

After the Plague: Society in Selected Post-Apocalyptic Novels

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ABSTRAKT

Tato bakalářská práce zkoumá společnost ve čtyřech zvolených literárních dílech post-apokalyptické beletrie: *The Scarlet Plague* (Rudý mor) Jacka Londona, *Earth Abides* George R. Stewarta, *Some Will Not Die* Algise Budryse a *Summer of the Apocalypse* Jamese Van Pelta. Cílem práce je najít podobnosti a rozdíly mezi těmito díly, přičemž se zaměřuje na kolaps společenského řádu, vznik nového společenského řádu a změny v kultuře společnosti v jednotlivých románech. Dochází k závěru, že ve všech zkoumaných románech jsou přítomny jevy jako zločin a návrat k divošství, jenž často vede ke vzniku kmenových společností.

Klíčová slova: společnost, post-apokalyptická beletrie, *The Scarlet Plague*, *Rudý mor*, Jack London, *Earth Abides*, George R. Stewart, *Some Will Not Die*, Algis Budrys, *Summer of the Apocalypse*, James Van Pelt, kolaps společenského řádu, nový společenský řád, kultura, zločin, divošství, kmenová společnost

ABSTRACT

The bachelor's thesis examines society in four selected literary works of post-apocalyptic fiction: *The Scarlet Plague* by Jack London, *Earth Abides* by George R. Stewart, *Some Will Not Die* by Algis Budrys and *Summer of the Apocalypse* by James Van Pelt. The thesis aims to find similarities and differences among these works with regard to the collapse of social order, an emergence of a new social order and the changes in the culture of each society in each of the selected novels. It comes to the conclusion that phenomena such as crime and reversion to savagery, which often results in a formation of tribal societies, are present in all the examined novels.

Keywords: society, post-apocalyptic fiction, *The Scarlet Plague*, Jack London, *Earth Abides*, George R. Stewart, *Some Will Not Die*, Algis Budrys, *Summer of the Apocalypse*, James Van Pelt, collapse of social order, new social order, culture, crime, savagery, tribal society

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I hereby declare that the print version of my Bachelor's/Master's thesis and the electronic version of my thesis deposited in the IS/STAG system are identical.

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INTRODUCTION

The thesis focuses on the social order and the types of societies that form in the post-apocalyptic worlds of the four selected literary works of American authors. These novels are Jack London's *The Scarlet Plague* (1912), George R. Stewart's *Earth Abides* (1949), Algis Budrys's *Some Will Not Die* (1961) and James Van Pelt's *Summer of the Apocalypse* (2006). Apocalypse arises in each of these examined novels as the result of a world-wide pandemic. Therefore humankind faces similar problems in these novels and the Earth's environment remains in a similar condition as opposed to being destroyed as it would be in the case of a nuclear war or an asteroid impact.

The aim of this thesis is to find similarities and differences among these works with the regard to three main areas: collapse of social order, followed by the newly established social order and the culture of each society depicted in the novels. Initially, the thesis deals with the collapse of society that follows or occurs during the worldwide die-off of the human race in each of the selected literary works. These chapters will focus on people's behavior as the social order disintegrates and the world becomes lawless. The goal of this part is to find out whether the behavior of people during the collapse of social order carries any similar traits such as turning to crime.

However, the main focus of this thesis is to examine the societies that stem from the remnants of humankind. More specifically, it will focus on the type of societies or communities which form after apocalypse and it will examine the social and political similarities and differences among those societies. The thesis intends to find out whether the American authors of the selected novels share the view on what kind of societies emerge after the biological apocalypses presented in the novels. The principal question is whether people are more likely to revert back to savagery and a primitive way of life or to preserve the knowledge and skills of modern civilized societies and re-establish more complex political types of rule such as democracy. Lastly, the thesis will also examine the notable changes in cultural patterns that may or may not occur within the societies of the selected novels.

1 APOCALYPSE

Disregarding historical and religious interpretations, apocalypse is defined by Majid Yar as “an event, act or occurrence (accidental or otherwise) that brings about the end of the world.”¹ Yar further claims that films, novels and other cultural discourses that are concerned with such acts can be labelled as apocalyptic and the ones that deal with what happens after an apocalyptic event are perceived as post-apocalyptic.²

In spite of what Yar’s definition of apocalypse suggests, he also remarks that the actual end of the world is rarely depicted as truly finite in modern literature and films.³ Therefore, paradoxically, apocalypse often occurs at the very beginning of a story in order to create a strong basis for the plot which leads us into a post-apocalyptic world. Yar also asserts that in these cases a certain, and often very small, percentage of human population survives in a world that follows the apocalypse.⁴ The idea that literature and film scarcely depicts apocalypse as the final end of the world can be further supported by Maria M. Lisboa. According to her, at least one of each gender of humankind remains and so does a sufficient amount of resources needed for their survival. Our race can thereby persist on the face of the Earth.⁵

According to Yar, states, governments and generally any type of social systems usually cease to exist due to the consequences of an apocalyptic event.⁶ Similar assertion is also offered by Claire P. Curtis who claims that all hierarchical systems that kept people organized are gone.⁷ As Majid Yar remarked, “what has ended is the world as we know it.”⁸ The term “government” is defined as the “exercise of influence and control through law and coercion over a particular group of people” by *The Palgrave Macmillan Dictionary of Political Thought*.⁹ “Government” is similarly defined by *Concise Dictionary of Social and Cultural Anthropology* as the “exercise of power, authority, or control, and

¹ Majid Yar, *Crime and the Imaginary of Disaster: Post-Apocalyptic Fictions and the Crisis of Social Order* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 2.

² See Yar, *Crime and the Imaginary of Disaster*, 2.

³ See Yar, *Crime and the Imaginary of Disaster*, 2.

⁴ See Yar, *Crime and the Imaginary of Disaster*, 2.

⁵ See Maria Manuel Lisboa, *The End of the World: Apocalypse and Its Aftermath in Western Culture* (Cambridge: Open Book, 2011), 8.

⁶ See Yar, *Crime and the Imaginary of Disaster*, 2.

⁷ See Claire P. Curtis, *Postapocalyptic Fiction and the Social Contract: We’ll Not Go Home Again* (Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2010), 7.

⁸ Yar, *Crime and the Imaginary of Disaster*, 2.

⁹ See Roger Scruton, *The Palgrave Macmillan Dictionary of Political Thought*, 3rd ed. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 279.

the formal body that does this. More generally, the rules by which governing is done.”¹⁰ Government should not be confused with the term “state.” This term is defined by *Concise Dictionary of Social and Cultural Anthropology* as a form of government which is significantly more developed and therefore commonly found in complex societies. A state often governs a large and diverse number of individuals and is widely acknowledged as the source of authority and power while also having its sovereignty recognized by other states.¹¹

The contemporary term “apocalypse” originated in Ancient Greece. It is derived from the Greek word “apokalypsis” meaning “uncovering.”¹² In literature and film, apocalypse can occur in many different forms. According to Claire Curtis, the end of the world may appear due to natural disasters, man-made disasters or catastrophes of divine origin.¹³ As Majid Yar claims, apocalypse may carry an entirely negative meaning and refer to an absolute end of the world. It may, however, also represent a positive outcome such as redemption, salvation or a chance for a new beginning.¹⁴

¹⁰ Mike Morris, *Concise Dictionary of Social and Cultural Anthropology* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 110-111.

¹¹ See Morris, *Concise Dictionary of Social and Cultural Anthropology*, 239.

¹² See Gregory Claeys, *Dystopia: A Natural History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 4.

¹³ See Curtis, *Postapocalyptic Fiction and the Social Contract*, 5.

¹⁴ See Yar, *Crime and the Imaginary of Disaster*, 1.

2 POST-APOCALYPTIC & DYSTOPIAN FICTION

The world after apocalypse is commonly depicted in works of post-apocalyptic fiction, dystopian fiction and utopian fiction. Post-apocalyptic fiction and dystopian fiction can sometimes be mistaken for one another or blended together as one. Dystopia as such has a broad meaning, just as Claeys stated: “The term is used [...] in the broad sense of portraying feasible negative visions of social and political development, cast principally in fictional form.”¹⁵ However, dystopian fiction mainly addresses the injustices occurring in a flawed society such as oppression, corruption, slavery or inequality.¹⁶ These injustices may arise within a new society which forms after apocalypse. Therefore post-apocalyptic fiction often overlaps with dystopia.¹⁷ Utopia is, as defined by *The Palgrave Macmillan Dictionary of Political Thought*, a “social arrangement without violence, oppression, or property, and presents a comprehensive view of ideal institutions.”¹⁸ According to Claire P. Curtis, utopian post-apocalyptic fiction uses apocalypse as a means of forming a potentially better world.¹⁹

Post-apocalyptic fiction is defined by Curtis as any account which is concerned with the way humans start living after apocalypse befalls the Earth and the world they used to know is irrevocably gone.²⁰ In comparison with dystopian fiction, post-apocalyptic fiction is more focused on the mere struggles for survival, the chance to start all over, the fall of civilization and the subsequent rebuilding of civilization or the reversion back to savagery.²¹ As Curtis remarks, many post-apocalyptic novels are concerned with the notion that human savagery arises once people are no longer limited by laws, regulations and other restraints.²² “Savagery” as described in *Concise Dictionary of Social and Cultural Anthropology* is the first stage on an evolutionary scale from which people can evolve to “barbarism” and in the final stage to “civilization”. Savagery also refers to belonging to woodlands and is closely related to primitive way of thinking.²³ “Civilization” is a highly

¹⁵ Gregory Claeys, “The Origins of Dystopia: Wells, Huxley and Orwell,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*, edited by George Claeys (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 109.

¹⁶ See Claeys, *Dystopia*, 5.

¹⁷ See Curtis, *Postapocalyptic Fiction and the Social Contract*, 7.

¹⁸ Scruton, *The Palgrave Macmillan Dictionary of Political Thought*, 716-717.

¹⁹ See Curtis, *Postapocalyptic Fiction and the Social Contract*, 7.

²⁰ See Curtis, *Postapocalyptic Fiction and the Social Contract*, 5.

²¹ See Curtis, *Postapocalyptic Fiction and the Social Contract*, 6-7.

²² See Curtis, *Postapocalyptic Fiction and the Social Contract*, 5.

²³ Morris, *Concise Dictionary of Social and Cultural Anthropology*, 224.

developed stage of society. Typical features of civilization, as proposed by the dictionary, are for example writing and complex structures.²⁴

The fragility and the collapse of social order, savage and criminal behavior are, as Majid Yar claims, a common feature of post-apocalyptic fiction in popular portrayals of post-apocalyptic worlds.²⁵ According to Yar, post-apocalyptic fiction also usually depicts a rise of a new sovereignty. *Concise Dictionary of Social and Cultural Anthropology* defines the term “sovereignty” as the ultimate source of authority. This source of authority can be either vested in a government, state, monarch, the people or another entity.²⁶ In post-apocalyptic fiction, as proposed by Yar, we often see the replacement of democracy by dictatorship in which laws and rules are issued by a single authoritative figure, people are stripped off their basic rights and extrajudicial punishment takes place on regular basis.²⁷ These aspects of sovereign power already resemble the standard features of dystopian fiction as well. On the contrary, “democracy” is defined by *The Cambridge Dictionary of Sociology* as a “form of political rule that is justified and exercised by the people for the benefit of the people.”²⁸ According to the dictionary, modern democratic systems give citizens the opportunity to only marginally influence the political decision-making processes and they are limited to electing a political party that will represent their beliefs.²⁹

Admittedly, many literary works can be classified as both dystopian and post-apocalyptic fiction as they include traits which are characteristic for both. Stephen King’s *The Stand* (1978) is an excellent example of a novel carrying characteristic traits of both post-apocalyptic and dystopian fiction and thus makes use of both concepts. In the beginning the long story details the journey of lone survivors wandering about the world and doing their best to survive. Later on the story features a dystopian society emerging from the eventual gathering of one of the groups.

Regarding post-apocalyptic fiction, an interesting viewpoint is presented by Majid Yar who suggests that post-apocalyptic fiction, as a genre, can be viewed as a mixture of three already well-known genres. These are science-fiction, action and crime.³⁰ According to him, post-apocalyptic fiction uses the usual scenarios of science fiction that include a

²⁴ Morris, *Concise Dictionary of Social and Cultural Anthropology*, 38.

²⁵ See Yar, *Crime and the Imaginary of Disaster*, 23.

²⁶ Morris, *Concise Dictionary of Social and Cultural Anthropology*, 257.

²⁷ See Yar, *Crime and the Imaginary of Disaster*, 23.

²⁸ Bryan S. Turner, ed., *The Cambridge Dictionary of Sociology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 126-127.

²⁹ See Turner, ed., *The Cambridge Dictionary of Sociology*, 126-127.

³⁰ See Yar, *Crime and the Imaginary of Disaster*, 20.

beginning of a social catastrophe such as nuclear conflict, plagues or genetic mutations. It also borrows themes of violence, injustice, vengeance and lawlessness from crime fiction. Heroism and bravery when opposing evil are the aspects borrowed from the action genre.³¹ Similar viewpoint is provided by Curtis, who claims that post-apocalyptic fiction is a combination of science fiction, horror and utopia or dystopia.³²

The popularity of post-apocalyptic fiction has been on the rise since the beginning of the 20th century. Its popularity was mostly triggered after the World War I and the World War II. Additionally, there are more factors such as Cold War, terrorism, rapid technological progress, global warming, that contributed to its acclaim. More specifically, the possibility of the end of the world, as Maria M. Lisboa remarked, became more likely after the two atomic bombs were dropped upon Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. Until then, the idea of apocalypse as the global extinction of our species was nearly unthinkable.³³

Following the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the vision of nuclear war turned from mere imagination into a dangerous and real possibility and thus post-apocalyptic themes established a firm position in our culture. The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, further strengthened the fears of the end of the world in 21st century.³⁴ As proposed by Yar, post-apocalyptic fiction regularly deals with the issues of crime and crisis of law which reflect the humankind's fears and anxieties about the future.³⁵ In many post-apocalyptic films and novels, once the law and order are gone, the evil are given the freedom to do as they please while the vulnerable and weak become an easy prey in the world that no longer provides a protection.³⁶

The contemporary popularity of post-apocalyptic fiction stems from the fears of the collapse of law and social order. The reversion of humankind to aggressive and violent behavior is often depicted in post-apocalyptic works immediately after an apocalyptic event.³⁷ The concept of the collapse of social order and its consequences is going to be further scrutinized in each of the novels *The Scarlet Plague*, *Earth Abides*, *Some Will Not Die* and *Summer of the Apocalypse*.

³¹ See Yar, *Crime and the Imaginary of Disaster*, 20-21.

³² See Curtis, *Postapocalyptic Fiction and the Social Contract*, 7.

³³ See Lisboa, *The End of the World*, 8-9.

³⁴ See Yar, *Crime and the Imaginary of Disaster*, 3.

³⁵ See Yar, *Crime and the Imaginary of Disaster*, 23-24.

³⁶ See Yar, *Crime and the Imaginary of Disaster*, 24.

³⁷ See Yar, *Crime and the Imaginary of Disaster*, 25.

3 THE SCARLET PLAGUE

As some scholars assert, Jack London's *The Scarlet Plague* is one of the first examples of post-apocalyptic fiction in modern literature.³⁸ Published in the first quarter of the 20th century, the work laid the groundwork for future post-apocalyptic and dystopian fiction writers. While the book was published in 1912, the story itself takes place in 2073, 60 years after the plague, variously called the Scarlet Plague, Scarlet Death and Red Death, which wiped out majority of human population. Scholars such as Michele A. Riva and Marta Benedetti perceive this story as the foreshadowing of the Spanish influenza pandemic of 1918 which killed at least 20 million people in the course of three years.³⁹

One of the very few survivors of the pandemic from 2013, James Howard Smith, tells the story of the Scarlet Plague and his own survival. James, who was twenty-seven years old when the plague struck, is now, in 2073, called Granser and he is the last surviving human being of the pre-apocalyptic age. Granser is accompanied by young savage-like boys Edwin, Hare-Lip and Hoo-Hoo at the beginning of the plot. The boys soon prompt him to tell the tale of the Red Death and as he feels the obligation to pass on the knowledge which was long lost in the past, he begins to share his story.

In order to create a coherent analysis of society in the novel, the examination will momentarily skip the beginning of the novel, which already occurs in the post-apocalyptic future, and will later return to it. The analysis will commence with the part of the story where the protagonist describes the spread of the Scarlet Plague and its initial impact on the human civilization as seen from the viewpoint of the protagonist.

The protagonist, James H. Smith, mostly only leads readers through the beginning of the Scarlet Plague in 2013, the fragments of the consecutive years of his solitude life and the following formation of the Chauffeur Tribe and the Santa Rosa Tribe. Much information about the development of those tribes is not revealed. Therefore, we mostly have to draw on James's interactions with his grandsons in 2073 to form an idea of how the social order and culture developed in the tribes of the fictional post-apocalyptic America of *The Scarlet Plague*. Many different definitions of the term "tribe" exist. *Concise Dictionary of Social and Cultural Anthropology* defines tribe as "a social group

³⁸ See Michele Augusto Riva, Marta Benedetti and Giancarlo Cesana, "Pandemic Fear and Literature: Observations from Jack London's *The Scarlet Plague*," *Emerging Infectious Diseases* 20, no. 10 (2014): 1753-1757, accessed October 3, 2018, doi: 10.3201/eid2010.130278.

³⁹ See Riva, Benedetti and Cesana, "Pandemic Fear and Literature," 1753-1757.

sharing common descent and a common language, territory and culture.”⁴⁰ Similar definition is provided by *The Cambridge Dictionary of Sociology*. Tribes are defined as populations which are mostly genetically isolated, linguistically and culturally united and politically gathered under the leadership of a chief, headman or another authoritative figure. In contemporary times the term “tribe” often carries the connotative meaning of primitiveness.⁴¹

3.1 Collapse of Social Order

As suggested by Majid Yar, it is possible that mankind is morally diseased and thereby naturally inclined towards committing evil acts. Consequently, lawful authorities are necessary for the maintenance of social order and once they are gone, reversion to savagery quickly follows.⁴² After the collapse of social order in *The Scarlet Plague* an abundance of violent acts soon follows seemingly supporting Yar’s suggestion.

Once the protagonist, James H. Smith, commences to tell the story, it is apparent that the threat of a new epidemic was attempted to be kept under wraps in order to prevent panic from taking over: “London [...] had been secretly fighting the plague for two weeks and censoring the news despatches.”⁴³ Keeping such an imminent threat a secret, can be attributed to the society’s fear that the collapse of law and order would follow.⁴⁴ This fear is, as the novel corroborates, reasonable.

As soon as a first student dies during a lecture of professor James Smith, the students and majority of the university employees flee the university and the world soon turns into the representation of every man for himself. James returns home only to see the housekeeping lady and the cook to run for their lives. He remains at home and uses telephone as the means of communication through which he acquires the news of what is happening. He soon finds out that the situation in New York is desperate, frightening and out of control. Law enforcement is slowly but surely gone and chaos and social disorder prevail:

A third of the New York police were dead. Their chief was also dead, likewise the mayor. All law and order had ceased. The bodies were lying in the streets un-buried. All railroads and vessels carrying food and such things into the great city had ceased runnings and mobs of the hungry poor

⁴⁰ Morris, *Concise Dictionary of Social and Cultural Anthropology*, 257.

⁴¹ See Turner, ed., *The Cambridge Dictionary of Sociology*, 638.

⁴² See Yar, *Crime and the Imaginary of Disaster*, 25.

⁴³ Jack London, *The Scarlet Plague* (1912; Milton Keynes: Createspace, 2018), 20.

⁴⁴ See Yar, *Crime and the Imaginary of Disaster*, 25.

were pillaging the stores and warehouses. Murder and robbery and drunkenness were everywhere.⁴⁵

The first days of worldwide panic and chaos were closely entwined with the rise of various crimes. Cities and towns were set on fire and many people die of crime-related reasons before dying from the disease itself. Riots, murders, robberies and arsons commence. James comments: “I heard sounds of rioting and of pistol shots, and from my windows I could see the glare of the sky of some conflagration in the direction of Oakland.”⁴⁶ These actions carried out by groups of people, shortly after the Scarlet Plague, began to spread all over the United States. This kind of behavior bears resemblance to many collapses of social order that occurred in our real world. Specifically, we may use the example of rebellious crowds’ behavior during the French Revolution at the end of 18th century, which is briefly described by Claeys as having atavistic traits of violence, barbarism and savagery.⁴⁷

3.2 New Social Order

The restoration of social order in *The Scarlet Plague* appears in a form of tribal societies. As the last surviving member of the pre-apocalyptic era, James H. Smith provides an insight into the differences between the civilized society he had been part of for 27 years and the primitive tribal societies that have developed few years after the Scarlet Death had struck and decimated human race.

After everyone around James H. Smith dies, he wanders through America, accompanied by two dogs, a pony and a horse, for an unspecified time period. Eventually, he settles down in a hotel loaded with food supplies in the Yosemite Valley. James lives in solitude for about 3 years until he decides it is time for him to search for other survivors. He later comments: “I felt that I was going crazy. Like the dog, I was a social animal and I needed my kind.”⁴⁸ This serves as a clear sign of sociality. As defined by *Concise Dictionary of Social and Cultural Anthropology*, “sociality” is the desire, either of humans or animals, to interact and live together with others and thus establish a social group.⁴⁹

James stumbles upon the first living human beings near Oakland. The first post-apocalyptic couple, found by James, consists of Chauffeur and Vesta Van Warden and

⁴⁵ London, *The Scarlet Plague*, 25.

⁴⁶ London, *The Scarlet Plague*, 27.

⁴⁷ See Claeys, *Dystopia*, 20-21.

⁴⁸ London, *The Scarlet Plague*, 39-40.

⁴⁹ See Morris, *Concise Dictionary of Social and Cultural Anthropology*, 234.

their child. Vesta had been forced into this relationship by Chauffeur shortly after most of humans died of the Scarlet Plague. Nevertheless, they form the basic social unit, a family of some kind, necessary for the later formation of a tribe.⁵⁰ Vesta is left to do the most mundane tasks such as, cooking, washing dishes, collecting firewood, building fires and tidying up the camp. Chauffeur is handling the business of hunting meat and catching fish. It is the standard co-operation of a family and division of tasks among its members that are being preserved.⁵¹ Chauffeur and Vesta were the founding members of what is later known as the Chauffeur Tribe.

The moment James discovers the information about the existence of another tribe, situated not far from the Chauffeur Tribe, he leaves Chauffeur and Vesta and sets out to find this tribe. The Santa Rosa Tribe turns out to be a lot more populated in comparison with the Chauffeur Tribe. It already consists of 18 members and James becomes their 19th member. There are mentions of other tribes, namely the Utah Tribe, the Los Angelitos and the Carmelitos, but no specific information about their existence is provided within the story. As John H. Bodley claims, tribal societies ordinarily have less than 2,000 members and are, therefore, in no need of forming a government which would exercise political power over the tribe.⁵² Although every tribe has a certain authoritative figure, or figures, which assumes the leading role, families of these tribes are often autonomous and only follow a certain tribal culture.⁵³ Since all of the mentioned tribes had tens of members at most, there were no attempts to establish a government or anything that would resemble it and thereby all of them remained in the simple form of tribes. It is only natural that tribes such as Santa Rosa contained several families living together. As asserted by Steven E. Hobfoll, the natural search for protection and better chances of survival has long been ingrained in humankind⁵⁴ and so it is no surprise that these tribal communities formed shortly after apocalypse.

Post-apocalyptic fiction often features portrayals of sexual violence, especially committed by men upon female victims.⁵⁵ The idea is that once laws, restrictions and social rules in general are gone, the possibility of punishment is gone with them and men

⁵⁰ See Talcott Parsons, Edward Shils, Kaspar D. Naegele and Jesse R. Pits, eds., *Theories of Society: Foundations of Modern Sociological Theory* (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1961), 1:131.

⁵¹ See Parsons, Shils, Naegele and Pits, eds., *Theories of Society*, 1:133.

⁵² See John H. Bodley, *Cultural Anthropology: Tribes, States and the Global System*, 5th ed. (Plymouth: AltaMira Press, 2011), 1.

⁵³ See Bodley, *Cultural Anthropology*, 8.

⁵⁴ See Steven E. Hobfoll, *Tribalism: The Evolutionary Origins of Fear Politics* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 24.

⁵⁵ See Yar, *Crime and the Imaginary of Disaster*, 60.

are easily controlled by their predatory instincts while morality is nearly forgotten.⁵⁶ Chauffeur can be used as an example of such a man as he “beat [Vesta] with those terrible fists of his and made her his slave.”⁵⁷ This behavior might be perceived as atavistic, that is being driven by our animalistic instincts which are biologically ingrained within us and will come to surface once law and order is no longer present.⁵⁸ With this in mind it is needless to say that Chauffeur had established, as Majid Yar calls it, a firm gender order⁵⁹ in which he, as a man, takes upon the superior and dominant role, while Vesta, as a woman, is forced into a subordinate role.

While the novel offers no other depiction of the progress and evolution of the Chauffeur Tribe, once James verbally illustrates the way Chauffeur treated his wife Vesta to his grandsons, one of the boys, Hare-Lip, replies, “Good for Chauffeur.”⁶⁰ According to some experts, gender is among the first social categories that children begin to learn according to the environment they grew up in.⁶¹ Because of this, we may assume that Hare-Lip, as a child growing up in the Chauffeur Tribe, perceives this treatment of women and the hierarchy of the gender order as common and will continue to do so. The fact that Vesta is left with performing all the tasks revolving around housekeeping while Chauffeur acquires the role of a hunter and a fisherman, will likely create an idea of gender roles where women are the housekeepers and men are the head of household. As cultural transmission from parents to children within a family is the basic type of transmission,⁶² it is likely that this distinction of gender roles will remain a part of the Chauffeur Tribe’s culture for many years.

Little is known about the way women were treated in other tribes, but it is suggested by James when talking about a member of the Santa Rosa Tribe that the gender roles of the Santa Rosa Tribe were generally more equal. He recalls: “He had a keen sense of justice and right-dealing, and she was far happier with him than was Vesta with the Chauffeur.”⁶³ We can thus assume that the members of Santa Rosa Tribe had maintained cultural

⁵⁶ See Yar, *Crime and the Imaginary of Disaster*, 61.

⁵⁷ London, *The Scarlet Plague*, 43.

⁵⁸ Yar, *Crime and the Imaginary of Disaster*, 61.

⁵⁹ Yar, *Crime and the Imaginary of Disaster*, 57.

⁶⁰ London, *The Scarlet Plague*, 43.

⁶¹ See Sven Kachel, Melanie C. Steffens and Claudia Niedlich, “Traditional Masculinity and Femininity: Validation of a New Scale Assessing Gender Roles,” *Frontiers in Psychology* 7 (2016): 956.

doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2016.00956, 2.

⁶² See Bodley, *Cultural Anthropology*, 11.

⁶³ London, *The Scarlet Plague*, 47.

behavior which resembles the pre-apocalyptic civilization, at least in terms of gender hierarchy.

3.3 Culture

As anticipated, the tribes were initially dependent upon obtaining food through hunting and gathering. But unlike our ancestors *Homo sapiens*, who had spent roughly 150,000 as hunter-gatherers,⁶⁴ these post-apocalyptic tribes of the 21st century moved on to cattle domestication and herding much quicker. Although, it is not specified how and when, it is safe to assume that the knowledge about cattle domestication was preserved by the survivors of the Scarlet Plague and thus passed on to the next generation. James remarks: “I am a dirty old man, clad in goat-skin, wandering with my savage grandsons who are goatherds in the primeval wilderness.”⁶⁵ Regarding the use of weapons, in 2073 there is no mention of any type of guns. Instead, the boys are carrying bows and arrows.

The young generation, as represented by Edward, Hare-Lip and Hoo-Hoo, is highly illiterate in terms of both knowledge and language. The knowledge of the pre-apocalyptic civilization has been lost throughout the course of 60 years as no educational programs were established by any of the known tribes. This is for example apparent when James, who was once a professor, attempts to explain the details of his former profession to the boys and one of the boys reacts to it. “‘Was that all you did?—just talk, talk, talk?’ Hoo-Hoo demanded. ‘Who hunted your meat for you? and milked the goats? and caught the fish?’”⁶⁶ The lack of any education within the new generation of these tribes can be attributed to the fact that, as asserted by James, none of the original founders of the tribes were literate.⁶⁷

Another distinctive feature of their culture, is wearing human teeth of deceased people. When the boys dig out a human skeleton, they do not hesitate to proceed extracting its teeth. As observed by James, “Edwin, using the back of his hunting knife, began to knock out the teeth from the jaws of one of the skulls.”⁶⁸ Later on, they divide those teeth among themselves and start wearing them. Other garments, such as pigtails and pieces of bear skin, are also mentioned as being worn by the boys. These garments represent distinctive symbols of the tribes in *The Scarlet Plague* and serve as a distinctive sign of the savage-

⁶⁴ See Robert L. Park, *Superstition: Belief in the Age of Science* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2008), 24.

⁶⁵ London, *The Scarlet Plague*, 17.

⁶⁶ London, *The Scarlet Plague*, 15.

⁶⁷ See London, *The Scarlet Plague*, 48.

⁶⁸ London, *The Scarlet Plague*, 11.

like rudeness. As for the clothing, both the boys and James are clothed in simple goat-skins.

One of the traits that represents the reversion back to savagery could be the overall lack of compassion. Over the course of telling the story of the Scarlet Plague and remembering the past, James is overwhelmed by emotion several times and weeps. The boys, however, are merely amused by this and mock James, who responds: “When I was a boy, we did not laugh at our elders; we respected them.”⁶⁹

The attempt in preserving the culture and knowledge of the pre-apocalyptic civilization was made by James. Since he is aware of the harsh truth that there is a huge culture gap between the pre-apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic societies, he gathers and stores an unspecified but great number of books in a cave.⁷⁰ James does so hoping that the future generations will find them and be able to finally take advantage of the knowledge stored within them.

Lastly, the boys and presumably the whole new generation of the tribes is highly superstitious and superstition becomes part of their culture. “Superstition” is described by *Concise Dictionary of Social and Cultural Anthropology* as an irrational belief associated with the unknown or perhaps even fear of the unknown.⁷¹ The boys’ superstitious beliefs can be seen during one of the conversations between James and the boys when James admonishes Hare-Lip:

Why has he not sent me the death-stick? Because he knows that with me it is without avail. But you, Hare-Lip, so deeply are you sunk in black superstition that did you awake this night and find the death-stick beside you, you would surely die. And you would die, not because of any virtues in the stick, but because you are a savage with the dark and clouded mind of a savage.⁷²

Sociologist Kathy S. Stolley points out that people in ancient times perceived illnesses as having a supernatural origin.⁷³ Taking all this into account it can be assumed that the new generation has a primitive mentality and is not capable of comprehending things rationally the way their pre-apocalyptic ancestors used to. While modern cultures are perceived as having a rational and logical view of the world, the so-called primitive people viewed world from a pre-logical and mystical perspective. Therefore they are described as having

⁶⁹ London, *The Scarlet Plague*, 7.

⁷⁰ See London, *The Scarlet Plague*, 49-50.

⁷¹ See Morris, *Concise Dictionary of Social and Cultural Anthropology*, 245.

⁷² London, *The Scarlet Plague*, 49.

⁷³ See Kathy S. Stolley, *The Basics of Sociology* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2005), 22.

a “primitive mentality” by *Concise Dictionary of Social and Cultural Anthropology*.⁷⁴ This serves as a proof of the reversion from civilized society to what resembles a primitive savagery in *The Scarlet Plague*.

⁷⁴ See Morris, *Concise Dictionary of Social and Cultural Anthropology*, 204.

4 EARTH ABIDES

Earth Abides is a novel set in a fictional world of post-apocalyptic North America. The novel was written by George R. Stewart in 1949 and has become a classic among the post-apocalyptic fiction of the 20th century. The first part of the book revolves around the protagonist Isherwood Williams, mostly referred to as Ish, who returns back to civilization after being secluded from society for two weeks in his holiday cabin. However, civilization is nowhere to be found as an unknown epidemic wiped out 99% of human population.

The plot then portrays the protagonist wandering on his own through the mostly vacant cities of what used to be United States and observing the changes that occur during the absence of human race. Wild animals roam the streets and formerly domesticated animals either go wild or fall prey to the far better equipped competition from the wilderness. Ants and rats proliferate on a dramatic scale and for a certain period of time seemingly rule the world. Even though a lot of attention is at first paid to the environmental changes, the attention shifts toward the concept of rebuilding civilization later on. After meeting and falling in love with a woman named Emma, Ish and Em settle down and together with several other survivors establish a new community. The community starts to call itself The Tribe. In the second part of the book, where the The Tribe begins to grow as its founders are producing offspring, the attempt to reconstruct the pillars of civilization is more apparent.

The last few chapters of the novel describe the passing years of Ish's life. As time flies by and he gets older, the other founding members of The Tribe die and he is the only original survivor of the mysterious plague. Before Ish dies of old age, he contemplates the drastic change the human race has undergone ever since the civilization collapsed and realizes that he has very little in common with the new generations of The Tribe.

Earth Abides can be viewed as a criticism of modern societies. As Maria M. Lisboa claims, the story represents “a cleansing process,” a chance for human race to start all over and right the wrongs of the previous civilization.⁷⁵ The concepts of re-establishing civilization and primitive savagery are major themes of the novel until the end. These concepts are going to be further discussed and scrutinized.

⁷⁵ See Lisboa, *The End of the World*, 66.

4.1 Collapse of Social Order

The protagonist Isherwood was absent from society when the unknown plague struck. Therefore, he was also absent when the subsequent collapse of social order occurred and is thus not witnessed by the protagonist. Consequently, the chapter of this thesis examining the collapse of social order in *Earth Abides* is going to be based on news reports found by Ish and assumptions of what might have happened.

While the collapse of social order following the spread of the plague was not depicted in the novel, assumptions of what might have happened can be made once Ish wanders through the near vacant cities of America. In comparison with *The Scarlet Plague*, there is nearly no evidence of rioting and arson. With the exception of being abandoned by humans, the cities, towns and villages appear to be in a relatively good condition, which may lead us to the conclusion that the collapse of order was much more peaceful than in the previously examined novel.

This is supported by the information found in the newspapers which Ish finds in Hutsonville. He reads through it and forms an idea of what proceeded the collapse of social order: “A certain amount of looting, particularly of liquor stores was reported. On the whole, however, order had been well preserved, possibly through fear.”⁷⁶ A notable difference between *The Scarlet Plague* and *Earth Abides* is that Stewart’s depiction of the end of civilization is more positive and focused on the power of collectivism. “Collectivism”, as defined by D.F.Y. Ho, is a cultural principle in which interests and goals of individuals are of less importance than those of a group. In order to improve the welfare of a group, individuals must set their own interests aside.⁷⁷ As observed by Ish when reading the newspapers, “Doctors and nurses had stayed at their posts, and thousands more had enlisted as helpers.”⁷⁸

The evidence of the lethal plague running wild is seen in the mass graves of larger cities and occasional unburied dead bodies. However, an evidence of social disorder is mostly missing. This notion is supported by the newspapers. While it reports many people running from cities, it described the ones who remained as suffering “no disgraceful panic.”⁷⁹ Although later Ish sees examples of disorder such as broken window of a liquor

⁷⁶ George R. Stewart, *Earth Abides* (1949; London: Millennium, 1999), 13.

⁷⁷ Drew Westen, *Self and Society: Narcissism, Collectivism and the Development of Morals* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 241.

⁷⁸ Stewart, *Earth Abides*, 14.

⁷⁹ Stewart, *Earth Abides*, 14.

store and a man hanging from a telephone pole, there are only few.⁸⁰ Additionally, authorities swiftly ordered mass burials to be executed as soon as possible with the intention to avoid the loss of morale.⁸¹ This probably played a major role in the way things developed after the plague struck. In *The Scarlet Plague* many bodies were left unburied lying on the streets, whereas in *Earth Abides* majority of bodies are buried in cemeteries or mass graves. It is, however, worth noting that the disease in *Earth Abides* was killing people over a longer period of time than in *The Scarlet Plague*. Therefore people had significantly more time to relocate themselves to secluded areas rather than dying abruptly on the streets.⁸²

The events that happened shortly after the breakthrough of the unknown plague, as reported in the newspapers, suggest that authorities handled this situation rather well and tried to maintain peaceful conditions. A lot of people were willing to give priority to the well-being of many rather than just trying to save themselves. This behavior described in *Earth Abides* could be connected to the belief of Greek philosopher Aristotle. As remarked by Yar, Aristotle believed in natural inclination of human kind towards a cooperative and collective style of life.⁸³

4.2 New Social Order

In *Earth Abides* we witness the attempt of restoring civilization in a small group of people who come together to find safety in numbers. This group, conveniently called The Tribe, starts to resemble a simple tribal society with no means of exercising authority not long after it forms.

After returning to his former parent's house in Berkeley Ish soon starts to search for another human being he could share company with which signifies the presence of sociality. He first begins to form a social unit after meeting an Afro-American woman Emma,⁸⁴ usually referred to as Em, with whom he starts a family. As proposed by Steven E. Hobfoll, our kind was forming and living in families even before we turned into modern humans. Therefore we are biologically and subconsciously inclined to form families.⁸⁵ It should thus come as no surprise that we see the same process of forming a family in both examined novels.

⁸⁰ See Stewart, *Earth Abides*, 26.

⁸¹ See Stewart, *Earth Abides*, 14.

⁸² See Stewart, *Earth Abides*, 20.

⁸³ See Yar, *Crime and the Imaginary of Disaster*, 25.

⁸⁴ See Stewart, *Earth Abides*, 95.

⁸⁵ See Hobfoll, *Tribalism*, 52.

The moment Em becomes pregnant, Ish feels the urge to start counting years anew and thus, before the birth of their first child, the Year One, also called the Year of the Baby, commences and a new tradition of counting and naming years along with it.⁸⁶ By the beginning of the Year Four, their family have grown bigger by two children, John, their firstborn, and Mary. During that year, the family is joined by a man named Ezra, his two wives Molly and Jean, Molly's young son Ralph, a married couple George and Maurine and a half-witted young girl Evie.⁸⁷ They all settle down in Berkeley and start living in houses nearby. Thus they form a society, The Tribe, which consists of seven adults and five children as Em gives birth to her second son Roger towards the end of Year Four. As Hobfoll remarks, tribe is "the principal biological grouping beyond the family."⁸⁸ According to him, our ancestors resolved to forming tribes nearly 6 million years ago as families started cooperating and joining together in order to maximize the protection of their offspring.⁸⁹

The Tribe resembles a tribal society as for many years the group does not attempt to either create any kind of a government or laws of any sort. This is visible especially when Ish gathers a meeting where he tries to propose what steps should be taken to secure a better future for The Tribe. He is met with ignorance and as a result he snaps as he sees neither he nor anyone else has any control over the group:

We haven't any laws—we aren't a democracy, or a monarchy, or a dictatorship, or anything. If someone—Jack, for instance—wants to walk out on what seems to be a kind of important meeting, nobody can stop him. Even if we take a vote here and decide to do something, even then, there's no means of enforcement—oh, a little public opinion, perhaps, but that's all.⁹⁰

This indicates an evident lack of a proper leadership within The Tribe. However, even though no leader is officially chosen or elected, Ish assumes the role of a leader of some kind naturally especially in times of struggles when others seek his help.⁹¹ He himself never attempts to start an election but he is the one making decisions as it is expected of him by the rest of The Tribe. In this case we talk of the so-called emergent leadership or de facto leadership. According to Northouse, "emergent leadership" refers to a situation in

⁸⁶ See Stewart, *Earth Abides*, 116.

⁸⁷ See Stewart, *Earth Abides*, 122-123.

⁸⁸ Hobfoll, *Tribalism*, 52.

⁸⁹ See Hobfoll, *Tribalism*, 53-54.

⁹⁰ Stewart, *Earth Abides*, 144-145.

⁹¹ See Stewart, *Earth Abides*, 153-154.

which members of a group or an organization view and follow another member as the leading figure even though the member has not publicly acquired any title or status defining his leading role. This member assumes the role of a leader by the acceptance and endorsement of others. This kind of leadership usually comes into existence when a member of a group exhibits an influential behavior such as providing new ideas for improvement or active verbal communication with others and seeking their opinions.⁹²

Overall, this small group, consisting of several families lives peacefully and quite recklessly since they get by with mere scavenging for canned food. By Year Twenty-Two, The Tribe consists of no social organizations other than several families. During this year, however, serious obstacles inevitably occur. A nearby water reservoir completely runs dry and the sudden shortage of the water supply catches them all off guard. When considering whether the young generation should be asked for help, Ish claims that they are only useful when it comes to hunting and fishing.⁹³ The gap between the two generations becomes obvious and the young ones already bear no or little signs of former civilization.

It thus becomes apparent that the only people who can deal with water supply issue are the adults who still have the knowledge of pre-apocalyptic civilization. Consequently, Ish calls a meeting where he mentions all the shortcomings of The Tribe such as not educating children who are unable to write and read, not trying to explore the surrounding areas where other communities may reside or the fact that they do not grow any food or domesticate any farm animals.⁹⁴ The Tribe therefore decides, to Ish's surprise, to make a few changes. A decision is made to send out an expedition which is to seek out other communities.⁹⁵ Nearly every man and boy wants to be part of the expedition but all the participants of the meeting together choose the most eligible people for the expedition. This is the first time The Tribe begins to resemble a simple democratic system. With the hopes of restoring civilization and passing knowledge from one generation to the other, Ish also commences to teach children geography, writing, reading and the basics of mathematics. He mostly sets his hopes on his brightest son Joey whom he believes to lead The Tribe in the future.

When the expedition returns, they bring a stranger named Charlie with them. His arrival is met with mixed feelings among the group but the children generally like him. Not

⁹² Peter G. Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 7th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2016), 8.

⁹³ See Stewart, *Earth Abides*, 160.

⁹⁴ See Stewart, *Earth Abides*, 167.

⁹⁵ See Stewart, *Earth Abides*, 168-169.

long after Charlie, to everyone's dismay, confesses to suffering from sexually transmitted diseases. As he was seen flirting with Evie one day prior to his confession, some of the founding members of the Tribe choose to vote on what is to be done with him. For fear of Charlie's retaliation, Ish, Em, Ezra and George unequivocally vote for death.⁹⁶ A few days later a sickness takes hold of most people within The Tribe and as a result five children die one of whom is Joey.

Following these events, grieve-stricken Ish reconciles with the fact that children are not interested in education and many skills needed for life in civilized world are of no use for them now.⁹⁷ He gives up on the dream of restoring civilization and permanently cancels the teaching lessons. Instead, knowing that they would one day run out of ammunition, he decides to show them how to build a bow and shoot an arrow. He also shows them how to kindle a fire by using a bow-drill and how to plant and grow corn. Most importantly however, he encourages all the adults to gather for meetings on a regular basis so that important decisions can be made and be binding upon every member of The Tribe.⁹⁸ As time flies by, the younger adults take the lead of these meetings while the elderly merely participate and Ish himself assumes a role of a peacemaker.

Ish, similarly to James in *The Scarlet Plague*, remains the only living person remembering the civilized world before the enormous die-off. His descendants, now also grandsons and great-grandsons, are leading rather primitive lives concerned with bow hunting and fishing. However, as he assumes, they no longer revert to savagery but rather begin to learn new things naturally as time goes. During one of the last moments of his life, he is witnessing three young members of The Tribe discussing the latest decision of their tribe. While some of them appear to dislike it, they all abide by it as they believe that what The Tribe has decided is binding.⁹⁹ This can lead to the conclusion that while sustaining a rather primitive way of life, The Tribe adopted and exhibits the decision making processes which resemble democratic systems. In comparison with the tribes seen in *The Scarlet Plague*, the society in *Earth Abides* thus maintained a more organized way of life.

4.3 Culture

The Tribe was obtaining food through scavenging for many years as it was the easiest way to gather food. While hunting with the use of guns was taking place during those years as

⁹⁶ See Stewart, *Earth Abides*, 240.

⁹⁷ See Stewart, *Earth Abides*, 269.

⁹⁸ See Stewart, *Earth Abides*, 276.

⁹⁹ See Stewart, *Earth Abides*, 305.

well, it was, for the most part, only a source of an entertainment. As the older generation did not want their offspring to be dependent upon scavenging forever, they passed on the knowledge of how to hunt animals with a bow and how to grow corn. The future generation was thus mostly acquiring food by the means of hunting, fishing and partially by farming. Unlike in *The Scarlet Plague*, they did not domesticate any cattle. As any of the founders of The Tribe never started domesticating cattle, we may assume that the means by which the future generation obtains food is highly dependent on what knowledge is passed onto them.

While goat-skins are presented as the typical clothing of the tribes in *The Scarlet Plague*, younger generations of The Tribe still take advantage of clothing which was left behind by their civilized ancestors. This is apparent when Ish, at the end of his life, looks observantly at his great-grandson and his comrades who all wear jeans yet their tops are covered by an animal hide with paws and claws dangling from it.¹⁰⁰ They are all equipped with knives, bows and quivers with arrows.¹⁰¹

Ish, just as James in *The Scarlet Plague*, sees great value in books and is determined to preserve them for the future generations. He is especially protective of the University Library: “Here rested in storage the wisdom by which civilization had been built, and could be rebuilt.”¹⁰² He taught children to respect the Library and declared burning books as one of the worst things a person could do. This resulted in a kind of a taboo as children truly respected the books but also viewed them as nearly having a mystical value.¹⁰³ As defined by *The Palgrave Macmillan Dictionary of Political Thought*, “taboos” are “all kinds of activities that are morally forbidden.”¹⁰⁴ Despite the fact that children are not interested in the knowledge stored within books, they are ultimately protective of them.

In *Earth Abides*, The Tribe, for the most part, does not form any kind laws or rules. It rather consists of unwritten norms and taboos. According to sociologist Kathy S. Stolley, “norms” are shared rules and expectations that tell us what kind of behavior is and is not appropriate. Norms help us keep stable social order and they heavily affect the culture we are part of.¹⁰⁵ One distinctive example of a taboo was the unwritten rule of not attempting to form a relationship with attractive yet feeble-minded Evie. Charlie, the newest member

¹⁰⁰ See Stewart, *Earth Abides*, 287.

¹⁰¹ See Stewart, *Earth Abides*, 298.

¹⁰² Stewart, *Earth Abides*, 111.

¹⁰³ See Stewart, *Earth Abides*, 263-264.

¹⁰⁴ Scruton, *The Palgrave Macmillan Dictionary of Political Thought*, 679.

¹⁰⁵ See Stolley, *The Basics of Sociology*, 46.

of The Tribe, breaks this taboo by seducing Evie. This is the moment when Ish realizes there is no law that would officially forbid Charlie to do so. Infidelity seems to be another taboo of The Tribe. As none of the adults ever attempted to form a sexual relationship with anyone else than with their partners, children follow their example and perceive marriage as binding.¹⁰⁶

However, a change in cultural patterns may be seen in marriage. Out of the seven founding members of The Tribe one man, Ezra, is married to two women. This example of polygamy is thereby perceived by the new growing generation of The Tribe as normal or at least it is never questioned by anyone. We may assume that this example of polygamy combined with the low numbers of humans might lead to polygamy, or at least polygyny, being perceived as normal by the future generations. *Concise Dictionary of Social and Cultural Anthropology* defines “polygamy” as a situation in which one person is married to more than one person simultaneously. In case of one man being married to more women, we talk of “polygyny.”¹⁰⁷

Nonetheless, the way new generations perceive the survivors of the apocalypse and the creation of the world, is the most intriguing aspect of their culture. During one of the teaching lessons, Ish asks the children how they think the world was created. One of them quickly replies: “Why, the *Americans* made everything.”¹⁰⁸ Ish immediately senses that children view Americans as mystical beings who had the knowledge and powers which they themselves cannot neither comprehend nor possess. In order to strip them off this belief, he presents himself as an American with the intention of showing them that he is just as ordinary as they are and so were all Americans. But to his surprise, they only fall silent as if admiring him. It occurs to him then that children filled the void of understanding the world by simply believing that all the knowledge which Ish and others possess is of supernatural origin. That he is one of the last legendary beings, the Americans, lingering in this world with them.¹⁰⁹ The founders of The Tribe are thus viewed as Gods or demi-Gods. This superstitious behavior represents a primitive mentality which the new generations reverted to. It resembles the superstition of tribes seen in *The Scarlet Plague*.

¹⁰⁶ See Stewart, *Earth Abides*, 204.

¹⁰⁷ See Morris, *Concise Dictionary of Social and Cultural Anthropology*, 257.

¹⁰⁸ Stewart, *Earth Abides*, 214.

¹⁰⁹ See Stewart, *Earth Abides*, 215.

5 SOME WILL NOT DIE

The novel *Some Will Not Die*, which was originally named *False Night*, was Algis Budrys's first published book in 1961. The world where only about 10% of population survives is an illustration of the concept of the survival of the fittest as it depicts a frighteningly dark vision of the post-apocalyptic world from the very beginning.

The novel alternates between two nonlinear plotlines. The first plotline is focused on the situation in Manhattan, New York happening shortly after most of humankind dies of the plague, where readers initially follow the journey of a nineteen-year-old survivor Matthew Garvin and later on the journey of Theodore Berendtsen. The second plotline takes place about 30 years in the future, when a young captain of the Seventh North American Republic named Joe Custis and Major Thomas Henley are on a mission to find Theodore Berendtsen, the former leader of the legendary Army of Unification, who is rumored to be still alive. According to *The Palgrave Dictionary of Political Thought* "republic" refers to a non-monarchical state which is autonomous enough to exercise its legal authority over its own territory and citizens. It is also a state where citizens are regularly able to elect new officeholders whose purpose is public service.¹¹⁰

After years of struggle, Matt Garvin forms Second Free American Republic (SFAR) and becomes its President. The republic takes control of entire New York. As Matt grows older, Theodore Berendtsen becomes the next authoritative figure of the republic. Theodore has the vision of unifying America under the control of their republic and thus creates what later becomes known as The Army of Unification (AU). While the AU serves its purpose, a new government is beginning to form in New York and take hold of the republic. Robert Garvin, Matthew Garvin's younger son, commences to promote his propaganda of social equality. At the same time, he undermines Berendtsen's authority by referring to his leadership as tyranny.

5.1 Collapse of Social Order

Similarly to Ish in *Earth Abides*, the protagonist Matthew Garvin is unable to witness the actual collapse of social order when it takes place. Although being in a family apartment in Manhattan, New York, he is in a delirious state of mind as suffering from a sickness, whether that be from the mysterious plague or from an unrelated disease is unknown. When he fully recovers he is unaware of how much time have passed but he is certain that

¹¹⁰ See Scruton, *The Palgrave Macmillan Dictionary of Political Thought*, 593.

most people have already died of the plague as the streets are empty. The novel provides a depiction of what was happening during the collapse of social order through glimpses of Matt's memory and through the conversation with his friend whom he encounters shortly after recovering and leaving the apartment.

From the moments when Matt regained consciousness, he recalls the government's efforts to keep people in their homes in order to prevent rioting and chaos from taking over. He, however, also heard sounds of machineguns suggesting that law enforcement units used or were provoked to use brutal force against citizens to maintain control over the city.¹¹¹

One of the first things that catches Matt's attention after leaving the apartment, is the smoke rising from a distance. This is very likely a sign of fire that had been set when the rioting took place and has not been put out since. The streets are filled with destroyed cars and trucks and most buildings and houses are barricaded.¹¹² He proceeds towards the apartment of his friend Larry, a medic, hoping to find him alive. As he walks through the streets he hears echoes of footsteps around him. He begins to realize that people now fear other people and are determined to avoid social contact. As soon as he turns corner his eyes lie upon a body of a young man who must have been murdered only recently. All this ties to the Majid Yar's claim concerning post-apocalyptic fiction. According to him, as soon as order and law disappear, the evil are free to flourish and prey on the weak.¹¹³

The first sign of organization he sees are posters with hand-written words "Live Medic" and an arrow pointing uptown.¹¹⁴ These posters lead him to Larry's apartment. Full of hope, he enters the apartment only to be attacked by Larry himself. Fortunately, Larry soon recognizes his old friend and begs him for forgiveness. He tells Matt what he witnessed from his apartment when people succumbed to panic.

According to Larry's estimates, about one hundred and fifty thousand people survived the plague in Manhattan and the situation there was desperate. Some survivors occupied warehouses with food supplies and were defending them against whomever tried to get close. The people who were unable to obtain food for themselves, tried to escape to New Jersey. However, it was apparent that the survivors in Jersey were killing anyone who tried to get closer to their farms. Only few people managed to return from New Jersey to

¹¹¹ Algis Budrys, *Some Will Not Die* (1961; London: Methuen, 1986), 28.

¹¹² Budrys, *Some Will Not Die*, 24-25.

¹¹³ See Yar, *Crime and the Imaginary of Disaster*, 24.

¹¹⁴ Budrys, *Some Will Not Die*, 28.

Manhattan with nothing more than gun wounds.¹¹⁵ In the end, Larry admits that he himself was unable to get to the food in stores and warehouses. It thus becomes clear that he only distributed the posters around the city in order to lure people into his apartment. Matt comes to understand that Larry turned to cannibalism and did not attack him with the intention of protecting himself but with the intention of killing him.

The breakdown of social order in *Some Will Not Die* bears resemblance to the one occurring in *The Scarlet Plague* with crimes such as arson, murder and robbery appearing soon in both novels. Nevertheless, this novel brings about the concept of cannibalism and arguably even surpasses *The Scarlet Plague* with its dreary view of what will happen to society once laws are gone. This novel stands as an example of the concepts of crime genre such as lawlessness, injustice and violence which, as proposed by Yar, often appear in post-apocalyptic novels.¹¹⁶

5.2 New Social Order

Restoring social order is not an easy task and holding it together once restored may be even more demanding. At least this is the case in *Some Will Not Die* where after several years a republic is formed. However, it is fragile and many aspects play a major role in its intermittent downfall and rise.

After leaving Larry's apartment, Matthew Garvin spends three years scavenging for canned food and fighting for his bare life whenever necessary. His solitary way of life comes to an end the moment he spots a frightened woman running across the street in his direction. As Margaret initially believes his intention is to rape her, she draws a gun but before she gets the chance to shoot, he disarms her. Once he manages to calm her down he helps her with her task and she takes him back to her apartment. Not before long, they start a family. This type of a story follows a trajectory which is, as proposed by Claire P. Curtis, typical in post-apocalyptic fiction. The protagonist, usually a white male, goes through a series of similar steps including searching for food and water, finding shelter and running into a companion who is often weaker than him and in need of his help.¹¹⁷

Matt provides food for their family by scavenging around New York and fighting other survivors if necessary. Margaret takes care of the household. As remarked by Talcott

¹¹⁵ Budrys, *Some Will Not Die*, 31.

¹¹⁶ See Yar, *Crime and the Imaginary of Disaster*, 20.

¹¹⁷ See Curtis, *Postapocalyptic Fiction and the Social Contract*, 8.

Parsons, this is the standard division of tasks within a family¹¹⁸ which appeared in *The Scarlet Plague* as well. They lead this lifestyle for three years up until the moment an intruder breaks into their apartment. He, however, tries to persuade them that his intention was to find an apartment for himself and was unaware that somebody lives in this one. Moreover, he craves a social contact. “I haven’t talked to anybody for years. Not even shouted at them, or cursed. All I’ve done for six years is fight other people. Shooting, running. I didn’t dare show myself in daylight. It isn’t worth it. Staying alive isn’t worth it. Grubbing through stores for food at night. Like an animal in a garbage can!”¹¹⁹ This is a clear example of sociality in a world where every man for himself rule dominates. Even though Matt wants to believe him, his fear is more powerful and he ends up killing the intruder. Afterwards he feels compassion for the stranger probably knowing that he would be desperate for social contact as the intruder was if he had not met Margaret. As asserted by Parsons, a family can easily exist in isolation while a man can hardly lead a solitary life.¹²⁰

Paradoxically, this encounter is what brings families of the same apartment building together. Their gathering commences to call itself the Second Free American Republic (SFAR) under the leadership of Matt Garvin and Gus Berendtsen.¹²¹ About a year later, they run into Charlie Conner who leads another group of families. He offers them to join up together. However, his offer requires them to succumb to his dictatorship rather than providing an equal partnership. Consequently, they ask for some time to contemplate his offer and about a week later, they are ambushed by his men when returning from scavenging. As a result, we see Matt and Gus discussing their options in how to resolve this conflict with the other members of their group.¹²² This type of behavior resembles the participative leadership and has traits of a democratic system. According to Northouse, “participative leadership” is the type of leadership where followers and subordinates are invited to share their opinions, suggestions and ideas which are later integrated in the decision-making process of the participative leader. These suggestions can therefore play a major role in the final decision.¹²³

¹¹⁸ See Parsons, Shils, Naegele and Pits, eds., *Theories of Society*, 1:133.

¹¹⁹ Budrys, *Some Will Not Die*, 68.

¹²⁰ See Parsons, Shils, Naegele and Pits, eds., *Theories of Society*, 1:133.

¹²¹ See Budrys, *Some Will Not Die*, 76-77.

¹²² See Budrys, *Some Will Not Die*, 85.

¹²³ See Northouse, *Leadership*, 7th ed., 118.

They settle for an attempt of making peace with Conner and succumbing to his leadership. This turns out to be a wrong decision as during a scheduled meeting with Conner they are ambushed again and Gus Berendtsen is shot dead. This results in Matt Garvin becoming the sole leader of the SFAR. As he seeks retaliation, he orders an attack which ends up with Conner and his group being slaughtered. After the slaughter, we see a conversation between Matt and Jack, one of his followers, during which Jack hesitates when wanting to express his distaste of how was Conner's group dealt with. However, Matt replies calmly by saying that "[t]his is still a free republic"¹²⁴ and everyone can say what they please. This is an example of freedom of speech which is highly valued in democratic systems.¹²⁵ As remarked by Harry Melkonian, democracy is based on mutual communication and reflection of the government and its citizens rather than on passive submission and obedience.¹²⁶ I, therefore, argue that the society forming in *Some Will Not Die* bears resemblance to a democratic society.

Soon after this event, however, the SFAR intends to unite the whole Manhattan via conquest. This intention stems from the fear of being forced to succumb to someone else's leadership. As Matt Garvin remarks: "[I]t'd be a lot nicer, for us, if we were the ones who came out running things, because that's the only way we could be sure all that work of ours hadn't been for nothing."¹²⁷ It is apparent that social contract is highly unappealing to the SFAR. *Concise Dictionary of Social and Cultural Anthropology* describes the term "social contract" as a "notional agreement by which individuals give up certain freedoms to an authority in exchange for protection and a code of ethics."¹²⁸ Over the course of several years, they manage to conquer the whole New York and to subject other people to the rule of their political system. This can be perceived as the first sign of imperialism. The term "imperialism" is defined by *The Palgrave Macmillan Dictionary of Political Thought* as the extending of power and influence over new territories and areas through conquest.¹²⁹ Additionally, as proposed in *The Cambridge Dictionary of Sociology*, "imperialism" often involves the process through which citizenship is extended to the people of conquered areas as opposed to being treated as unequal.¹³⁰ While imperialism is commonly viewed as

¹²⁴ Budrys, *Some Will Not Die*, 96.

¹²⁵ See Harry Melkonian, *Freedom of Speech and Society: A Social Approach to Freedom of Expression* (New York: Cambria Press, 2012), 13.

¹²⁶ See Melkonian, *Freedom of Speech and Society*, 40.

¹²⁷ See Budrys, *Some Will Not Die*, 122.

¹²⁸ Morris, *Concise Dictionary of Social and Cultural Anthropology*, 232.

¹²⁹ See Scruton, *The Palgrave Macmillan Dictionary of Political Thought*, 320.

¹³⁰ See Turner, ed., *The Cambridge Dictionary of Sociology*, 79.

problematic, it can be also viewed as a noble desire to unify humankind for the sake of peace which could be achieved through a universal political structure.¹³¹

As it becomes apparent that people are getting organized in other parts of the United States, Matt Garvin gathers a meeting together with his most trusted members of the Second Republic. During this meeting, they assume the notion that a conflict with other organizations is inevitable.¹³² This idea is proposed by the only son of Gus Berendtsen, Theodore Berendtsen, who suggests that other organizations will try to rule over them unless they attempt to rule over them first. With this belief they set out to conquer the neighboring cities such as Boston and Philadelphia. Thus the concept of imperialism is evident.

As the years pass and Garvin grows older, a new authoritative figure is on the rise. Although being only twenty-three years old, Ted Berendtsen is well regarded by other members of the SFAR and is willingly followed by them because of his bold ideas, hard work and natural knack for leadership.¹³³ The manner through which Ted acquires the role of the republic's leader is similar to the way Isherwood does in *Earth Abides*. His forward thinking and the ability to not only bring ideas forth but to also execute them, is what turns him into a leader without any specific election or declaration.¹³⁴ This is another example of emergent leadership. This also serves as the evidence that the leadership within their society is not passed from a family member to another, as Matt's oldest son James did not take over.

Berendtsen's intention to unify people under one political structure may also mirror the idea of Thomas Hobbes who, as presented by Majid Yar, claimed that human beings are driven by their self-interest, appetites and pursue violence because of fear and distrust towards others. This vision supports his belief that in order for people to co-exist in peace, their innate proclivity towards conflict must be constrained by sovereign power.¹³⁵ This ideology allows for one entity to legitimize its use of violence towards other entities as the necessary means for enforcing laws and forming peaceful conditions under the rule of one

¹³¹ See Turner, ed., *The Cambridge Dictionary of Sociology*, 280.

¹³² See Budrys, *Some Will Not Die*, 138-139.

¹³³ See Budrys, *Some Will Not Die*, 133-134.

¹³⁴ See Budrys, *Some Will Not Die*, 144.

¹³⁵ See Yar, *Crime and the Imaginary of Disaster*, 25.

sovereignty.¹³⁶ It is this ideology, or at least a similar one, that Theodore Berendtsen promotes himself.¹³⁷

The army he leads towards other regions is conveniently called The Army of Unification (AU). The general idea of this conquering is that while fighting will be necessary at the beginning, groups of people will join them willingly later on as the army grows larger. After several successful conquests, he returns to New York. There a new government is about to form with Robert Garvin, Matt Garvin's younger son, as one of its potential members. Upon his arrival, Ted is warned by his wife that Robert might try to overthrow him once he seizes power in the SFAR.¹³⁸ However, Ted emphasizes that they are still a republic where people are free to choose their leaders and he will willingly give up his position if that is what people want.¹³⁹ He states: "I do not especially like the techniques necessary to that unification, but the important thing [...] is the union. [...] it's up to the people to decide how that union's going to function internally."¹⁴⁰ According to *The Cambridge Dictionary of Sociology*, imperialism and democracy are not always mutually excluded.¹⁴¹ *Some Will Not Die* thus depicts a unique kind of society where democracy and imperialism are compatible.

During Berendtsen's absence, the government deals with matters such as voter eligibility and municipal election of new office-holders. Robert Garvin commences to promote his ideals of liberalism and social equality which are, according to him, suppressed by Berendtsen. According to *The Palgrave Macmillan Dictionary of Political Thought*, "liberalism" has many interpretations. It can be described as the belief that every individual is highly valuable and so are his rights and freedom. Alternatively, as the belief that every individual has natural rights which are meant to be protected by and against government.¹⁴² Robert Garvin also promotes the idea that every man should own a gun to ensure that one's own liberty and possessions will never be taken away by another man.¹⁴³ He firmly believes that this is a necessity for a true equality. His ideas are well regarded and as a result he is elected as the new City Councilman. With his newly acquired power,

¹³⁶ See Yar, *Crime and the Imaginary of Disaster*, 25.

¹³⁷ See Budrys, *Some Will Not Die*, 147-148.

¹³⁸ See Budrys, *Some Will Not Die*, 157.

¹³⁹ See Budrys, *Some Will Not Die*, 157-158.

¹⁴⁰ Budrys, *Some Will Not Die*, 157-158.

¹⁴¹ See Turner, ed., *The Cambridge Dictionary of Sociology*, 280-281.

¹⁴² See Scruton, *The Palgrave Macmillan Dictionary of Political Thought*, 394-395.

¹⁴³ See Budrys, *Some Will Not Die*, 182.

he begins to influence other members of the government and he successfully portrays Berendtsen as a tyrant.

Upon Berendtsen's return, he is charged with treason against the SFAR and is to appear at the trial the following day.¹⁴⁴ As soon as Berendtsen is stripped off his power, all the units of the AU are to be demobilized and disbanded.¹⁴⁵ Robert Garvin is appointed as the President of the Second Free American Republic. He delivers a speech declaring that with the AU disbanded, the republic can once again grow and prosper: "We are a nation of free men armed, each equal to the other, each a brother to the other, each firm in his resolve that no one man shall again impose his twisted will on other men."¹⁴⁶ Nevertheless, the ideology of Robert Garvin is strikingly flawed as he appoints civil governors to the people from different regions who are thus governed by someone else either way.

During the trial, Ted Berendtsen asserts that Robert Garvin is fighting for social equality while having more power than anyone else in the republic. He claims that it was the democracy of the SFAR that gave him the chance to gain power, power which he now abuses. Ted is sentenced to go about freely but unlike any other man, unarmed.¹⁴⁷

The weapons which are handed over to every man and are meant to serve as a symbol of everyone's freedom, unsurprisingly turn out to be the republic's end. Especially after Garvin orders several men to form and resemble an angry mob which is set out to kill Berendtsen. Subsequently, Theodore Berendtsen and his wife are lynched on the streets of New York.¹⁴⁸ What follows is a series of rioting and rebellion. Garvin is forced to flee the city and the republic crumbles as anarchism takes over. *The Palgrave Macmillan Dictionary of Political Thought* provides a definition of "anarchism" as the belief that "it is preferable and possible to abolish government, either completely, or at least in part."¹⁴⁹ Anarchists also believe that state is oppressive and society should be natural and free. Moreover, revolutionary actions are often perceived as necessary in order to bring a social change even if it at the cost of violence.¹⁵⁰

About thirty years later, we see captain Joe Custis and Major Thomas Henley, on their mission to find Theodore Berendtsen, who is, according to rumors, still alive. We later find out that these men were actually not sent out by the Seventh North American Republic but

¹⁴⁴ See Budrys, *Some Will Not Die*, 210.

¹⁴⁵ See Budrys, *Some Will Not Die*, 212-213.

¹⁴⁶ Budrys, *Some Will Not Die*, 214-215.

¹⁴⁷ See Budrys, *Some Will Not Die*, 219.

¹⁴⁸ See Budrys, *Some Will Not Die*, 227.

¹⁴⁹ Scruton, *The Palgrave Macmillan Dictionary of Political Thought*, 23.

¹⁵⁰ See Scruton, *The Palgrave Macmillan Dictionary of Political Thought*, 23.

a newly forming Eighth Republic. It is therefore apparent that over the course of 30 years, the republic has seen its government being overthrown numerous times. This, along with the fact that there was a new government searching for Theodore Berendtsen in order to put him in charge, proves that the republic has never truly recovered from his demise and was frequently reverting back to the anarchic state it entered after his death.

We may assume that the ideology about social equality, which was heavily promoted by Robert Garvin, remained imprinted within the minds of many people. Unfortunately, it resulted in series of anarchistic rebellions. Additionally, Berendtsen's attempt to unite the whole US meant that many people were forced into joining the SFAR and therefore despised the republic and its government ever since. Combining both Berendtsen's and Garvin's actions, it may seem logical that citizens of SFAR had inclinations towards anarchism.

6 SUMMER OF THE APOCALYPSE

Written by James Van Pelt and published in 2006, the novel *Summer of the Apocalypse* depicts a post-apocalyptic world after an unidentified disease wipes out roughly 99% of human race. Through the eyes of Eric, the protagonist, we see what follows and what kind of societies formed 60 years after the initial wipe-out.

The story frequently switches between two different timelines. One of the timelines takes us back to see fifteen-year old Eric's life during the time the unknown plague struck humankind. News reports are filled with numerous accounts of people dying from the plague. As a result, Eric's father decides to shelter his family in a cave as he tries to protect his family from the disease and problems that could arise in the city when people will begin to panic. Unfortunately, Eric's mother dies of the disease anyway. After his mother's death, Eric's father decides to travel to a nearby city in order to acquire more medical supplies. This proves to be a grave mistake as during his father's absence, Eric sees an explosion taking place in the city and waits fruitlessly for his father's return. Consequently, Eric sets out to find his father. During his travels, he comes across a young woman named Leda who joins him in his search. Unfortunately, he never discovers what happened to his father but it is presumable that he died.

The other timeline offers a look into the post-apocalyptic future where now seventy-five year old Eric is displeased with the way children are raised in the small town of Littleton. The illiteracy of the young generation is what sparks his idea of finding another group of people and also the library at the University of Colorado in Boulder. Thus begins his journey with the goal of finding a sign of another society's existence and books which could improve the lives of people in Littleton. To his surprise, he is followed by his grandson Dodge and his grandson's friend Rabbit who are determined to accompany him. Towards the end we see Eric making up his mind about the importance of books and knowledge. He is ready to embrace the reversion to savagery and primitive way of life.

6.1 Collapse of Social Order

Eric and his family moved to a cave once the reports about the incurable disease began. Therefore when the collapse of social order commenced, Eric was far from society. Nevertheless, Eric gathered some information through radio reports. He and his father also travelled to a nearby town to gather additional supplies shortly before the panic erupted. The following chapter will therefore be examined mostly from the information gathered through the radio reports and Eric's visitation of a nearby town.

Some of the initial reports, which Eric hears from the radio, mention the government's imposition of quarantines over certain areas.¹⁵¹ Although in *Some Will Not Die* we saw the government's attempt to maintain peace and keep citizens at homes, this is the only novel where we witness an attempt to impose quarantines. The government at least partially managed to maintain order even after the news of the deadly disease were broadcasted. Additionally, the government also tries to keep citizens calm by regularly releasing information about the development of a new vaccine.

However, there are also reports regarding the increase in criminal activity. Specifically, cases of looting and rioting are reported.¹⁵² This appears to be a re-occurring aspect of the beginning of social disorder within all the examined novels. Law enforcement is needed at hospitals and food distribution centers for unspecified reasons¹⁵³ but it is safe to assume that many people panic and try to take hold of medical and food supplies.

Four days later, Eric and his father journey to Idaho Springs to get some more supplies. Although initially walking, they soon get a ride from a young military soldier who informs them that the roads are closed, Denver is under quarantine, many states shut their borders and martial law is in effect. According to *The Palgrave Macmillan Dictionary of Political Thought*, the term "martial law" describes a situation where "justice is administered according to provisions laid down by military councils, standards of evidence are changed, and the right of appeal constrained or abolished."¹⁵⁴ The soldier appears to be convinced that a cure will soon be finished.¹⁵⁵ This encounter further affirms that the government tries to keep both the people and the disease under control. However, the soldier also mentions that a shooting transpired at some of the blockades.

Once in Idaho Springs, they enter a supermarket which is still in operation in spite of most goods being gone. The shop clerk, although wearing a surgical mask, serves the customers and goods are sold for a much higher price than usual.¹⁵⁶ There are no apparent signs of criminal activity and streets are quiet and empty rather than chaotic and violent as depicted in novels such as *The Scarlet Plague* and *Some Will Not Die*. Similarly to *Earth Abides*, the efforts of government to maintain order were successful for a certain period of time and kept people at bay. While people in *Summer of the Apocalypse* do not exhibit the

¹⁵¹ See James Van Pelt, *Summer of the Apocalypse* (Auburn, WA; Fairwood Press, 2006), 26.

¹⁵² See Van Pelt, *Summer of the Apocalypse*, 26-27.

¹⁵³ See Van Pelt, *Summer of the Apocalypse*, 28.

¹⁵⁴ Scruton, *The Palgrave Macmillan Dictionary of Political Thought*, 423.

¹⁵⁵ See Van Pelt, *Summer of the Apocalypse*, 51.

¹⁵⁶ See Van Pelt, *Summer of the Apocalypse*, 53-54.

cooperative behavior as seen in Stewart's novel, they do not immediately revert to violent atavistic behavior either. As Eric and his father leave Idaho, they encounter an old lady who calmly informs them that Idaho Springs is now under quarantine.

A few days later, Eric ventures out of the cave just to find plenty of abandoned cars on a nearby road. There are evident signs of shooting and numerous dead bodies proving that panic and violence did eventually break out. In the end, the collapse of social order was inevitable as more people were dying of the plague.

6.2 New Social Order

The novel provides a look into what kind of society formed in the post-apocalyptic world in one of its main plotlines which takes place 60 years after the apocalypse. While Eric lives in a small society which is situated in Littleton, he encounters a few other groups of people during his travels, each of which has its own distinctive social features. Therefore more than just one society is going to be examined.

Through the eyes of Eric, we are first introduced to the society which resides in Littleton and is home to nearly one thousand people. It is suggested that roughly only one hundred of these people are literate.¹⁵⁷ Because of this we may draw a conclusion that no official educational system was established in Littleton. What was established, however, is the regular town meetings and some sort of a city council. As the only man in Littleton who still remembers the pre-apocalyptic times, Eric is one of the people who have the right to vote on the city council.¹⁵⁸ This information indicates that the society in Littleton developed some kind of a government with voting system similar to democratic systems. As asserted by Durkheim, democracy is where "legal-moral ideas can be communicated and developed"¹⁵⁹

As seen in the novel, Eric is a proponent of education and fears that each generation in Littleton is more and more illiterate and primitive. He thus tries to convince the council to establish an educational system but is always outvoted by other members of the council. His own illiterate son Troy is against his proposals as he believes that Littleton needs to focus on agriculture and search for tradable goods.¹⁶⁰ Eric also heavily criticizes the fact that people prefer to scavenge for variable goods rather than trying to learn how to make those goods themselves. Ultimately, this society appears to be similar to the one we see in

¹⁵⁷ See Van Pelt, *Summer of the Apocalypse*, 17.

¹⁵⁸ See Van Pelt, *Summer of the Apocalypse*, 14.

¹⁵⁹ Melkonian, *Freedom of Speech and Society*, 49.

¹⁶⁰ See Van Pelt, *Summer of the Apocalypse*, 14-15.

Earth Abides, reverting to a primitive way of life while maintaining democratic political rule. Additionally, the indifference of younger generations to education is what these two novels also have in common.

On Eric's journey, he first encounters a man named Phil who lives a solitary life. He exhibits a clear signs of sociality as he is excited about meeting new people. As Phil remarks: "A man needs companionship. We weren't meant to be alone."¹⁶¹ He tries to persuade Eric to stay with him but is unsuccessful with his attempts and also afraid to leave his place and so Eric soon moves on.

Later on, Eric runs into a group which is led by a man named Teach and resides somewhere in the mountains in a place called Highwater. It later turns out that Teach's group lives in caves of what used to be a mining town. The group is described as wearing primitive clothing such as leather skirts, wool shirts and moccasins. Moreover, they are armed with bows, spears and staffs and build wooden poles with animal skulls hanging from them.¹⁶² Teach appears to be a chief of this group as others obey his orders.¹⁶³ Their group is illiterate as none of them can neither write nor read and they also appear to be superstitious as they believe Eric is some kind of a spirit. These signs suggest that this group represents a rather primitive tribal society.

Eric is invited by Teach to follow them into the Highwater. As they travel, they encounter another group which is dubbed by Teach as Earth Dancers. During one night, they witness them dancing naked and painted in white color on a clearing and Eric quickly understands why they were given this name.¹⁶⁴ Teach comments on them, saying that they are feral and illiterate because they are children of the children who survived the plague and had to grow up on their own. He also implies that they run whenever his group tries to make contact with them.¹⁶⁵ Earth Dancers neither use English language nor any other verbal language known to humankind. It is assumed that they have forgotten their language as a result of their ancestor's isolation. They live in natural caves and obtain food as hunter-gatherers. Teach reckons there are about 60 of them. They bear all the sings belonging to a primitive tribal society. Eric describes their physical shape as scrawny and muscular suggesting that they physically evolved to be more animal-like and they are far

¹⁶¹ Van Pelt, *Summer of the Apocalypse*, 66.

¹⁶² See Van Pelt, *Summer of the Apocalypse*, 109-111.

¹⁶³ See Van Pelt, *Summer of the Apocalypse*, 112.

¹⁶⁴ See Van Pelt, *Summer of the Apocalypse*, 134.

¹⁶⁵ See Van Pelt, *Summer of the Apocalypse*, 135.

from physically resembling the civilization that existed before the apocalypse.¹⁶⁶ Furthermore, he brings attention to their relatively young age. As none of them look older than 30, Eric wonders whether their lifespan is shorter.¹⁶⁷ Teach refers to them as the “true natives of the land”¹⁶⁸ probably referring to their resemblance to Indians.

A strange thing happens when a young Earth Dancers signals Eric to follow them. After a few moments of hesitation he obliges and soon finds himself in their home. One of them leads him to a cave room where all the others are gathered in a circle around a huge grandfather clock. He realizes that this is their place of worship and the clock may even be viewed as their God.¹⁶⁹ According to Harry Melkonian, primitive societies with mechanical solidarity usually undertake the same activities as hunter-gatherers and their values, beliefs and perception of the world are uniform and shared.¹⁷⁰ “Mechanical solidarity” is according to the *Concise Dictionary of Social and Cultural Anthropology* defined as the type of social cohesion which is commonly found in primitive societies. It means that members of this society share similar beliefs and perform similar tasks and activities.¹⁷¹ From what we know of Earth Dancers, it can be assumed that they fit into the category of a primitive tribal society as they bear signs of mechanical solidarity.

6.3 Culture

Through the eyes of Eric, the novel provides insights into three different societies which developed over the course of 60 years after the apocalypse. While these societies share certain cultural patterns, they are distinguished from one another via others. In this part, we will not only try to compare cultural differences and similarities between the societies of this novel but also between the societies of previously examined novels.

Regarding Littleton, one of the most intriguing aspect of their culture is that people of this town began naming their children after automobiles. There are several children with names such as Mercedes, Dodge, Rabbit, Neon and others.¹⁷² People of Littleton gather resources and food through scavenging, hunting and also farming. Scavenging is no longer used as a means of obtaining food. It is rather used for finding items left from the pre-apocalyptic times that people of Littleton are not able to create but desire to possess.

¹⁶⁶ See Van Pelt, *Summer of the Apocalypse*, 137-138.

¹⁶⁷ See Van Pelt, *Summer of the Apocalypse*, 139.

¹⁶⁸ Van Pelt, *Summer of the Apocalypse*, 136.

¹⁶⁹ See Van Pelt, *Summer of the Apocalypse*, 141-142.

¹⁷⁰ Melkonian, *Freedom of Speech and Society*, 40-41.

¹⁷¹ See Morris, *Concise Dictionary of Social and Cultural Anthropology*, 163.

¹⁷² See Van Pelt, *Summer of the Apocalypse*, 11.

Farming is used when the seasons are favorable but ultimately, it is hunting that people rely on. Overall, this is highly similar to the way The Tribe was acquiring food at the end of *Earth Abides*. As for the Earth Dancers and people of Highwater, we may presume that both these tribes mainly consist of hunter-gatherers as no other way of obtaining food is suggested in the novel. The means of acquiring food of these tribes bears resemblance to the tribes in *The Scarlet Plague*.

As for clothing, Earth Dancers simply wear none. People of Highwater wear handmade leather and woolen clothing but people of Littleton presumably still wear some of the clothing left behind by the former civilization. Eric himself wears jeans¹⁷³ and while it is unclear whether other people from Littleton do too, it is not anyhow implied that his clothing is perceived as an oddity in this town. Therefore there is another similarity between The Tribe in *Earth Abides* and Littleton in *Summer of the Apocalypse*. People of both Littleton and Highwater are depicted as being armed with spears and bows and arrows.

The priceless value of books and knowledge appears to be one of the most re-occurring features of these novels as the protagonists in *The Scarlet Plague*, *Earth Abides* and *Summer of the Apocalypse* are desperately trying to preserve books and teach younger generations to read and respect books. Eric fruitlessly tries to persuade the whole Littleton that they need to start educating their children. As he remarks, “if we don’t teach the kids, the next generation will be nothing more than nomads following deer herds.”¹⁷⁴ The ideology of teaching children the value of books is omnipresent throughout the whole novel. However, as Eric encounter other societies which appear to have reverted to savagery a lot more than people in Littleton, it is implied that he slowly begins to believe that reversion to a primitive way of life is inevitable and the loss of knowledge stored in books as well.¹⁷⁵ Once again, there is a striking similarity between Eric and Ish from *Earth Abides* as both men eventually give up on trying to educate children and embrace the idea that young generations are in need of other skills.

Another re-occurring aspect among these three novels is superstition and the mythical view of the world. People in Littleton are afraid of countryside as they believe that ghosts and bad spirits roam the rural areas.¹⁷⁶ Eric’s grandson Dodge refers to electricity as

¹⁷³ See Van Pelt, *Summer of the Apocalypse*, 18.

¹⁷⁴ Van Pelt, *Summer of the Apocalypse*, 15.

¹⁷⁵ See Van Pelt, *Summer of the Apocalypse*, 253-254.

¹⁷⁶ See Van Pelt, *Summer of the Apocalypse*, 16.

magic.¹⁷⁷ Furthermore, people of Littleton believe in the existence of creatures called Bugbears. Mythical beings that roamed the Earth even before humans did. These Bugbears are, according to their stories, the ones responsible for the disease that killed most humans.¹⁷⁸ Similar superstitious beliefs are also seen in both *The Scarlet Plague* and *Earth Abides*.

¹⁷⁷ See Van Pelt, *Summer of the Apocalypse*, 59.

¹⁷⁸ See Van Pelt, *Summer of the Apocalypse*, 92.

CONCLUSION

When comparing how the beginning of the collapse of social order unfolded in each of the selected novels, there are some notable similarities and differences. What all the novels have in common is, unsurprisingly, the fact that a certain amount of criminal activity arises as the social order begins to crumble under the pressure of panicking citizens. There are, however, distinct differences in how quickly and how many people turn to crime. The collapse of social order as depicted in Jack London's *The Scarlet Plague* is very quick and violent. Similar depiction is provided in Algis Budrys's *Some Will Not Die*. These two novels represent humankind which readily turns against the law enforcement and government. Rioting, arson, murder and other crimes are depicted soon after the deadliness of each novel's plague becomes known to the public. Both novels thus bear the implications that human race is naturally inclined towards committing evil as soon as lawful authorities are gone, if not sooner.

Quite a different depiction is presented in George R. Stewart's *Earth Abides* and James Van Pelt's *Summer of the Apocalypse*. These novels depict the disintegration of social order in a much more peaceful way. Governments in these novels manage to keep relatively peaceful conditions even after people are aware of the lethal plagues that kill majority of population. *Summer of the Apocalypse* is the only novel where we see government imposing quarantines over the most infected areas and also frequently releasing news of a newly developed vaccine. For several days after the plague running wild, law enforcement units still operate and try to maintain peace while citizens remain rather calm. Similarly good actions were also taken by the government in *Earth Abides*. Stewart's novel, however, presents an even more positive depiction of the collapse of social order where people neither turn to violence as in *The Scarlet Plague* and *Some Will Not Die* nor only mind their own business as in *Summer of the Apocalypse* but illustrate a cooperative behavior as if focusing on the well-being of many and there are generally very few signs of social disorder and crime in this novel. Nevertheless, this appears to be a rather rare depiction of collapse of social order as even in *Summer of the Apocalypse* people eventually turn to crime and violence. Therefore, the novels *The Scarlet Plague*, *Some Will Not Die* and *Summer of the Apocalypse* serve as a proof that aggressive and violent behavior is often depicted in post-apocalyptic fiction from the very beginning of apocalypse.

Another fundamental aim of this thesis was to examine what kind of society re-emerges in the post-apocalyptic worlds of the selected novels and whether the societies in each novel bear any resemblance to each other. Every novel has its protagonist wondering in the post-apocalyptic world on his own for a certain period of time. In each case we see the protagonist eventually searching for other human beings, a sign of sociality, and later on forming the basic social unit, a family. The subsequent development of these social units, however, differs. Beginning with *The Scarlet Plague*, we see that the societies presented in this novel most resemble primitive tribal societies where each tribe is isolated and united under the authority of a chief. No official laws or rules are imposed over these tribes and they are mostly assumed to abide by unwritten norms and taboos.

A similar type of society is also seen in *Earth Abides*. The Tribe also represents an isolated tribe consisting of several families. While Ish is perceived as an emergent leader, he also stands as an example of a single authoritative figure who is leading the whole tribe without exercising his authority through laws. As the story progresses, The Tribe begins to carry signs of a democratic system where all the adult members make decisions concerning The Tribe's future together. In the end, it appears that members of The Tribe follow decisions of their tribe because of habits and taboos but no official government, which would exercise its authority over The Tribe, has been established yet. This is where *Earth Abides* differs from *The Scarlet Plague* as The Tribe developed a more complex political rule. Ultimately, I would claim that the society in *Earth Abides* can still be perceived as a tribe which is on the path of having a democratic political rule.

Summer of the Apocalypse brings a broader point of view as it focuses on three different societies that formed in its post-apocalyptic world. Two of the societies, Earth Dancers and the people of Highwater, also resemble tribal societies. Even though the leadership of Earth Dancers remains unspecified within the story, they resemble a primitive tribe in many ways especially through their mechanical solidarity and primitive mentality. People of Highwater are politically united under the leadership of a chief and are culturally and linguistically united as well. Both these societies lack any complex political structure and can therefore be classified as tribes resembling the ones in *The Scarlet Plague* and The Tribe in *Earth Abides* prior to its development at the end of the novel. The last society depicted in *Summer of the Apocalypse*, people of Littleton, is more developed than the other two. Littleton has a city council and its members abide a clear voting system. It thus resembles and even surpasses, in terms of development, the society at the end of *Earth Abides*. However, it is also clear that Littleton did not establish an

educational system and the young generations already bear signs of primitive mentality preoccupied with superstition and mythical view of the world. People of Littleton are not interested in educating their people and so most of them can neither read nor write. This also suggest that all societies in *Summer of the Apocalypse* will ultimately become uncivilized.

In terms of how society developed, the novel *Some Will Not Die* stands out the most out of the four selected novels. In comparison with the other examined novels, *Some Will Not Die* presents a unique society where democracy and imperialism co-exist. Democracy re-emerged relatively fast and the Second Free American Republic developed only a few years after the apocalypse in the novel. This could be partly attributed to the fact that approximately 10% of people survived in *Some Will Not Die* while only about 1% survived in all the other novels. These survivors were thus able to form societies consisting of many individuals, re-establish certain social systems and preserve knowledge and certain cultural patterns of the pre-apocalyptic civilization before they were lost. In *The Scarlet Plague*, *Earth Abides* and *Summer of the Apocalypse* only a few people were able to form small societies soon consisting of many genetically related individuals. A majority of social systems was lost and children in these novels were born into the world where civilization no longer existed. Nevertheless, the democratic society in *Some Will Not Die* eventually fell apart and anarchism took over. The novel further elaborates on the failed attempts of people to establish a new republic. The frequent reversion to anarchism depicted at the end of this novel may also suggest that the society will eventually lose all that made it civilized and will revert to savagery.

Regarding culture, *Some Will Not Die* is the only novel where society has not undergone many changes as civilization was rebuilt sooner than in the other examined novels. The remaining three novels, however, share certain similarities. The people of tribal societies became hunter-gatherers in each of these novels. The Tribe in *Earth Abides* and the people of Littleton in *Summer of the Apocalypse* also make use of farming. *The Scarlet Plague* is the only novel where tribes eventually began to domesticate cattle.

With the exception of *Some Will Not Die*, each novel's society clearly reverted to superstitious beliefs and ideas. The children who were born after apocalypse in *The Scarlet Plague*, *Earth Abides* and *Summer of the Apocalypse* were never properly educated and were thus unable to rationally comprehend many things of the past civilization. This resulted in acquiring mystical view of the world and superstitious beliefs which can be perceived as primitive mentality.

The present thesis thus serves as an evidence that the four American post-apocalyptic fiction authors do share certain viewpoints about society and its future development in a post-apocalyptic world. Firstly, concepts related to crime genre such as lawlessness, injustice and violence appear in every of the four examined novels, especially during the collapse of social order. Secondly, one way or the other, all four authors present post-apocalyptic societies which became uncivilized or are, at least, on the way of becoming uncivilized. The loss of civilization is often depicted through the loss of knowledge and education which results in the formation of tribal societies. While there are exceptions where humankind preserved civilization and complex political structure, even in these cases society faces an uncertain future because of repeated anarchism or lack of educational systems which could lead to reversion to savagery. These four post-apocalyptic novels thus stand as an example of the shared viewpoint of four American authors that after apocalypse society's loss of civilization and reversion to a more primitive way of life are inevitable.

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