, which is associated with a constant sense of catastrophe. History is not a linear process, nor does it create watersheds in which one ideology is left behind and replaced with another. History impacts on society and continues to haunt the damaged lives in the future. While apocalyptic thought is teleological as it progresses towards the End, it limits chiliastic, millenialist thinking and eschatology as, in the face of the End, it places emphasis on different choices to be made in the present.

The five South African fictions selected for this study are: *Na die Geliefde Land* (*Promised Land*) by Karel Schoeman, *July's People* by Nadine Gordimer, *The Life and Times of Michael K* by J. M. Coetzee, *The Mask of Freedom* by Peter Wilhelm and *Horrelpoot* (*Trencehrman*) by Eben Venter. Each portrays a dystopic imaginary present, and offers the reader with an "unveiling" of historical truth and thus a possibility of deferred eschatology. These novels form part of a body of South African literature that represents the critical self-consciousness of white writers as opposed to the historical setting within South Africa from 1972 to 2006.

The introduction of this study will first outline some of the thinking on apocalyptic rhetoric, which is relevant to this project. The thinking comprises a secular model of apocalyptic reading that places apocalypse in a state of unending crisis without an expected eschatology, an "immanent" apocalypse. This is by no means an exhaustive exploration as this will be limited to the scope of the fictions in this project. Secondly, the apocalyptic in South Africa cannot be separated from its historical context as, what Green refers to as a "resistant form" and thus the second half of the introduction will offer an historical frame in which to contextualize the five texts of fiction central to this study (Green 6).

Frank Kermode's analysis of apocalyptic rhetoric is an essential tool and creates an obvious starting-point for my discussion. In his lecture series, *The Sense of an Ending* (1965), Kermode discusses how apocalyptic patterns provide an apt analogy to reading

and writing. Writing at a time in history that included the Cold War, the Cuban Crisis and the assassination of President Kennedy, Kermode uses the pervading fear of eschatology as an opportunity to suggest that it makes better sense to confront a crisis than to allow oneself to be emotionally engulfed by it. By and large, his ideas remain pertinent to a new millennium, facing threats and challenges demonstrating that that "apocalypse can flourish on its own…at any time. The possibility of personal disaster is, after all, never quite absent from our lives" (Kermode 182). For Kermode the importance of sense-making is pivotal as, in effect, throughout history we are always "in a perpetual crisis"(Kermode 52). His distinction of "immanent" and "imminent" is useful in our understanding of apocalyptic rhetoric. He explains that in twentieth century literature, temporality is displayed in different forms with diverse "paradigms of apocalypse" (Kermode 28). Traditional apocalypse is limiting as it views the end as imminent; however, with the application of "sense-making", it becomes immanent. The end is not removed but redefined so that "in every moment slumbers the possibility of being the eschatological moment. You must awake it" (Butterfield as quoted in Kermode 25). The distinction between "imminence" and "immanence" separates traditional apocalyptic narratives having the objective of offering comfort in the face of redemption (imminence) from apocalyptic accounts that evoke ambivalence, confusion and fear, and are in a perpetual state of immanence. Kermode's comprehensive study merits consideration, as his ideas have direct bearing on the structure of apocalyptic rhetoric evidenced, I will suggest, in South Africa over the past five decades. Kermode emphasises that apocalyptic rhetoric has the potential to mutate and change to different historical crisis. Its resilience and inductive rhetoric is a rectilinear rather than a cyclical view of the world. The pattern is always, and has always been, the same: elements of empire, terror and decadence with hopes of renovation, which end, transform and are consistent in their cycle .

Kermode's discussion hinges on humankind's need for order out of impending chaos. Humankind thinks in terms of linear temporality and sees the present as having a temporal link to the past and the future. Humankind is born in *medias res,* between past and future. He dies in *mediis rebus*. Standing "in the middest" he needs to find order and structure in the story, the plot. Using the analogy of the *tic-toc* of the clock, Kermode explains the essential need for form. Genesis is the beginning (*tic)* while the Book of Revelation (*toc*) is the End. Humankind yearns to find order between the *tic* and the *toc:* the plot of the fiction, which we imagine. Kermode continues: "Crisis is a way of thinking about one's moment and not inherent in the moment itself" (Kermode 101).

We share however, says Kermode, "our insatiable interest in the future" (Kermode 52). One thinks, for example of the texts in this current project which position themselves in an imagined space in the near future which is both dynamic and fearful, yet always speculated and never prophesied. Our interest in a future time necessitates a relationship with the past and with the moment in the middle, which can only be achieved through plot. Kermode refers to these subtler concords of narrative as "time defeating", a "spatial form" which is "Time-redeeming" (*Ibid.* 52). He suggests that any ordering of time becomes a spatial metaphor that takes on a different shape. As example he uses W. B. Yeats's poem "The Second Coming" with the startling image of the turning gyre which "turns and turns" incessantly. Using further examples from the jarring realities presented in Shaekespeare's *Macbeth* and *King Lear*, he concludes his argument by stating:

> In our perpetual crisis we have, at the proper seasons, under the pressure perhaps of our own end, dizzying perspectives upon the past and the future, in a freedom which is the freedom of a discordant reality (Kermode 52).

Kermode draws on a richly varied number of key philosophers and writers to add impetus to his views. One such philosopher is Kurt Vaihinger, whose Kantian ideas are drawn from his observations from physical sciences, especially those of electromagnetic waves. He believes that humankind can never really know the underlying reality of the world and consequently constructs a system of thought, assuming that these match reality. The fictions created in Vaihinger's world are "consciously false" and knowing this, humankind reacts in the real world *as if* it were real. Kermode recognises the power of Vaihinger's method of narrative form because, he attests, we need to understand that we must act on fictions that are false. The seemingly paradoxical underlying notion is that we can regard the idea as true even if it is false. In this way we supplement reality through our psyche – in this instance, our apocalyptic crisis. This points very strongly to the purpose of South African apocalyptic rhetoric in fiction: when reading about the imagined revolution in *Promised Land* or living in the aftermath of a post-apocalyptic revolution in *Trencherman*, for example, although experiences and descriptions are related in graphic detail, we recognise that the scenes in a future imaginary space are fictive. We respond *as if* they were real and by so doing, as Kermode proposes, we will be acting in ways more useful to ourselves than if there were no such fictions. Apocalyptic fiction displays metaphorical truths and uncovers the current human condition, thus moving

from being immanent to imminent. If it echoes something feared, imagined, yet to come, its imminence secures our present safety. We still think in terms of apocalyptic patterns of transition, crisis, decadence and empire, but we are skeptical of epochs because we are aware of their fictiveness. Secular apocalyptic texts narrate scenarios that fundamentally never occur, but appear only *as if* they did. They reflect fear because they assume reality and the potential that they *could* occur if we do not engage with the present. They serve the dual purpose of articulating inherent fears of the moment and deferring eschatology itself. Kermode reminds us that the essential difference between fiction and myth rests in understanding that myth is believed as truth, while fiction, even though it may have the semblance of reality, is always fictive.

Our twentieth century version of apocalyptic crisis becomes a fiction of order, where we assume to stand in some "extraordinary relation to the future" (Kermode 101). We no longer have confidence in epochs and millennialism, waiting for the End, as we prefer to regard them as moments of transition and, because of this, they become a crisis. For Kermode, transition has become, in a way, the new epoch, and subjects in apocalyptic immanence feel that "[our] own epoch is the epoch of nothing positive, only of transition. Since we move from transition to transition, we may suppose that we exist in no intelligible relation to the past, and no predictable relation to the future" (Kermode 101-102). We follow his lucid example when he traces Arnold's bewilderment in "Dover Beach" as the speaker stands between the two epochs:

> …the world, which seems
> To lie before us like a land of dreams,
> So various, so beautiful, so new,
> Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
> Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
> And we are here as on a darkling plain
> Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
> Where ignorant armies clash by night.[5]

Jean Baudrillard (1994) parallels Kermode's theory by suggesting that "conventional" apocalyptic has become a deflated concept of a fantasy of linear historical time. Even "the idea of putting an end to our planet by atomic clash is superfluous" (Baudrillard 119). Baudrillard argues that having been deprived of a biblical apocalypse, hope is lost and we are left to continue in a *simulacrum* of repetitive hopelessness and self-destruction drawn on key historical moments of violence such as World War 1, the

Holocaust and the Cold War. The world is exhausted by violence and incessant hopelessness. Despondency has replaced hope for renewal with the future seen to be random without a promise of a cataclysmic end for possible renewal.

While Kermode believes that the End is immanent, James Berger (1999) argues that the apocalyptic and its associated trauma, "the unimaginable, the unspeakable has already happened and continues to happen" (Berger 42). For Berger, the horrors of history such as the Holocaust, Vietnam, American slavery and Reaganism have impacted so profoundly on humanity that their traces are still experienced in a contemporary, post-apocalyptic world. These traumatic, disorienting incidents are a re-enactment, in part, of earlier traumatic historical events. Discussing American culture in the late twentieth century, Berger proposes that if we consider events associated with different types of disasters, whether environmental, social or political, there is a glimpse of what "the end" could possibly look like. The crisis or trauma neither signals "the end" nor symbolises an apocalyptic moment, but rather reminds us of its continual existence in our world. However, at "its destructive moment" catastrophe also has the potential to shape the world that follows, to "illuminate the true nature of what has been brought to the end" (Berger 5). Discussing apocalyptic as a genre, Berger suggests these fictions form an essential didactic function:

> Apocalyptic writing takes us after the end, shows the signs prefiguring the end, the moment of obliteration, and the aftermath. The writer and reader must be in both places at once, imagining the post-apocalyptic world and then paradoxically 'remembering' the world as it was (Berger 6).

Conflating apocalypse and post-apocalypse supposes then that the catastrophic scenarios depicted are "a remainder, a symptom, an aftermath of some disorienting catastrophe" (Berger 7). Accordingly, if the trauma has already taken place, it cannot be said to be in an apocalyptic time but a consciousness of the post-apocalyptic:

> The visions of the End that Frank Kermode analysed in terms of a sense of an ending have increasingly given way to visions after the end, and the apocalyptic sensibilities both of religion and modernism have shifted towards a sense of post-apocalyptic (Berger xiii)

Berger hypothesises that the ruinous world after the trauma, the world that is "unimaginable" and "unspeakable", encourages analysis and self-reflexivity, so that the historical cause of the traumatic rupture will become evident (*Ibid.* xiii). The destruction and trauma then moves from being incapable of representation to become a feasible and understandable delineation. He urges that our search should involve looking through moral "bifocals" to "[m]ake the perception new, but recognize that damage is longstanding, symptomatic, haunting, and historical" (Berger 218). This can only occur if we acquire a greater understanding of the historical moment. However, for Berger, working through the trauma by identifying its source does not necessarily hold true for everyone. Using Reagan's speech (at Bitburg) as an example, he shows how denying engagement with the trauma, results in an unexamined, vacuous life. For this, Berger draws on the analogy of Žižek's living "between two deaths", where one has the anxiety associated with knowing that something has been destroyed in our world, but lacks the insight to identify it (Berger 42). This reduces existence to vacuousness and listlessness. It contributes to lingering anxiety, projecting itself into subconscious thoughts and feelings that inhibit any feasible vision of the future.

For Kermode, the apocalyptic is associated with crisis and catastrophe, but in the yearning teleological progression from beginning to middle to end, catastrophe offers the potential to unveil what is required to defer the End. For Berger, the shift from seeing the present event as post-apocalyptic rather than apocalyptic, problematises the moment of revelation, seen in Kermode's *kairos*. The crisis, for Berger, affords the opportunity to question what has happened between the beginning and the end, and even though the dystopia reflects intense emotions of anxiety and fear associated with the end, it enables the subject/protagonist to make the choices necessary to prevent the "chaos and insignificance" (Berger xi). He suggests that history is the key that holds the potential for the changed perspective. Analysis and understanding of what is passed on in history can prevent the repetitive post-apocalyptic cycle. The paradox of the apocalyptic and the post-apocalyptic is that the end is deferred, as "writing about history constructs scenarios 'after the end', in which the ending, paradoxically, both does and does not take place" (Berger xii). What happens after the end, Berger's "aftermaths and remainders", can remain either the same, without historical interrogation or perhaps change with a greater understanding of the traumatic symptom.

Teresa Heffernan (2008) concurs that apocalyptic rhetoric in narratives plays "out… a particular cultural moment" (Heffernan 26). Contrary to the defined structure

of nineteenth century novels, "the world cannot be righted because there is no right" (*Ibid.*). However she challenges the idea that the future and the end are senseless and arbitrary. She suggests that time can chart a different progression, so that it is neither eschatological nor meaningless; there is the impulse to remodel a new version of the world. The corrupt, dystopic environment is defeated by the promise of a new purposeful world. The world cannot be remodelled on the same principles that led to the former dystopia, but we need to re-imagine what is required and what needs to be remodelled in order to remain human.

Walter Wink (2001), whose theological philosophy is based on his extensive work in both the Civil Rights Movement in America and anti-apartheid campaigns in the 1980s, rejects the notion that secular apocalyptic is redemptive. While eschatology links apocalyptic to the theistic and the secular, eschatology is, in Wink's view, "anti-apocalyptic" as it considers the future to be altered by conscious choices made in the present. While apocalyptic images of destruction, chaos, violence and hopelessness are fearful, redemption is not its end; what is its end is the conscious choice-making that will prevent the impending destruction. Thus, for Wink, eschatology becomes "anti-apocalyptic" and a conscious, essential mode to defer end-times. He uses his experience in South Africa as an example:

> When I was [in South Africa] in the 1980s, it appeared that armed revolution was inevitable. Blacks were becoming more desperate by the day. Teenage boys were confronting the police and army without concern for their safety. Chaos was beginning to overtake the townships, as children, outraged by the timorousness of their parents, seized the initiative themselves. Whites were taking an increasingly hard line. It was a recipe for disaster. The whole scene reeked of an apocalypse of the negative sort.
>
> Then the most unexpected thing happened. The white government chose, under intense internal and international pressure, to relinquish power, and negotiated with its former black enemies a process that led to the election of a black president, a model constitution, and relatively low causalities, considering the alternatives… What had appeared as an inevitable … apocalyptic bloodbath turned out to have been a positive apocalyptic situation…thanks to the "anti-apocalyptists" who rose to the occasion (Wink 4).

The limitation of Wink's argument lies in the absolutism of an "anti-apocalyptic" choice, which he proposes is a choice consciously made. This underscores the sophisticated nuances apocalyptic rhetoric that develop narratives where the end is not absolute, a closure, but rather an opportunity for engagement in potential possibilities.

Baccolini and Moylan (1998) offer a succinct understanding of how imagined dystopias in different historical settings vary in purpose. Dystopia is part of our life, as different historical moments destroy order by creating chaos and confusion. Why is dystopia such a habitual part of our existence? Baccolini and Moylan suggest that on a superficial level, dystopia reminds us that things can persistently get worse and that looking at the dystopic historical moments, can act as a reminder of what can be expected. However, critical dystopia acts as a defiance of our times, in our times. In deconstructing imagined apocalypses and dystopias, it would be facile to conclude that utopias are merely juxtaposed dystopias, since these terms have become convenient referents to suggest a binary condition. Whilst utopias and dystopias may be seen as histories of the present, the latter mirrors the former with dystopia considered as utopia's twentieth century *doppelganger*. Gordin, Tilley and Prakash (2010) explore the finer nuances of understanding the sophisticated complexities of these loosely used terms. They demonstrate how dystopia may be considered as the fall of utopia – one that functions for a segment of society, where formal social order for those previously privileged, is now under threat:

> The dystopian imagination has served as a prophetic vehicle, the canary in a cage, for writers with an ethical and political concern for warning us of terrible socio-political tendencies that could, if continued, turn our contemporary world into the iron cages portrayed in the realm of utopia's underside (Baccolini & Moylan 1 – 2).

Marxist philosopher Ernst Bloch (1998) develops the idea that dystopia and utopia are conjoined. Utopianism is not separate to apocalyptic consciousness, but rather a manifestation of it. In his three-volume monograph, he charts the changing forms of utopia. He explains that "for a long time utopias appeared exclusively as social utopias: a dream of a better life" (Bloch 4). Drawing on Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516, first translated into English in 1551) where the transformative potential of utopia is imagined and set as a goal to be achieved, hope filters through to consciousness and is articulated

in every aspect of existence from architecture, to music, to politics to philosophy, even though Bloch attests "not all of literature and art is utopian" (Bloch xxxiii). Working from the visions of Judeo-Christian traditions, he draws a parallel between apocalyptic vision and utopianism. Rather than being consumed by images of catastrophism, individuals are compulsively driven by "dreams of a better life" (Bloch 4). Their optimism derives from an anticipated future Bloch refers to as an "anticipatory illumination":

> The utopian quality of a work of art is determined by its *Vor-Schein* or anticipatory illumination … an image, a constellation, a configuration closely tied to the concrete utopia that are lit up on the frontal margins of reality and illuminate the possibilities for rearranging social and political relations (Bloch xxxiii).

The hope for redemption from a dystopic present moves to a state of "anticipatory illumination" and should not be considered an unconscious desire. Bloch's reasoning draws on his comments on psychoanalysis, especially the theories of Freud and Jung. In these theoretical frameworks, catastrophism as trauma is repressed subconsciously and thus, Bloch explains, negates the future and cannot find expression as an "anticipatory illumination" of utopia. Bloch clarifies the difference between psychoanalytic concepts of the unconscious and what he termed the "Not-yet-conscious". The utopian dream is not a yearning that lies unknown within the unconscious, but rather is on the horizon, as yet unarticulated. His concept of *Heimat,* a term meaning "the attachment to an ancestral homeland" (perverted by Nazi usage into a rejection of anything foreign), suggests the utopian illumination of a home that we sense we have, yet which has never materialised. The suggestion here is that utopia is not an absolute, but rather as a continuum, feeding the possibility of hope for an imagined social utopia either by attainment of freedom or by creating order out of dystopia. Utopia thus becomes "only a *condition* for a life in freedom, life in happiness, life in possible fulfilment, life with content" (Bloch 16).

In his collection of essays on science fiction Jameson affirms that the concept of utopia is relevant and possible, and that modern society finds it essential as an assessment of its political value[6]. Jameson's essays most pertinent to the present study are "Utopian Science versus Utopian Ideology" and "Progress Versus Utopia, or, Can We Imagine the Future?". In these analyses, Jameson asserts that – counter to the expected

stereotypes – Science Fiction/speculative fiction does not project images of the *future*, but rather of "our incapacity to imagine the future" (Jameson 1981, 286). It defamiliarises and dislocates our experience in the present, and by engaging in an eschatological fear of the future, restructures the present to avoid the impending cataclysm.

Jameson suggests that our inability to imagine the future is deterred by chaos, prevalent as present crisis. For Jameson, it is a natural impulse to yearn for optimism, which is often negated in the present. Rather than sinking in the despair, the spirit of utopianism surges with hopes for an ideal future. The importance of this is not in the actualisation of the utopian ideal, but rather in the process of the hope. Contrary to Bloch's notion of a constant dream for a better life (the *Heimat*) for Jameson, postmodern capitalism has suppressed utopian impulse. Man's incessant need to pursue capitalist power in the belief that it will bring about a utopian existence, ironically draws man into a society that is dystopian. The idealisation of capitalism in society, has misdirected man's natural desire for utopianism. Rather than seeking a neutralisation of global capitalism, utopianism is still bound by capitalist values. The utopian wish then becomes a repressed desire for a wish for a better world. With self-reflection and accountability, Jameson suggests that dystopia has the potential to be the catalyst for a utopian wish separate from capitalist power. Man will continue to yearn for a utopian end no matter how difficult, even if the end is not definitive, precise and final. The utopian spirit is the essential path of hope.

In his essay "Journey into Fear", Jameson comments on Kermode's discussion of the apocalyptic in its encompassing of two distinct sources: a projection of the fear of death, and the formal consequence of the narrative fiction moving towards an end. Jameson argues that if the Apocalypse includes both catastrophe and fulfilment in salvation and redemption, it then embraces the utopian impulse in the promised redemption in the kingdom of God and the End of humanity. Utopia becomes intentionally ambiguous by defamiliarising our perceptions, yet the utopian impulse remains strong. Thus utopia cannot be considered apocalypse's dialectic nor a "psychological projection", a wish fulfilment, it becomes empowering in its potential to create an aesthetic paradigm for a different future:

> The desire called utopia must be concrete and ongoing, without being defeatist or incapacitating; it might therefore

> be better to follow an aesthetic paradigm and to assert that not only the production of the unresolvable contradiction is the fundamental process, but that we must imagine some form of gratification inherent in this very confrontation with pessimism and the impossible (Jameson 84).

Thus, when political chaos presents itself as dystopic, utopia will rise from its dystopian vestiges and become "some form of gratification" (*Ibid.*). Jameson suggests that narrative offers this opportunity because in this construct, what cannot be said in the narrative *per se*, opens up opportunities for utopian imagining. The utopian impulse will always flourish and be effective for two reasons: firstly, the intensity of crisis itself promotes utopian impulse, and secondly, the utopian impulse is not reliant on the fulfilment of utopianism itself. It is not an absolute, but an emotion necessary to counteract negativity and nihilism.

Robert Thornton, a Professor of Anthropology, aptly comments that since the earliest recorded history of South Africa, the country has been characterised by its vision of a "rolling apocalypse", punctuated by predictions and catastrophist speculations. Colonial domination, the rise of Afrikaner Nationalism, the abhorrence of apartheid, ecological wreckages, global economic isolation, quotidian fear – these images have been part of South Africa's collective historical fabric so much so, that one may be drawn to respond to feelings of Afro-pessimism for a continent that has gone hopelessly adrift:

> For most of its existence, the sense of the end of history, the coming of a bloody and final conflict, has characterized South Africa's view of its own history…It is a vision of a "rolling apocalypse" in which the predicted end is only just put off by another war, another proclamation, another bomb, by segregation, by Apartheid, by the end of Apartheid, by "one settler, one bullet," and now by elections (Thornton quoted in Steyn 25).

Moments in South Africa have gaven rise to apocalyptic thinking, usually with an undertone associated with insecurity and fear: either white fear associated with loss of dominance and power, or black fear as an expression of colonial exploitation. One such case is the Spanish 'flu epidemic of 1918 which, in a matter of six weeks killed over 300,00 people[7]. In the face of disaster many turned to religion as a feasible explanation. Historian Professor Clifton Crais, on reviewing Robert R. Edgar's and Hilary's Sapire's *African Apocalypse: The Story of Nontetha Nkwenkwe, a Twentieth Century South African Prophet*,

points to the fact that if we consider various theological and secular beliefs of an "African Apocalypse" it affords us "precious material to investigate more subtly… some of the most basic challenges in the study of South Africa's modern history" (Crais 384)[8]. Nontetha Nkwenkwe, a Xhosa woman, had survived the influenza virus and proclaimed that it had been revealed to her through a series of dreams and visions that the virus was a punishment from God. She proclaimed herself a prophet, and with a following of approximately 300 people, began a process of cleansing which included no drinking, smoking, dancing or witchcraft. [9] She encouraged her followers to lead an ascetic life distant from their colonial masters. They were to wear white, sell their livestock and not work for a wage. Their lifestyle would purge them of the punishment that had been sent by God in the form of the Spanish 'flu. White fear soon resulted in her being treated harshly and imprisoned in an asylum for influencing her followers and preventing them from returning to work. At the time, the 500 African Israelites led by Reverend Enoch Mgijima had requested land, and were massacred in a battle against colonial forces, fuelling white fear even further.

Although the scope of this thesis is not historical but literary, one cannot divorce the country's political trajectory from literature, in particular the impact that Calvinist-Christian Nationalism has had on framing and feeding the apocalyptic. This will prove valuable in understanding the broader framework of localising South African apocalyptic rhetoric.

South Africa's history and its echoes in eschatology, has been in "perpetual crisis" from when Jan Van Riebeeck founded the first Dutch settlement in 1652. At a time when colonial expansionism, conquest and empire building were prime goals of major colonial powers, Jan van Riebeeck was commissioned to set up a trading post and settlement for the *Verenigde Oost Indische Compagnie* (VOC) as a half way station between Amsterdam and Batavia, to serve as an important link between the east and the west. Shortly afterwards, approximately 200 French Huguenots who were fleeing from religious persecution, came to the Cape Colony (1688). The authoritarian control and extreme harshness of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) contributed much to the unrest at the time and established an atmosphere of dystopian bleakness, paranoia and unease.

The Cape Colony accommodated the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British changing hands no fewer than three times before it eventually became a British colony in 1795. Skirmishes and violence became common occurrences in the Cape Colony; times that were fraught with restlessness and fear about protecting land, cattle and identities.

These gave rise to mythical and at times theological speculations about the demise of dominating tribes or groups or means to ward off disease. In some instances, visionaries threatened non-believers, promising salvation to the firm devotees. This period of history is what Paul Landau (2008*)* refers to as "tumultuous times" where "people threw off their ancient regimes, rallied in streets…enslaved foreigners" (Landau 2). Historians, such as Landau and Crais in documenting this period, note that the hunter-gatherers and pastoralists, who had been practising pastoral agriculture in the region since approximately the fifth century, came constantly under the attacks of commandos. Even within these early years the tension between the *briquas* (large and powerful chiefdoms) and the settlers threatened the safety of livestock and homesteads as the VOC enclosed traditional grazing land for farms. Panic about future security was often an underlying emotion that spurred much of the violence and contributed to a sense of doomsday collapse. White fear encouraged apocalyptic thinking, and often gave rise to wars, aggravating even further the sense of unease.

Although most missionaries and clergymen had not overtly used apocalyptic messages in their teachings, chiliastic utterances were embraced as a reaction to natural disasters and disease outbreaks. These naïve predictive apocalypses were not confined to a particular ethnic or cultural group; analogies to either traditional religious imagery or mythological scenarios were common, the disaster being regarded as a revelation from God or ancestors about the predominant "evil" within society. In order to imply a strict concordance between beginning, middle and end, myths are called upon as naïve predictive apocalypses. For Kermode, the concordance remains the desired object created imaginatively. One such example is the smallpox epidemic (1713 and 1767). It caused large-scale fatalities of approximately a quarter of the Cape Colony population, with the Khoi-khoi suffering the largest losses. The Khoi-khoi's reduced resistance to the disease was interpreted as a revelation that the colonisers themselves had called this malady upon Khoi-khoi. When in December 1809, the area around current Cape Town experienced an earthquake, similar reactions to natural disaster ensued. People fled their homes and feared that it marked the end of the world. Burghers and slaves alike linked the natural disaster to "end-of-the-world" apocalyptic eschatology.

The force of apocalyptic rhetoric as an essential means to drive apocalyptic thinking, as discussed by O'Leary, is evident in the escalation of revelations and prophesies in the Cape. Rev. van der Kemp, a controversial missionary dedicated to assisting the Khoi-khoi to alleviate their economic plight in the Cape, was believed to

have been chosen by ancestors for his prophetic vision. While based at the Mgqakhwebe River in the Eastern Cape, he was given the name *uNyengane* (the one who reveals secrets) as revelatory benefactor of future prophecies. We read in Landau, that van der Kemp's emotive discourse and powerful images resonated further. Two amaXhosa men at the time, Ntsikana and Nxele Makanda, felt that they too had been granted his gift for prophecy. Where Ntsikana's vision was peaceful and focussed on utopian oral narratives of healing, Nxele's rhetoric preached apocalypse and destruction. When Nxele drowned (1819), the divine messages and expected deliverance were not thwarted. The amaXhosa recreated a new vision, believing that his spirit had been incarnated in Mlanjeni., who unsuccessfully had prophesised victory in the Eighth Frontier Xhosa War (1850-1853). Prophecy and superstition were strongly linked: even when these were not aligned to the desired end, a new imagined outcome was created. The need for consonance inspired the prophecies. Commenting on the strength of belief in naïve apocalypses, Kermode states "Men of all kinds…reflect, as if this…collocation of opinion and predictions were true. When it appears to the contrary, they act as if it were true in a different sense" (Kermode 29).

The Cattle Killings (1853-1854), an event that resulted in wide-spread famine, is one further example which shows the power and impact in believing the apocalyptic when confronted with a crisis in the hope of consonance. Events around the cattle killings began when a lung sickness epidemic (1854) spread to the large herds of cattle. As with the Spanish 'flu epidemic, here too disease was seen to be a spiritual sign. The salvation was in the deliverance of a prophecy that initiated cattle killings and destructions of crops in the hope that whites would be driven out to sea. The result proved disastrous: approximately 85% of Xhosa males killed their cattle and destroyed their crops, their only means of livelihood. 400 000 cattle were slaughtered and 40 000 Xhosa starved as a result. An additional 40 000 Xhosa left their homes in search of food and land[10]. These movements, sparked by proclaimed prophets who offered revelations, as spiritual emissaries were a means of bolstering confidence in their devotees, but reflected an underlying fear of colonial exploitation. Kermodian apocalyptic patterns of empire, decadence, renovation, progress and catastrophe are fed by history and inspire our ways of sense-making from where we stand "in the *middest*". In some instances, it was a means of cauterising evil, either in the form of disease, or political oppression. In each instance, the dystopian vision and apocalyptic prophecy perhaps reflects a deeper unease about the continued socio-political challenges within the country. Apocalypse became a reaction to

one crisis after another in Robert Thornton's "rolling apocalypse". Frederic Jameson's imperative "Always historicize!" in his famous study *The Political Unconscious* (1981) continues to draw us into the importance of investigating the complex, reciprocal relations between texts and sociological, theological and/or political events (Jameson 1981, 9). While history is comprised both in and out of time, the apocalyptic is not historical but ongoing, the End being deferred. Michael Green (*Novel Histories*) identifies two approaches to history. The first sees past history in a limited, linear relation to the present, suggesting a natural, logical progression from past into the present, and the future as a "continuous and connected presence" (Green 22). However, Green suggests, history is an "irruption" (Green1) and should not merely be appropriated "to one own's position" (Green 6). The challenge of a South African historical past continues to threaten and implode within the present, and thus becomes a "resistant form" in its search "for a critical mode"(*Ibid.*). It is "resistant to be simply appropriated by the present and yet relevant enough to relate meaningfully to the present" (Green 29). By so doing it throws up what Green calls "future histories" (Green 232). The present becomes a continued preoccupation with the impact of the past.

The rise of Afrikaner Christian nationalism, and its construction of a national identity, which culminated in apartheid when the Nationalist Party came to power in 1948, was the birth for the formation of a crisis marked by guilt and alienation that still impacts on and haunts current generations. Dunbar Moodie in his 1975 study (*The Rise of Afrikanerdom: Power, Apartheid, and the Afrikaner Civil Religion*) makes a convincing case for showing how Afrikanerdom as an ideology goes beyond developing a pride in language and culture, but draws on conservative Calvinism. He refers to Afrikaner faith as being closely interlocked with the historical trajectory epitomised in the Great Trek, intent on creating a separatist ideology. Fundamentalist *laager* ideology developed Afrikaner's sacred history as a nation with a self-regard of neo-Fichtian exceptionalism to the events around them[11]. Moodie refers to Afrikaner Christian Nationalism as their 'civil religion', which he explains to be:

> …the religious dimension of the state. As such it is invariably associated with the exercise of power and with the constant regeneration of social order…set within the context of ultimate meaning; aspirations to sovereign power and the exercise of sovereignty are given transcendent justification (Moodie 296).

Originally Calvinists of Western Europe arrived in the Cape prior to British occupation (1806). Their difficulty under the VOC solidified their unity as a cultural and linguistic group and nurtured feelings of land entitlement. They were strong adherents to core Calvinist principles, which endorsed unconditional doctrine election by the sovereignty of God, in the belief that God chooses those whom He believes are worthy of salvation/redemption and those whom He punishes. For Afrikaners, Moodie explains, the period of revelation, occurs between British occupation (1806) and the execution of a foremost traditional Boer hero, Jopie Fourie (1914). Boers felt marginalised and under threat owing to the gentler policies of Britain towards blacks and the establishment of the Black Circuit Courts. This not only displayed in their eyes a contempt for their nation, but seemed to prove that their role as suffering Christians in the face of evil would be rewarded. In this context, Moodie suggests, God elected to save Afrikaner people, the *Boerenasie,* as "a whole nation with its distinct language and culture, its own history and special destiny" (Moodie xvii). The 1815 rebellion at Slagter's Nek where, as reported, six Boers were hanged in an "inhuman way…martyred in the most brutal fashion" gave further credence to their sacred path as selected martyrs (du Toit as quoted by Moodie 4).

Worship united them as a community with a shared vision of being God-chosen to fight for a promised land for their people, that would enable them to foster their language. The Great Trek, regarded as a spiritual pilgrimage, assumed proportions of a National Epic. Quoting Francis Reitz, a formative figure in Afrikaans cultural life and regarded as progenitor of Afrikaans as a cultural language, Moodie draws attention to the biblical rhetoric associated with Afrikaner nationalism:

> [O]ur people had to pursue their pilgrimage of martyrdom throughout South Africa, until every portion of that unhappy country ha[d] been painted red with blood, not so much of men capable of resistance as with that of our murdered and defenceless women and children…deliver[ing] them out of the hands of the enemy …for the freedom of the promised land (Reitz as quoted by Moodie 5).

The "pilgrimage of martyrdom" was marked by ruptures of war, suffering and tragedy: the Great Trek with its numerous battles culminated in the death of Piet Retief and the devastation and death of women and children in the concentration camps in the Anglo-Boer War. These, as well as the death in exile of Paul Kruger, marked a spiritual

journey where, it was believed, God tested Afrikaner faith. Chosen as "martyrs", their salvation would be the salvation of their nation and heritage for future generations. The Battle of Blood River (1838) and the subsequent pledge with the Covenant (marked as a public holiday in the Apartheid years) became a sign that God had revealed His *magna suprema* and had deferred the feared end of Afrikaner nationalism.

The violence of the battles of the Great Trek was not perceived to be between the Boers and the isiZulus or other tribal groups they encountered, but rather as the mythologised battle between good and evil. Christian suffering with its promise of resurrection echoes the Book of Revelation where the adherents of goodness will rise to the Kingdom of God, while those who are faithless will be left to a life of torture. The battles of the Great Trek and the Boer Wars suggest strong parallels with the biblical apocalyptic presenting the world as a bleak and ravaged place, culminating in a battle of good and evil reminiscent of the Battle of Armageddon. Where the Afrikaner origin myth served to strengthen Christian-Nationalism and consolidate the group, it also became one of the causes of segregation laws when the Union was formed (1910).

The special destiny of the Afrikaner *Volk* was, as discussed in Moodie, incorporated as an ideological focus by the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC). The civil faith became a political and theological institution in the late 1920s, through the philosophies of the Afrikaner Broederbond. Opposed to any form of *samestelling* (integration) between English and Afrikaners, the Broederbond became the secular intellectual core of the Afrikaans Nationalist movement, secured in a policy document in 1933. It was in the same decade that Afrikaner Nationalism articulated the link between race and nationality in an article, written by a small membership group of the Federation of Calvinist Student Association, in *Koers in Die Krisis*. Giliomee, (2003), in tracing these pivotal years in the development of Afrikaner nationalism and the apartheid philosophy, points out that the publications in *Koers* seemed to embody many of the ideologies that were developing concurrently in Germany.

In 1931, J. Albert Coetzee articulated the need to secure white supremacist views as a prerequisite to safeguard the sacred Afrikaans *Volk*. He wrote of the need to nurture the Afrikaans "soul", in its passion and love for nation building, as opposed to the British "mind" , seen to be logical and distanced from nationalism. Koot Vorster, whose brother became Prime Minister from 1966 – 1978, linked with this the idea that it was God's will to keep races separate in order to thwart sin. By 1936, the term "apartheid" had been

coined and this in turn promulgated a tragic history – a crisis which only began to be resolved, at least nominally, in 1994.

Afrikaner Christian-Nationalism drew from popular Fichtian and Kuyperian influences in the German Christian movement in the 1930s and 40s, in particular, the ideology of a German *Volk* and the supremacist entrenchment of the Aryan race[12]. Kuyperian and Ficthtean (and neo-Fichtean) philosophies were influential on various racial legislations of Apartheid, and bear a short discussion. Abraham Kuijper, better known as Abraham Kuyper, was the leader of the Dutch Neo-Calvinist movement in 1876. A conservative fundamentalist, he was opposed to any form of modernism and humanism, seeing these as weaknesses in the eyes of a sovereign God. Echoing ideas in Afrikaner Christian nationalism, his slogan was *sovereinteir in ere kring* (sovereignty in your own sphere) suggesting that each sphere of society (political and spiritual) was subject to God's sovereignty. His Manichean principles of diversity based on clear divisions in the sovereignty spheres, drew many interested Afrikaans students to the University of Amsterdam, which was an important forum for the dissemination of his ideology. The Christian National Calvinist principles in Holland acted as a model for Christian Nationalism in South Africa.

Carl Schmitt (1888 – 1985), German political legal theorist opposed theologians as interlopers in politics, yet his statements and observations are particularly relevant to our understanding of Afrikaans Christian nationalism and apartheid, the crisis that is used in many apocalyptic texts to be discussed in this paper. Schmitt makes a historical claim that "All significant concepts of the modern theory of the state are secularized theological concept" (Ostovich 50). Schmitt's argument depends on an understanding of the structural parallels between theological and secular/political concepts. Drawing closely on Hobbsian concepts of "mortal God" in a parallel to the immortal God of Christianity, his political theology invites comparisons with Moodie's discussions on cultural Calvinism discussed earlier. Schmitt visualised his political theology as a way of dealing with an exceptional set of political events. His prime goal was to establish political order and security as a means of quelling the political chaos rife in Germany in the 1920s. The opening to his 1922 essay, *Political Theology*, states that "Sovereign is he who decides on the exception" (Schmitt as quoted by Ostiovich 54). He asserts that the sovereign has the sole power to create an exception as "[t]he rule proves nothing; the exception proves everything" (*Ibid.*). If the sovereign's power is to endure then he needs to make exception to the norm. If we consider that apartheid South Africa had long periods in a state of

emergency based on exceptionalism, we can understand the impact of Schmitt's discourse in these early years of the twentieth century. Eschatology is reflected in exceptionalism. It propagates a version of the apocalyptic amongst communities that need to defend, at all costs, what is particular to their needs. This forms the springboard for many of the literary texts that explore crisis in an imagined South African apocalyptic space, to be discussed in subsequent chapters.

The first prominent Afrikaans theologian to provide biblical justification for exceptionalism based on racial superiority was J. D. du Toit (Totius) whose opening address at the congress entitled *Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuur* revealed and explained his reasoning for arguing that God ordained separatism. Drawing on the creation myth in Genesis of the Story of Babel, he presented an argument that segregation was part of God's ordained plan. Using Manichean principles of God dividing light from darkness, God's will, in his eyes, included the segregation of nations. The exegesis draws on the idea that black symbols of evil, degeneracy and destruction provided the potential instigation for a "rolling apocalypse" and thus were required to be contained as proclaimed by God. Du Toit saw God as the great divider who created different nations in order to keep them separate. In this address he explained how the Boers, who had trekked away from the Cape into a barbarous continent plagued with the Sons of Ham, had exemplified the will of God. Today, DuToit's crass historical analysis can be perceived as intellectually simplistic, expressed in politically dangerous rhetoric. His message replete with propagandist exceptionalism dictates that, in this apocalyptic darkness, God would bring redemption in the form of the rebirth of the Boer nation.

Neo-Fichtean principles worked in parallel with the ideology of Schmitt and Kuyperian belief systems in the creation of an idealised *volknationalist* with its distinctive culture, language and history. In 1925, Afrikaans was established as an official language as a retaliation for Milner's Anglicisation policy. The idealised view of the nation as a *volk* was brought to South Africa by Diedericks, Piet Meyer and Geoff Cronje in the 1930s and resulted in the establishment of Afrikaner nationalistic principles. After 1948, National Christian education formed the core of pedagogical instruction in all white schools. It was designed to support apartheid by encouraging white children to be passive citizens who would blindly accept authority. Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in black schools, which already faced impoverished educational standards and support systems, was yet another ploy for maintaining white Afrikaner supremacy. The politicisation of education saw the establishment of various Programmes, like Youth Preparedness and

veldskool, where white schoolboys were taught the need to protect the land from blacks and communists who threatened the survival of the promised land. Literary figures, such as Gustav Preller and Langenhoven (who wrote the words to the national anthem, *Die Stem*) embellished notions of *volk* and Boer heroism, fed Afrikaner's sacred history and established Afrikaner icons of history. Eschatological fabric wove its way into every fibre of the South African socio-political environment.

Exceptionalism had been established and was to be used by subsequent right-wing apartheid leaders in order to further Afrikaner national elitism. This was no longer based solely on culture, language and heritage, but on racism. The toxic political atmosphere over the next decades isolated South Africa and fostered an intellectually simplistic and erroneous series of assertions made by right wing political leaders to galvanise racist ideology as exceptionalism. Pseudoscientific racial statistics were used to support the notion of the inferior genetic pool of black people, which in turn became a means to justify the need for separate development. The Tomlinson Commission in the 1950s advocated the need for the "Bantu Homelands", based on such statistics, on the assumption that blacks were mentally underdeveloped and physically inferior. Their well-being and development would be secured in their separate Homelands. With growing global concerns about injustices in South Africa, South African legislative bodies were required to pass laws based on exceptionalism. Segregation in all facets of life was enforced by harsh censorship and banning orders. Internally, liberals found ways to resist as much as they could, which often culminated in violence and arrest. Any uprising was opposed with military force, until a state of emergency was declared in the 1980s. South Africa faced a trade embargo. The socio-political climate left the nation disempowered and hopeless; it fostered a dystopic political landscape where imagination found a voice through narratives using apocalyptic rhetoric to express its fear both for the present and for the future.

Prior to the publication of *Promised Land* (1972), writing was generally reportage, with some examples of realist political critique. Alan Paton's iconic *Cry the Beloved Country* published the year that the Nationalist Party came to power (1948) as a socio-political protest, comes to mind here. Writers felt trapped in a tragic present and shared a hopeless detachment from the future. Michael Green comments that the writers shared a common *angst* about not seeing beyond the immediate present. In his notebooks (1968, 1974) Athol Fugard's words echo the political limbo many writers experienced at the time:

> Today's future barely includes tomorrow. At times I see the situation deteriorating still further, to the point where even the thought of tomorrow will be a luxury. (Fugard 104)

Further, the harsh censorship legislation in the Apartheid regime, left South African writers with an even greater sense of disillusionment and hopelessness. Many writers yearned to allow their writing to voice the concerns of the disenfranchised. The yearning to be freed from the dystopic existence of "discordant [South African] reality", loaded with feelings "of chaos or absurdity…more than we can easily bear", found writers searching for a narrative form that reflected their emotions and projected their hopes, fears and challenges for the future (Kermode 179). Following global interest and development in science fiction and speculative literature, the stifling vision in South Africa called on the imaginative powers of its writers. Eschatological speculative fiction became a means of 'sense-making" in a politically debilitated society that was believed to be marked by devastation and an apocalyptic revolution. Eschatological fictions offered, and continue to offer, a way forward. Kermode reminds us that they are a creative means for sense-making of the chaos and disordered life around us. Kermode suggests that while escapist literature merely consoles, fiction should offer us the opportunity "to make discoveries of the hard truth here and now, "in the middest" (Kermode 179). He urges that we should "not be offered easy satisfactions, but a challenge to creation co-operation" so that the speculated future intrudes on the present (*Ibid.* 179) In this light, realistic narration cannot achieve this end, as the conventional use of time prevents it.

The final months of 1989 and the heralding of a new decade hold vast symbolic magnitude in South African socio-political discourse. Specific events during this period changed the political climate in the country. On the 2 February 1990, the ANC was unbanned and the then President F. W. de Klerk announced to the world that Nelson Mandela would be released. Additional political prisoners were freed within the forthcoming months and South Africa mapped out its journey to the first democratic elections precipitating into a new phase loosely termed "transition". The collapse of Apartheid was foreseen and the freedom of a nation that was held captive for decades became a hazy utopian concept, encapsulated in 1994 by Desmond Tutu's term "The Rainbow Nation". Even the most optimistic scenarios did not exclude the possibility of an armed struggle, a blood bath, an African Revolution; for many, the peaceful negotiated transition seemed unrealistic. The end of an epoch, the *saeculum* as referred to by Kermode, with its promise of renovation, mirrored patterns of Judeo-Christian

apocalyptic thinking. Post 1994, the TRC became the promise to heal a nation, amid horror stories such as Vlakplaas, that were televised live to the nation. A dystopic rendition of testament history published in Antjie Krog's *Country of My Skull* (1998) shocked the nation and the world.

At the cusp of this political shift, Patrick J. McGowan, Professor of Political Science at the Arizona State University, presented a treatise on the New South Africa. He questioned whether there would be an ascent fulfilling its non-violent, non-racial commitment to transformation, or whether there would there be a spiralling descent to chaotic rule of the masses no differently to the scenario painted in Nadine Gordimer's *July's People* (1982). In his view, the new democratic state would remain politically weak by global standards, and would further decline economically, largely because of its apocalyptic visions of impending chaos. Indeed, "the New South Africa will be fortunate to maintain its present position [of *Ubuntu*] in the medium-term" (McGowan 35).

The period of political transformation in South Africa leading up to the 1994 elections falls into Kermode's apocalyptic pattern of transition: the period which " does not properly belong to either the End or to the *saeculum* preceding it" (Kermode 12). Not surprisingly, the literature of this period reflects the pervasive sense of unease of the future. The attendant lack of confidence in changing events resulted in the creation of imaginary texts that opened up a space of possibilities for change, or what Jacques Derrida refers to as the *apocalyptic pli*, or message, that can induce change. In her famous essay "Living in the Interregnum" (1982), Nobel laureate Nadine Gordimer draws on Antonio Gramsci's description of a period of political transition as an *interregnum,* and refers to the contradictions articulated in the dictum. On the one hand, there is the insecurity of living in the New South Africa without familiar structures, however "hateful and shameful", and on the other, the discarding old identities for "unknown and undetermined" ones (Gordimer & Clingman 268). It is from this ambiguity that the writer's predicament can draw on the complexities of and ambivalence in socio-political contexts, and can articulate these by allowing his/her imagination to fold into various South African situations.

John Hall (2009) in his meticulous sociological thesis (*Apocalypse: From Antiquity to Modernity*) that comprises three decades of research, draws on the history of apocalyptic cultural literature, which he refers to as "a phenomenology of history" from its nascence in Mesopotamia to contemporary society (Hall 6). He devotes sections of his monograph to showing how the apocalyptic has metamorphosed over time from the

Middle Ages, the Reformation, the secular revolutions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and contemporary era of globalisation and terrorism, drawing particular attention to 9-11. Over time, apocalyptic thought has shown patterns of destruction and rebirth, often reshaping views and historical patterns. In line with the theories as outlined by Kermode, Hall suggests a phenomenology of history as a strategy to allow us to interrogate and reconsider our views of history, as "the apocalyptic…articulates with diverse modernizing developments" (Hall 6). In a detailed construct, he begins his explanation by framing the apocalyptic, in particular the times that are what he considers to be dystopic "eruptions…that arise out of relation to diverse other kinds of social time" (*Ibid.* 6). He divides social time into "*synchronic* time" (what he refers to as the "here and now" - the immediate present) and "*diachronic* time" (understood as measurements of time such as minutes, hours but also, importantly, history).

The phenomenology of history emerges, he asserts, if we piece together how different types of social time interrelate with historical epochs. This in turn will render a richer understanding of the character of modern society and the prospects facing that society. Like Kermode, he states that apocalyptic texts are not about the End but rather are texts that are about the present crisis and "by absorbing apocalyptic features" society can potentially transform (Hall 5). The apocalyptic is really about the end of the world "as we know it" and the dramatic events (whether fictive or not) have the capabilities of reshaping the relationship of the individual to history. He makes a strong case to suggest that if we should consider the apocalyptic in these terms with the potential to reshape, then it can enhance our understanding between the past and the present. The premise works from the idea that present actions are not to be seen in isolation. People's reactions, thoughts, fears, guilt in the present are based, consciously or unconsciously, upon recollections of the past and anticipation, whether positive or negative, about the future.

Hall's suggestion that man in the "here and now" is drawn to respond based on past memories, present fears and future hopes, led him to construct six types of temporalities to be used as referents, or benchmarks.[13] He explains, for example, that in the historically oriented "Strategic Time" , people make meaning in relation to events prior to the present, whether this is in the immediate past or distant past. This impacts on decisions taken on their actions in the present. This type of action is generally oriented to an anticipatory End and thus becomes pre-apocalyptic. If one considers this, then one can see the connection; many of the actions of the boers during the Great Trek

were governed by their past experiences in violent skirmishes and hardships in the Cape, and then adapted to their becoming, in their view, God's chosen nation in search of the promised land.

Reflecting on 9-11, Hall concludes that the apocalyptic in one particular moment in historical time will often inspire action that will "delimit or encourage the development of later apocalyptic ideas along one line rather than another" (Hall 201). For Hall, the apocalyptic cannot be regarded as a lens to explain social phenomena, as this would reduce its complex potential. On the contrary, it facilitates radically alternate forms of social enactment that, in effect, question ultimate meaning. This in turn enables choice of action, which should never be considered to be inconsequential as the choice is always "path dependent" (Hall 202). However, Hall offers the possibility, with introspection, that "Meaningful temporalities of enactment…do not 'cause' action: they set the alternative tracks of meaning along which action unfolds" (*Ibid.*).

Jacques Derrida in his lecture entitled *Spectres of Marx* (1994) draws a parallel between the paradox of historical past and the present. He suggests that in a period of crisis, time appears "out of joint", muddled and confused (Derrida 109). The paradox lies in that at such a moment, rather than abandoning historical past, we are driven to "borrow" from the old, with the past being called upon in an attempt to create a future. Thus he declares that "the future is its memory", suggesting the inextricable link between historical past and the future imaginary (Derrida 37). South Africa's turbid history is drawn to apocalyptic rhetoric that, on the one hand reflects deep-rooted white anxieties about the consequences of recalcitrant politics, while on the other, in the face of a new democratised South Africa, a despondency and disillusionment in its failed promise. The final pronouncement in these fictions reveals an existential vision of Africa as a continent on the decline, lost in darkness of corruption, disease, violence and barbarism. Discussing post-apartheid narratives, Graham Pechey adds impetus to this view by quoting Habermas's famous dictum that the "modern history of South Africa has without exception been a process and continues to be a process of continuous catastrophe" (Pechey as quoted in Barker et al 162).

Apocalyptic rhetoric offers an understanding of shifting ideologies in South Africa. These texts, by their very subject matter and in many instances their atemporality, unmask articulations of dystopia in a South African socio-political setting of a haunting hegemonic white rule. The former white domination of apartheid is visible in a volatile post-apartheid democracy riddled with crime, AIDS and disillusionment. In turn, the

texts respond to an atmosphere of what Kermode refers to as "a characteristic apocalypse crisis" with recurring catastrophic elements of "Terror and Decadence" (Kermode 9). They also offer what Hall meticulously outlines as "meaningful temporalities of enactment" (Hall 202).

Globally, apocalyptic rhetoric has given rise to a number of fictional dystopic texts (fiction, film, television and games), including pop-cultural representations that articulate a cynical engagement in both the present and the future, with nihilistic undertones no different to those created by Conrad in *Heart of Darkness*. Both popular and more serious literature have explored apocalyptic themes that critique a particular ideology such as ecological disease, surveillance, power and control. Pascal Bruckner (2013), presents an argument that shows the fanaticism associated with theological and secular apocalyptic narratives, where prophets of decay give rise to uncontrolled panic and frenzy and call us to expiate our sins before it is too late. Speaking about ecological disasters, Bruckner feels that there is a "seduction to catastrophe" seen in the proliferation of texts, films, social media frenzy about catastrophism. He attributes this overpowering indulgent fanaticism to delusional narcissism based on Western guilt[14]. One recalls the great classics of George Orwell's *Nineteen Eight-Four* (1949) and the modern twist in Haruki Murakami's *IQ84* (2010), Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932), Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) with more populist renderings of doomsday themes as explored in Suzanne Collins's *The Hunger Games* (2008), Tom Perrotta's *The Leftovers* (2006) and the postmodern and writable text written by Anna North, *America Pacifica* (2009) which recounts a post-apocalyptic tale of a girl in search of her mother reminiscent of Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* (2006). Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* (1982), Proyas's *Dark City* (1998), Tezuko's *Metropolis* (2001) and Charlie Jade's *South Africa* (2004) explore the paranoia of citizens who are monitored, betrayed and manipulated as they live no differently to hunted animals. Futuristic imaginings and apocalyptic allegories can aestheticize or even globalise the fictional political landscape to the point where the reader has no certainty about who the enemy is. These texts paint a gloomy, dark and violent atmosphere contrary to utopian renderings of works such as Andrè Brinks *Imaginings of Sand* (1996) or narratives where white disenchanted émigrés, such as Lally, in Sarah Penny's *The Beneficiaries* (1998), accept the challenge of a new changing democracy in their willingness to abdicate power as a compromised path for healing in a state that has soul.

South African writers have used apocalyptic rhetoric to explore not only the present but challenges in the future, Green's "future histories" (Green 232). The texts appraise the past as well as the present by projecting implications of past injustices and fears in the present and the future. Rather than being predictive, these texts are pre-emptive and interceptive, as they operate within a flexible literary landscape, stretching realms of possibilities, contending, or even valorising, fears, disillusionment and apprehensions.

Jameson's chapter "Progress Versus Utopia, or, Can We Imagine the Future" (*Archaeologies of the Future*), offers a detailed construct about how modes of representation prompted the new narrative styles inherent in cultural texts, such as Science Fiction or Speculative Fiction. He opens his discussion by explaining how the emergence of new thinking, prompted by the popularity of psychoanalysis, semiotics and structuralism as well as a growing political consciousness in the 1960s, contested with traditional forms and resulted in the use of symbol. This suggests that individual opinions become symbols of what he refers to as a "*penséé sauvage"* (a symbolic reconciliation of opposites or political consciousness) so that texts become lived in the present as genuine politico-historical narratives "anxiously interrogat[ing] their fate and explor[ing] it with hope or dread" (Jameson 2007, 282). Although these early narratives prompted new voices, they established closure as they demanded endings, even if these were creatively structured around the form of endings as such. However, Jameson alerts us to the difficulty this poses in science fiction and speculative fiction, as a vision of a future history prevents closed endings of this nature. The speculative/science fiction texts are dynamic entries into a future imaginary and the structure needs to reflect this.

His discussion of numerous science fiction texts forms a worthwhile introduction to understanding how apocalyptic rhetoric is represented in speculative fiction. Science fiction became an emergent form during the second half of the nineteenth century, as "a symptom and reflex of historical change" debated extensively in George Lukács's *The Historical Novel* (1936) (Jameson 285). Jameson explains that Lukács' observations show that the rise of new historical thinking in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century saw the emergence of a narrative structure in the works of Sir Walter Scott, reflecting a new mode of historical consciousness. Jameson asserts that the originality of Lukács' work rests in the recognition that if a text does not reflect the historicity of the time, it merely "survives as a dead form, a museum piece, as 'archaeological' as its own raw materials, yet resplendent with technical virtuosity" (Jameson 2007, 285). Jameson draws

two important conclusions from the above. Firstly, he observes that at this point the historical novel loses its functionality and impact and is replaced with a new dynamic form , the first science fiction novels of Jules Verne and H.G. Wells. These texts registered a sense of the future in an unspecified time. It is Jameson's second conclusion that is particularly interesting. Taking Flaubert's *Salammbô* and Kubrick's *Barry Lyndon* as examples, he shows that these texts replace an idealised historical nostalgic past, and that even if they are aesthetically pleasing and rich, they are unsuccessful because they are "profoundly and disturbingly unmotivated" (Jameson 2007, 285). The pivotal parallel that Jameson draws is that these speculative/science fiction texts able create an emerging future as a symbol in the narrative space that had previously been reserved for the historical past.

The sophistication of the text narrating an expectant future rests, in Jameson's view on what he refers to as "representational" structure (Jameson 2007, 286). They create scenes that are mimetic of conventional realism, yet the settings and full action are only possible in an imagined future space. It is this challenge that some readers may naively misconstrue as prophetic predictions of realistic future. However, as Jameson says, where in early speculative and science fiction we were channelled " to expect the unexpected and thereby insulate us" from the dystopic scenes unravelling in the fictive text, more sophisticated later texts encouraged the experience as a totality in the "present" (Jameson 2007, 286). This has been achieved through the sense of defamiliarisation and restructuring of the present, thus adding poignancy to these texts. This invites us to interrogate the possible changes that can be envisaged in a present, to prevent the crisis narrated in the text. The authenticity of this genre does not rest in the promise of keeping the future alive, even if only in our imagination, says Jameson, but rather it is our inability to imagine a future when the present is so unfathomable. Jameson's theory points to the fact that it is at this juncture that the utopian impulse offers a hope for the future, even if the utopia falls short of reality. The instigation of the utopian impulse creates a space for socio-historical interrogation and decoding.

David Atwell (1993) considers the conscious choice of selecting the use of alternate narrative forms other than realism in writing narratives that interrogate politicised racism in South Africa. Even though in most speculative fiction, the narrative discourse is historically rooted, the texts become texts of struggle representing the voices of the dispossessed where "history is a tyrannical presence" (Atwell 10). From as early as the 1970s and 1980s, liberal radicalism in South Africa dominated historical and

geographical debates. Left wing radicals voiced, within limited circles locally but with greater effect globally, the idea that apartheid was a shrewd disguise for white capitalist gains. Liberals placed the responsibility of apartheid on the continuing path of Afrikaner Nationalism creating pressure and awareness globally. In this politically volatile environment, the premise would be that realistic documentation of the oppressive would best represent the cause. This is particularly the case when it draws on a long history of realism. Atwell explains:

> Both the white liberal tradition since Olive Schreiner, continuing down to the radicalism of Nadine Gordimer …, and contemporary black prose narrative since the era of *Drum Magazine* in the 1950s have adopted various forms of realism as the unquestioned means of bearing witness to, and telling the truth about South Africa (Atwell 11).

In the 1960s, amid the focus on representing history in avant-garde narrative structures (especially with the rising popularity of magic-realism in Latin America and New Wave Science Fiction that looked beyond traditional discourse), South African writers confronted yet another difficulty: harsh censorship. This was an era of global radicalism, women's liberation movements accelerated, and cultural attitudes experienced greater freedom. It was a time when boundaries were blurred and individualism and innovation grew, as there were greater demands on new cultural spaces. In acknowledging further that history could not be directly and realistically presented owing to the textual nature of history as espoused by Jameson, writers started to explore different narrative structures. The need for innovation was echoed when in 1967, Coetzee while commenting on black South African poetry and fiction, criticised it for relying too heavily on realism. Realism, Coetzee asserted, was "journalistic fact parading as imaginative literature", ignoring the importance of social injustice and the inability to persuade into action (Coetzee in Atwell 12). Paradoxically, the 1960s and 1970s were decades of a forceful Black Consciousness cultural programme development. Its purpose was to create egalitarian opportunities, literature being used to represent oppression in realistic or documentary modes. Liberal writers saw this as limiting and retrogressive in its representation of history.

Art had to be politicised, pointing towards transformation and the awareness of a different form of political struggle. Defamiliarisation of the present in an imagined future

space, as discussed by Jameson, was projected as an accessible and effective narrative style for the South African crisis. The Nobel Award ceremony speech, on the occasion of Coetzee's being awarded the Nobel Prize for literature, best articulates the reasons for selecting a non realistic narrative:

> To write is to awaken counter-voices within oneself, and to dare enter into dialogue with them. The dangerous attraction of the inner self is John Coetzee's theme: the senses and bodies of people, the interiority of Africa. "To imagine the unimaginable" is the writer's duty. As a post-modern allegorist, Coetzee knows that novels that do not seek to mimic reality best convince us that reality exists (Per Wasberg on the occasion of the Nobel Literary Award Ceremony, 2003).

The State of Emergency in South Africa (1985 – 1987) created a sense of foreboding and dystopia, yet writers felt an even stronger responsibility to represent history using different and new narrative forms. The political consciousness within texts demanded dynamism with intensified feelings of dislocation. For Coetzee it meant that writers felt the need to engage in a political struggle with words, to create a "novel that operates in terms of its own procedures and issues in its own conclusions, not one that operates in terms of the procedures of history… A novel that involves its own paradigms and myths in the process… going so far as to show the mythic state of history- in other words demythologising history" (Coetzee as quoted in Atwell 15).

Chapter One of this thesis examines the early speculative text, *Promised Land* (1972) by Karel Schoeman and will discuss how the apocalyptic rhetoric situates itself around the subversion of the *plaasroman* as a justification of land ownership. In this early speculative text, white fear of the erasure of Afrikaner Nationalism forms the core. In a presentation of a reverse-type apartheid, this text interrogates change in South Africa and the cost of refuting change. Schoeman's text acts as a dire warning to recalcitrant politics and the fear of any idea of a shared land.

Chapter Two explores the challenges of white displacement in Nadine Gordimer's *July's People* (1981). This post-apocalyptic text, written in the interregnum, suggests a precautionary apocalyptic in its open-ended narrative that defies a determined conclusion. It explores the duplicitous role of a liberal white family, the Smales, in South Africa and the understanding of their new roles in a changed

environment. The psychologically penetrating text explores the racial tension and former hegemonic roles of master-servant.

Chapter Three examines the philosophically narrated *The Life and Times of Michael K* (1984) by J. M. Coetzee. In a post-apocalyptic South Africa, the text is an existential text defining the determination in maintaining dignity in a society where dignity has been denied and deprived. Allegory forms the central fabric of the apocalyptic rhetoric.

The next two chapters focus on fictions written in the post-apartheid period, but both share a disillusionment and cynical despondency in a future democratic South Africa. Chapter Four discusses Peter Wilhelm's unexplored text *The Mask of Freedom* (1994) a dark and disturbing post-apocalyptic text that explores the consequences of imposed movements of freedom. This fiction is a rich text that draws on specific historical intertexts to highlight the dystopic setting. Apocalyptic rhetoric in this text draws on the gothic elements of haunting history.

The final text to be explored in Chapter Five is the most graphic of the texts in this study, *Horrelpoot (Trencherman)* (2006) by Eben Venter which uses Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* as an intertext to present a country in collapse. In its presentation of eschatological scenarios at the end of the narrative, I suggest that it is a text that encourages a reconfiguring of a new world, as suggested by Teresa Heffernan and living on in a complex and difficult future as suggested by West-Pavlov.

The focus of apocalyptic literature in a South African domain is to embrace the "rolling apocalypse", identify the challenges and map a new way forward. Certainly Kermode's closing words in *The Sense of an Ending* are a concise reminder of the scope of these fictions:

> Naturally every such fiction will in some measure repeat others, but always with a difference because of the changes in our reality (Kermode 178-180).

END NOTES TO INTRODUCTION:

[1] In this thesis, "Apocalyptic" (capitalised) refers to the Apocalypse as described in the Book of Revelation while "apocalypse"(small case) refers to catastrophism and apocalyptic rhetoric.

[2] See Lewis, Scott, M. *What Are They Saying About New Testament Apocalyptic?* 2004 (85).

[3] See Hall, John *Apocalypse: From Antiquity to the Empire of Modernity* (2009).

[4] See Stephen Smalley, *The Revelation to John: Greek Text of the Apocalypse.* (2012)

[5] Arnold, M. "Dover Beach" as quoted in Kermode (2000).

[6] See Jameson *Archaeologies of the Future* (2007).

[7] Howard Phillips outlines how the Spanish 'flu seen as "tornado of plague" left its survivors struggling to recover in a society that had been affected by the epidemic. Many turned to religion to explain the epidemic. The Calvinists saw it as a "divine visitation" and compared it to the lice plague in Egypt. Johanna Brandt prophesised that this was a sign that the Day of Judgement had arrived as prophesised in the Book of Revelation. (see Phillips 2008)

[8] Robert Edgar and Hilary Sapire relate the story of Nontetha from her survival of the 1918 influenza epidemic, to her prophecies which led to her being committed Fort Beaufort Mental Hospital in 1922. Edgar and Sapire text describe how they located Nontetha's grave in order to return her remains to her home (see Edgar & Sapire 2001).

[9] See Phillips, Howard (2008) pages 34 - 36.

[10] For a more detailed discussion on the Xhosa Cattle killings see Peires (1987, 49 – 66).

[11] Afrikanerdom grew from the belief that the Afrikaans nation was unique and God-chosen people through a revelation. "The German romantic philosopher-historians, especially Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803) and Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814), dwelt on the theme of uniqueness in the late 18th century. They de-emphasized the political state and instead emphasized the uniqueness of the *Volk*, comprising the whole people, their languages and traditions. Each nation, considered as a cultural entity with its own distinctive history, possessed a "national spirit", or "soul of the people" (in German: *Volksgeist*). This idea had a strong influence in the growth of nationalism in 19th-century European lands — especially ones ruled by élites from somewhere else."(www.questia.com)

[12] See Moodie (1975).

[13] Hall refers to the six types of social temporalities and suggests that these are either Pre-apocalyptic or post-apocalyptic, each influencing actions in the here and now.

[14] See Pascal Bruckner. *The Fanaticism of the Apocalypse.* (2013).