

Chapter V

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Apocalypse and Post-Apocalypse in Thomas King's Trilogy:

UFOs That Crashed to Earth, Martian Fever and Message From Titan

The term apocalypse is taken from the book, *The Revelation*, the last book of *The Bible*. Apocalypse means destruction of the world. Apocalypse is a spiritual belief which comprehends that the human life which began has to end and it symbolizes the destruction of the world. As J.J.Collins defines,

An apocalypse is a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework in which a revelation is mediated by an other worldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, in so far as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial, in so far as it involves another, supernatural world. (9)

Apocalypse in The Bible exposes the impending havoc which would bring an end to the world. In *The Revelation*, the signs of apocalypse are the natural disasters like floods and earthquakes. Moral deterioration of human beings would lead to catastrophe where the world would come to an end by fire. This would be followed by the final judgment and God shall create a new earth. According to the Hindu tradition, the cycle of human life is categorized into four ages: Gold, Silver, Bronze and Iron. It is believed that the present age is the fourth age, Kali-yuga or Dark Age. During this period, there is rampant moral deterioration.

In literature, modernization began through Renaissance. Harold Rosenberg explains the modern art as "The tradition of the new" (3). This period transformed the God-centric

world to man-centric world. Many writers from 1890 to 1930 wrote about the dehumanizing factors. They are Henry James, Joseph Conrad, Marcel Proust, Thomas Mann, Andre Gide, Franz Kafka, Italo Svevo, Robert Musil and William Faulkner.

Most of the European literature after World War I portrays the world which is falling apart due to the excessive growth of capitalism, loss of community, destruction of world wars and risk of nuclear catastrophe. These writings are categorized into three groups. The first one is mythical and religious approach which represents the works of T.S. Eliot and W.B. Yeats who find hope through revitalization of spiritual values and beliefs. The second one is historical and materialistic approach which represents the works of Bernard Shaw and Sean O'Casey who examine the current scenario historically and throw lights on the challenges and find a possible solution through combined effort. The last one is subjective approach which perceives world through philosophical terms and notice not only the world is changing but also realizes that the damage done is irrevocable.

Kermode says, "Apocalypse is a part of the modern absurd" (20). Watson calls apocalypse as, "The myth of catastrophe" (486). Modern literature exhibits the theme of apocalypse in certain novels. Nineteenth century American novelists are the one who introduced apocalyptic imagination in their fiction. Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Blithedale Romance*, Herman Melville's *The Confidence Man* and Mark Twain's *The Mysterious Stranger* are of apocalyptic genre. David Ketterer states that science fiction is the purest outlet to exhibit apocalyptic thoughts. He asserts, "The search for a definition of mankind and his status in the universe which will stand in our advanced but confused state of knowledge (science), and is characteristically cast in the Gothic or post-Gothic Mode" (13).

Science fiction is one of the popular genres that portray the issues such as war, nuclear destruction, environmental degradation and evil side of artificial intelligence.

In the 1940s science fiction had promoted itself as prophetic and inspirational.

In the 1950 it had been diagnostic and critical, but typically provided some sort of happy ending. But in the 1960s the dominant mood of much of the best writing could only be described as nihilistic. At last science fiction found a fictional voice appropriate to the nightmare of nuclear war.

(Brains 12)

This chapter examines the Apocalypse and Post-apocalypse in Thomas King's Trilogy: *UFOs That Crashed to Earth*, *Martian Fever* and *Message From Titans* as the three novels portray the horror of the earth's technological civilization that brings an end to sustenance of all life. Thomas King discusses pollution due to nuclear waste in *UFOs Crashed to Earth*. The other two novels, *Martian Fever* and *Message From Titans* are futuristic novels which project sustenance of life aftermath nuclear destruction. Both the novels take place on another planet as the earth is burning up and loses its power to sustain all living being because of the impact of nuclear destruction.

The novel *UFOs Crashed to Earth* is based on the recorded history of nuclear weapons explosions on earth. Thomas King throws light on the nuclear waste storage facilities which are highly dangerous to environment. He also brings in the UFO, Unidentified Flying Objects, phenomenon which is one of the biggest mysteries of all time. The novel reveals that the United States Air Force reverse engineer the alien technology which eventually paved way to the atomic age on earth.

Allan Ginsberg asserts, “The by products of that sickness include not only the political violence...but all the grant fantasies of the cold war- the witchhunts, race paranoia, projections of threat and doom. The sickness will end in our destroying our planet” (242). Thomas King gives a glimpse of Vietnam War and its impact on people as well as environment through the protagonist, Jake who had once worked in United States Air Force. Jake is in search of a new life through which he wants to asserts his identity. “I’m fifty years old and I have wasted all of my time being someone else. What the hell have I really accomplished? Nothing, that’s what! I have never had a creative or original thought in my head all of my days on this planet! Hell I’ve followed the leaders, played their little head games and done whatever was expected of me” (King, “UFOs” 10). Jake thinks about his past life in United States Air Force. The Air Force is bureaucratically run by officers in a rigid system. Jake feels that he is lucky that his work was on planes. He was a part of medical evacuation team on C-13 transports. “No caste system exists in the air” (King, “UFOs” 11).

Jake was almost killed in action at the war and his leg was blown apart. He does not call it a war instead he calls it a conflict. “I was almost the 48,987th KIA of the war, which wasn’t really a war. Since we never declared war on North Vietnam, it was a conflict, not a war. So it was the Vietnam Conflict” (King, “UFOs” 11). The war field memories often come up and he feels disgusted even after lapse of many years. He remembers each and everything that happened in the war field. The place was filled with dead bodies and the whole place is covered with pools of blood. Just when Jake and the medical team planned to make an emergency take off from the bush at Viet Cong territory, the mortar from the bomb which exploded came tearing through the bottom and hits Jake. Immediately Jake was evacuated to Saigon Field Unit hospital. “I had gotten nailed with shrapnel and

had emergency surgery. The shrapnel had almost torn my damned leg off” (King, “UFOs” 13). After the injury, Jake gets a medical discharge from the military and settles in San Francisco. Later his interest turns towards UFOs.

H.G. Wells states, “This time, however, it is the underground dwellers who control the technology, the means of production, while the surface dwellers are the victims consumed, quite literally, by these futuristic capitalists” (87). The places where UFOs were sighted are made into restricted areas and U.S. military guards the place like a hawk so Jake strongly believes that military has secrets regarding the UFOs. He spies the places so as to find out the highly protected secret of U.S. military. He gets this idea when he passes by the Mojave Desert. “One thing I always liked about the Mojave Desert is the spooky nights” (King, “UFOs” 15). People who live near the desert believe that the area is surrounded with some sort of superstitious activities. He decides to camp in that area for a few days to see what happens. He sets up a tent and gets his sleeping bag. He lits up fire with pieces of wood and keeps it the whole night. A day passes and he plans to observe things and people. Suddenly a bright light flashes in his face. He sees a very bright flash of orange-red light streak passes just above his head. “Now I’ve seen everything! A freaking UFO!!” (King, “UFOs” 18). Then two air force jets follow the object and he hears a thundering sound similar to that of rocket being fired. Then he witnesses a huge yellow blast and something falls down to earth. Jake covers his ears as the ground vibrated from the blast. Suddenly four more jets appear near the blast. Lots of debris falls from the sky. “I can see tons of stuff falling to the desert floor over there! The damned UFO was shot down!” (King, “UFOs” 19). Similar incident took place at Roswell and air force denied it so Jake suspects the air force. “I want to know if the Air Force really did cover up UFO sightings like at Roswell”

(King, "UFOs" 19). He plans to drive near the site where the explosion took place. As he nears the place he hears more explosions. He takes out his camera and pictures everything before he gets caught.

Jake is transfixed by looking at the enormous disc shaped shiny spacecraft which is approximately 200 feet long. Many soldiers are in the process of covering the alien space craft with a net. The smoke and flames are still coming out from the space craft and Jake could not take photos. The breeze ignites the blaze and huge fire covers the object. Soon soldiers rush with fire proof suits and they make use of foam to put down the fire. A bad smell surrounds the place. "Damn that stinks!" (King, "UFOs" 19). Jake research in the web about the alien and UFO crashed sites. The first one was reported back in 1941, Cape Girardeau Missouri Crash and U.S. Military covered that up. The author documents all the data related to UFO crashes.

They were: Socorro, NM 5-31-47, Roswell 7-7-47, San Augustin, NM 7-5-47, New Mexico desert 8-13-47, Paradise Valley, AZ 10-47, Aztec, NM 2-13-48 and 4-48, Hart Canyon near Aztec on 3-25-48, (two alien space craft were found and 17 alien bodies recovered.) White Sands, NM 3-25-48, Mojave Desert, Cal. 1-50, Carson Sink, Nev. 7-24-52, (2 pilots saw 3 UFOs in a V formation with delta wing airfoils), Otis AFB Falmouth, MA. (Air Force pilots chased a UFO and had to eject, Air Force plane was never found.).(King, "UFOs" 22)

Thomas King expounds the brutality of U.S. Military towards Jake and Suzie for uncovering their secret project. Jake feels thrilled after he saw the Air Force shoot down a UFO which turned out to be an alien spacecraft and he had taken pictures of it. He has no

job and he has to create one. Jake loves photography and writing so he decides a career in photo journalism and reporting. “I’m a free spirit, free lance photag and reporter” (King, “UFOs” 45). He gives his photos to the local newspapers and contacted almost all the media outlets but none of them believed him. Sure enough and to his surprise articles have started appearing in various papers and on TV stating that Jake is crazy and the whole news about the alien spacecraft is a lie.

...the lip-smacking relish with which our twentieth- century prophetics proclaim the imminent destruction of our society is unmistakable. They are thrilled by it. They want it. Perhaps they want to revenge themselves on it because it is not perfect. Perhaps, more particularly, they want to revenge themselves on it because it has not fulfilled the dreams of perfection they had....it has betrayed them, betrayed their hopes and ideals...made a mockery of their lives. (Magee 37)

The Yucca Mountain Nuclear Repository Monthly believes his story and sends a reporter to interview Jake. The reporter asks him about the Air Force UFO project which makes Jake speechless. “No, I had no idea about any secret project and it was an accident that I ever saw the damn UFO to begin with” (King, “UFOs” 47). The reporter warns him about the U.S. Military who is desperately looking for Jake and the reporter asks him to clear the place and advices him not to come back. The state police, Cap and Frank catch Jake near the Area 51. Cap has a night stick and is slapping it into his hand while Frank has his gun drawn towards Jake. Jake asks them the reason behind his arrest. “We’ll bring him to that Air Force facility where they experiment on aliens. Hell, they can find out what the fuck is wrong with him” (King, “UFOs” 48). Cap hit Jake across his back and

head several times. Frank punches his nose hardy and breaks his nose. Frank says, “Quit bleeding all over my highway shit for brains” (King, “UFOs” 48). They ask Jake if he is carrying drugs in his van but Jake replies that he wants to talk to his lawyer. They plan to frame him for drug case. “Frank placed a bag of marijuana in Jake’s shirt pocket and spilled some on the seat of the van. Then he spilled some cocaine in the glove compartment” (King, “UFOs” 49). They threaten him that they have solid evidence and they can put him under bars for a long time. They laugh hysterically and smash Jake with the night stick. Eventually Jake escapes from there and runs into the desert.

Suzie is also ill-treated by the army as she is involved with Jake. Suzie wakes up to a loud booming sound outside her window at her mansion. It is a jet chopper and two men approach her. “Miss, we need to fly you to FBI Headquarters in LA” (King, “UFOs” 71). Suzie is shocked and does not know what is happening. After a while they land in a desert near some buildings. Suzie is very sure that the place is not LA so she asks them for which they reply, “Sorry miss we have our orders” (King, “UFOs” 71). She asks the reason for bringing her to the deserted place for which they scare her by saying, “The last time we flew someone here they were never seen or heard from again” (King, “UFOs” 71). She begins to shake and mumbles a prayer. They take her to a large room with one light on and water running onto a wooden board. She is locked inside a room and she yells until she passes out. When she wakes up she is tied to the board naked. Water is running into her mouth as she is tilted back. She begins chocking and she yells, “I can’t breathe you perverts! You sick bastards like torturing women? May you all rot in hell” (King, “UFOs” 72). She passes out and wakes up again with the same torture. This continues for many days

and when her health condition deteriorates, the water finally stops. A loud piercing voice is heard asking her to talk about UFO. She finally cries out, “Okay I was with a friend who saw a UFO crash and we followed it around” (King, “UFOs” 72). At last they give her electric shock until she becomes unconscious. When she wakes up, she is lying in the desert with her clothes on. She has dried blood on her face and her head is badly hurt.

Thomas King unfolds the dreadful experience of Jake who witnesses alien bodies. Jake accidentally falls into a pit with concrete walls when he tries to escape from the police. He finds a trap door which he opens with force. It leads to an underground tunnel. “I don’t know where I am but, it’s better than up there” (King, “UFOs” 49). He finds a maze of tunnels and portals leading in all directions. He looks for a set of stairs and elevator. Finally he finds some stairs. As he runs down, he hears voices. “Hey, Bob why are we always the ones to examine this alien shit?” We’re just lucky. This is some nasty smelling stuff. The stealth jets shot a UFO down yesterday and they removed these bodies. Well, I’ve got to take a shit and need a break” (King, “UFOs” 49-50). Workmen leave the room to take a break. Jake is left alone in that room and he takes a closer look at the alien bodies. He collects a few tissue samples from an alien’s body. He could not take pictures as he does not have camera. Then he gets right out of there. He makes his way to the surface and reaches Area 51. He finally locates his van and drives off.

Another corresponding incident occurs in the following month. Jake and Suzie hear a loud bang echoing through the valley. Then a bright light fills the night sky above them. Fighter jets aim at the flying object. A huge bang is heard and there is fire and smoke everywhere. All of a sudden, Suzie and Jake see something weird.

Several little creatures crawled out of the UFO and on to the ground. Jake was busy filming and taping the whole thing while Suzie looked through the binoculars. Fire trucks came screaming up and put the fires out. An ambulance came and picked up the alien bodies and drove off. More F-15's came streaking past and flew straight up into the night sky as though to do a victory roll. (King, "UFOs" 93)

They handover the video footage to CNN news and the channel telecast it and reveal Jake and Suzie's name and both of them immediately evacuate the place.

Thomas King divulges the operation of power hierarchy that dominates a common man. Jake files a law suit against the United States Air Force. Dan Miller from CNN news interviews him. Jake says that the case is about kidnapping Suzie. "Suzie was kidnapped and tortured because she saw a UFO. I have film and audio recordings of Air Force jets shooting down UFOs" (King, "UFOs" 97). The day when Jake and Suzie are testified in the court, Major Armstrong from Air Force Security is present. When Major Armstrong is cross examined, he is asked to tell everything he knows about the UFO crashes. He says, "There wasn't any" (King, "UFOs" 98). He is questioned about the secret facility in Nevada called Area 51. He escapes by blaming the national security. "I can't say due to national security" (King, "UFOs" 98). Even the judge favors Armstrong so the case is dragged. The hearing goes on for several more days with Jake displaying the film and audio recordings of the UFOs. Eventually Armstrong wins the case by saying that the recordings are not real. Jake is not able to prove anything and the Air Force hides the truth in the name of national security. As Michael Barkum states, "...the absolute condemnation of

the existing political and social order, while denying its legitimacy, the transgression of accepted norms, laws, and taboos; and unrealistic aims in regard to the work of revitalizing society” (18).

The Air Force takes their power for granted and kill all the innocent people who go near the restricted area. After losing the case, Jake and Suzie, collect all the news that occurred in the past to make the evidence strong. They collect a relevant story from the Argus Courier. The story is about three college students who have gone missing. “Two boys and one girl became disoriented after taking peyote and were lost. They wandered on to Naval restricted land and were shot. The Navy had no comment concerning the incident. The bodies were picked up by the Dry Desert Funeral Home for burial on boot hill” (King, “UFOs” 102). Jake is shocked after reading the story.

Thomas King elucidates the shrewd plan of U.S. Military who makes use of the warehouse to store the remains of alien spacecraft. Jake and Suzie plan to visit Jake’s friend who lives in Beatty, California as they are chased by the police. As they drive through Needles, they see a warehouse near some railroad tracks. Jake becomes suspicious and says, “From the looks of how full the parking lot is there must be 5000 workers on all three shift, seven days a week. Something damn big thing is happening here” (King, “UFOs” 99). Both of them park their car within eyesight of the huge building. At about 3am a train pulls in and the workers unload a dozen of trailers. By looking at the workers, Jake shouts, “The workers look like freaking zombies or robots” (King, “UFOs” 99). Jake manages to find some work clothes and an identity card. He changes quickly and pretends to be a worker. Then he approaches a worker about the rest of the alien wreck but he asks him to keep quiet. Jake has no other option but to follow the other workers inside the

basement. He is astonished by looking at the huge pile of alien metals stacked up to the ceiling. “There were alien looking generators or engines, solar panel looking things, strange looking mirrors, some kind of propulsion or rocket engines, clear glass domes, alien looking controls and much more” (King, “UFOs” 99). Jake finds out another shocking truth about the workers. He assumes that the workers are either given drugs or brain washed so that they will not reveal any of the secrets outside. “Now I know why they all look like zombies” (King, “UFOs” 99). The Air Force manipulates the workers by using their powers.

In the novel *UFOs That Crashed to Earth*, the author discloses the vulnerability of nuclear storage facility and its lingering effects. Jake gathers information about UFO sightings from the local people. “Well they been out thar fur a couple yars naw. Thar real purdy and blue and red and all colors. We like em just fine” (King, “UFOs” 108). They confirm that the UFOs has been sighted in Yucca Mountain since two years. So they go to the spot and after a while they see colors move back and forth in the sky. Jake suspects that UFOs have come there for a reason. “I think that the nuclear waste is so hot and radioactive that it’s contaminating our planet. The aliens or whatever is up in the sky is monitoring it. This freaking waste dump is a hot bed for all kind of pollution... the damned aliens are afraid that Mankind will pollute the whole damned Universe. They may be right” (King, “UFOs” 108-109).

Jake makes up a fake pass and dresses like FBI to approach the storage facility. In the main gate, the guard stops him and says that it is off limits. Jake shows his fake passes and the guard opens the gate. As soon as he enters, he finds a diagram of the entire facility. He tours the whole place with the help of the diagram but he is not able to find anything.

Just when he decides to leave, he finds an elevator. The elevator takes him all the way to the bottom where he finds some safety glasses and a radiation badge. Then he enters into the room which read “Do Not Inter” (King, “UFOs” 110). Once inside, he feels like puking as the room stinks badly. The whole place is filled with the debris from alien spacecraft. He sees another sign that read, “Radioactive Waste” (King, “UFOs” 110). He enters easily with the help of radioactive badge he took from the entrance. The room is extremely hot so he examines where the heat comes from. The whole room is empty except for the piping and air vents. He assumes that the pipes are connected to the underground. On the wall, he finds a chart of all nuclear waste that has been transported till date. It has some red stars near them. It appears to be some kind of trouble during transport of the nuclear waste material. He counts the red stars and it is totally forty five. This means that nearly forty five of nuclear waste are either spilled or leaked during transportation. Jake bursts out thus:

Now they’re polluting our entire country side with nuclear waste which lasts for thousands of years! Radioactive waste can last for hundreds of thousands of years. It comes from spent fuel rods and old nuclear weapons. They had planned to store it under ground, above ground, under the sea, in space, in warehouses and any where else they could hide it. In Russia there have been “accidents” where huge spills of this waste has gone into lakes and rivers. The stuff can be stolen and “Dirty Bombs” made.

(King, “UFOs” 111)

Thomas King explains the devastation caused by nuclear attacks which has altered the global landscape. Jake finds out that there are several Air Force bases where the officials experiment the atomic bombs. “Davis-Monthan, near Tucson, Williams AFB, 30 miles

from Phoenix, Kirtland near Albuquerque, Holloman near Alamogordo and Cannon near the Texas pan handle” (King, “UFOs” 114). Jake has done his research and plans to investigate all of them. First he decides to investigate Alamogordo, New Mexico because that was the place where the first big atomic bomb blast was conducted. “It was July 16, 1945 in the desert sixty miles south West of Roswell. They detonated the first atomic bomb” (King, “UFOs” 114). He finds out that every time Air Force experiment their atomic bomb only after the UFO sighting. “Rosewell AFB was the home of the Enola Gay, the B-29 bomber that dropped the first A-Bomb on Japan. Then UFOs are sighted and aliens found there. Not a coincidence!” (King, “UFOs” 114).

Never again we say: God will not allow it. We say no to torture, and then we find a reason to torture in the name of democracy. We say no to sixty-six thousand dead in a single bomb blast over a defenseless foreign city, and then we do it again, a hundred thousand this time. We say no to eight million dead in camps and then we do it again, twelve million dead in gulags. Humans are poison. Perhaps it would be better if they did not exist at all. (Evenson 46)

Meanwhile in Holloman Airforce Base, experimental aircraft are fueled with SR-71 Blackbirds. As they take off with the huge turbojets, the ground shakes and the Mother Nature shatters. “With no traffic ahead or behind, the Blackbirds kicked it up mach 3. A terrible roar shook the desert far below. Able to out run anything in the sky the Blackbirds ruled Earth and space” (King, “UFOs”119).

Thomas King uncovers the fact that reverses engineering of alien technology had paved way for the introduction of atomic age. Through reverse engineering of alien technology

theory, the U.S.A. has copied alien technology concerning radar, propulsion systems, navigation systems, life support, communication, weapons, computer chips and nuclear power and weapons. Jake opines, “One day a UFO crashed in America and the brilliant scientist geeks found a little, funny looking machine called nuclear reactor on the space ship from the stars. They eventually figured out how to copy it and we got atomic bombs!” (King, “UFOs” 117). After gathering all the information, scientists do not want the aliens anymore so they keep destroying them. Jake becomes emotional after knowing the truth. “We tried to kill off another species to make way for our own greedy, selfish species, called MAN!” (King, “UFOs” 118).

There have been over two thousand nuclear bombs detonated around the world. Life sustaining earth has been polluted with nuclear fallout and other forms of atomic, particle pollution for more than half a century. One of the realistic examples is Hiroshima and Nagasaki attack. During World War II, United States exploded two nuclear weapons on the Japanese Cities, Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Casualties of the blast range around 180,000 people. The impact of the nuclear bombs resonates even today as a warning. The whole area was inflicted by radiation which resulted in serious health issues like burns, queasiness and loss of hair. In addition to that, survivors still suffer from leukemia and malignant tumors. The future kids who are born to survivors or people who live there are prone to deadly diseases such as carcinoma.

Unused nuclear weapons create more nuclear waste. All the nuclear wastes are disposed in many ways: buried in the earth, dumped in the ocean, launched it into space and burned it into earth’s atmosphere. This radioactive contamination lasts for thousands of years. Mankind and his insatiable desire for power, conquest of other nations, greed

for material things is destroying the earth which took millions of years to evolve. Man's need for energy from the planet's limited fossil fuels is also insatiable. With the fossil fuels becoming extinct, capitalists shift their gaze towards nuclear power plants all over the world.

Eventually Jake wakes up from a dream and everything that happened in his life such as UFOs sighting, nuclear storage facility and reverse engineering are just a dream. However Jake takes Suzie to all the places where he investigated in his dream. Surprisingly both of them feel that they have been to the places before. Suzie remembers the torture as soon as she sees the place. She immediately checks her shoulder and finds the scar proving that everything that happened is not just a dream.

In the novel *UFOs That Crashed to Earth*, Thomas King throws light on major issues like war, environmental catastrophe due to nuclear weapons and misuse of hierarchal power by killing common people. "...the realities of overpopulation, ineradicable pollution, rampant nationalism and plain entrepreneurial greed- the four horsemen of Greenhouse apocalypse- closed around the Planet" (Turner 45). Characters namely Jake and Suzie walk past a lot of trouble to reveal the secret project of U.S.A Military but they fail to prove in spite of producing lots of evidence. Eventually both the characters Jake and Susie gain a renewed sense of purpose in life. Thomas King makes the readers realize the importance of the mother earth which provides abundance of resources to live in. Simultaneously he portrays that the atomic age might be the end of mankind on earth.

Thomas King's *Martian Fever* is about earth's early settlements on the planet Mars from the year 2025 and beyond. The novel is about a family with generations of descendants who have a very special gift of precognition or the unique ability to see into future is

passed on from generation to generation in the Miller family. Thomas King has given a glimpse of American Civil War and the destruction that took place during the year 1865. Then the novel shifts to the future 2025 where the earth is burning due to manmade disasters. As the earth is reduced to an unbearable and polluted world, Mars is the only planet left for mankind's salvation. The Martian colonialists find ways to survive in their new hostile world. Eventually mankind's greediness makes the new world, Mars an uninhabitable place by looting all the natural resources as they did in earth. Eventually they pollute Mars beyond sustainable levels and people had to seek refuge elsewhere.

The apocalypse, then, is The End, or resembles the end, or explains the end. But nearly every apocalyptic text presents the same paradox. The end is never the end. The apocalyptic text announces and describes the end of the world, but then the text does not end, nor does the world represented in the text, and neither does the world itself. In nearly every apocalyptic presentation, something remains *after the end*. (Berger 5-6)

As Berger states, existence of post-apocalyptic fiction is undeniably paradoxical because apocalypse is meant to be the end of the world and the apocalyptic fiction also demand such an end for the story. However, something remains after the destruction and that something is the beginning of post-apocalypse. Post-apocalypse is the life or settlement after a catastrophe. The post-apocalyptic texts generally perceived in two ways: first one is utopian in which the text is focused on restoration of world and relationships. The other one is dystopian in which the text progresses towards destruction, lone survivors and bleak future. The post-apocalypse text is more complicated than utopian and dystopian texts. The actual post-apocalyptic narrative consists of the longing of utopian and at the

same time accompanied by the dystopian characteristics like corruption and oppressive state. Post-apocalypse is the fusion of both utopian and dystopian elements which creates an amalgamated society. James Berger states “Apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic representations serve varied psychological and political purposes. Most prevalently, they put forward a total critique of any existing social order (7).

The post-apocalyptic narrative can be distinguished from other themes such as utopian and dystopian. Post-apocalypse begins with the fragments of the past which is completely left behind or forgotten. Post-apocalyptic fiction visualizes the future. Authors and film makers create stories envisioning future which is formulated by the hierarchal society. Most of the science fiction imagines future but they replicate the present. As Jameson aptly states,

Whence the canonical defense of the genre: in a moment in which technological change has reached a dizzying tempo, in which so-called —future shock is a daily experience, such narratives have the social function of accustoming their readers to rapid innovation, of preparing our consciousness and our habits for the otherwise demoralizing impact of change itself. (151)

Thomas King shows the intensity of the nuclear destruction on earth. People on earth are desperate for relief from the global warming and other environmental nightmares, which is the result of mankind’s unscrupulous exploitation and pollution of nature.

With fossil fuels exhausted and over population creating more and more pollution, it was crisis time for all Mankind. Between the thousands of nuclear weapons detonated, nuclear energy and its contamination lack of

fresh drinking water, smog and lack of clean air, lack of food and housing, Earth and Mankind were on the brink of disaster. (King, "Martian" 56)

Almost all the countries indulge in nuclear practice. Threats of global nuclear holocaust have been a persistent danger. When a nuclear weapon is used, it leaves the area in ruins and the land gets contaminated with nuclear fallout and its pollution continues for nearly twenty thousand years. Even though the U.S.A, Russia, China and other nuclear countries have disarmed their nuclear weapons, many other countries have nuclear weapons and are using them on their neighbours.

As D.H. Lawrence states, "Apocalypse...is repellent because it resounds with the dangerous snarl of the frustrated, suppressed collective self, the frustrated power-spirit in man, Vengeful" (61). Thomas King portrays the Pioneer 1 Mission Mars crew's perilous trip to the Red planet. As the nations are ready to blow up the entire world ten times, Mars is their last and only hope. So the United States Air force and NASA have landed on Mars first and make sure that the planet is inhabitable. Security and law and order issues are made clear in meetings. "The military had the final word on all government matters. Security police, the courts, local law enforcement, local and state government all came under their jurisdiction. Constables and justices of the peace were elected by the Martian settlers at elections held twice yearly at town hall meetings. Only the church was exempt from total military control" (King, "Martian" 56-57). After that NASA and United States Air force arrange a team under the captaincy of Sammy Miller. He is from the Miller family who are gifted with precognition and he too is gifted. Sammy is accompanied by Davey Bucko Young who is the friend of Sammy and a crew mate. Interested people join the crew on their own risk as the trip is experimental. Pioneer 1 Mars Mission is ready to

take off and the final announcement is given to the crew members. “Ladies and gentlemen this is launch control at Melbourne announcing the beginning of colonization on Mars and the lift off of our new Mars mission” (King, “Martian” 58).

The space ship is nuclear powered. When the ship gains orbit around earth for radical acceleration to Mars, the crew members brace themselves for the gravitational force they would receive. Sammy, crew leader and chief engineer, pilots the ship from blast off and changes it to auto pilot. The trip is cut from six months to three months by fixing Ion Thruster, rocket engine. Ion Thruster has the power to generate high speed. Each and every parts of the ship has been tested several times as there are lots of unknown hazards involved as many things might go wrong on long space flights. “However, this mission would go much deeper into space and no rescue help could be expected. It was expensive and extremely dangerous. Space flight had become an all or nothing gamble. Once in deep space the crew could not look to Earth for help. They were victims of their own destiny” (King, “Martian” 59).

In the novel *Martian Fever*, the author explains how the crew members face the wrath of the sand storm in the new hostile land. Sammy, the captain of the ship strives hard to make a smooth landing on Mars. As the ship is about to land, the wind and sand from the storm broadsides them and pushes the shuttle into a tailspin. The crew is saved because of the shuttle which is made of titanium. Eventually the whole ship is plowed into the sand and dirt wall near the domes and it comes to rest. Sammy shouts, “We’re buried in this sand and crap!” (King, “Martian” 69). The crew members witness the sand beating against the hull. It takes twelve hours for the robots diggers to take the ship out. Manual work by humans is impossible on Mars as it needs more oxygen. The robot

diggers work slowly without rest. They are much faster than humans. Need of oxygen while digging makes it virtually impossible for humans to do any manual work on Mars. “The robot diggers were like a tunnel digger on Earth, with a conveyor belt which picked up the sand and dumped it into waiting dune buggy loaders. These robot buggies then took the sand to a designated area and dumped it” (King, “Martian” 70). Pioneer 1 is transferred through the underground tunnels to a waiting dome. Just when the robots clear out the place, they are buried in sand again. Sammy yells, “This damned planet has not been very hospitable to us” (King, “Martian” 70-71). After two days, the rescue team and robots finally digs them out again and finally they are rescued.

Thomas King demonstrates how terraforming brings artificial rain on Mars. Terraforming is changing the atmosphere and temperature of another planet to make it fit for human habitation. To create atmosphere on Mars, Martian colonialists combine the methane gas with Carbon dioxide and start the process of terraforming to make the land a breathable atmosphere. Soon after they release gases in the atmosphere, it starts to rain with heavy thunder. Sammy assumes, “It must be from the terraforming. It’s released enough gases into atmosphere to create this electric-ion storm” (King, “Martian” 76). This rain is completely different from the Earth’s rain. Even the thunder is severe that the whole crew members go into the underground bunker. As they reach the underground retreat, the rain gets violent.

Berger states, “[E]very structure of the old world is infected, and only an absolute, purifying cataclysm can make possible an utterly new, perfected world” (7). Exploration of new planet brings surprise to the crew members. The crew takes four rovers, three shuttles, two jet choppers and ten GPS navigation systems to explore the new land. The crew splits

into two groups and one team is headed by Sammy to explore the channels and the other team is headed by Major Rogers, commandant of the Mars base Cydonia-City to explore Olympus Mons. Sammy's team is surprised by the view of Martian channel. Sammy shouts with excitement, "The freaking canals are enormous" (King, "Martian" 78). Bucko corrects him by saying, "They're channels not canals! But you can't even see across them and it's a bottomless pit!" (King, "Martian" 78). The Martian channels appear to be hundreds of miles deep and wide. Some of them seem to stretch out forever and appears to have been formed from water erosion. After they find a safe place to land, they find a cave. The caves are vast and winding around in gigantic circles and extending for kilometers. As soon as they enter the cave, they look for hieroglyphics that they heard so much back on earth. But they find no writing on the cave or any other sign of life or civilization. Later Blondie, Sammy's girlfriend finds something and calls out Sammy in excitement. "I think this is gold!" (King, "Martian" 81). Then bucko finds silver and other members find uranium. Sammy is both excited and worried. "It was a huge find and when word about it reached Earth the race would be on" (King, "Martian" 81).

The major's crew finds nothing in the foothills of Olympus Mons, the huge dormant volcanic mountain. So they plan to fly up to the top and check. "The choppers circled while climbing higher and higher up the volcano" (King, "Martian" 81). The weather was calm when they reach the top so it makes more convenient for them to set up domes for a camp site. After heavy rain the weathers has calmed down but it does not last. With the Martian wind howling and intense cold, the crew members feel as if they are abandoned on Mars. Major says, "I'll never understand this Martian weather" (King, "Martian" 82). They feel proud because they are the first troop to set foot on Olympus Mons, the tallest mountain in the solar system.

Thomas King expresses the ill effects of the excessive greed of human beings. With limitless supplies of rare and precious metals on Mars, greedy people on earth swarm to Mars. People are tizzy to figure out a way to reach Mars to become rich. All kinds of people and situation exist on earth. Some people are honorable and stand up to face the hardships of the situation. Cow boys decide to sign up the Mars contract in order to help their friends who live in the bunk house. The child welfare workers worry about the future of the children who have signed up to go to Mars. They guess that the child abuse would skyrocket and they really want to save the children. There are more sinister people who are ready to escape from earth and reach Mars to become rich.

Lousy doctors fed up with sick people always dying on them, quack psychologists weary of listening to the constant whining and poor me excuses of their clients, rabid police officers who wanted to shoot first and ask questions later, sadistic judges who dreamed of putting the DA and public defender in the electric chair and pulling the switch, immoral teachers who hated their students, blue collar workers who detested their bosses and planned torture them in as painful a manner as possible and watch them suffer, fisherman who hated the smell of dead fish and many, many others. (King, "Martian" 90)

The flight to Mars seemed to be an exodus from earth. Spacecraft has weight limits so people are restricted to bring much with them. People have no other choice but prioritize their things to carry with them. This creates dilemma for most people. They are forced to leave their pets and relatives behind. One such family is Frank and Edith Burns of North Bumblehead, South Dakota. The family has been running dry cleaning business.

They plan to go to Mars leaving their son and daughter behind who are studying in college. The children refuse to go as they want to complete their studies. “Oh daddy we can’t because of college” (King, “Martian” 100). Frank warns her daughter not to ask for tickets once they reach Mars. “But don’t call me on Mars and ask me for a ticket” (King, “Martian” 100).

Thomas King narrates an incident where the farmer boys build their own spaceship with organic rocket fuel from cow manure. Clyde and Joel from East Overshoe, Ohio who are farmers plan a trip to the red planet. The cow’s manure is processed to produce methane gas which is used as rocket fuel. They buy rocket engines from Army and Navy surplus stores which sell NASA space things. After five weeks, the spaceship is ready to take off and they inform their parents. “Pa we’re going to Mars to strike it rich and then we’ll be back with the money. We know you and ma need it. That’s why we’re doing it” (King, “Martian” 93). The next morning, the farmer boys take off with the homemade spaceship. They never shut the rock engine down as they have endless supply of cow manure. “You see, they brought Bessy the cow along! So, fuel was no problem”(King, “Martian” 94). They reach Mars by breaking all speed records.

Security forces arrest the boys after seeing them on Mars. They take them to the base camp and Major Roger is stunned by looking at the boys. “What the hell are you two doing on Mars and how the hell did you get here? (King, “Martian” 95). The boys answer him that they want to become rich and they came in their homemade rocket ship. Roger asks about food for the past six months for which they reply, “Well major, we had whatever ma packed for us. You know, dandelion greens, spinach, hard cider, some moonshine pa brewed, beef jerky and the like” (King, “Martian” 94). Then the boys give the cow to Major and ask him to use it for milk. The next morning the boys go to the gold fields with

protective suits. The major helps them with all the food supplies as they deserve to become rich. They work hard for six months and make a reasonable profit. Eventually they promise the major that they will not ride back to the base camp. They are sent back to earth with all respect. “The major and all the troop began shaking hands with the boys who had become popular on Mars” (King, “Martian” 97). The author suggests that the rockets and the fuels can be made from natural manure instead of nuclear fuel.

In the novel *Martian Fever*, Thomas King depicts the severity of the skyrocketing demand of water and Oxygen for economic consumption to meet the basic necessities of the growing population. The cost of basic needs like water and oxygen are extremely high that new settlers are dumbfounded by looking at the prizes.

There were Martian fees for everything. Re-charging your batteries for your rover was \$595 plus tax. Highway taxes varied depending on where and how far you were going. A typical road trip from Cydonia base to the channels was \$250 plus tax. Renting a jet chopper was very costly. You needed a pilot and charts. The average cost for one week was \$50,000.

The pilots charged more or less the same amount. (King, “Martian” 104)

There are no welfare schemes on Mars nor are there other relief agencies. Most of the religious groups have established church domes near the main base camp at Cydonia. A few Church going Martian settlers have created shelters where new settlers who are down with money can make use of the shelter. That is the only help they can receive on Mars. A family loses everything on Mars. Donald and Marsha Rhodes from Toledo, Ohio pay their travel expense by selling their business. By the time they reach Mars, they are left with nothing. Don buys three Ford Rovers with their savings and start a taxi business

on Mars. He along with his wife and three kids stay in the basement of the dome. A severe storm wipes out all the domes along with the cabs. With no insurance available on Mars and no money, the family faces a hopeless situation. Donald gets a job at the hotel diner running the water re-generator and his wife, Marsha fills the customer oxygen tanks. Then the three kids are old enough to wash customer's rovers. But Donald indulges in gambling and sells everything including his wife and children.

Thomas King illustrates heart wrecking inhuman act of human organ harvesting on Mars. Homeless Martian settlers end up dying in a Martian gutter. Their bodies are taken to the organ banks for organ harvesting. Many of them volunteer for termination of their life and sell their organs. They receive the money for their organs ahead of time in order to save the remaining family members.

There was a hell of a lot of domestic violence and child abuse on Mars. The police and the courts were very busy. Unfortunately, these victims eventually ended up at the organ banks too. In fact, over 50% of all Martian colonists either volunteered or were taken to the organ banks for termination. The Martian organ Corporation usually cleared a 500% profit. It was the wealthiest business in the solar system. (King, "Martian" 107)

Crime rate is at its peak on Mars. The security forces hire civilians as officers as the Martian security forces get more cases than ever. No one including Air Force can afford to pay for room and board for prisoners so there are no jails on Mars. If a person is found guilty by a court, that person has to choose between termination or being sold to the mining companies as a forced labourer for life. Mc Carthy's *The Road* has the similar incident of

killing people. “By dusk of the day following they were at the city. The mummied dead everywhere. The flesh cloven along the bones, the ligaments dried to tug and taut as wires” (Mc Carthy 23).

In addition to that, Mars Special Forces finds out that a black market operation is thriving out near the channels. All the cops raid the crook’s compound and take everyone into temporary custody. They confiscate many illegal drugs like Cocaine, one million hits of THC, Tetrahydrocannabinol, an illicit drug and one thousand liters of booze. Everyone is punished as they are unable to pay the fines. “Being framed out meant that all of your organs that were in good condition were to be sold to the highest bidder and the organ bank got the profit after taxes. This was of course you were disintegrated. The cons were kept alive in a tank until all of their organs were sold” (King, “Martian” 109).

The Industrial Revolution has set its foot on Mars by establishing factories all over the planet. All popular automobiles companies like Ford, BMW, Harley-Davidson and Martian motorcycles have launched their vehicle. All sorts of clothing mills are churning the pollution into the thin Martian atmosphere. All kinds of foods and fresh vegetables are brought from earth.

All sorts of food was grown in Martian greenhouses and livestock was imported from Earth and placed in special domes. Dairy products, meat, fish, vegetables, fruit and even drinking water were produced on Mars. Breakfast diners, steak houses, health food stores, and even road side fresh vegetables stands sprung up all over the base camp area. 7 Eleven stores, Stewart’s stores, burger joints. Dunkin Donuts and even coin operated Laundromats were everywhere. (King, “Martian” 115).

The most popular food on Mars is Martian-Kentucky Fried Chicken. Getting the chickens to Mars is considered to be costly. Raising them in domes is costlier than importing. This situation is used as an opportunity to sell fake chicken. A business woman invents fake chicken using synthetic fibers. The taste exactly matches the real chicken. The best part is that nobody is able to find out the secret.

“Man is a wolf to man especially since there are no real wolves anymore” (Bartosch 233). Thomas King skillfully highlights the pathetic conditions of tunnel diggers who fall ill with a mysterious disease called Martian fever. Major Roger asks Sammy to help him with the underground secret installation. The major and the Air Force have decided to reverse engineer the underground water plant at Olympus Mons. Once they start digging, many things are discovered. “Artifacts from lost civilizations from millions of centuries ago were dug up. Statues, bones, teeth, various weapons that resembled knives and throwing daggers, things that the humans could possibly understand. An entire collection of Martian artifacts was started and placed in a dome” (King, “Martian” 118).

Sammy gets a vision of the future. The Martian ancestors warn him to leave the remains and artifacts undisturbed. Otherwise they will destroy every living thing on the Mars and on Earth. He immediately says about his precognition power to Blondie and Bucko, but they do not believe him. From that day onwards strange things happen in the tunnel and the work does not progress. “One day a worker started screaming and appeared to be in a trance. His words appeared to be in a strange and foreign language. He began running out of the tunnel screaming that he was going to be killed by Martians” (King, “Martian” 120). Everyone appears to be under a spell. The workers kept collapsing with fever. The doctors tell that it is not a disease but a psychosomatic disorder. It is a mental state, the workers

fall sick once they get inside the tunnel and it disappears once they are out. They name it as Martian Fever. Sammy convinces the major and they bury all the artifacts and another tunnel is dug past the pyramids. They announce it as restricted area. "Grave markers were constructed and signs that read: DANGER Keep out of this quarantined area!" (King, "Martian" 121).

Earth is gradually returning to its original form. The entire Pioneer 1 manages to get a ride back to Earth and they are amazed by looking at the cleaning process. Everybody on the earth has taken responsibility to plant trees and clean their town by taking turns. CNN reporters cover all the areas and interview people about their opinion. A fifteen year old girl says, "My whole neighbourhood is spending one day a week cleaning up our town of all trash and other junk" (King, "Martian" 127). The paper mill has been the biggest polluter for years. The local paper mill stops dumping wastes into the river. "We stopped dumping sewage and waste into the river last week. Now wees is green, ha, ha!" (King, "Martian" 128). Environmental technology companies become the biggest industry on earth. By looking at the people on Earth, Sammy and Bucko start their new business on Mars. "Green Mars, inc., a new environmental task force for cleaning up all pollution and waste on Mars" (King, "Martian" 136).

Yet even these extreme circumstances would appear unlikely to break the grip of technology over human civilization, and science's ability to replicate itself. The reasons for this again have to do with the relationship between science and war. For even if one could destroy modern weapons and scientific knowledge of how to produce them, one could not eliminate the memory of the method that made their production possible. (Fukuyama 87-88)

Thomas King reveals the United States Airforce's experimental spacecraft on Mars and their cover ups. When Pioneer 1 team returns to Mars they witness three gunships following them. Soon after landing on Mars, Marster Weekly News reporters surround them and ask about the gunships. Sammy says, "Yes, the Air Force will handle it" (King, "Martian" 135). Sammy immediately approaches major to report about the gunships but the major does not believe him. He convinces him by saying that the gunships are just optical illusions. Sammy becomes suspicious and he flies to Olympus Mons with Bucko to find the truth. They return with disappointment. Later he suggests Bucko an idea of exploring the channels to find any clue. After going there they get another idea of looking at polar ice caps. "So why aren't we looking for the gunships and aliens at the polar ice caps? If the ice was to melt it would flood the entire planet! Water is a damned precious resource in the universe" (King, "Martian" 143). It takes two days for them to reach the spot. They find a door leading underground. They enter the underground tunnel with several domes in it and see pipes stretching out for miles. They take photos and release it to press. Later they are questioned by the Martian Security. "Listen Miller, do you know we can throw you and your hair brained friend in the stockade for a breach of Martian security? This is a serious situation" (King, "Martian" 147). Sammy assures the Major that he would help him with the issue. The new mission begins to find the aliens and months later the team returns with nothing. The actual fact is that there are no aliens. It is all set up by the Air Force in order to carry out their spacecraft experimentation.

It had come to light through the Martian Freedom of Information Act of 2065, (Martian Years), that the so called alien gunships were really Air Force experimental spacecraft and that the underground water station was

also an Air Force instillation. These alien looking things were intentionally made up by the Air Force to get people's attention. It was the same game that Air Force played back on Earth in the Roswell incident in 1947.

The Air Force had done it again. It was the old cover up all over again.

(King, "Martian" 150)

A group of greedy Martian colonialists plan to invade the earth. After being on Mars for a while people start to miss the Earth. The Martian settlers, who crossed the fifty million miles space to reach Mars, wonder if they have made a mistake. It is 2079 and the Martian colonists try their best to make it a habitable place. The atmosphere is hundred percent better but it would take another ten thousand years for it to resemble earth. Mars has water but not the clear fresh drinking water like earth. So a group of people in Martian plan to attack earth. Initially everything was under the Air Force's control but after sometime, new colonialist go against the Air Force. Most of the best inventors and scientists on Mars join these colonialists and develop nuclear weapons to attack earth. Sammy gets a vision that the scientists would develop a gas that might make women infertile. "They've developed a nerve gas that is completely undetectable. It will make all the women on Earth sterile. It can be delivered to Earth easily by anyone and placed in the air or water. It's completely undetectable, no smell and colorless. This vile substance can be placed in tiny vials, transported and released" (King, "Martian" 159). Sammy contacts Col. Tool, commander to inform about his vision. Then Sammy comes up with a plan by changing the direction of their poisonous gas into the deep space rather than earth so that major accidents can be stopped, but the problem is locating them. After a long struggle, they spot the rebel army and then attack begins.

The rebels had been sighted at 0800 hours Mars time near the ancient volcano's cone. As the rebels fired back at the Blackbirds with sonic disruptors and laser canons, the Eighth Air Force B-4 rocket bombers carpet bombed the entire area. Rebel gunships were taking a beating and in retreat after three hours of being pounded into the Martian soil. Air mobile with Sammy and his crew had infiltrated the rebel base and taken control of it. (King, "Martian" 162)

Suddenly the nuclear blast cloud fills the Martian skies around the old base camp. Everyone is scared but they miss the direction and the nuclear weapon blasted near the empty desert. The rebel threat to Earth and Mars ends forever.

After the war, they come across the ancient Martian stones and structures which had survived the nuclear fallout. The entire Pioneer 1 crew is assigned to investigate the entire Cydonia City on Mars and report back. They equip themselves with full nuclear fallout gear to protect themselves from radiation. Geiger counters are used to check radiation damage to that area and to their surprise, nothing has happened to the ancient stones and structures and the place is free from radiation. The pyramids, rock formations are still erect and unchanged. Even the footpaths between the pyramids are intact. Sammy is confused and says, "I can't understand how these paths are unchanged" (King, "Martian" 166). After hours of inspecting, Blondie finds a cave near Giza Pyramid. They assume that, "The nuke blast must have uncovered millions of years of sand and dirt and exposed this cave" (King, "Martian" 167). Inside the cave, it is an entire network of roads underground. They also discover that the oxygen levels are higher and they need not wear oxygen mask. Eventually they find authentic alien writing, paintings and symbols resembling the

Egyptian hieroglyphics. Sammy gets another vision where he sees ancient Martians and their story of civilization. In his dream like vision, Martians explained how the volcanic eruption melted down and destroyed everything. After that Sammy strongly believes that there were aliens eons ago.

At last most of the characters realize the value of mother Earth. The crew of Pioneer 1 remains on Mars and try their best to create pollution free Mars. But people keep coming from Earth and the population increases on Mars. This situation favours Earth to recreate itself to its old form. Mars is terraformed faster than expected and both the planets are gaining its power to sustain all lives.

Post-apocalyptic vision is to create a new environment in spite of total annihilation of life. Bartter aptly says, "Purified through the sacrifice of a large percentage of its members (and perhaps by a return to primitive conditions), [survivors] might eventually be able to build a new, infinitely better world" (148). Thomas King brings out the fact that mankind is solely responsible for his own destruction. Human greed has reached its peak and created ever lasting damage to the environment. In the novel *Martian Fever*, most of the characters wish for the utopian society and they try to create one by taking up the responsibility of cleaning the pollution they had created. Certain characters who are sinister not only destroyed the earth but also the mars. Thomas King highlights the horror of nuclear fallouts, human organ harvest and child abuse in Mars. People on earth try to rectify their mistakes and they strive to revive the earth to its old form. The author points out that the world is filled with different kinds of people and the problems arise every single minute but that should not stop people from their responsibility of safeguarding our mother earth.

Message From Titan is the last novel of Thomas King's science fiction trilogy.

This novel is about people whose life is at stake as the pollution of nuclear fallout reaches its peak on both Earth and Mars. So the United Space Agency looks to Titan, the largest moon of the planet Saturn where water, ice and atmosphere favors mankind to seek refuge. "Technology has given a new edge to what was already bound to be an age of anxiety (Dowling 83). Jake Green Jr is the captain of the Explorer One space craft which goes to Titan. Jake Green Jr is the grandson of Jake Green from the first novel, *UFOs that Crashed to Earth*. The voyage to Titan encompasses travelling from Earth orbit to moon, then to Mars and finally to Titan. Peter the Great, the Russian spacecraft accompanies Explorer One to Titan. Titan is billion kilometers away from earth and it is not visible to the naked eye but it is the only hope for people who live on the dying Earth and polluted Mars. Captain Green remembers the lessons he learned from his grandfather during Vietnam War. Captain Green's memories of those stories help him to cope up with the Russian crew and other issues in the deep space.

Thomas King explains the planetary defense against the meteors approaching towards Moon. Captain Green and his team find that some meteors are on their way to crush the Moon. Meteors are small rocks from space and it flashes light when they approach earth's atmosphere. Meteor shower is not new to Moon but this time there are many at a time so USAF team is worried and they call Captain Jake to know about his team's plan. Captain reassures, "Meteors have been hitting this crated Moon for millions of years and they have not killed it yet" (King, "Message" 17). Cap Green and the Space Ranger check the long range radar scan and plot the three Meteors to be 120,000 miles away. Then they plan to head at the maximum velocity and blast a hole in the lead meteor. He instructs the

Russian spacecraft captain Boris. “Laser cannon gunmen will concentrate their fire on one location on the lead meteor. Ranger and I will be with you to help spot the weakest area. That goes for all Russian crews as well. Now let’s get busy and take care of business” (King, “Message” 24). The two huge spacecraft converge on the meteors and the image of the meteors fills the view screens. The crew brace themselves to fight for lives. They fire the laser cannons and they see the meteors roll and turn. It appears to splinter and the chunks of rock begin to fly off the space. After ten minutes of laser fire, they finally blast the other two.

In the novel *Message From Titan*, the crew members of Explorer One get disappointed after landing on the Saturn’s moon which is completely frozen. When the Explorer One reaches near Jupiter, the crew plans to increase the speed by using the gravitational pull of Jupiter and Saturn. Jupiter and Saturn are gas giants and have no real surface. But they are huge and have immense gravitational pull. They circle the giant planet, Jupiter until the velocity is fast enough to accelerate the Explorer One heads towards Saturn at a terrific speed. This gravitational assist would propel the Explorer One and the other space craft Peter the Great at speeds never obtained by anyone. Cap Green warns Ranger and the pilot to buckle tightly as they are about to face some serious gravitational force. Then they clear up Jupiter’s gravity and head towards Saturn. Suddenly they see Titan, the pale green moon which is twice the size of Earth’s moon. As soon as the crew approached the moon, they get disappointed as the moon is completely frozen. Ranger shouts out of frustration, “Why the hell are we really here? This damned moon is frozen, over 200 degrees below zero, no breathable atmosphere, no water that I can see and methane gases! It’s a garbage can of the solar system and it will never thaw out” (King, “Message” 55).

Thomas King evinces that the hard lessons Jake Green's grandfather learnt during Vietnam War help Captain Green in taking decisions during critical situations. During the voyage to Titan, Captain relates every situation to the similar incident of Vietnam War. Right from day one, Explorer one crew does not get along with Peter the Great crew. One day the Captain remembers an incident that his grandfather had told him. His grandfather and the other Air Force members were insulted when they reached their country after the Vietnam War. Jake's grandfather had recounted his experience thus:

Not one damn person was there to greet us! It was like we didn't matter to the country that we had fought for. The next day we went to San Fran and got rotten eggs thrown at us by some hippies... We fucking hated those hippie bastards. While they was back home smoking their dope and having their free love, we was in country, 12 thousand miles away getting shot at my gooks! None of us will ever forget how our country treated us when we come from Nam. (King, "Message" 63)

After the reminiscence of this incident, Captain Green informs his crew members to respect and support the Russian crew members. He orders his crew members, "I don't want to hear about any disrespect for women or the Russians" (King, "Message" 63). Captain realizes his mistakes by relating the incidents to Vietnam War and rectifies the situation. "Accept[ing] endings most cheerfully because of the fanatic commitment to better worlds emerging from the ruins" (Dewey 13).

Thomas King brings out the anticipation of the crew members as they find an alien manuscript which contains blue print of a new solar system. The crew begins exploring Titan in spite of knowing that the place cannot be habituated. At last Ranger finds some

symbols on the rock. Then they interpret the symbols and find that it is Egyptian hieroglyphs. After translating they come to know that they can locate some alien documents under the ground. Captain informs the news to Earth as well as Mars; people finally get some hope for future.

Most people believed that if alien life existed somewhere within their reach, the possibility of a future Earth settlement on a new world existed. This was a huge relief for the people of an over populated and polluted Earth and a violent, crazy Mars. Life on Earth had become like life in hell and life on Mars was always a violent existence. Hope for all of Mankind that a new heaven existed was a relief. (King, "Message" 60-61)

After several days of digging, Boris' crew finds a large alien looking box. When they opened it, they see a manuscript which contains blueprint for a star system. They even find map and drive to reach there. They find a solar system named Alpha Centauri. With the help of manuscript, both the team creates a warp drive engine and installs it in the ship. They send message to Earth as well as Mars and get ready to set off for the star system Alpha Centauri in order to explore the new solar system.

Utility of warp drive engine which picks up light speed is clearly brought out in the novel *Message From Titan*. When the crew kicks on the warp drive engine, the stars slowly faded away on the main view screen. Ranger is excited and shouts, "Cap, we're travelling at the speed of light or at least close to it" (King, "Message" 64). With the light speed, the whole team feels as if they are travelling in the dream world. It is half make believe and half reality. They think about Einstein's relativity theory. "If Einstein was right then time will slow down for us. And be the same for the people and places we left

behind” (King, “Message” 65). Shannon, Captain’s girl friend asks them that their friend would be older or dead when they return to Earth. Cap replies, “That’s the theory anyway” (King, “Message” 65). The mechanism of warp drive engine is that it increases the output of the rocket engines thousand times and eventually the space ship overcomes speed and time. The Warp drives goes into the fabric of light and the ship tags along the drive. Then the people on board go with the ship and appear several light years away after the engines come out of light speed.

Thomas King captures the excitement of the crew after seeing the new star system. Alpha Centauri consists of three Suns and possibly solar system that resemble Earth where life can be sustained. “We know that Alpha Centauri A is yellow sun like our sun, a bit larger and a little older. The next sun is Alpha B and it is an orange sun, but smaller than our sun. Lastly Proxima, or Alpha C is a tiny red dwarf. Alpha A and B form a binary system and orbit each other every 80 years. 4.37 light years away from our sun” (King, “Message” 66). Boris and Captain plan to set foot on the new planet if it exists. Their plan is to first land and do some test from inside the shuttle. If the atmosphere is hospitable they would leave the shuttle and walk for a certain distance on the surface. Then make arrangements to settle on the planet. The crew members are amazed as they approach a solar system in a long range that orbit Alpha B. There are five planets and particularly one planet’s distance from new sun resembles the distance from Earth to sun. They coast near the Earth type planet and view from top. “It’s incredible Cap, and it reminds me of Earth” (King, “Message” 67). The Captain names the planet as Atlantis. From the long range telescope, they enjoy the binary suns lighting up. “Ending our world, we simultaneously create a new one, one sometimes hopeful and one sometimes fearful, but one that always depends for its emergence upon the destruction of the world that preceded it” (Rabkin viii).

Thomas King tries to create the utopian society through the Explorer One crew. Most of the people on Earth as well as Mars long for the utopian society but they are forced to get along with the dystopian society in order to survive. The Explorer One crew becomes the representative for the people who long for a better future. As the crew discovers a new world, they realize their responsibility and plan to save the new world. Cap tells everyone that it is the second chance given to mankind to take better care of the new world. Everybody reassures by telling that they would never pollute and would not do oil drilling on the new planet. Captain makes everyone repeat the oath:

I will care for and nurture this new world and all other worlds; I will treat these worlds as my own children and never pollute or do anything to harm their environments; and I will care for and nurture my brothers and sisters who dwell on these lands. We'll call that the Atlantis Oath and all settlers will be administered it prior to being granted citizenship. (King, "Message" 68)

After several tests, the crew finds that the air is breathable although the percentage of carbon dioxide is more compared to Earth. They remove their pressurized suits and go out to explore the land. They find trees, rocks, fruits, vegetables, moist from rain, some caves, mountains and abundance of vegetation. The plants here grow about hundred feet up the vine due to high level of carbon dioxide. After a deep search, they find water and through tests, it is found to be drinkable. The pH level is high in water due to high content of calcium but it is pure water. A group finds a box near the rock and they try to open it but they fail to open. Later they interpret the writing on the box by translating. It is written that this star system is similar to Earth and has planets which are habitable for mankind

and they are warned by saying, “Take care of it. We will look at you from our home planet in Sirius” (King, “Message” 95-96).

Then the crew looks for animal habitation but they do not find any animals. After a few weeks, an animal gets trapped. “It’s like half primitive-dolphin and half primitive looking amphibian or something. It’s intelligent and seems to understand that we mean it no harm” (King, “Message” 83). Captain assumes that the creature is evolving to go on to land like early amphibians on Earth. Once they begin growing legs and lungs, they would survive on land. He asks them to keep the creature under protected species until they find out more about it. Captain warns Boris to release all the trapped animals of the same species. Then Boris orders his crew members to release it back. Captain explains him that some of the animals here have evolved in a way that makes them intelligent beings. He asks them to fish trout but not the intelligent beings. “This will have to be a fishing village only. No killing or trapping of animals” (King, “Message” 84).

With the total collapse of law and order, small bands of individuals emerge to assert their authority. Looters, bandits and common thugs prey on survivors, taking what they want and indulging in whatever pleasure they can find.[...]

These modern-day barbarians became such because of their disrespect of the law, their hatred of organization, their choice of destruction over creation. Their nihilistic, parasitic existence feeds off the riches of others instead of producing their own. This mentality prevents them from settling down and building a new life. (Brooks 155-156)

Back on Earth and Mars, the crime rate increases to the extreme level. The crime rate on Mars among the settlers and miners is alarming. All forms of crime existed on an

extensive basis. “It was ‘dog eat dog’ and ‘everyman for himself’ on the Red planet” (King, “Message” 123). There are a group of people who steal human organs. These ruthless men kill anyone they found and harvest their organs. One group of killers namely “Reapers” (King, “Message” 123) operate around the channels. At dawn the reapers hit the sleepy village. They kill innocent women and children. The reaper doctors are actually real butchers who are trained to butcher cattle for meat. They have no regard for human suffering and pain. The organs are simply cut and preserved. Women are first raped and children are abused before harvesting their organs. No one is left in the village except for a few women whom they chose as sex slaves.

People on Earth have turned into flesh eating zombies. The Explorer One who reached Atlantis sends a team back to Earth and Mars to inform about their discovery of new planet. The pilot and Yuri along with a few people head towards Earth. As the crew travelled in light speed, it has been only two months for the crew but on Earth and Mars ten years have passed. They are left with utter shock after seeing zombies on Earth.

Alden Bell’s *The Reapers are Angels* is the similar novel based on zombies.

They walk, some of them, in twos and threes, sometimes even hand in hand like lovers, lumbering along, slow and thick, blood crusted down their fronts, stumbling over the bony remains of consumed corpses. Their gestures are meaningless, but they hearken back with primitive instinct to life before. A slug dressed in black with a white preacher's collar lifts his hands towards the sky as if calling upon the god of dead things, while a rotting woman in a wedding dress sits open-legged against a wall, rubbing the lace hem against her cheek. (Bell 82)

In these last ten years since the crew left, many things have changed. The gamma rays from the sun are burning the people as the ozone layer has been evaporating. Most of the people have evacuated to Mars and the rest of them have made their shelter underground. The gamma rays have affected millions of people. “The gamma rays have caused people to mutate into flesh eating zombies and other bizarre creatures. It is the end for Mankind on Earth” (King, “Message” 85).

Thomas King points out the terrible catastrophe that destroys Earth without any traces. The destruction finally approaches the earth to take away all life forms. The moon breaks up into pieces and collides with Earth. Huge chunks of the moon strikes the earth and pushes the earth out of its orbit. This makes the earth lose control and creates a collision with sun. Eventually it burns up completely. As Derrida states, “An irreversible destruction, leaving no traces” (26). Desperate to escape calamity, a few thousand remaining people who live underground try to go to Mars and a few manage to reach it. The collision changes the alignment in solar system and it is in a dangerous situation. This would eventually collapse the whole solar system. The crew who came back to Earth and Mars witness the destruction and immediately set off to Atlantis to inform them to arrange the rescue mission.

The Explorer One crew forms the Martian rescue mission to save people on Mars. Captain, Shannon, Boris and his men arrive back at Mars to rescue people. People are unaware of the destruction so they go to each bar, restaurant and other public places to warn them. But no one believes them. “Is this an experiment or something? Yea, they probably want to steal our organs!” (King, “Message” 121). Suddenly all the domes begin to shatter and the whole place shakes. The quake throws most of the people inside the sand. Captain is one among them. He goes inside one of the domes to gather people to

the spaceship and the dome trembles. He gets injured severely. Shannon volunteers to help the doctors to help the wounded survivors. The doctors shift the Captain to the other place and the crew members struggle to find him. After searching for a long time they give up. They plan to leave the place with the rescued people to Atlantis. At last the Captain arrives and they set off to the new planet hoping for a better future.

Thomas King ends the last part of his third science fiction trilogy by connecting it with the UFOs sighting. UFOs sighting is the common thing seen in all three books. After reaching the new binary solar system, a new spacecraft is seen orbiting Titan leaves everyone puzzled. As the days passes by, several people spot UFO from the new earth and contact Air Force Headquarters to report it. When they check out with the help of jet choppers, the UFO appears on radar and appears to be scanning the new earth. The Explorer One attempts to find out the UFOs. They go to Titan and watch there like a hawk to spot any UFO, but they find nothing. After an hour, the group detects something like a door. They see someone come out with pressurized suits. The disc shaped spacecraft lands near them and suddenly they take off. Boris is shocked by looking at the spacecraft and shouts that the spacecraft is manmade. Captain asks if he is sure about this. Boris replies, "I have seen many real UFO and zhis is not one of them" (King, "Message" 150). Captain becomes suspicious and goes near the cave to send message to aliens stating that they have come in peace and they want to meet them in person. But the crew receives no response from the aliens. Back on Atlantis people decide to arm themselves and prepare for invasion. After a few days, Major confesses to Captain about the flying saucers. "Cap, I've got something to tell you. That secret base on the outer planet is our new Project Roswell Atlantis" (King, "Message" 157). Captain is astonished and asked more about this.

Then he comes to know that the blueprint they took from underground was actually not placed by aliens but United States Air force. When Captain asks about the warp drive engine, he reveals that they learned it by reverse engineering from the recovered alien spacecraft. Major explains everything:

I'll start from the beginning. The whole Roswell thing got it all started. UFOs were seen everywhere and by everyone back in the 1950's, 60's, 70's and after that. The whole Roswell thing created an opportunity for the Air Force to begin a campaign of misinformation. They deflected everything off to UFOs that Crashed to Earth never even existed!

(King, "Message" 159).

The Air Force has created new spacecrafts and conducted several experiments on various places with the help of the recovered alien spacecraft at Roswell. They have blamed UFOs and conducted their nuclear experiments for years. The next day Captain with his crew go to the secret cave and finds Air Force people who pretend to be like aliens. The Captain evacuates the Air Force people immediately and asks his crew members to plant plastic explosives and destroys the secret underground base. Then he advises Major not to create nuclear explosives on the New Planet. He bursts out, "The freaking stupid Cold War is over... the Russians are our friends now. We're not destroying this new world like we did the old Earth. No more nukes major. No more pollution and over population. World hunger is gone" (King, "Message" 162-163). At last, the Captain raises questions about the alien message on Titan. Major says that he is unaware about it.

NASA and other scientist have found that Mars can be terraformed and it can be made into a breathable planet. The research is still going on. They not only study about

solar system but beyond that. They try hard to find a solution for the polluted Earth.

Mankind has used up almost all the earth's resources. Global warming, ozone depletion, solar flares, nuclear fallout and over population are driving mankind to search for a new planet. Having used up all the fossil fuels and drinking water, sustenance of all life is at stake.

Post-apocalypse is all about the life of survivors during and after a catastrophe.

Wolfe gives a template of the characteristics of a post-apocalyptic fiction thus:

- (1) the experience or discovery of the cataclysm; (2) the journey through the wasteland created by the cataclysm; (3) settlement and establishment of a new community; (4) the re-emergence of the wilderness as antagonist; and (5) a final, decisive battle or struggle to determine which values shall prevail in the new world. (Wolfe 8)

Similarly in the novel, Thomas King in *Message From Titan*, brings in issues like nuclear fallout, annihilation of life on Earth, establishing new world, rescuing people from destruction and building hope.

Thomas King's science fiction trilogy: *UFOs That Crashed to Earth*, *Martian Fever* and *Message From Titan* portrays the mankind's greed that puts the environment under risk. Thomas King has created two sets of characters in which one set long for the utopian society and strive hard to create a better place to live. The other set of characters are the ones who do not hold any societal responsibility and destroy the world. At times, even good people turn evil and consider it as a survival tactics. The author brings in the fact that at times dystopian characteristics overlap utopian characteristics. The characters shift from good to bad as survival becomes an individual's prime goal and they are not

concerned about others. The terrified survivors of Earth and Mars become more aggressive due to fear. Thomas King makes the readers understand that post-apocalypse future can be survived only as a group.