

Temporality in Ancient and Contemporary Revelations:  
Hypermasculinity and Violence in the Book of Revelation and Donnie Darko

By  
Alexander Cox-Twardowski

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Queen's University  
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## **Abstract**

Since the birth of cinema, religion has played an integral role in filmmaking. The marriage between religion and film has yet to relent, and over a century later, religiosity continues to surround cinema. Judeo-Christian apocalyptic ideas influence a wide range of Hollywood films. This paper will explore the Book of Revelation and its relation to Richard Kelly's *Donnie Darko* (2001). Both seers, John of Patmos and Donnie, use and manipulate time to reveal contemporary socio-political and cultural concerns. Two



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“I hope that when the world comes to an end, I can breathe a sigh of relief because there will be so much to look forward to.”<sup>1</sup>

## **Introduction**

Furthermore, the double feature metaphor is appealing because the films that

mainly involve corrupt authorities, destruction of cultural values, and economic struggles. The outcomes of this investigation were surprising, and resulted in shedding light on two different phenomena. First, the most important and heroic figures in these apocalypses are not the violent sacrificial messiahs, but rather the prophetic revealers. Power and authority derives from the visions themselves, and not the horrific actions found within visions. Second, there is a correlation between the controller of time and hypermasculinity. These findings are then contrasted with other films, as well as Jewish apocalypse *The Book of Watchers* (1 Enoch 1-34) and Christian apocalypse *The Shepherd of Hermas*. The conclusions of this work suggest that hypermasculinity and violent subject matter, under eschatological authority, were used in attempt to improve and conserve cultural values of communities experiencing changing millennia.

Prior to further analyses, a clarification of terminology is necessary. Throughout this paper, “movie” and “film” will be used interchangeably. “Cinema” will be used in a broader, macro sense, to describe a larger scope of films or the film industry. Despite the popular, colloquial usage of “apocalypse” to mean “destruction,” here it will be used interchangeably with revealing or unveiling (*apokalypsis*

In contemporary Hollywood film, religious images, themes, and references are abundant. There has been ample scholarship on the ritualistic aspects of movie-going and church-going,<sup>7</sup> just as there have been many instances of religious groups claiming that popular Hollywood films really pertain to their religion. *The Matrix* (1999) alone evokes debate concerning the Christian, Gnostic, and/or Buddhist nature of the film. That said, justification for studying religion and film can be found in a movie's first image on screen. A moviegoer arrives in the theatre, and soon the curtains open, the lights dim, cellphones are stowed, and chatter subsides. After the many advertisements for variously diversified products come to an end, the theatre falls silent. As S. Brent Plate demonstrates, the first image on the big screen is a larger than life logo attributed to the producer (s) and/or distribution companies of the film. These logos are those of Universal, which is a spinning planet earth amidst the stars. Dreamworks depicts a boy, sitting amongst the clouds, dropping a fishing line into still waters. Paramount's logo hangs high over a mountain, and Columbia, Lionsgate, and Warner Brothers' insignia floats triumphant in the clouds. Often, the first message received by audience members is a connection between this film and something larger than their own lives. The first image of a film is attributed to the action of looking up, either to the heavens, to the clouds, or to the stars.<sup>8</sup> As long as there have been movies, there have been production companies, and they choose insignia that promote their companies as something larger than life, and above worldly reality itself. At the birth of cinema, there were producers financing films,

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<sup>7</sup>Christopher Deacy, "From Bultmann to Burtman, Demythologizing the Big Fish: The Contribution of Modern Christian Theologians to Theology-Film Conversation." in *Reframing Theology and Film: New Focus for an Emerging Discipline*, ed. by Robert K. Johnston, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007) 254.

<sup>8</sup> S. Brent Plate, *Religion and Film: Cinema and the Recreation of the World* (London: Wallflower, 2008) 10.









the oral law. Similarly, to ensure that the teachings of the Buddha survived, they too had to be written down. In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, cinema has ensured myths remain in contemporary memory and at the same time, can also modify and challenge them. This “transmediality” is a dynamic attempt to remain static. It is an effort to preserve what is important, but changing the medium, ultimately changes what was meant to be conserved.<sup>19</sup>

It is not only religion that contemporarily re-creates past mythologies; film participates in the process as well. A cinematic example of hashing together past myths and recreating them is famously accomplished in George Lucas’ *Star Wars*

box-office receipts. Therefore, the content and style of the film are created in a way which movie watchers will appreciate, enjoy, and find meaningful.<sup>22</sup> Ultimately, the reception of the production influences the production itself. John Lyden makes similar claims in his book, *Film as Religion: Myths, Morals, and Rituals* (2003), and importantly suggests that film can be studied as religion, and likewise focusses on myth and ritual.<sup>23</sup>

### Religion and Film as Cultural Studies

Gordon Lynch is a leading advocate for studying religion and film from a cultural studies lens. Lynch states

The general concern and unfortunate outcome of a religious studies approach to film is that it often studies films as ends in themselves. Researching from the cultural studies perspective, Lynch says is to better research “the context of wider social structures and wider cultural processes of power, ideology, oppression, and mystification.”<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, religion and film scholars too often focus on the religious and existential meaning in cinema. Cultural studies provides a broader perspective, which can lead to varied and important results.<sup>28</sup> Wright



one method that can be used while implementing religion and film in the wider context of cultural studies. Wright argues that the re-creation approach, that religious meaning can be moulded together in new media, is one promising methodology that can be properly researched and studied in cultural studies.<sup>36</sup> Thus the first trend of recreation or world-making is even more promising because it fits well within the realm of cultural studies.

It should be clear at this point that studying religion and film as re-creation or world-making is of significant value. This approach, and the growing field itself, can be best studied in the discipline of cultural studies. Next, progressing from Lynch's proposal



Religion, of course, can be approached from the same starting point of intermediality. Many different forms of media contribute to what may be called a religion; for example, prayers are spoken, texts are read, rituals are practiced, foods are made, meditative poses are held, etc. Knowing this, religion and film involve ever-changing media. Messages are portrayed throMessage



comes from Jesus Christ; and John is to write down what he has seen (Rev. 1), including the circumstance of present day churches (Rev. 2-3), and his eschatological visions (Rev. 4-22).

The apocalypse commences with John being transported to heaven through a window in the sky. The prophet witnesses twenty-four elders and four living creatures who are worshiping the throne of God. God on the throne holds a scroll that contains the future of the earth. The scroll contains seven seals that can only be broken by one who is worthy. Next to God is a slaughtered lamb, symbolizing Jesus Christ. The Lamb takes the scroll and begins breaking the se

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manipulate it. He must decide between saving his own life, and seeing his girlfriend, mother, and sister die. Alternatively, he could sacrifice himself while those close to him live, yet so also does a child molester. In the climax of the film, he decides to travel back through time, allowing the plane engine from the opening scene to kill him, but this also allows his family and girlfriend to live. Donnie dies laughing in bed, comfortable with his decision.

### **Community Concerns**

This section will not solely focus on the similarities and differences between the Book of Revelation and *Donnie Darko*. This would lead to rather dull scholarship, and would ignore Luther H. Martin's thorough concerns surrounding a comparative method in religious studies.<sup>44</sup> After all, biblical imagery and themes in Hollywood film are not novel, and it is not surprising to find forms of religiosity in Hollywood cinema. This year alone, box offices anticipated the arrival of Christopher Spencer's *Son of God*, and high budget epics like Darren Aronofsky's *Noah*, and Ridley Scott's *Exodus: Gods and Kings*. Moreover, ideas of the apocalypse, and specifically the Book of Revelation, are commonly used in television, cinema, and other works of art.<sup>45</sup> The Apocalypse of John is directly quoted in popular television programs like *Dexter*. In film, the influence of this

between biblical scripture and cinema, his film *Southland Tales* (2006) draws from the Book of Revelation.<sup>46</sup>

Harry Maier writes that the Apocalypse of John excites the secular imagination more than other biblical texts, and despite the frustration it causes amongst Christian scholars and communities, it is commonly used in popular media.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, Ostwalt suggests that film is the best suited medium to represent apocalyptic scripture. He writes that “[a]uditory effects and visual graphics available to contemporary filmmakers bring



becoming too comfortable, and potentially assimilating to Greco-Roman life.<sup>55</sup> He did not wish for his people to give into the greed and perceived corruption of the beast that was Rome.

John begins his apocalypse by emphasizing the first person narration and uses the past tense (Rev 1:9-20). *Donnie Darko* similarly is presented from Donnie's point of view, and is a film released in 2001, that is set in 1988. The film itself is a vision back in time, which exemplifies societal issues that likewise take place in the year the film was released, and seem to persist in the future. Through the protagonist and seer, Donnie, the audience is witness to the effects of Reagan right-winged Christian conservatism.<sup>56</sup> The film presents images of greed, paranoia, failing capitalism, and the effects of institutional dogma that dampers critical and deep thinking.<sup>57</sup> This is best demonstrated in a scene depicting a private conversation between Donnie and his science teacher. Donnie asks an insightful question that threatens Christian beliefs, his teacher then abruptly ends the conversation fearing the loss of his job. Furthermore, subplots refer to issues of bullying, adolescent violence, alcohol abuse, racism, and pedophilia.

Both works exemplify the clear anxiety towards corrupt political institutions. Writing from the present, John was concerned about his contemporary community. Collins writes that Christians were only sporadically persecuted during this tim



this idea and states John of Patmos was writing during a time of differing conflicts.<sup>59</sup>

Similarly in

Book of Revelation, where John writes of the ultimate end times of the earth, as well as the cosmos. Furthermore, in *Donnie Darko*, there is no final judgement. Yes, Donnie assesses which of the different realities he deems favourable; however, there is no global judging of the righteous and punishing of evil.

The most significant difference is the relationship between seer and actor. John possesses privileged knowledge and writes down what he sees. The visions are of devastation and violence. John differs from Donnie because he is the seer alone. Donnie on the other hand, is both seer and actor. He is the receiver of visions and instructions. He also acts as both a Christian-like messiah, as well as a messiah similar to that of the Hebrew Bible. He serves the role of a passive sacrifice for the betterment of Humankind, as well as an active conqueror. The Book of Revelation provides a similar, split messiah.

prophecies. Donnie wields axes, floods his school, commits arson, and then murder to attain the most successful outcome of his multiple realities. In Revelation, Jesus, unlike Jesus of the gospels and similar to the messiah of Jewish apocalyptic literature, is a warrior with a sword and iron rod (Rev 19). This varied depiction of Jesus has troubled theologians for centuries. So much so, Martin Luther disregarded the Book of Revelation itself, and exclaimed: “There is one sufficient reason for me not to think highly of it— Christ is not taught or known in it.”<sup>63</sup> John of Patmos does not preach forgiveness or the loving of enemies, but rather presents a messiah in chapter 19 who finally returns to destroy his enemies.<sup>64</sup> The question remains then, what are the positive outcomes of these violent actions? Despite what the Book of Revelation says, it is known that the prophecy failed. Rome was not destroyed during this time.<sup>65</sup> Donnie chooses one timeline where his mother, sister, and lover survive, but in doing so justice is not served to a false prophet pedophile that Donnie identifies as the Antichrist.<sup>66</sup>

Such violence ultimately is less influential than the critical revelations themselves. Donnie saves his loved ones, and his world ends, so theirs can continue. Yet, the corruptions and concerns for the United States also continue. Kevin Dodd writes about the importance of Donnie as a representation of Jesus Christ in the movie, and the intriguing

the importance of his violent actions. Regarding John's revelation, it does not actually lead to the immediate destruction of the Roman Empire.

These visions, however, through the media of film or scripture, inspire hope and question the sociopolitical circumstances of their audiences. Donnie's visions are the audiences' visions, and through this contemporary film, viewers can look back to see what has led to current crises. John's apocalypse was intended to be read aloud (Rev 1:3), and this would contribute to a critical re-

an exaggerated form of masculinity, virility, and physicality, as well as a tendency to ward disrespecting women.<sup>69</sup>

Prior to the scholarship in the 1980's, hypersmasculine characters were portrayed in 1960s and 1970s mainstream Hollywood film. An example of this would be Clint Eastwood's strong, emotionless, and violent roles in *A Fist Full of Dollars* (1964) and *The Outlaw Josey Wales* (1976). These character traits, or masculine ideals, likewise existed away from mainstream Hollywood, and were also found in 1970s Asian-American Martial Arts films, and Blaxploitation films. Contemporary research surrounding hypermasculinity concerns popular media as well, specifically issues regarding Black Americans, hip-hop, and crime.<sup>70</sup>

Mosher and Sirkin (1984) contributed a three part constellation that breaks down a macho personality as: "(a) calloused sex attitudes toward women, (b) a conception of violence as manly, and (c) a view of danger as exciting. These components reflect the macho man's desire to appear powerful and to be dominant in interactions with other men, women, and the environment."<sup>71</sup> Twenty years later, Burk, Burkhart & Sikorski add to the three traits, and suggest that hypermasculinity also includes an "inflated valuation of status, self-reliance, aggressive activities, dominance over others, and devaluation of emotion and cooperation."<sup>72</sup> As shown, there is not a singular definition for hypermasculinity, but rather an evolving understanding of the term. Recent research

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<sup>69</sup> Ronald O. Craig, "Hypermasculinity" in *Encyclopedia of Race and Crime*, ed. by Helen Taylor Greene and Shaun L. Gabbidon (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2009) 367-69.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 367-69.

<sup>71</sup> Donald L. Mosher and Mark Sirkin, "Measuring a Macho Personality Constellation," *Journal of Research in Personality* 18. 2 (1984), 151.

<sup>72</sup> Charles S. Corprew III, G S8w5(1e7wf.86 Tm 0tTm[F-12.09 ]) TJETtsQBT1 0 0 1re2 Tm[(S)-9(AGE)-4( )-2(P)-9(u)2e7wf

suggests that an individual does not statically possess all hypermasculine characteristics, but rather demonstrates varied behaviours.<sup>73</sup>

Christina Lee comments on the popularity of time travellers and hypermasculinity

female characters, symbolizes the right-winged Christian conservatism and naïveté that epitomizes 1980's America. The name Farmer fits her personality well. Reflecting stereotypes of rural America, she is presented as backwards, and not up-to-date with contemporary times. Kitty Farmer is viewed as the female antagonist, who even supports and defends a known pedophile. *Donnie Darko*

intelligent and correct in his claims. The seer, who has knowledge unknown to the rest of the world, suggests that life itself is pointless without a male sex organ.

Another instance occurs when Donnie is hypnotized during a therapy session. He is at risk of revealing his visions and knowledge to another, specifically a female. To counteract this problematized situation, Donnie fantasizes about intercourse with women and begins to masturbate. This ends his hypnosis and the therapy session. Donnie can defend his greater knowledge, ultimately, with the power and authority of his penis. Lastly, and a poignant example, is prior to Donnie completing his prophecy and saving those around him, he has intercourse with his lover. Hypermasculine behaviour often associates violence, with danger, and sex.<sup>77</sup> Prior to being the saviour of the damsel in distress, Donnie first asserts his male dominance and has sex with her.

In the book of Revelation, phallic dominance and negatively portrayed women are







*Back to the Future* and *Donnie Darko* are productions that use the motif of time travel to express external and internal change. That is to say, the heroes in the films manipulate time for different tomorrows and simultaneously alter themselves in the process. Despite dealing with grave issues like terrorism, cultural corruption, fear, and death, these films are also coming-of-age, or boys-to-men stories.<sup>85</sup> Experiencing the present, and manipulating the past, these heroes can control and alter the future. Knowing time, and manipulating time, leads to power. It must then be noted that time travel in film is almost exclusively a masculine endeavour. *The Time Machine* (1960), *Superman* (1978), *The Terminator* (1984), *The Time Bandits* (1980), are but a few examples of males altering time, and ultimately power, to control the future.<sup>86</sup> Similarly, in boys-to-men films, adolescent males experience identity crises, and successfully reach manhood by sexually dominating women. There are numerous films that strictly follow this formula, including, *40 Days and 40 Nights* (2002), *American Pie* (1999), and *Dead Poet's Society* (1989). These are three films, from three different decades, that all exemplify youthful male identity crises, whose characters take a maturation leap forward, by attaining and sexually dominating women.<sup>87</sup>

*Back to the Future's* hero, Marty McFly (Michael J. Fox), dislikes his life in the 1980's. His mom is an alcoholic, his father is bullied, and his elder siblings work miserable jobs. To make matters worse, Marty's friend, Dr. Emmet Brown (Christopher Lloyd), invents a time machine, but is killed by Libyan terrorists for the plutonium he stole. Marty flees for his life, and accidentally ventures back to the golden-era of the

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<sup>85</sup> Lee, *Screening Generation X*, 110.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 111, 114.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 115-16.

1950's. It is during the time travelling adventure, where Marty discovers that his future may be in jeopardy, when his mother (Lea Thompson) likes him and not his father (Crispin Glover). Marty ultimately uses the 1950s to literally save his life, ensuring that he is born, but also to improve upon his failing future in the 1980s.

*Back to the Future* shows the potential of the 1980's, whereas the later *Donnie Darko*, presents the decade in a darker light.<sup>88</sup> Despite the optimism of *Back to the Future*, it should be clear that the state of the 1980s were a clear matter of concern. More than just the McFly's familial problems, the movie marquees chosen to represent the 80s should be considered. Like in *Donnie Darko*, the movie marquees are revealing and important to the narrative itself. In the 50s, the film being showed at the Essex Theatre is *Cattle Queen of Montana* (1954), starring Ronald Regan. Movies are representative of their era, and in this idealistic decade, the movie stars themselves are future presidents. In the 1980s, however, the film shown at the same theatre is pornographic, *Orgy American Style* (1973). Zemeckis chose pornography to represent the social and cultural failings of the 1980s. The "American Style" was perceived to be struggling, and only by returning to the golden 1950s, can it be restored. Despite the ideological differences of *Back to the Future* and *Donnie Darko*, the two movies' heroes use the same means to achieve ideal results. These means all involve time, hypermasculinity, violence, and sexual domination over women.

Unlike Donnie, who until his last moments is troubled and uncertain, Marty is confident and self-assured in his time travel.<sup>89</sup> The audience receives a sense that this is

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how the world, or at least white middle class United States, should be. *Back to the Future* idealizes the 1950s, and ignores the issues that are associated with the era. Lee describes this phenomenon; and states that those writing about time have the ability to reveal and

Americans were in part responsible for black Americans' future success. A narrative's manipulation of time to support systemic hegemony, and the support of societal hierarchies will be discussed in later sections. For now, attention will be paid to how the reassurance of the 1950s can aid the contemporary audience in the 1980s.

Marty, through knowledge and manipulation of time, shows how the 1950s lifestyle can be re-lived in the 1980s. The 50s were a time where middle class white Americans were restored to a less progressive, and less frightening lifestyle. That is to say, men returned to work after the Second World War, women returned to the home, the economy, and most importantly, the suburbs, were booming. Unlike in the challenging 1980s, Marty can thrive in this era. Through hypermasculinity and violence, he prevails. Amusing to the audience, Marty experiences a real life oedipal struggle, where his mother would prefer him as a sexual partner over his unmanly father. Marty must then dominate, and manipulate the sexual behaviour of his own mother to ensure his survival, and a better tomorrow. Marty's father is presented as a weakling, and in both decades, he is bullied by the antagonist, Biff (Thomas F. Wilson). Marty eventually persuades his father to resort to violence, and his actions are successful. Marty's father attacks Biff, who is forcing himself upon Marty's mother. As the result of a punch, Marty's father wins his future wife, and she kisses him on the dance floor. The return to the 1980s is an immediate improvement for Marty. The 50's way of life now exists in the present. His father resumes his patriarchal role, his mother is content, his elder siblings are happy with their employment, his friend is now alive, and Marty is shot into the future with his loving girlfriend by his side.<sup>93</sup> Zemekis creating his film in the midst of the decade

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 124.

provided a theatrical means for hope and restoration. Kelly, releasing his film two decades later, knew that improvement did not actually come, and expressed greater pessimism for the age. Nevertheless, in both works, the knowledge and manipulation of time creates control. With control, comes power, and this power evokes *improved* futures on the shoulders of masculinity, violence, and misogyny.

### **Women, Time, and Power**

Women mastering time in film is uncommon, but there are some examples worth considering. Francis Ford Coppola's 1986, *Peggy Sue Got Married*, surrounds protagonist Peggy Sue (Kathleen Turner). Not surprisingly, this film was released one year after the successful *Back to the Future*. Peggy Sue transports back to the year 1960, and by altering the past, she can effectively change her life in the future. However, unlike *Donnie Darko*, she unintentionally travels to the past. Differing from *Back to the Future*, Peggy Sue only helps herself, and not those around her.<sup>94</sup> Her knowledge and manipulation of time in this film are presented as insignificant and not seriously influential.

A more recent film to consider would be Lars von Trier's, *Melancholia* (2011). The film begins with the end, and a planet named Melancholia collides and destroys the Earth. Unfolding over two parts, the movie surrounds two sisters, Justine (Kirsten Dunst) and Claire (Charlotte Gainsbourg), and how they individually deal with doomsday. Justine, who is the focus of most of the film, is a troubled young woman. She suffers from serious depression, acts questionably, and at times, is catatonic and cannot even

bathe herself. Despite these concerns, Justine is also privileged to knowledge unknown to others. Like Donnie and John of Patmos, she has visions and possesses an awareness of time. Yet, Justine reacts quite differently to her knowledge. She, as the name of the film and antagonizing planet, acts in a state of melancholia, and is apathetic throughout the film. In fact, upon knowing this information, she does not use this to inspire action, like Donnie, nor does she take this opportunity to reach out and tell communities, like John of Patmos.

Justine is perhaps worthy of consideration as a character due to her hyperfemininity. Throughout the film, she is unsatisfied by men. She is late, and not physically present for most of her wedding. She expresses indifference upon receiving an entire apple orchard as a wedding gift. Refusing her husband's sexual advances to consummate the marriage, Justine leaves on her wedding night, and forcefully dominates, and has sex with her co-worker. In the second half of the film, attention is drawn to Justine's naked feminine form. In a powerful scene, she undresses and lies naked in the forest. She presents, or perhaps even offers herself, to the nearby planet. The lighting in the scene, which is coming from the near planet and destructor of Earth, shines on Justine's breasts, drawing attention to her feminine sexuality. She is making an offer of her youthful, naked body, to the source of destruction. Where in *Donnie Darko* and *The Book of Revelation* hypermasculinity and violence are deemed best suited for end times, in *Melancholia*, a hyperfeminized, non-acting, woman, serves as the knowledgeable seer.

*Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (2004), directed by Alfonso Cuarón is an example of another strong female lead, who possesses the knowledge of time, and time travel, and chooses to act upon it. Hermione Granger (Emma Watson) is given a



“Time-Turner” by Professor Albus Dumbledore (Michael Gambon) so that she may attend more classes than linear time would allow. Like the other works addressed in this paper, the devices and methods of time travel must be simply accepted, and the physical probabilities mostly ignored. The Time-Turner allows the user to move back or forward in time, based on the twisting of dial. Where women are useless or antagonists in *Donnie Darko* and the Book of Revelation, Hermione in this film masters time, to achieve greater knowledge. In the film’s climax, she travels in time to allow the saving of a creature, the title character, and rescuing an innocent man. Hermione, unlike Donnie who rather impulsively alters time, life, and death, understands the importance of time, and is reminded by Dumbledore: “Mysterious thing, time. Powerful, and when meddled with, dangerous.”<sup>95</sup>

*Melancholia* and *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* show how the knowledge of time does not always lead to hypermasculinity and violence, and in the case of the former, it can lead to the opposite. Violent and manly characters, and passively portrayed women, continue to be portrayed in Hollywood film. Laura Mulvey describes the latter well, and argues that mainstream Hollywood creates useless female characters that are appealing through a hetero-normative male lens, and fall into a phallogentric, dominant patriarchy.<sup>96</sup> Yet, not all Hollywood films address time. Then what is it about the Book of Revelation, and works influenced by it, that specifically makes the connection between knowing time, and hypermasculinity and violence? The Book of Revelation influenced Kelly’s *Donnie Darko*, and the Book of Revelation was influenced by other apocalyptic texts. Therefore, to delve deeper into the relationship

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 111. Opening quotation from Chapter 7.

between time and hypermasculinity, it is necessary to look at other apocalyptic texts. The following section will focus on 1 Enoch and *The Shepherd of Hermas*.

### **Jewish and Christian Apocalyptic Literature**

The Book of Watchers (1 Enoch 1-34)

1 Enoch 1-34, also referred to as The Book of Watchers, is a Jewish apocalyptic text. It is the first of five parts that comprise 1 Enoch. George Nickelsburg and James VanderKam describe the divisions of 1 Enoch: “Overall they express a common world view that characterizes this present world and age as evil and unjust and in need of divine adjudication and renewal....Their authority lies in their claim that they transmit revelation, which the patriarch Enoch received in primordial times.”<sup>97</sup> Despite not being canonized in the Hebrew Bible, apocalypses in the Book of Watchers were influential, and elements of it can be traced in the New Testament. The Book of Revelation possess similarities to the Book of Watchers in regards to the punishment of evil doers (Rev. 10, 14, 20. 1-3), the vision of the throne (Rev. 4-5), and the Tree of Life (Rev. 2:7, 14, 19, 22:2).<sup>98</sup> Mitchell Reddish divides The Book of Watchers into three sections. The first, which can be thought of as an introduction, describes the heavenly vision Enoch received from an angel. The vision is of judgement day, where on top Mount Sinai, God judges the good and evil. It is emphasized that that nature is good and obeys, and humanity is not, and rebels. Those deemed good by the Lord will be rewarded, and those who are evil, will be punished (Enoch 1-5). The second section is an elaboration of Genesis 6:1-4, and contains the narrative of The Watchers. The Angels, or The Watchers, disobey God. Two

accounts of the story are “intertwined.” In one, the leader of Watchers is Semyaza; and they are guilty of having sex with the Earth’s women. In the other, the leader is Azazel, and they are guilty of sharing secrets from heaven. The Watchers ask Enoch to speak to God on their behalf. Enoch has a vision where in heaven, God instructs him to deliver a message of judgement to the evil Watchers (Enoch 6-16). In the final section, Enoch is guided by angels, and ventures to privileged sections of creation. He visits the

Both works do include great feats of violence and destruction, but the Book of Watchers does not directly target females. Those with superior knowledge do sexually dominate women. Yet, God condemns this behaviour, and severely punishes The Watchers. In this apocalypse, opposite of the Book of Revelation, the slandering and dominating of female figures is punished, not encouraged. Apocalyptic literature often consoles groups in crisis, and by showing the end, it is a reminder of how it should be in the present. It is commonly a reconfirmation of values. Therefore, for the audience of the Book of Watchers, it is a representation that sexually dominating, and slandering women, is not encouraged. There exists lengthy scholarship, which describes the wives of The Watchers in a negative light. It describes the women as turning into mythological Sirens, symbolizing that these women were dangerous and seductive. Alternatively, Ethiopic translations describe The Watcher's wives as ultimately living peacefully.<sup>101</sup> Kelley Coblantz Bautch



becomes young and vigorous.

church, symbolize a womanly figure. The contrast is between goodness in itself, represented as a woman; and all things utterly evil, taking the shape of a woman. *The Shepherd of Hermas* is lacking the connection between those knowledgeable of time, being linked to hypermasculinity and misogyny. Moreover, aside from the church being portrayed positively as a woman, promiscuous or unfaithful wives are to be forgiven. Where the Book of Revelation presents the symbol of promiscuity, the Whore of Babylon, as a creature to be destroyed, *The Shepherd of Hermas* teaches that adulterous women can be forgiven, and accepted back into the household.

*Future*, created in the 80s, looked ahead with optimism for the future of the decade.

*Donnie Darko*, on the other hand, looked back with negativity and pessimism.

Nevertheless, the two works present narratives reflecting the relationship of time, hypermasculinity, and violence, which were integral in the Book of Revelation. In more recent films, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* and *Melancholia*, this relationship differed significantly, suggesting that this is not a truism for all works. The knowledge and manipulation of time, does not necessarily lead to hypermasculinity, misogyny, and violence. Thus, the question remained, what is it then about this formula that is so appealing to apocalyptic thinkers? Furthermore, what does it accomplish?



shows that John of Patmos most likely perceived a crisis, or was recalling past crises. Furthermore, Kelly was an aspiring young filmmaker, who despite expressing concerns for the future of the United States, was most likely not being violently persecuted.<sup>109</sup> Apocalyptic literature facilitates a reconfirmation of cultural values, as well as provides reassurance that in the end, justice and peace will be reinstated. It is therefore understandable why the apocalyptic formula would be so popular in the ancient world. Furthermore, using contemporary nomenclature, ‘apocalyptic movies’ have appeal for they are dystopic, and often question human behaviour during societal collapse. This is of course not to remove the sensationalism and interest in subject matter that surrounds the entire destruction of the planet and humankind.

Both the Book of Revelation and *Donnie Darko* were created surrounding the birth of a new millennium. They were works created out of the concern for contemporary communities. Maier emphasises how the Book of Revelation is an apocalypse of hindsight. It is looking back, to improve the future ahead.<sup>110</sup> This I contend is accurate, and likewise true of *Donnie Darko*. Looking back, and re-calling the past, one can see the problems that led to present issues. Controlling time, and knowing time, is a way to

and hope is restored in the future. It is an attempt in rapidly changing worlds, to ensure systemic patriarchy. When communities are changing, and advancing quickly, males are still in power, and violence is still a solution. The perceived crisis then, was not one of violent persecution, but perhaps fears of losing the

The contemporaries of John of Patmos did not all suggest the same solutions to these trying times. *The Shepherd of Hermas* is a Christian apocalyptic text that did not support the dominating patriarchy. Perhaps one of the reasons the text did not make it into the Christian cannon was because a woman was chosen to represent the church itself. Where the Book of Revelation was counter-politics literature,<sup>112</sup> *The Shepherd of Hermas* is anti-normative. Instead of revealing worlds of violence against enemies, it presented an alternative view, where the church itself is feminine, and women who sin are to be forgiven. Simply put, knowledge and manipulation of time, did not lead to

Revelation. She is aware of the soon to come demise of humankind, yet does not act violently. In fact, Justine is hyperfeminized, and acts as a sexual dominator of men.

*Melancholia* is another counter-example to how the knowledge of time does not

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## **Filmography**

*40 Days and 40 Nights*, Directed by Michael Lehmann, *Miramax Films*, 2002.

*American Pie*, Directed by Paul and Chris Weitz, *Universal Pictures*, 1999.

*Back to the Future*, Directed by Robert Zemeckis,



*Southland Tales*, Directed by Richard Kelly, *Samuel Goldwyn Films* and *Destination Films*, 2006.

*Superman*, Directed by Richard Donner, *Warner Bros. Pictures*, 1978.

*The Ten Commandments*, Directed by Cecil B. DeMille, *Paramount Pictures*, 1923.

*The Terminator*, Directed by James Cameron, *Orion*, 1984.

*The Time Bandits*, Directed by Terry Gilliam, *Avco Embassy Pictures*, 1980.

*The Time Machine*, Directed by George Pal, *Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 1960.

*The Wizard of Oz*, Directed by Victor Fleming, *Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 1939.

*This Is the End*, Directed by Seth Rogen and Evan Goldberg, *Columbia Pictures*, 2013.