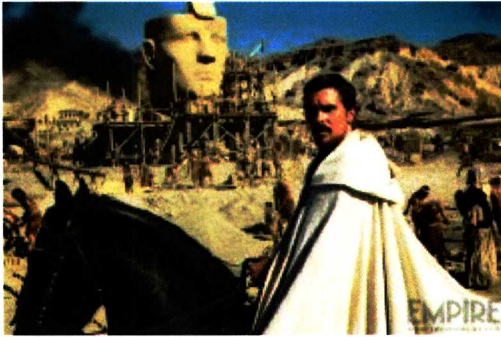


# Big Budget Bible Study

By Chris Bush 🕒 April 11, 2014



With the anticipated release of the now titled *Exodus*, Hollywood blockbusters have gone back to their storytelling roots with their current reliance on the flawed hero. In these movies the protagonist no longer readily makes the sacrifice to do right. Rarely do we see one where Luke Skywalker takes on the Empire to protect the galaxy simply because a princess asked him to. Now, protagonists like Captain Kirk in the new *Star Trek* films are practically begged by their sage, experienced superior or elder to cease indifference to duty and join the Starfleet Academy. We're familiarized with their flaws early in the story, while their heroic qualities remain untrained until the second act. Some event must occur to finally make them embrace their destiny. Bruce Wayne's anger and fear prevent him from putting on the cowl, Peter Parker's selfishness indirectly leads to his uncle's death. Even Kal-El in the fresh take on the Superman mythology shuns his duty out of fear of how will be accepted by the world.

Luke, Indiana Jones, John McClane, or any Arnold Schwarzenegger persona are perceived as flat characters. They start off as solidified good guys and stay that way throughout the story. Their hardships are not personal crises that they must grow from in order to achieve victory. Once they receive their world saving mission, they will undoubtedly complete it while limiting innocent casualties and dispatching the bad guy in grand spectacle. Ironically, some of the oldest protagonists in literature fall right in line with the newest trend in big budget storytelling.

These movies continuously dominate the box office, making well-known biblical epics the next logical action for a Hollywood facelift. In a landscape where most high concept productions are sometimes puzzling remakes of film classics, or other times rehashes of forgettable melodramas, the biblical narrative is the best attempt at originality. Perhaps it's the ready-made character arc present in these stories that makes it an ideal Hollywood blockbuster. Be prepared for Moses to question his faith and purpose only to later become to a heroic leader. Perhaps it's the set pieces that will attract the action seekers. Director Ridley Scott has said *Exodus* will have large battles as well as the requisite parting of the Red Sea, all assuredly done on a massive scale, with emotion and spectacle that only the green screen can provide.

Interestingly, another biblical epic released on the 28<sup>th</sup> is taking a radical approach to the formula. *Noah* follows its titular character through the destruction of humankind as expected, but moral ambiguity will play a large role in the story. The large set pieces of destruction and action will be displayed in all it's special effects glory. However, Noah's arc is very much atypical of the characters we've been exposed to recently in these movies. Noah begins the movie as a righteous, loving father and husband. He easily qualifies for the man that God chooses to create the Ark that will save the

animals on the planet while dooming it's people.

In what could be considered blasphemy by religious zealots, God's continuous bombardment of dreams and visions on Noah mold him, making him so staunch in his mission that he knowingly and willingly allows people to die. He could be considered a villain by the end of the movie. In one instance, Noah, in devotion to his mission, stoically watches people begging for refuge on his ship cling to the side of mountains in a futile attempt to avoid death. The viewer is left to wonder what it means for the soul to idly watch people die even if it's done under divine order.

From one perspective, it's a natural evolution of the characters we see in movies recently. Initially, we had movies rampant with do-gooders, now we have the flawed hero in their place. It's possible, but unlikely that they embrace the next step which is the origin, or deconstruction of a villain in these movies. But with our fixation on the downfall of the world and humankind it may be a genre too delectable to resist for some of the big wigs at these studios. Noah may be the first step in the new category. After all, some people care more about the Joker and Bane than Batman in the newer flicks. Some fans clamored for a Magneto solo film, focusing on his origins and development of his "mutant and proud" philosophies. People want to know what makes these characters tick, how they developed their evil identities, an idea that's an extension of the troubled protagonist. Now may be the time to shift to the ultimate complex character; the villain who believes in his or her cause.



# “Independence Day” and Film’s New Golden Age

By Taylor Shortal 🕒 April 11, 2014



Remember that time, long, long ago, when movies about one guy with a gun shooting a couple hundred other guys with guns made more money than any other movie every year? That was called the early ‘90s, and things started to shift very quickly after that. Like a tractor beam, something took possession over the conventional action movie and started to steer it away from the gritty city streets and up toward the stars of the night sky. Remember *Independence Day*? The movie where an alien space ship blew up the White House, so Will Smith and the President had to fly up there and blow them up right back? That film left audiences awe-struck in 1996, and it eventually won the bronze in box office grosses for the decade, ranking only behind *Titanic* (1997) and *Jurassic Park* (1993). No alien invasion story of that scale had appeared in America since Hollywood’s Golden Age of Science Fiction when movies like *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951), *The War of the Worlds* (1953) and *Godzilla* (1954) gripped audiences across the globe.

Now remember, *Men In Black*? The buddy cop comedy with a twist: they’re policing aliens hidden from mankind on Earth? In 1998, this concept was lauded by film critics for its originality and adored by the public for the comedic pairing of Tommy Lee Jones and... Will Smith. A trend was emerging. He would later save the world from sentient machines in *I, Robot* (2003) and from zombies in *I Am Legend* (2007) during an ever-growing glut of spectacular sci-fi catastrophes. It is still uncertain as to whether Will Smith personally shaped film history with the star power he brought to these project or he simply rode the waves of the action film to its natural destination into science fiction after CGI broke cinema’s Earth-bound visual possibilities. Either way, the future of big budget filmmaking was ultimately recast in the image of the blockbuster blueprint Will Smith helped establish. This meant our theaters were going to be loaded with lots of aliens, lots of apocalypses, and lots of weird futuristic settings.

Today we are unequivocally in Hollywood’s New Golden Age of science fiction with regular renditions of the apocalyptic, post-apocalyptic and dystopian genre. We have even witnessed the rebirth of those classics from the first Sci-Fi Golden Age with remakes of *Godzilla*, *The War of the Worlds*, and *The*

*Day the Earth Stood Still* in 1998, 2005, and 2009, respectively. But the first decade of the new millennium was only the build-up to a complete sci-fi occupation of the world's mainstream multiplexes. Last year, three films depicting Earth's future as an inhospitable landscape were released (*Oblivion*, *Elysium* and *After Earth*, the latter of which happened to star Will Smith). Also in 2013, three apocalyptic comedies were released (*Warm Bodies*, *This Is The End*, and *The World's End*). Again in 2013, this titular End was averted in several other films from several different threats: zombies in *World War Z*, inter-dimensional Godzilla-esque monsters in *Pacific Rim*, aliens in *Man of Steel*, and inter-dimensional space elves in *Thor: The Dark World*. And this was just a typical year for the early 2010s. 2014 continues this sci-fi onslaught with a theatrical line-up that includes *Jupiter Ascending* (from the writer/directors of *The Matrix*), *Transcendence* (where Johnny Depp becomes an evil computer), *Interstellar* (Christopher Nolan's tale of wormhole space travel), *Transformers 4* (you know what that's about), a movie called *Godzilla* (an original idea), and *Edge of Tomorrow* (which seems to be challenging itself to blend as many different sci-fi elements as possible).

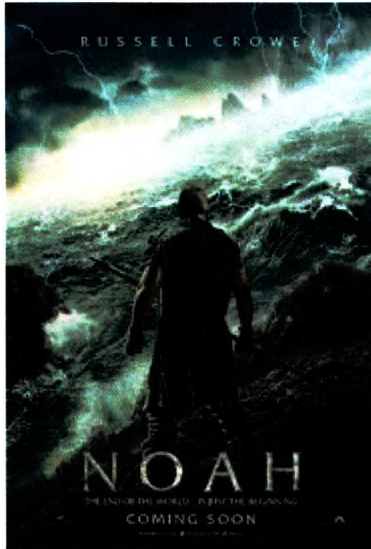
In the latter, Tom Cruise, a well-established sci-fi vet, will be a soldier in a robot battle suit, which he will use to fight alien invaders in the future, while also caught in a time-travel loop. Although ambitious in its conceptually derivative cocktail, *Edge of Tomorrow* is still not as impressively diverse in its range of ingredients as one of the most ignored gems of this New Golden Age – 2011's *Priest*. This film, to date, is the only steam punk Orwellian vampire Western I can name. But I am hopeful for the genre's future. Surely artificial intelligence or clones or something can be worked in there somewhere.

The Sci-Fi explosion is also set to reach complete circularity. Currently, *Independence Day 2* is scheduled for release in 2016 – twenty years after the original's debut in theaters. Although it remains indefinite, as of now, it appears unlikely that Will Smith will reprise the role that proved to be his breakout on the big screen and, of course, forever alter the course of cinema. Still, the most surreal aspect of anticipating *Independence Day 2* is the realization that, while the original was so breathtaking in its scale and unique in its premise that it became one of the most iconic films of the 1990s, in today's world of apocalyptic saturation, the prospect of its sequel sounds, regrettably, like little more than just another movie. But maybe I will be wrong. Maybe Will Smith will even decide to save us one final time. And maybe, just maybe, we will all be as happy as we were the first time we watched all those alien space ships blow up way back in '96.



# Noah: As Good As the Book?

By Taylor Shortal 🌱 April 11, 2014



If nothing else, director Darren Aronofsky's *Noah* is a unique film. It is unquestionably revivalist of Hollywood's religious epics from fifty years ago, but also strikingly revisionist and modern in its explicit embrace of religion as allegory, its disturbing depiction of Biblical morality, and its reflection of contemporary societal anxieties.

At its core, however, *Noah* is primarily one thing: an action-packed blockbuster. Fraught with the dreams of an all-consuming, all-destroying flood from the heavens, Russell Crowe (a.k.a. Noah/Gladiator) and his family embark on a search for shelter in a setting that already appears post-apocalyptic. They steer through the remnants of a resource-starved civilization; both the ruins of its abandoned towns and the raiders that now lurk amongst them. Then, in a twist even fantastic by Bible standards, they stumble upon a community of giant rock monsters. Yes, giant rock monsters. These beings, called the Watchers, are revealed to be fallen angels, apparently cursed by God to live on Earth forever and look like granite Transformers. After Noah receives a vision of animal life's salvation aboard a massive vessel, these rock angels who wandered off from Middle Earth help him to construct the Ark. They also assist in defending the ship against the covetous armies of mankind led by a charismatic warlord named Tubal-Cain (Ray Winstone).

All this occurs before the rain begins which, of course, builds to the big budget spectacle we were all promised: the flood, which is easily the most cinematically stunning storm since the world-killing tides of Roland Emmerich's disaster film *2012* (I know, how derivative of *Noah*).

Besides being an exciting blockbuster, the movie is also a committed character study. In its bold portrait of Noah, the film addresses the difficult question of what kind of worldview would he hold? Who could watch the whole world drown before them without throwing so much as a rope to save a single soul? In Aronofsky's rendition, Noah is a man who not only believes God has lost all faith in the moral potential of humanity, but who has also judged his own family to be wholly devoid of redemptive virtue. This leads Noah to ponder preventing his own sons from taking wives upon the ark, which would thereby ensure the eventual extinction of the entire human race. This consideration sets the stage for a central character conflict that continually escalates until the final gut-wrenching climax.

Within this unconventional, morally dubious characterization of Noah, Russell Crowe presents a gripping and unsettling performance of a man who believes he has been anointed by God to be the world's executioner. Crowe's Noah hardly inspires an impression of virtue. Instead, with an eerie reassignment and relentlessness to complete his entrusted task, he strikes the awe worthy of a man determined to become the personification of wrath itself. Next to him, at times, Tubal-Cain, the antagonist, feels almost like a good guy. Tubal-Cain is certainly a humanist, expounding, "Man is not ruled by the heavens but by his will," and contesting God's rationale for the flood, lamenting "the Creator" for punishing the world when all its faults are, in fact, the creation of God himself. But Tubal-Cain's Nietzschean code, which places primacy on obtaining one's pleasures, no matter what the cost is to others, vilifies him to the viewer and epitomizes the selfish destructiveness that Noah suspects to lie within every man. Noah's wife and children, however, are torn between these two extremes, rejecting both the harmful ways of Tubal-Cain and the merciless methods of Noah.

The suspense of the film, however, lies in the knowledge that the fate of humanity most likely rests, not in their hands, but in those of their fanatical, uncompromising foils.

The movie is not what you would call "faithful to the source material," at least in terms of plot, dialogue and giant rock monsters. In regards to theme and tone, however, it absorbs some of the darkest and most divisive dogma of the Hebrew Bible (elements from both Cain and Abel, as well as Abraham and Isaac) and interweaves them into a single, cohesive drama that, although decidedly divergent from the traditional telling of Noah's Ark, is unflinchingly authentic in its tale of unsympathetic Old Testament reckoning.

The religiosity of the film is still, however, chiefly allegorical, as evident in a scene featuring some of the opening verses of Genesis voiced over a dazzling visual showcase of the universe's history from its commencement with the Big Bang to the creation of man via evolution from primates. After accounting for this symbolic approach, the theological debate within the story can also be extended to become a secular, philosophical meditation on humanity's inherent moral worth. The human story that unfolds through this frightening ethical inquiry, amidst pop culture's ever-more pervasive backdrop of the apocalypse, dares us to ask ourselves the same question that obsesses Noah: Is civilization itself, when faced against man's natural greed and selfishness, just a fool's errand?



# Flawed Heroism and the Apocalypse

By Matt Reed 🕒 April 14, 2014



A question I am always asked by other comic book fans is what my favorite comics are. This is always something of a task for me. Mainly because I always seem to change up the list. Unlike wolverines claws, it is not as firm as adamantium. Given this current apocalyptic trend that has seemed to enthrall so many, between the newspaper staff, the most recent films, and even so many of the television shows, I've come to realize that some of my favorite comics, the ones that always seem to make it on the list, are in some way apocalyptic. Comics like *The Walking Dead*, *Judge Dredd*, *Fist of the North Star*, and *The Dark Night Returns*. These comics have some overarching characteristic that I find intriguing in a hero: uncompromising resolve.

A protagonist with this passion to protect those who cannot protect themselves is weaved into the whole cavalcade of flaws, strengths and emotions that make each character so unlike the next but all similar. The main characters of two of my favorite comics are both men backed by having a badge. This gives their decisions a little more weight when people look to them for leadership. Rick Grimes of *The Walking Dead* wants to protect his people, his son and though he is nowhere near perfect he takes on the responsibility as best he can. His character is deeply flawed with the emotions that come attached to killing living people who have succumbed to the savagery necessary to survive the horrors of a world ravaged with a zombie virus.

In his eponymously titled comic, Judge Dredd lives in a world where almost everyone is in some way a criminal and he has to pass judgment on those who break the law. It is a burden he carries with his big gold badge and lawgiver (his gun). Both of these men will kill if deemed necessary, it may affect Rick more but that's only because he knows humanity as it was before the zombies started eating people. Dredd doesn't have that emotional attachment to humanity, which isn't always a positive. He will not take into account extenuating circumstances because in his mind, life is black and white, either you obey the law or you don't.

Like Rick and Dredd, the character Kenshiro in the Japanese manga *Fist of the North Star* will also kill people in his apocalyptic world. A cross between Bruce Lee and Mad Max, Kenshiro is a dangerous martial artist who wields an ancient assassin martial art known as Hokuto Shin Ken (which translates to fist of the North Star) and he uses it to protect weak and helpless people who are being taken advantage of by the thugs of his world. He bares the weight of his dead comrades and enemies, some of which were his own family and killed by his own fist. One of the most pivotal moments in the comic is when Kenshiro faces a character who is one of his brothers, a man named Raoh, who is gigantic in stature and a lot stronger than Kenshiro. Only through the use of his fallen comrades martial art styles and the perfection of his own style does he defeat Raoh and actually ride off into the sunset

with his wife whom he thought was dead the whole time. Kenshiro has not lived a life that lends him to give in to pleas made by those who have done the same evils that plague Rick and Dredds world.

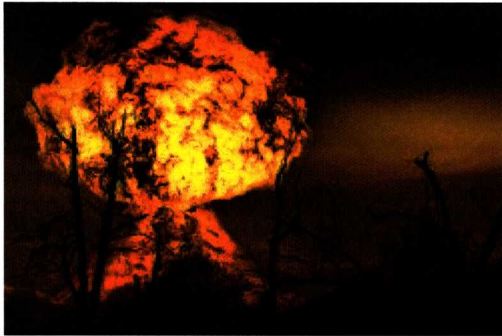
The man unlike the three previous heroes is Batman. Batman is only different because he will not kill his enemies. The strict code that he has led his life by forbids the use of lethal force; everything up until that point however, is fair game. The comic that deals with this apocalyptic theme is called *The Dark Knight Returns*. In this comic by Frank Miller, Batman is aged and grizzled. Nearly sixty years old, he dons his bat cowl once more after a ten year retirement and faces down the new and old villains of his now dystopian Gotham. One of the major ones is the leader of a gang called the mutants who savagely beats Batman the first time they meet. Still, through all the violence and years of brutality he has seen, dealt and, been dealt he only uses rubber bullets. It's not until he again meets his arch-nemeses the psychotic, evil and manic, serial-killer-clown, The Joker that he allows death to defeat an opponent. Batman knows that the Joker's death is the only way to end all the senseless murder and destruction. It's the only time he ever "crosses the line" as Batman puts it.

These characters are flawed and imperfect people. They have been through a metaphorical hell and come back scarred. Despite that, they still have something in their character that is redeemable, in my opinion, and that is what makes them some of my favorite characters. Each one, though different, acts selflessly. They take on the weight of doing the dirty work that innocent people would normally have to deal with and they are rewarded by being feared. Uncompromising resolve is a harsh weapon to wield but they do for the people they protect and I find that admirable in a hero.



# Hellfire and Chaos

By Matt Reed 🌱 April 14, 2014



Hellfire and chaos intrigues us. If you're sitting there reading this and thinking, "Whoa Matt, that's just not true." Then the fact that Hollywood has produced almost as many apocalyptic films in the last 4 years as it did in the previous decade determined that that is a lie. We as Americans love end of the world scenarios. The idea of losing control and having the phallic fortitude to take that control back in the fog of chaos mesmerizes us. We all think we can survive an apocalyptic, end of the world scenario, however, none of us really stop and think about what sort of skill, passion, or mentality is necessary to survive such an event. So basically the characters, though cleverly designed to feel very realistic, set some very high metaphoric bars for any would-be apocalyptic survivor. Let's take a look at some of the characteristics of the characters in just a few of these movies and determine if you actually could make it in the apocalypse.

We'll start by taking this apocalyptic fetish to its biblical roots. *Legion* is a film that came out in 2010 that depicted a furious God sending his legion of angels led by the medieval/cyberpunk mace wielding Archangel Gabriel to earth to massacre all of humanity. His opposition is the Archangel Michael who no longer has his angelic power (having cut his own wings off with a pair of rusty scissors in a gas station bathroom) and a rag tag team of human strangers who have barricaded themselves in a road stop diner in the middle of nowhere. Could any of us stand by and watch our families torn apart and massacred by demonically possessed old women and small children with a Chucky complex? The film's protagonist is a young man named Jeep who acts like a metaphorical Joseph who watches all his fellow humans sacrifice their lives and protects a girl he loves, who is bearing the savior child who is not his own flesh and blood. The amount of courage and spiritual strength showcased by this young man sets the first high bar that not many people could reach.

Let's go full sci-fi now and look at *Battle: Los Angeles* from 2011. We've seen this concept before; an alien force shows up one day and their technological superiority is so far beyond anything the indigenous species has seen and they are utterly massacred. That Alien force is like the Spanish from *Apocalyptico*, or even our own American ancestors shown in *Pocahontas*. *Battle: Los Angeles* shows us what it might be like to deal with an alien invasion and I don't for see it going quite as well for us as it did for SSgt. Michael Nantz. See, he was able to capture an alien and then proceed to torture and cut it to pieces to find its weak spot so he could learn how to kill the other aliens. And just remember, all those aliens and zombies in *Call of Duty* type games, they go ahead and tell you to shoot the big, red dot in the center of their face. I mean of course all aliens in the universe have big, red dots in the center of their faces right? I think most people would be too busy trying to not trip over each other while running the opposite direction to even think, "you know what, I'm gonna catch one of them



aliens.” Yet again we have another one of those rather high bars set by a protagonist, in this case, that bar is having enough biology knowledge to quickly find a kill shot, and enough military training to run towards the sound of gunfire.

How about we hit one of my personal favorites; the post-apocalyptic police state found in the 2012 film *Dredd*. I know what you’ve probably thought; a lot of people survive the apocalypse so if I can make it at least that far the rest is a cake walk. No, with that attitude you probably won’t even make it this far. See this film was based on a comic about the eponymous character Judge Dredd who is pretty much the super cop that you always fear is gonna be the one to pull you over when you’re speeding. Dredd lives in a world that had been ravaged by nuclear fire and now all of humanity lives in a giant walled in urban metropolis that make Batman’s Gotham look tame. Drugs, murder, and human trafficking are everyday petty crimes. So suffice it to say, Dredd does not care about people or their feelings. He is given the power of judge, jury, and executioner. His tagline is not just for cool points, he is the law. In this film, Dredd, along with rookie cop Judge Anderson, responds to a suspected murder of a drug leader in a giant skyscraper which turns out to be a giant trap (pun intended). The main villain, a woman named Maw-Maw who ordered the murder because the drug dealer wasn’t making enough money, locks Dredd and Anderson in and sends her forces out to kill them. Basically the only way you survive this world is to be as ruthless and uncompromising as Dredd, or willing to just throw your morals out the window along with people who let you down like Maw-Maw. So in this case, we actually don’t get a bar set. Instead the bar is taken down and used as a blunt instrument of death.

Last year’s film about gigantic monsters rising out of the Pacific Ocean to destroy the world entitled *Pacific Rim* is another film that sets some of the highest of the metaphoric bars. The film depicts the story of a washed-up Jaeger pilot who has lost his brother fighting these monsters called Kaiju. The Jaegers are skyscraper sized robotic suits that humans pilot to fight the Kaiju which are alien monsters of about equal size. The main character Raleigh Becket is pulled out of retirement to fight the Kaiju one last time and destroy the alien portal that is allowing them passage to earth. In the film it is shown how people are only able to pilot these robotic suits if they have a co-pilot who they can connect with mentally. The film goes to great lengths to show the importance of connection between pilots because a single pilot might die. Also, it isn’t like the old Power Rangers shows, you don’t just get gifted a giant robot suit and the martial art and technical know how to operate it. Raleigh has years of combat training and knowledge to properly use the Jaeger suit. So unless you have a working knowledge of mixed martial arts and nuclear powered A.I. systems, you might not be able to reach Raleigh’s bar. In the same vein as the *Pacific Rim* film, another giant monster themed apocalyptic film is coming out based on a classic Japanese movie of the same name, *Godzilla* (you might have heard of it). If this latest remake is anything like its predecessors, it will also depict a similar need for advanced weaponry and animal psychology that would make most of us cry if we tried figuring it out.

People love these movies and this genre in general because it’s absolutely nothing like our real life. Most people, myself included, love to think we could be the protagonists in these movies. We think we are smart and strong, and we love to imagine the power those characters wield. We love it because we can imagine till our faces turn the shade of azure and we still have a nice cozy bed to go home too. There are dozens of ways we have seen the world end on film, hundreds in books, and at the end of all days that’s what we love, the fictionalized version of destruction because none of us really want the world to end. We love chaos, but we love our own boring lives more. Well, at least I do.



# Post-Apocalyptic Culture: A Training Ground?

By Richie Kemper 🌱 April 14, 2014



It's an average day at the office. You've been working all day on the Miller project when you decide to get up for a stretch. Suddenly the electricity flickers. A blinding light flashes off in the distance with a thunderous clap. What happened, was it a bomb? A nuke? An EMP? There's mass chaos, everyone's running around shrieking. Frantic phone calls are being made. Shock waves hit the office building, then...nothing.

The scene I just described could be the premise for the next summer blockbuster, or the game that takes best of show at this year's E3 convention. The post-apocalyptic narrative has been around since, and possibly before, the book of Revelations. This latest trend we've seen can partially be attributed to the Mayan Calendar craze that enthralled us in 2011. Even before then I can remember the Y2K scare in 1999. I'm betting this is a trend we could trace back further than that.

Be sure, we do fantasize about it. From movies such as *The Book of Eli* to games like *Fallout*, post-apocalyptic scenarios dominate our media. It never fails in these story arcs for a hero or heroine to rise above the masses to lead everyone back to a normal state of being, whether that means taking down a tyrannical government, creating an antidote for a mutated virus or rebuilding civilization following a nuclear attack. Who doesn't want to envision themselves as a John Connor or Katniss Everdeen?

The air of uncertainty surrounding these types of doomsday events are what I believe captivates our curiosity. It's something unfamiliar to us as we haven't lived through it. We view it as a welcome escape from the mundane. The thrill of not having control over a situation entices us, perhaps this is where the intrigue stems from. Think about it, our day to day lives are mostly planned out. We know at seven o'clock the alarm will go off, at noon we will eat lunch so on. Living in a first world society presents us with few truly chaotic and deadly events threatening to take this peace away from us. In the relinquishment of control comes the adventure and danger of attempting to regain it, something we desperately crave on a primal level. As our minds indulge on post-apocalypticia, we are provided an appropriate opportunity to weigh if killing another person or even turning to cannibalism for survival is fathomable. There are clear boundaries in place to keep such things from happening. In a post-apocalyptic world however, the area surrounding survival and ethics is muddled.

It's not to say everyone around the world shares these sentiments. For people who live in a third world country, they are living these kinds of conditions, just struggling to survive. They don't have the luxury

to fantasize about what this type of life would be like as their survival already depends upon vital instincts we exercise very little.

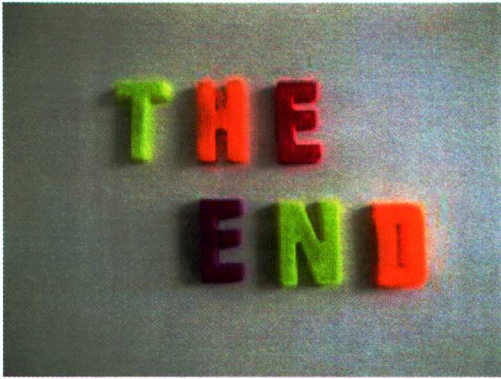
In a way we feed off of them and their hardships. Every time we turn on the TV and see reports of violence, starvation or any other forms of suffering we are living vicariously through them. Think back to last year when the Boston bombing captivated us, for a few days destruction became a socially acceptable topic. On the outside we showed how horrific we found it, though on the inside we yearned for it.

I'm not sure whether our fixation with a post-apocalyptic life is generated from the bombardment by a multitude of entertainment based media sources, or if we see the growing chaos around the world, such as the Ukrainian revolution, as threatening this tight grip we hold over our lives. Whatever the case may be it's frightening to think maybe the real reason we are addicted to post-apocalyptic visions is because our minds see them as virtual training grounds; an opportunity of running endless scenarios to see if we are indeed capable of surviving what we are viewing.



# Snowed In

By Tyler Fernandez 🕒 April 14, 2014



The groundhog really predicted this one. Winter is here to stay. Yes, this winter has been one of the coldest and longest we've ever seen. And folks, it doesn't look like it's going to stop. A world-blanketing winter is waiting to fall across our doorsteps in a white, sparkling, and oddly clumped torrent. Recent studies in meteorology and astronomy have led many scientists to believe that this winter could continue into June and July. Researchers indicate that there have been drastic changes in the climate that account for the alterations in the winds and oceans in the Western Hemisphere. (To our Eastern hailing readers, there is no need to worry, you guys will be fine.)

There are signs all around you, just like the ones that Al Gore warned us about seven or eight years ago. Fluctuating tides, Earth's changing orbital patterns, the decreasing temperatures, the melting of the ice caps, the car crash his son was in, they are all indicators that icy sadness is going to settle into the world like cancer sets into a smoker's lungs.

Canadian natives and Eskimo tribes of the Great White North have been reporting that large glacier like chunks have been floating in great numbers down into the more inhabited areas of the North via river and stream. Scientists are baffled by the recent migratory habits of northern ice. In addition to the nomadic ice, polar bears have started to move southward from their glacial homes. Up until now they have kept their white fluffiness confined to the Northwest Territories. Now it seems that they are becoming more like their state-born cousins and have been spotted in Toronto backyards. One local said, "Well, eh, when me and my family were campin' up in neer Hudson Bay der', I tell ya, we saw a big ol' white bear comin out of the holes in da ice der."

Temperatures in the northern areas have been dropping as this untameable polar freeze has worked its way into the states. This has taken many meteorologists by alarm as inexperienced weathermen and women are at a loss when it comes to reporting on snow and cold weather. Of course I am referring to the closing down of highways in Santa Fe, New Mexico when half an inch of snow had fallen during the early hours of a Tuesday morning in March. Many individuals missed work that day due to the impassable roads. However, city workers clocked some serious overtime hours clearing the streets.

Astronomers have also been working to come up with their own explanations for Mother Nature's white icy wrath. Astrophysicists belonging to the Russian Federal Space Agency have attributed the freeze to a large object identifiable as a comet that has been caught in our Moon's gravitational pull.

During a mission in 2011, (while the Space Agency was sending robotic and remote controlled satellites into space to see if they could pry the American flag from the surface of the Moon) Russian researcher, Dr. Artyom Malovsky, spotted the cobalt colored ball. Referred to now as ICEE, the trapped comet is approximately five hundred miles in radius and registers a surface temperature of 10 degrees above absolute zero.

Japanese astrophysicist, Muskio Myizaki, has a different take on the cause of the changes in the weather. "During one of my assignments to photograph and chart solar patterns I took note of a large abscess in the space-time fabric. What I think is a black hole has appeared behind the Sun and has been sucking the energy straight out of it. This is something to be concerned about. The more life it drains, the larger it gets. (My colleagues are skeptical but I have devoted the past six months of my work to studying this black hole.) Right now it is tiny, but has been growing at a rate of one mile per ten seconds. If we don't do something soon the Sun will be consumed by this hole.

Unfortunately, the North isn't the only place that is being affected by the decrease in temperatures. Ice in the south pole has been melting at alarming rates. (Poor penguins.) The melting ice has cooled the oceans causing undersea havoc for the animals. Furthermore, as the water gets colder, so does the wind and the rain that makes its way inland bringing with it the cold blasts we have been experiencing. Last Monday, an emergency radio broadcast was issued from Port Lockroy, Antarctica. The SOS stated that that the section of ice the port rested upon has broken off and began to drift into the ocean. The five mile long port, buildings and all, has been afloat on its own for the past twelve days. Luckily, as one local official told us "we have been surviving on a plethora of penguin meat, I think we will be able to stay afloat until we get closer to the Equator. I don't think we will melt away." The ten workers who are stationed there in charge of the museum and post office are experienced cold-farers so no rescue missions have been discussed at this time.

Now, I know that many of you readers are currently hiding next to your fire places in hopes that you don't end up a popsicle, but fear not. There are ways to survive the powdery armageddon. The United States has deployed the national guard to provide rations, clothing, and hunting gear (high powered rifles) to help us make it through this winter. Multiple public service announcements have been made directing citizens to purchase blankets, stockpile firewood, and perhaps consider if pets are worth eating because the dropping temperatures will cause huntable animals to seek warmer climates.