

Generic Transformation in Post-Apocalyptic Genre: The Romantic Hero in *The Giver*

Definitions:

Genre-

- a) “a process by which art-works, during and after consumption, arouse and **fulfill or defeat a consumer’s expectations**, and are compared to other art-works;
- b) b) the collective noun for named patterns of expectation generated by art-works.” (Lennard and Luckhurst, 2002, 336).

Generic Transformation - As audiences and social circumstances change, the genres have to adapt or they will seem dated.

Genre Examples (defined more broadly--“ways of organizing styles or characteristic forms of expression”--it can be applied to science/professional domains).

Workplace Documents	Films	Literature
Resumes	Action	Bildungsroman— character formation (Stephens 2009)
Cover Letter	Adventure	Coming-of-age
Lab Reports	Comedy	Romance
Proposals	Romance	Historical fiction
	Drama	Graphic novels--trauma
	Horror	Travel literature
	Post-Apocalyptic (last man)	Epistolary (in letters)
	Road Movies	Coming-in-from-the-cold (ex-revolutionaries)



Chinatown and Generic Transformation



Originally, Good guy(s) destroys bad guy(s)



Overturms this traditional genre--eg as in a Western, the “bad guy wins.”

Why ?

Generic Transformation - As audiences and social circumstances change, genres have to adapt or they will seem dated. Films have adapted to better reflect reality. In the genres of crime or espionage stories, we still have plenty of Hollywood stories in which the hero, as in a Western, cleans out/ destroys the bad guys. But increasingly, the ending is more ambiguous. *The Giver* vs. *The Road*

Generic Transformation of the Romantic Hero

Like Genres, the Romantic Hero has transformed/evolved



Byron



Edward



Chris Kyle

Explain the excursion into Romanticism. Framed by **Mathew Barrett Gross and Mel Gilles, *The Last Myth: What the Rise of Apocalyptic Thinking Tells Us about America* (Prometheus Books, 2012)**

“Romanticism had arisen as a form of literary and intellectual revolt against the excesses of reason and the industrialization of the natural and human world” (Gross & Gilles, 118-29).

Lord Byron—poet, novelist, and playwright—larger than life (1778-1824). The “**Byronic hero**” emerged as a type. This was a forerunner to the rock-and-roll self-fulfilling prophecy of “live fast, die young, and leave a good looking corpse.” Byron anticipated the gradual move towards social engagement, and later revolution, by dying a “heroic death” at age 36, while supporting the Greek War of Independence (1824).

Definitions of romanticism . It does not refer to love as a subject. Rather:

1. Revolt against the status quo: “Romanticism's essential spirit was one of revolt against an established order of things.”
2. The Romantic Style was “**a mood or movement whose central characteristic is revolt.**” Those enthralled by “the romantic philosophy” had in common “the **desire to be free of convention and tyranny,**” within the context of a new emphasis on the rights and dignity of the individual.

Thumbnail definition of romanticism:
a rebellion against tyranny and mindless convention.

Was Jonas a romantic rebel? Tyranny, or benevolent despot?

What were the primary forms of “mindless convention” he came to oppose?

“Something within him, something that had grown there through the memories, told him to throw the pill away” (162, end Ch. 16) [what elements or rebellion implied?]

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Romantic heroism (value of Romanticism, 1770 to 1850). The Romantic hero was measured according to the extent to which he was true to his conception of himself.



After earlier individual excess, increasingly the romantic heroes engaged in political rebellion , such as Byron dying while fighting for Greek independence (with increasing presence of women and African Americans, etc)



Generic expectations are beginning to form : *the romantic hero will not only defy social conventions, but engage in open rebellion against injustice, or for freedom.*



The hero of literature transferred into the real world



Because art imitates life and life imitates art – the attitude of revolt found in movements like socialism, communism, anarchists etc transformed the romantic hero – revolution was an important element- and the types of revolutionaries which existed in real life became part of the expectation of the romantic hero

Romantic Hero

Typically, there are two narratives of the **Romantic spirit** who sets forth to create a life according to his own best imaginative conception:

1. In the **optimistic version**, the spirit succeeds in transforming the world to fit his/her conception of it. The world eventually shapes itself to answer the hero / heroine's conception of it & his or her place in it. [*utopian /rewriting script*]
2. In the **tragic version**, the hero is defeated by a world which proves too powerful, too resistant to the hero's transforming powers. [*dystopian/tilting at windmills*]

Some archetypal Romantic figures - heroes valorised by Romanticism

- a. *The man of feeling, the sensitive soul, the suffering artist* (whose suffering is due to the crudeness of the world in comparison to his imaginative mind): Hamlet
- b. *The historical rebel* - the **overthrower of ancient authority**, eg. Che Guevara
- c. *The outsider/criminal/social outcast* - the person who refuses to compromise his sense of self for any social standard, eg. Heathcliff (Johnston)

Works Cited

Lennard, John, and Mary Luckhurst. *The Drama Handbook: a Guide to reading plays*. Oxford University Press, 2002.

Johnston, Ian. "The Romantic Hero"

<http://extensionstyluspapyrus.wikispaces.com/The+Romantic+Hero>

The Norton Anthology of English Literature cited in "The Romantic Hero)