Research Article

The Rewriting of Exodus in Eschatological Landscapes: Religious Spaces and Cultural Interpretations in Post Apocalypse Sci-Fi Feature Films

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	The essence of sorting and interpreting religious spaces in post apocalypse Sci-Fi feature films is to investigate the relationship between the hidden religious logics and the film narratives. From the perspective of religion, within the theoretical framework of Spatial Narratology, this paper attempts to figure out the deep strategies for narration within the text of post apocalypse films, namely, the inner features of "narrative spaces" and "spatial narratives", so as to depict the "post-apocalyptic landscapes" in post apocalypse films and to analysis the "rewriting" of Exodus in such type of films. Contribution: This study analyzes the religious narrative and cultural metaphor in post apocalypse films, and theoretically explores the relationship between religious logic and movie narrative in post apocalypse films. And it applies the theoretical framework of spatial narratology to explore the deep narrative strategy in post apocalypse film text, which can enrich the research dimension of post apocalypse film. In the practical aspect, it can help film researchers and creators to better understand the religious and narrative logic of post apocalypse film industry, which has theoretical guidance for the creation of such films.

INTRODUCTION

As the pace of industrialization accelerates in modern society, information technology leads to a new revolution of social production, and people's living environments and conditions have improved incredibly. From an anthropocentric point of view, while humans have been conquering and exploiting nature, a raft of environmental problems has emerged, affecting the ecological landscape of human society. To date, countless social issues have derived from environmental problems. The anxiety about the doomsday crisis is being injected into the collective unconscious of mankind through the repetitive narrative and "formulas" of the mass media. From a diachronic perspective, issues related to the apocalyptic disaster, such as shadows of nuclear weapons, energy crises, anxieties about global warming, and panics about pandemic outbreaks, have arisen in different eras and social and cultural contexts. Against such a backdrop, reflections on the self and anxieties about the future of humanity have started to occupy a vital portion of mainstream social consciousness. Needless to say, ecological problems have sparked a heated debate about anthropocentrism, whose emergence and resolution are not simple self-proposed questions but rather issues at a macro level, influenced by factors such as state politics, social economy, ideologies, and religious beliefs. It was not until the modern and contemporary times when the traditional religious world began to be "disenchanted" by the rationality of modern instruments. Being mechanically copied, the "Aura" of art, a concept proposed by Walter Benjamin, is gradually fading away. Having witnessed this, many artists consciously or unconsciously started to pick up and wave the flag of religion again, either to reveal the disorders of modern society, the collapse of the inner world or to seek a certain way to escape. Modernists continued to "search for answers to traditional religious questions about the human condition, the nature of historical experience, sexuality, death, and ultimate realities." （Lewis 2006:20） Thus, post apocalypse films, as a part of popular culture, have become opportunities for the public to vent emotions.

As the last chapter of the *New Testament*, the *Book of Revelation* tells the story in which Jesus Christ revealed to his servants "the things that must happen soon" through the apostle John. It can also be found in this book detailed description of various cataclysms and doomsday judgments in the future, as well as the gorgeous view of the new heaven on earth: the Holy City, New Jerusalem. From a religious point of view, the term "apocalypse" is associated with miracles, destruction, and renewal, signifying the supremacy of God and the destruction caused by human sins. With the passage of time and the development of civilization, the traditional religious world began to be "demystified" by the instrumental rationality of modernity, and "apocalypse" was no longer a simple word in the Christian discourse system. Instead, it has gradually become synonymous with "doomsday" in the process of secularization. Additionally, it has been given new meanings in various fields such as literature, art, and social philosophy. For example, in Hollywood films, the term has the meaning of the destruction and reshaping of human history and civilization and the natural environment. It encompasses religious clashes, the succession of civilizations, racial integration, and the reshuffling of natural landscapes.

The full name of post apocalypse films is Post Apocalypse Sci-Fi Feature Films. Many scholars have offered explanations for this notion. According to Petter Skult(2015:104), " Post-apocalyptic fiction is a narrative of a period of time from a pre-apocalyptic past through a cataclysmic event (or series of events) that culminates in an entirely new world order – the post-apocalypse. During this transition from pre-to post-apocalypse, the landscape and geography of the world change drastically: usually from a recognizable, urban 'normality'to an uncanny wilderness."Post apocalypse films create a fantasy space different from reality by depicting people's survival conditions, thoughts, and actions after Doomsday. They underscore eco-criticism, place human beings at the bottom of the world, and portray the end of the world by depicting the ruthlessness of nature and the insignificance of humanity. Kelly J. Murphy and Justin Jsffcoat Schedtler（2016）have provided examples, arguing that films such as *The Road* (2009) and *The Book of Eli* (2010), which express survivors'anxiety when struggling for survival while facing the loss or even obliteration of their humanity, are post apocalypse films.

Keane(2001) holds that disaster film is a type used repeatedly, even it is not a genre with a stable framework. As a sub-genre of eschatological films, post apocalypse films naturally focus more on the "group portrait of human beings" after the end of the world. With eco-criticism as the motif, they embed the imagination of the post-apocalyptic space in the anxieties about and reflections on the current environmental crises. This has become the most common direction of research on post apocalypse films. For example, Karl Becke (2010) analyzed excerpts of post apocalypse films and novels and argued that this genre can express deep-seated anxiety about consumerism and its consequences.Emma Anne Harris（2016）elaborated on the status and narrative structure of post apocalypse films as a genre in her doctoral thesis titled *Post-Apocalyptic Film Genres in American Culture 1968-2013*. She held that, from the perspective of American culture, this genre expresses a discomfort with modernity and depicts a pastoral utopia.

It is worth noting that post apocalypse films are based on sub-cultural images derived from Christian eschatology. The religious significance is a cultural characteristic deeply rooted in its essence, giving birth to motivations for the cognition of beliefs and cultural diffusion. Post apocalypse films have undergone a transformation from being anti-genre to becoming a genre, from experimental images to commercial films, and from niche culture to the mass market. Currently, studies on this genre are largely focused on cultural studies, ideologies, and social criticism, with the "religious elements" in such films insufficiently explored. There are significant gaps in research in this field although post apocalypse films are a relatively well-established sub-genre of science fiction films. Therefore, this paper, from a perspective of film studies and religious studies, analyzes a large number of classic post apocalypse films. It conducts a typological study and cultural reflection on the unique religious aesthetics and religious narratives in these films, within the theoretical frameworks of semiotics and narratology. The first part primarily focuses on the "narrative spaces", which are categorized into three major ones, namely, the closed "*dys-topia*", the re-enchanted "*heterotopia*", and the punkified "*E-topia*". The goal is to depict the "post-apocalyptic landscapes" in post apocalypse films more thoroughly. The second part discusses "spatial narrative" and the homology of the narrative in post apocalypse films and the narrative in *Exodus* based on intertextuality and spatial relationships. By combining the spatial displacements of "leaving Egypt" and "entering Canaan" and integrating the narrative of lower-class suffering and the narrative of ethnic consciousness shared by the two, this paper analyzes how *Exodus* is rewritten in post apocalypse films.

I.NARRATIVE SPACE: THE ESCHATOLOGICAL LANDSCAPE IN POST APOCALYPSE FILMS

The reflection on the concept of space can be traced back to the idea of the perfect world proposed by the ancient Greek philosopher Plato in *The Republic*. During the Renaissance, Thomas Moore generalized and developed it as the "*utopia*", which triggers the prologue to the vision of the future society. For example, the "*dys-topia* or *dystopia*" during the monopoly capitalism period in the early 20th century, the "*heterotopia*" proposed by Foucault in the period of state monopoly capitalism in the 1960s, and "*E-topia*" aroused by William J. Mitchell during the blossom of the Internet in the 1980s, etc.

The background of post apocalypse films is set in the near future. From the perspective of the development of linear spatial narratology, the spatial mode is most likely in the form of "*E-topia*". Nonetheless, devastating disasters in post apocalypse films have divided the development of civilizations into different periods, whilst science and technology have suffered from either cliff-like regression, or leapfrog developments in certain fields, which lead to the mixed mode of the spatial features of post apocalypse films. To illustrate, various spatial modes that used to appear within different social and historical context transcend the linear time order, and even exist at the same time. In this paper, spatial modes of post apocalypse films are categorized in to three types: "*dys-topia*", "*heterotopia*", and "*E-topia*".

(1)The shaping of the closed "*dys-topia*"

"*Dys-topia*" is also called "*dystopia*". Contrary to "*utopia*", "*dys-topia*" "does not foresee the beautiful prospects of human

society, but its evil future."(Gao2016:7) This quotation indicates the social criticism reflected in the concept of contemporary "*dys-topia*". Comparing with the serene and peaceful "*utopia*", the desperate and cruel "*dys-topia*" is more suitable to be used to summarize the wasteland where people struggle to survive after the doomsday.

Another reason why the wasteland space is more similar to "*dys-topia*" rather than the most romantic and optimistic "*utopia*" is the closure of its space. In the more utopian "space opera", the open space is where people actively explore unknown and mysterious places. However, in the post-apocalyptic movies, the past human civilization is overthrown overnight, and there is no way to escape in the post-apocalyptic world dominated by the scorched earth. However, this enclosed space never equals to a peaceful "Garden of Eden". In the claustrophobic space without order or moral restraint, the most despicable desire in human nature is like the snake that seduces Eve, and human beings are expelled from the Garden of Eden" by themselves.

After the occurrence of the stereotyped apocalyptic event, different causes of "*dys-topia*" and its various forms provide more possibilities for the narrative and motif interpretation of fi-lms.

1."*Dys-topias*" of resources on islands

"The image of the '*island*' indicates that it is surrounded by vast waters and is besieged.as water is a symbol of nowhere to escape." (Cao 2002:182) Such a dead-end dilemma is also the portrait of the survivors in the post apocalypse films. Although this kind of situation is isolated and desperate, if order is maintained, it can also become a doomsday heaven. Just as illustrated by the historian of religion, Mircea Eliade(1987:59), "The architectural plan of the temple is the work of the gods and hence exists in heaven, near to the gods."But in post apocalypse films, together with the vanishing of "architects", gate-keepers of orders, the respect for morality and the belief in order also disappears.

When the collapse of order encounters the shortage of resources, the two of them jointly create an excellent narrative conflict and plot contradiction, after which the evil of human nature begins to spread on the isolated island as well. For example, in *Alita: Battle Angel* (2019), the descent of human civilization resulted from the *impact winter* as well as the separation of colonized planets, together lead to the emergence of the three top-to-bottom distorted human living spaces from "*Elyon*" to "*Zalem*" and then to "*Iron City*", hence leading to the resource exploitation and power control from different classes, as well as the resistance of the people at the bottom against the ruling power. *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015) and *Waterworld* (1995), due to nuclear war and the greenhouse effect, respectively, caused a shortage of fresh water and a desert space and ocean space worshiping violence, which reflects the law of the jungle to fight for resources and the cruel questioning on humanity after the doomsday crisis.

2. "*Dys-topias*" of power in carriages

The internal space of a vehicle can also be regarded as a spatial form, which is controlled by "discipline" and at the same time emphasizes order. Richard Sennett (1996)views the internal space of the "train" carriage as a space of "order" in which balance is kept, and distance is maintained through the method of "silence". Additionally, the order forms of different carriage types are also discussed . Seats inside different classes of carriages correspond to different types of service treatments and different size of free space. This hierarchical division in a closed space, on one hand, allows passengers to feel the unfreedom of individuals, while on the other hand, forces them to surrender to the pressure of power in the carriage. For instance, the story in *Snowpiercer* (2013) happens on a seemingly non-stop high-speed train, where rulers and their followers live in the first-class carriage, whilst the poor without tickets have no choice but to fight their way in the back of the train. In the *Attack on Titan* (2015), a three-layer circular rampart is set to prevent the giants. Civilians inhabited in the four barbicans are used to attract the attack from the giants, whereas the royal family remain untouched in the safest Mitra in the center. Albeit there is no concrete image of carriages or ramparts for hierarchical division, in the *Handmaids Tale* (1990), power is distinguished by gender, fertility and color instead.

(2) The shaping of the re-enchanted "*heterotopia*"

The concept of "*heterotopia*" was first proposed by Foucault at the *Cercle d'études Architecturales* in 1967. The concept of "*heterotopia*" reveals the nature of "*promise*" of "*utopia*", and is a kind of existence different and critical, with irreducible diversity. The background of post apocalypse films is set in the near future, which is the continuation of people's contemporary space from a different perspective, so does its nature of being a "heterotopia". And because of the harsh living environment and chaotic life order, people are more likely to regard religion as their spiritual sustenance and ultimate salvation. Therefore, in post apocalypse films, many spaces deploy a variety of visual expression methods to "re-enchant" the religious aspect of the space in order to complete the shaping of "heterotopia" in the future space.

In particular, visual expressions methods mentioned above consist of the selection of religious colors and the implement of light arrangement. In terms of color selection, in order be distinguished from the colors that people are accustomed to in modern life, and also to ensure the desolate and desperate apocalyptic atmosphere, most post apocalypse films are dominated by a high-contrast and dark-tone style similar to film noir. Thus, black has become the most prominent iconic color among all the color palettes.

"Technologies like the still or the film camera make it possible to capture minute experiences which otherwise remain like a play of shadows on our conscious visual apparatus. The huge proliferation of visual culture in modernity means our stock of these images has proliferated manifold. Post-apocalyptic horror and science fiction cinema taps into this '*optical unconsciousness*' to refer back to the horrors of catastrophic events, by evoking the images of war, violence and destruction and reproducing the tortured corporeality thereof by means of oblique reference. " (Baishya, A 2011:4) Saint Bernard also reproaches color in general as being a thick envelope that hinders contact with the divine. For him, black in particular is density, and density is hell. There are abundant examples of applying the heavy religious color of black to defamiliarize spaces in post apocalypse films.(Pastoureau, M 2009:54) For example, *The Matrix Revolutions* (2003) uses overwhelming black to create a future world where humans are enslaved by machines. From metal furniture in the house to the dilapidated walls, and the gigantic spaceship, as well as Zion, the base camp of the rebels, all are designed in black with the texture of oil and machinery. Even the "01" created by the Architect is

ruled by endless darkness and heavy smog.

In a post apocalypse movie dominated by black tones, the scattered white is particularly calling out for attention. From the perspective of religion, black and white of high purity can also be regarded as the rejection to the colorful secular life, which can be proved by the colors of the clothes of the priests. In particular, white is commonly utilized as the color for sacramental rituals of the liturgy in Catholicism and Christianity, etc. In general, Christianity believes that white is a symbol of purity. For example, Jesus in his childhood is often portrayed as a naked child sitting on a white cloth, symbolizing his innocence, purity and holiness. In post apocalypse films, most of the time, white exists in the form of natural light. Unlike artificial light that can be regarded as light pollution such as large searchlights and neon lights, which can be called light pollution in the film, this type of soft and pure natural light seems incompatible with the post-apocalyptic wasteland.

(3)The shaping of the punkified "*E-topia*"

The myth of the Internet continues to create new digital spaces. These mixed spaces are like a new type of city built on the basis of the original human society. William J. Mitchell's(1999:33) illustration of "*E-topia"* goes as " a global construction of high-speed telecommunications links, smart places, and increasingly indispensable software", and "electronically serviced, globally linked cities."

In the future society where human beings and machines co-exist, "*E-topia*" is accompanied by a shift from "heavy modernity" to "light modernity". "Once distances can be spanned (and so the materially distant parts of space acted upon and affected) with the velocity of electronic signals, all references to time appear, as Jacques Derrida would put it, '*sous rature*'". (Bauman 2000:117)Time starts to become more flexible and stretchable, and gradually swallow up the space. However, "The near-instantaneity of software time augurs the devaluation of space". (Bauman 2000:118) This inevitably leads human civilization to a more secularized status with more instrumental rationality and belief in efficiency. As Guy Debord (1990:13)said, people live in an era "which wants to forget the past and no longer seems to believe in future." This rebellious spirit that despises tradition and morality in particular coincides with punk culture.

The word "Punk" originated from a rock music developed in the mid-20th century. Ragged clothing, violent and erotic patterns, the combination of mecha leather and rivet, all these elements constitute to an iconic punk style. The punk, "They fight against all traditional and moral things, the society, the religion, and even human beings themselves."(Li 2017:142)As a subcultural phenomenon, representative behavior of punk is perverse and rebellious, incompatible with the noble, holy and transcendent nature of religion. In fact, the punk elements of blasphemy, together with gothic, death metal, etc., have always been known as antichrists."(Xu 2015:485). In film and television works, punk and gothic elements are mostly applied to express the existence of a certain alienation, which is a sharp resistance to mainstream values including religion.

Since the background of the post apocalypse films is set in the near future, although after apocalyptic disasters, certain relics of previous civilizations are still necessary to be maintained to certain degrees. For instance, light "*E-topia*" and the rebellious punk culture, as the relic of civilizations have been more or less preserved in the post apocalypse films. Even in the "*E-topia*" of the cyber age, punk culture has evolved into a newly labelled visual element: *Cyber Punk*. In some movies, science and technology forge ahead rapidly within certain fields without considering the lives of the people at the bottom-class, which leads to the situation of "high-tech and low-life", and different punk styles can coexist harmoniously. Namely, the coexistence of cyberpunk and diesel punk in *Alita: Battle Angel* (2019). The leap of military technology in different planets for the preparation of arms race after catastrophic "*impact winter*", the immaculate sky city Zalem, bright blocks lined with skyscrapers, as well as the shining Berserker mecha, all the above elements contribute to the substantial cyberpunk style. On the other hand, the Iron City handling mechanical trash from Zalem is rather dilapidated, with streets filled with trash surround by the atmosphere of abandoned industrial heavy metals, and motorcycles with roaring engines and wild remodelers are spinning around. In this sense, there also coexists a rough style of diesel punk. Another example is the coexistence of cyberpunk and vacuum punk presented in *Blade Runner 2049* (2017). Thirty years after the story of the previous episode, *Blade Runner* (1982) (that is, 2022), nexus 8, clones with a lifespan similar to humans are hunted and killed by humans who practiced "human supremacy". In order to destroy relevant information related to its own survival, nuclear missiles were used to create a "global blackout", which leads to a devastating damage to the world that is highly dependent on digitalization and technology. After this, the technology has been developed into two extremes. On one hand, with its advanced technology, Wallace as a technology giant, has experienced rapid progress, and its overall design has developed into the postmodern style. Simple and light electronic equipment, curvilinear clothing tailoring as a whole, smooth and concise interior design, all in all shows a typical cyberpunk style. On the other hand, the overall technology represented by the Los Angeles police has stagnated or even regressed, resulting in the worn electronic equipment of the police station and replica Ks old flying car, with rough frames, mechanical lines and geometric graphics. Red, blue and green, colors commonly used by monochrome display screens, as well as the scratched and worn screen together present a retro vacuum punk style.

Ⅱ. SPATIAL NARRATIVE: THE REWRITING OF EXODUS

Different from the narrative space mentioned previously which was encoded with rich religious elements, the spatial narrative focuses more on how to apply religious content in spatial writing into the narration of films. Although a film may not include many religious factors, the creators, very often, tend to borrow the narrative models from religious classics, such as the *Bible*, to add religious implications into spatial writing, making them the narrative clues of the film.

Spatially, *Exodus* can be divided into two parts in its narration: "leaving Egypt" and "entering Canaan". The former part describes how those at the bottom are persecuted and their trying experiences of escaping from Egypt because of the hunting of

pharaohs. The latter, however, turns to the journey of the Israelites heading for Canaan and a series of religious stories occur on the way, such as the "being of the Ten Commandments", "the creation of the sabbatical year and the Sabbath", and the "Tabernacle". Such kind of spatial flow and narration boils down to the narrative of lower-class suffering and the narrative of ethnic consciousness.

Kristeva (2015：87)believes that "the construction of any text equals the combinations of introduction and that any texts amount to the absorption and conversion of other texts."In the case of post apocalypse films, the narrative of lower-class suffering and the narrative of ethnic consciousness are still maintained only embedded with some new changes in the light of new conflicts. On the one hand, changes have happened to the source of suffering and the subject of beliefs and therefore added new implications to the suffering narrative under new contexts. On the other, the scope of ethnic consciousness is extended.

（1）Leaving Egypt: the rewriting of the narrative of lower-class suffering

In *Genesis*(NLT 51:7), "Joseph and all of his brothers died, ending that entire generation. But their descendants, the Israelites, had many children and grandchildren. In fact, they multiplied so greatly that they became extremely powerful and filled the land ",the new head of Egypt and the Egyptian people began to persecute the Israelites in the forms of killing or slavery. In response, the Israelites begged God for help who in turn sent prophet Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. Post apocalypse films, comparatively, also attach great importance to a similar narrative of lower-class suffering as people who survive an apocalypse usually live in a world of wasteland where order is deprived, and resources are in dire shortage. " A society relentlessly at the frontier of social change and individual mobility is bound to doubt periodically the benefits of modernity and secularization, yearning for the security of traditional values and institutions rooted in Gods eternal truth."(Castells 2010:23-24) People living on the wasteland, therefore, develop the need to seek spiritual comfort by resorting to "religion alike" as a source of belief and thus feel determined to leave the wasteland. For example, in *the Book of Eli*, human civilization has been reconstructed on a small scale in the small town, the head of the town, however, wants nothing but a *Bible* as he knows that the prominent factor to survive the wasteland where resources are of shortage and force prevails is the re-building of spirit and belief. In the book, Eli and the girl escape the little town with the last copy of Bile and go to the new cluster of human civilization. Such a journey is similar to the one stated in *Exodus* where people at the bottom escaped Egypt. Narrative of such kind is also applied in *Waterworld* (1995), *The Road (*2009), and other films.

Such kind of lower-class suffering is not only reflected in the suffering solely accumulated before leaving Egypt, but also in the whole process of "leaving", and the suffering includes both the physical suffering of lacking materials and the spiritual suffering of being doubted. When being chased in the wilderness by the pharaohs of Egypt, the Israelites complained to Moses, "Why did you bring us out here to die in the wilderness? Werent there enough graves for us in Egypt? What have you done to us? Why did you make us leave Egypt?"（Ex. 14:11）The process of going to a new place of hope in post apocalypse films is also full of similar physical and spiritual suffering.

However, in Post Apocalypse Films, such kind of suffering narrative is assured of some changes. One, the source of the above-mentioned belief has changed, which is no longer confined by concrete divinities. Two, except for reasons such as being suppressed and enslaved as in the process of "leaving Egypt", there are factors such as worse natural environment, broken humanity, and power struggle. Therefore, the completion of "leaving" in the process of "leaving Egypt" in Post Apocalypse Films is no longer a simple spatial migration. For example, in *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015), the War Boys worship Immortan Joe and believe in Valhalla and V8 engine, but such spiritual comfort is not conducive to the improvement of real-life conditions. Even if Furiosa and Max reached the former "Green Place" after twists and turns, they did not have a different destiny. On the contrary, it was after they rode back to the canyons under the rule of Immortan Joe and overthrew his tyranny that a new starts. This narrative model completely rewrites the happy ending as in the story of *Exodus* and overturns the salvation theme of the original text, adding new implications to the suffering narrative under new contexts, and putting the audience in deeper desperation and pessimism.

（2）Entering Canaan: the rewriting of the narrative of ethnic consciousness

As stated by Zygmunt Bauman(2000:107): "The purpose of territorial separation being aimed at the homogeneity of neighbourhood."Consider *Exodus* as a narrative text, the process of the Israelites heading for the divine land of Canaan, as promised by God, is the process of constructing their ethnic consciousness or recognition which is rooted in two aspects. The first is the collective memory of lower-class narratives and the second is a shared belief in the same religion.

1.Collective memory and resistant recognition

Like the connection between Egypt and Canaan made by the migration of the Israelites, "the narrative of lower-class suffering" and "the narrative of ethnic recognition" are not isolated from each other. The narration of lower-class suffering forms the collective memory of the Israelites as a nation, and the corresponding resistance in the process shapes their religious belief as a whole, which then built their ethnic identity and national coherence that last for millennia. The truth is, "the sharing of painful memory serves to form and maintain ethnic identities." (Guo 2019:4)

More specifically, such pain, in *Exodus*, originates from slavery and suppression experienced in Egypt and from the shared memory of hardships in the process of "leaving Egypt". It is such collective memory of pain that triggers the resistant recognition among the group. Castells （2010:8） thinks that the resistant recognition is "generated by those actors who are in positions/conditions devalued and/or stigmatized by the logic of domination." and therefore those who are belittled and excluded come to put up a fort of defense. "It constructs forms of collective resistance against otherwise unbearable oppression, usually on the basis of identities that were, apparently, clearly defined by history, geography, or biology, making it easier to essentialize the boundaries of resistance." （Castells 2010:9）Therefore, the ethnic recognition of the Israelites is, in a word, a kind of resistant

and defensive recognition based on ethnicity.

Like the persecuted Israelites, survivors in an apocalypse escape spatially out of resistance for certain things, and their collective identity is established and deepened during the process. For instance, in *the Postman* (1997), the emergence of the "postman" brings hope to the people who live in the tyranny of the warlords and makes them believe that the government is being restructured and civility is restored so that they regained their national identity as American citizens. In this case, their ignited passion motives them to fight against the acrostic warlords which expedites, to a certain degree, the return of civilization. It is easy to notice that the process of key characters leading those at the bottom to escape spatially and head for an ideal space through fighting hardships like suppression and slavery amounts to a journey of building self-identity. The fact that such a process started in the narrative of *Exodus* gives a precise confirmation that the narrative of *Exodus* is, essentially, a universal social pattern that is embedded in the whole human history. As Ronald Hendel（2001:621）put it, "The historically true and the symbolically true are interwoven in such a way that the past authorizes and encompasses the present. The exodus, in this sense, is not a punctual past but ongoing, a past continuous." Post Apocalypse Films, therefore, can be seen as the future forms of "leaving Egypt" in an imaginative way.

2.Religious belief and consensual identity

Among the historians, the questioning on the validity of the narrative in *Exodus* has been long-standing yet has remained unverifiable at the same time. However, the description of "leaving Egypt" is what the Jewish people wanted to pass onto the next generations as a collective memory either being regarded as a cultural reference or a part of actual history. With that being said, the investigation on *Exodus*, the narrative text that embodies the collective memory of the Jewish people, has its values.Such values are demonstrated, in particular, by the connection between religious and ethnic identity.

From the perspective of functionalism, the religious ethnic consensus bears a huge influence as "Through a community of history and destiny, memories may be kept alive and actions retain their glory...the formation of nations and the rise of ethnic nationalisms appears more like the institutionalization of "surrogate religion" than a political ideology, and therefore far more durable and potent than we care to admit."（Castells 2010:33）Such kind of religious ethnic identity is also reflected in Post Apocalypse Films. Reclaiming the religious fundamentalism is "aiming to construct social and personal identity on the basis of images of the past and project them into a utopian future, to overcome unbearable present times."（Castells 2010:28） In a wasteland like the "*dys-topia"* as in post apocalypse films, religious consolation is more needed which has also become a way to reach consensus.　In *Cargo* (2017), the little girl Tumi and her family converted to life in a matriarchal clan from life in modern society. During the apocalypse, they restored their faith in gods and managed to establish a traditional matriarchal tribe, which also reflects the important role of religion in concluding consensual identity.

CONCLUSION

Post apocalypse films are looking into the future. They create many bizarre apocalyptic landscapes that are mostly derived from various "utopian" textual imaginations of the future society. These include the closed "*dys-topia*", the re-enchanted "*heterotopia*", and the punkified "*E-topia*", among others, constituting a unique narrative space characterized by diverse spatial representations. In these narrative spaces, the various issues in human society are pushed to their most tragic extremes. Commonly held social concepts are questioned. Religious allegories and metaphors are used to warn of the seeds of catastrophe that may have already been sown, seeking the ultimate crux of human civilization.

The hands of post apocalypse films reach toward history, seeking answers from past eras where religion was regarded as a yardstick. They look to perhaps the most widely recognized motifs of religious narratives to find a way out of their difficulties. Such films often draw on narrative patterns from religious texts such as *Exodus* in the *Bible* to add religious implications into spatial writing, making them the narrative clues of the film.

Looking at the development history of post apocalypse films, their quantity, as well as the ups and downs of the motif, are positively related to the social crises at that time and the shifts in the public's spiritual needs. In recent years, the surge of post apocalypse films reflects, in an indirect way, that in the post-globalization era, the refusal of popular beliefs and socially psychological panic becomes widespread as a result of the rising neo-liberalism and populism, the continuous economic downturn, and the treacherous global political situation. In short, post apocalypse films enjoy rich possibilities.

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