

Abstract – The apocalypse is no-thing to wish for: Revisioning Traumatic Masculinities
in John Hillcoat's *The Road*

This chapter critiques masculinism in the apocalyptic genre as seen in film, television and other media. By exploiting regeneration through violence and traumatic aesthetics, the genre tends to narrativize perceived crises in masculinity in terms of 'paradise lost'. The latent assumption is that historical events have eroded the 'essential' core of masculinity and male heroes must endure apocalyptic extremes in order to regain it. With reference to Richard Slotkin's 'Frontier Myth', E. Ann Kaplan's 'trauma future-tense' and Dominick LaCapra's 'trauma, absence, loss', I examine how John Hillcoat's *The Road* distinguishes itself from the generic field by empathically unsettling viewers. The protagonist does not master his environs and reconstitute a heroic masculine ontology, but rather exemplifies a non-regenerative, more ethical, model of working through times of mourning and melancholy.

