

DEGREE IN AUDIOVISUAL COMMUNICATION DISSERTATION

# **15 YEARS LATER:** **Zombies & The Apocalypse**

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To George,  
if there is a Zombie Apocalypse, you deserve to rise first.  
To Jim,  
you had me at hello.

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this dissertation is to analyse the societal and cultural fears displayed in recent “zombie apocalypse” films produced in the first decade and a half of the 21st Century. Using the lenses of critical theory five pieces of media will be analysed, being *28 Days Later* (2002, dir. Danny Boyle), *World War Z* (2013, dir. Marc Forster), *REC* (2007, dir. Jaume Balagueró and Paco Plaza), *The Walking Dead* (2010 -, dev. Frank Darabont) and *The Girl with all the Gifts* (2017, dir. Colm McCarthy). The common factor of the aforementioned works being that they were all produced after the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center. The latent fears displayed in this recent crop of zombie horror films deal with the loss of stability in a familiar place, loss of humanity due to hardship and the distrust for established authority figures.

**Key words:** TV, Cinema, Media, Zombies, Fear, Apocalypse

## INTRODUCTION

“*Films are the mirror of the prevailing society.*”

- Siegfried Kracauer

The quote above comes from the essay “Little Shopgirls go to the Movies” a part of the controversial collection *The Weimar Essays*. In said essays Kracauer argues that films by their plural development reflect the unconscious fears, desires and hopes of the society that produces them. This same logic can be applied to more or less intensity to other mass produced entertainment like television series and videogames as stated in a study done by the University of Leon in 2005 where their results showed that videogames “build instruments through which the child understands the cultural media that surrounds him. It represents, explicitly, social symbolisms and cultural constructions around us, which can help us comprehend its content, and at the same time, it’s potential as a transmitter of values.” (Díez Guitierrez, 2009: pp. 35-52)

This theory can be applied to several film and television genres, specifically to the genre of horror and thriller since they interact with a very primal and instinctive feeling. Several publications point this theory out while applying it to different aspects of fear like *Men, Women and Chainsaws* (1992) by Carol J. Clover that analyses the slasher genre popularized in the 80s within the realm of feminism and the fear of female empowerment. In his essay “From Caligari to Hitler” Kracauer analyses such household names of the horror genre like *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920, dir. Robert Weine), *Nosferatu* (1922, dir. F.W. Murnau) and *M* (1931, dir. Fritz Lang) from such analysis he draws the conclusion that Weimar Germany already had an ambivalent relationship with tyranny and authority that would later come to fruition with the rise of National Socialist German Workers' Party, this and other essays are collected in the book *The Mass Ornament* (Kracauer and Levin, 1995). It is not hard to see how very **real fears inspired horror movies** produced over history, there being no clearer example than the Japanese *Kaiju* film, *Godzilla* (1954, dir. Ishirō Honda). The monster, being a giant uncaring force of destruction, is shown destroying two cities through the course of the film in very clear parallels to the destruction the atomic bomb caused to the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the end of World War II. This is expressed by several scholars among them Morros Low in his essay *The Birth of Godzilla: Nuclear Fear and the Ideology of Japan as a Victim* (1993).

With this idea in mind five pieces of media will be analyzed in the following thesis. The objective is to draw a definite link between emblematic works in the “Zombie Apocalypse” genre and the societal fears they represent. In order to narrow the field only media produced from 2000 to 2017 in either Europe or the United States will be analyzed due to the personal familiarity with the culture that produced these works. The aim of this dissertation is to prove that the latent fears displayed in this recent crop of zombie horror films deal with the loss of stability in a familiar place, loss of humanity due to hardship and the distrust for established authority figures as brought by the rise in terrorism in western countries, recent epidemics like ebola and the financial crisis that affected the western world. These fears had been previously outlined after intensive viewing of other works within the same cinematic genre.

The first step is to justify why the zombie has proven an enduring and prevalent horror in cinema and television since their first appearance in *White Zombie* (1932, dir. Victor Halperin) to its latest incarnation as to the writing of this thesis *Pride, Prejudice and Zombies* (2017, dir. Burr Steers). Furthermore, a very clear topic of analysis will be decided, the “Zombie Apocalypse” genre is so wide and rich in themes and implications that a broad objective would quickly unravel while a narrow one would prove irrelevant to the next iteration of the genera. After that a selection of media will be made in order to create a manageable body of work to go through, these will be selected for their relevance and clarity when addressing the fears in each work. To conclude there will be a contrast of the initial hypothesis and how much it reflects the results of this analysis.

## JUSTIFICATION

*“From being catalogued as an african mythological creature with roots in Haiti, today, the zombie is the chosen metaphor to write about the possible cataclysms of humanity.”*

- Leonardo Xavier Brito Alvarado, Saudia Levoyer (Translation mine)

Zombies have been a **prevalent figure of cinema** since their appearance in *White Zombie* (1932, dir. Victor Halperin). That was hardly the first ever mention of a zombie in global culture though, as several accounts both in the Caribbean and Eastern Europe discuss beings that resemble the zombie in one way or another. After all, the origins of the Vampire also arise from an undead creature that rises from the grave to consume the body of living beings. The zombie proper on the other hand, seems to originate from Haiti where there are several rituals both to turn someone into a zombie and to protect a recently deceased loved one from turning into one.

The earliest accounts of zombies portray the creature as indistinguishable from a human, except for their **lack of thought and free will**, they were raised from the dead in order to be slaves to whichever bokor (witch or sorcerer) summoned them. Jamie Russell, in his *Book of the Dead: The Complete History of Zombie Cinema* (2005) postulates that these early zombies “symbolised the ultimate horror” (Russell, pp. 12) since the stories came from a **society made of former slaves** to whom the thought of losing autonomy and free will would naturally be horrifying. These zombies were not aggressive, and the fear of the early zombie films wasn’t the visceral fear of being eaten alive by a reanimated monster, but of yourself or **someone you love becoming an undead puppet**. This is reflected in the earlier zombie films like *White Zombie*, *Voodoo Man* (1944, dir. William Bedouin) and *I Walked With a Zombie* (1943, dir. Jacques Tourneur), where young, beautiful white women get turned into puppets usually by Bela Lugosi as a white bokor and are coerced to marry men they do not love. Most of these films take place in Jamaica or an otherwise **exotic location**, the fear of the zombie being turned into a fear of the exotic or the unknown as well as the loss of free will, as Russell explains “the fear involved with the folklore zombi for these “common people” is not of meeting one (or being eaten by one)—but of becoming one.”

Zombies continued on their pacifist albeit terrifying path for the first three decades since their entrance in cinema, with a few changes here and there, were it was aliens and not wizards that possessed unknowing vulnerable people and turning them into mindless slaves. Everything changed with the release of *The Night of the Living Dead* (1968, dir. George A. Romero) where **zombies were transformed into cannibal monstrosities** with an appetite for human flesh. This was the first film to introduce the concept of cannibalistic corpses to the zombie mythos, turning these radiation infused cadavers into a predator that stalked the nightmares of people. The Romero Zombie though, still retains some sort of memory of its previous humanity, being able to open doors and even use firearms. From that moment, zombies were usually summoned or **created through radiation of some kind**, be it proves from outer space or nuclear leaks, but what most films that appeared after *The Night of the Living Dead* talked about the fear of **dehumanization through consumerism**.

This ever evolving monster found it's latest incarnation in the year 2002 with *28 Days Later* that started the representation of the zombie as a very **local and very human danger**. This new imagery associated with the zombie, linking it with the loss of humanity of the people living within the zombie apocalypse is the one that's reigning supreme as of today and with new incarnations of the genre creeping its way to the mainstream like *The Girl with all the Gifts* (2017, dir. Colom McCarthy) and seems in no hurry to stop. This prevalence in media, both in traditional media (like cinema and television) and new, digital media (like web series and videogames) and the diversity of representations, like a small foray in romance with *Warm Bodies* (2014, dir. Jonathan Levin) are the reason why the zombie apocalypse is such a **pertinent field to analyse**.

It's abundantly clear that the core of the zombie horror deals with **dehumanization**. The key components of the zombie, regardless of its origin, are "mindlessness and a loss of free will" as outlined by Margaret Thowry in her thesis, *From Voodoo to Viruses: The Evolution of the Zombie in 20th Century Popular Culture* (2008, pp.5). What changes with time is what other fear is paired with that loss of human status. In the earliest zombie films the fear of the exotic plays a part, with most films occurring on foreign soil where dark-skinned natives practice their forbidden rituals. Romero brought the zombies to the nuclear age, and the fear of dehumanization in the face of rampant capitalism as he clearly shows in his second film *Dawn of the Dead* (1978) where the survivors are shown consuming anything they desire in the shopping mall in contrast to the savage consuming of the zombies outside. This latest incarnation of the zombie displays fears that are deeply associated with the **loss of safety in domestic soil** in contrast to early fears of the exotic and the foreign and **mistrust towards the government** and both its ability and will to keep the population safe. Both of these fears Daniel Antonius claims in his article "When fear

is a weapon: How terror attacks influence mental health” (2016) in *The Conversation* are a very **common reaction after a terrorist attack**. This essay unlike others before will travel further into the 21st century to explore the fears present in more recent media.

## THEORETICAL BASE, METHODOLOGY and OBJECTIVES

This dissertation is based primarily in the *Book of the Dead: The Complete History of Zombie Cinema* by Jaime Russell (2014), a very complete collection of the evolution of the zombie in television, cinema and even video games throughout all of its history. This book served as a base for the analysis as well as an aid to the selection of pieces that would prove relevant to the focus of the analysis. Another book that will be used to lay the base of this analysis is *American Zombie Gothic: The Rise and fall (and rise again) of the Walking Dead in Popular Culture* (2010) by Kyle William Bishop. These two books are alike in the timelines analysed but *American Zombie Gothic* frames the zombie genre within certain literary traditions as well as analysing its narrative significance.

As for the ideological base, this belief that media has the potential of reflecting hopes, fears and latent ideas of the society that produces it is one of the basis of **Film Studies** that were informed by Siegfried Kracauer in his Weimar Essays, collected under *The Mass Ornament* (1995). This series of **academic essays** will provide the thematic base of this dissertation as it explains, to an exhaustive detail the many different ways media can hint different facets of the prevalent society.

As for other academic works, there will be a wide variety from articles to thesis from other students of media. One of the biggest influences is the master thesis *From Voodoo to Viruses: The Evolution of the Zombie in the 21st Century* (2008) by Margaret Tw Hoy, this essay is particularly interesting due to its similarities to this very dissertation, but it stops exactly where the films that will be analysed in this dissertation start. The focus of this essay is also exclusively anglo-saxon barely commenting on REC, even if it mentions it. “¿Porque fantaseamos sobre el apocalipsis zombi? Lo que dice de “nosotros” el éxito de The Walking Dead y otras ficciones del capitalismo tardío” (2011) by Diego Labra will also be used in order to provide certain ideas and insights regarding *The Walking Dead* that is **too modern** to be treated or discussed in the works above. “Tradición y Transnacionalidad en el tratamiento de lo Fantástico en la Saga REC de Jaume Balaguero y Paco Plaza” (2013) by Ruben Sanchez Trigos proves to be a very interesting analysis of REC and one of the few academic works that tackles **the whole saga as a unity** and doesn't dismiss all films after the second one due to their technical differences. *Liquid Cinematography and the Representation of Viral Threats in Alfonso*

*Quaron's Children of Men* (2015) by Julia Echevarría Domingo is also a useful thesis to keep in mind due to its specific **treatment of viral threats** and pandemics even if it treats a whole different genre. Finally, to tackle the economical crisis several articles will be observed, among them *El miedo que nos genera la crisis económica* (2012) by Margarita Olmedo Montes and Javier Monje Arenas, this article does a very good job at outlining several **social fears generated by the financial crisis** with a specific emphasis on Spain and *El miedo al Apocalipsis o el miedo a nosotros mismos* (2012) by Isabel Romero to complement the different articles outlined above. Several different articles and academic works were looked at for context and as a barometer as to the current trains of thoughts in the Z-Academics analysis.

As for the films chosen for the analysis the selection started with *28 Days Later*, a very logical choice as it's considered to be the base for the rest of the zombie films that followed. As a side note, Danny Boyle stated that he "doesn't see 28 Days Later as part of some zombie lineage. Zombie films are an entertaining part of the horror genre, but they are rooted in nuclear paranoia" (qtd in Russell, 179). this feeling is interesting since his film was the **first one** alongside *Resident Evil* to give zombies an origin based on a viral infection. With *28 Days Later* clearly in mind the next step was *World War Z* released in 2013, a Hollywood summer blockbuster based on the book of the same name by Max Brooks that imagined the **zombie apocalypse in the modern world** and how **states would adapt and change because of it**. The movie takes a slightly different approach although it does keep a very **global point of view** of the zombie infection that makes it an interesting complement to the smaller and more personal *28 Days Later*.

The film that was chosen next was *REC*, a spanish zombie film that displays very intense levels of **distrust and anger towards traditional authority figures** in Spain like the **police** and the **catholic church**. This also marks the first spanish horror film to achieve a high level of notoriety worldwide to the point it got a shot-to-shot remake by Hollywood as *Quarantine* (2008, dir. John Erick Dowdle), the original director of *REC*, Jaume Balagueró expressed his distaste towards the remake in an interview with the webpage Fangoria stating that "it's impossible for me to like, because it's a copy. It's the same, except for the finale. It's impossible to enjoy *Quarantine* after *REC*. I don't understand why they avoided the religious themes; they lost a very important part of the end of the movie." (qtd in Russell, 163) This will be discussed in the analysis and how the **loss of the religious aspects** of the film cheapen the overall **feeling of helplessness** presented in the original film.

The third audiovisual production that will be looked at is *The Walking Dead*, a television series produced by AMC that focused on a **group of survivors** of the zombie apocalypse on the southern United States of America. A lot has been written about this series that due to its **long format structure** is able to flesh out and explore several sociological, ethical and psychological implications of the post-apocalyptic genre and the **effects such cataclysm has on humans**. A lot of different topics have been looked at when it comes to this series, from issues of race and the depiction of the African-American characters of the show, to sexism and how women were excluded from the decision making processes of the main group of survivors in the earlier seasons. *The Walking Dead* has enjoyed a rather long success in television with its **eighth season** starting broadcast the 22nd of October of 2017.

The last piece of media to analyse will be *The Girl with all the Gifts*, bringing this analysis into a circle as it's a smaller production than the ones mentioned above, with the exception of *28 Days Later* and was produced in the same country. This movie follows a teacher that claims that the **zombie-hybrid children** can be taught and educated and **have a place in human society**. This is a very new entry to the genera and not much has been written about it even if it's based on an already existing novel. This film differs from the other material to be analysed showing the first instance of a certain degree of coexistence with the zombie menace and some **hope regarding the future of humanity** in this new world.

The objective of this essay is to prove that **current dehumanization of the zombie** in cinema has to deal with the fears directly associated with the **terror attacks** in western countries, the **financial crisis** that swept through the United States and Europe and the rise of **pandemics** like ebola or the avian flu. To this effect several aspects were outlined for the analysis of the films.

The first topic analysed is the **dehumanization** of both the humans and the zombies living in the post apocalyptic wasteland. In order to look at this particular aspect the name or how the zombie is referred to will be taken into account, there is a striking difference between a zombie that is addressed as an **infected**, a **walker** or as a **demon**. This will be noted as a difference in attitude from the living towards the dead, if they are neutral towards the zombie, negative or sympathetic. The second aspect to analyse of dehumanization the process of changing from human to zombie will be looked at, both the **speed of transformation**, if it takes a few seconds or if it takes a few days of feverish illness, and the **reaction of the other survivors** to the infection, if they immediately kill the infected, if they prefer running or if they treat the

recently infected like someone dying from an illness and take care of them to make their passing comfortable. To end the analysis of dehumanization one final aspect will be looked at, this is the **murder of the zombie** and of other humans, specifically how different or similar the murder of a zombie being is presented compared to the murder of a human.

The second topic that will be analysed is the **distrust of authority** from the survivors of the apocalypse towards traditional figures of rule. Firstly, **who has authority** in the works will be observed. Then what was their **occupation** will be looked at for example, Rick Grimes in *The Walking Dead* was a Sheriff before the apocalypse, or how the Major Henry West was, as stated, a soldier. Finally **their actions and how they are represented** will be looked at in order to show the different approaches to the distrust towards authority and their willingness to keep people safe.

The third and final topic analysed is the **loss of safety** in a familiar ground. This has more to do with the familiarity of both the audience and the characters with their setting. To analyse this particular topic two aspects will be used first the **setting** of the film, whether it takes place on a familiar or unfamiliar ground both to the **audience** and the **characters**.

Recapitulating, the guiding hypothesis of this essay is that zombie apocalyptic fiction serves to display latent fears of the society that produces and consumes them. In this most recent crop of films we can see three fears interlocking. The first is the fear of dehumanization as is linked to the zombie, the second is the fear of authority figures in times of crisis and finally the fear of the loss of safety in familiar ground. This essay will first organize the media based on the origin of the zombie be it viral, fungal, unknown or a case of demonic possession. In each section the works will be observed noting how the three fears are present or addressed. At the conclusion of the dissertation the way the films concur or diverge in the fears will be analysed as well as mentioning extra connections among them that could signal the future of the zombie apocalypse genre.

## **THE AUDIOVISUAL MATERIAL**

This section will provide a brief technical description of all the audiovisual media that will be analysed in this essay. The technical description will also include the poster, the summary and a link to the trailer of the media in question.



**Title:** 28 Days Later

**Directed by:** Danny Boyle

**Country:** United Kingdom

**Year:** 2002

**Runtime:** 113 minutes

**Genre:** Drama, Horror, Sci-Fi

**Rating:** R for strong violence and gore, language and nudity.

**Cast:** Cillian Murphy, Naomie Harris, Brendan Gleeson, Megan Burns, Christopher Eccleston, Noah Huntley, Luke Mably, Stuart McQuarrie, Ricci Harnett, Leo Bill, Junior Laniyan, Ray Panthaki, Sanjay Rambaruth, Marvin Campbell.

**Web:** This film does not have an official webpage.

**Distribution Company:** Fox Searchlight Pictures

**Production Company:** DNA Films, British Film Council

**Budget:** \$8,000,000 (estimated)

**Written by:** Alex Garland

**Score:** John Murphy

**Synopsis:** Animal activists invade a laboratory with the intention of releasing chimpanzees that are undergoing experimentation, infected by a virus -a virus that causes rage. The naive activists ignore the pleas of a scientist to keep the cages locked, with disastrous results. Twenty-eight days later, our protagonist, Jim, wakes up from a coma, alone, in an abandoned hospital. He begins to seek out anyone else to find London is deserted, apparently without a living soul. After finding a church, which had become inhabited by zombie like humans intent on his demise, he runs for his life. Selena and Mark rescue him from the horde and bring him up to date on the mass carnage and horror as all of London tore itself apart. This is a tale of survival and ultimately, heroics, with nice subtext about mankind's savage nature.

(Synopsis taken from IMDb)

**Trailer:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c7ynwAgQIDQ>



B R A D P I T T

WORLD WAR Z

IN 3D, IMAX 3D AND 2D THEATRES

JUNE 21

PLAN B ENTERTAINMENT

WorldWarZ.co.uk

GK

**Title:** World War Z

**Directed by:** Marc Forster

**Country:** United States

**Year:** 2013

**Runtime:** 116 minutes (commercial version), 123 minutes (unrated version)

**Genre:** Action, Adventure, Horror.

**Rating:** PG-13 for intense frightening zombie sequences, violence and disturbing images.

**Cast:** Brad Pitt, Mireille Enos, Daniella Kertesz, James Badge Dale, Ludi Boeken, Fana Mokoena, David Morse, Eyles Gabel, Peter Capaldi, Pierfrancesco Favino, Ruth Negga, Moritz Bleibtreu, Sterling Jerins, Abigail Hargrove, Fabrizio Zacharee Guido.

**Web:** [http://projectc.net/wwz\\_site/](http://projectc.net/wwz_site/)

**Distribution Company:** Paramount Pictures

**Production Company:** Plan B Pictures, Paramount Pictures, Skydance Media, Latina Pictures, Apparatus Productions, 2DUX<sup>2</sup>, Hemisphere Media Capital, GK Films.

**Budget:** \$190,000,000 (estimated)

**Written by:** Matthew Michael Carnahan, Drew Goddard, Damon Lindelof, J. Michael Straczynski.

**Score:** Marco Beltrami

**Synopsis:** Life for former United Nations investigator Gerry Lane and his family seems content. Suddenly, the world is plagued by a mysterious infection turning whole human populations into rampaging mindless zombies. After barely escaping the chaos, Lane is persuaded to go on a mission to investigate this disease. What follows is a perilous trek around the world where Lane must brave horrific dangers and long odds to find answers before human civilization falls.

(Synopsis from IMDb)

**Trailer:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Md6Dvxdr0AQ>



FILMAX ENTERTAINMENT presenta  
 una producción de JULIO FERNÁNDEZ  
 para CASTELAO PRODUCTIONS



SIGES 07  
 SESIÓN OFICIAL FANTASÍA

- PREMIO A LA MEJOR DIRECCIÓN  
JAUME BALAGUERÓ & PACO PLAZA
- PREMIO A LA MEJOR ACTRIZ  
MANUELA VELAZCO
- PREMIO DE LA CRÍTICA
- BOYA PREMIO DEL PÚBLICO  
MEJOR PELÍCULA

EXPERIMENTA EL MIEDO

# [●REC]

Dirigida por **Jaume Balagueró & Paco Plaza**

FILMAX ENTERTAINMENT, FILMAX ENTERTAINMENT de JULIO FERNÁNDEZ y CASTELAO PRODUCTIONS. "REC" MANUELA VELAZCO, TERESA TORRES, JORGE YANINA SORIANO, PABLO PÉREZ, DAVID VÍTO, VICENTE DEL, MARTHA CARRONCHI, CARLOS VICENTE, M. KRISTA BIRDA, MANUELA BONDICHIO, ALEXA GÓZD, PACO PLAZA, MARÍA LARREA, CLAUDIA SIVIA, ANDRÉS BÉREZ, BOB TERPIL. Música de banda sonora de CARLOS LACORTE. Diseño de título: PABLO TORRES. Premios de cine de JULIO FERNÁNDEZ y CASTELAO PRODUCTIONS. Música: DAVID GALARRI. Montaje de cine: GUILLERMO TORRES. Dirección de fotografía: PABLO TORRES. Dirección de producción: TERESA TORRES y ORIOL JUANES. Distribución: ALBERTO RAMÍREZ. Producción ejecutiva: JULIO FERNÁNDEZ y CARLOS FERNÁNDEZ. Dirección de arte: JAVIER GALARRI. Dirección de producción: LUIS A. BERNER y PACO PLAZA. Producción: JULIO FERNÁNDEZ. Distribución: JAUME BALAGUERÓ y PACO PLAZA.



**Title:** REC

**Directed by:** Jaume Balagueró and Paco Plaza

**Country:** Spain

**Year:** 2007

**Runtime:** 78 minutes

**Genre:** Horror, Mystery, Thriller

**Rating:** R for bloody horror violence and language.

**Cast:** Manuela Velasco, Ferran Terraza, Jorge-Yamam Serrano, Pablo Rosso, David Vert, Vicente Gil, Martha Carbonell, Carlos Vicente, María Teresa Ortega, Manuel Bronchud, Akemi Goto, Chen Min Kao, Maria Lanau, Claudia Silva, Carlos Lasarte, Javier Botet, Ben Temple, Ana Isabel Velásquez, Daniel Trinh, Marita Borrego, Jana Prats, Víctor Massagué, Javier Coromina.

**Web:** This film does not have an official webpage.

**Distribution Company:** Sony Pictures Entertainment, Odeon Sky Filmworks, Filmax.

**Production Company:** Castelao Productions, Filmax, Instituto de la Cinematografía y de las Artes Audiovisuales, Instituto de Crédito Oficial, ICF Institut Català de Finances, Generalitat de Catalunya - Institut Català de les Indústries Culturals, Televisión Española, Canal+ España.

**Budget:** €1,500,000 (estimated)

**Written by:** Jaume Belagueró, Luis Berdejo, Paco Plaza.

**Score:** This film does not have a score.

**Synopsis:** "REC" turns on a young TV reporter and her cameraman who cover the night shift at the local fire station. Receiving a call from an old lady trapped in her house, they reach her building to hear horrifying screams -- which begin a long nightmare and a uniquely dramatic TV report.

(Synopsis from IMDb)

**Trailer:** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YGJ\\_jPKOj1c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YGJ_jPKOj1c)



**Title:** The Girl with All the Gifts

**Directed by:** Colm McCarthy

**Country:** United Kingdom

**Year:** 2016

**Runtime:** 111 minutes.

**Genre:** Drama, Horror, Thriller.

**Rating:** R for disturbing violence/bloody images and language.

**Cast:** Sennia Nanua, Fisayo Akinade, Dominique Tipper, Paddy Considine, Anamaria Marinca, Gemma Arterton, Anthony Welsh, Glenn Close, Mia Garcha, Grace McGee, Eli Lane, Connor Pratt, Joe Lomas.

**Web:** <https://www.warnerbros.co.uk/movies/the-girl-with-all-the-gifts>

**Distribution Company:** Warner Bros., Saban Films.

**Production Company:** Poison Chef, BFI Film Fund, Altitude Film Entertainment, Creative England.

**Budget:** £4,000,000 (estimated)

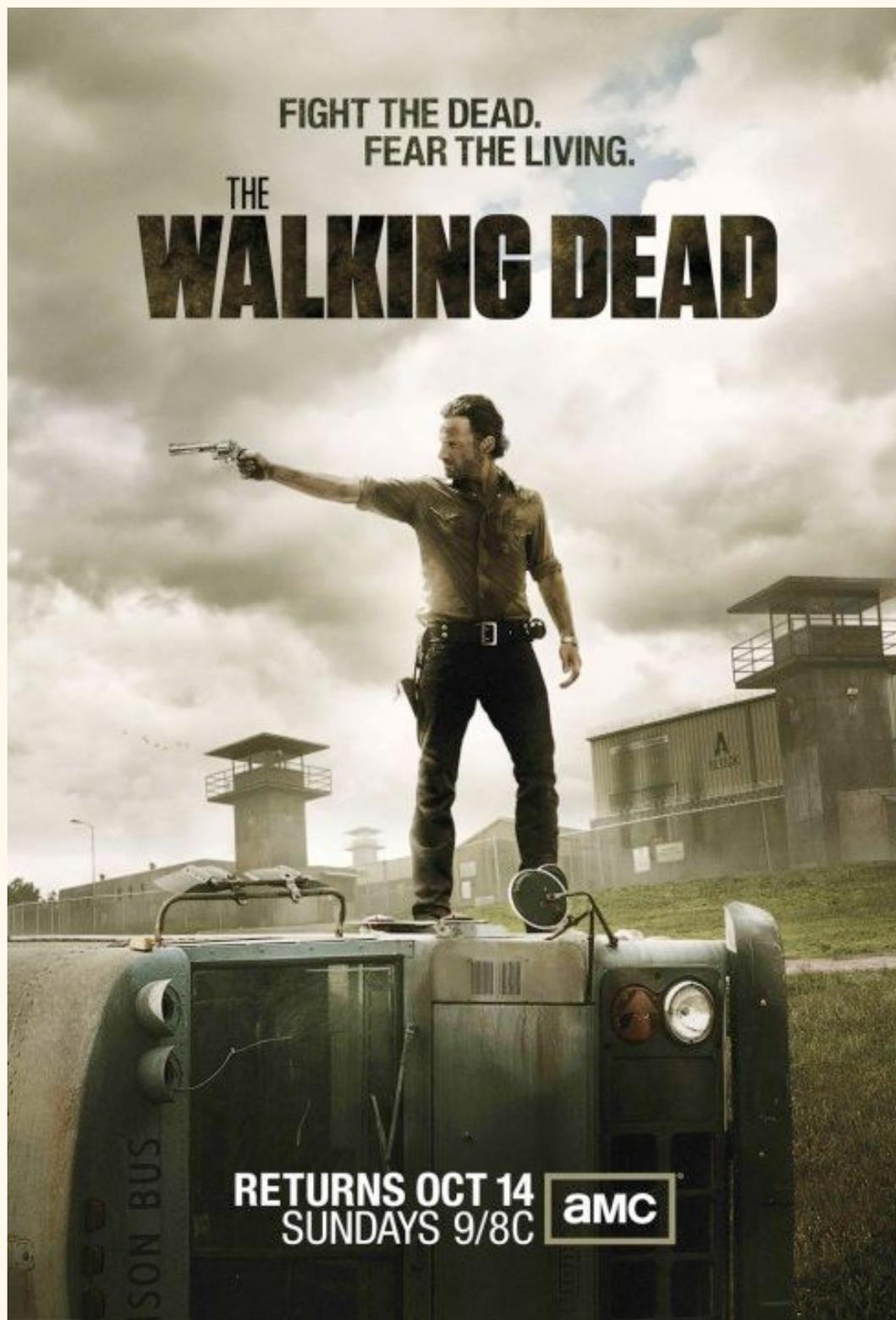
**Written by:** Mike Carey

**Score:** Cristobal Tapia de Veer

**Synopsis:** In a dystopian near future, humanity has been ravaged by a mysterious fungal disease. The afflicted are robbed of all free will and turned into flesh-eating 'hungries'. Humankind's only hope is a small group of hybrid children who crave human flesh but retain the ability to think and feel. The children go to school at an army base in rural Britain, where they're subjected to cruel experiments by Dr. Caroline Caldwell. School teacher Helen Justineau grows particularly close to an exceptional girl named Melanie, thus forming a special bond. But when the base is invaded, the trio escape with the assistance of Sgt. Eddie Parks and embark on a perilous journey of survival, during which Melanie must come to terms with who she is.

(Summary taken from IMDb)

**Trailer:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eTUUoQ3FRLE>



**Title:** The Walking Dead

**Created by:** Frank Darabont

**Country:** United States

**Year:** 2010 - present.

**Runtime:** 44 minutes per episode

**Genre:** Drama, Horror, Thriller

**Rating:** TV-MA in the United States/ 18+ in the United Kingdom/ 12 in Spain

**Cast:** Andrew Lincoln, Norman Reedus, Chandler Riggs, Melissa McBride, Lauren Cohan, Danai Gurira, Steven Yeun, Alanna Masterson, Sonequa Martin-Green, Josh McDermitt, Christian Serratos, Seth Gillam, Lennie James, Emily Kinney, Michael Cudlitz, among others.

**Web:** <http://www.amc.com/shows/the-walking-dead>

**Distribution Company:** American Movie Classics (AMC), Channel 5 Television, Fox.

**Production Company:** American Movie Classics (AMC), Circle of Confusion, Valhalla Motion Pictures, Darkwoods Productions, AMC Studios, Idiot Box Productions.

**Budget:** \$ 3,400, 000 per episode (estimated during Season 1), \$2,750, 000 per episode (estimated after Season 1).

**Written by:** Robert Kirkman, Tony Moore, Charlie Adlard.

**Score:** Bear McCreary

**Synopsis:** Sheriff Deputy Rick Grimes gets shot and falls into a coma. When awoken he finds himself in a Zombie Apocalypse. Not knowing what to do he sets out to find his family, after he's done that he gets connected to a group to become the leader. He takes charge and tries to help this group of people survive, find a place to live, and get them food. This show is all about survival, the risks, and the things you'll have to do to survive.

(Synopsis from IMDb)

**Trailer:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cu2ApTImBKc>

## CHAPTER 1: WHERE DO THEY COME FROM AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

*“I can't profess to understand God's plan. Christ promised the resurrection of the dead. I just thought he had something a little different in mind.”*

- Hershel Greene (The Walking Dead)

This quote comes from *The Walking Dead* series (2010 - present) where Hershel Greene, a kindly religious farmer, expresses his own view on where the undead that roam the streets come from in the face of the lack of knowledge that prevails in this series universe. The previous section discussed the changing origins of zombies. From their earlier appearances where the forbidden and exotic breed distrust among the traditional colonial population of the states, bringing to light the fear of a bokor possessing a pure young woman in order to bend her will and steal her virtue. George Romero's *Night of the Living Dead* (1968) portrayed a whole different kind of fear, this one on western soil where the zombies are the product of radiation, a much more 'realistic' approach than voodoo, and consume every human on their path as the humans in question consume the goods produced by the manufacturing industry. So where does the current breed of zombies come from?

Their origin within the media pieces themselves are diverse to say the least. Supernatural zombies suffered a little hiccup along the line as the western world became more **secular** leading to blaming the origin of the zombie in any one religion being considered rather old fashioned, close minded and superstitious. There are **exceptions** to this trend like the remake of *The Evil Dead* (2013, dir. Fede Alvarez) where a book, not unlike Lovecraft's *Necronomicon*, leads a group of friends to summon **demons** that look suspiciously like zombies. *REC* is the prime example of that, this spanish film earned enough recognition from the States and Hollywood in particular that a **remake** was made that removed the **supernatural origin** of the zombie giving it a mundane **virus origin** that was released by a doom cult.

The reigning explanation for zombies nowadays is, as stated by Margaret Thowry in her previously mentioned thesis is the “**contamination zombie**” (2008, pg. 21). These are usually the result of a **lab virus, bacteria, fungus or a biological weapon** accidentally spreading to the population. This is the origin of the zombie in most current films starting with the double threat of *28 Days Later* and *Resident Evil* (2002, dir. Paul S. W. Anderson) that came out at the perfect time for their imagery to sweep the western world. In contrast to these explanations one of the biggest staples of zombie media in current popular culture is *The Walking Dead* that **escapes giving an actual explanation** to the zombies, regardless of that fact the TV series includes a section where the survivors reach the CDC where a doctor explains the basic facts of the zombie and the revival process giving it at least some scientific credence. Even with that explanation how different characters view the zombies is one of the many sources of conflict in the earlier seasons of the show.

The 9/11 attacks changed how Hollywood dealt with horror, thrillers and threats within their borders, “after 9/11, nihilism, despair, random violence and death, combined with tropes and images generated by the terrorist attacks began to assume greater prominence in horror cinema” states Kevin J. Wetmore Jr in his book *Post 9/11 Horror in American Cinema* (2012). This fear of an attack on domestic soil by an enemy most of the population doesn’t fully understand, something the States hadn’t felt in all it’s history, quickly expanded like a virus through the western world quickly infecting Europe.

This **lack of safety** in a familiar environment soon got coupled with another catastrophe, of the economical kind, being the financial crisis of 2007. All media is usually reticent about addressing poverty whether it be within the country itself or in other countries, since most of their revenue comes from advertisers that most of the times protest at having their product displayed along a report on poverty the effects of this is rendering the poor population **invisible in the eyes of the population**. The fear of **losing your human status** in the eyes of the media and the rest of the population is overwhelming in a financial crisis. This feeling of helplessness is usually compounded by the **distrust towards the government and a political class** that seems to only care about their own interests.

The **final stroke** that made the first decade and a half of the new millennia the perfect ground for the zombie apocalypse was the resurgence of epidemics like the avian flu or, more recently, ebola. News Media usually portrays epidemics and illnesses as a third world problem, and the only level of interest usually comes when someone in local soil gets infected by a 'third world epidemic'. A very clear example is the case of the a nursing assistant in Spain that was infected with ebola and her dog had to be sacrificed in a preemptive measure. The commotion and outrage around the euthanization of an animal was bigger than any emotional reaction to the state of Sierra Leone, Guinea or Liberia, that were the three countries more affected by ebola. The current crop of Zombie Apocalypse media deals with the fears detailed above regardless of the in-story origin of the zombie. Consequently each film will be analysed with these fears in mind and how they transmit them.

## CHAPTER 2: THE VIRUS

*“That was longer than a heartbeat”*

- Jim, 28 Days Later

*“Looks like we just woke the dead. In that respect,  
please turn off all pagers and cellphones.”*

- Captain Speke, World War Z

*28 Days Later* follows Jim as he wakes up in a hospital 28 days after the zombie apocalypse has wiped out most of the population of the United Kingdom and the island has been **quarantined** by the UN. He soon encounters Selena and the two end up creating a small **survivors group** with father and daughter, Frank and Hannah. After hearing a broadcast from a barricade in Manchester that claims to have the **answer** to the infection they start their journey. Once they get there Frank accidentally gets infected and killed by the soldiers at the barricade. Their answer to the infection, as stated by Major Henry West, is to capture female survivors to repopulate the United Kingdom once the infected die of hunger. Jim ends up killing the soldiers, with the help of an infected soldier they kept chained outside. The film ends with Jim, Selena and Hannah living peacefully in a cabin where they manage to get the attention from a Norwegian jet that sees their call for **help**.

*World War Z* portrays the story of Gerry Lane, an investigator for the UN tasked with finding either the origin or **cure** for the zombie infection sweeping the world. After witnessing the fall of Philadelphia and the ensuing chaos, retired investigator Gerry Lane gets drafted by the UN to investigate the infection in exchange for his family’s safety. He travels to South Korea, Israel and finally the UK initially trying to find the origin and eventually figuring out that the zombies don’t attack weakened, ill or impaired individuals. This leads him to help in the creation of a camouflage **vaccine** that hides survivors from the zombies allowing regroupment and a chance of fighting back to humanity.

Firstly **dehumanization** in these two works should be addressed as they share several similarities when it comes to the behaviour of the infection. The infection is **quick**, from 10 to 20 seconds in both films reducing the possible reaction of the survivors to either **fight or flight**. *28 Days Later* usually takes the **running** approach with our main character only killing an

infected passed the halfway point of the film and that event is treated with the gravity of a **tragedy**. The infected in question is a **child** and the fact that the **infected are still human**, just ill, is present at all moments through the film. As a matter of fact the first incident that sets the **morality** of the soldiers into question is the discovery of a chained and starving Mailer in an inside open air area where they keep him for observation. The reaction towards infection is just as hesitant, at the beginning of the film Selena kills her partner, Mark, as soon as he is seen ingesting infected blood. She kills him while he's still human but infected. This contrast with later in the film where Frank gets infected and Jim hesitates to kill him, long enough for the soldiers to be the ones to do it. Death, be it of a human or a zombie, is portrayed as uniquely violent and traumatic both due to its gore and the constant reminder of the humanity of the victim. Humans that are not infected only die at the end of the film when Jim needs to save Selena and Hannah from a gang rape at the hands of the soldiers. The zombies are constantly referred to as infected, or simply "them".

*World War Z* very quickly differentiates the zombies from the humans in the film. The first way it does that is by quickly referring to the infected humans as zombie and quickly addressing them like they are a monstrous creature. The best demonstration of this is the behaviour of the zombie itself that stands in stark contrast to the zombie of the movie mentioned previously. The zombies of *World War Z* move like an oversized and aggressive ant colony. The only zombies that remain some sort of individuality from the other, that aren't part of a horde, are the zombies seen in the States and the United Kingdom. In contrast, we hardly see the infected in the North American base in South Korea, they are shadows in the night that appear through the rain. The event that cements the zombies of *World War Z* as monsters is the fall of Israel, where not only they climb a wall and manage to jump over it, they take down two helicopters. This hyper competence but paradoxical mindlessness makes this breed of zombies appear as monstrous or supernatural even if it's stated and proven to be the result of an unknown virus. With this established it's no surprise that the murder of a zombie is treated with the coldness of someone who has killed a dangerous and aggressive subhuman creature. This extends, to a certain degree, to the murder of a human early on in the film where Gerry kills a man that fired on him after he had also attempted to rape Gerry's wife in a crowded and chaotic supermarket. The reaction of the survivors towards infection also vary but unlike in *28 Days Later* there is a chance to avoid infection once bitten. This is demonstrated by Segen when she's bitten by a zombie and Gerry cuts her arm off. This does not change the fact that in other moments soldiers shoot themselves heroically after killing the last zombie in the vicinity once they have been bitten.

**Authority** figures are scarce in the world of 28 Days Later, although this is mostly due to the fact that the UK has been quarantined by the UN which is a higher form of authority. After waking and encountering people Jim questions about the state of the government to be met with the answer that there is **no government**. This lack of structures to follow gives the survivors some sort of freedom which is shown when the survivor group loot an empty supermarket with glee, having fun and discussing the different objects they couldn't have in the early days of the apocalypse or even when the world and society was still in shape. The first and only characters that still hold **authority from before the apocalypse** are the soldiers encountered by the main characters in the final third of the film. The soldiers are led by Major Henry West and they are the ones that sent the broadcast claiming to have an answer. This turns out to be a lie since their interpretation of an answer is a **new societal structure** where female survivors are to be used as breeding stock to repopulate the United Kingdom. The soldiers then attempt to murder Jim and successfully murder a dissenting comrade, who is also the one to communicate that the world hasn't fallen to the zombies instead the United Kingdom has just been put under quarantine by the rest of the world. Even at the end, when the survivors manage to signal a "hello" to a reconnaissance jet with their eventual rescue left implied and **ambiguous**.

*World War Z* has a different approach to authority figures even if it retains the distrust towards the higher levels of authority and portrays them as completely **utilitarian**. This is specifically addressed when it comes to the safety of Gerry's family. The UN rescues Gerry and his family originally implied to be due to his past service and friendship with current head of the Deputy Secretary-General Thierry Umutoni. When they arrive an aircraft carrier they reach the safest place in the world since no one in the ship has been infected and there are no ways anyone could get infected. Gerry is then informed that the certain safety of his family depends on his cooperation and success in the mission. When Gerry protests at this he is informed that only people who serve a purpose are kept in the ship and the purpose of Gerry's family is to **blackmail** him into cooperating. The fact that the family might be kicked out is referenced to over and over again with the film showing us other families getting moved from the ship to safe areas in solid ground although the safety of those is disputed. When Gerry loses contact with the UN ship due to an air crash his family is moved to a safe area since Gerry is considered dead and they are no longer useful. Gerry is made aware of this after three days of being unconscious after a plane crash on his way to a World Health Organization location in Wales. He is eventually reunited with his family and they are indeed safe and their abandonment by the UN without having official proof of Gerry's death is not mentioned again.

Finally, the setting of *28 Days Later* is immediately **familiar** to both audience and characters. London is a city that has been displayed many times in different media and has received “14 million international visits in the first nine months of 2016” according to *London & Partners*. The first minutes of the film consist of a confused Jim walking through the **deserted London** with plenty of shots of empty streets that usually are very busy. A very impactful moment of the film revolves around Mark and Selena taking the newly awoken Jim to his house, where he discovers the corpse of his parents and Mark is killed due to an attack of a nearby infected that gets drawn by the sound of Jim playing home movies. This literal **attack in his home** sets Jim and Selena on their adventure together. The next recognizable setting in the film is Manchester which can be seen from the blockade, the city is consumed by fire in one of the most striking images of the film.

In contrast *World War Z* doesn't stick to a single setting, or even a single country. The book *World War Z* is based on deals specifically with how **different nations** reacted to the zombie apocalypse, it doesn't have a main character and it's approach is closer to a history book detailing the changes that the world suffered throughout and after the zombie war. This leads to the film trying to adapt the **global** approach to the apocalypse and sets the UN as the command center of the whole world. Four countries are shown in the film, the **United States**, which are reduced to several scenes in the streets of **Philadelphia and Newark**. The second country shown is **South Korea**, even if barely and the action is reduced to a **North American Military Base** and only addresses South Korea as a possible **ground zero** for the infection. From there the action is moved to **Israel** where the zombies scale the wall around **Jerusalem**, several landmarks are shown, like the tomb of Solomon and the streets of Israel are shown rather clearly. The final location of the film is **Wales**, where after the plane crash Gerry Lane stumbles through the countryside and a **small rural village** until he reaches the **WHO Headquarters** ending the shots of places that might be familiar to the audience. Unlike with *28 Days Later* the settings in *World War Z* are more varied but less familiar to most of the audience and the character himself who is always either led around by someone who is more familiar with the place or is a native in Segen's case. Originally the film went from Israel to **Russia** but the content was scrapped with the original ending. While the intentions of the film was to portray a zombie apocalypse through different countries, making the threat on familiar ground more palpable to the audience, showing them settings they might be familiar with or recognize, it ended detaching the characters from the suffering and fear of the threat in their own home.

Concluding, both of these films deal with the fears outlined above to different degrees of success. Regarding dehumanization *28 Days Later* has a more **sympathetic** approach towards the infected this is portrayed in different ways from how they are referred as to how difficult it is for our main character to kill them, not due to physical limitations but due to the **emotional distress** of killing a human being. Same courtesy is extended to people who are either in the process of becoming a zombie or simply posing a danger to the group. This sympathy is not demonstrated in *World War Z* where both zombies and even rioting humans are displayed as **monsters** and killing one of either of them is portrayed as either **just** or at the very least a **necessary evil**. Both films show different levels of distrust towards traditional authority, on one hand *28 Days Later* presents the **soldiers** and the **hierarchical military structure** as a threatening presence in the apocalypse that's even bigger than the infected themselves. On the other hand *World War Z* explicitly shows the **utilitarian** nature of the military arm of the UN where people will be put in danger if they are **not useful**. While that is shown and treated like a negative, the main character doesn't address it after finding out they moved his family to an unsafe location. Finally, the settings of both films are **familiar** to the audience and the characters to more or less degree, Jim is incredibly familiar and at home with both London and the English countryside but Gerry is unfamiliar with most locations they visit alienating the audience from the setting to some degree.

## CHAPTER 3: THE POSSESSION

*“The Security Agents that are will you will  
keep you informed of what you must do.”*

- Voice from outside, REC

The first film of the *REC* series follows Angela and Pablo as they film a fireman crew through a night shift eventually following them to a building where an old person seems to be in trouble. There they are attacked by the old woman who seems **rabid** and bites off a policeman’s ear. The hysterical neighbours get shepherd downstairs as they are made aware that the police and military have issued a quarantine and they are not allowed to get out. As they panic a firefighter that had stayed with the old woman gets thrown off the railing and dies prompting the remaining police officer, firefighter and the journalist duo to head upstairs where the policeman is **forced to shoot** the woman. Eventually a little girl that was seen as ill throughout most of the film turns into a zombie attacking her mother and the other inhabitants. They start turning leading Angela and Pablo to hide in the attic where they discover that a **priest** had been experimenting on a young woman who had been **possessed by a demon** and that experimentation lead to the infection of the rest of the inhabitants of the building. Pablo is murdered by the girl in the attic and Angela is attacked which in later films is revealed to be how the demon that controls the infected **changes host**.

**Dehumanization** in *REC* follows a familiar pattern where the infected are considered human until their aggressiveness becomes too dangerous for the characters to do something other than run. Jennifer, the ill little girl, is always portrayed as small and frail, constantly in the arms of her mother. When the infection is linked to her dog and she becomes a zombie you are supposed to feel sorry for her and her mother. At the beginning the **supernatural origins** of the zombie are hidden and the first clues that are given to the characters and the audience are **red herrings**. Until the end of the film where the **Medeiros Demon** is revealed to be possessing the young woman in the attic everyone addresses the zombies as the result of some sort of **contamination**, this is encouraged by the military initiating an **NBQ protocol**, which stands for Nuclear, Biological or Chemical, and the reveal that the origin of the infection comes from Max, a dog that had been sent to the vet because he was **ill**. The end of the film reveals that the infection is actually a **mass possession** from a demon with a central host that was in the attic

of the building. This possession is maintained throughout the other films in the series where the arrival of the demon is hailed to as the **beginning of the biblical apocalypse**. The zombies aren't addressed in any particular fashion by the survivors but the film frames them as monsters without any remains of humanity. The transformation is also very fast, like in the previously mentioned films, where a few seconds after the bite the human becomes a zombie. Our main characters, Angela and Pablo, **never kill** a zombie throughout the film, or another human as they are mainly witnesses to the events in the building. The first zombie to get murdered is the first zombie we see, the elderly Mrs. Izquierdo. She is murdered by the only remaining police officer who is visibly shaken by the occurrence trying first to justify his actions as self defence and then ordering Pablo to stop filming. It is pertinent to note that no uninfected human being is attacked by another in the film or their murder justified in the name of protection, almost no zombies are killed either with the only one being Mrs. Izquierdo whose murder is portrayed as a horrific act.

*REC* has an **intense distrust** towards traditional authority figures for the spanish audience. This is shown by how the film represents the **police force**, the **military** and the **Catholic Church**. Firstly the police, there are two policemen of importance in the film. They are both shown to be **authoritative** and adverse towards the filming of their actions. Even if their concern for the main characters is obvious the way they express it is in a **intransigent** tone. Later in the film the older policeman is injured and out of commission leaving the younger of the two to maintain the order and his place of authority over the other characters. Previously this character has been shown to be **incompetent and insecure**, especially if other characters point out his **mistakes** or someone witnesses one. When the firemen and the main characters are looking for a place to **escape** the imposed quarantine the policeman **threatens** them with his gun while an ominous voice from the outside names him the highest form of authority in the building. The scene is framed as **tense and terrifying**, almost as much as the appearance of the first zombie, specially since it comes after we have seen this man shoot Mrs. Izquierdo. Unlike *28 Days Later* this film still has an **active government** which is presented as an **intractable**, secretive and uncaring. This can be derived from the treatment of the people locked within the building as they are **not informed** of anything that's going on and are left at the mercy of the zombies living in the building. Finally, the catholic church is the one that is treated with most **contempt** by the film as they are the reason the zombie possession starts and then spreads to the unsuspecting population. This is represented specifically at the end of the film with the discovery of Tristana Medeiros in the attic and the reveal that the occupant of the attic was **experimenting** on her in order to treat her possession. In the related comic books the origin of the possession is attributed to the **gang rape** of Tristana Medeiros, at that time age nine, by a group of priests.

This distrust is what sets apart *REC* from its American remake *Quarantine* (John Erick Dowdle, 2008). While the remake is a shot-for-shot remake with only country and the relevant authorities changing, they also do a very big change when it comes to the origin of the zombie which becomes a virus stolen by the leader of a doomsday cult. The biggest difference here, besides the inherent helplessness towards a supernatural enemy to which there is no possible defence as opposed to a virus to which a cure can be developed, comes from the difference in power between a doomsday cult in the United States and the Catholic Church in Spain. The Catholic Church has a very influential role when it comes to both the government and the population, with over 92% of the population being baptized at birth according to the *Boletín de la Santa Sede* from 2011.

Like with *28 Days Later* the setting of this film is very **mundane**. The film happens, mostly, in the **same building** which has several **apartments** within. Most of the characters live in this apartment building and part of the tension comes from the fact that the events that triggered the zombies happened in the attic of this very same building **without the awareness** of the inhabitants. The mundanity of the setting and the **familiarity** the characters have with the building, even the ones that don't live there, drives home the tension of an attack on a familiar ground. Specifically because it's an actual **attack at home**. The fact that the characters are quarantined in their own homes reduces the variety of settings that can be shown and creates the added tension of **claustrophobia**. It also feeds on the previously mentioned distrust and anger towards the ones keeping the inhabitants imprisoned in a **dangerous environment**.

*REC* is a very **angry** film, and it seems to be angry towards a **secretive** and self-serving government that is more than happy to lock **innocent civilians** in a dangerous environment with incompetent guards to keep them from escaping. This anger is paired up with the **dehumanizing effect** of the zombie, rendering the people inside the building **no longer human** in the eyes of the military, as soon as the quarantine is put in effect. That is a sentiment echoed by the last surviving fireman when he tells the policeman that the military and government **do not care about him** either. This follows the beliefs outlined at the beginning of the thesis, but unlike the two films above that seem to deal more with the zombie and its status as human being to different extents, *REC* is more focused on the **unfairness** of the situation of the survivors and the **betrayal** by the **government** and **church** that claim to be there for the **benefit of the population**.

## CHAPTER 4: THE UNKNOWN

*“Because this is how we survive. We tell ourselves...  
that we are the walking dead.”*

- Rick Grimes, The Walking Dead

The first season of *The Walking Dead* (2010) follows Rick Grimes as he wakes up in the hospital in the middle of the zombie apocalypse. He finds his family, his best friend and a **group of survivors** alive in the outskirts of Atlanta. The camp is attacked one night forcing them to flee. They arrive at the CDC where a **doctor** tells them about the **zombie infection** and how it manifests itself. The second season (2011-2012) has the group living on a farm and going through a change in leadership from Shane, a police man who used to be Rick’s friend, to Rick. Their peaceful existence in the farm ends after a zombie **horde** overtakes it, separating the group. Season 3 (2012 - 2013) features another survivor community known as Woodbury lead by a man called The Governor. Rick and The Governor clash several times which leads to an **attack** on the prison where the survivors are staying and the destruction of Woodbury as a settlement.

In season 4 (2013 - 2014) the survivors are thriving in the prison when The Governor attacks, destroying the structure and separating the group. One by one they make their way to a promised ‘**safe haven**’ known as Terminus. They reach the place where they are captured by the friendly-looking occupants of the settlement. The fifth season (2014 - 2015) begins with the survivors captured in Terminus by it’s **cannibalistic** inhabitants, who are planning on bleeding and then eating them, but they free themselves quickly. They are approached by a recruiter for the Alexandria Safe-Zone who promises **shelter and safety**. The group faces some tension with the inhabitants of the Safe-Zone as they have been sheltered from the Zombie Apocalypse up to this point and don’t know how to defend themselves.

The sixth (2015 - 2016) and last season that will be analysed shows the survivors dealing with a large horde invading the Safe-Zone lead by The Wolves. Once this is dealt with the group comes into contact with another settlement known as the Hilltop that requests, in exchange for goods, that the Alexandrians, which is how the survivors and inhabitants of the Alexandria Safe-Zone will be known, **kill** a group called The Survivors, lead by a man named Negan. The Alexandrians manage to destroy a Survivors Checkpoint but are latter ambushed by Negan who beats one of the members of the group to death.

The zombie, or walker as it's called in this show, in *The Walking Dead* is stated to be something completely **unhuman**. This is left abundantly clear in the series where the survivors arrive to the CDC and a doctor explains the zombie plague to our core group. Dr. Jenner describes the zombification process as an **infection** that reawakens the primary functions of the brain (classified as eating and walking in the show) but nothing else like speech, memory or personality. The doctor cannot offer an explanation as to the origin of the infection or where it comes from but he does state that every person who's currently alive will become a zombie in the event of their death. From that moment our protagonists encounter people who believe the zombies to have some humanity left or that they are like an animal, deserving to be left alive.

There are three different types of belief in *The Walking Dead* universe regarding the zombies: the first is the practical approach of our main characters who see the zombie as a barely sentient **hazardous creature** that needs to be eliminated whenever possible. Then there are characters like Hershel Greene, a farmer whose wife and step-son were infected at the beginning of the apocalypse, believe the zombie state to be **temporary** and awaiting a **cure** leading him to imprison zombies in a barn. Finally we have characters like Lizzie Samuels, a child who believes the zombies are another **natural stage of life** or at least is traumatized by the state of the world to a point she acquires this beliefs as a defence mechanism to deal.

There is a very brief point the show flirts with the idea of a possible cure for those who remain alive. This starts in the tenth episode of season four with the appearance of Eugene who claims to be a **scientist** on route to Washington DC to make a cure. He explains that he has the cure for the zombie plague that will make the living dead die and cure the remaining living people. This plot line comes to an end in the fifth episode of season five where Eugene reveals that he lied in order to survive, negating the possibility of a cure.

A common phrase used in *The Walking Dead* marketing is “Kill the dead, fear the living”. This serves as a summary of how the show treats its zombies and its humans, as the first is presented as a swarm or dangerous animal, while the latter is presented as a conniving threat. There is no human character in the show that doesn't partake in **morally gray** actions regarding the life of other humans in the name of preemptive self defence.

The main characters often have to contend with other groups of survivors that have forgone certain aspects of **humanity** in order to live in the post-apocalyptic world of the show. This starts with Randall and his group, the young man explains how the other members of his group raped two girls in front of their father. Other survivors being the main source of tension reaches a peak with the introduction of the survivors of Terminus. This last group are shown to have started as a peaceful community that indeed wanted to provide a safe haven for everyone but through abuse ended up becoming a **cannibalistic** group that trapped those seeking asylum.

The most prevalent fear in the show is that of people in power either becoming **dangerous** or **incompetent**. There are several examples of this in the show starting from the very first season. Shane Walsh used to be an **upstanding cop** and the leader of the survivor group before Rick awoke in the hospital, but the tension of the new world order and his feelings towards Lori, the wife of his best friend Rick, turned him into a danger to the group as he **attempted to murder** Rick. Hershel Greene who is the **owner** of the farm where Rick and his group stay in season two is shown to be kind and useful but foolish in his belief that **zombies can be cured** and loses his status as the highest authority when the group murder the zombies inside the barn. In season three Rick becomes the head of the group, but he'll be discussed at the end of this section. Starting with the third season other survivors groups are introduced, starting with The Governor and Woodbury.

The Governor is portrayed, for two thirds of the episode he is introduced as a **kind** if slightly mysterious individual who is leading a relatively **peaceful settlement**. Immediately after it's revealed that he is a much more **violent** person than he appears as he keeps **trophies** of the zombies he has killed and keeps and takes care of his **zombified daughter**. The character devolves from this to a man that **sacrifices** most of his followers twice in order to murder Michonne and Rick. He ends up dying to the hand of his former lover Lily, after his negligence causes the death of her daughter.

The next figure of authority we are introduced is Lieutenant Dawn Lerner, who is in charge of the community at Grady Memorial Hospital. Her position is **dependant** on how happy the other officers in the hospital are so she allows certain **abuse** towards the staff, patients and the people they rescue as long as peace is kept. She is stabbed by Beth Greene, whom she shoots reflexively prompting Daryl to shoot her back.

More or less at the same time we are introduced to Father Gabriel Stokes who's biggest transgression as an authority figure is to have locked his **parishioners** outside of the church to be devoured when the apocalypse started. Unlike the people mentioned earlier his authority derives of his position as a **man of faith**, which he abuses in latter seasons to besmirch the other survivors and keep his sin a secret.

The last authority figure we are introduced to is Deanna Monroe, whose only mistake seems to be **lulling** her community into a false sense of security in the apocalypse, **listening** to Father Gabriel's lies and **distrusting** the highly violent group of survivors she takes in. She is shown to correct this and partially **share her authority** with Rick. Her death is due to a zombie bite and she passes away fighting.

At last it's time to adress Rick Grimes. His position as the main character leaves him with the one that has the highest degree of evolution through the series. He starts as a honorable individual who sets the rule of no murdering any living human under the punishment of death but ends up becoming a man who "commits violent and morally repugnant actions" as they are described by Peter Peik in his essay *The Gnostic Zombie and the State of Nature: On Robert Kirkman's The Walking Dead*. In season one we see a very **unsettled** and confused Rick, even if he is slowly and surely pushed into a position of **reluctant leadership** within the group, usurping his friend Shane. At the end of the second season Rick **murders** Shane after the latter attempts to murder him and becomes the leader of the group.

This follows through season three where even when he loses his mind due to the death of his wife, the survivors follow his commands. Even before that, Ricks' **ruthlessness** starts to show as he planned on murdering the inhabitants of the prison in order to take it for the main group of survivors. The audience receives a visual cue that indicates Rick might not be alright with the appearance of his wife Lori after this one perishes during childbirth, these **hallucinations** end when Rick steps down as the leader of the group. In season four Rick refuses to become the leader of the group again, regardless of the pleas from the survivors. Even in his lower official status Rick ends up exiling Carol, one of the oldest members of the group, when she proves to be a danger for more vulnerable members.

During the fourth season the group is disbanded although they reunite at the end as most of them are captured by Terminus. The fifth season has Rick as the main leader again and even when the survivors are inducted into the Alexandria Safe-Zone he remains the leader of his group of survivors as they struggle to adapt to the peaceful surroundings. After an altercation with one of the members of the Safe-Zone that ends with Deanna's husband being killed. She eventually relinquishes complete control of Alexandria to Rick as she perceives she is no longer capable of leading them through the apocalypse.

The setting for *The Walking Dead* is the **south** of the United States as the series sticks rather close to **Atlanta** for its earlier seasons and slowly inches north for its latter seasons as the Alexandria Safe-Zone is located close to **Washington DC**. As a series produced in the United States this is a familiar setting for both characters and audience in the same manner *28 Days Later* tackled in its portrayal of London. While the show doesn't feature many specific settings it does show several **landmarks** around the city of Atlanta like the Grady Memorial Hospital or the Center for Disease Control. Most of the series though showcases houses and residential areas in ruins, schools repurposed as military bases and other familiar settings **ruined** by the apocalypse.

In conclusion, *The Walking Dead* features the three fears outlined quite clearly but seems to eventually focus on the **corrosion** an end of the world situation has on the individual, especially those with power and **responsibility**. Unlike *28 Days Later* and *REC*, it places its protagonist as the **leader** of a group that has to make tough choices placing the ethical dilemma of the characters of *The Walking Dead* in "how far one is willing to go in order to preserve one's own life or lives of those whom one loves" as stated in *The Gnostic Zombie*, mentioned above. Unlike *World War Z*, the setting is very static and close to the protagonists and audience of the show. The zombie becomes the **least of the threats** that the characters face, accepted as a reality quite early on and just serves to desynthesize the characters and audience towards the violence that will be committed. The series ends up portraying the horror of losing your humanity not through the process of becoming a zombie but through the **loss of the morals and ethics** of our current society.

## CHAPTER 5: THE FUNGUS

“Then why should it be us who die for you?”

- Melanie, *The Girl with All the Gifts*

*The Girl with All the Gifts* follows Melanie, a young girl who is a **prisoner**, along with other children, in a military facility. They are taught by a kind woman named Helen Justineux that views them as normal children, sometimes forgetting their dangerous true nature. The **children** were born of women that became infected while pregnant and the fungus infected the embryos through the placenta. When the babies were big enough, they devoured their mothers from the inside out. This ‘**Second Generation**’ as it’s called through the film is either like humans, sentient and aware, capable of their own thoughts and being or mimicking the humans around them in order to spread the virus. A doctor at the base, Caroline Cadwell, is working on a **vaccine** that would protect humans from the fungus, but in order to do that she needs to dissect the children. Every night she asks a number from 0 to 20 from Melanie, and the child in question is **dissected**. One night Melanie gives her own number, but when she is about to be killed the base falls to the zombies.

When the base falls Melanie saves Miss Justineaux who carries her, with the help of Dr. Cadwell to a truck. The three women and three soldiers, one of them the mean Sargent Parks, try to make their way to the main camp called Beacon. While they travel they observe several **strange behaviour** from the zombies, or hungries like they are called in this interaction, like a woman pushing a stroller. Melanie slowly starts embracing her **dual nature**, as both human and zombie, devouring a cat and using a dog as bait, but still remaining lucid and capable of interaction. Once they get to London the group spots a movable lab that uses solar panels in order to be kept moving and operating through the apocalypse. In London the small group finds the **next stage** of the fungal infection as several zombies congregated around a tower and sprouted vines with **pods** that would make the infection **airborne**, therefore infect the whole world in hours. Also in London, Melanie encounters a group of children who like her seem to be **sentient** and capable of thought, but due to their isolation from adults that could teach them language behave and interact like a very **primitive** society of cavemen. She manages to protect Miss Justineux and Sargent Parks from them by violently defeating the eldest child with a baseball bat, killing him brutally and managing to scare both humans.

Once the group makes it back to the lab Dr. Cadwell makes them all become unconscious with the use of an anesthetic gas she found in the lab. Her aim is to dissect Melanie and finally **finish** the vaccine that would protect the remaining **vestiges of humanity** from the infection before the pods open. Melanie awakens before the doctor can cause her any harm though, revealing that she and the fungus have a **symbiotic** relationship where it metabolises oxygen for her in case it's needed. The two women have a **heart-to-heart** regarding the vaccine with Melanie almost agreeing to **die** in order to give Miss Justineaux a chance at a long, fulfilling life with people who love her. The young girl first asks a question, whether Dr. Cadwell still believes the children are just **mimicking** being human or if she is now convinced that they are **sentient** creatures. The doctor reveals that she knows now that the second generation of zombies, or the children, are actually sentient and alive. This prompts Melanie to **refuse** to die in order to save humanity and escapes the lab, ordering Dr. Cadwell to remain inside. Dr. Cadwell follows her, leading to her being ambushed by the London children and being eaten alive.

Melanie meanwhile sets **fire** to the tower that contains the pods, prompting them to open and **dooming humanity** to extinction. Sargent Parks becomes the first infected from this as he chased after Melanie, worried about her safety. He begs for Melanie to shoot him before he turns and reveals that his own **daughter** would be part of this Second Generation. Some time later Miss Justineaux awakens in the lab, alone, with Melanie watching from the other side of the closed door, the seeds of the infection floating around her. Miss Justineaux awakens a few months later, still in the lab, but this time surrounded by the **children** of the base, the children from London and Melanie, who keeps all of them in check. She has returned to her **teaching** duties, much to the pleasure of Melanie, who asks for a story.

In order to properly analyze this piece of media another must be taken into account, due to the relative **obscurity** of this film or its appearance at a time when *Zombie-Academia* was focused on other works, this other piece of media being a **video game** called *The Last of Us* that thematically and in the narrative follows similar story beats as the film. The game follows a man called Joel as he has to deliver a young girl, Ellie, to a resistance group who are planning to use Ellie's brain, due to her **immunity** to the fungus, for a **vaccine** that would inoculate humans other humans. Joel saves Ellie and murders most of the resistance at the end of the game as he doesn't consider it fair, **dooming** the rest of humanity. Both pieces of work deal with a fungal infection as a result of a mutation of the Cordyceps fungus that spreads through both bites from infected people and spores. Both media follow a **young girl**, Ellie in the game and Melanie in the film, with a special relationship to the infection. Both media also focus on the **paternal feelings** from the other main characters towards the young girls, Joel seeing Ellie as a surrogate for his daughter Sarah and both Helen Justineaux seeing Melanie as a daughter figure as Sargent

Parks sees Melanie as a reminder of his own Second Generation daughter. Both media feature familiar settings for the audience **overrun by nature**. Another similarity is the behaviour of the “hungry” or “runner”, both words used instead of zombie, in regards to it being an infection with the intention of **spreading**. “Hungries” have an initial **aggressive stage**, where they actively chase uninfected humans like the “Runner” stage in the video game. This is followed by a **peaceful** if not provoked stage for hungries where they congregate in groups and remain dormant unless awoken by loud sounds. This corresponds with the “Clicker” stage in the video game where the fungus has rendered the host blind and mostly peaceful who only attacks if there is a loud sound nearby. Both infections also have a “mature sexual stage” as described by Dr. Caroline Cadwell where the infected die and the fungus **releases spores**. In the film, unlike the video game, that stage is newly discovered and signals the **end of humanity** as we know it. Due to this parallelisms it’s not hard to see how academic writing that deals with one can be applied to the other.

The pure zombie in *The Girl with All the Gifts* is similar to the one featured in *28 Days Later* even if the nature of the infection is widely different. The infection is **quick** once the person has been bitten, and it takes over it’s host quickly. The potential infection or the infected are not the focus of the film though, the children are. The children stand in a strange position as hybrids of humans and infected, both immune and co-existing with the infection. The film is clearly positioned with Melanie and Miss Justineux when it comes to viewing the children as a living and sentient entity, not a mimicking trick by the fungus. Melanie is a **charming child** that keeps pictures of cute kittens and pretty forests, she likes stories and loves Miss Justineux fiercely. As the film advances the audience is shown more sides of her **monstrous** nature, eating a cat the first time she is allowed outside unsupervised, for example. It reaches a point that when in London Melanie demands to be let out to eat right after a soldier has been sent out to retrieve supplies the audience is lead to **fear** for the soldier as Melanie might devour him out of sight. Instead she encounters the other children who behave like primitive humans, making the audience and Melanie aware that the time for humans is over and this Second Generation and a possible Third, immune or **symbiotic** with the infection, will take over. The hybrids humanization increases to a point that we are left at the end with them taking the world, which is **sunny** and bright once again leaving Helen Justineaux as the last living human. It relevant that Melanie is never portrayed as cruel, or vindictive. Melanie is just the next stage in the evolutionary cycle of humanity, and with her comes the end of humans as we knew them. This is one of the core fears of the film that diverges from the three fears demonstrated in the other films.

It is important to note that the infection the film hinges on is a **real** phenomenon which Amy Green claims in her article “The Reconstruction of Morality and the Evolution of Naturalism in the Last of Us” (2016, pp. 745-763) claims “further problematizes the pandemic infection by couching it within the realm of possibility, demonstrating how a simple mutation of the Cordyceps fungus, one small step by which it secures its own future, changes everything.” What in the videogame is called just the Cordyceps fungus, in the film is called *Ophiocordyceps unilateralis*, which is a natural occurring phenomenon that infects insects, arachnids and other fungus. In the film the infection behaves in the following way: firstly, it **infects a host**. How the first human got infected it’s not known, unlike in *28 Days Later* where we see the first inflection point. Then the host **chases** after other potential hosts and infects them. Finally, when enough infected hosts come together the fungus sprouts and develops **pods** that when open release spores that infect more hosts. The fact that the infection is based on an existing natural phenomenon lends the film with the subtext of **nature** reclaiming the cities, making the deserted London a much more green place than the bare London of *28 Days Later*. This state of the world renders the cities “eerily beautiful in their new, verdant form” ( 2016, pp. 753), something it shares with *The Last of Us* as described by Amy Green in her article.

Human in-fighting and authority figures misbehaving is the least of the focus of this film that sees the world squarely from Melanie’s lenses. We are treated to the **neglect** and verbal **abuse** the children suffer while at the military camp but it falls soon and then the left over soldiers are at their worst, indifferent to the young girl. Dr. Cadwell presents a **sinister** figure at the beginning since the audiences’ sympathies are with Melanie after all she is a doctor dissecting and **experimenting** with children, whom she doesn’t see as human. Sargent Parks is another negative authority figure that **mellows** as the story progresses initially shown to punish Melanie for a snarky remark about his attraction to Miss Justineaux. Helen herself is shown as a **positive** authority figure, being soft and **gentle** with the children, specially Melanie. They all suffer a **reversal** as Melanie starts becoming the authority figure: Dr. Cadwell was only trying desperately to save her **species** from extinction, Sargent Parks exposes himself to danger and infection in order to retrieve Melanie and Miss Justineaux ends up **imprisoned** in the mobile lab, teaching the hybrid children. At the end we are faced with Melanie as the new authority of the world, keeping the other feral children in check by screaming and physically overpowering them. Melanie has what she always **wanted**: authority and Miss Justineaux.

The film is set in England, starting a bit north from London and then squarely in London for the finale. While it doesn’t show any **landmarks** it does show plenty of **stores** that one would find in the streets, among them, Lidl, Costa, Waterstones and Mark & Spencers. Those little details lend a very **erie** sense of familiarity to the setting that would unsettle the viewer and the

audience. To make the familiarity more clear there is an extended scene where the feral children hunt a soldier set in a Off-licence and Newsstand store that can be found in almost any corner of any city in the United Kingdom. This type setting is described by Amy Green as “a landscape scarred and broken yet still recognizable” (2016, pp. 746). As stated before, the **familiarity** of the settings is important but in this film the proceedings are a bit more subtle than showing a dilapidated London eye, but showing plenty of stores that would be familiar to the audience. The downside of this approach is that the familiarity of the stores **decreases** as soon as it encounters an **international** audience.

*The Girl with All the Gifts* is a strange zombie film if compared to the other films in this project. It follows a character who is a whole new **being** entirely who behaves somewhere between a zombie and a human. It presents a new world order where humanity is on its way to **extinction** because of the existence of the children. This **humanizes** the monstrous character of Melanie into someone the audience is supposed to feel **sympathy**, pity and to a certain extent be happy when she succeeds or at least catch themselves surprised and horrified at the sympathy they feel for the child who ended mankind. Authority figures are not lacking in the film, but they suffer a **transformation** from the stereotypes they would have been in a different zombie film to the characters they end up being. Melanie is the last seen authority figure and she is both **innocent and terrifying** as she keeps the very last human alive and alone doing what she always wanted her to do, tell her stories and teach her. Finally, the setting of the film is very clearly rooted in showing the **old world**, or the cities that populated it, being slowly overrun by **nature**.

## CONCLUSIONS

Through this dissertation **three fears** have been outlined as an integral part of the strain of **Zombie Apocalypse Media** that populated the early 2000 and well into the mid 2010s. Several media has been observed with a specific emphasis on film and TV series as one of the most popular forms of mass media of the time. Video Games and other interactive forms of entertainment haven't been discussed at length but they too play a significant part in the discourse. The media observed has been *28 Days Later* (2002), *REC* (2007), *The Walking Dead* (2010 - present), *World War Z* (2013) and *The Girl with All the Gifts* (2016). Other media discussed but not analyzed has been the american remake of *REC*, *Quarentine* (2008), in order to contrast the two different approaches to the zombie and the american video game by Naughty Dog *The Last of Us* (2013) due to its thematic and narrative similarities to *The Girl with All the Gifts*.

Each work analysed presents each fear in a unique way but still retaining some similarities with the others. Starting with the fear of **dehumanization** that has always been intrinsically linked with the zombie. *28 Days Later* and *World War Z* present the rise of the zombie through a **viral threat** that soon engulfed most of the United Kingdom in one and the whole world in the other. While *The Girl with All the Gifts* treats a **fungal infection** instead of a viral one it spreads rather similarly to the other two works mentioned above. In all three works the infection is quick, between 5 to 10 seconds from infection to transformation. *World War Z* immediately robs the humanity from the transformed as their behaviour turns unrealistically monstrous while *28 Days Later* and *The Girl with All the Gifts* present a sadder view where the infected have to be put down, with the same level of tragedy one would approach this situation without the threat of being eaten alive. *REC* has a subtly different approach due to the nature of its virus, while it's described as such due to it's similar way of infecting new hosts, we are dealing with a grand-scale **demonic possession**, which indeed turns the infected into monsters. The possessed don't get murdered in *REC* as they are a demonic entity with supernatural strength and speed. *The Walking Dead* takes a literal approach to the zombie as the human actually dies in the **transformation** between human and zombie. This facilitates the dehumanization of the walking corpse which does not have any remaining traits of the human they once were. The tragedy in the last one is killing someone who is bound to become a zombie before they turn. The fear of losing your humanity permanently and becoming something subhuman is easily

observable in any zombie work as they were the original fear that propelled the zombie within its culture of origin.

Another fear ever present in the Zombie apocalypse genre is the decay of **Authority** due to the pressure the characters in such positions face as they are considered the sole responsible of the survival of their group. This position puts them in situations where they must commit morally questionable acts to ensure the survival of those they are in charge of. *REC* presents a **unique** situation from the other films as the apocalypse is incipient but not widespread enough to give rise to **citizens** corrupted by the apocalypse. The film presents two corrupted structures of authority outside the building where the protagonists are trapped: the first being the **government**, who lie to the people inside the building, the second being the **Catholic Church** who is the creator of the demonic possession that spreads through the building. This has to do with the recentness of the situation, being the first reported incident with zombies, so traditional authority figures still retain their power but are still corrupt. *World War Z* is also unique in its representation of authority as the main character is part of the main source of authority in the film, that being the UN. This organization serves as the largest form of authority in this world sending Gerry, the main character of the film, to different locations to observe and learn as much as he can from the zombie virus.

The other media, that being *28 Days Later*, *The Girl with All the Gifts* and *The Walking Dead* present us with a situation much more dire in relation to this second fear. The three pieces of media occur well into the zombie apocalypse where all previously existing forms of government have disappeared. This leads to military or paramilitary groups rising mostly consisting of armed civilians. In *28 Days Later* our main group of survivors is styled after a family or familiar structure that encounter a military group. Here we see the figure of Major Henry West. He is in charge of a group of soldiers to whom he promised women to repopulate Great Britain in order to keep their morale up in the apocalypse. In order to maintain his promise he captures a teenager and a woman and would consent to their rape by his soldiers. He also tries to murder Jim when he becomes aware of this and makes moves to flee the compound with the girls. In *The Girl with All the Gifts* we are shown a military base where children are manhandled, neglected and abused by the soldiers running it as well as experimented on by the scientists. The only purely positive form of authority in this base is Helen Justineaux who is a teacher and cares for the children. As the base falls and the small group of survivors make their way to the next one the characters are humanized and portrayed as helpless, their authority trickling away until Melanie becomes the highest form of authority in the new world at the end. This is presented as a harsh but natural development as one species gets extinguished for the new one to survive.

Finally, *The Walking Dead* presents several authority figures who are corrupted, already vicious before the apocalypse or helpless in the current state of affairs. Rick Grimes is the character who changes from a morally sound character to a ruthless tyrant who gets broken by the loss of his wife, disagrees with the cloistered lifestyle of the community that takes his smaller group of survivors in so he stages a coup and eventually leads them into conflict with a dangerous group that end up capturing them. Rick cycles back and forth between morality and preemptive violence in order to protect his people or his interests. He is corrupted again and again as soon as he is placed in a position of authority. His character serves as a microcosm for all other authority figures in this series as they all are portrayed as somehow broken by the apocalypse. The closest we get to a completely black and white villain is at the end of Season 6 with the introduction of Negan, but this might be subverted as the other seasons proceed.

The third and last fear to be analysed is the **setting** of the works and how **familiar** they are to both characters and audience. *World War Z* is the one that differs most from the rest that occur within the same country and most of the times within the same region of said country, be it the South of the United States, the area between London and Manchester or the same apartment building in Barcelona. *World War Z* features a character that moves from location to location with dizzying speed, first the United States, then Korea, then Israel to end up in Wales. This is done in part so that the film can be relatable to a larger audience who would have a higher chance to see areas that they are familiar with even if the character isn't. The main reason for this though is due to it adapting a book that doesn't have a main character or focuses on a particular country, as it is meant to be an account of the Zombie War from it's beginning to its end. The film tried, in its first minutes, to create the same sense of danger in familiar settings by showing us the main character and his family's flight from the United States. *REC* has the complete opposite approach by focusing on a very constrained setting that would be very familiar to most of the intended audience, a spanish apartment building. This creates an even more deliberate feeling of attack in the home as mentioned earlier. *The Girl with All the Gifts*, *The Walking Dead* and *28 Days Later* feature both city and countryside that would be very familiar to the audiences of the countries produced. They hardly vary from the approach showing a ruined and desolate landscape for all three with the odd monument or recognizable store.

As shown above all three fears are very clearly represented in all of the media observed which according to Peter Paik's essay on *The Walking Dead* is due to the genres ability to work "almost too easily as a metaphor about our current economic predicament" (2011; pp. 7). Unexpectedly a fourth strong thematic point started to take shape in the most recent works like *World War Z* and *The Girl with All the Gifts*, the idea that nature itself created the zombie apocalypse in order to reduce the population of the planet as humanity has damaged it. This ties in to a lot of the visual cues in the setting from all the works mentioned above where the cities are shown as ruined and overtaken by nature and the countryside is shown as quiet and peaceful. Some works, like the briefly discussed *The Last of Us* also shows animals regaining freedom once their human jailers were killed.

In this dissertation we have argued that the Zombie Apocalypse Genre is an ever evolving monster that adapts itself to the fears of the society that produces it. Starting with the fear of perpetual enslavement in the newly freed slaves of Haiti to the fear of dehumanization, corruption of the authorities and fall of the society we know today in Western Civilization. To achieve this we have organized the media by the origin of the zombie in each of them to then analyse the three fears as they are presented in the works starting with dehumanization, then fear of authority and ending with the familiarity of the setting. The genre seems to be evolving further with different works looking at the humanity of the zombie, like Melanie in *The Girl with All the Gifts*. Another common trait in works that fall outside of this dissertations' scope feature a hope for humanity in young women who are immune to the virus, like Ellie in *The Last of Us*, or that can control the zombies, like Brooke in the Australian Horror film *Wormwood* (2004, dir. Kiah Roache-Turner), which will be properly analysed in future essays. The only certainty when it comes to the Zombie Apocalypse genre is that it will unfailingly rise again.

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