

Z for zacharia

Politics



C. O'Brien clearly portrays this genre through a disappointing world of nuclear decimation. This poignant tale conveys the features of post-apocalyptic fiction such as consequences of humanity's failures, loss of civil law and an indication of a post-apocalyptic event through powerful imagery, setting and perspective. In *Z for Zachary* Anne Burden is left isolated in a small valley after a nuclear explosion that oppositely killed every other living thing other than her own farm animals.

Just when she thinks that she will have to fight for survival on her own she discovers another unlikely survivor that could save her but worse yet, could kill her. Through a powerful first person voice Anne Burden destroys sexist assumptions of women when it comes to survival. In the wake of any great cataclysm, there are survivors. These survivors are always the ones that have to face the consequence of humanity's failures, which in the case of post-apocalyptic fiction is the desolation of the world they're left with.

Writers of post-apocalyptic texts are interested in the impact of destruction on mankind and how our carelessness towards war could lead towards an aftermath of limited resources and non-existent technology. The perspective of Anne Burden being left alone due to the war is immediately established in Chapter 1 where she realizes "It is one thing to hope for someone to come when things are civilized, when there are other people around, too. But when there is nobody else, then the whole idea changes". This indicates the post-apocalyptic genre of loss of civil law and danger to the vulnerable.

Being a woman, Burden's vulnerability towards a man forces her to be extremely cautious and watch Mr. Loomis every step. The reference to when

Mr. Loomis first comes to the valley and she thinks " I had better keep him in sight as much as I could - until I get to know something about his habits" clearly identifies a loss of sense of security and civilization. In post-apocalyptic texts, a main feature of the genre is that a post-apocalyptic event is indicated, whether it's a nuclear warfare, biological warfare, ecological disaster or cosmological disaster.

The setting of Z for Zachary evokes memories of WWII when America bombed Hiroshima on August 6, 1945. Just like extracts from textbooks about Hiroshima being bombed, Z for Zachary produces powerful imagery of the nuclear explosion and how it " rose in a great cloud a long way away, and stayed in the sky for two weeks". The novel doesn't just explain the outcome of the bomb but precisely clarifies what caused the smoke to fade away with the reference " A forest fire in the dead woods, and then it rained and the smoke stopped. A significant idea of Z for Zachary is that although Anne Burden is only a girl she has been proved to be much more effective than Mr. Loomis. While she ran the farm and single-handedly looked after Mr. Loomis while he was sick all Mr. Loomis managed to do was get himself poisoned and shoot Anna.