




University of Tehran press

Research in Contemporary World Literature

<http://jor.ut.ac.ir>, Email: pajuhesh@ut.ac.ir

p-ISSN : 2588-4131 e-ISSN: 2588 -7092

A Geocritical Study of Spatio-Temporality through Post-Apocalyptic Novel *Malevil* by Robert Merle

Somayeh Rostamipour ¹  0000-0003-3883-4898

I. Department of foreign languages, PayameNoor University (PNU), Tehran, Iran.E-mail: srostamip@pnu.ac.ir

Article Info

Article type:

Research Article

Article history:

Received: 03 September 2023

Received in revised form: 19 December 2023

Accepted: 07 January 2024

Published online: Spring2025

Keywords:

Bertrand Westphal, Geocriticism, literary representation, *Malevil*, post-apocalyptic, spatio-temporality, temporal strata.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Science fiction works with an apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic image deal with events such as huge wars, unknown diseases, mutated viruses, misuse of science and knowledge, any of which can lead to the death of the planet. The first novel with an apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic image is *The Last Man* (1826) by Mary Shelly, 19th century English writer, in which the geographic space of the 21st century has been ravaged due to the rise of bubonic plague pandemic that sweeps across the entire globe and only one human remains. In this regard, the image of the dystopian and the importance of geographic space is extremely evident in post-apocalyptic novels, especially in the science fiction and post-apocalyptic novel of *Malevil* (1972) by Robert Merle. In fact, *Malevil* is a science fiction novel in which due to a huge unknown nuclear war, life returns to the starting point before human civilization. The story begins with a large-scale unknown explosion and represents the surroundings as reduced to ashes, rubble and ruined human civilization. After this extensive destruction, the protagonist, Emmanuel, and several of his friends in the cellar of the Castle and other people and animals have survived by chance. Therefore, the spatio-temporality is more prominent. The current research article deals with the spatio-temporality with an emphasis on Westphalian Geocriticism with regard to *Malevil*. The confluence of reality and imagination plays a significant role in the representation of geographic spaces. The main goal is to investigate the geographic space and its diachronic evolution. Based on Westphalian Geocriticism, time and space are not independent of each other, but time is considered as a dimension of space and forms the spatio-temporality continuum. The spatio-temporality continuum proposed in Westphalian Geocriticism opens a new horizon in the interdisciplinary studies of space and place in literary works especially in Westphalian Geocriticism. In this continuum, time depends on space, and their expansion and contraction are dependent on each other. From this point of view, the non-linear time of the story is divided into three parts: Before (past), the “Zero Day” or “Event Day” (present) and after (future). The cyclic time is due to the superiority of imagination and the labyrinth of memories. In the analysis of spatio-temporality, diachronic strata have been investigated in order to represent a more comprehensive geographic space. Relying on imaginary transgressivity, the mass of memories is becoming important in representing the geographic space of the novel through asynchronous strata. The continuous effort, knowledge and experience of the world before “Zero Day” in order to restore the post-apocalyptic dystopia and reach the utopia indicate the human values and responsibility of *Malevil*'s residents.

Cite this article: Rostamipour, S. “A Geocritical Study of Spatio-Temporality through Post-Apocalyptic Novel *Malevil* by Robert Merle” *Research in Contemporary World Literature*, 2025, 30 (1), 157-181. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.22059/jor.2024.364784.2458>.



© The Author(s).

Publisher: University of Tehran Press.

DOI: <http://doi.org/10.22059/jor.2024.364784.2458>.