The Meaning of Destruction – Definition and Contextualization of Disaster Movies

The disaster movie is one of the most persistent genres in cinematography, but it constantly escapes our attention because it is presented as “easy summer fun”. If we want to understand it as a cultural document of an epoch in which the genre is important and popular, we need to come up with a definition, formula and conventions of a disaster movie. Also, we must propose one of many possible comprehensions of its popularity and religious heritage.

The paper uses definitions of genre, conventions and formulae in the attempt to show a way of using popular narratives in the transmission of a world view. Using a narrative structure gives us a glimpse into the deeper cultural, social and political context in which the disaster movie is created, popular or rejected. The paper discusses disaster movies as cultural artifacts, as a ritual we are practicing without remembering its purpose.

Also, paper is examining identifying apocalyptic and catastrophic as an product of interposition of Apocalypse to Johan and Great Tribulation. Using apocalyptic literature, end times narratives and disaster movies, the paper shows the fruitfulness of destruction representations and imaginarium of terror. Using fear and shock, the messages of disaster movies seems more urgent and relevant. Through the ideas of Susan Sontag and Maurice Yacowar, the paper presents a way for analyzing the contemporary disaster movie. Conventions and formulae of disaster movies help us to understand the way modern cinematography is used for cultural and political means.

The popularity of disaster movies can be seen as a form of “ritualization of discontent” wherein the viewers experience some sort of catharsis. Also, disaster movie gathers different interests and actualizes thirstness for transformation of order or achieving justice.

Key words:
Disaster movie, genre, formula, convention, socio – cultural context, "secular apocalypse".