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Redemption from Darkness: A Study of Form and Function, Sacred and Secular, within the Genre of Apocalypse

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Redemption from Darkness: A Study of Form and Function,
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<u>Introduction</u>

The genre of apocalypse has an irresistible draw. The concepts of beginning and end to humankind as well as the cosmos situate themselves in our daily stories, microcosmic narratives that repeat through time, placing the footprint of humankind a little more firmly into the earth, a place we have called our home from beginning and, naturally, to the end. In a world that constantly pushes forward to the next piece of technological equipment, reducing mass pandemics to mere over the counter solutions, and extending its hand into the abyss of the unknown universe, humanity craves the elusive next chapter in the novel of the world.

But what is to be attained when we reach the climax? When we are situated in the denouement? And finally, what happens when all is at an end? There is a universal truth of birth, and a universal truth of death (despite our advances to elude it). By that logic there must exist a macrocosmic version, a global scale birth, termed creation by many, and thus a large scale death. But since death of the individual remains a complete mystery, many diverse factions exist. This extends to the global picture then, not only seeking inquiry into what happens after we (as in the individual) but when the entire world ceases to exist.

This thesis is an attempt to explore the genre of apocalypse for a deeper understanding of these questions and notions. With various systems in place, such as those put forth by John J. Collins and other apocalypse scholars, there exists a possibility to examine various iterations of apocalypses. By examining paradigm traits and tiers and the complications that arise with systemization, this thesis develops a methodology in which to include the functional take on various case studies of apocalypse. Generally reserved for examinations of sacred text, the expanded methodology presented here will seek to not only look at an example of said text, but

also a secular text, two examples of 'sacred function', and one ideological example of a secular function.   This study is not about changing the makeup of the paradigm, nor is it an effort to disprove criteria, nor tack on additional items. The goal is to use the paradigm to identify a more well-rounded view of the genre, and then see what can be gleaned from those categories and their prototypes. In doing so, the definition of the apocalypse genre will be more comprehensive, and thus beneficial for any avenue of study to which it is applied.

Methodology

In 1979, the Society of Biblical Literature published its quarterly journal *Semeia*[1] under

the title *The Morphology of a Genre.* Within this incarnation, John J. Collins spearheads a

detailed and intimate look into the genre of apocalypse, utilizing different examples from various

faith Traditions. In examining these apocalypses, his methodology primarily concerns an attempt

to codify various traits that constitute the genre, while paying attention to the various issues and

concerns that accompany this endeavor. While taking this careful criticism into account, he

develops a master paradigm, a list of approximately forty entries or traits that characterize the

genre of apocalypse. Collins states that, "the significant recurring elements constitute a paradigm

which shows not only the persistent similarities which run throughout the corpus but also the

variations which distinguish the different sub-groups and individual works."[2] From this, Collins

establishes the first of many claims: apocalypse is always communicated through a narrative

structure.

In order to support this claim, Collins first describes the paradigm as, "laid out in two

main sections: the framework the revelation and its context".[3] For our purposes, this entails

three main sections: the primary text as literary text alone, the various historical elements that

influence it on a temporal level, and the eschatological places on a spatial level. With this

classification, Collins' intention is to set up a methodology from which to analyze texts.

Upon examining primary texts that are considered apocalypses, there are various

modifiers that are essential, most specifically sensory aspects such as what the receiver sees,

hears, and speaks. In other words, the bare bones of the text create the framework. In addition to

these sensory aspects, Collins also includes the concept of the otherworldly journey, as well as

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[1] John J. Collins. "The Morphology of a Genre" *Semeia*: Journal of the Society of Biblical Literature. 1979. 14.
[2] Ibid p. 5
[3] Ibid

the dynamics of relationship between the receiver and mediator. From a literary standpoint, Collins' paradigm is engaging directly with the rich descriptions within the texts read. These sensory aspects set the stage of a narrative framework by supporting the plot as it moves forward.

The second tier is the temporal axis of historical and eschatological influencers. These are not part of the primary text, but rather aspects that cannot go unnoticed if one is to read the text to the level of depth as the author might or might not have intended it. These examples, usually more difficult to immediately highlight, include references to primordial, as well as final, events, eschatological crisis, and a complex framework of salvation. By employing these aspects, the narrative framework extends beyond the basic text, giving motive, tone, and broader context.

The third tier of this is the eschatological spatial axis[4] of otherworldly beings and inclusions. Collins uses this angle to account for the aspects of a revelation that do not exist on an earthly timeline. Instead, they are part of the spatial frame in which the revelation takes place. Since there is a component of an 'otherworldly' journey, such as to places of Heaven and Hell and not merely earth, this delineation is required to account for the entirety of the characters and plot.

Supported by this three-tiered structure, the genre of apocalypse clearly possesses a narrative framework. These various traits allow scholars to come closer to properly identifying an apocalypse, even if, as Collin states: "An 'apocalypse' is simply that which scholars can agree to call an 'apocalypse'."[5]

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[4] Collins makes reference to eschatological influencers primarily in the temporal section of the paradigm. However, in the angle/third tier of 'space', the eschatological descriptor is just as relevant. In the case studies that follow this methodology, these two tiers of eschatological explanation will be referenced separately as they pertain to the temporal and the spatial.
[5] John J. Collins.*"The Morphology of a Genre"* p. 2

However, systematizing traits within a fluid and elusive concept such as genre requires caution. These traits can help define the genre, creating points of recognition. On the other hand, they can characterize the genre as nothing more than a static laundry list—a freeze-frame of one particular viewpoint. Collins is not unaware of the complexities that factor into genre, as he highlights the noticeable obscurity in defining either apocalypse or genre: "The purpose of this volume is to identify and define a literary genre 'apocalypse'. Since neither 'genre' nor 'apocalypse' has a precise, universally accepted connotation".[6] In order to better understand the reasoning behind the development of these traits, as well as the overall literary importance for the genre, Collins pays particular attention to the following: Genre and historicity, clarification of terminology, interdisciplinary investigation, and themes of transcendence and salvation.

The first topic, historicity, primarily concerns the empirical and objective authenticity of both the text and content of apocalypse. Earlier in the description of the second tier, it was noted that historicity adds an element of depth to an apocalypse text, but Collins specifically labels it as temporal. This leaves the interpretation of empirical elements abstract. There is room for both the recorded historical elements, such as events surrounding the apocalypse text (perhaps giving it a reason to be written), as well as a more objective view of the text from a scholar.

This is not simply in the text either. Collins seeks to eliminate the supposition that there is a rigid relationship between historical accuracy and genre; the genre does not depend on links between texts, and the criteria do not simply extend from one formula or tradition. Even so, modernity has given the name of apocalypse/revelation to these texts in order to delineate that they are a collection. Because the historicity of text and genre are difficult to streamline, Collins prefers to view each text from a literary/form criticism point of view, thus taking into account the significant historical aspects that correspond with said text.

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[6] Ibid p. 1

The second source that influences the paradigm is a classification of terminology. ἀποκάλυψις is the Greek word for revelation, but to Collins and the scholars he employs in this introduction, there is a world of potential variance between the two. The noun *apocalypse* can be used to name either the text or the genre. As referenced in historicity section, apocalypse as a textual descriptor was not understood the way it is now. In scholarship, there is little justification to use the one word as a blanket term for all texts called apocalypses in the time in which they were written. Were they religious in origin? Were they satirical as a response? Were they written during a certain period? Were they conceived of in a certain place? Collins concludes: "The literary genre 'apocalypse' was not clearly recognized and defined in antiquity and has not been precisely delineated in modern scholarship."[7]

The term apocalyptic as an adjective also has an abstract connotation. While Collins notes that "apocalypse is too broad against all other types of revelation", he also states that "apocalyptic [is] to narrow for too many texts usually regarded as 'apocalyptic' and ignores non historical or cosmic transformation."[8] What Collins intends to communicate, again, is the danger of generalizing the genre. In order to shine a light into this abstraction of terms, it is again important to look at each text as its own entity, and from those texts, find the literary similarities that support the codification of the genre.

The third influencer is interdisciplinarity and the historical and eschatological second tier of the paradigm takes this topic into account. In keeping with the previous theme, there is a suggestion to organize terminology in order to correlate to various fields and shed clarity on the genre. Collins states that "apocalyptic can hover vaguely between literature sociology and theology". By doing so, scholars attribute 'apocalypse' as a literary genre, 'apocalyptic' to

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[7] Ibid p. 4
[8] Ibid p. 5

describe theological eschatology, and 'apocalypticism' as sociological ideology.[9] However, there

is still no way to ultimately fit each text into a neat box—hence, the need for a deeper look into

the interdisciplinary play. All three topics have the potential to cross-pollinate, and their

cooperation might be the only way to unlock certain doors within each field. Collins however

continues to drive home this point that with investigations of an interdisciplinary nature, the

scholar must retain a fidelity to the literary tradition from which it stems. These interpretations

only exist because the text exists as a foundation from which to work. Sociological concerns

might be addressed and therefore able to add depth, but only because of the text; theological

eschatological discussion can only stem from the revelation presented, and the literary text,

exists only as text itself.

The fourth influencer on the paradigm is the quintessential aspect of transcendence.

Collins indicates that many texts reference supernatural elements, explaining the inclusion of

such elements on their own tier within the paradigm. It is not only inclusion, but also a defense

and declaration of the involvement in the physical world, most specifically within humanity.

This transcendence in turn connotes a strong case for salvation; transcendence itself is

eschatologically action-oriented in the case of the death and destruction that precedes it in

apocalypse texts. With this elements organized into a plot structure, Collins can still highlight

these traits as contributing to a narrative form, preserving a literary fidelity to scripture.

Thus, the apocalypse genre can be defined in the following ways. Firstly, there is always

a narrative framework in which the revelation is described. Secondly, there are literary aspects

that occur frequently within the narratives presented, thus laying the ground work for a

codification. Thirdly, there is both a concern for the historical-critical and eschatological

influencers, which allows the narrative to retain the literary depth. Finally, the concept of

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[9] Ibid p. 3

transcendence, which can translate into a degree of salvation, moves the plot forward, keeping the narrative structure intact.

From this, Collins states: "This common core of constant elements permits us, then, to formulate a comprehensive definition of the genre: 'Apocalypse is a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation and spatial, insofar as it involves another, supernatural world'."[10] From this definition, Collins then distinguishes the preference for examining the apocalypse genre primarily from a literary, textual perspective. By doing so, he cements the importance of accuracy, continuity, sourcing, close analysis, and the Tradition of the text.

This conclusion may seem slightly redundant and generalized. However, with this inference, it also enables us to see the criticisms that can be applied to it. Collins' "definition marks the boundaries of the genre and enables us to identify it," with the caveat of "it [not being] intended as a complete or adequate description of the constituent works."[11] No individual apocalypse can be adequately understood without reference to some other elements in the paradigm. The paradigm thus sets a baseline, and from this baseline, it is possible to approach the criticisms that address the limits of this codification.

The paradigm is, as Collins says, "internally coherent"[12]. While the paradigm and the influencers do contribute to Collins' preference for literary examination, it is not without complications. Firstly, despite the attention to the literary, there are still shortcomings. Collins notes one of these himself: "No one apocalypse contains all the elements noted in the

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[10]Ibid p. 9
[11] Ibid 10
[12] Ibid 12

paradigm".[13] Not only is the list non-exhaustive of traits, but there is no one text that embodies them all. While this is not an issue so much in itself, it sheds light on asymptotic impossibility of text meeting criteria: The criterion list, while useful, will never be complete, and thus, there will never exist a text that encompasses all of the traits of an apocalypse. The attention of the narrative focus is distracted by this paradox, and, while this does not void an attempt to examine, it presents the daunting task of detailing ad infinitum. Not only this, but all elements might not be weighed equally.

Secondly, by defining apocalypse as a literary genre, the static nature of the criteria can force the genre into move two potential places. On the one hand, the genre can itself refuses to grow outward. This causes a lack of discussion on the future texts that, from the historical critical level, arise as a response not only to occurrences within faith traditions (literal sacred revelation) but also secular world events. On the other hand, there is also the issue with the opposite—namely the multifaceted genre and genre blending. Collins makes reference in his article to the constant problem of fitting all apocalypses explicitly named or abstractly referenced, into their respective categories. Collins asserts that looking at each text is the best mode of procedure, while also noting that certain apocalypse text might only be part of a larger work. This secondary assertion can lead to complications of genre conflation. Is the text an apocalypse, or just this section? Can the text be read in different ways? Collins understands the problem from another angle as well: "Conversely an apocalypse may include subsidiary literary forms which are independent of the genre"[14]. By working backwards, the same concern applies.

Thirdly, in keeping with the risk of genre conflation, this exploration must consider interdisciplinary investigation carefully. In order for clarity, scholars in Collins' article have

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[13] Ibid 8
[14] Ibid 8

designated the various iterations of the word apocalypse to describe the different disciplines: Apocalypse as literary, apocalyptic for eschatology/theology, and apocalypticism for sociological investigation. But what is really 'in a name' when it comes to this terminology? Will these terms be confusing to those who use them outside of an academic framework? For example, apocalypse, in popular culture, is a stylized word, one that is hardly used to describe anything except, as Fr. Felix Just cites, "a catastrophic event."[15] This idea of high scale disaster may trace its origins back to the imagery in the Book of Revelation, but does not always match up with an in depth reading of the text. The word 'apocalypse' loses its singular aesthetic purpose, becoming a generic, ill-defined term, even if it remains in the literary sphere. Collins' admits there is an issue of 'etic' and 'emic' differentiations[16]. Etic characterizes the historical critical approach due to the fact that cultural perspectives might be too biased. The Emic approach allows the cultural perspective to escape the objective historical view in order that the scholar can get a Perhaps then the iterations of apocalypse for different disciplines are too objectively abstract—too etic. While this might sort the ideas into a better system, is it too precise? The terminology would suit a scholar, but what might be lost from an actual cultural interpretation, as in a view from the point in time?

Collins' paradigm has had thirty-five years to breathe since its publication in *Semeia* in 1979. In 2016, Collins published another article within his book *Apocalypse, Prophecy, and Pseudepigraphy: On Jewish Apocalyptic Literature*, entitled "The Genre Apocalypse Reconsidered", in which he examines the original work and comments on criticisms placed on it since its publication. The various criticisms shed light on the shortcomings of the original

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[15] Just, Felix. Apocalypse: Definitions and Related Terms: http://catholicresources.org/Bible/Apocalyptic.htm
[16] Collins. John J. "The Genre Apocalypse Reconsidered*". Apocalypse, Prophecy, and Pseudepigraphy: On Jewish Apocalyptic Literature*, 2016. pp. 23-24.

paradigm, and allow time to bridge a gap of understanding about the genre, in order that further study might be explored.

Collins notes that the paradigm, while replete with traits that describe the structure of the text, lack in terms of literary theory. While Collins believes there might not have been a different overall outcome, if another study was done, he would incorporate more focus on the theoretical aspects that help to define any literary genre.

Although it is a small criticism, it is an important modifier of the further criticisms made, namely, that they all concern the paradigms structure and impact on interpreting literary aspects. Firstly, scholars raise an awareness to the dangers of systematizing. The temptation to fit a square peg in a round hole, to organize and catalogue for our own efficiency, is great when it comes to information, most notably to judging texts. By cataloguing we can find pertinent information with new ease, and then apply it to more fields and texts as they arise. On the other hand, if the structure is too rigid, the risk becomes cataloguing incorrectly, or leaving out certain information in order to satisfy the criteria. This systematizing becomes a danger to the individual text.

In addition, the model itself might be too idealized, theoretical and abstract. Genre cannot be confined to the laundry list of criteria, as noted at the beginning of this paper. If this criticism was present in 1979, and still exists in 2016, then the paradigm is clearly not the whole story. Within Collins' text, Carol Newsom, resting on George Lakoff, is quoted saying: "'elements' alone are not what trigger recognition of a genre; instead, what triggers it is the way in which they are related to one another in a Gestalt structure that serves as an idealized cognitive model. Thus the elements only make sense in relation to a whole"[17]. Newson's critique allows for a continuation of practical exploration as opposed to satisfying an empirical list. Judging the

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[17] Ibid; Newsom p. 27

quantitative will lead to different results than the qualitative.

This leads into the third criticism, which has been brought up before, namely, that of the all or nothing criteria form. Must an apocalypse satisfy all the criteria of the paradigm? Which traits outweigh the others in terms of importance? How can we conform to fitting everything into the boxes we desire, if we cannot decide on the hierarchy of criteria? Collins cites Derrida to reframe the situation: "a text cannot belong to no genre…[it] speaks of a sort of participation without belonging—a taking part in without being part of, without having membership in a set."[18] Derrida makes the point that it is incorrect to place anything rigidly into a genre. However, scholars recognize genre sorting as inevitability in order to obtain consistency.

The solution of sorts is to recognize that while there are not clear lines all of the time, that there are, what Collins calls, "Family Resemblances"[19]. While this concept is still generalized, it leads to a more concrete view that center around prototypes. Collins states:

> Rather than having clear boundaries, essential components, and shared and uniform properties, classes defined by prototypes have a common core and then fade into fuzziness at the edges. This is to say that we classify easily at the level of prototypes, and with more difficulty—extending features of the prototype by metaphor and analogy to take account of non-typical features—as we diverge from them."

This is an admittance of the limits of paradigm constructs, but also allows for those criteria to stand. More importantly, it keeps with Collins' original aim: to pay the closest attention to the actual texts. By examining certain core texts, or prototypes, we can observe how the paradigm works for them, and then in turn how they work for defining the genre.

Collins makes one more distinction in "Apocalypse Reconsidered" by calling attention to the issue of functionality. Collins frames this issue from the historical critical side by quoting David Hellholm's question addressed in a later edition of *Semeia*: "Why were apocalypses ever

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[18] Ibid; Derrida; 28
[19] Ibid p. 29

written?"[20] This issue of functionality has a few explanations. Some see apocalypses as a cathartic way to express crisis or marginalization[21]. Others see it as an earthly understanding, with the majority of the emphasis on the destructive elements, it does not give appropriate credence to the eschatological implications and supernatural world[22]. In both situations it is clear that communicating a message of some sort holds equal importance. While the paradigm allows various points of the text to become categorical and therefore makes its easier to interpret the message of the text, there is still a variance in the question of why.

With all of this considered, Collins makes a clear distinction between two fields: Form and Function. Form is the clear focus on what constitutes the text, where as function is how it is applied and its use to the greater community. When observing the theoretical valuation of the genre, Collins firmly states that there is "no simple correlation between form and function."[23] Function is not clear enough to factor into the paradigm because it is so varied; it, in itself, is not systematized, nor can an absolute consensus be drawn from it. The adaptability of genre cannot be reconciled with the variety of function, as functional elements will be relative to the historical critical examination of each text.

It would seem that this is the final judgment on the apocalypse genre. The genre requires a text and a set of multivalent criteria by which to judge it. Since the criteria include an attention to the supernatural and eschatological, there must be a sacred component to it. It is difficult to contest the paradigm since it has given a systematic framework. To overhaul it completely would not do the genre any justice.

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[20] David Hellholm, "The Problem of Apocalyptic Genre and the Apocalypse of John," Semeia 36 (1986): (13−64) 26.
[21] Tina Pippin; Adela Yarbro-Collins
[22] As referenced in Apocalypse Reconsidered, p. 33,34
[23] John J. Collins. "The Genre Apocalypse Reconsidered". *Apocalypse, Prophecy, and Pseudepigraphy: On Jewish Apocalyptic Literature*, 2016. pp. 23-24.

However, the routes of communication have changed vastly with time even since the paradigm was constructed. If genre is dynamic, then it must continue to evolve, as humanity evolves, for humanity is the persistent author of such texts. There is a difficulty in Collins' claim that form and function have no simple correlation. Rather than state there is nothing, it is more apt to say that it cannot be simple. Form and function both serve a particular utility in studying genre. As we've seen, Form delineates the necessary literary components of a genre, and allows the scholar to empirically note which are present within a text. Function, in Collins' view, applies to the historical-critical analysis of one particular text, as in why it happened. However, perhaps by reframing function, we can see how to expand the genre in present day. Since scholars have addressed many historical critical concerns of apocalypse texts, what occurs when those texts, even with those interpretations, are received by the general public. No longer are these texts read solely by the community written to or to the scholars that study them, but they are received by the general public, including both religious and secular communities. Many groups have taken apocalyptic texts and used them as a guide map for predicting or carrying out apocalyptic occurrences. Instead of why these texts were written, perhaps a more apt definition of function, is a continuation of how they *did* function to how they *do* function in the present day.

In the interest of keeping the genre dynamic, it is important to examine its multivalent facets. There are two distinctions: Form and function, and within those, an attention to sacred and secular. Form characterizes text, and function, for lack of a more generalized word, characterizes motivated action. Sacred and secular retain their core definitions. What occurs is a need to examine sacred and secular text, as well as sacred and secular function. This is not an effort to add more items to the list, as that does not move the genre forward. Instead what follows

is an examination of four different 'texts', one in each of the following categories: sacred form,

secular form, sacred function, and Secular function. By attempting this case study, each

examination will provide an outlook of what the text, and the category it represents, can bring to

the study of the apocalypse genre. Each case study will take into account the three tiers of

Collins' paradigm and, from that analysis, will then add further contributions to the genre.

Case Study 1: Sacred Text (Form)

In order to begin any of these case studies, we must make a distinction of what constitutes each in their own right. For the first study, the text being examined is the Book of Revelation, the final book in the New Testament canon of Christianity. This text is characterized as sacred, as it belongs to the Christian religious Tradition, and within that Tradition is classified as divine word of God, hence its inclusion in the canon. For our purposes this will suffice for now, and will be examined in more detail after the case study is complete.

In order to deem the Book of Revelation and apocalypse, it, as a text, must be examined under the lens of the paradigm. Since many scholars have made this analytical journey before, the exegesis that follows will lay out systematically how certain portions of the Book itself conform to the paradigm. With the criteria provided, we will examine the literary text alone, and then subsequently investigate the historical critical, and finally the supernatural tier. Thus to begin: the mechanics of the Book of Revelation satisfy three of the main criteria within the first section of Collins' paradigm, namely, the otherworldly journey, visual elements, and auditory discourse.

The otherworldly journey frames the overall narrative structure of the Book of Revelation. Without John's entrance into a supernatural realm to frame what he sees and the instructions he receives, the entire book would have no context, but would only be a strange conglomeration of symbols and perhaps literal nonsense. The utility of the journey is that John of Patmos[24] is portraying the images in a plotted structure that humanity can understand it as a story. Plot is essential for any text that hopes to emulate a narrative structure, and the journey provides that

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[24] Much scholarship has been done on establishing John of Patmos as an author independent of the author of the fourth gospel. That recognition is shown here so that there is no need to stem an argument of genre conflation. This is confirmed in W.J Harrington's commentary: Harrington, Wilfred J. *Revelation*. Sacra Pagina series. Volume 16. Liturgical Press: Collegeville, MN, 1993.

structure. In addition, the otherworldly journey allows for catharsis to take place. As with most

narrative plots, the main character, in this case the narrator, undergoes a change through the

story, which creates a dynamic interest in the observer. However, in the case of sacred text, the

narrative is not simply about the narrator, but rather about the author, the readers at the time, the

readers through history, and the scholars among them. All participants experience a catharsis

within their own spirituality or analysis. For Christians, this otherworldly journey allows a

connection with the supernatural divine presence of God, one only seen from the natural

perspective in the rest of the canon. Thus, the journey not only represents a narrative within

itself, but is a microcosm of the larger story at hand. It becomes a pinnacle point for the

understanding of time, most particularly in the Christian Tradition, as in this case, the linear

structure dictates that natural time, that is time on earth, is coming to an end, and supernatural

time is about to begin. This completes the larger narrative which began with creation[25].

If the otherworldly journey builds the narrative framework, the visual elements, in keeping

with the paradigm, add to its intensity. In terms of description, the most important aspects are the

sensory perceptions, specifically what we see and hear. In Revelation, John consistently leads his

audience through a series of images that evoke vision: "and in the midst of the lampstands, I saw

one like the Son of Man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash across his chest. His

head and his hair were white as white wool, white as snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire.

His feet were like burnished bronze, refined as in a furnace."[26] Not only are the images plentiful,

their visual description flows fairly effortlessly, pulling the audience closer and investing them in

the importance of the Christ figure. In addition, John also uses audio to appeal to the hearing

sense: "and the noise of their wings was like the noise of many chariots with horses rushing into

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[25] If not a further allusion to Jn 1:1-12
[26] Rev. 1:13-15

battle."[27] It is difficult to convey a sound through words, especially if that sound is otherworldly or singular to the original party. By using a simile, John is able to make this description approachable. The vehicle of description is vital to understanding all the components in the narrative framework.

Both the structure and description must give rise to the final aspect of action and reaction which is exemplified through the trait of epiphany. In the first chapters, Christ, as described above, gives the actual revelation to John in which to communicate to the seven churches:

> He touched me with his right hand and said, "Do not be afraid. I am the first and the last, the one who lives. Once I was dead, but now I am alive forever and ever. I hold the keys to death and the netherworld. Write down, therefore, what you have seen, and what is happening, and what will happen afterwards. This is the secret meaning of the seven stars you saw in my right hand, and of the seven gold lampstands: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches[28]

The narrator's reception of the knowledge in its intensity solidifies his belief in God and the word given by Christ. Daniel Harrington writes in the *Sacra Pagina* Revelation commentary: "The blessing of grace and peace issues from God, a God not remote but active in our world a God especially active and present in Jesus Christ…Jesus' help is not only for the future; it is more intimately in the past and in the present."[29] Much like the concept of catharsis, there is a realization here. However it is not the simple at-hand end of the world, but rather an understanding of Christ's role. Epiphany is therefore a trait that is present within the Book of Revelation.

It is clear that Book of Revelation satisfies the literary-textual elements of the paradigm, deeming it an apocalypse text. However, in examining the text, we can see there are avenues for

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[27] Rev 9:13
[28] Rev 1:17-20
[29] Harrington, Wilfred J. *Revelation*. Sacra Pagina series. Volume 16. Liturgical Press: Collegeville, MN, 1993. p. 48

a more dedicated study of literary theory. Examining the otherworldly journey, visual and auditory elements, and epiphany give rise to three additional topics within the literary sphere, namely, plot, description, and character development, respectively. This is not to say that these three devices should be added to the paradigm, but rather, by investigation of the text via the paradigm's criteria, they become methods in which to examine the text further, so that the idealized message within the apocalypse text is recognized.

In addition, the visual and auditory elements do not merely satisfy the criteria, but give rise to a larger category of description. By examining these descriptions, the visual and auditory are not only static images and sounds, but they reflect the emotions and actions of the characters. A key trait of description is the attention paid to the emotional status of the receiver: "And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or look into it. And I began to weep bitterly, because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it."[30] The receiver has invested his audience by being narrator and tuning his listeners into the desperateness of the situation. He places them in his position so that the audience feels as he does.

Furthermore, in an 'apocalypse', the players, or characters, are always defined. Not only does this satisfy the requirements for communication of the text and visual and audio discourse, but characters provide the basis for the realizations and epiphanies communicated. This does not mean that the characters are always identical, but rather the roles are constant. In Revelation, John relays his communication with heavenly bodies to an audience: "He made it (revelation) known by sending his angel to his servant John, who testified to the word of God."[31] By having consistent roles, it is easier to define the actual genre because there is little room for

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[30] Rev. 5:3-4
[31] Rev 1:1-2

interpretation. It is in the actions and portrayals of these characters that the interpretation becomes more varied. The idea that one cannot be without the other also defines how the plot will play out.

Thus, without forcing the paradigm to change, there is clearly more literary theory that can be employed to the textual sections. If this is the case, there are certainly avenues to explore concerning the historical-critical. By its very nature, the historical-critical analysis of any text is bound to be varied. Collins shies from adding aspects of such interpretation because it is so particular to the various texts. However, similar to the idea of literary theory, there are various interpretations that can lead to systematic characterizations of the genre. Within the Book of Revelation, each line is laced with an allegorical allusion to the trauma being faced by Judeo-Christian people under Roman rule. By examining three sections of the text that evoke these sentiments, namely the epistolary introduction, the seven trumpets, and the beast, we will not only see the reflection of people in crisis, but also how this interpretation lends theoretical wealth to the genre.

The historical critical analysis, at its heart, revolves around the physical community presented in revelation. This mainly speaks of the seven churches in Asia Minor: Ephesus, Thyatira, Laodicea, Philadelphia, Smyrna, Sardis, and Pergamum, and the faithful that reside within them. For all of the allegorical imagery and haunting aspects of his otherworldly journey, the epistolary addresses, that of letters to the communities being included, are not out of place; a physical community exists. John, in this sense, becomes a figure of mediation between Christ and these communities. These communities are not presented as perfect, rather that they possess both good aspects, but also flaws, and must repent for those specific tribulations in order to regain favor with Christ. For example, in the letter to Ephesus: "You have endurance and have

suffered for my name, and you have not grown weary. Yet I hold this against you: you have lost the love you had at first. Realize how far you have fallen. Repent, and do the works you did at first. Otherwise, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent."[32] Similarly in the letter to Sardis: "'The one who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars says this: "I know your works, that you have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead. Be watchful and strengthen what is left, which is going to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God."[33] The communities themselves are human, and this description speaks to an extended history within a temporal mindset. From the methodology, we recall that the historical critical analysis characterizes the various temporal aspects of the paradigm. However, the trait of epiphany can lend some of its above knowledge to this discussion. Echoing Harrington's quote before, the declarations to the communities speaks to a wider investment that Christ has in humanity. Since the text, the churches, and humanity exist in the temporal plane, namely, natural earth, it is foundational and necessary to acknowledge the importance of community.

As the community builds the foundation, it is imperative to note the temporal situation of those addressed directly by the text, in order to further the usefulness of historical-critical analysis. Within the Book of Revelation, there are many visual descriptions of the undoing of creation, and purging of the world. Usually grouped in sevens, this deconstruction occurs so that new life may spring forth. The seven trumpets of chapters eight and nine correlate to the plagues of Egypt: "When the first one blew his trumpet, there came hail and fire mixed with blood, which was hurled down to the earth…When the second angel blew his trumpet, something like a

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[32] Rev. 2:3-5
[33] Rev. 3:1-2

large burning mountain was hurled into the sea. A third of the sea turned to blood."[34] While

references to the Old Testament are frequent in the Book of Revelation, this particular reference

evokes a memory of action on God's part in relation to a community of the faithful. The Exodus

text speaks of the horrors that plagued Egypt and eventually secured the Israelite's freedom.

These plagues were a response to the suffering that occurred in Egypt, and, on a larger scale,

duplicate the same essence of purging away sin.

What many scholars have found interesting is the continued correlation of viewing the

communities of apocalypse texts as those in crisis. The immediacy in the tone in the letters, as

well the intensity of the purgation and vengeance that follows in the revelation speak to a people

who are searching for a culminating answer, judgment, and rescue. Adela Yarbro Collins, in her

book *Crisis and Catharsis* spends a chapter discussion the crisis element in the historical critical

approach to Revelation. Within that section, she pays particular attention to the concept of

trauma: "Another faction the composition of Revelation is the experience of trauma, both

individual and collective, personal and communal. The trauma I speak of is relation to the

elements of social crisis…and like them can be inferred from the pages of Revelation when it is

read in the light of its historical situation."[35] The most salient example to characterize this the

frequent allusion to "Babylon" as a moniker for Rome, and with that its subversive text

criticizing the beasts as reference to the emperor Nero: "I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast

that was full of blasphemous names and it had seven heads and ten horns…on her forehead was

written a name, a mystery: 'Babylon the great, mother of whores and of earth's abominations."[36]

The psychotic imagery continues in reference to the two beasts: "Then out of the sea I saw a

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[34] Rev 8:7-8 (in reference to Ex 7:20)
[35] Adela Yarbro-Collins. *Crisis and Catharsis: The Power of the Apocalypse*. (Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1984) p. 100.
[36] Rev. 17:3-5

beast rising, with ten horns, and seven heads; on its horns were ten diadems, and on each head a blasphemous name…I saw another beast rising out of the land…It caused everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to have a mark put on the right hand or on the forehead, and no one was allowed to buy or sell unless one had the mark, the name of the best or the number of its name. This calls for wisdom. Let anyone who has intelligence figure out the number of the best for it is the number of a human being; and its number is six hundred and sixty-six."[37] By framing these images in the context of trauma, this written text becomes an active rebellion rather than just a literary entity. David Sánchez argues that "people living on the margins of power, especially those who find themselves in imperial, colonial and neocolonial contexts will challenge centers of power in patterned ways over both time and culture"[38] The strong reaction is the people pleading for an answer, a relief of their sufferings and reward for their steadfast behavior.

With the context of trauma, the historical critical also gives rise to another aspect of literary theory within the realm of interpretation[39], namely authorial bias. Yarbro Collins speaks to the underlying issue concerning his authorial bias: "The Book of Revelation also seems to have been written in response to a major crisis" however "the crucial element is not so much whether one is actually oppressed as whether one feels oppressed."[40] Defining John's tonality, we see the writing's foundation steeped in a historical mire of oppression.

Thus, the historical critical aspect to the paradigm works on its temporal level, however, the interpretations evoke a strong need to examine the importance of temporality to the apocalypse genre. By examining community and its relation to crisis and trauma, the genre gains

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[37] Rev 13:11, 16-18
[38] David A. Sánchez. *From Patmos to the Barrio: subverting Imperial Myths*. Fortress Press, Minneapolis 2008 p.45
[39] As opposed to technical terms for text alone
[40] Adela Yarbro-Collins. *Crisis and Catharsis: The Power of the Apocalypse.*(Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1984) p. 84.

a larger scope which, again, does not alter the paradigm, but supports its foundational roots and gives it new insight.

The final tier of the paradigm for sacred form deals with the spatial and supernatural elements of the apocalypse genre. The basic text and historical critical elements of the paradigm have laid a foundation for an investigation into the supernatural elements of the Book of Revelation. The sacredness of the text becomes apparent as Christ is present within the text and community, and in both of those situations transcends time to be a universal savior for the living Christian Church as it stands. The Book of Revelation employs a great deal of supernatural imagery most notably in the destructive elements following the epistolary section, the "End of Beasts", and the "New Jerusalem", and the "New Heaven and Earth". By examining the eschatological criteria within the paradigm, these specific examples will show not only how the Book of Revelation completes the requirement, but also how it then affects the Tradition that it solidifies.

In the Book of Revelation, there are multiple references to the destruction of earth, specifically in the opening of the seals, found in chapter six: "They were given authority over a quarter of the earth, to kill with sword, famine, and plague… he sun turned as black as dark sackcloth… Then the sky was divided like a torn scroll curling up"[41]. Canonically speaking, both Genesis and Revelation serve as bookends to the Christian Biblical Tradition. However, it is not simply the beginning and ending to a story, but an interpretation of humanity's existence in and departure from the world. This formatting suggests that Revelation is a mirror to Genesis. This also shows importance of balance in the dualistic world—that everything is made equal in the end. Neither book necessarily discriminates against its opposite—Genesis possesses eschatological sentiments by establishing itself as a perfect beginning, which is then marred by

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[41] Rev. 6:8, 12-14

sin and forced to begin a story of a journey to regaining that perfection, and Revelation references a beginning in accordance with its end by using the primordial setting and referencing the cosmos before systematically undoing it.

There is an interplay here of both time and space. The two being inextricably linked in this text tasks the paradigm with acknowledging there is a historical critical, and thus, temporal component to the examination of eschatological place. While this interpretation may lean toward conceptualizing time, it is also important to notice the spaces of creation and destruction for the genre as they are what make the text communicable not only the community audience at the time, but for those who accept the text as sacred scripture.

In addition, the "End of the Beasts" section crystallizes the element of eschatological salvation: "And I saw heaven wide open, and behold a white horse; its rider's name was Faithful and True and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eye flamed like fire, and on his head he wore many diadems…he was clothed in a cloak dipped in blood…on his thigh was written the title: King of kings and Lord of Lords…The beast was captured and along with him the false prophet…These two were thrown into the lake of fire with its sulfurous flames."[42] The catharsis through action again occurs as another climax of the story is realized. To highlight this section might seem slightly out of place, for even though there are otherworldly beings both angelic and demonic, what is the context for eschatological salvation? This section is necessary both in the narrative and in its interpretation, as it sets the stage for the "New Jerusalem": He took me in spirit to a great, high mountain and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God. It gleamed with the splendor of God. Its radiance was like that of a precious stone, like jasper, clear as crystal."[43]If read from a standpoint of people in crisis, it is easy to see

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[42] Rev. 19:13
[43] Rev. 10-11

the natural progression on a textual level. However, it goes deeper than this. The sacred text satisfies its need for eschatological fulfillment in the resurrection aspects of the world by noting this progression, and in turn it is used by the universal church, past and present. Although the natural world understands the text on a temporal and spatial level, Christ, through this action and establishment of all things new, transcends these spheres. In turn, the Tradition emerges as an entity of ideology and truth, as opposed to literal text, or its grounding in history.

We have seen that sacred text, especially in the case of the Book of Revelation, satisfies the paradigm's criteria on a textual, historical-critical, and eschatological level. However, we have seen that beyond the paradigm's laundry list qualities lies a vast undercurrent of untouched literary methodology. It is not that the paradigm itself is inadequate or incomplete, rather there is more to it than its surface iterations. If we adhere to Collins' solution to view prototypes, the Book of Revelation fits right in. However, this study proves that it is not only the particular texts that can be considered a prototype, but rather the paradigm itself. The paradigm has a foundational quality, but although it needn't be altered, there is much beyond its surface text. While this does not give a definitive answer, it gives credence to sacred texts perhaps eschewed by the paradigm before, such as Thessalonians[44]. Thus, by investigating the paradigm's effects, as well as an increasing focus on literary theory, sacred text becomes a more significant contributor to the apocalypse genre.

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[44] 1 Thess. 4:13-18, 2 Thess. 2

Case Study 2: Secular Text (Form)

The Book of Revelation neatly fits in the investigation of sacred text. Since it serves as a prototype example, it meets many aspects of the paradigm and has the ability to expand the genre from that perspective. Apocalypses from other biblical texts, as well as other faith Traditions meet the same example.

It is imperative to refer back to the concept of narrative at this point. In order to characterize the genre, the classification of form is heavily dependent on the narrative structure, as we have discussed. However, sacred canonical texts only represent a portion of written word. What then makes texts sacred or secular? For our purposes, we have defined sacred literature as texts belonging to a particular faith Tradition, with a preference for those which are canonical and regarded as divine truth. To this we must classify all other text as secular, even if it has other genre and tonal affiliations. This includes religious fiction across time, from Dante's *Inferno* to the *Left Behind* series, as well as impartial historical text commenting on religion. For our purposes, the focus will be on the former, as there is more room for interpretation on cultural expression.

However, in order to make secular text work for this study, there must be a recognition of the religiosity in storytelling as a practice. Is it at the point of canonization that a text becomes sacred? If a text is non-canonical, does that mean it loses its sacredness? If a text is regarded by the individual as a credo for living, does that give it a sacred quality. As said, for our purposes, it is logical to start with a systematized definition, in order that we can perhaps bridge this gap.

How then are we to approach secular text? While there are definitions of various genres, there is no mirror paradigm for the secular. However, from observing certain texts that may attempt to call themselves apocalypses, the following observations can be made. Firstly, there is

a heavy concentration on the destructive elements. This can be seen in many different situations, warfare, the end of naturally occurring and life sustaining ecosystems, and disease to name a few. This destruction, while not always instigated by a direct command, is usually dictated by disagreeing factions, power-hungry individuals or groups, lack of care for resources and human life. In addition, there is usually a usurpation of power or a permanent change of course of the 'life we knew'. This overpowering can come in the form of avaricious dictators, regions taking control of other regions, and, in more fantastical realms, aliens and foreign beings forcing the entire planet under a new world order. Furthermore, many secular apocalyptic texts include a post-apocalyptic world, littered with the aftermath of destruction, minimal elements of survival, or, due to the change in resources and power, of super-beings such as zombies.

It's no secret that there is an interesting inverted correlation of these traits and those presented in the plot of the Book of Revelation. The undoing of creation and purging of evil is as much a cathartic action in popular secular text as it is in sacred. However the focus is kept on it, and 'otherworldly' beings (or powers that be above a normal order in the case of secular novels) reign for long tyrannical periods. If the focus is not on the destruction it is on the aftermath, and the eschatological redemption, while not always absent, is usually centered around an individual than the entirety of the place where she exists.

Secular text does not have its own established paradigm, only some general codifying traits. However, it should not be overlooked so quickly by those who seek to define the apocalypse genre more fully. By using Collins' paradigm, we can apply an examination of text alone, historical-critical, and eschatological traits to a secular text, and see if that reaps more methodological benefits for the genre.

Out of the many texts that could be selected for such a study, Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* offers many opportunities for discussion about apocalypse from a different standpoint. A multilayered frame narrative, *Heart of Darkness* presents the experiences of a riverboat captain named Marlow as he narrates on a journey into the Congo, at the turn of the century and the height of British Imperialism. The novel has very few direct parallels to religion, and overall does not pose, by form or content, as a sacred text. For our purposes, it is a better narrative to unpack than other lauded religious fiction such as Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Dante's *Divine Comedy*. In addition, *Heart of Darkness'* lack of direct attention to a formally religious apocalypse, as opposed to as Tim LeHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins' popular series *Left Behind,* lends credibility to a purely secular outlook. As we will see later, there is a danger of conflation that religious-oriented fiction can present.

To begin the analysis, we can look to the same framework utilized for sacred text, that of observing the paradigm's three categories: text alone, historical-critical/temporal, and eschatological/spatial. By observing *Heart of Darkness* from these lenses, this study will show not only that the text satisfies various criteria of an apocalypse, but also contributes back to the scope of the genre.

From a text-alone perspective, *Heart of Darkness* employs many elements of the paradigm including auditory representation, visual imagery, and the overall otherworldly journey. When the book begins, Marlow is not experiencing the story in real time, rather he is relating his experience in the Congo to his present day shipmates:

> I don't want to bother you much with what happened to me personally," he began, showing in this remark the weakness of many tellers of tales who seem so often unaware of what their audience would best like to hear; "yet to understand the effect of it on me you ought to know how I got out there, what I saw, how I went up that river to the place where I first met the poor chap. It was the farthest point of navigation and the culminating point of my experience. It seemed somehow to

> throw a kind of light on everything about me and into my thoughts. It was somber enough too—and pitiful—not extraordinary in any way--not very clear either. No, not very clear. And yet it seemed to throw a kind of light.[45]

Marlow is not simply telling a story, rather he is orating it to his peers. By doing so, Marlow becomes the author of the text, while also being the primary recipient of the revelation he received on this journey, not unlike John of Patmos. Since Conrad's own authentic experience is threaded through the character of Marlow, speaking the ideological truths that he internalized in his own, the fictional element is perhaps lessened, and not so easily dismissed.

In addition, Conrad's description through the novel brings many disturbing images as Marlow progresses deeper into the Congo. When Marlow reaches the Company Station in order to secure the boat he will be using, he notices the dilapidation and destruction present there

> At last we opened a reach. A rocky cliff appeared, mounds of turned-up earth by the shore, houses on a hill, others, with iron roofs, amongst a waste of excavations, or hanging to the declivity. A continuous noise of the rapids above hovered over this scene of inhabited devastation. A lot of people, mostly black and naked, moved about like ants. A jetty projected into the river. A blinding sunlight drowned all this at times in a sudden recrudescence of glare. 'There's your Company's station,' said the Swede, pointing to three wooden barrack- like structures on the rocky slope. 'I will send your things up. Four boxes did you say? So. Farewell.'[46]

Destruction, as we have said, is typical for secular apocalyptic literature, connoted most effectively through images. However, this instance is one of the first concrete descriptions that unfolds in front of Marlow. Apocalypses such as a Book of Revelation lay out, very systematically the destructions that are occurring, often accompanied by numerical values and exact time frames. In the case of Marlow's journey, there is a much slower progression of images and actions, but the foreboding tension is still there. Since this revelation is given over time, and

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[45] Joseph Conrad. *Heart of Darkness*. (Barnes & Noble Classic, New York: 2003) pp. 50-51
[46] Ibid p.61

not necessarily in a precise dream, it does not diminish the fact that the images are still those of

destruction and destitution of humanity.

As Marlow's journey approaches its climax, his steamship is suddenly forced into a fog,

and treacherous waters, which leads to an ambush by the natives

> I turned my shoulder to him in sign of my appreciation, and looked into the fog. How long would it last? It was the most hopeless look-out… I was looking down at the sounding-pole, and feeling much annoyed to see at each try a little more of it stick out of that river, when I saw my poleman give up the business suddenly, and stretch himself flat on the deck, without even taking the trouble to haul his pole in…At the same time the fireman, whom I could also see below me, sat down abruptly before his furnace and ducked his head. I was amazed. Then I had to look at the river mighty quick, because there was a snag in the fairway. Sticks, little sticks, were flying about--thick: they were whizzing before my nose, dropping below me, striking behind me against my pilot-house[47]

From this exchange comes the abhorrent demise of one of the sailors: "It was the shaft of a spear

that, either thrown or lunged through the opening, had caught him in the side just below the ribs;

the blade had gone in out of sight, after making a frightful gash; my shoes were full; a pool of

blood lay very still, gleaming dark-red under the wheel; his eyes shone with an amazing

luster."[48] The chaos that comes from this battle is in character of the destruction elements as

well, but also references a dualistic, two faction battle. While very different from Revelation, it is

nevertheless characteristic of the plot progression and catharsis observed in the sacred text.

Lastly, the otherworldly journey itself must not be overlooked. From the inspiration for

the trip, to Brussels to secure a contract, to the depths of the Congo, Marlow goes from a place of

knowing, to a place of complete foreignness. However, there are issues with Marlow's

otherworldly journey at first glance. In contrast to the Book of Revelation, he is not given a

revelation from God, rather he is inspired to seek this journey on his own terms. Marlow even

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[47] Ibid 100, 102
[48] Ibid 105-6

tells his aunt before embarking that it is more so for the money than any moral experience. However, there is another level of interpretation that can be gleaned here. Although there is a lack of a defined God figure, perhaps it is better to view Marlow's inspiration as willingness to receive that which the journey gives him. Although at the start this might mean money, once he is on the journey, he is at the mercy of the experience. Everything he witnesses is not only foreign but beyond his motives and imagination. While the events may take place on a natural place, they are so otherworldly to him, that they can translate as the revelatory experience.

The historical critical aspects of the paradigm are just as fruitful. As we have shown, Marlow's narrative may have been an otherworldly journey with various visuals, however, it is heavily grounded in the natural world view. Without a specific divine figure, *Heart of Darkness* may see limited. However, we do see a harkening back to primordial imagery as the story starts from England and moves into the Congo. It is this aspect that we must take note of for a historical critical view of apocalypse.

Marlow makes reference just before the start of his narrative to Rome's conquering of Britain: "I was thinking of very old times, when the Romans first came here, nineteen hundred years ago--the other day. . . . Light came out of this river since—you say Knights? Yes; but it is like a running blaze on a plain, like a flash of lightning in the clouds. We live in the flicker--may it last as long as the old earth keeps rolling!"[49] Conrad does not include this comment lightly, rather uses it as a piece of cheeky introduction of the British Imperialism in Africa that takes place in Marlow's narrative. Again we are met with this interesting parallel to people in crisis, except now it comes from the viewpoint of power. To observe this emulates the objectivity necessary to view the entire situation of crisis. Marlow witnesses those being persecuted, and by existing in that realm and its experience, is changed. Even more interestingly, it is not a change

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[49] Ibid 48

to sympathy, but rather one of personal madness, and individual horror. However, the readers and listeners of Marlow's text not only understand the objective historical implications surrounding British imperialism, but also see how the individual, regardless of the power, may not have power at all. The commentary is weighted on the oppressive system, as opposed to one individual. This then broadens the scope of the genre by forcing it to look at the real entity, as opposed to simply allegorical and literal imagery.

Finally, the eschatological/spatial space must be explored. This concept builds, as it has done in the Book of Revelation, on the aspects of the otherworldly journey. However, it is here where there is a true splitting of the sacred and secular text. Most secular texts, and *Heart of Darkness* is among them, do not account for a redemptive element after various catharses and battles fought. However, despite this gravity, it is imperative that we look past this in order to tease out further meaning from the text. The eschatological elements that are present in the text exist in two salient examples, namely, the enigmatic African woman and the infamous Mr. Kurtz.

The enigmatic African woman first appears when Marlow is making his final, long-awaited meeting with Mr. Kurtz: And from right to left along the lighted shore moved a wild and gorgeous apparition of a woman.

> She walked with measured steps, draped in striped and fringed cloths, treading the earth proudly, with a slight jingle and flash of barbarous ornaments. She carried her head high; her hair was done in the shape of a helmet; she had brass leggings to the knee, brass wire gauntlets to the elbow, a crimson spot on her tawny cheek, innumerable necklaces of glass beads on her neck; bizarre things, charms, gifts of witch-men, that hung about her, glittered and trembled at every step. She must have had the value of several elephant tusks upon her. She was savage and superb, wild-eyed and magnificent; there was something ominous and stately in her deliberate progress. And in the hush that had fallen suddenly upon the whole sorrowful land, the immense wilderness, the colossal body of the fecund and

> mysterious life seemed to look at her, pensive, as though it had been looking at the image of its own tenebrous and passionate soul[50]

This fierce description classifies the woman as otherworldly to Marlow. Not only is she foreign to him on a cultural level, but his description also deifies her, setting her as a focal point for all of the pain, filth, and misery that goes on in the world to pause and look upon her. One might be tempted to once again harken back to the two female figures within Revelation, the virgin giving birth and the whore of Babylon. However, it is not enough to simply make a parallel. This woman, for Marlow's intents and purposes, is an enemy, and yet his respectful deification of her does not keep with a consistent trope. The enigmatic woman transcends a dualistic understanding, and remains complex, but no less otherworldly. In this case, she satisfies the paradigm's criterion, but at the same time complicates it.

To turn to the other example, we can address the largest divide of the secular literature, namely, the lack of a supreme God figure. While the readers, and perhaps even the listeners to Marlow's tale, might agree that there is no clear God, for Marlow and his individual scope, his otherworldly journey does not lack a God, for he finds it in Kurtz. Through the downward progression, Marlow becomes obsessed with Kurtz, deifying his accomplishments, knowing that he will receive some sort of edification, whether educational, fiscal, or moral, as well as know the man who seems to have ultimate control of the area. It is this removal that makes Kurtz an otherworldly superior. Even when Marlow eventually meets Kurtz, and finds that the former is injured and dying, he still cannot bring himself to fight him:

> 'I had immense plans,' he muttered irresolutely. 'Yes,' said I; 'but if you try to shout I'll smash your head with--' there was not a stick or a stone near. 'I will throttle you for good,' I corrected myself. 'I was on the threshold of great things,' he pleaded, in a voice of longing, with a wistfulness of tone that made my blood run cold. 'And now for this stupid scoundrel--"Your success in Europe is assured

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[50] Ibid 127

in any case,' I affirmed, steadily. I did not want to have the throttling of him, you understand--and indeed it would have been very little use for any practical purpose. I tried to break the spell--the heavy, mute spell of the wilderness--that seemed to draw him to its pitiless breast by the awakening of forgotten and brutal instincts, by the memory of gratified and monstrous passions[51]

Even Kurtz, in his state of fevered madness, keeps claiming the area, as well as his bride at home, dully repeating *my intended…my ivory…the horror*. This once again harkens to the addressing of the individual's apocalypse experience. Both Marlow and Kurtz do not receive a redemption, for Kurtz dies, and Marlow is forced to confront Kurtz's "intended" and lie to her about the man's last words:

"I pulled myself together and spoke slowly, 'The last word he pronounced was--your name.' I heard a light sigh, and then my heart stood still, stopped dead short by an exulting and terrible cry, by the cry of inconceivable triumph and of unspeakable pain. 'I knew it--I was sure!' . . . She knew. She was sure. I heard her weeping…It seemed to me that the house would collapse before I could escape, that the heavens would fall upon my head. But nothing happened. The heavens do not fall for such a trifle. Would they have fallen, I wonder, if I had rendered Kurtz that justice which was his due? Hadn't he said he wanted only justice? But I couldn't. I could not tell her. It would have been too dark--too dark altogether[52]

Marlow must now live in his own post-apocalyptic aftermath, a terrible reversal of Christ rising as victor and evil being washed away as presented in the Book of Revelation.

While the distinctions of lacking redemption and God figure, as well as the concentration on the natural world and space (and only conceived supernatural), secular text is not wholly useless to classifying the apocalypse genre. While it is true that Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and other secular texts are merely apocalyptic, perhaps we are better served by not categorizing them as apocalypses, and instead looking at what they can offer when put through various parts of the paradigm, and then compared to prototypes such as the Book of Revelation. Instead of just

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[51] Ibid 134
[52] Ibid 149

becoming disease, war elements, human suffering links, it becomes more about what they evoke, which in turn, can better serve an examination of sacred text as well, by adding the element of personalized experience.

Studying text in general is a delicate process. However, words on a page provide a context that represents a fidelity to originality. While a text may not always be interpreted with the author's intent, it is nevertheless enduring, and no matter the amount of opinions and commentaries, still remains the original text. For the purposes of genre, it is imperative to pay close attention to text as it forms the systematic spinal cord of the definition.

Case Study 3: Sacred Practice (Function)

The question remains however, is text the only way to define a genre? What occurs when text is put into practice? Does it become less credible? Even if a practical interpretation of the text is utilized, there is still room for a great deal of variation in action. However, genre cannot be confined to its theoretical existence, for if it is, it loses its ability to grow, develop, and change. Humanity is the author and influencer of the written word, and narrative stories come about usually to convey authentic actions or beliefs. The why question of texts rings just as truly as it did during the time of conception, to previous analysis, and to future investigation. Previously, we have noted analyses ranging from crisis to narrow-minded destruction. However, both of these analyses live in the world of action and are only communicated by text. Therefore, it is a disservice to the genre of apocalypse to exclude various examples of functional investigations.

From here, we must clarify then what we mean by sacred practice. Much like sacred text, sacred practice thrives in organized faith traditions, as it is a way to engage directly with belief through action. Because practice comes from natural, temporal perspective considering that we are human, there tends to be a limit on what we can apply from textual influence. However, coming back to the sacred characterization, due to the belief in unequivocal divine revelation, there is, at least, a direct correlation between the text and practice, as one informs the other.

In order to yield the best results, a study of sacred practice must look at both positive and negative iterations. As we have seen in the form sections, what sets the sacred apart is its attention to redemption. However, while the theoretical attention is easier to connote, there is tenuousness to it when it comes into practice. Two different perspectives come into play here, those of Christian liturgy and religiously-motivated apocalyptic groups. Both of these

perspectives include the necessary ingredient of community, and actively explore the complicated facets of eschatology in the guise of ritual.

   While the task of translating a literary methodology into a commentary on praxis is daunting, it is effective in the case of sacred liturgy. However, it is more useful for our purposes to apply the paradigm inversely to liturgy, that is, using the eschatological tier as the foundation to support the historical and literary (in this case symbolic) tiers.

   Λειτουργία is translated from Greek to mean "the work of the people". In its simplest form, people meet to share a meal, to break bread with each other. This gathering involves giving thanks for life and resources, and fosters a continued sense of *koinonia* in God. Liturgy is not a popular culture characterization of an apocalyptic event. Rather, it is a praxis that involves a connection to the eschatological understanding of salvation. However, if an apocalypse requires this understanding, then we can examine liturgy further. Liturgy is impossible without community, without people, as stated above. Without people, there would be no work accomplished. Without community or relationship, there is no fully-fledged engagement or deepening of faith; there is no connection to God. Thus community is imperative.

   This community then participates in the Eucharist—it breaks bread and gives thanks together. While the confines of this thesis cannot explore a complete understanding of the Eucharist, it is imperative to note that it as an action cannot be without an understanding of eschatology. Thomas Rausch S.J. cites Karl Rahner who "argues that individual eschatology can be complete only if a collective eschatology is developed, one that includes the world and its history."[53] Rausch argues that liturgy, among the foci of Christology, soteriology and mission, and grounded in a true form, is a core praxis of this. Already we see a relationality to the paradigm in that it unites an eschatological understanding to the historical world, both temporal

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[53] Thomas Rausch SJ. *Eschatology, Liturgy, and Christology*. Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota, 2012. p.xiii

and spatial. Rausch continues to investigate a methodology for examining eschatology further, specifically under the lens of time and memory as it relates to liturgy. The past, firmly rooted in Scripture and a beloved attention to revelation and continues in the *anamnesis* of the community[54]. The present is understood in the persisting community that upholds it daily. The future is then understood as a continued relationship and reunion with God that includes a care for the whole world.

Understanding the Eucharist in a measure of past, present and future mind lend itself to a temporal structure, however it is important to note that the figure of Christ transcends this meaning by existing in the past, the present and future. In this understanding, Christ becomes the otherworldly mediator, a figure that persists beyond a textual representation. By transcending this temporal space, liturgy too is the action that allows the community to engage directly with Christ in the Eucharist, and within the action of transubstantiation, there exists a space of liminality. Twentieth century theologians such as Henri de Lubac "employs…transcendence to describe…his writings on Christology, nature and grace"[55] Emanuel Swedenborg sums: " It is called the sacrifice of the mass, because the sacrifice by which Christ offered up Himself to God the Father, is represented thereby under the form of the bread and wine; that thence it is a sacrifice truly propitiatory , pure and there is nothing in to except what is holy."[56]

We must also consider liturgy as a call to wait in joyful hope. This phrase, read by the priest during the embolism following the Our Father during the catholic liturgy, acts not only as a continued reflection of the continued promise of revelation in the world, as in keeping with Christ's transcendence, but it also shows the need for respect, grace and civility to the greater community of the world. The paradigm calls for a receiver of revelation and when one considers

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[54] Ibid pp. 22-24

[55] Joseph S. Flipper. Between Apocalypse and Eschaton. Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 2015.

[56] Emanuel Swedenborg. *The Apocalypse Revealed*. Swedneborg Foundation: New York, 1961 p. 2

the actual revelation, it is logical to infer that it should illicit some sort of response. If it did not, then there would be no point in the analysis. Thus, for a practice, instead of rote analysis, it is perhaps better to frame the 'response' as a reaction to the revelation. Not only does this take into account Christ's transcendence, but it also keeps the spirit of the action authentic. As stated above liturgy should not be reduced to mere pageantry, but should rather be a community event that sends us forth to live out Christ's message in the world. Rausch puts the status of church, the community that celebrates liturgy, as thus: "The Church itself is an eschatological reality, a pilgrim church journeying through time toward a fulfillment that is at once historical, social and cosmic…It sees history as moving toward a goal , the fullness of the kingdom that has already been revealed through the resurrection when death will be destroyed and God will be all in all."[57]

While the positive example of liturgy exists, it is important to parallel alongside it, a type of sacred praxis that does not emulate the joy and faith of the Divine. As liturgy has evolved over the centuries to shape the church, so have extremist notions that form into fringe faith groups. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to categorize all fringe groups into a paradigm, the adjective that is used to describe them, and thus place them on the periphery of our study, is apocalyptic. In the case of the People's Temple, led by Pastor Jim Jones, the relationship between extremism and apocalypse is realized.

Marc Galanter in his book, *Cults: Faith, Healing and Coercion* characterizes such charismatic groups as having "A shared belief system, [a] sustaining of a high level of cohesiveness, are strongly influenced by the groups behavioral norms, and impute charismatic (sometimes divine power) to the group or its leadership"[58]. By using this system to examine the infamous People's Temple group, and their development into the community at Jonestown, it is

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[57] Rausch 157
[58] Galanter, Marc. *Cults: Faith, Healing and Coercion.* Oxford University Press: New York, 1999. p. 4

clear that the group fits the bill. The People's Temple members initially joined for Jones'

progressive views on race relations and caregiving acceptance, agreeing that the American

government at the time of the 1960-70s was not addressing these issues properly. Jim Jones Jr.

stated that, "Being in an environment where you constantly up you're constantly busy and you're

made to feel guilty if you take to many luxuries like sleeping, you tend to not really think for

yourself and I did allow Jones to think for me because I figured if he had the better plan…I gave

my rights up to him as many others did."[59] This cohesiveness did not fail when the group

traveled from Indiana to California. Many men eschewed their responsibility to serve in the

Vietnam War, and instead joined the group. Another aspect became the idea of Jones healing

people. He is quoted as saying: "Some see Christ in me"[60], and would perform various healing

miracles among fevered revival-style meetings.

This is not to say that all charismatic groups are apocalyptic. In the documentary, a

member opens by saying "Nobody joins a cult. Nobody joins something they thinks gonna hurt

them. You join a religious organization or political movement and you join with people you

really like."[61] While the People's Temple movement was originally established as a charismatic

group, the leadership caused its devolution.

It's important to note here that there is a temptation once again to name this group

apocalyptic due to its emphasis on destruction. This does neither the group nor the definition

justice. Once again, we must look at the paradigm to see if it can bring any sort of systemization

to this examination. Because end times groups are so varied, this is not an application of

methodology to all groups. Rather, this harkens back again to Collins prototype model. By using

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[59] Stanley Nelson, Marcia Smith. *Jonestown: The Life and Death of Peoples Temple.* Firelight Media Documentary, 2006
[60] Ibid
[61] Ibid

the People's Temple group, we can explore the paradigm's usefulness, as well as what the group brings to the genre.

However, in the example of the People's Temple, the paradigm is probably the least helpful. This has to do with the amount of variance in the systematization. By being so unpredictable, it can be difficult to lock onto route for analysis. While the historical development can be observed objectively, the eschatological importance seems to fluctuate. This is because there is a layer of murkiness that obscures the group's purpose. The original goal was to join into community, whether religiously or politically, however, since the group as an entity changed motives, it became less credible to judge it objectively. For example, Jones' supposed ability to heal a woman of her blindness and cripple, despite its authentic appearance, turned out to be one of his secretaries who was made up to look that way. In addition, the political movement evolved into a communist society, but Jones began to instill fear in anyone who considered leaving the movement. Furthermore, the exodus to the 'promised land' of Jonestown led to the fatalities not only of nearly one thousand people, but the group idea itself.

These symbols, if any, that might have meant something, take on a sinister view of deception, which is really only a characterization of evil, rather than the more multivalent definition of apocalypse. So then, since the People's Temple movement is still characterized as apocalyptic, what makes it so if it cannot be systematized in the paradigm? The answer lies in the fact that groups, such as these, purport to know the full scope of eschatological salvation based on a false revelation, a personal and natural one experienced only within the mind of Jim Jones. In this case, the revelation he proposed was overtaken by the natural inclination to greed for power and mental illness. In claiming to receive such revelation, he disseminated it into the community. While theoretically the idea worked, the lack of commitment to it could not be

upheld by a human order. Jones became a false prophet when he falsified healings, and commanded from his own perspective, not a divine one, that people ought to die. The apocalypse genre must note that there can always be a false sense of redemption to groups such as these especially when there is concentrated human power as well as an emphasis on the group's perfection, not its individual members. By focusing on the former, there is ample space for marginalization and trauma, as seen by those members who wanted to leave, but felt it was impossible, and soon knew firsthand, the catastrophic 'day of reckoning', when Jones asserted that if they could no longer live in peace, they would willingly die in peace.

This mass suicide for many members who survived was not voluntary, and therefore is more murderous in its connotation. The lines become blurred when one considers purgation that occurs in apocalypse—this constant harkening back to an undoing of creation. If Jones had established a utopian society, and then for his own reasons decided it was better to eliminate it than keep fighting a figment-enemy of the United States government, was there any eschatological meaning to begin with? Or was it simply a human response to various triggers to keep something in his control? The 'why' question leaves a chasm greater than one can imagine, and will never be understood due to the subjective and addled mind now being deceased.

Yarbro Collins indicates a key point in respecting apocalypse when it comes to this implementation of practice: "Some have taken their visions as literal prophecies of political and military events to be fulfilled…this mode of reading the apocalypses is inadequate because of its aesthetic, religious, and moral poverty…it takes apocalyptic symbols as steno-symbols or flat allegories, missing their multivalent symbolic meaning and their rich traditional connotations…It associates the…beast and other symbols of chaos and evil with "other", the current enemy,

leaving the audience to imagine themselves and their institutions as pure and innocent."[62]

Although Yarbro-Collins is speaking about groups implementing text, the essence of the argument is just as useful, since Jones' mentality served as his living text. Thus, the attention to the dangers of an apocalypse without a true commitment to a supernatural salvation is paramount to the genre. This must not be mistaken as an empirical understanding of truth, rather, it is the truth in connection with the divine. On the one hand, liturgy, while not a catastrophic representation of apocalypse, keeps true to the eschatological root of God's presence and continued revelation to the community. Without this divine component, groups such as the People's Temple movement are at the mercy of an unpredictability of human understanding of the divine eschatological plan, and the understanding of apocalypse only becomes one of fear and destruction.

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[62] Adela Yarbro Collins. *Cosmology and Eschatology in Jewish and Christian Apocalypticism.* Koninkijke Brill, Netherlands, p. 15

Case Study 4: Secular Practice (Function)

The term secular practice is definitely the most abstract way to title to the last case study here. With the potentiality to characterize any action that is not religiously motivated, it requires some context for our study. For our purposes, we can contextualize it by saying it is not an action that is religiously motivated (for better or worse, as noted previously), and yet still holds a generalized popular characterization of apocalyptic. Much like the examinations on secular text and the negative sacred practice example of Jonestown, examples of apocalypse from a secular practice perspective tend to favor the destructive elements due to grounding in a solely natural perspective.

However, it is not redundant to examine this particular view. The paradigm itself is grounded in its literary comfort zone, and yet, is also governed by the time in which it was conceived. In terms of secular practice, how can one ignore the events of the world as they are happening and characterized as apocalyptic? How do world events shape our view of apocalypse and the world as it persists?

The question is how can this be approached? Much like the sacred practice examples, it is imperative to view the paradigm in a different capacity. Within the paradigm, one of the traits is a harkening back to creation images. For the Book of Revelation, there is an undoing of creation, not only to highlight its linear significance, but also to set the stage for the impending eschatological catharsis. Coupled with eschatological crisis and upheaval, destruction of the world is at hand via war, famine, disease leading to overall death.

It is easy to see that this destruction within revelation is presented in absolutes. War, famine and disease are earthly perils that humanity can understand, and do experience. Thus, it is understandable to characterize them as apocalyptic as they pertain to the ever-popular relation to

the undoing of creation. For the purposes of our study, focusing on one of these aspects, namely war, will be an appropriate characterization of secular practice as it pertains to the apocalyptic[63].

But does war fit the paradigm's methodology? It is once again an example of practice, as opposed to the strict literary adherence, and its variance cannot be understated, even as confined to one century, or even one war. Lawrence Tritle, a war historian, classics scholar and veteran, studies the parallels that occur in warfare across time, focusing particularly on ancient Greece and twentieth century instances, states: "When it comes to matters of violence, and how societies cope with conflict, the parallels are many and range from the literary to the artistic, the psychological to the personal."[64] This shows the range of study that can occur, and the variance that can be encountered. Thus, in this particular case, the prototype theory, such as selecting one particular war, would hinder our investigation to methodology, not to mention, there is a degree of credence that must be applied by a formal war historian, as opposed to a theologian. Nevertheless, there are a few instances that we can call attention to, in order to bring warfare and the paradigm into conversation, even if a conforming does not occur.

The visions and auditory aspects of war must be approached with caution. Referring back to Collins' reference to the etic and emic approach, the caution must come from the difference between the objective study and the actual experience of war. A scholar's perspective on statistical fatalities pales in comparison to a soldier's experience of watching comrades and cities fall to gunshot wounds, grenades and land mines. From the perspective of the soldier, the horrors of war are the undoing of creation. It puts the soldier in a place of wanting for the most primary needs. The interminability, the chance of survival fluctuating every day, the loud sounds of weaponry characterize the undoing of peace referenced in the Book of Revelation's highlight of

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[63] It would be just as effective to examine apocalypse from the perspective of famine and/or disease, however the confines of this paper do not allow for such investigation

[64] Lawrence Tritle. *From Melos to My Lai: War and Survival* (Routledge, London, 2000) p. 193

the Red Horse. From this experience, there are epiphanies about their internal life and existence, about the reality and purpose of war. The scholar then takes up the task of tracing the historical ideology, answering questions on whether war is a necessity, what patterns can be found in between dueling factions, and why it exists at all when the morality and epistemology is growing so much more detailed.

While the trait of the otherworldly mediator may be missing, in this context that figure may be considered moot. The experience occurs in real time and the revelation lived as it is received. There is no chance for text, except that which comes post-war, and even that is not always an objective description, as in the case of the removed scholar or the traumatized veteran. It is clear that the otherworldly mediator need not factor, as the experience is lived historically.

But the experience of war, despite its concentration on the desolation, should not be reduced to senseless waste. The credence of the experience in the midst of the horror is exemplified in the survival of the individual, not only in wartime but after. Despite the fact that the war is over, the narrative remains, however traumatizing. Tritle contextualizes this in his experience in Vietnam: "I remember upon arriving at Vietnam the dread of booby-traps that would leave you without legs or arms, but yet alive, wondering how life could be lived"[65] . If this experience is then a form of catharsis, then there is clearly more to talk about.

For a standard apocalypse, one can argue the lack of salvation included in human-waged war is due to a lack of divine intervention. While this is true, the catharsis of the individual should not be left untouched. If the narrative persists, then what are we to do in spaces of post-apocalypticism, especially from a human standpoint? Some might defer to the opinion that there is no God, no salvation. Others might still believe with a large degree of faith, continuing the praxis of waiting in joyful hope for the resolution.

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[65] Ibid 193.

What occurs here, for the good of secular practice analysis, is not the focus on the war itself but what we reap from it as individuals. The goal of investigating secular practice is not to situate itself permanently in a discussion of war, rather it is to see what can be gleaned because of its occurrence. The paradigm must be careful to examine the whole narrative, including the space between the destruction and redemption. While this is comfortable to do from a textual perspective, especially in the Book of Revelation, it may not be from a solely human standpoint in practice.

Thus, if war is a human construct that represents a historical tier, what is the eschatological salvation tier? If war is grounded in humanity as an action, what is the human response to its persisting nature? War can be catastrophic, certainly in the supernatural place as referenced in Revelation, but it continues to affect individuals in a post apocalyptic scenario, who is to be the eschatological hope on the natural plane?

It is here where the sacred and secular blend. A secular look at warfare has a sacred explanation in the figure of Christ. Do survivors and others not as affected by war become an otherworldly mediator or transcendence to those caught in conflict? In this situation, to become Christ-like, as it is mandated in Christ's hypostatic union, is an obligation. The narrative can persist, and by its very structure offer a means to rebuilding the creation within the human individual—a catharsis, but more importantly eschatological redemption of the soul.

While the examination of warfare as a secular practice could go in many avenues, we can clearly see that the tiers, while distinct, intermix and depend on each other in the chaotic understanding of war. Due to its characterization, war may only a portion of the apocalyptic but lends us much to talk about in terms of grappling with the human side of the genre, and furthering the time frame that makes the gravity of it realized.

PART 3: Recapitulation, Criticisms, and Conclusions

The case studies presented here have given an outlet to various areas in which to explore the genre of apocalypse more fully. Sacred text has upheld the integrity of the paradigm, while adding various elements of literary theory for discussion. Sacred practice, grounded in ritual, for better or worse, shows that there is a manifestation that lifts the paradigm out of its static and removed analysis. Finally, both instances of secular text and secular practice show that there is more to note of the human experience than the objective view of the scholar, and in that experience more depth can be added to the genre.

As stated before, this study is not about changing the makeup of the paradigm. It is not an effort to disprove criteria, nor tack on additional items. The goal is to use the paradigm to identify a more well-rounded view of the genre, and then see what can be gleaned from those categories and their prototypes. By no means is this an exhaustive study either, rather, it is a springboard for potential growth in the paradigm's usefulness. The stress on this reasoning comes from the often ill-used time spent debating on whether something is an apocalypse or not. It is easy to find apocalyptic elements in secular texts such as Lois Lowry's *The Giver*, H.G Wells' *The Time Machine*, or Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, however their shortcomings on certain elements of the paradigm might exclude them from a 'proper' understanding of apocalypse. This is what scholars ought to avoid if there is to be fruitful discussion. As long as issues of genre conflation are avoided, texts and practice do not have to forcibly conform to the genre, but rather should shape the genre for a better definition.

That being said, this study does not come without criticism. It is clearly in the Society of Biblical Literature's best interest to examine apocalypse from a sacred text perspective, as that is

the goal of the group. Working with ancient texts already yields a great deal of scholarship, and there is still much more to be ascertained.

Genre is mysterious in its definition—if it was not, we would not have so much trouble keeping it defined. This has the potential to make the paradigm seem like a inevitable failure, a storm signifying nothing. To this, I argue, that it must have some sort of foundation. If other elements of interpretation become so widespread after scrutiny and speculation, let them influence the paradigm for the betterment of examining texts. The fear of never completely defining the genre should not be a hindrance to the attempts.

This study has been from both Christian and secular perspectives. These traits may be even more broadened by the exploration of other faiths, and, from that, interreligious dialogue. The subjectivity in this study has been from my own perspective, but is set up in such a way that it has the ability to go further into different apocalypse 'prototypes' within other Traditions. By no means either is this reason to restrict other aspects of the systematic study of traditional Christian spirituality and eschatology. Within any faith tradition, even the study of last things is wider than this paradigm, the texts that pertain to it and the practices that support it. It is on faith that we work out an epistemological understanding of our eschatological end. However, the adherence then constant analysis protects against rigidity.

In terms of the analysis, it is true that many might find the juxtaposition of secular text and a sacred framework ineffective as there is no fidelity to the Tradition. The lack of the divine in certain examples might provoke the danger of accepting fiction as faith. While this may have pastoral concerns, it is solely for the benefit of scholarly analysis, which then can be mediated in addressing particular concerns in a pastoral setting as religious leadership feels is necessary.

At the beginning of this study, Collins' definition of the apocalypse genre was thus: "Apocalypse is a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation and spatial, insofar as it involves another, supernatural world."[66] While the word literature occurs in the definition, the analysis presented here shows that there is potential to use this paradigm to explore various incarnations of literary form *and* practical function in order to reap a broader understanding of the genre. In a time and place where faith, understanding and human experience are instruments at the ready, the journey to explore the complicated nature of eschatological revelation is both exciting and terrifying, however, in neither case, is any less imperative to our persisting nature and narrative.

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[66] John J. Collins. *"The Morphology of a Genre"*

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