

Apocalyptic literature - the book life of pi and film big fish

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In religious doctrines, sacred texts contain varied visions and revelation of the end times in the history of humanity. In Christianity, content of apocalyptic texts like the book of Revelation in the New Testament paints a vivid image of symbolism in creating a vision surrounding the end of the world. Apart from the knowledge from sacred texts, human beings are obsessed with creating artistic objects predicting catastrophic happenings at the end times. Examples of art used in contemporary times to reproduce visions of apocalypse include literature materials like the book "Life of Pi" and popular forms of electronic media like the film "Big Fish". These forms of art simulate controversies on how earth and humanity will be brought to termination by extraterrestrial powers. In modern age it is evident that human psyche has ventured into uncharted territories of imagination in trying to portray apocalyptic fictions. In this essay, we will extrapolate the role of apocalyptic literature both within religious and artistic context in appraising the depth and breadth of apocalyptic imaginations. Apocalypse of John as contained within the book of Revelation demonstrates the manner in which eventually, good will triumph over evil. As a sacred text, most Christian denominations use John's revelation as a basis of explaining prophetic happenings in present age, and in creation a visual projection of the end times. Revelation of John tries to teach Christians about the just nature of God and the ultimate purpose of humanity. John describes about endless wars that will destroy humanity. In addition, the books extrapolate on the rescue of righteous people from destructive powers of God's punishment. Similar to another apocalyptic literature, the book "Life of Pi" is based on a story of a boy stranded on a wrenching ship with a tiger (Yann

25). It revolves around importance of faith in life threatening situations. On the other hand, the film " Big Fish" is a fantasy piece of art based on a metaphorical perception of an immortal and uncatchable fish. In this context, it is undeniable that " Life of Pi" and " Big Fish" tries to create apocalyptic visions similar to that in the book of Revelation. The operating thesis statement in the essay is that the use of symbolism plays a significant role in facilitating delivery of apocalyptic message in religious literature and casual art. With respect to apocalypse of John, literary construction of Revelation involves substantial use of symbolism. In actual practice, this technique of using symbols within the book of Revelation either enhances or obscures the readers meaning. Within the apocalypse, John vividly describes heaven as a place with a street of gold. John also adds considerable reference to the color white in the clothes worn by angels and in referring to the color of horses in heaven. In this context, it would be illogical to regard gold and white colors in literal sense. Gold is a symbol of wealth. Its rarity signifies preciousness in ownership. This means that heaven is filled with vast wealth as a reward to righteous Christians after the end of the world. On the other hand, white color symbolizes purity and cleanliness. In this case, white clothed angels demonstrated purity of God's servants. In addition, John constantly mentions of God cursing the earth not with water but with fire coming down from heaven as a punishment for unrighteous people. Fire is a symbol of harsh and painful reward that sinful humans will receive at the end times. " Life of Pi" shows how fiction is used to predict inevitability of friendship with nature during the end times. In this case, " Life of Pi" adopts the use of a fictional friendship between the Indian boy and the Bengal Tiger as a symbol of

apocalyptic peace. In real life, Bengal tigers are known to being the fiercest animals on earth. In actual context, Bengal tigers are untamable and unfriendly to humans. However, Pi finds himself with an unrestrained tiger inside a lifeboat and stranded on the sea away from the shores (Yann 23). In order to survive, Pi employed faith in making peace with the fierce animal. In this regard, symbolism is used to blend religious extrapolation of faith and the nature of truth in human survival. With respect to the story of Pi and the tiger, John describes that he saw a woman clothed with the sun and wearing a crown of twelve stars. In this context, clothing with the sun is a symbol of apocalyptic possibility, which is not possible in the real world. This is identifiable to the manner in which Pi makes friendship with a fierce tiger in the apocalyptic book of "Life of Pi". Another use of symbolism in "Life of Pi" is one the name Pi itself. At first, it is difficult to realize that Pi is an allegorical figure commonly used in disciplines like science and arithmetic calculations. Pi is an infinitely decimal number which is normally shortened to 3.142. The infinity of its decimal digits represents situations that normal human psyche cannot comprehend. Pi is used to symbolize unattainable goals in the chase of religious truth. Shortening of Pi means that some struggles to unearth apocalyptic truth are futile and needs considerable rounding off because search for reality could be troubling and substantially difficult. In this context, Pi is not only a protagonist in the "Life of Pi" but also a symbol of immortal dominance of obscure apocalyptic reality. Just like other apocalyptic art, "Big Fish" uses symbolism in creating apocalyptic imagination in the mind of viewers. In the movie, Will finds Edward's use of metaphors and symbols unbearable. Will even falls out with his father

Edward because he was fed up with his father's obscure tales (Burton 01). Upon the death of his father, Will later came to internalize the story of the big fish and the ring as bait symbolizes vain obsession characterizing human behavior. Use of the wedding ring as a bait in catching the fish, which in fact the fish swallowed without being caught, represents the chase of vanity popular with humanity. However, Will's father claims that he got back the bait ring when Will was born (Burton 01). In this case, symbolic obscurity of the tale resembles and even exceeds obscurity of Revelation as told by John. Therefore, the "Big Fish" revolves around obscurity and mystery of faith, which is essential in order to ensure human survival during apocalyptic incidences. Apart from the bait ring, the fish serves as another use of symbolism in apocalyptic imaginations. Edward admits that he caught the uncatchable fish on the same day that Will was born. However, he was forced to give up his ring, which symbolized chase of vanity, in order to catch the fish. Despite the fact that Will dislikes his father's story at the beginning, he later understood it and passes on the same tale to his son. This means that the fish stands for Edward. Even after dying of cancer, his favorite tale remained immortal within Will's family. In this context, the big fish is a symbol of dreams and wishes that will remain unattainable until one gives his chase of earthly things as represented by the ring. Conclusion As a conclusion, it is undeniable that the use of symbols and metaphors is common in apocalyptic literature and art. Symbols enable human psyche to create fantastic visions that cannot be conceived through normal imagination. Friendship between tiger and Pi signifies unconventional happenings taking place under the influence of divine or paranormal powers.

In this regard, exaggerated use of symbolism as seen in the book “ Life of Pi” and the “ Big Fish” explains why current apocalyptic imagination in art outweighs that of John in Revelation. Works Cited Burton, Tim. Big Fish - 2003 Film. ApocalypseFilms, February 4, 2010. Web, 03 December 3, 2013. <http://www.apocalypselaterfilm.com/2010/02/big-fish-2003.html> Yann, Martel. Life of Pi. Harrisburg: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2003. Print.