

IS THERE LAW IN A POST-ZOMBIE WORLD? A CRITICAL DISCOURSE  
ANALYSIS OF POWER, AUTHORITY, AND GOVERNANCE  
IN AMC'S *THE WALKING DEAD*

By

Sarah Bray

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Approved: Dr. Michele Byers  
Supervisor

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Approved: Dr. Robert Gray  
Reader

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Approved: Dr. Ashley Carver  
External

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## ABSTRACT

IS THERE LAW IN A POST-ZOMBIE WORLD? A CRITICAL DISCOURSE  
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Using one of AMC's "original series," *The Walking Dead*, as a narrative frame, this thesis offers a qualitative critical analysis of different and competing discourses of power, authority, gender, race, class, the law, governance, risk, and the body in the first two seasons of the series. I critically examine and analyze these discourses to demonstrate how the power and authority to govern, the management of risk, and the control of the body are brought into being in the text as well as how these discourses produce régimes of truth in the series. In particular, I argue that the power and authority to govern are gendered, raced, and classed, overwhelmingly falling in the purview of those who are male, white, middle-class, and heterosexual; I also argue that discursively the able, clean, and living body is privileged as normal in the text and that the body is governed through the management of risk, more so than through overt physical violence or force. I draw on Jacques Derrida's vocabulary of deconstruction, Michel Foucault's concepts of discourse, knowledge, power, truth, governance, normalization, resistance, and the body, and Julia Kristeva's theory of abjection to compile the conceptual tools and language I need to deconstruct, critically analyze, and speak about this text.

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## Introduction

My research offers a critical analysis of different and competing discourses of power, authority, gender, race, class, the law, governance, risk, and the body in the first two seasons of *The Walking Dead*. I critically examine and analyze these discourses to demonstrate how the power and authority to govern, the control of the body, and the management of risk are brought into being in the text and how these discourses produce *régimes of truth*<sup>1</sup> in the series. In preparation for doing this work, I reviewed a wide array of literature on television studies, the horror genre, and the sub-genre of zombie horror, as well as theoretical literature regarding power, knowledge, truth, discourse, normalization, governance, risk, the abject, and the body. What sprung from my readings left me with the following question(s) that form the basis of this thesis: What are the dominant discourses surrounding power, authority, and governance of the body that are in operation within AMC's *The Walking Dead* and how do these discourses construct *régimes of truth*? In this thesis, I argue that the power and the authority to govern are gendered, raced, and classed, overwhelmingly falling in the purview of those who are male, white, middle-class, and heterosexual; I also argue that discursively the able, clean, and living body is privileged as normal within the text and that the body is governed through the management of risk, more so than through overt physical violence or force. Although these two main arguments, my analysis of authority and my analysis of abject bodies

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<sup>1</sup> The particular grounds on which truth is claimed constitutes what Michel Foucault (1980) called a *régime of truth*. It is the 'general politics' of truth: that is, "the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true or false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true" (p. 131).

respectively, are discussed separately in my analytical chapters, they are both strongly associated to the overall argument of this work. Disruptive, abject bodies have very strong connections to authority in the series and in many ways fuel and legitimize those in positions of authority.

Throughout this research, I also explore several additional questions that enhanced my critical reading of the series: Why does the main character, Rick Grimes (Andrew Lincoln), wear his sheriff's uniform and continue his law and order approach to solving problems in this post-apocalyptic world? Who/what is the main model of authority in the series? How is power and authority challenged or resisted? How are bodies governed/controlled? Why are weapons important? Why are women restricted to domestic space in this dystopian world, having little input on decisions that affect the group and often denied the ability to break gender norms? What is the significance of children and reproduction within this text? Why are alternative methods of handling the undead, other than killing them, largely ignored?

### **Significance of the Zombie**

*The Walking Dead*<sup>2</sup> tells the story of a small group of survivors living in the aftermath of an apocalypse where an infectious disease has killed, reanimated, and turned cannibalistic a significant proportion of the population, known as *walkers*.<sup>3</sup> The series is set in the United States of America, particularly in the state of Georgia, although it exists

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<sup>2</sup> Throughout the remainder of this work each episode will be referenced by its corresponding season and episode number. For example, season one, episode two would appear as follows: 1002, (10) for season one, and (02) for episode two. For a more detailed account of each episode, and its title, refer to *Appendix C: Episode Guide*.

<sup>3</sup> Refer to *Appendix A: Glossary of Terms* for a definition of *walker/s*. This term will be used throughout this work to describe the “zombie(s)” of *The Walking Dead*.

within its own textual universe. Viewers are offered brief flashbacks about the world before the apocalypse,<sup>4</sup> but actual dates and times referencing when the apocalypse started or how long it has been since the first outbreak are never made explicitly clear. The plot focuses heavily on the weeks and months that follow after the zombie apocalypse, focusing on the personal struggles of the survivors, the changing dynamic of one particular survivor group, and the survivors attempts to retain their humanity as they face the challenges of surviving in a hostile, post-apocalyptic world.

Whereas vampires often symbolize sex and hedonism, and werewolves the struggle between civilized and barbaric “man,” zombies *are* death: they embody it and represent it simultaneously (Riley, 2011, p. 196). Zombies break apart the binary of living/dead, existing in the space between, both alive and dead. A zombie world also promises a world of lawlessness, with chaos ensuing quickly as social institutions and governing bodies fall apart. I read *The Walking Dead* as symptomatic of things that are happening in the “real world,” but focus my analysis on what happens in the textual universe of the show, concentrating on its own internal logics and structures. Thus, the apocalyptic textual universe of *The Walking Dead* – in which the dominant discourses of power, authority, and governance of the body circulate in relation to the presence of the walkers – largely informs the criminological standpoint of this thesis.

The meaning of the walker(s) is not as important as how their presence creates and develops the apocalyptic textual universe within which the survivors exist and interact. Prior to the apocalypse, this textual universe is largely suggested to have been a space where traditionally white and patriarchal versions of power, authority, and governance

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<sup>4</sup> 1001, 1006, 2002, and 2005.



existed<sup>5</sup>. As the old world dissolves, the survivors are given a chance to rebuild their lives, ideologies, and institutions, but for the most part they do not; clinging instead to their previous held beliefs, norms, and values. Because of this return to old world norms, I focus heavily on these traditional versions of power, authority, and governance, as they are the ones that sustain the transition from the “pre” to “post” apocalyptic worlds. I touch on aspects of gender, femininity, motherhood, race, and class, but I use these to interrogate and discuss the masculine, patriarchal power and authority structures within the text.

This thesis project is located within the field of criminology, but many may wonder how, exactly, it fits within that field. The answer is simple. This thesis deconstructs, discusses, and builds upon understandings of power, authority, governance, the body, risk, and masculinity, all of which are topics of inquiry within criminological study. My thesis is among the first to critically examine *The Walking Dead*, as the television series is quite new. There is often a lack of dialogue between television studies and criminology, even though these two disciplines are often complementary, as television deals with crime and a lot of criminology discusses media. Thus, my examination of criminological concepts through a televisual lens serves to bring together concepts from both disciplines, enabling me to enrich and expand both, and opening up new ways of thinking about some of their core concepts.

## **Chapter Outlines**

My thesis is organized into two sections:

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<sup>5</sup> It is the American South of “today” as those who are watching the series might know it.

Section 1.0 is comprised of three chapters: Literature Review, Theoretical Framework, and Methodology. Chapter 1.1 is a review of the literature surrounding the study of television, the horror genre, and the representation of the zombie in popular culture. First, I review the medium of television, and how it has evolved, with a particular focus on AMC and their “original series” *The Walking Dead*. Second, I examine the horror genre and how zombie horror is situated within it. Lastly, I discuss the zombie in popular culture, including how the zombie has been defined, and different representations and readings of the figure therein. Overall, the research objective of this chapter is to review the literature in order to situate my research in the context of other scholarly work.

In chapter 1.2, I discuss the theoretical framework I adopted for this research, a poststructuralist perspective, and discuss its usefulness to my examination of the dominant discourses of power, authority, and governance in *The Walking Dead*. I begin by providing a brief description of the underlying assumptions of poststructuralism. Next, I elaborate on how Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, and Julia Kristeva fit into a poststructuralist framework and how they are beneficial to my work. I begin by examining Derrida’s critique of structuralism and his work on deconstruction. Next, I explain how I draw upon Foucault’s works on discourse, knowledge, power, truth, governance, normalization, resistance, and the body. Finally, I discuss Kristeva’s concept of the abject and its significance to my analysis. The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate how Derrida’s vocabulary of deconstruction, along with Foucault and Kristeva’s concepts, have provided my research with the conceptual tools needed to study the dominant discourses of power, authority, and governance in *The Walking Dead*.

In chapter 1.3, I describe the qualitative research methodology that I use in my analysis of *The Walking Dead*. First, I define qualitative research and content analysis, explaining how discourse analysis fits within this method and informs my own research. Second, I expand upon discourse analysis and explain how I employed a critical discourse analysis to this text in order to reveal the discursive source of power, dominance, inequality, and bias and how these sources are initiated, maintained, reproduced, and transformed within specific social, economic, political, and historical contexts. Third, I provide justification for how I chose my data set and I outline the possible limitations of my methods and research. Fourth, I describe the process of this critical discourse analysis, and explain how I probed, pulled out, and organized my data. Finally, I discuss the post-structural concepts that are incorporated into my analysis, exploring how, from a methodological standpoint, these concepts eventually formed the structure of my three analytical chapters, and describe how these chapters changed and evolved over this research process. The aim of this chapter is to describe the research methods I believe best enabled me to answer my research questions.

Section 2.0 focuses on my qualitative analytical findings and contains one descriptive chapter (2.1 – Binaries In *The Walking Dead*) and two analytical chapters (2.2 – Competing Discourses Of Power, Authority, And Governance and 2.3 – The Body And The Abject). In my research, Derrida, Foucault, and Kristeva offer me various analytical tools that I apply in the service of my analysis of discourses (including discourses of power, authority, gender, race, class, governance, and biological, scientific, medical, and social discourses of the body) through which the key concepts I identify are made meaningful in the text. These concepts include: authority figures, weaponry, paternity,

reproduction, masculinity, knowledge, whiteness, white trash, suicide, mercy killing, and risk.

In chapter 2.1, I provide a deconstructive reading of the binary oppositions that I found embedded in the discourses and through which the key concepts (identified above) are constituted. These binaries are urban/rural, male/female, white/black, and us/them (living/dead). The purpose of this section is to introduce and discuss these binaries, as it is important, within this textual landscape, to unpack these binaries in order to expose their contradictions because the key concepts I employ in my analysis all engage the binaries in some way. The binary structures provide an entry way into the narrative; exposing/unpacking these binaries helps me to highlight a pre-existing discursive system that always brings us back to the normative.

Chapter 2.2 presents my qualitative findings of the critical discourse analysis I applied to *The Walking Dead*. In this chapter, I explore discourses of power, authority, gender, race, class, and governance and examine the ways in which the particular concepts I've identified are discursively constructed through particular *régimes of truth* in the text. I begin my analysis of how the power and authority to govern is gendered within *The Walking Dead*. This is achieved through an examination of the way masculinity is represented in the series, specifically through an interrogation of Rick Grimes and Shane Walsh's (Jon Bernthal) occupation, their position as partners, as well as how power is related to paternity in the text. I also discuss my analysis of weaponry on the series, considering how weapons are used to divide the gender/power relationship in the text. Specifically, I focus on which characters are allowed access to guns and other weapons.

Second, I analyze how the power and authority to govern is raced within the text through an examination of the setting and a discussion of the majority position that white characters have within the text. The dichotomy of us/them is also explored in relation to my reading of the walkers as a displaced “other,” paralleling what has been theorized in relation to other zombie texts (Wood, 2003; Muntean & Payne, 2009; Stratton, 2011). By exploring the character of Merle Dixon (Michael Rooker) as “white trash” in comparison to the “whiteness” of Rick’s uniformed body, I discuss how whiteness is privileged and classed, not something afforded to all white men.

Finally, I discuss the three main authority figures I identified in the text and expand upon the different models of authority that they represent. I begin with Rick and Shane, who are discussed first and more closely together because they were partners and friends before the apocalypse, but also because they are often presented together, even though they tend to disagree. I add my discussion of Hershel Greene (Scott Wilson) in later, as we are not introduced to his character until season two and he has no prior connection to the other survivors. Regardless of their point of introduction, I discuss how each of these three characters authority is garnered, drawing on my prior discussion of power/authority as gendered, raced, and classed and utilizing my discussion of masculinity, paternity, and whiteness to further analyse the different forms of authority they represent: Rick as moral and democratic; Shane as pragmatic and militaristic; and Hershel as a medical authority, in addition to exemplifying a feudal and religious authority.

In chapter 2.3 I explore scientific, medical, and social discourses of the body, as well as discourses of governance and risk. Throughout this chapter, I argue that the bodies

on the series are represented as being governed through the management of risk. I begin by calling upon Julia Kristeva's concept of the abject as a method of deconstructing bodies in *The Walking Dead*. Kristeva's concept helps to provide an important distinction between the inherent state of the body (survivor/undead) versus what is done to the body because of its status as undead. Following this, an analysis of the character Sophia Peletier (Madison Lintz) is used to exemplify how the survivor's deal with the abject body in this text. The concept of suicide is subsequently discussed in order to illustrate another example of a response to the abjection of the infected body. I provide an analysis of how suicide is constructed through a discourse of control and as resistance against the abject, as well as how it is utilized as a method to mitigate risk. Overall, Kristeva's concept of the abject works to illustrate that discursively, the able, clean, and living body is privileged as normal within the text, and creates a dominant *régime of truth*.

In the second half of this chapter, I discuss Foucault's concept of bio-power. Foucault's understanding of bio-power helps to further extend my reading of suicide, but also enables a reading of reproduction within the text. The walkers' method of reproduction is used to demonstrate how a discourse of contagion is developed on *The Walking Dead* and reconnects us to Foucault's understanding of bio-power. Next, I move through an analysis of Foucault's understanding of the power of the norm to further contribute to my reading of how the body is controlled within *The Walking Dead*. This is achieved by exploring the three organising principles that Foucault used to explain how individual human beings become subjects: dividing practices, scientific classification, and subjectification. By applying these three organising principles to the text, I argue that normalcy helps us to comprehend the rules of the diegesis. I demonstrate how conformity

is achieved within the text, specifically through a reading of the character of Daryl Dixon (Norman Reedus). By using Daryl as an example, I demonstrate how an individual is seen as a risk if they do not conform to the overall group rules and analyze how the diegetic setting reinforces the need for risky individuals to be managed.

Finally, I present my reading of resistance within the series through readings of the characters Daryl and Michonne (Danai Gurira). This reading is required because resistance is intrinsic to power and demonstrates the cyclical nature of power that Foucault describes (Foucault, 1980, p. 133). A reading of resistance is also significant to the work I do in this chapter because I explore how Daryl and Michonne's unclean, abnormal bodies create confusion in the group, as they too closely resemble the abject.

In the final chapter of this work I summarize the main points and arguments of my thesis. Next, I discuss, what I believe, are the contributions of my research and I examine some of the challenges I faced in this work and how I overcame them. Finally, I conclude by offering suggestions for future research.

## Section 1.0

### 1.1

#### Literature Review

##### The Medium of Television

Despite this continuing contempt for the medium of television by the priests of both high tech and high theory, there continues the nagging suspicion or even begrudging recognition that television remains the preeminent information and narrative technology of the world (Sconce, 2004, p. 94).

In their book, *Television after TV* (2004), Lynn Spigel and Jan Olsson argue, “if TV refers to the technologies, industrial formations, government policies, and practices of looking that were associated with the medium in its classical public service and three-network age, it appears that we are now entering a new phase of television – the phase that comes after ‘TV’” (p. 2). They go on to discuss television’s rise and transformation over the past fifty years, insisting that television has reinvented itself in numerous ways: the demise of the three-network system in the United States; the increasing commercialization of public service/state run systems; the rise of multichannel cable and global satellite delivery; Internet convergence; the advent of high definition television (HDTV); technological changes in screen design; the innovation of digital television systems like TiVo; new forms of media competition (p. 1).

Originally, television was consumed within the home, addressed to a national audience, universally available, articulated to the democratic state as part of its communication infrastructure, and was a leading edge in the post-war representations of



consumer society. Television was thus a broadcast technology (Turner & Tay, 2009, p. 1). Now, however, much of this has changed, and television has been argued to be evolving into a “broadband narrative” (p. 1). At varying points, depending on the location in the world but certainly increasingly from the mid-1970’s onwards, Graeme Turner and Jinna Tay contend that TV escaped the confines of domestic space: platforms of delivery proliferated, and TV screens began to appear everywhere (p. 1). Later on, screens became smaller, and radically privatized, as they shrank to fit the mobile phone, the portable DVD player, and the dashboard of the car (p. 1). Adding to Spigel and Olsson’s earlier work, Turner and Tay, the editors of *Television studies after TV* (2009) insist, “we can no longer speak about ‘TV’ as if it were a singular entity, if we have any chance of adequately understanding the contemporary social, cultural, and political functions of the media” (p. 3). Rather, as Michael Curtin (2009) describes, we now must refer to television as a media “matrix” (p. 3). Curtin, discussing this transition, explains,

In the 1960’s, each of the three major television networks regularly drew close to 25 per cent of all television households to their prime-time schedules. Yet during the 2007 season, prime-time audiences for each of the four leading networks averaged roughly 5 per cent of television households. Interestingly, daily television viewing hours remained high – in fact, higher than the 1960’s, at 4 hours 35 minutes – but it was coming from more centres and flowing through more circuits than ever before: via DVD, cable, satellite and broadband, via Telemundo, Spike, Netflix and YouTube (Nielsen Media Research, 2006, in Curtin, 2009, p. 13).

Thus, television was no longer a broadcast medium or a network medium, “television had become an increasingly flexible and dynamic mode of communication” (p. 13).

Once the prime medium of mass communication, Turner and Tay (2009) insist, “television can now also be discussed as a highly personal medium of individualized, privatized consumption” (p. 2). Television’s convergence with the Internet helps to

highlight this individualization and has also transformed the medium, making it more available, and in many more forms, such as Netflix and YouTube (Miller, 2002, p. 1). As Henry Jenkins (2003) observes, of what he defines as convergence culture, “all evidence suggests that computers do not cancel out other media; instead, computer owners consume on average significantly more television, movies, and related media than the general population,” (p. 1). This helps to counter criticism asserting that the Internet will *displace* television and highlights Toby Miller’s (2002) suspicion that the future will involve, rather, a “*transformation* of television” (p. 3, emphasis in original). Ten years after Miller’s assertion, I believe that this has indeed been the case.

David Marshall (2009), discussing individuals who use their computer screens to search for television content in an Internet delivered format, adds, “although their viewing practices are not connected to the television networks directly, nonetheless their choice of what to watch is driven by their relationship to the content produced by major television production houses and networks” (p. 41). Due to the success of download social networking sites that use BitTorrent, with its peer-to-peer structure of parsing up content among its users and contributors and its reassembling of that content, “within minutes of their broadcast, many popular television programmes are available for download through these networks of distribution, creating a secondary audience” (p. 41)<sup>6</sup>.

Jenkins (2003) recognizes the force of this convergence phenomenon by identifying the change in the narrative structure of some American television series as linked to the evolution of “trans-media storytelling.” In this new structure, the narrative migrates from the original television programme into other media forms such as websites,

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<sup>6</sup> In fact, this is how I initially was able to access the first two seasons of *The Walking Dead*, since my cable package did not include the channel it was broadcast on, AMC.

or games – each providing greater narrative depth (Marshall, 2009, p. 42). *The Talking Dead*, a live talk show hosted by Chris Hardwick, which airs on AMC immediately after each episode of *The Walking Dead*, could be seen as an example of “trans-media storytelling” (Norman, 2011). The show is an hour in length and often includes series’ cast, crewmembers, and celebrity fans. It encourages further engagement through online polls, episode trivia, behind-the-scenes footage, and questions from fans sent via phone, Facebook, Twitter, or the official *Talking Dead* website. After the on-air episode has finished, a bonus fifteen to twenty minute segment continues online.

As cable and broadcast networks struggle to compete for audiences, new program forms emerge and multiply. For instance, exploring AMC’s contribution to the evolution of scripted series on cable television, Deborah Jaramillo (2012) contends, “originally AMC’s only property was a brand that boasted classic films without interruptions” (p. 6). However, she goes on to explain how that singular identity was challenged multiple times, “forcing AMC to experiment with the flexibility of its brand on two fronts: movies and original series” (p. 6). The turn to original scripted series in the 1990’s, as Jaramillo (2012) asserts, “marked a turning point for a tier of cable channels that primarily offered recycled material to paying customers” (p. 8). Anthony Smith (2011), discussing another of AMC’s “original series,” *Mad Men* (Weiner, Hornbacher, Jacquemetton, Jacquemetton, & Leahy, 2008-), suggests its many trophies, such as receiving the Outstanding Drama Series Emmy for three years running, “have raised AMC’s profile among viewers, journalists, advertisers, and basic cable providers” (p. 2). Smith contends that this is indeed the primary purpose for which its original drama series, such as *Breaking Bad*, and more recently, *The Walking Dead*, were conceived: to serve as what

Mark C. Rogers, Michael Epstein, and Jimmie L. Reeves regard as institutional “brand equity” (Smith, 2011, p. 2). Furthermore, “one of the factors that encouraged viewers to regard Home Box Offices’ (HBO) series as “cinematic” – the lack of advertisements – was precisely the factor that AMC embraced,” enabling AMC to venture into the expensive territory of original series that would rival HBO’s output (p. 12). Perhaps, as Jaramillo (2012) contends, AMC’s success is also due to the fact that “without a coherent brand to limit the network, it has no clear dramatic sensibility to maintain and no particular niche audience to alienate” (p. 5).

Based on the black and white comic series created by writer Robert Kirkman and artist Tony Moore, first issued in 2003 by Image Comics, *The Walking Dead* (Darabont, Hurd, Alpert, & Kirkman, 2010–) is one of American Movie Classic’s (AMC) newest “original series.” Kirkman, explaining his inspiration for writing the comic series, comments, “I’ve always been a fan of zombie movies, but I’m not usually a fan of how they end. I felt there was more story to be told ... I wanted to create the zombie movie that never ends” (in Dawn, 2010). His dream has found success in comic form; in July of 2012 it’s 100<sup>th</sup> issue was printed, and sold “383,612 single issues, shattering the last single issue sales record held for fifteen years” (Ruffin, 2012). Kirkman got a chance to enter a second medium, and to further develop his zombie narrative, when the comic series was adapted for television in 2010 by Frank Darabont (who also penned screenplays for the film adaptations of two Stephen King novels: *The Green Mile* (1999) and *The Mist* (2007)).

The television series premiered on AMC October 31, 2010. Since then, *The Walking Dead* has had three successful seasons, winning the Saturn Award for Best

Television Presentation in 2010 and 2011 and for best syndicated/cable television series in 2012, Primetime Emmy Awards for outstanding prosthetic makeup in 2011 and 2012, an Eddie Award for best edited one-hour series for commercial television, and American Film Institute's (AFI) TV programme of the year awards in 2010 and 2012, as well as many other nominations, including a Golden Globe for Best Television Series (IMDB, 2013). The premiere of the fourth season on October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2013 shattered AMC's television viewing records with 16.1 million viewers tuning in, beating out the *Breaking Bad* (Gilligan, Johnson, & MacLaren, 2008-2013) finale and even surpassing every National Football League (NFL) game this season (Carter, 2013). Perhaps, as Kyle Bishop (2009) contends, this success is due to the zombie resurgence that has been taking place since 2002, with the release of two mainstream film series, *28 Days Later* (Boyle, 2002) and *Resident Evil* (Anderson, 2002). Adding to the assertion of the existence of a resurgence, Peter Dendle (2007) states, "depending on how the zombie is defined, comprehensive lists of zombie films and shows can run well over three hundred titles," (p. 45) and according to the Internet Movie Database, about a third of these titles have appeared since around 2000 (IMDB, 2012).

Examining the evolution and transformation of television as a medium is relevant to my work for two reasons. Firstly, it allowed me to justify why I chose to examine the television series of *The Walking Dead*, instead of the graphic novel, and instead of examining the zombie in film (which, as I discuss later in this chapter, has been done multiple times). Secondly, it allowed me to illustrate, in the midst of criticism of the medium, that television "remains the preeminent information and narrative technology of the world" (Sconce, 2004, p. 94).

## Horror

Thomas M. Sipos (2010) asserts that *genres* are usually defined “by a set of *story conventions*, which may include plot, character, period, and/or setting, and story conventions spawn a genre’s *icons*, such as vampires or spaceships” (p. 5, emphasis in original). Paul Wells (2000) addresses the difficulty of defining horror, stating, “problematically, the genre has no clearly defined boundaries, and overlaps with aspects of science fiction and fantasy genres” (p. 7). But horror has its own story conventions, “it is an emotive genre, defined by its intent to scare, and how it presupposes a threat, building tension with its promise that something hideous will occur and there is no escape” (p. 5). Rick Worland (2007) contends, “another significant dimension of the horror tale is its affinity for the lesson, often metaphysical, implicitly social” (p. 8). Worland also asserts that the monster is a major component of the horror genre, and argues that “most sub-genres of horror are built around specific monsters: the zombie, werewolf, vengeful ghost, or the psychotic slasher” (p. 9).

Discussing classical horror films, including *Dracula* (Browning, 1931) and *Frankenstein* (Whale, 1931), and comparing them with “creature feature” films, such as *The Thing* (Nyby, 1951) and *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (Sigel, 1956), Isabel Christina Pinedo (1997) asserts that they share a basic narrative structure:

The film opens with the violent disruption of the normative order by a monster, which can take the form of a supernatural or alien invader, a mad scientist, or a deviant transformation from within. The narrative resolves around the monster’s rampage and people’s ineffectual attempts to resist it. In the end, male military or scientific experts successfully employ violence and/or knowledge to defeat the monster and restore the normative order (p. 15).

Here we can see how themes of power, authority, masculinity, knowledge, and governance are present within the structure of the horror film. Pinedo identifies five characteristics that “*operate together* to constitute the postmodern horror film: horror constitutes a violent disruption of the everyday world; horror transgresses and violates boundaries; horror throws into question the validity of rationality; horror repudiates narrative closure; and horror produces a bounded experience of fear” (p. 17, emphasis in original). In addition, Sipos (2010) discusses how horror, to differentiate itself from other genres, “must dramatize horrific events other than the commonplace, realistic, or historical,” positing an unnatural threat that is outside the realm of normalcy, reality, or history (p. 6). Fundamentally, then, “horror texts engage with the collapse of social/societal formations,” which can range from the personal to the familial, the communal, the national, and the global (Wells, 2000, p. 10).

The zombie narrative can be situated as a sub-genre of horror because its monsters are unnatural, it builds tension with its post-apocalyptic backdrop, and it has the intent to scare. Bishop (2009) distinguishes the zombie narrative from other horror sub-genres, stressing that it contains its own specific criteria that governs plot development. In addition to the previously mentioned criteria, he adds the imminent threat of violent death, the collapse of societal infrastructure, the indulgence of survivalist fantasies, and the fear of the other surviving humans (p. 20).

Exploring the characteristics of the postmodern horror genre is relevant to *The Walking Dead* according to Dan Hassler-Forest (2011) in his analysis of the comic series. He interprets *The Walking Dead* “as a quintessentially postmodern text in at least two ways: first, through its overt intertextual reference to ‘classic’ zombie narratives; and

second, by its focus on post-apocalyptic themes and motifs that place the texts' characters and events outside of history" (p. 341). Hassler-Forest, through his examination of the graphic novel series, sees *The Walking Dead* phenomena pointing towards interesting questions that are raised by its intersection of genres, as well as by its unique combination of an apocalyptic narrative and seemingly endless ongoing serialization. For instance, he makes an interesting assertion that Kirkman, the author of the series, uses the zombie motif "to re-articulate the fundamental narrative paradigm of the western: that of the lone hero struggling to establish a safe and tranquil community in a pastoral frontier surrounded by perpetual slavery and danger" (p. 342). Hassler-Forest also examines how power in the comic series is maintained through violence; turning to Jacques Lacan's theory of phallogentric discourse to explain how various forms of power in the text can best be understood.

The body is also a central concern of the horror genre. Film scholar Carol J. Clover discusses its' importance in her book, *Her body, himself: Gender in the slasher film* (1987), contending, "it is a rare Hollywood film that does not devote a passage or two – a car chase, a sex scene – to the emotional/physical excitement of the audience" (p. 189). Drawing on Clover's discussion of "body genres," Linda Williams (1997) parallels the importance of (female) human figures in horror, melodrama, and pornography. Bodies function here as ecstatic spectacle, as "*embodiments* of pleasure, fear, and pain" (p. 143, emphasis in original), and as a site of perceived mimicry whose cries and convulsions audiences' bodies are imagined to replicate (Kirkland, 2008, p. 116-117). The body is central within zombie horror, not only because the genre tends to produce scenes of



extreme gore and rotting flesh, but also because the zombie narrative breaks apart the binary of living/dead.

Bringing the horror genre, and sub-genre of zombie horror, into a televisual context, Christopher Lockett (2011) writes “one way to view AMC’s adaption of Kirkman’s graphic novel series into an original television series is as a natural evolution, a move from the B-movie horror ghetto into the respectable neighbourhood of ‘quality television’” (p. 2). Contrasting the negative stigma sometimes associated to the horror genre, and especially the “slasher” film (Clover, 1987), Lockett further contends, “that AMC would, in its ongoing attempt to set itself as HBO’s principal rival, opt for an ongoing zombie apocalypse narrative, speaks to the genre’s transformation from horror schlock to potential art” (p. 2). Meslow (2010) states, “the only medium that hasn’t been overrun by hordes of the undead is television” (p. 1). He asserts that zombies lack the soulful, seductive appeal of others monsters, such as the vampires and werewolves found on HBO’s *True Blood* (Ball, 2008-) or the CW’s *The Vampire Diaries* (Williamson & Plec, 2009-). He continues, “add to that the highly graphic and gory method of killing a zombie; a hard blow or gunshot to the head, and it would seem that this favoured method of killing a zombie is far too graphic for prime-time television” (p. 1). Gale Ann Hurd, a producer of the television series, argues that “*Walking’s*” undead may be the first [zombies] to have risen (at least, in non-animated form) in a prime time TV series and remain as ever present characters<sup>7</sup> (Dawn, 2010). She further comments, AMC wanted to “break new ground, irony intact, and deliver something that people have never seen on TV” (ibid).

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<sup>7</sup> Perhaps with the exception of the Independent Film Channels’ (IFC) British miniseries *Dead Set* (2008), which ran for 5 episodes.

## **An Evolution of the Zombie**

“Dead is the new alive.”

- Dr. Ryan Maydan, during Ottawa’s 2008 zombie walk (Moreland, 2011, p. 77)

Interestingly, unlike the vampire or werewolf, the zombie does not have a long literary tradition preceding its emergence in film and television. The figure of the zombie, literally an undead human recently resurrected from its grave, originates in African myth and folklore that migrated to Haiti. Boluk and Lenz, editors of *Generation zombie: Essays on the living dead in modern culture* (2011) contend that the Haitian “zombi” is the first of three “generations” of the zombie (p. 3). Most zombie scholars agree that the figure’s origins lie in Haitian voodoo practices (Bishop, 2009, Boluk & Lenz, 2011, Dendle, 2007, Jankowski, 2011, Loudermilk, 2003, Moreman, 2010, Russell, 2005), and “was made known through English-language reports of zombies in Haiti, most notably William Seabrook’s *The Magic Island*” (Russell, 2005, p. 7).

The voodoo zombi is a creature born of evil magic and the person who has been zombified is under the control of a witch doctor who performs the resurrection (Boluk & Lenz, 2011, p. 3). In this respect, the Haitian zombi is deeply embedded in historical imageries of slavery and colonialism. Seabrook (1929) famously described the zombi thus:

Obediently, like an animal, he slowly stood erect – and what I saw then, coupled with what I heard previously, or despite it, came as a rather sickening shock. The eyes were the worst. It was not my imagination. They were in truth like the eyes of a dead man, not blind, but starring unfocused unseeing. The whole face, for that matter, was bad enough. It was vacant, as if there were nothing behind it. It seemed not only expressionless, but also incapable of expression (p. 101).

Remarkably, “medical professionals in Haiti are accustomed to the appearance of zombies, believed to have somehow gained freedom from the captors” (Moreman, 2010, p. 267). These “real” zombies appear to display various symptoms of mental deficiency or illness.<sup>8</sup> Surprisingly, it was not until the 1980’s that Wade Davis attempted to find a scientific explanation for the process of zombification in Haiti. Davis proposed that these zombies were not undead, but living persons placed in a state of chemically-induced suggestibility, akin to hypnosis, by the use of a numbing poison that can induce a death like state (in Boluk & Lenz, 2011, p. 4). Davis (1988) hypothesized that the main ingredient used to zombify a person was a chemical called tetrodotoxin; the ingestion of it generally causes death by paralysis. In sub-lethal doses, however, it causes significant reduction in heart rate and metabolic activity, and puts a person into a state in which they are completely paralysed but fully conscious. Davis published his findings, and his hypothesis of how zombification is performed, in two books, entitled *The Serpent and the Rainbow* (1985)<sup>9</sup> and *Passage of Darkness: The Ethnobiology of the Haitian Zombie* (1988). Davis also suggested that zombification played a social role, arguing that before a person was subjected to zombification, he or she must first be found to have broken some specific social norm, such as stealing the wife of another man, and thus the threat of the process acts as a form of social control (p. 213-240). In this case, “zombies are not feared in Haiti, but are an object of pity ... rather than the zombie itself, what is truly feared is the possibility of being returned to slavery” (Moreman, 2010, p. 267). Moreman continues by suggesting, “the idea of becoming a slave can be equated with the fear of

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<sup>8</sup> See Littlewood & Douyon (1997), *Clinical findings in three cases of zombification*.

<sup>9</sup> This book was made into a film, by the same name, in 1988 and was directed by Wes Craven.

death in that both might represent a loss of freedom and ultimately of self, and so the zombi is a person who has both died and become enslaved” (p. 267).

Perhaps if the riddle of the living dead had been solved sooner, the zombie would have never taken root in the imagination of the Western world (Russell, 2005). However, the zombie entered popular culture most dramatically in 1932 with the release of *White Zombie*, directed by Victor Halperin. Unable to be contained, the Americanized version of the Haitian zombi, a creature more robotic than undead, would continue in film relatively unchanged until George A. Romero’s re-invention of the figure in *Night of the Living Dead* (1968), where he severed its’ Caribbean origin (Boluk & Lenz, 2011, p. 4). Influenced as much by pod-people<sup>10</sup> as by Haitian folklore, as well as Richard Matheson’s novel, *I Am Legend* (1954), “Romero injected a new purpose into the figure by removing the witch doctor, adding the violence of cannibalism, and relocating the menace to an explicitly American cultural landscape,” ushering in the second generation of the zombie (p. 5). Indeed, as Moreman (2010) highlights, “Romero’s zombies differ greatly from the established folklore of Haiti”; interestingly, “Romero did not originally use the term [zombie] to describe his monsters, referring to them instead as ‘ghouls’ or the ‘walking dead’” (p. 269).

Regardless of how Romero referred to them, his films laid out some specific criteria for zombie horror that have since aided in defining the genre. Especially in Romero’s first three films,<sup>11</sup> but also in his more recent work, the zombie, once reanimated, possesses only the most elementary awareness, intelligence and recall. They are physically slow and inept, not bothered by pain or exhaustion, and the sole focus of

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<sup>10</sup> See Jack Finney’s *The Body Snatchers* (1955).

<sup>11</sup> *Night of the Living Dead* (1968), *Dawn of the Dead* (1978), and *Day of the Dead* (1985)

their existence is an inexplicable urge to devour human flesh. Sometimes reasons are hinted at,<sup>12</sup> but ultimately the force that creates the possibility for reanimation is never revealed. The condition is also highly contagious; humans who are bitten but not consumed will become ill, die, and reanimate. Although some zombies are able to use basic tools, they appear incapable of communicating or strategizing.<sup>13</sup> Finally, the only way to “kill” a zombie is by destroying the brain, severing its head, or incinerating it. As long as the brain remains intact and attached to the spinal cord, the zombie, however battered, remains a threat. Christopher Zealand (2011) adds, “Romero’s zombies decompose more slowly than cadavers and can remain viable for years after reanimation” (p. 233). For these reasons, humans and zombies cannot coexist harmoniously. Romero’s films inculcate that humans, to survive, must destroy the zombie. Furthermore, as Moreman (2010) contends, “in removing the supernatural elements from the creature, Romero introduced a monster that was entirely human, and in doing so exploded the normal dichotomy of Us versus Them ... now, They are Us” (p. 270).

In *Icons of horror and the supernatural: An encyclopaedia of our worst nightmares* (2007), Jane Pulliam further contributes to the definition of a zombie and distinguishes it from other supernatural monsters by offering two basic criteria that incorporate both the Haitian version of zombi and Romero’s ghouls. First, she contends, it must be a “reanimated corpse or possessed living body of one person (or animal),” so golems and creatures similar to what Dr. Frankenstein stitched together do not fall into

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<sup>12</sup> A famous line from *Dawn of the Dead* (1978) states: “when there is no more room in hell, the dead shall walk the earth,” and suggests sinful behavior, such as adultery, abortion, and same sex relations are to blame, reflecting Christian beliefs.

<sup>13</sup> However, this could be contested in Romero’s recent film *Land of the Dead* (2005) through the zombie known as “Big Daddy,” who learns or “remembers” how to use weapons and begins to show the other zombies.

this category (p. 724). Mummies and vampires, some may argue, are also reanimated corpses, and yet most are *not* zombies because they do not have the second essential characteristic: a lack of free will. The zombie, for Pulliam, “must be completely subordinate to either the will of someone else (Haitian) or to some monomaniacal drive, whether for living flesh, violence, or revenge” (p. 724). Furthermore, Pulliam asserts that “this lack of free will generally makes zombies flat characters, unable to fully appreciate the wretchedness of their condition,” unlike vampires, for example, who frequently wax philosophical about being doomed to hunger for living blood (p. 724).

The current popularity of zombie horror also spreads to media beyond film (Bishop, 2009, p. 19). For instance, Max Brooks’ *The Zombie Survival Guide* (2003) is a handbook for the zombie survivalist that includes advice on such topics as weaponry, tactics, mental conditioning, and even the relative zombie specific advantages of different hairstyles (p. 62-63).<sup>14</sup> This, in turn, has driven groups such as the St. Louis, Missouri based organization, known as Zombie Squad, to come together, amplifying and refining Brooks’ messages of self-reliance and citizen preparedness (Zealand, 2011, p. 240). Offering seminars, participating in charity work, hosting online disaster forums, and organizing zombie con,<sup>15</sup> the core message and mission of the Zombie Squad “is to educate the public and to increase its readiness to respond to a number of disasters such as earthquakes, floods or zombie outbreaks” (Zombie Squad, 2008).

Posted on Cracked.com, T.E. Sloth and David Wong’s (2007) article “5 scientific reasons a zombie apocalypse could actually happen” went viral, with over seventeen million hits, and a popular Facebook group “The hardest part of a zombie apocalypse will

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<sup>14</sup> Short hair is preferred because a zombie cannot grab it.

<sup>15</sup> Zombie-con is an event where members from around the world can get together, discuss disaster plans, and test their survival skills, hosted by Zombie Squad.

be pretending I'm not excited," both help to demonstrate how online forums, social networking sites, and blogs provide a platform for groups such as *Zombie Squad* to communicate and prosper. Even classic literature such as Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) has been subjected to the resurgence and popularity of the zombie. Seth Grahame-Smith's parody, *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* (2009), combines elements of modern zombie fiction with the classic novel, placing it in an alternative version of Regency-era England where zombies roam the English countryside, and the Bennett sisters are a fearsome zombie-fighting army, molded by their father who has guided them in martial arts and weapons training.

In *Gospel of the living dead*, Kim Paffenroth (2006) contends, "part of the appeal of the zombie lies in their undeniable humour ... unlike other monsters, zombies do not need any separate comic relief, such as a comedic sidekick like Igor or Renfield: they are their own comic relief" (p. 14). Although some examples, such as *Shaun of the Dead* (Wright, 2004), *Dead-Alive (Braindead – original title)* (Jackson, 1992), and *Wasting Away* (Kohnen, 2007), are outright comedic, Paffenroth claims, all zombie narratives participate in comedic relief; "part of their appeal and meaning is that no good zombie movie takes itself, or us, seriously" (p. 14). The most basic kind of humour that zombies bring is simple slapstick, physical gags based on the zombies' lack of coordination and intelligence. In relation to Romero's *Dead* films, Paffenroth states:

All of the movies are full of zombies bumping into things, knocking each other over, trying to go the wrong way on escalators, taking various pitfalls, and accidentally electrocuting or decapitating themselves by staggering into things they should not. It is macabre, black humour, to be sure, and not to everyone's taste, but it is boon to the pacing and tone of the movies that zombies can alternate pretty seamlessly between making us scared and making us laugh (p. 14).

A specific example is illustrated in the original *Dawn of the Dead* (1978), where the human characters throw cream pies at zombies and squirt them with seltzer bottles.

If zombies are shown as humorously and fatally distracted by shiny objects or fireworks (Romero, 2005), the human characters are frequently just as funny in their dullness and shallowness. For instance, in *Shaun of the Dead* (2004), “the human characters do not even notice that zombies are taking over the earth for much of the movie, because they are all so drunk and/or self-absorbed” (p. 15). But the more straightforwardly serious movies frequently play with the same idea, epitomized perhaps in the remake of *Dawn of the Dead* (Snyder, 2004) when one character, while stuck in an elevator, leaving one scene of unspeakable horror and violence, on his way to another, smiles when he hears the mind numbing Muzak, which, as a mall employee, he must have heard a thousand times, and says, “I love this song.” In this sense, Paffenroth claims, “zombies movies are more meaningful because we do not just laugh at the hideous, evil vacuousness of zombies, but we laugh a little uncomfortably at our own empty, selfish pettiness” (p. 16).

The third generation of the zombie, according to Boluk and Lenz (2011), comes in the form of pathologized, infected humans who behave as if they were living dead (p. 3). For instance, the film *28 Days Later* (Boyle, 2002), its sequel *28 Weeks Later* (Fresnadillo, 2007), and video game series such as *Left 4 Dead* (Valve, 2008) and *Resident Evil* (Capcom, 1996) fit into this third wave of the zombie in popular culture. Sarah Lauro (2011) refers to these examples as the “new viral zombies, [as] a narrative that emphasizes the condition as specifically biological, and does not need the zombie to be a resurrected corpse” (p. 58). What is also common in this new narrative is that the



zombie is no longer slow and clumsy, but is instead relentlessly fast moving and thus even more dangerous. Brendan Riley (2011) discusses how “fast zombies infect living people, usually by the same means that highly infectious disease spreads” and this is what Bishop (2010) dubs “the contagion narrative” of zombie horror (p. 197, see Bishop, 2010, *American Zombie Gothic*, p. 205).

### **Representations of Zombies**

Many scholars of zombie horror, as well as zombie enthusiasts in general, have sought to offer their own interpretation of the zombie as it appears through time and across different mediums. Dendle (2007) discusses how the figure has transformed through the decades, marked by concerns over “environmental deterioration, political conflict, the growth of consumer capitalism, and the commoditization of the body implicit in contemporary biomedical science, serving to articulate these anxieties in ways that are sometimes light-hearted and witty, sometimes dark and cynical” (p. 45). In the *Book of the dead: The complete history of zombie cinema* (2005), Jamie Russell states, “ultimately, the zombie is a symbol of mankind’s most primitive anxiety: the fear of death” (p. 8). This is an interesting reading of the zombie not only because it acknowledges how the figure breaks apart the living/dead binary, but also because it offers an explanation for how the survivors in a zombie narrative, living under the constant fear of death, behave accordingly, and what Ernest Becker (1973) argues is “a major psychological problem of man” (p. 20).

In early films such as *White Zombie* (Halperin, 1932) and *I Walked with a Zombie* (Tourneur, 1943), the figure has been read in terms of racism, slavery, and colonialism

(Aizenberg, 1999, Allkins, 2000, Bishop, 2008, & Dendle, 2007). Within this context, Bishop (2008) argues, the underscoring of the moral/sexual peril of innocent and beautiful white women, who must be saved and returned to their rightful place at the European male's side, works to portray "whites as universally righteous and casts blacks as potentially wicked" (p. 151). In a more recent reading, Justin Ponder (2012) uses Zack Snyder's remake of *Dawn of the Dead* (2004) to discuss how the zombie and the "mulatto" have been constructed in similar ways. By deconstructing the birth scene in this film, Ponder contends that the zombie child, "not only breaks the binary of life/death, but also the binary of white/black," which historically, he contends, "has insisted that one is either pure white or entirely black" (p. 555). He goes on to explore how both horrify because, according to their respective discourses throughout North American history, zombies and mulattos have been constructed as "impure, degenerate, sterile, infectious, apocalyptic, symbols of divine justice, and dreadfully sinful" (p. 555).

In an interesting take, Susan M. Behuniak (2011) argues that zombies, in particular Romero's version of the figure as slow, rotting, with a lack of memory and a grey pallor, suggest the ageing process. She goes on to debate how persons with Alzheimer's disease have been "constructed as animated corpses and their disease as a terrifying threat to the social order," detailing seven ways that the zombie trope is applied to patients with Alzheimer's (p. 72).

Paffenroth (2006) continues that Romero's "*Dead*" are used to "disorient and reorient the audience; disturbing them in order to make some unsettling point, usually a sociological, anthropological, or theological one," such as a situation where all humans are quickly reduced to a hellish existence, either as zombies, who are the walking

damned, robbed of intellect and emotion, or as surviving humans, barricaded and trapped in some place from which there is no escape (p. 2, 22). Offering a Buddhist reading and interpretation of the Romero series, Moreman (2010) argues in *Dharma of the Living Dead: A mediation on the meaning of the Hollywood zombie*, “the zombie resurrection illustrates the rebirth of the self that fears death” (p. 275).

Tyson E. Lewis (2011) has asserted that the zombie in Romero’s films is a representation of Giorgio Agamben’s term “bare-life,” “referring to a life that is not simply dead or alive, but rather renders these oppositions inoperative” (p. 91). Discussing the zombie film is one attempt by Lewis to gaze at the disturbing realm of bare life in order to examine its political implications. He assesses how “zombies as bare life are mere materiality stripped of ‘death’ as a socio-symbolic event that defines *a life* – they are truly profane” (p. 93, emphasis in original). Jon Stratton (2011) also uses the concept of bare life to found his thesis that the underlying characteristics of zombies are similar to those attributed to displaced peoples; that is, people predominantly from non-Western states striving for entry into Western states (p. 266).

Lauro (2011) uses the remake of the film *I Am Legend* (Lawrence, 2007) and *Dead City* (2006), a novel published by Joe McKinney the year after hurricane Katrina, to discuss how, what she terms the “eco-zombie,” “channels contemporary characterizations of a planet angered by humanity’s long term damage, into a natural progression that comes to look like retaliation for humanity’s abuse of the environment” (p. 55). This positions the environment in the role of an angered god, and the zombie as a gruesome reckoning, again showcasing a theological interpretation of the zombie, mixed with an environmental reading.

For Bishop (2009), since the beginning of the War on Terror in America, “popular culture has been coloured by the fear of possible terrorist attacks and the grim realization that people are not as safe and secure as they might have once thought” (p. 17). He contends that this shift in cultural consciousness can be most readily seen in narrative fiction, and particularly zombie cinema. Dendle (2007) concurs, asserting “the possibility of wide-scale destruction and devastation which 9/11 brought once again into the communal consciousness found a ready narrative expression in the zombie apocalypses, which over thirty years have honed images of desperation, subsistence, and amoral survivalism to a fine edge” (p. 54). Settings for zombie horror are often sewn into a post-apocalyptic landscape, where the idea of society’s foundations breaking down provides a world where terror presents itself as inescapable. Stephen Harper (2007) further contends the imagery in *Resident Evil* (Anderson, 2002) and its sequel *Resident Evil: Apocalypse* (Witt, 2004) recalling the televisual images of the World Trade Center attacks and, in an examination of otherness, explains, “this ‘them and us’ dualism underpins reactionary responses to the terrorist threat in the post-9/11 context of heightened US insecurity and xenophobia” (p. 10).

Steven Jankowski (2011) offers an alternative way to explain the current popularity of zombies, building on Bishop (2010), Dendle (2007), and Harper’s (2007) assertion that events such as 9/11 and hurricane Katrina have crafted the conditions that make the zombie a logical form of expression for anxieties related to such moments (p. 3). He borrows from Manuel Castells (2004) and stresses that zombies represent our anxieties about being part of a “network society” (p. 3). Using three non-fiction books

published in the last couple of years,<sup>16</sup> he pays particular attention to the language used by these authors to describe their apprehensions about the internet: terms such as a mass of mobs, hordes, herds, crowds, swarms, and packs (p. 4). He contends that in each of these books there is a common thread that links them to two types of anxiety that underwrite the zombie horror narrative. The first is the loss of individual autonomy, which leads to being controlled by a powerful other, and the second concerns losing ones' self to the crowd (p. 5).

By providing an overview of the various representations of the zombie, I was better able to comprehend how and where my analysis of *The Walking Dead* fits in the field of zombie horror and television studies. Considering the different representations presented above also enabled me to glean important points that I wanted to address in my own work. For instance, the fear of death, racism/slavery, theology, "bare-life," the post-apocalyptic landscape, and cultural consciousness were all things that I considered while performing my reading of *The Walking Dead* and are further explored in my analytical chapters. In the following chapter, I discuss the vocabulary and concepts that come out of my theoretical framework. A discussion of these concepts is needed for my critical discourse analysis of power, authority, and governance of the body because the theory is where I get the language to speak about the dominant discourses I found in my reading.

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<sup>16</sup> See *Amateur* (Keen, 2007), *Crowdsourcing* (Howe, 2009), and *You are not a Gadget* (Lanier, 2010).

## 1.2

### Theoretical Framework

#### Poststructuralism

My theoretical framework is poststructuralist. Poststructuralism is the name of a movement in philosophy that began in France during the 1960's. It offers a critique of structuralism, which was developed largely from the work of the structural linguist Ferdinand de Saussure. Poststructuralism does not have one specific definition but, can instead be understood through the many seminal texts within it that “perform specific critiques of the central figures and the cardinal concepts of structuralism” (Stam, Burgoyne, & Flitterman-Lewis, 1992, p. 23). As Robert Young (1981) contends:

The name ‘post-structuralism’ is useful in so far as it is an umbrella word, significantly defining itself only in terms of a temporal, spatial relationship to structuralism. This need not imply the organicist fiction of development, for it involves, rather, a displacement. It is more a question of an interrogation of structuralism’s method and assumptions, of transforming structuralist concepts by turning one against another (p. 1).

Poststructuralism, through its critique of structuralism, is relevant to my work because it is always evolving and therefore, never ends. Since it is constantly evolving, a final interpretation or grand narrative could never exist and this understanding coincides with my deconstructive and critical discursive analysis of *The Walking Dead*. As I acknowledge, there can never be a final, complete reading of any text and I welcome ongoing deconstructive readings and counter-interpretations of this text and of my research (Hollinger, 1994, p. 96-98). Within this framework I focus particularly on the

work of three poststructuralist thinkers: Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, and Julia Kristeva.

Many poststructuralist theorists assert that in order to understand a subject, for example a text, it is necessary to study both the object itself and the systems of knowledge that produced the object. Derrida developed deconstruction as a technique for uncovering multiple interpretations of a text, stressing that all texts are ambiguous, and therefore a final and complete interpretation of any text is impossible (p. 96-98). Deconstruction, like other forms of poststructuralist thought, refutes master narratives and explodes binaries. Helping to highlight how television is constantly evolving, Jonathan Bignell (2004) uses a discussion of television narrators to explain:

The meanings of television are not universal but local and are produced within the conventions and moral and cultural values of their time. Authors always negotiate with the other practitioners in the making of television (directors and producers for instance) and are not free to mastermind a unique version of their own (p. 99).

In this sense, a poststructuralist television scholar would acknowledge that there can never be a final reading, even from one individual viewer, and that “a television program can only be understood by its relationship to other programs, not by any relationship to the real” (Fiske, 2011, p. 115). All of this makes a poststructuralist framework appropriate for my analysis of AMC’s *The Walking Dead*.

### **Derrida and Deconstruction**

Chris Weedon (1997) contends, “while different forms of poststructuralism vary in both their practice and in their political implications, they share certain fundamental assumptions about language, meaning, and subjectivity” (p. 20). Broadly speaking,

poststructuralism “entails a critique of the concepts of the stable sign, of the unified subject, of identity and of truth” (Stam et al., 1992, p. 23). Young (1981), discussing Derrida’s influence and proximity to the poststructuralist movement explains, “it is he (Derrida) who has most carefully investigated and exposed the contradictions and paradoxes upon which structuralism is formed” (p. 15). Derrida critiques structuralism by doubting the possibility of general laws, probing the opposition of the subject and the object, and questioning the structure of binary oppositions, suggesting that binaries need to be undone. A binary opposition represents a way of seeing, and occurs when the relation between the members of a pair of linguistic terms places one at the opposite pole from the other, such that one is the absence of the other. Derrida (1981) claims:

In a traditional philosophical opposition we have not a peaceful coexistence of a vis-à-vis, but rather with a violent hierarchy. One of the two terms governs the other (axiologically, logically etc.), or has the upper hand. To deconstruct the opposition, first of all, is to overturn the hierarchy at a given moment (p. 41).

Derrida means that binary oppositions always entail a violent hierarchy, which occurs when one side of the binary is privileged over the other. For Derrida, deconstruction proceeds first by a reversal of the opposition, giving priority to the supposedly secondary term. However, this is not sufficient: the opposition is not to be simply reversed; “the *Umdrehung* (revolution or rotation) must be a transformation of the hierarchical structure itself” (Derrida, 1979b, p. 81, emphasis in original). Thus, the reversal is followed by a second phase of “re-inscription, displacement, or reconstruction” (Gasché, 1986, in Evans, 1991, p. 52).

According to Young (1981), “typically, Derrida uses Saussure to deconstruct Saussure,” producing a critique of Saussure’s theory of the sign by pushing his



formulation of difference to its limits (p. 15). Derrida denies the very possibility of literal meaning. Young, interpreting Derrida, suggests, “this is because the literal assumes the absolute self-presence of meaning, whereas in fact, according to Saussure’s own formulation, language is constituted by difference – it is ‘form and not substance’” (p. 15). For Saussure, “a language is a system of differences with no positive terms” (de Saussure, 1966). I understand him to mean that there are not any actual positive terms that exist in a language system, but that our understanding of them is owed to their difference. According to Saussure, we recognize the units of a language because they are distinct and different from each other. His differential theory holds that these units acquire meaning only in comparison, by their difference, from other units. Derrida critiques structuralism for its’ insistence that underlying structures of signification must be understood in terms of their relationship to a larger, overarching system or structure, and for not attempting to deconstruct and pull apart hierarchical binaries.

Poststructuralism assumes that meaning is constituted within language and is not guaranteed by the subject that speaks it. Derrida moves from the Saussurean focus on speech to “a concern of writing and textuality and replaces the fixed signifieds of Saussure’s chains of signs with a concept of *différance*” (Young, 1981, p. 25). Derrida’s objection was rooted in Saussure’s own model: the signified “difference” would have to exist prior to any value supposedly generated by it. Derrida concluded that:

By requiring difference paradoxically to be its own origin, Saussure gave it the covert status of a "transcendental signified", directly contradicting his insistence that signifier and signified come into existence simultaneously and are as inseparable as the front and back of a sheet of paper (Daylight, 2011, p. 208).

Young (1981), discussing Derrida’s critique of the sign, continues:

The sign must always involve the silent play of ‘spacing’ – the absence of everything from which it is differentiated. At the same time, the sign cannot literally represent that which it signifies, produce the signifier as present, precisely because a sign for something must imply that thing’s absence (p. 15).

Thus, representation never re-presents, but always defers to the presence of the signified.

Meaning that is produced via the dual strategies of difference and deferral, is what

Derrida’s concept of *différance* refers to.

In poststructuralist theory, “signs still acquire their meaning by being different from other signs, but those signs from which they are different can change according to the context in which they are used” (Phillips & Jørgensen, 2002, p. 11). Context is important to Derrida (1979a), who writes, “no meaning can be determined out of context” (p. 81). That is, the meaning of signs depends on the context of production and the context of reception (Bennington & Derrida, 1993, p. 86). In my own work, the context of production refers to the time and place of a show’s production. Therefore, the dominant discourses within *The Walking Dead* may have been influenced by the people who made the series (producers, directors, actors, etc.), the year it was made, the country it was produced in, and the studio or network that provided the funding. The context of reception refers to the time and place of a particular reception of a text. In this case, the ability to recognize or inscribe particular discourses as existing within the text will depend on who is examining the series, where, and when.

For poststructuralists, just as signs always refer to other signs, so then texts always refer to other texts, “generating an intersecting and indefinitely expandable web known as intertextuality” (Sarup, 1989, p. 57). Roland Barthes argues, “that intertextual relations are so pervasive that our culture consists of a complex web of intertextuality, in which all

texts refer finally to each other and not to reality” (in Fiske, 2011, p. 115). For Barthes, the “real” is never accessible in its own terms. He replaces the notion of the real “with that of culture’s construction of the real, which can be found only in cultural products (such as texts) and not in reality itself” (p. 115). The theory of intertextuality proposes that “any one text is necessarily read in relationship to others and that a range of textual knowledges is brought about to bear upon it” (p. 108). These relationships do not take the form of specific references from one text to another and there is no need for readers to be familiar with specific or the same texts to read intertextually; “intertextuality exists rather in the space *between* texts” (p. 108, emphasis in original). Intertextuality is an important poststructuralist concept because there is a proliferation of interpretations, and no interpretation can claim to be the final or “true” one. When we read a text, such as a television series, we always draw on our prior/intertextual knowledge to make sense of the text (How is it like them? How does it differ from them?). Commenting on the importance intertextuality holds over genre, in relation to television studies, Fiske suggests, “any one program will bear the main characteristics of its genre, but is likely to include some from others: ascribing it to one genre or another involves deciding which set of characteristics are the most important” (p. 111-112). Considering the intertextuality within *The Walking Dead* is also important in order to situate the series within the sub-genre of zombie horror, as I have already done in the previous chapter, as well as for analyzing potential discourses that have been derived from other texts.

Adding to Derrida’s work on deconstruction, an analysis of Foucault and his works on discourse, knowledge, power, normalization, governance, and the body, are

important to strengthen my poststructuralist framework and convey how the language Foucault uses is important to my analysis of *The Walking Dead*.

### **Examining Foucault**

As Weedon (1997) stresses:

It is in the work of Michel Foucault that the poststructuralist principles of the plurality and constant deferral of meaning, and the precarious, discursive structure of subjectivity are integrated into a theory of language and social power which pays detailed attention to the institutional effects of discourse and its role in the constitution and government of individual subjects (p. 104).

For example, Foucault has produced detailed historical analyses of the ways in which power is exercised and how individuals have been governed through psychiatry, the penal system, and the discursive production and control of sexuality.<sup>17</sup> Discourse is a central concept in both Foucault's theoretical arguments and his methodology. Developed from bodies of social knowledge, discourse refers to groups of statements that structure the way a thing is thought about. In other words, "discourse is a particular knowledge about the world which shapes how the world is understood and how things are done in it" (Rose, 2012, p. 190). Foucault (1980) claims, "'truth' is to be understood as a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation, and operation of statements" (p. 133). These statements that come together to form discourses are called discursive formations, and "discursive formations *produce* the object of which they speak" (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 61, emphasis in original). Discourses, for Foucault, are ways of constituting knowledge, which, together with social practices, forms of

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<sup>17</sup> See *The Birth of the Clinic* (1973), *Discipline and Punish* (1975, 1995), *The History of Sexuality, Volume One* (1978), and *The History of Sexuality, Volume Two* (1985).

subjectivity, and power relations, inhere in such knowledges and the relations between them.

Significant to my analysis is an exploration of how “power plays a central role in managing how meaning is constituted in text and how particular forms of knowledge acquire authority in the formation of ideology” (Olstead, 2002, p. 626). Power, for Foucault, is a relation between two or more entities that encompasses struggle and the manoeuvre for position and advantage. For instance, employers and employees confront each other in a field of power that contains both opportunities and constraints for both parties. Furthermore, for Foucault, power is dispersed, fragmented, decentralized, invisible, and it is always subjected to resistance, which itself can be considered a form of power. Accordingly, I engage in a critical analysis of discourse to better enable my analysis of the ways in which power, authority, governance, and resistance are depicted through the characters interactions and discussions in *The Walking Dead*. This includes assessing how the characters negotiate the post-apocalyptic landscape and how they present various truth claims about their actions within that landscape.

Discourse, for Foucault, is also a form of discipline, and this leads us to his concern with truth, knowledge, and power. Alec McHoul and Wendy Grace (1993) contend that the word “discipline” is used by Foucault in two senses: “as referring to *scholarly* disciplines such as science, medicine, psychiatry, sociology and so on; and as referring to disciplinary *institutions* of social control such as the prison, the school, the hospital” (p. 26, emphasis in original). This is important because the dominant discourses of a certain historical period form what Foucault calls an *episteme*, or the body of knowledge that we accept as the truth. The most powerful discourses in our society have

firm institutional bases, in the law, for example, or in medicine. However, these institutional locations are themselves sites of contest, and the dominant discourses governing them are under constant challenge or resistance. Foucault (1980) insists that the important thing to recognize here “is that truth isn’t outside of power, or lacking in power ... truth is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it,” and this denial of a single, universal truth helps to situate Foucault within a poststructuralist framework (p. 131, 133).

In the opening chapter of *Discipline and Punish* (1995), Foucault states “that power produces knowledge; that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations” (p. 27). Thus, Foucault contends that power and knowledge are inextricably linked. Rose (2012) adds, “he (Foucault) insisted that knowledge and power are imbricated one in the other, not only because all knowledge is discursive and all discourse is saturated with power, but because the most powerful discourses, in terms of the productiveness of their social effects, depend on assumptions and claims that their knowledge is true” (p. 193).

The particular grounds on which truth is claimed constitutes what Foucault called a régime of truth. He (1980) contends:

Each society has its régimes of truth, its ‘general politics’ of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true or false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true (p. 131).

An example of a régime of truth in our society could be scientific discourse and the institutions that produce it, such as the university. For Foucault, “it’s not a matter of

emancipating truth from every system of power (which would be a chimera, for truth is already power) but of detaching the power of truth from the forms of hegemony, social, economic, and cultural, within which it operates at this present time” (p. 133).

### **Foucault and the Body**

Foucault’s understanding of the body is significant in his comprehension of power and knowledge and has been influential in the development of key concepts within theories of the body, such as normalization, governance, and resistance (Rabinow, 1984; Foucault, 1995). Foucault suggests, in *Discipline and Punish* (1995), that the body as a site of penal repression disappeared with the advent of modernity, but in place of penal punishment arose other forms of punishment, including self-discipline, self-regulation, and surveillance (p. 8). In other words, the body was still the subject of attention, however, it was no longer subject to physical torture and violence, but became subject to forces of discipline and control. As Foucault stresses, “the human body was entering a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down, and rearranges it ... thus, discipline produces subjected and practiced bodies,” which he termed “docile bodies” (Rabinow, 1984, p. 182). In this sense, docility is achieved through the actions of discipline.

Foucault continues:

Discipline increases the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility) and diminishes these same forces (in political terms of obedience). In short, it dissociates power from the body; on the one hand, it turns it into an ‘aptitude,’ a ‘capacity,’ which it seeks to increase; on the other hand, it reverses the course of the energy, the power that might result from it, and turns it into a relation of strict subjection (p. 182).

Discipline is different from force or violence because it is a way of controlling the operations and positions of the body. Foucault argues that institutions, such as prisons and

schools, act like machines transforming and controlling people, as discipline depends on the idea of a series, such as a rank of soldiers. To accomplish this, the organization and control of time and space becomes important. Foucault asserts that “discipline is a political anatomy of detail” (p. 183) and this comment works to illustrate institutions, such as the prison, the hospital, and the school, in terms of machines and living organisms. For instance, in a prison, the organization of space works according to certain rules, however, the whole process works within a larger space, which is divided into parts or cells. The control of time in a prison is equally important, as the idea that people are held in a series is preserved, and inmates are controlled by a timetable, in which time is divided up like space.

Foucault explains, “the exercise of discipline presupposes a mechanism that coerces by means of observation; an apparatus in which the techniques that make it possible to see induce effects of power and in which, conversely, the means of coercion make those on whom they are applied clearly visible” (p. 189). For Foucault, the perfect disciplinary apparatus would make it possible for “a single gaze to see everything constantly” (p. 189). The gaze, as a method of surveillance, allows disciplinary power to become “an ‘integrated’ system, linked from the inside to the economy and to the aims of the mechanism in which it was practised” (p. 192). In other words, the primary function of disciplinary power is to train.

In addition to hierarchical observation, normalizing judgement and examination are suggested by Foucault to be at the heart of all disciplinary mechanisms. Foucault’s work on normalization recognizes that, in all societies, structures of power not only have



the power to define what is considered “normal” within a particular society, but also to decide how to deal with those who do not conform. Foucault contends:

It (the art of punishing, in the regime of disciplinary power) is opposed, therefore, term by term, to a judicial penalty whose essential function is to refer, not to a set of observable phenomena, but to a corpus of laws and texts that must be remembered; that operates not by differentiating individuals, but by specifying acts according to a number of general categories; not by hierarchizing, but quite simply by bringing into play the binary opposition of the permitted and the forbidden; not by homogenizing, but by operating the division, acquired once and for all, of condemnation. The disciplinary mechanisms secreted a “penalty of the norm,” which is irreducible in its principles and functioning to the traditional penalty of the law (p. 195-196).

In this sense, normalization involves the construction of an idealized norm of conduct – for example, the way a married woman should behave, talk, interact with other men, and so on – and then rewarding or punishing individuals for not conforming to or deviating from this ideal. The process of observation allows the individual to be looked at, written about, and analyzed, thus uniting the processes of observation and normalization.

In the “*Right of Death and Power over Life*” (Rabinow, 1984), Foucault explains, “for a long time, one of the characteristic privileges of sovereign power was the right to decide life and death,” which in reality meant, “the right to *take* life or *let* live” (p. 258, emphasis in original). From the seventeenth century onward, “the old power of death that symbolized sovereign power was carefully supplanted by the administration of bodies and the calculated management of life” (p. 262). Thus, death was seen as power’s limit, and there was “an explosion of numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations” (p. 262). This new power over life, which Foucault calls “bio-power,” developed along two axes. On the one hand, it was tied to the disciplines of the body, where the human body is treated like a machine, on the

other hand, it was applied through the regulation of populations, which focuses on the reproductive capacity of the human body (p. 267). In this sense, law and disciplinary mechanisms became less interested in forbidding and condemning, and became more interested in normalizing and optimizing the conditions of life. For example, “during the classical period there was a rapid development of various disciplines – universities, secondary schools, barracks, workshops; there was also the emergence, in the field of political practices and economic observation, of the problems of birth rate, longevity, public health, housing, and migration” (p. 262).

### **Kristeva and Abjection**

The body is also at the centre of Julia Kristeva’s theory of abjection. Her conceptualization of the abject provides an excellent point of reference from which to interrogate bodies in *The Walking Dead*. Kristeva (1982) defines the “abject” as:

What disturbs identity, system, and order. What does not respect boundaries, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite (p. 4).

For Kristeva, abjection is that which creates the human reaction, such as horror or vomit, to a threatened breakdown in meaning caused by the loss of the distinction between subject and object, self and other because it exists in the space of repression. Kristeva’s primary example of what causes such a reaction is the corpse, but also suggests that other objects can elicit the same reaction:

Loathing an item of food, a piece of filth, waste, or dung. The spasms and vomiting that protect me. The repugnance, the retching that thrusts me to the side and turns me away from defilement, sewage, and muck. The shame of compromise, of being in the middle of treachery, the fascinated start that leads me toward and separates me from them (p. 2).

More specifically, she associates the abject with the eruption of the “real” into our lives, associating such a response with our rejection of death’s insistent materiality. The corpse, for Kristeva, is “the upmost of abjection ... death infecting life” (p. 4). Fear and abjection are directed towards the corpse because it reminds us of our own mortality. Thus, we recognize abjection in the reactions to such sites (death, blood, pus, garbage, sewage, even the skin that forms on the surface of warm milk) and their inhabitants.

Kristeva also explains how the body is abjected because of its permeability:

A wound with blood or pus, or the sickly, acrid smell of sweat, of decay, does not signify death. In the presence of signified death – a flat encephalograph, for instance – I would understand, react, or accept. No, as in true theatre, without makeup or masks, refuse and corpses show me what I permanently thrust aside in order to live. These bodily fluids, this defilement, this shit are what life withstands, hardly and with difficulty, on the part of death (p. 3).

As the abject body leaks wastes and fluids, it becomes intolerable because it is “in violation of the desire and hope for the ‘clean and proper’ body, thus making the boundaries and limitations of our selfhood ambiguous, and indicating our physical wasting and ultimate death” (Covino, 2004, p. 17). Therefore, the abject body is not tolerated because it forces us to confront things that are supposed to stay confined within the body as a system. Kristeva’s concept helps to provide my analysis with an important distinction between the inherent state of the body versus what is done to the abject body because of its status. This helps my analysis because it allows me to analyze how certain constructions of the body are discursively constituted as “normal” within the text, while others are excluded or even eliminated.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter I have reviewed the theoretical frameworks I believe best enable my analysis of *The Walking Dead* by providing the language to deconstruct, critically analyze, and speak about this text. This has included an overview of Derrida's critique of structuralism and his work on deconstruction, as well as an exploration of Foucault's works on discourse, power, knowledge, truth, normalization, governance, resistance, and the body. An overview of Kristeva's conceptualization of the abject also provided an excellent point of reference to allow for an interrogation of bodies in *The Walking Dead*. In the following chapter, I discuss my methodology. I explain how my qualitative research, a critical discourse analysis of power, authority, governance, and resistance in *The Walking Dead*, fits within a content analysis framework. Furthermore, I explain the relevance of analyzing the first two seasons of *The Walking Dead* and the significance of this particular zombie narrative. Finally, I describe a detailed account of how, exactly, I conducted my research and I provide a detailed outline of the post-structural concepts that inform my analysis.

### 1.3

#### Methodology

Qualitative research, according to Earl Babbie and Luca Benaquisto (2002) is “the non-numerical examination and interpretation of observations, for the purposes of discovering underlying meanings and patterns of relationships” (p. 496). Jim Macnamara (2003), a media scholar who uses content analysis, explains that one of the fundamental objectives of qualitative research is to “investigate certain issues or themes in detail” (p. 15), which helps the researcher discover underlying meanings in their data. Content analysis<sup>18</sup> is a form of qualitative research and can be described as “a method used to study a broad range of ‘texts’ from transcripts of interviews and discussions in clinical and social research to the narrative and form of films, TV programs, and the editorial and advertising content of newspapers and magazines” (p. 1). Some examples of commonly studied qualitative content analysis are: adjectives used in descriptions (positive and negative) which give a strong indication of a speaker’s attitude, metaphor’s or similes used, visual imagery in text, binaries established in texts and how these are positioned and used, and context factors such as the position or credibility of spokespersons or sources quoted which affects meaning taken from text (e.g. if one message is presented by a high profile expert it will generally outweigh a non-expert opinion) (p. 17).

Discourse analysis scholar, Teun A. van Dijk (1983) argues that discourse analysis can “make more explicit the classical approaches to ‘content analyses’” (p. 20). Van Dijk’s assertion helps to showcase how discourse analysis can be situated within a

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<sup>18</sup> Jim Mcnamara (2003) provides an excellent overview of other scholarly definitions content analysis. See pages 2-4 of his article *Media content analysis: Its uses, benefits, and best practice methodology*.

qualitative content analysis approach to research. Discourses are the spoken or written practices or visual representations, which characterize a topic, an era, or a cultural practice; discourses are a group of statements that structure the way a thing is thought about. The field of discourse is not homogenous, as “discourses differ with the kinds of institutions and social practices in which they take shape and with the positions of those who speak and those whom they address” (Macdonell, 1986, p. 1). Discourse analysis is a method of looking at the way in which meaning is constituted in a text and this method is best applied when the identification, tracking, and operation of powerful discourses is useful. Jonathan Potter (1997) offers a congenial definition:

Discourse analysis has an analytic commitment to studying discourse as texts and talk in social practices. That is, the focus is not on language as an abstract entity such as a lexicon and set of grammatical rules (in linguistics), a system of differences (in structuralism), a set of rules for transforming statements (in Foucauldian genealogies). Instead, it is the medium for interaction; analysis of discourse becomes, then, analysis of what people do (p. 146).

In other words, language is taken to be not simply a tool for description and a medium of communication, but as a social practice, as a way of doing things. Therefore, the analysis of discourse “entails more than a shift in methodology from a general, abstracted, quantitative to a particularized, detailed, qualitative approach” (Wood & Kroger, 2000, p. 3). Discourse analysis can be considered postmodern because it does not provide a tangible answer to problems, but instead, enables access to the potential ontological and epistemological assumptions one may read from a text.

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) “is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context” (Van Dijk,

2001, p. 352). CDA is most often used “to identify a set of perspectives that emphasizes the relations between language and power and the role of discourse analysis in social and cultural critique” (Wood & Kroger, 2000, p. 205). CDA can be defined in part by its focus on social issues and social problems (e.g., racism, sexism, etc.) but a significant difference from discourse analysis “lies in the *constitutive problem-oriented, interdisciplinary approach* of the latter ... *CDA is therefore not interested in investigating a linguistic unit per se, but in studying social phenomena which are necessarily complex and thus require a multi-disciplinary and multi-methodical approach*” (Wodak & Meyer, 2008, p. 2, emphasis in original). Any social phenomenon lends itself to critical investigation, and television texts are precisely the type of complex texts that require this type of approach, highlighting how “the objects under investigation (of CDA) do not have to be related to negative or exceptionally ‘serious’ social or political experiences or events” (p. 2).

A central concept in most critical work on discourse is power, and more specifically the social power of groups and institutions. As Van Dijk (2001) suggests:

Most kinds of CDA will ask questions about the way specific discourse structures are deployed in the reproduction of social dominance, whether they are part of a conversation or a news report or other genres and contexts. Thus, the typical vocabulary of many scholars in CDA will feature such notions as “power,” “dominance,” “hegemony,” “ideology,” “class,” “gender,” “race,” “discrimination,” “interests,” “reproduction,” “institutions,” “social structures,” and “social order,” besides the more familiar discourse analytical notions (p. 354).

Theoretically and descriptively, Van Dijk (1995) proposes that an exploration of structures and strategies of text and talk are needed in order to discover patterns of elite dominance or manipulation “in” texts, as well as detailing how such forms of inequality are expressed, enacted, legitimated, and reproduced by text and talk, in relation to major

social and political problems and issues, such as sexism or racism (p. 19). Within the practice of CDA, discourse is understood as a form of social practice and “this implies a dialectical relationship (or a two-way relationship) between a particular discursive event and all the diverse elements of the situation(s), institution(s), and social structure(s) which frame it” (Fairclough, Mulderrig, and Wodak, 2011, p. 357-58). In this sense, situations, institutions, and social structures shape the discursive event, but it also shapes them. To put it a different way:

Discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially shaped: it constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people. It is constitutive both in the sense that it helps sustain and reproduce the social status quo, and in the sense that it contributes to transforming it. Since discourse is so socially influential, it gives rise to important issues of power. In a dialectical understanding, a particular configuration of the social world (e.g. relations of domination or difference) is implicated in a particular linguistic conceptualization of the world; in language, we do not simply name things but conceptualize things. Thus discursive practices may have major ideological effects: that is, they can produce and reproduce unequal power relations between (for instance) social classes, women and men, and ethnic groups, through the ways in which they represent things and position people (p. 358).

So discourse may, for example, be sexist or racist, and try to pass off assumptions (often falsifying ones) about any aspect of social life as mere common sense. Since the conceptual ways of using language and the relations of power that underlie them are often ambiguous, “CDA aims to make more visible the opaque aspects of discourse as social practice” (Fairclough et al., 2011, p. 358) by uncovering, revealing, or disclosing “what is implicit, hidden, or otherwise not immediately obvious in relations of discursively enacted dominance or their underlying ideologies” (Van Dijk, 1995, p. 18).

Moreover, work that employs CDA is often characterized by an interest in “de-mystifying ideologies and power through the systematic and *retroductable* investigation



of semiotic data (written, spoken, or visual) (Wodak & Meyer, 2009, p. 3, emphasis in original). CDA researchers also attempt to make their own positions and interests explicit, while remaining self-reflective of their own research process. CDA does not characterize “a school, a field, or a sub-discipline of discourse analysis, but rather an explicitly critical approach, position, or stance of studying text and talk” (Van Dijk, 1995, p. 17). Van Dijk (1995) goes on to describe the following additional criteria characteristic of CDA:

- CDA work is typically multidisciplinary, and especially focuses on the relations between discourse and society.
- Historically and systematically, CDA is part of a broad spectrum of (usually rather marginal or marginalized) critical studies in the humanities and the social sciences.
- CDA studies are not limited to purely ‘verbal’ approaches to discourse, but also pay attention to other semiotic dimensions (pictures, film, sound, music, gestures, etc.) of communicative events (p. 17-18).

Within this critical discourse analysis, I also draw on key theoretical concepts from a number of post-structuralist theorists, including Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, and Julia Kristeva (and discussions of these are located in my theoretical chapter).

### **AMC’s *The Walking Dead***

This critical discourse analysis is applied to a single case study; it focuses on one television series, specifically the first two seasons of *The Walking Dead*. I limited my data set to the first two seasons of the series for two reasons. First, when I began this research project, the first two seasons had already aired, but the third season was still in production. Secondly, my analysis of this series covers nineteen episodes, which I was satisfied would provide plenty of data; with six discs of approximately 147 minutes each, that is about 19 hours of *The Walking Dead* to examine. These episodes all contain some aspect of the concepts that I identify throughout my work, but there are certain episodes

that are discussed in greater detail because they are more centrally concerned with a certain concept/s and/or better exemplify the discourses I am interested in analyzing than others.<sup>19</sup>

My decision to analyze a single television series could be seen as a limitation to my research, however, as most existing analyses of zombie horror have concentrated on films which have decisive ends, studying zombie horror on television provides an opportunity for an analysis of a text that plays out over a longer period of time. In this sense, the experience of watching television occurs in a dimension of time where little end-points (like the end of programmes) keep occurring, but where “viewers are always aware that something new is about to take place of what they have just been watching” (Bignell, 2004, p. 4). AMC’s *The Walking Dead* is still in production, and the fourth season premiered on October 13, 2013, helping to keep interest in the series by providing an ongoing, evolving narrative, and strengthening Kirkman’s aspiration to create “the zombie movie that never ends” (Dawn, 2010).

### **Data Collection**

I began my research by purchasing the first two seasons of *The Walking Dead*. Season One consisted of six episodes and Season Two consisted of thirteen episodes. Each season premiere ran for approximately 60 minutes and the remaining episodes lasted for about 45 minutes each. I spent many hours watching, rewinding, re-watching, transcribing, and analyzing the series. I experienced a range of emotions from anger, annoyance, sadness, anxiety, and fear, to happiness and liberation. I also had many

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<sup>19</sup> For a complete list of all nineteen episodes, and an overall summary of each individual episode, refer to *Appendix C: Episode Guide*.

interesting conversations, debates, and questions from my supervisor, my family, and my friends while embarking on this endeavour. Below, I describe a detailed account of how, exactly, I conducted my research.

Having previously been an ongoing fan of the television series, I had already seen the first two seasons of *The Walking Dead*, and was anxious for the third to premiere. However, I had never read any of the graphic novels, blogs, or short stories, seen any of webisodes or talk shows associated with the series or played any of the board/electronic games that further the narrative, prior to starting my thesis. Early on, I determined that it would be best to continue to stay away from these additional narratives and other mediums associated with the series, in order to avoid any conflicts or discrepancies in my analysis of the television narrative.

I initially sat down at my desk with my TV and Xbox 360 (through which I was able to play the DVD's) and got comfortable. I watched two episodes a day, with breaks in between each episode. This process took me ten days. During my first viewing, despite my instincts to start writing, I restrained myself, simply watching, in order to refresh my memory of the series, its characters, setting, etc. This task was surprisingly difficult, as I tried to resist the urge to scribble down notes and begin analysing situations. However, I feel that the experience of simply observing benefitted my overall work, by allowing me to focus on and experience the visual nature of the series, without pauses or interruptions, which I feel later enabled me to better interrogate, critically analyze, and deconstruct the text.

As I viewed the series a second time, I used a notepad, a pen, and a lot of Post-it notes, as I allowed myself to begin sketching out and coding concepts that emerged.

Coding is a process of organizing raw data into categories, themes, and concepts based on a theoretical framework (Neuman, 2011). Coding enables the researcher to take large bodies of text and reduce them to more manageable pieces of information. Research questions guide the process of determining the categories for coding, but the researcher may raise new questions during the coding process. It is important to note the different epistemology here from many quantitative projects. In a qualitative approach, “what is generally of interest is not so much the codes as the text they denote, not how often they occur, but what is in them” (Crang, 1997, p. 188). This viewing took about three and a half weeks to complete. My aim was to compile a list of concepts and developing discourses in the text, as well as to highlight emerging binaries that I began to read from the situations, conversations, interactions, and circumstances of the characters, setting, scene, etc. In this sense, I was able to record important instances and concepts that occurred both on and off screen (for example, screams that could be heard but not seen), as well as those that were spoken and unspoken, such as facial expressions.

During this viewing, I recorded many different concepts, and my theoretical framework influenced these. For this portion of my analysis, the concepts I identified were as follows: power; authority figures; risk; governance; binaries; the body; gender; suicide/death; surveillance; violence and guns; resistance; and truth/knowledge. Based on my reading of Derrida, I began to notice binaries that were embedded in the text and in the concepts that I was identifying, and I took note of these under the category of “binary oppositions.” At this point, I had recorded the following binary oppositions: male/female, light/darkness, and us/them. During this reading, the following questions guided my research:

1. What are the dominant discourses of violence and power that are in operation within *The Walking Dead*?
2. Who is exercising power? Who is not?
3. Who/what is the main model of authority in the series?
4. What is the role of the police/the law in the text?
5. How is power resisted?
6. How are bodies controlled?
7. What is the role of women in the text?

Out of all the concepts I identified in my second viewing, I compiled a table, with the heading of each column corresponding to the concept(s) I identified.

My third viewing of *The Walking Dead* was the most intense, and took just over a month and a half to complete. Along with my TV and my Xbox 360, I used my laptop to organize and take notes as I moved through my analysis. The original table that I had created during my second viewing on my notepad was transferred over, verbatim, to my laptop, along with all of my scribbles and post-it notes. This enabled me to more clearly organize and lay out my thoughts and this time, during my analysis, I focused on clarifying and elaborating on the concepts I identified, analyzing the discourses that constituted the concepts, and looking for evidence to help answer the updated questions I had posed of my data. I spent a lot of time pausing, typing, rewinding and replaying scenes, transcribing quotes from the characters and recording particular scenes and settings which demonstrated the concepts and discourses I was now looking for. I also recorded the running time for each note I took, so afterward, if I wanted to review a certain situation or interaction, I could easily jump to that point in time. This was extremely useful as I moved through the third stage of my analysis because often scenes or situations in one episode would refer back to another, for example, calling upon a specific instance that had previously occurred.

During my third viewing, the concepts I identified transformed from my initial reading and became: power/authority/knowledge; governance, risk, and control of the body; binaries; gender/sex/gender roles; suicide/mercy killing/death; weaponry; resistance. What I found, as I continued working through the episodes, was that many of these concepts I originally recorded as separate, began to come together and intertwine. For example, based on my reading of Foucault, I had originally organized governance, control of the body, and risk separately. As I moved through the series, I began to realize that all three often occurred together, or depended on one another in some way at the level of discourse. Therefore, I merged these concepts into one category, termed, “governance, control of the body, and risk,” which reflected discourses of power and governance. I dropped surveillance from my original list of concepts, as it no longer appeared as relevant as it did in my first viewing. I eliminated the category of truth/knowledge and incorporated the examples into the power/authority section, as my analysis revealed that these concepts all functioned together at the level of discourse. The category of violence and guns also transformed into the concept of weaponry, as my reading revealed that violence was more performative in this text, and I wanted to encompass all of the weaponry used in the text, not just guns. Gender roles and sex were also concepts that emerged during my second viewing and became more prominent in my third viewing of the series, although, at this time I was unsure where they would fit into my analysis.

I added the binary of urban/rural to the already existing list of binaries I had recorded, as in this viewing I saw the significance of the city versus the country. My initial research questions also developed:

1. What are the dominant discourses surrounding power, authority, and governance that are in operation within *The Walking Dead*?
2. Who is exercising power, that is, whose discourses are being presented? What is left unsaid?
3. Who/what is the main model of authority in the series?
4. Why does the main character, Rick Grimes, wear his sheriff uniform and continue his law and order approach to solving problems in this post-apocalyptic world?
5. How is power and authority challenged and/or resisted?
6. How are bodies governed and/or controlled?
7. Why are women restricted to the domestic space in this dystopian world, why do they have little input on decisions that affect the group and why are they often denied the ability to break gender norms?
8. Why are weapons important?
9. Why are alternative methods to killing the undead largely ignored?

This step of coding focused on finding my data to answer my questions, as well as tying together my concepts and questions.

After I completed my third viewing, I began to review my data and pull out specific moments to focus on which I determined to be representative of how the concepts of the show were constructed through competing discourses. This allowed me to begin thinking about and organizing how I would ultimately design and layout the analysis chapter of this thesis. During this time, I also constructed a character description section,<sup>20</sup> as well as an episode guide<sup>21</sup> to help me remain organized as I began to write my analysis, but also to provide clarity for future readers of this work. In order to accomplish this, I referred to various episodes and important points within my data, but I did not watch the entire series a fourth time. I realized, at the end of the third viewing, that I had a pretty solid handle on my research, and ample data to begin writing, so I did not feel it necessary to go over the entire series a fourth time. By the end of my viewings and through the beginning of writing and editing my analytical chapters, I was able to

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<sup>20</sup> See *Appendix B: Character Description*.

<sup>21</sup> See *Appendix C: Episode Guide*.

organize how the concepts I had identified were constructed and constituted through different and competing discourses and how I would lay out the analytical chapters of my thesis. The next section will provide an overview of the analytical tools that I bring to bear on my reading in this thesis, which draw on key theoretical concepts from a number of post-structuralist thinkers, including Derrida, Foucault, and Kristeva.

### **Post-structural Concepts in my Analysis**

I began section two of my thesis by developing a descriptive chapter based on my deconstructive reading of the text, which I termed, “2.1 – Binary Oppositions In *The Walking Dead*.” Jacques Derrida offered my analysis the analytical tool of deconstruction, which I then utilized to examine binary oppositions in the text. I provide a descriptive analysis of the binaries I identified in *The Walking Dead*, as the binary structures are our entry into the narrative of the text, and help expand my (latter) critical reading of the concepts.

Derrida’s method of deconstruction can be considered a method of critical discourse analysis (CDA) because it provides an interpretive and critical reading, which can be used to examine text in my case a television series. Applying a deconstructive analysis to the text allowed me to read for internal contradictions, oppositions, and absences, allowing me to link the socio/political context of the discourses in the text back to the binaries I uncovered. This permitted me to analyze the hidden relations of power, looking at things such as: who is exercising power, who is not, whose discourses are being presented, who is excluded from talk, what is left unsaid, how are events presented, and how are characters in the show characterized. Deconstruction connects to CDA’s



descriptive, explanatory, and practical aims of attempting to uncover, reveal, or disclose what is implicit, hidden, or otherwise not immediately obvious in relations of discursively enacted dominance or their underlying ideologies by allowing for a critical and oppositional stance against the powerful (whether it is a powerful authority, a powerful discourse, or the privileged side of a binary) (Van Dijk, 1995, p. 18). Therefore, recognizing and unpacking binaries within the textual landscape is important in order to expose the contradictions.

Since, methodologically, deconstruction involves an attempt to “take apart and expose underlying meanings, biases, and pre-conceptions that structure the way a text conceptualizes its relation to what it describes,” Derrida suggested that this must first be accomplished by a reversal of the opposition (Dickens & Fontana, 1994, p. 185). This reversal is followed by a second phase of “re-inscription, displacement, or reconstruction,” where the violent hierarchical structure is transformed (Evans, 1991, p. 52). In my work, this second phase involved a reading of the text for internal contradictions in an attempt to explain how the text works against itself to show the problematic nature of things. This helped me to determine that the text is set up around binaries (male/female, white/black, us/them, urban/rural) but I also discovered that the binaries do not hold together and reveal themselves to be faulty. Poststructuralists, such as Derrida, argue that distinctions between binaries (such as male/female or white/black) serve to create false dualities inherent in either/or categories and advocate that once you begin to carefully examine these oppositions, they no longer work effectively. Consistent with CDA, poststructuralists perceive different, competing aspects of the self as constituted by different, competing discourses. Put another way, poststructuralists

propose close analysis of language use in texts of the categories used in order to demonstrate how categories that seem to be in opposition to each other actually have a lot of overlapping meaning. Therefore, in the context of my work, although the binaries do not necessarily directly relate to the concepts, because the concepts in the text are socially and discursively constructed, what is important is that the binaries help to highlight a pre-existing discursive system that always brings us back to the normative. Thus, it is important, within the textual landscape, to unpack these binaries in order to expose their contradictions because the key concepts I employ in my analysis all engage the binaries in some way.

Deconstruction opens up the infinite: “for Derrida, there is nothing that has been thought that cannot be rethought” (Kearney, 1986, p. 120). The context of reception is constantly changing, and there are always more potential contexts through which a text can be read. Therefore, due to the fluidity of context, no particular meaning can be positioned as “true.” Likewise, the purpose of discourse analysis is not to provide definite answers; it always remains a matter of interpretation. However, this does not weaken the value of my research because it is not my intention to reveal the producers “true” meaning or to provide a generalizable account of how viewers may interpret various and competing discourses in *The Walking Dead*. Although there is no hard or quantifiable data provided through discourse analysis, the reliability and validity of one’s research/findings depends on the force and logic of one’s argument. Therefore, AMC’s *The Walking Dead*, as well as my own research on this text, will always be subject to ongoing deconstructive readings and counter-interpretations and this is acknowledged and welcomed under the poststructuralist framework from which this thesis operates.

The subsequent chapter, “2.2 – Competing Discourses Of Power, Authority, And Governance,” is largely analytical and presents my qualitative findings of the CDA I applied to *The Walking Dead*. Foucault provided me with analytical tools such as power, knowledge, and truth that I applied in the service of analysis of discourses through which the key concepts I identified are made meaningful in the text. CDA focuses “on relations of power, dominance, and inequality and the ways these are reproduced or resisted by social group members through text and talk” (van Dijk, 1995, p. 18). The analytical tools I employed from Foucault enabled me to focus on critiquing power and social injustice in the text. I also employed his analytical tools in order to show how *The Walking Dead* could be privileged toward a particular ideology, examining how social injustice is portrayed and how certain social groups may be misrepresented in the discourse. Utilizing Foucault in this way allowed me to determine that the concepts I had originally recorded as separate, such as power, authority, weaponry, and knowledge, in the end became objects of analysis constituted in discourses about power, gender, race, class, masculinity, and the law.

Originally, this chapter was entitled “Power And Authority,” and of all my analytical sections, it has had the most revisions. For instance, I intended to have an entirely separate chapter on “gender and morality,” but through edits and revisions I incorporated that material into chapter 2.2. As I continued to work through the newly combined chapter, I began to realize that the gender aspect was just too much to handle, not just in any chapter, but also in the entire thesis. My supervisor and I ultimately decided that I would drop this section, as it could have been a thesis all on its own. It also became apparent that femininity and womanhood, especially as it pertains to motherhood,

was beyond the scope of this research project as I would not be able to provide a fully articulated analysis of this here. Because of this, I focus heavily on traditional versions of power, authority, and governance, as they are the ones that sustain the transition from the “pre” to “post” apocalyptic worlds. I touch on aspects of gender, femininity, and motherhood, but I use these to interrogate and discuss the masculine, patriarchal power and authority within the text.

As I began writing and editing chapter 2.2, new concepts, such as paternity, reproduction, masculinity, and whiteness emerged as I worked through the competing discourses that I identified, and this was something that I never would have expected in my initial reading of the text. When I read these concepts through my Foucauldian framework, in addition to the previous ones, I resolved that gender, racial, class, and legal discourses helped to operationalize authority in different ways, exemplified through the three separate models of authority that I identify in chapter 2.2. Each of these models of authority are underpinned by discourses which offer a particular régime of truth for understanding authority and each model of authority is discursively constructed through different discourses. However, there are things that these models of authority share, such as masculinity, heterosexuality, and whiteness, and this allowed me to determine a dominant régime of truth within the text.

In the final analytical chapter, “2.3 – The Body And The Abject,” I again turned to Foucault as he provided me with the analytical tools of bio-power, resistance, the power of the norm, and modes of objectification that I applied in the service of analysis of discourses through which key concepts I identify are made meaningful in the text. The body, suicide, mercy killing, and resistance revealed themselves to be objects of analysis

constituted in medical, scientific, social, and familial discourses associated with the body and how to control it. I originally termed this analytical chapter “Governance Of The Body,” but this later developed into “The Body And The Abject,” as I began writing and editing. During this time, the concept of risk was added to this chapter, as well as Julia Kristeva’s concept of the abject, as both offered me a way to further analyze the discourses surrounding the governance of the body in the text, but also allowed for the realization that the disruptive, abject body had a very strong connection to authority in the text, in many ways fuelling and legitimizing those in positions of authority. Originally, I had also assumed that the concept of violence was going to play a major role in my analysis of the text, however, as I wrote and edited this analytical chapter, I realized that although there is a lot of violence in the series, it is heavily performative, and appears more so in the service of other things, such as power and governance.

The analytical tools that I employed from Foucault and Kristeva further enabled a CDA by allowing me to critique power and social injustice by examining resistance and how risks are mitigated in the text. My attempt to uncover the discursive means of control and social influence “implies a critical and oppositional stance against the powerful and the elites, and especially those who abuse their power” (van Dijk, 1995, p. 18). Foucault’s concept of normalization and Kristeva’s concept of the abject allowed me to critically read discourses of the body and governance within the text to define what is considered “normal” in this diegetic world. By understanding what the norms or rules of the narrative were, I was better able to critically analyze how the body was controlled and governed, how risks were mitigated, how the disruptive, abject body was connected to power and authority, and how resistance was represented in the series.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has addressed the research methodologies I found best suited to answer the research questions I posed in my thesis research. Deploying only content analysis would have restricted my ability to highlight the discursive language surrounding the concepts I identified within this text. Thus, a qualitative, critical discourse analysis provided me a more complete way of analyzing the concepts and discourses I identified in this text. In the following section, I discuss my findings and analysis of *The Walking Dead*, beginning with chapter 2.1, which provides a descriptive analysis of the binary oppositions I uncovered in the text, as the binary structures are our entry into the narrative of the text and help to highlight some of the key points that my latter analysis will take as its focus.

## Section 2.0

### 2.1

#### **Binary Oppositions in *The Walking Dead***

In this chapter, I utilize Derrida's method deconstruction to discuss my reading of the text for internal contradictions in an attempt to explain how the text works against itself to show the problematic nature of things. This helped me to determine that the text is set up around binaries (male/female, white/black, us/them, urban/rural) but I also discovered that the binaries do not hold together and reveal themselves to be faulty. Therefore, it is important, within the textual landscape, to unpack these binaries in order to expose their contradictions because the key concepts I employ in my analysis all engage the binaries in some way.

#### **Urban/Rural**

In *The Walking Dead*, urban environments and landscapes are often depicted as dirty, contagious, overrun, and dangerous. Although, as a viewer, I never actually saw the city of Atlanta fall to the walkers (this is suggested through the accounts of various survivors), it is often illustrated through the visual images of the city. For example, Rick enters the city on horseback and immediately realizes that it was a bad idea (1001). Huge hordes of walkers startle his horse, which bucks him off, and then overwhelm the military tank that Rick takes refuge in. As the camera pans out, the viewer is given their first real view of how desolate, overrun, dirty, and unsafe the city actually is, as buildings are abandoned and crumbling, the ground is littered with garbage, dirt, corpses, deserted

vehicles and belongings, and literally thousands of the undead roam the streets, devouring any living thing, and swarming the tank.

In comparison, and up until the end of season two, the rural landscape of the Greene farm is depicted as pristine, isolated, untouched, and safe and is presented as being largely sheltered from the zombie threat, due to its isolation and wide spanning fences. When the survivors first encounter the farm, they are bewildered that Hershel's family, and his farm, has been so untouched and isolated from the events that they have witnessed in the city, and through their travels. This rural life is envied by many of the survivors once they experience what it is like on the farm, and they do not want to leave. However, the text contradicts itself as the farm (rural) is shown to be unsafe multiple times: Sophia, along with the walkers Hershel's family have corralled in his barn, are set free by Shane and gunned down by members of the group (2007), Dale Horvath (Jeffery DeMunn) is gruesomely killed while strolling the fields at night (2011), Shane murders Randall Culver (Michael Zegen) by snapping his neck (2012), and Shane deceives Rick into entering the forest in an attempt to murder him as well (2012). It could be argued that many of these crimes are brought by the urban to the rural, as the survivor's lead an exodus out of the city for the country, and the walkers follow as their food source relocates to the rural. During the last episode of season two (2013), we see the binary of urban/rural dismantled, as a huge walker herd overruns the farm and forces the group to abandon their safe haven. We see the group members panicking, arguing, and undermining each other's authority, as they struggle to decide where they will go now that they have realized that no place will ever truly be safe. Interestingly enough, especially from a criminological standpoint, the last image we are given from the series,



at the end of season two, is the shadowy outline of a maximum-security prison in the distance, suggesting that this institution's fences, concrete walls, countless locks, and cells is the group's next (or last) resort in terms of safety and security.

### **Male/Female**

There is a gendered binary within the text that positions male characters as capable, rational, and authoritative, and female characters as being incapable, irrational, and not authoritative. We are positioned early on in the series to know women in the domestic sphere, as lovers and mothers, and as beneath men, both intellectually and morally, suggesting an understanding of what it means to be men in the text, that is, not being like women. Within the text, women are often unable to stray from the camp and are restricted to domestic chores, such as laundry, cooking, cleaning, and educating the children, while men provide sustenance through hunting and scavenging, participating in manual labour, and ensuring the camp's safety by participating in structured patrols. A prominent example of how space is gendered occurs early in season one (1003), as Andrea (Laurie Holden), Carol (Melissa McBride), Amy (Emma Bell), and Jacqui (Jeryl Prescott Sales) converse while doing laundry by the edge of a lake:

Andrea: I'm beginning to question the division of labour here.

Jacqui: Can someone tell me how the women ended up doing all the Heidi McDaniel work?

Amy: The world ended, didn't you get the memo.

Carol: That's just the way it is.

In this scene, the women sit together at the edge of a lake, washing clothes in buckets, using washboards. Andrea's character challenges the system; she was previously a civil

rights attorney and therefore it is not surprising that she is the first one to address the division of labour within the text, an argument I further develop in chapter 2.2. However, we are cued to an interesting distinction through Amy's statement. Her acknowledgment that the world has ended, suggests that the previous discourses and norms governing the survivors have also ended. For instance, there is no longer a president, a government, hospitals, or police departments. This suggests that the survivors have the opportunity to create an entirely new world, with new norms and standards of authority and governance, however, for the most part, the new world continues to function under the same discourses as the world before. Or perhaps we have gone even further back in time, since many of these women were employed outside the home before the apocalypse.

The binary of male/female proves to be faulty as there are many circumstances where women are shown to be capable, rational, and possess authority in the text. For instance, when Carl (Chandler Riggs) is shot in the beginning of season two (2011), Lori reveals how she is capable when she takes over an authoritative role in making decisions for her son. In this scene, Rick can barely stand, as he is extremely weakened from giving blood. He demonstrates his irrationality when he attempts to leave the farm to find Shane and Otis and bring back the supplies. Lori demonstrates rationality, as she realizes the potential consequences of Rick leaving the farm in such a weakened state and as she is successful in convincing Rick that the best thing he can do for his son is to remain by his bedside.

Throughout the first two seasons, the women of the series continually evolve and are shown to be more and more capable. For instance, Andrea trains with Shane on how

to properly use, clean, and load a gun, and becomes one of the best shots within the group; Maggie contributes by successfully completing supply runs for the group in order to gather food, water, and medicine; Carol, surviving her abusive relationship and the loss of her daughter, continues to develop into an intelligent and strong female character; and Patricia (Jane McNeill) assists Hershel with many of the medical procedures he performs. Furthermore, many of the women also overcome emotional and psychological problems, such as depression from losing loved ones, thoughts of suicide and/or suicide attempts, and anxiety about the apocalyptic landscape, continuing as successful and productive members of the group. Acknowledging the male/female binary allows for an analysis of how the binary always serves power and this understanding supports my analysis of how power and authority is gendered in the text (expanded in chapter 2.2), as although there are circumstances where women prove themselves capable, rational, and authoritative, the overall narrative of the text denies them the ability to be constituted in the dominant discourse of power, authority, and governance.

### **White/Black**

The binary of white/black is prevalent in a number of ways within the text. For one, it represents a racial binary. As I argue in chapter 2.2, the majority of the characters in the text are white (even though this is not consistent with the location of the series: Atlanta, Georgia). This creates an overwhelming white/black dichotomy in the series, as other racial representations, for instance the African American characters Theodore Douglas (T-Dog) (IronE Singleton) and Jacqui, are not given prominent roles or offered

the opportunity to be authoritative figures. In this sense, the white/black binary helps to underpin my analysis of how discourses of power and authority are raced within the text.

In *The Walking Dead*, I read whiteness as representative of law, authority, morality, and knowledge, whereas blackness represents darkness, lawlessness, and the unknown, which later helps to underpin my analysis of discourses of power and authority as raced and classed, since the way that white/black operates as a binary in both ways is connected. For instance, one way in which whiteness is representative of knowledge is demonstrated when Rick first awakens from his coma. In this scene, he is alone in the hospital and totally unaware of the apocalypse that has occurred since he was last conscious. He must move through the hospital, which has lost power, and literally travel through the darkness into the unknown space that lies ahead. When he finds matches in one of the nurses' stations, this is all the light (or knowledge) that he has at this point in time, suggesting that he is unaware or "in the dark" about the current state of things. Once Rick ventures outside of the hospital, he is literally overwhelmed by the light, which is evidenced through his body language (falling down, squinting, trying to shield his eyes, etc.). Although he has made it into the light, he has not yet "seen," and this scene, where he leaves the hospital and enters this new landscape, suggests he is still unaware and naïve to the state of things. For instance, Rick tries to signal to one of the first walkers that he encounters by waving his arms above his head and shouting "hello!" (1001). Unknowingly, this behaviour puts him in danger. Morgan (Lennie James) and Duane Jones (Adrian Kali Turner), the first pair of survivors that Rick encounters, although confused by his actions, save him from this situation, by killing the walker that Rick is waving at. Afterwards, Rick confronts Morgan:

Rick: You killed a man out on the street!

Morgan: Friend, do you need glasses? That was a walker. (Pause) Hey mister, do you even know what's going on? You know about the dead people right?

Morgan has knowledge about what has happened since Rick was injured (i.e. walkers are dead and are no longer human, it's kill or be killed, the brain must be destroyed, noise attracts them, etc.), and Rick, through Morgan's account of things, is slowly brought "into the light."

Another example can be illustrated through the characters Rick, Merle, and Daryl. Rick represents the law, since he was previously a police officer and continues to wear his sheriff's uniform even after the apocalypse. In this sense, he comes to represent whiteness as rationality through his moral and law and order approach to situations, post-apocalypse. Merle and Daryl, however, provide examples of how whiteness does not in itself guarantee authority to all white characters, as they are portrayed within the narrative as white trash, dirty, racist, and irrational. As I argue in chapter 2.2, if whiteness is seen in the text as authoritative, we see the limits of this in Merle, and to a lesser degree his brother, Daryl as they demonstrate that being white is different from embodying whiteness.

If Rick as the symbol of whiteness represents rationality, morality, and the law, then the white/black binary proves to be faulty as there are many instances where we see Rick acting in immoral or lawless ways. For example, Rick has an altercation with Merle on a rooftop in Atlanta, where he incapacitates Merle and handcuffs him to a pipe, ultimately resulting in Merle getting left behind (1003). Another example occurs near the end of season two, when Rick kills Shane (2012). Rick's ultimate failure is his extreme

pride and arrogance, known as hubris, as he believes that his position, as an officer of the law, and a man, provides him with the ability and knowledge to be a moral and just authority in the post-apocalyptic landscape. Rick's insistence on maintaining "old world" norms of law and order, even after the apocalypse, further illustrate his hubris, as he believes that these norms worked well before the apocalypse and therefore are best suited to continue "after." Although this point of contention is debateable, and something I expand on in 2.2, it is important to acknowledge because it helps us recognize how a dominant discourse of power is constructed within the text, by denying alternative or competing discourses of how to rule in a post-apocalyptic world, and allowing a white, masculine authority to consistently be at the forefront.

### **Us/Them**

Throughout *The Walking Dead*, a strong example of the us/them binary is seen between the living (the survivors) and the undead (the walkers). The survivors are still recognizably human, thinking, feeling, talking, whereas the walkers are often portrayed as dirty, dangerous, diseased, and different from the human survivors. This is illustrated through the raced depiction of the dark and gray pallor of their skin and clothing, their limited intelligence, awareness, and recall (i.e. not being able to open a door, or not recognizing a family member), the fact that they are not bothered by pain or exhaustion, their inexplicable urge to devour human flesh, and their ability to spread their contagion through bites/scratches, where, shortly after, the infected survivor becomes ill, dies, and reanimates. These characteristics parallel many of the criteria that Romero laid out in his

films, and have since aided in defining the genre of zombie horror and differentiating zombies (or walkers) from humans.

Language such as “walkers,” “geeks,” and/or “lame brains,”<sup>22</sup> are used by the survivors in the series in an attempt to differentiate the undead from humans. The characters’ use of these concepts towards the undead is derogatory and positions them as different or “other.” For instance, the term “walker” suggests physical differences, such as their slow and inept movements, whereas the term “lame brains” suggests limited intelligence and lack of memory. Even the term “geek” is used to refer to an odd or non-mainstream person, suggesting difference. The binary divisions that inform language are also challenged by the very nature of the zombie. As Hassler-Forest (2011) argues in relation to *The Walking Dead* comic series, “both alive and dead, the ‘undead’ posits a threat not only to the lives of the protagonists that share its diegetic world, but even to our understanding of life itself, as defined by its now-absent opposite” (p. 346).

A significant reversal of the us/them binary occurs during the end of season two (2013) when we learn what Jenner whispered in Rick’s ear during the final episode of the first season (1006). Rick hesitantly informs the group that everyone is already infected and will become a walker no matter how they die. This not only displays how the us/them binary proves faulty in regards to dichotomizing the humans and the walkers, since everyone is infected; as Rick so eloquently states: “We are the walking dead!” (2013), but also represents another instance in the text where Rick has acted immorally, keeping the knowledge Jenner gave him (1006) a secret from the entire group. Again this highlights Rick’s hubris, as he believes that he has the right and the authority to determine what

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<sup>22</sup> Refer to *Appendix A: Glossary of Terms* for a more detailed description.

knowledge he discloses to the group and his behaviour is immoral because it is carried out in a self-serving attempt to maintain authority and control over the group.

The us/them binary also operates within the survivor group. For example, whenever a survivor is bitten or scratched, they are immediately removed from the privileged side of the binary (us or living) and moved to the opposite pole (them or dead), even before they die (and possibly reanimate). The survivors do not act or speak to the infected member of the group the same way. For instance, after the zombified version of Sophia exits the barn and is killed (2007), we hear her mother Carol say: “That’s not Sophia, she died a long time ago,” and refuses to attend her daughters funeral. Additionally, when members of the group are infected, the other members often resort to mercy killing, usually by shooting them in the head, in order to prevent them from “turning” and becoming “one of them.”

Another way division along the us/them binary occurs within the group of survivors, is often depicted in language used between Rick’s group and Hershel’s family. Terms like “your group” or “your people” are examples of this division. Midway through the second season (2006), it is revealed that Hershel’s family has been keeping and feeding walkers in their barn. In this case, the binary is reversed by Hershel’s family who treats Rick’s group as “other” and the walkers as their own, who are sick and in need of a cure. For instance, Dale approaches Hershel and comments that he (Hershel) must have a good reason for his secret about the walkers in his barn:

Hershel: I saw the broadcasts before they stopped, saw the irrational fear, the atrocities, like the incident in my well.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> In episode 2004, the survivors find a bloated walker stuck in Hershel’s well and subsequently kill it, upsetting Hershel in the process.



Dale: We put down a walker!

Hershel: You killed a person!

Dale: Well, if you watched the same broadcasts I did, you saw walkers attack, kill, they're dangerous!

Hershel: A paranoid schizophrenic is dangerous too. We don't shoot sick people!

Hershel sees the walkers as human, largely due to the fact that his second wife (Annette [Amber Chaney]), stepson (Shawn [Travis Chapentier]), and family friends are among the walkers he secretly keeps locked up in his barn. He tries to convince Rick and the other survivors that the walkers are still human, but is met with much resistance.

Another example occurs when Hershel threatens to kick Rick's group off his land, Rick tries to reason with him and find a way for them to stay. Hershel resolves that if Rick and the others are to stay, they must deal with the walkers on his terms:

Hershel: It doesn't matter if you don't see them as human beings anymore. But if you and your people are going to stay here, that is how you are going to have to treat them (2007).

There is a more complex power/authority struggle occurring in this scene and this will be analyzed further in chapter 2.2. This struggle is significant, as Rick ultimately relents to Hershel's way of dealing with the walkers, treating the walkers as human (or the privileged side of the binary), and restraining from committing violence against them (at least while on the farm).

Finally, during the last episode of season two (2013), the us/them binary is again disrupted by the hooded, katana wielding character (Michonne), who saves Andrea's life. Although we don't find out her identity until the third season, we realize, immediately, that she has successfully exposed the binary and overturned the violent hierarchy.

Michonne accomplishes this by cutting off the jaws, and removing the arms of the two walkers that she keeps chained to herself. In this way, they cannot cause her any harm or infect her (since they cannot bite or claw her) and their presence also protects her from other walkers because they have a similar smell<sup>24</sup> of decomposition and decay, a point of resistance, which I further analyze in chapter 2.3.

## **Conclusion**

I have discussed four binary oppositions (urban/rural, male/female, white/black, and us/them) that offer us entry into the narrative and underpin my forthcoming analysis of power and authority as gendered, raced, and classed. This deconstructive reading has allowed me to highlight hierarchical binaries as being productively engaged by discourse, helping to highlight a pre-existing discursive system that always returns us to the normative, but I also demonstrated how the binaries are faulty and do not hold together. In the following analytical chapter (2.2 “Competing discourses of power, authority, and governance”) I explore discourses of power, authority, gender, race, class, and governance and I provide an in-depth analysis of the concepts of authority figures, weaponry, knowledge, paternity, reproduction, masculinity, and whiteness, as I subject these concepts to a critical discursive analysis. I outline the three main authority figures that I uncovered in my reading of *The Walking Dead*, using their models of authority, how they garner their power, and numerous examples from the text to argue that the power and the authority to govern is gendered, raced, and classed.

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<sup>24</sup> It was revealed in the first season (1002), that the survivors could use walker’s entrails to mask their own (living) smell and successfully pass among the walkers unnoticed. However, this experiment is short lived, due to the rainstorm that washes away the entrails and immediately reverts the survivors back to their original, unsafe smell.



## 2.2

### **Competing Discourse of Power, Authority, and Governance**

This chapter presents my qualitative findings of the critical discourse analysis (CDA) I applied to *The Walking Dead*. In this chapter, I explore discourses of power, authority, gender, race, class, and governance. In what follows, I examine the ways in which the particular concepts I've identified are discursively constructed through particular régimes of truth in the text. For the purposes of this chapter, these concepts are: authority figures, weaponry, knowledge, paternity, reproduction, masculinity, whiteness, and white trash.

Given the power of the spoken and written word, CDA is necessary for describing, interpreting, analyzing, and critiquing social life reflected in text (Luke, 1997). Michel Foucault provides me with a variety of concepts such as power, knowledge, and truth that I use as analytical tools. These analytical tools offer insight into the way in which the concepts listed above are constructed discursively within the text. So to understand, for example, "whiteness" requires an analysis of the ways in which power, knowledge, and truth are brought to bear in the discursive formation of whiteness in this text. I begin this chapter by briefly defining the different models of authority that Rick Grimes, Shane Walsh, and Hershel Greene, the three primary authority figures in the series, represent in the text. Next, I move through the three overarching régimes of truth that my reading of *The Walking Dead* revealed, utilizing numerous examples from the text to support my analysis.

**Three Models of Authority:**

My analysis of *The Walking Dead* revealed three prominent authority figures: Rick, Shane, and Hershel. My reading of Rick suggests that he represents a democratic, moral, and law and order model of authority; these are the discourses through which his authority is constructed. He is often involved in decision-making, counselling, protection, enforcement of rules, and in the overall functioning of the group. Shane, on the other hand, garners his authority through a different mechanism, more of a straightforward and martial approach. Unlike Rick, whose morality is deeply rooted in his sense of duty to others, Shane's morality hinges on a different standard of right and wrong. Where Rick might ask, "*What is my moral obligation to others,*" Shane asks, "*What do I have to do to stay alive,*" with his answer usually being, "*whatever it takes and by any means necessary.*" In this sense, Shane does what is necessary to ensure his own survival and self-preservation, without considering moral or social implications. Shane's ethics can therefore be defined as pragmatic, in that he determines what actions are morally correct based on whether or not an action works. This also suggests that Shane is more narcissistic than Rick: he bases his decisions on self-preservation.

Hershel is the third authority figure I identified in the text. My reading of Hershel determined that he represents a medical model of authority. Hershel has many years of veterinary training and knowledge, making him a crucial figure in the text's apocalyptic setting since most medical institutions and persons with medical knowledge are gone, but medical concerns still exist. My reading also suggests that he garners authority through his possession of land, land which is viewed by the survivors as a safe and secure space

due to its rural location and self-sustaining abilities. Thus, in this sense, Hershel also represents a feudal model of authority.

Acknowledging these three models of authority, and the discourses through which they are constructed, at the beginning of my analysis is significant because they highlight competing versions of authority within the text. As I move through this chapter, I will elaborate on the different discourses that construct each of these three men as different types of (legitimate) authority and I will also tease out how identity functions within these models of authority. I also argue that this legitimacy is connected to the discursive construction of a more general idea of authority as an inherent quality of white, middle-class, and heterosexual masculinity. As I focus on critiquing social injustice in *The Walking Dead*, I seek to show how this text is biased towards a particular ideology of authority (as white, male, middle-class, and heterosexual). Additionally, I examine how social injustice is portrayed and how certain social groups are often excluded from authoritative positions. For instance, in the section on gender (see below), I discuss how women are constructed largely by discourses, which preclude their assumption of authoritative positions, except in relation to their children. In this text, women are constructed through discourses of domesticity, their value linked to marriage and motherhood, as well as the ability to feed and care for others in the apocalyptic landscape.

## **Gender**

My reading of the discourses of power and authority within the text revealed them to be gendered and ultimately male-centered. One way the text cues us to this is through the hegemonic masculine construction of many of its male characters, but especially

through Rick and Shane, in who much conventional power and authority reside. For instance, some of the characteristics that are considered normative for men and boys in dominant U.S. culture and which are present in the series are hegemonic masculine traits such as emotional toughness, exercising power over women, physical force and control, familial patriarchy, violence, and hetero-normativity (Connell, 1990; Mahalik et. al., 2003; and Trujillo, 1991). An example from the text that demonstrates the hegemonic masculine construction of these two key characters occurs early in the first episode (1001), when we are shown a flashback of a conversation between Rick and Shane prior to the apocalypse. In it, the pair discusses the difference between men and women:

Shane: I never met a woman who knew how to turn off a light. They are born thinking the switch only goes one way, on. I come home, the house is all lit up, and my job you see, apparently, because my chromosomes happen to be different, is I've then got to walk through that house and turn off every single light this chick left on ... then this same chick mind you, she'll bitch about global warming. This is when Reverend Shane wants to quote from the guy gospel and say, darlin', maybe if you and every other pair of boobs on this planet could just figure out that the light switch goes both ways, maybe we wouldn't have so much global warming. (Laughs) So how's it with Lori?

Rick: We didn't have a great night.

Shane: (Sarcastically) Do you express your thoughts? Do you share your feelings? That kind of stuff?

Rick: The last thing she said this morning ... sometimes I wonder if you even care about us at all. She said that in front of our kid. (Pause) What's the difference between men and women? I would never say something that cruel to her, and certainly not in front of Carl.

This scene is significant because it positions us to know Rick and Shane in their roles as male officers of the law, partners, and friends. This example cues us to their roles as officers of the law and partners through the similarity in their dress (i.e. their matching uniforms) and their shared workspace (i.e. the police car). We are cued to their role as friends through the joshing and comfortable manner as they carry out the conversation.

However, it also prompts us to how they represent hegemonic masculinity by “deriving their reputations from the workplace and their self-esteem from the public sphere” (Feasey, 2008, p. 2-3). Erica Scharrer (2013) concurs and, in her discussion of masculinity and television, contends that men have often been identified primarily by their occupation (p. 164). *The Walking Dead* holds true to this account, as Rick and Shane are most definitely defined and identified by their occupation: sheriff’s deputies. Both assume authoritative roles within the survivor group almost immediately and I interpreted this as a result of their positions within the King County sheriff’s department (Georgia) prior to the apocalypse, in addition to the fact that they are male, creating a discourse in which authority resides not in the person, but in the office. It is a kind of professional authority associated with discourses of law and order, which are themselves connected to discourses of hegemonic masculinity (only men with power are able to define and wield this type of authoritative power). The other discourses I introduce later, offer nuances in the discursive construction of each man, demonstrating that even within a broader realm of male power and authority, each man is slightly different and thus differently able to claim that form of authority.

When Shane asks Rick if he shares his feelings or thoughts with his wife, we see a close up of his face as he snickers, suggesting that “feelings” are for women and that men need to be emotionally tough. This scene is significant because of the dichotomy it strikes between men and women. Here we are presented with a discourse about normative gender identity. One that insists that masculinity/femininity, male/female are dyadic opposites with particular characteristics and roles belonging clearly to one or the other. As Michael Kimmel (2004), in his discussion of masculinity, states, “this notion of anti-femininity



lies at the heart of contemporary and historical conceptions of manhood, so that masculinity is defined by what one is not rather than who one is” (p. 185). We are positioned to know women in the domestic sphere as lovers and mothers, and as beneath men, intellectually and morally, cueing us to the understanding of what it means to be men in the text, that is, not being like women.

Rick and Shane’s conversation also posits a split between the two characters. Rick is constructed as a married man and father, less sexist, but more emotional and moral. In comparison, Shane is not constructed as moral or familial, instead appearing ignorant and chauvinistic. In this example, we are presented with different discursive constructions of masculinity, one in which power resides in a moral authority and sensitivity (Rick) and the other where a more raw version of power, a kind of male entitlement to power, to women, to children (Shane). In this dichotomy between forms of masculinity we are positioned to read Rick’s masculinity as privileged. The text cues us to this, at least for now, because Rick represents many hegemonic masculine traits, such as heteronormativity and familial patriarchy, which I expand upon below, but also because he is positioned as morally superior, which is constructed through Rick’s internal struggle to always do the right thing. It is also important to recognize that both of these discourses still root themselves in the dyadic separation of men and women, and the privileging of white, heterosexual, professional men as those who ultimately are owed/deserve power. More broadly, gender, class, race, and age are other discourses through which normative masculinity is constructed. As Kimmel (2004) identifies, within the dominant culture the discourses “that define[s] white, middle class, early middle-aged, heterosexual men [produce] the masculinity that sets the standards for other men” against which other forms

of manhood are measured and evaluated. (p. 184). Thus, in addition to their occupation, being white, young, and straight men also affords Rick and Shane authoritative rights within the text.

Discourses of normative masculinity are upheld in *The Walking Dead* by positioning heterosexuality as the norm for males, a common characteristic of many television programmes (Scharrer, 2013, p. 160). David Greven (2012) acknowledges the marginalization of same-sex relationships in his article “The walking straight: Queer representation in *The Walking Dead*,” admitting that “what the series does not have in any way, shape, or form is an explicitly queer character.” One way the text cues heterosexuality as the norm is through Shane’s struggle to overthrow and eliminate Rick, in order to possess Lori (Rick’s wife) and thus take on the patriarchal role as husband and father (to Carl and Lori’s unborn child, Judith). Greven (2012) offers a compelling queer reading of the text, suggesting that what makes *The Walking Dead* a queer show “is its queering of masculinity, specifically the character of the aptly named Shane, who recalls the loner hero of the classic Western” (p. 3). Greven argues that “what we have in *The Walking Dead*, then, is a resolutely non-queer show in terms of content that has some deeply queer elements in formal terms that including acting styles” (p. 4). He also suggests, “the relationship between Shane and Rick, a handsome man in distinct ways, deepened by the theme of triangulation, is another potential site for queer pleasure in the series” (p. 5). In this sense, Shane’s struggle to overthrow and possess Rick’s heterosexual and paternalistic position, suggests that Shane actually wants Rick, but since he cannot have him, he instead attempts to take over his masculine, familial position. Greven further suggests that other characters, shown to be variously solitary and cut off

from the group, such as Andrea and Daryl, are potentially readable as queer (p. 5-6). While Andrea and Shane hook up at one point, “Daryl has never been shown to be motivated by sexual interest in any other character, including Carol Peletier, who clearly feels for Daryl” (p. 6).<sup>25</sup>

Rick and Shane’s struggle for power over a paternal position cues us to another feature of hegemonic masculinity: familial patriarchy. This is significant because it highlights a discourse of power, which is gendered within the heterosexual family, but also discursively constructs paternity within the text. For many feminist theorists concerned with the origins of women’s oppression, “the prehistoric discovery by men of their role in reproduction is a key moment” (Mumford, 1995, p. 95). In their discussion of fathers and fertility, Peter Gray and Kermyt Anderson (2010), assert:

Historically, demographers and biologists studying fertility have focused on women ... who are the ones having babies, and the process of female fertility is highly visible. Men are a step removed; they help create the baby but do not carry it, and some men may not even know about all of the children they have fathered (p. 82).

Before the recognition of paternity, by some accounts:

Women were assumed to reproduce on their own or in concert with deities or nature, and were consequently viewed with awe. The power to create life seemed to put women on par with other aspects of the natural world, and to position them above men, who appeared to be the only ones unable to exercise this creativity. Once men’s role was discovered, however, this interpretation of women’s reproduction capacity dissolved, and new rituals evolved that emphasized men’s importance, including the development kinship networks that depended on exogamy (Mumford, 1995, p. 95).

The discursive construction of paternity within the text helps us understand the role that children play in *The Walking Dead*. Children are constructed less as individuals than as a way of defining masculine and male authority. This is evidenced through a scene in the

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<sup>25</sup> Daryl and Carol’s flirtation is brought up in the third season (3001), but “is largely played for laughs and left notably non-committal” (Greven, 2012, p. 6).

first season (1003), when Shane offers to teach Carl how to catch frogs, if he can get through the haircut that his mother is giving him:

Carl: I've never caught a frog before.

Shane: Frogs, plural. And it is an art my friend that is not to be taken lightly. There are ways and means that few people know about and I'm willing to share my secrets.

(Carl turns to his mother with a puzzled look on his face)

Lori: Oh, I'm a girl you talk to him.

Carl: But why do we need frogs, plural?

Shane: You ever eat frog legs?

(Carl and Lori both stick out their tongues with a disgusted look on their faces).

Shane: When we get down to the last can of beans you're going to be loving these frogs legs lady. (In a mocking tone) "Oh, Shane, do you think I could have a second helping please, uh, like just one." Don't you listen to her man, we'll be heroes! We'll feed these people Cajun style Kermit legs ... Heroes son, spoken of in song and legend. You and me, Shane and Carl.

In this scene, we are cued to an attempt by Shane to possess Rick's patriarchal position within the family. By insisting to Carl that he will share his "secret" knowledge, as it is "an art not to be taken lightly" and will gain them acknowledgment in the group, Shane is using Carl to help him define and assert his masculinity and male authority, by, for instance, suggesting that hunting and providing sustenance to the group is a masculine role and one that he will be praised for. Shane is portrayed as experienced, knowledgeable, and tough, which is suggested through Carl's immaturity, as he squirms and complains about getting his hair cut, and through the awe on his face when Shane explains the reward for providing food to the group. This suggests that Carl is not yet a

“man,” and that he looks up to Shane’s portrayal of masculinity as one he wants to aspire to. Lori’s response further highlights Shane’s authority, as she suggests her gender excludes her from having any knowledge on the matter and from even having an opinion. Carl also openly admits he has never learned how to catch frogs, which suggests a flaw in Rick’s masculine and paternal role, but also suggests that Shane can be the one to fill the gap left by Rick’s less adequate masculinity, ensuring Shane a legacy, a continuity of his “self.”

Paternity and children help to establish and discursively construct power and authority through the associations of these with paternity and/or family. We are cued to the concept of paternity and the role of children in the text through other narrative choices, such as which characters have children and which are allowed to keep their children in the face of this new apocalyptic landscape. For instance, Rick and Hershel enjoy the presence of their children (Carl, Maggie [Lauren Cohan], and Beth [Emily Kinney]) after the apocalypse, and the conception of more children (Judith),<sup>26</sup> even in the face of danger that this new landscape brings, because they represent male and masculine authority, and are heterosexual and white. On the other hand, characters that do not fit this authoritative model are denied the ability to keep their children and/or procreate. For example, Sophia (Carol’s daughter) goes missing (2001), dies, and is reanimated as a walker, only to be killed once again (2007); Jim (Andrew Rothenberg) explains how he lost his family to the walkers (1005); Amy is killed by walkers (1004) and this is extremely hard for both Andrea (as her older sister) and Dale (who admits to loving her like a daughter). These examples help to illustrate the marginalization of certain

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<sup>26</sup> As I discuss later, the timeline for Judith’s conception is really murky.

characters within the text's structure of authority, when they do not embody the constructed white, masculine, and heterosexual model of authority.

This critical discourse analysis also suggests that the paternal role is privileged over the maternal role, as before long motherhood is suggested to not even be necessary. This is because the show constructs maternity and paternity along really conventional lines. This is cued to us through the fact that both of Hershel's wives are deceased and dramatically revealed in the third season when Carl kills his own mother (Lori) in order to save her baby (3004). There is no room for traditional conceptions of motherhood, which are about nurturance and love, but the text is not yet ready for an alternative discourse of motherhood (or fatherhood for that matter, because the fathers have not changed much either). It is interesting that in the later seasons Carol comes to offer such an alternative discourse of motherhood: the fierce mother who teaches her children how to fight and protect themselves. Here she also shifts the discourse of childhood from one of innocence, which must be protected, to one of agency and self-protection. This shift, however, is impossible in the earlier seasons because it potentially undermines the father's authority.

The importance of paternity within the text is also significant as the walkers revealed another discourse of reproduction. My reading suggested that the walker(s) are essentially "fathered," not requiring a heterosexual union to reproduce and thus disrupting the norm of heterosexuality within the text. Referring back to my first chapter, where I outlined a definition of the zombie, and according to the diegesis of the text, a bite or scratch from a walker (zombie) is enough to infect a human and those who are not consumed will become ill, die, and reanimate. Therefore, in relation to the walkers,

heterosexual reproduction is replaced by asexual reproduction, as a walker need only bite/scratch a human to create an offspring. I also read this method of reproduction, biting or scratching, as phallic, in the sense that it represents the masculine creative principle through the result (i.e. creating offspring) but also because this result occurs through “piercing” and/or “penetrating” the body (Cooper, 2008, p. 129).

A woman’s association with body/nature “is strengthened by biological essentialist and determinist paradigms which define woman according to her reproductive physiology ... she is thus feeble and passive, literally a receptacle for the desires of the male<sup>27</sup> and incubator for his offspring” (King, 2004, p. 31). Whereas, historically maternity has been the main area of focus biologically, the walkers’ method of reproduction implies that mothers are not important or even necessary, again suggesting that paternity is privileged over maternity. A walker can infect a human, through a bite or scratch, and reproduce (i.e. the human dies and reanimates) at a far greater rate than the average women can become pregnant and bring the baby to term; infecting, killing, and turning a human within hours (1006). So, in the realm of the walkers, femaleness is eliminated; ultimately everyone becomes male. This could be read as potentially radical, upsetting the binary, rewriting the discourses which underpin hegemonic gender relations; however, I read it as something much more traditional. This presents a discourse of reproduction in which the mother is merely the vessel and the important matter is the father’s “seed,” his “blood.” Ultimately resulting in my reading of the walkers as all, essentially, male.

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<sup>27</sup> The word vagina comes from the Latin word for sheath (King, 2004, p. 31).

Female fertility issues, such as spontaneous uterine mortality, miscarriage, or sterility (Gray & Anderson, 2010, p. 85), as well as male fertility issues, such as low sperm count or impotence, do not restrict the walkers, allowing them to produce countless offspring. In a sense, they are the ultimate male, always ready, and always able. It takes the walker an instant to reproduce, which makes them comparable biologically, to the father's role in heterosexual reproduction: both are over very quickly. Walkers can reproduce endlessly and are always ready to reproduce one minute to the next. The fact that it takes nine months to carry a baby to term, as well as the unrealistic assumption that a woman could conceive again immediately after giving birth, decreases the potential amount of offspring they could produce in their lifetime (p. 86-87). Unlike women, men often have anxiety over the question of paternity, "springing from the fact that no man can ever be certain of his children's identity as is the women who bears them: only mothers know beyond a doubt that their children are their own"<sup>28</sup> (Mumford, 1995, p. 96). By contrast to both women and men, the walkers' "fertility" ensures that each attempt to reproduce (i.e. a bite or scratch) is successful.<sup>29</sup> Thus, the walkers reaffirm the primacy of paternal power and masculinity, as a gender which can be inhibited by (undead) people regardless of sex, at least potentially.

### **Gender and Weaponry in *The Walking Dead***

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<sup>28</sup> It is important to note that changes in reproductive technology could ultimately place women in the same position as men in this regard. "Even as social relationships like surrogacy increasingly complicate the legal definition of motherhood, embryo transplants and other techniques are likely to complicate the biological meaning of parenthood for both sexes" (Mumford, 1995, p. 96).

<sup>29</sup> One contradiction could be noted in the third season (3001). In this episode, a walker bites Hershel in the leg and, within a few seconds of realizing this, Rick decides to amputate Hershel's leg, ultimately saving Hershel's life and making him the only known character to survive a walker bite.



I read the use of weaponry within *The Walking Dead* as another space for a discussion of gender and power to take place. The weaponry used within the text is not limited to guns, but also includes crossbows, machetes, swords, axes, and other forms of melee weapons, such as shovels or wrenches. Guns, however, are present in every episode and can be understood through the ways they are constituted through gendered discourses of power and authority. One of the ways this is achieved is through the phallic imagery that the guns represent. As David E. Roark (2011) suggests in *Girls with guns: Understanding gender and violence in contemporary cinema*, “a weapon is almost always considered a phallic object,” and guns represent the phallus due to their resemblance of the penis in shape, as well as in their ability to penetrate and injure (p. 13).<sup>30</sup> In *The Walking Dead*, I read guns as an extension of the phallus and thus an extension of male power. This is cued to us through the choice of characters consistently permitted to carry guns: white males in positions of power/authority. Rick and Shane, for example, are rarely seen without their guns. This particular model of authority, which relies on a display (threat) of force/violence, is discursively constructed. When Rick instructs the group to relinquish their firearms and places Dale in charge of safeguarding and accounting for all of the guns, claiming it is for the overall safety of the group (2004). As a result of their previous law enforcement positions, the pair believes guns are essential for control and protection of the group.

Much work in CDA is about the underlying ideologies that play a role in the reproduction of (or resistance to) dominance and inequality within a text (van Dijk, 1995,

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<sup>30</sup> The term “phallus” designates the representation of an erect penis. Symbolically, “the phallus represents the masculine creative principle; the procreative, generative forces of nature and the human race; the function and potency of the Creator; the stream of life” (Cooper, 2008, p. 129). Examples of phallic symbols include “the pillar; the obelisk; anything piercing or penetrating such as the sword, lance, and arrow” (p. 129).

p. 18). In this case, we see Rick and Shane use the discourse of the law, and the discourses of policing and the state, to distinguish their authoritative identities and to assert that their previous training and occupations exempts them from complying with this (their own) rule of law; in this case they argue that unlike the other survivors, they can carry firearms because they have the appropriate knowledge and experience needed to handle them. Their hubris is made visible here through their refusal to comply with their own order, which essentially places them “above” the law, creating a discourse of expertise which comes from their role as police officers. This situation also mirrors the idea of “the state of exception” (Agamben, 2005). Within the state of exception, an executive power is invested with the power and voice of authority over others that have been extended well beyond where the law has existed in the past and usually occurs in times of crisis. In *The Walking Dead*, Rick and Shane represent this executive power, as previous officers of the law. Foucault states in *Discipline and Punish* (1975),

Power is not to be treated as a property of any particular social stratification or individual who possess it, nor as an instrument they can somehow use at will. Instead, power refers to the various forms of domination and subordination that operates inherently in social relations ... power is not negative: it does not act by repressing or controlling subjects. Rather, power is productive as it acts directly on and through bodies, as opposed to against them (p. 27).

In this sense, the acceptance of Rick and Shane’s attempts to control the guns and ammunition within the camp further strengthens their authority among those subjected to their rules who, in surrendering their firearms, seem to agree that this act will increase their safety. Power is shown to be productive here as the group acknowledges the “law and order” discourse of power that Rick and Shane, as officers of the law, stood for, can keep them safe.

The text, however, constructs a competing discourse of governance within the narrative, as it does not actually support Rick and Shane's idea that guns ensure safety and control. This is cued to us through two ways. The first is through the fact that, next to survivors succumbing to the walkers, guns account for a large majority of human injuries and casualties in the text.<sup>31</sup> This suggests that guns are just as lethal to the human survivors as the undead and thus do not guarantee the safety of the living. It also provides a link between the violence of the past and the present, by suggesting that humans are violent even when they are not undead. The second is through the accepted truth in the diegesis that noise attracts walkers. This is something we are cued to early in the text<sup>32</sup> and is held to by the survivors throughout the series. Guns are loud and using them always seems to bring a lot of walkers. As the series goes on, the characters with guns often have to keep silent and allow those with other weapons (often the more marginal characters) to step in for closer combat because it is the guns that might put them more at risk. One might read this as demonstrating these more marginal characters as slowly playing a greater role or of having their power acknowledged/legitimized, but I read this as power recognizing that it can use the "Other" to fight its battles on the front lines. I also read guns as panoptic symbols in the text. Foucault applied Jeremy Bentham's conceptualization of a panopticon to the disciplinary model of a prison, and used it as a metaphor for the operation of power and surveillance in contemporary society. Foucault's

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<sup>31</sup> Otis (Pruitt Taylor Vince), while hunting deer, mistakenly shoots and severely injures Carl (2001); Shane shoots Otis in the leg and uses him for bait as he escapes a horde of walkers (2003); Andrea, mistaking him for a walker, shoots and injures Daryl (2005); Rick shoots and kills Dave and Tony (Michael Raymond-James & Aaron Munoz) (2008); Hershel and Rick each kill a man as they try to escape the tavern in a shootout (2009); Shane attempts to shoot and kill Rick (2010, 2012).

<sup>32</sup> Andrea yells at Rick, while holding him at gunpoint, because Rick has been shooting his gun off in the middle of the city and she believes that the noise will attract more walkers to their location (1002).

application of this model suggests that through constant visibility and vulnerability, the application of violence and force is no longer needed to sustain power. Instead, those upon whom power is subjected use self-control, as they become “caught up in a power situation where they themselves are the bearers” (Foucault, 1995, p. 201). In *The Walking Dead*, guns represent a panoptic conceptualization of power through the way that you can look through the scope and see, but others are not guaranteed to be able to see you.

Therefore, at any time, an individual cannot be guaranteed to be free from the “gaze” of another, specifically another with a gun, who watches with the intent to harm. A strong example from the text is shown in the first season (1003), as Shane holds Rick in the sights of his scope for some time. This reflects Foucault’s application of the panoptic model because Shane has constant visibility as he follows Rick through the scope, and Rick is vulnerable and unaware as Shane contemplates killing him.

In *The Walking Dead*, white males in positions of power or authority consistently carry guns, allowing them distance from the acts of violence they commit. In this sense, I read guns as negating the intimacy that happens in proximate violence because they allow the shooter distance from those s/he injures or kills. Thus, I interpreted guns as often affording certain characters, predominantly white males in positions of authority, distance and space to remain “clean” within the apocalyptic landscape; not having to get their hands dirty in close combat. So it invokes a discourse of white masculinity that links it to cleanliness in some sense, a distance from dirt, although not even these characters can stay out of the dirt for long. On the other hand, characters that do not fit into this profile (of white, male, and authoritative) are not granted the same space from violence, blood, and dirt. These characters must more often engage in close combat and use weapons other

than guns in order to eliminate threats, causing them to be closer to the violence and to become dirty. So discursively, links are made between being unclean and being not male, not white, and not professional/middle class. In my reading of the text, women and the walkers are overwhelmingly placed into this role, illustrating further how weaponry is used in the text to gender power. The text discursively reminds us that only men who embody a certain type of white masculinity can have this authority.

How white masculinity is granted distance from violence is cued to us through the character Andrea. Andrea is intelligent and brave, never shying away from a challenge or fight. She is extremely protective of those she cares about and not afraid to speak her mind. Before the apocalypse, Andrea was a civil rights attorney.<sup>33</sup> After losing her sister, Andrea wants to contribute to the group by helping to keep its members safe, meaning that she wants to learn how to use, shoot, clean, and handle a gun. The other women in the text (Lori, Carol, Jacqui, Maggie, Beth, Patricia, and Amy) are primarily constructed through a discourse of normative hetero-femininity, and are largely represented as content with upholding retro gender norms like cooking, cleaning, and caring for the children. However, the text places Andrea in an ambiguous gender position in relation to this discourse, as she embodies masculine traits, such as the willingness to fight and/or confronting the system, and is single and childless. But as she is ultimately not male, she is hindered again and again from escaping traditional gender role expectations.

An example early in season two (2001) cues us to this ambiguous gender position. In this episode, Andrea becomes trapped in the RV washroom after the survivors encounter a massive herd of walkers on the interstate. Andrea is attempting to take apart

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<sup>33</sup> I read Andrea's occupation as suggesting that she challenges "the system," both before and after the apocalypse.

and clean the gun her father left her when walkers suddenly surround the RV. As a walker stumbles into the RV, Andrea hides in the bathroom and struggles to remain silent and put her gun back together. However, her attempt to manage this phallic object fails. Andrea's refusal to accept her gender role (by attempting to use a gun) has placed her in a dangerous situation. That is, she is in close proximity to a walker and must be intimately involved in violence in order to eliminate this threat. So she refuses the dominant discursive construction of femininity on offer in the text, but there is no real alternative offered to her.

In this scene, Andrea is forced to eliminate the walker in close combat, using a screwdriver that Dale passed to her through the roof of the RV. This scene is quite graphic and disturbing as the walker bangs and pushes against the bathroom door, snarling and reaching for Andrea's flesh, only inches away. We are cued to the danger, as well as Andrea's failed attempt to be emotionally tough, as she screams, with tears streaming down her face. In those few seconds, she realizes that she must fight. As Andrea realizes this, she opens the bathroom door, allowing the walker to move closer and cuing us to the intimacy in the proximity of violence that she is subjected to. Screaming, she lunges towards the walker, holding the screwdriver above her, and violently stabs the walker in the head numerous times, killing it, but leaving herself dirty and covered in its blood, as well as physically exhausted.

This scene is significant because it cues us to read the physical location of the body as an indicator of the discursive construction of gender in the text. In it, men are constructed as literally above women, and here we see the text offering us a visual reminder of this. Andrea, while trapped in the bathroom, is physically lower than Dale

(who is on the roof above her). What is interesting is that Dale does not make an attempt to save Andrea, and neither does anyone else. Instead, Dale hands Andrea a screwdriver, which suggests that he assumes she is able to destroy the threat in front of her, as long as she doesn't mind getting dirty. I read height in the text as representative of power by granting space from the proximity of violence. Dale is also white, male, and heterosexual, suggesting that white masculinity is granted additional distance from violence. Andrea's realization that she is in danger, and her acceptance of the screwdriver, suggests that for the moment, she has accepted her position within the text, and is therefore successful in eliminating the walker. Thus, the discourse constructs male power as authoritative but also as "clean," whereas when others take power, especially those who are marginalized, it's dirty.

### **Race and Class:**

In addition to being gendered, my critical discourse analysis also reveals that the power and authority to govern is raced and classed. One way the text cues us to this is through setting. *The Walking Dead* is set in the United States of America, particularly in the state of Georgia, although it exists within its own textual universe. According to 2011 census data, the population of Georgia is broken down by race in the following way: White persons – 63.2%, Black persons – 31%, American Indian and Alaska Native persons – 0.5%, Asian persons – 3.4%, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander persons – 0.1%, Persons of Hispanic or Latino Origin – 9.1%, and Persons reporting two or more races – 1.8% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011), yet the majority of characters in the text are white. Mastro and Greenburg's (2000) qualitative study of television content

determined that white characters generally outnumber characters of colour on television.<sup>34</sup> This study was replicated a decade later,<sup>35</sup> and it was determined that white actors continue to be in a distinct majority position (Monk-Turner, Heiserman, Johnson, Cotton, & Jackson, 2010, p. 105). *The Walking Dead* holds to this account, with few characters that are not white in the first two seasons,<sup>36</sup> and only two (T-Dog and Glenn [Steven Yeun]) that appear regularly throughout the first and second seasons; no other ethnicities or races appear consistently in the text, suggesting a largely White/African American dichotomy.<sup>37</sup>

In *The Walking Dead*, all of the survivors, regardless of ethnicity or race, are “American born” and constantly searching for “safe” spaces in the hopes of re-building their previous lives. In contrast, the walkers are a metaphor of the displaced “other,” endlessly roaming, hungry, and striving for access into these “human” spaces. This is significant as it strengthens the dichotomy between us/them and living/dead while also paralleling Stratton’s (2011) analysis of zombies, viewing their underlying characteristics as similar to those attributed to displaced peoples; “that is, people predominantly from non-Western states striving for entry into Western states” (p. 265), constructing a discourse of the other. Stratton argues that the rise of the popularity of the zombie, which has occurred within film, television, literature, and video games since the 2000, has

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<sup>34</sup> The quantitative findings revealed that 80% of major and minor characters in prime time television programmes (from 2000-2001) were white.

<sup>35</sup> Prime time television programmes (airing from 8-10pm EST) on ABC, FOX, NBC, and CBS were coded and analyzed. White actors continued to be in a distinct majority position, African American representation was in line with their percent of the U.S. population, and the representation of Latino’s continued to be in a distinct minority.

<sup>36</sup> In addition to Glenn (present in 19 episodes) and T-Dog (present in 17 episodes), who appear consistently throughout the first two seasons, Jacqui and Morales appear only in the first season (6 and 4 episodes, respectively), and Morgan and Duane both only appear in the first episode of season one.

<sup>37</sup> Glenn is an exception, as he is originally from Michigan and identifies as a Korean-American.



transpired during the same time period as the “increasing anxiety in western countries over the number of people attempting to gain entry across their borders” (p. 266). Thus, a racial and national discourse develops around state/land ownership, as the human survivors’ national identity is discursively constituted as “American” and they are positioned as the rightful and normal inhabitants of the space they are in (i.e. the farm, Georgia, and ultimately America as a whole), whereas the walkers are discursively constructed as a foreign, abnormal, and evil “other” who must not be allowed access to this space.

Recalling from chapter 1.1, Dendle (2007) and Bishop’s (2009) discussion of the “War on Terror” to examine the popularity of the zombie narrative, has allowed for the grim realization that people are not as safe as the once thought (p. 17). This adds to Stratton’s (2011) analysis, acknowledging how “anxieties over border protection in all countries, but especially in the West, were heightened in the wake of the 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center in New York” (p. 266). The apocalyptic backdrop of *The Walking Dead* further connects Dendle’s (2007) argument that zombie apocalypses have “honed images of desperation, subsistence, and amoral survivalism to a fine edge” (p. 54), often displaying countless hordes of walkers from aerial views, as well as character perspectives, as the survivors do whatever it takes to stay alive, which generally results in the brutal annihilation and dismemberment of the walkers’ body, a point I expand upon in chapter 2.3. *The Walking Dead*, like other apocalyptic zombie narratives, draws parallels to the war on terror, border security, and otherness, as the zombie apocalypse trope displays images of increasing numbers of zombies (or walkers) that appear from nowhere

and in which entire communities, whole countries, and even the world are subjected to this collective and inescapable destruction.

Nick Muntean and Matthew Payne (2009) discuss British Canadian film critic Robin Wood's argument that the monster (in this case, the walker) "represents otherness in society; someone or something that should be repressed, but which has materialized nonetheless ... and its very existence is an unwelcome challenge to the status quo" (p. 242). As Wood (2003) states, "otherness represents that which the bourgeois ideology cannot recognize or accept but must deal with in one of two ways: either by rejecting it and if possible annihilating it, or by rendering it safe and assimilating it, converting it as far as possible into a replica of the self" (p. 65-66). We see the former frequently in *The Walking Dead*, as the diegesis suggests that the walkers and humans cannot coexist harmoniously and must be eliminated to ensure the safety of the group, foreshadowing the logic of 9/11, which suggests that "the response to the threat must be as or more barbaric than the threat itself" (p. 199). Sometimes the survivors are even offered a chance to get violent revenge on a walker who has killed someone they cared about. In regards to the latter, we see a few examples in the text of a survivor rendering a walker safe/assimilating it, cued to us through the jawless, limbless walkers that Michonne keeps chained to her.

A particular confrontation in the first season (1004) cues us to this "otherness," as well as to the discursive construction of power and authority as raced and classed. This confrontation also takes place in Atlanta, providing viewers with a significant depiction of urban spaces as a sight of disease, danger, and uncleanness. In this scene, Rick, Daryl, Glenn, and T-Dog have returned to Atlanta in hopes of retrieving a bag of guns dropped by Rick as he escaped, as well as rescuing Merle, who was left behind in the

ensuing chaos. However, their plan goes awry when they are attacked by a group of men and Glenn is taken hostage. Rick, Daryl, and T-Dog manage to take a hostage of their own, and plan to use him as leverage to get Glenn back. When they confront Guillermo (Neil Brown Jr.), the young, Latino leader of the group that attacked them, they realize that he is actually protecting a nursing home and its residents, which include Guillermo's grandmother. Rick confronts Guillermo:

Rick: You are the dumbest son-of-a-bitch I ever knew. We walked in here ready to kill every last one of you.

Guillermo: Well I'm glad it didn't go down that way.

Rick: If it had that blood would have been on my hands.

Guillermo: Mine too. We would have fought back. Wouldn't have been the first time we had to, to protect the food, medicine, what's left of it. These people, the old ones, staff took off, just left them here to die. Me and Felipe (Guillermo's cousin), we're the only ones who stayed.

Rick: What are you? Doctors?

Guillermo: Felipe, he's a nurse, a special care provider. Me, I'm the custodian ... the world is still the same. The weak get taken. So we do what we can here. The Vatos work on cars and talk about getting out of the city, but most can't get to the bathroom by themselves, so that's just a dream. Still, it keeps the crew busy, and that's worth something.

This scene reveals that Guillermo and Felipe (Noel Gugliemi) are part of a Latino gang, known as the "Vatos," and this is significant as it cues us towards the immediate perceived "otherness" and classed position of Guillermo's group, as poor, violent, and anti-social (Vigil, 2003, p. 226). Rick first asks if they are doctors, suggesting that he does not make the connection between their social identities and their class/racialization. However, the way the Vatos are represented (as gang members who are legible to the viewer as such and thus, scary) produces a kind of irony where we are drawn into the

discursive construction of the Vatos as monsters, and thus, like the walkers (gang members are often represented as violent, without feelings, automatic killing machines). When they are revealed as “good,” remaining behind at the nursing home to care for the elderly, we are instructed to be reflexive of our own presumptions about such characters. The opposite occurs in season three, when we are introduced to The Governor, who we see as benevolent (white, middle-class, educated, charismatic), but who ultimately turns out to be a sadist.

### **Whiteness and the “White Trash” Identity**

Another example that works to discursively constitute power and authority as raced and classed occurs even earlier in the first season (1002), drawing a distinction not only between the us/them binary within the survivor group, but also displaying some of the initial images of the danger that lies within the city. When Rick first meets part of the survivor group in Atlanta, they are out on a mission to scavenge supplies from the city. Shortly after, an altercation occurs between Merle and the rest of the group. Merle has been shooting his rifle off on the top of the building, and the group is concerned because he is wasting ammunition, as well as attracting more walkers with all of the noise. As Rick arrives on the rooftop, T-Dog and Morales (Juan Gabriel Pareja) attempt to approach Merle, asking him to refrain from shooting his gun:

Morales: Dixon, are you crazy?

Merle: Hey, you gotta be more polite to a man with a gun, only common sense!

T-Dog: (Yelling) Man, you’re wasting bullets we don’t even got! And you’re bringing more of them down here on our ass, man just chill!

Merle: Hey, it's bad enough I've got this taco bender (pointing to Morales) on my ass all day, now I'm gonna take orders from you? I don't think so "bro" (looking at T-Dog). That will be the day!

T-Dog: That will be the day? (Yelling) Hey man, you got something you want to tell me?

(Morales steps in between them in an attempt to diffuse the situation).

Merle: I'll tell you the day mister "Yo," it's the day I take orders from a nigger! (1002).

Immediately, T-Dog attempts to punch Merle and Merle dodges his punch, hitting T-Dog with the end of his gun, knocking him to the ground. A fistfight ensues and Merle viciously beats T-Dog, knocking him headfirst into a pipe. This scene is quite disturbing and conjures violent and racist imagery as Merle towers over T-Dog, continually kicking and punching him, as he lies helpless on the ground. Even though T-Dog is a big man, in height and musculature, we are cued to the unequal, racialized power relations that are not necessarily supported by the text, but that are continuous from the "real" world to the diegesis.

Merle then pulls out his gun, shoves it in T-Dog's face and spits on his chest:

Merle: (Yelling) Alright, we're gonna have ourselves a little pow-wow. Talk about who's in charge! I vote me. Democracy time y'all. Show of hands, all in favour?

As Merle waves his gun around, he demands that the group raise their hands and elect him their leader. The other survivors, who have huddled around T-Dog's injured body, hesitantly raise their hands. We see a close-up shot of Merle as he smiles, suggesting he is pleased with himself; sure no one else will challenge his authority. Rick walks into the scene and overpowers Merle the same way Merle overpowered T-Dog, by hitting him in the head with the end of his gun. As Merle falls to the ground, Rick quickly handcuffs

Merle to the pipe he previously knocked T-Dog into. Thunder can be heard in the background, helping to illustrate the power struggle occurring in this scene. Here, whiteness is equated with power, but classed whiteness mitigates that power. So white masculinity never relinquishes power, but rather the text acknowledges that this discursive construction of power is not limited to a discourse of whiteness, but includes intersectional points of reference, such as class. Merle, handcuffed and wincing in pain, challenges Rick:

Merle: Who the hell are you man?

Rick: Officer Friendly. Look here Merle. Things are different now. There are no niggers anymore. No dumb as shit, inbred, white trash, fools neither. There's only dark meat and white meat, us and the dead. We survive this by pulling together, not apart!

Merle: Screw you!

Merle is consistently presented as an ill-tempered, redneck, racist, less educated and lower than the rest of the group, especially Rick. We are cued to this through Merle's racist comments to T-Dog and Morales, his violent behaviour, but also through the close up shots of Rick's uniformed body standing over Merle once Rick has him handcuffed to a pipe. Rick's use of the term "white trash" is a marker of social difference and also signals an absence of whiteness rather than its presence (Wray, 2006, p. 1-3).<sup>38</sup> Rick's whiteness is portrayed as middle-class and professional, whereas Merle is seen as white trash, portrayed as poor, uneducated, and rural (p. 47). Matt Wray (2006), in his book *Not*

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<sup>38</sup> Wray (2006) explains, "whiteness studies began to take shape as an interdisciplinary field of research in the 1990's" (p. 4). David Roediger (1991, 1994), Toni Morrison (1992), and Ruth Frankenburg (1993), are among some of the influential works in the area. "Whiteness studies" focus on the historical development of race-based social domination and exploring what the legacies of white supremacy and white privilege have meant, not just for people of colour, but for whites as well (Wray, 2006, p. 4).

*quite white: White trash and the boundaries of Whiteness*, contends that terms such as “white trash” “have been used by Americans of all colours to humiliate and shame, to insult and dishonour, and to demean and stigmatize” (p. 1) and he defines “white” as a social category, not solely a racial one (p. 139). Although Merle attempted to gain power and control over the group by exercising violence, he fails to cultivate authority over them, as they refused to accept his actions. In this sense, there is a conflation of racism with the lower class, which suggests that people like Rick (middle-class, white) are not racist, providing a great way of allowing these characters (like Rick), as well as the audience, to ignore class and white privilege, as well as how they benefit not only from class privilege, but from the privilege that comes out of racist, white supremacy as well, to say nothing of gender and heteronormativity.

In contrast, Rick garners authority in this scene, visually, through his uniform and the law and order paradigm it represents, but also through the group’s acceptance of his actions. Although Rick’s dominance over Merle could be read in terms of his morality, his critique itself is racist and classist. Even if Rick speaks eloquently of equality (referring to everyone as “meat”), his assumption that he should be the voice of authority underscores the racialized and classed nature of the discursive construction of authority in the text. His utilization of “inbred,” “redneck,” and “white trash” are racialized and classed terms in themselves (Wray, 2006, p. 3).

Whiteness is also at play in this scene as Rick uses Merle as a scapegoat to help obscure his own white privilege. While power and authority invested in him in part due to his claim on white privilege, he refuses that privilege to Merle on the basis of his class status as he assumes authority over the group. In a Foucauldian sense, “the discourse on

Whiteness systematically forms the object of which it speaks – invoking a presence that is not manifest in the physical, but in the social construction of identity, worth, and value” (Alexander, 2004, p. 650). In this sense, the class discourses come into play to cover over any critique we might make of Rick’s sense of his own white privilege. Rick’s sheriff uniform towering above Merle in this scene helps to produce his identity as white, masculine, and authoritative. The choice to make the wearer(s) of this uniform exclusively white men, demonstrates the way in which the text conflates the power invested in the uniform with whiteness. Rick and Shane’s uniformed bodies help to discursively construct their position and identity, as officers of the law, and as men, as worthy and important of power and authority, and the reaction from the other survivors (visually expressed through signs of their relief: sighs, deep breaths, relaxing their shoulders) cues us to the acknowledgement of this authority.

Merle’s behaviour is represented as risky, violent, and threatening, and Rick also shows himself capable of this behaviour, through his actions of overpowering Merle. However, the dichotomy between these two characters is underscored by Rick’s repudiation of Merle, which plays into the construction of Rick’s morality by positioning him as the “hero” to the survivors, as he rescues them from Merle’s tyrannical rampage. Rick’s verbal identification of the us/them binary, “there’s only dark meat and white meat, us and the dead,” calls upon a raced image, but then seems to refuse racial distinctions, suggesting that you are either one of “us” (i.e. human) or one of “them” (i.e. the undead). This scene positions whiteness as good, moral, and just by suggesting that “by pulling together” and abandoning old world views (that are raced and classed), the survivors can prosper over the evil undead others. However, his speech in this scene,



coupled with his choice to continue wearing the uniform in this apocalyptic landscape, further promotes white privilege and authority. When Rick draws the binary between “us” and “them,” and compares it to “dark” and “white,” he is suggesting that an individual only remains on the privileged side of the binary if they accept and function according to the white side, which conveniently falls under his privileged authority. The power struggle between Rick, representative of “real” or “true” whiteness, and Merle, white trash, parallels Wray’s argument that, “the social domination that whiteness enables is of many different forms and relies on many different kinds of social difference” (p. 139). In other words, whiteness speaks to much more than colour and race, suggesting that not all white people can claim the same white privilege. Even though Merle appears to believe in white superiority/supremacy, Rick’s appearance demonstrates that Merle’s hold on white privilege is tenuous at best. Thus, although both characters are white, the discursive construction of power and authority is raced and classed, and demonstrates that power is not necessarily something afforded to all white men, when there is a white man with more power in the group.

Another example of how whiteness is classed occurs in a subsequent episode (1003). In this episode, Rick is almost immediately offered an authoritative role by the rest of the survivors when he returns from Atlanta with Andrea, Glenn, T-Dog, and Jacqui. Upon their return, the group discusses how they should approach Daryl and explain how his brother, Merle, was left behind. T-Dog admits that it is his responsibility to tell Daryl, since he dropped the key to Merle’s handcuffs, and left him on the roof. Rick also takes responsibility, as he was the one who handcuffed Merle in the first place. However, Glenn, considering the circumstances of Merle’s restraint, interjects: “I don’t

mean to bring race into this, but it might sound better coming from a white guy.” Glenn here suggests that Rick’s race places him in a better position than T-Dog to explain to Daryl what happened to his brother. However, his suggestion also cues us to the intersectional identity of whiteness. Since Merle is portrayed as a bigot, his brother, Daryl, is assumed to be the similar because they have the same class background. According to Rogers Brubaker (as cited in Wray, 2006, p. 141), “social differentiation can occur whether the perception of social difference is valid or not”; it is the definition, imposition, and reiteration of the boundary that makes the difference. Wray (2006) explains, “in a social world, the classifying process enables us to place ourselves and others in relation to one another as we stake out the boundaries of our individual and group identities” (p. 140). He uses “boundary theory,” which is the analysis and understanding of these classifying processes and their manifold effects, to assert,

*White trash* is an important case for applying some of these ideas because *white trash* so clearly does not name an externally bonded group. There is no bounded social collective. Those so labeled do not form a group in the sociological sense (i.e., having members who interact with each other, share values and norms, and share a sense of “we-ness” or collective identity), yet, historically, the attribution of the term has resulted in a kind of group effects. One of those effects is to make us think and act as if there is a group being referred to, when there is in fact a situation being referred to, an encounter between peoples, some of whom may have differing habits, morals, and worldviews (emphasis in original, p. 178).

What makes the term white trash and the characters of Daryl and Merle relevant is that they help us identify the boundary set up between being white and exemplifying whiteness, further demonstrating how power and authority are discursively constituted as being raced and classed.

I read Glenn’s suggestion, and Rick’s subsequent agreement, as an acknowledgment of social difference between Rick and Daryl. Glenn does not suggest

that Rick should speak to Daryl solely because he is white, but also because the group marginalizes Daryl, assuming him to be similar to his white trash brother, Merle (i.e. racist, violent, uneducated, poor, and dirty). Moments after this conversation between Rick, Glenn, and T-Dog, we are cued to how Daryl is marginalized from the group based on his relation to Merle. The camera focuses and follows Daryl, as he returns to camp from a hunting trip, appearing in a sleeveless shirt, with greasy hair, sweat, and dirt covering his body. He is also carrying his haul from his hunting trip, consisting of dead squirrels, tied to a rope, and slung over his shoulder. The portrayal of Daryl in this way demonstrates how a discourse of whiteness helps to construct white trash to be synonymous with uncleanness, the uncivilized, the rural, and the poor, as it works to distinguish him from the cleanliness of Rick's whiteness.<sup>39</sup>

Rick explains to Daryl how and why Merle was left behind in Atlanta, claiming that he was “a danger to the group” and that he doesn't “play well with others” (1003). We are cued to Daryl's anger and frustration as he lunges at Rick, attempting to punch him. Shane, however, immediately subdues Daryl and proceeds to hold him in a headlock. In this scene, we are cued to the power and authority that Rick and Shane have over Daryl. As Shane restrains Daryl, we hear him challenge Shane, claiming, “chokeholds are illegal” to which Shane sarcastically replies, “Ya, file a complaint.” This suggests that Shane's (and Rick's) power extends even further now that there are no structures (discourses above their authority) to keep them in check. The answer to the question inherent in Shane's statement is: where does one/can one file a complaint after

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<sup>39</sup> Rick has washed and cleaned himself since returning from Atlanta. We are cued to this because while in Atlanta (1002), Rick covers himself with entrails from a dead walker, in an attempt to move unnoticed through a crowd of walkers outside the department store. However, when we see him again in the next episode (1003), he is clean and Carol has washed and hung his uniform to dry.

the apocalypse? It also suggests that Daryl has experience in being on the other side of the law from Rick and Shane. He is or has been the object of policing, thus, he knows that chokeholds are illegal to use on suspects of crime. Daryl also seems to be speaking to Rick and Shane here in a relation to their professional (prior) roles through which they have garnered their current status, suggesting that he does not accept their authority. Rick approaches Daryl again and asks: “Now, I’d like to have a calm discussion on the topic. Think we can manage that?” In a condescending tone, Rick questions whether Daryl can have a calm and rational discussion, suggesting social difference and assuming Daryl to be violent and irrational, much like his brother. Rick’s position as a white, male, officer of the law, and Daryl’s difference and classed position, further illustrate the discursive construction of power and authority as racialized, classed, and not afforded to all white men. It also demonstrates how this discursive construction is a dominant régime of truth within the text, as we are consistently reminded that only men who discursively embody whiteness, masculinity, heterosexuality, and middle-class status can have this authority.

### **Authority Figures**

In this section, I will discuss the three different models of authority that Rick, Shane, and Hershel, represent, as well as how their power is garnered, using examples from the text to further enable a better understanding of how power and authority is gendered, classed, and raced. This is significant as different discourses of power operationalize authority in different ways. For instance, each of these models of authority is underpinned by discourses which offer a particular régime of truth for understanding

authority: Rick as moral and democratic; Shane as pragmatic and militaristic; and Hershel as a medical authority, in addition to exemplifying a feudal and religious authority.

The discourse of law defines Rick's identity as an officer of the law and the authority he previously held transitions with him into the new apocalyptic landscape. Viewers are cued to this through Rick's continued effort to wear his uniform (and ride a horse) and through the survivors' behaviour towards Rick, which I read as a reaction to this. For instance, Andrea identifies Rick's authority right away. In the second episode (1002), the survivors become trapped in a department store. Andrea begins to look around and finds a mermaid necklace that she thinks her sister (Amy) might like for her upcoming birthday. Rick, observing her behaviour, realizes that she is hesitant:

Rick: Why not take it?

Andrea: Because there's a cop standing right next to me. (Pause) Would it be considered looting?

Rick: I don't think those rules apply anymore.

The sheriff's uniform that Rick wears throughout the first and second seasons is an important symbol of his power and moral authority. This is illustrated by Andrea's initial hesitation to take the necklace while Rick is observing her. Prior to the apocalypse, Andrea worked as a civil rights attorney, suggesting that she accepted and functioned according to dominant discourses of the law and order authority that Rick and his uniform represent. Although Andrea could have just taken the necklace, she waits until Rick conveys his opinion on the matter. Once she gains his approval, she no longer hesitates.

Shane's authority transitions with him into this new landscape in a different way. The discourse of hegemonic masculinity that is used to construct Shane as an authority figure, suggests that he uses his authority not only to govern the group of survivors, but

also to take over Rick's patriarchal role within his nuclear family. We are cued to this as we witness Shane and Lori having sex in the woods (1002), away from the rest of the group. Before Lori and Shane meet in this scene, I was unsure of what was about to occur because Shane's body movements (quick, swift, silent motions as he ran through the forest, hiding behind trees, and peeking out from behind them), seemed to signal that he was hunting or stalking prey. In actuality, he was "stalking" Lori, as it is revealed later that the two had made plans to meet up in the woods. This scene suggests that women are vulnerable prey to the desires of the male in this apocalyptic space and that they are something to be possessed, and this strengthens the discourse of hegemonic masculinity that underpins Shane's authority.

As they are intimate, Shane notices Lori's wedding ring, which she is wearing around her neck, and is reminded of Rick. We see Lori remove the necklace and place it off to the side, illustrating that she is separating that part of herself and indicating that she wants to continue her relationship with Shane. As one of the few sex scenes in *The Walking Dead*, this scene is significant because it reinforces heteronormativity and strengthens Shane's masculinity, through his physical force and control of Lori's body as he stalks her in the woods, and through the visual domination of her, as he straddles her from behind on the forest floor. In a following scene, Shane sits around the campfire teaching Carl how to tie knots. As Lori looks on at the pair she smiles, indicating her approval and pleasure. This scene works to suggest that Shane has been acting as a surrogate father for Carl, and associates his assumption of authority over Rick's family with his masculinity, as a lover, and a leader, and, drawing heavily on dominant discourses of patriarchal masculinity, as a father figure.

As a viewer, I was offered little information as to how Shane became the leader of the survivor group stationed outside of Atlanta. However, an early scene reveals this authority (1002). In the scene, Amy hears T-Dog's radio transmission from the department store in Atlanta, explaining that they are trapped and surrounded by walkers. Amy, passionate about the group's rescue due to the fact that her sister (Andrea) is among them, demands a rescue attempt. Shane, however, immediately denies Amy's request:

Shane: No way! We don't risk the rest of the group ... y'all know that!

Amy: So we're just going to leave her (Andrea) there? She volunteered to go, to help the rest of us!

Shane: I know, and she knew the risks right? See, if she's trapped she's gone ... we just have to deal with it, there is nothing we can do.

Shane has made the decision for the group, and although many dislike it, their body language (heads down, distressed and solemn facial expressions) and silence suggest that they will not challenge his authority. The events that take place in this scene and Shane's steadfast authoritative decision, which he believes is for the betterment of the group, work to discursively construct Shane's model of authority as pragmatic as opposed to Rick's democratic and moral authority. Shane views the projected outcome of his conduct as the ultimate basis for any judgement about the rightness of that conduct. For him, a moral act, or omission, is one that will produce a good outcome, or consequence. However, the right outcome is that in which he (as the authority) defines it; "right" is not open here, it is the right as defined by his patriarchal authority. In this sense, Andrea, along with the others, must take responsibility for their choice to return to the city, acknowledging the risks, and ultimately accepting their fate. Thus, Shane feels justified in his decision to not enact a

rescue party, as this would risk more group members and could ultimately lead to more deaths (which for him is a bad consequence).

We are cued to the fact that Shane represents a masculine and professional authority in this scene through the way he is dressed, consisting of a King's County sheriff department hat, cargo pants, military boots, and gun holster. Rick and Shane both embody uniformed, disciplined, and armed male bodies. However, Shane's appearance differs from Rick's in that Shane looks more militaristic. Whereas Rick wears the original sheriff deputy's uniform we see him in before the apocalypse, complete with cowboy hat and badge, Shane does not. Instead, Shane is dressed in cargo pants, military boots, a baseball cap, and a t-shirt, conjuring more militaristic images, such as a drill sergeant at boot camp. This distinction between Rick and Shane helps to solidify the differences in these two characters and the model of authority each represents for viewers. For instance, under the discourse of law, officers of the law, represented in the text by Rick, are integrated with the day-to-day social life of the community, providing many different services; they are also responsible for order maintenance and crime control (John Howard Society of Alberta, 1997). On the other hand, Shane's version of authority is discursively constituted through a military discourse. In contrast to an officer of the law, the military works to ensure the security of their country's citizens and attempt to enhance sovereignty, resulting in the separation from many of the domestic responsibilities that police undertake (Mason, 2013).

Prior to the apocalypse, flashbacks inform us that Rick and Shane were both sheriff's deputies, however, nothing in the text gives any indication that one of these two characters had a privileged position of authority, although flashbacks did suggest that



there was a higher authoritative power that kept them both in check. After the apocalypse, and as the seasons progress, the separate models of authority that Rick and Shane represent begin to collide and often result in tension between these two and the different discourses of power they represent. Pre-apocalypse, they were not able to act out their authority and power the way that they do after, but now, they are, in a sense, the ultimate authorities. Foucault's understanding of power helps to explain how these divisions and negotiations of authority occur. Since power, for Foucault, does not emanate from a single source, this suggests that authority must be diffuse and plural (Foucault, 1995, p. 27). Foucault saw power as manifested through a "capillary model," suggesting that where there is power, there is resistance and struggle (Best, 2002, p. 19). This understanding indicates that power and authority are in constant flux and negotiation and helps us to comprehend the fluidity of power and authority within *The Walking Dead*, which is perhaps best exemplified early on in the text, as Rick and Shane are reunited and immediately struggle for position and advantage within the group, as well as who will retain the patriarchal role over Lori and Carl.

Recalling an earlier example, in which Rick approaches Daryl about his missing brother, we are cued to the further evolution of the power struggle between Rick and Shane. After the altercation with Daryl, Rick offers to return to the city to rescue Merle, and Glenn, T-Dog, and Daryl volunteer to join him. However, Shane disagrees with Rick's decision and we are cued to this as he confronts Rick:

Shane: Merle Dixon is a douchebag! The guy wouldn't give you a glass of water if you were dying of thirst!

Rick: What he would or wouldn't do doesn't interest me. I can't let a man die of thirst ... we left him like an animal caught in a trap. That is no way for anything to die, let alone a human being.

Shane: You're putting every single one of us at risk! Just know that Rick! You saw that walker; it was here, in our camp. They're moving outta the cities and if more come we need every able body we got, and we need them here, to protect the camp (1003).

In this scene, Shane is very upset and believes his authority has been challenged.

Shane, in his pragmatism, believes that in order to protect the group, risks must be kept to a minimum and safety is to be upheld at all costs. Shane's upset tone cues us to the fact that he views Rick's decision as extremely dangerous and a risk not worth taking, as they have already experienced the overrun city and the threat it holds. Shane's militaristic nature also leads him to be angry at the fact that Rick wants to risk four able-bodied men from the camp to retrieve Merle, who is expendable in Shane's mind. In this scene, Shane's pragmatic approach is cued to us as he advocates that the group needs all the able bodies they have to remain at camp, ensuring that if the camp falls under attack again, they will have the maximum amount of people there to protect it. Shane's comment also cues us to the discursive construction of the able, male body as essential to ensure protection for the group.

In an attempt to maneuver for a position of power and convince Shane of his plan, Rick changes his argument insisting that they need to return to Atlanta to retrieve the bag of guns that he dropped in the street. Rick's knowledge of the location of these weapons provides him power in this scene, and he uses this knowledge to mitigate the risk and justify his return to the city. Power in this scene is also related to Rick's identity, as a man and an officer of the law. We are cued to Rick's power here through his moral judgment, parallel to his law and order approach, in which he asserts that he cannot leave a person for dead the way that Merle was left in Atlanta. Shane negotiates his authoritative position in this scene, verbally contesting the group's return to the city as "foolish and

reckless,” but relinquishes much of his authority to Rick at the chance of gaining more weapons and ammunition (1003). Again, this underscores the differences between these two models of authority, as Rick uses moral reasoning to justify his opinion, and Shane insists that they take a pragmatic approach to the situation.

Although Rick and Shane are in relatively equal fields of power in opposition, it is not clear what they resist aside from each other. Prior to the apocalypse, it is suggested that each only held minor amounts of power, but a pre-existing tension between Rick and Shane, specifically over Lori, is hinted at. A particular scene in the third episode (1003) alludes to the continuation and development of this tension. The group from Atlanta, now reunited with the others back at camp, sits around a campfire as Rick describes how he felt waking up in the hospital alone. Lori and Carl cling to Rick’s side and the camera provides a close up of the Grimes family as Rick explains to his son, that his mother, Lori, had every reason to believe he was dead. Lori glances across the fire to Shane with a look of guilt on her face and we see a close up shot of a scorned Shane sitting across the campfire from the newly reunited Grimes family. A discourse of devotion is present here, as Lori’s ashamed and guilty looks cue us to the primacy of biological and marital relationships. I read her returning to Rick’s side not only from guilt, but because doing so is central to her discursive construction as a good woman, wife, and mother. There is also a suggestion that she used Shane opportunistically as both a lover and a stand in for Rick because the text constructs women as unable to survive without men in this world. Shane’s solemn and glaring gaze across the campfire suggests that he is envious of Rick and feels as if Lori and Carl have been taken from him. As Shane and Lori try to avoid eye contact, the tension between them rises. The evolution of a struggle for power is

foreshadowed as thunder booms in the background, suggesting that this struggle will be deepened as Rick and Shane compete for the patriarchal role within the Grimes family.

After Rick's return, Shane continues to pursue Lori, forcefully demonstrating his feelings for her and his desire to continue their affair (1006), and approaching her when she is alone to try to convince her that they belong together. He also questions Rick's masculinity and his patriarchal role by insisting that he cannot protect his family or make the hard (pragmatic) decisions when they count. Shane's persistence prompts Lori to approach Rick with her concerns about his behaviour and actions (2009):

Lori: We need to talk about Shane. He thinks the baby is his. (Pause)  
No matter what, it's yours.

Rick: He (Shane) won't except that.

Lori: You're going to have to make him. He won't listen to me. He's delusional, he's dangerous ... you saw what he did to the barn, he's threatened Dale, and Hershel, he's scaring people, he's scaring me and I think he killed Otis<sup>40</sup>, and I think he did it not just to save Carl but because he loves me and he thinks that we are supposed to be together, no matter what.

Rick: I killed two men myself because I love you, and Carl, and the baby. It was going to be me and not them, no matter what.

Lori: You killed the living to protect what's yours? ... Shane thinks I'm his, he thinks the baby is his, and he says you can't protect us, that you're going to get us killed. He's dangerous Rick and he won't stop!

This conversation again cues us to the importance of paternity and masculinity within the text. Mumford (1995) helps to highlight why the question of paternity is featured so prominently, asserting, "mainstream, mass-media-generated popular culture reflects the prevailing political and social ethos of the culture in which it is produced, in this case

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<sup>40</sup> Dale speaks to Lori and explains that he believes that Shane killed or sacrificed Otis so that he could get away. He also explain to Lori that Shane has threatened him, and that he believes it is only a matter of time until he kills someone else (2008).

patriarchal interests that privilege the father's role and identity over the mother's" (p. 100). Although Mumford discusses this in the context of the soap opera, this understanding can be used as a jumping off point for a discussion of paternity within *The Walking Dead*. The analysis of masculinity within the text is crucial, "not because such representations are an accurate reflection of reality, but rather, because they have the power and scope to foreground culturally accepted social relations, define sexual norms and provide 'common sense' understandings about male identity for the contemporary audience" (Feasey, 2008, p. 4). In other words, paternity and masculinity help to discursively constitute power and authority as male.

Lori and Rick are in their tent having this conversation and the scene contains a lot of close up shots of the two. Lori stresses her fears about Shane to Rick and we are cued to this fear through her hushed, strained voice as she speaks. Furthermore, she seems to be embarrassed while explaining that she believes Shane thinks her unborn child is his; we see her hanging her head and no longer making eye contact with Rick. My reading of this scene reveals that Rick has anxiety over the paternity of Lori's unborn child, cued through the stress in his voice and the strained look on his face as he admits to killing the living<sup>41</sup> (something he struggles with morally) to protect Lori, Carl, and the baby. Lori and Shane's relationship, at least in part, is suggested to have begun before the apocalypse and shortly after Rick was injured in the line of duty. It is suggested through flashbacks that show us how Shane took care of Lori and Carl, helping them escape during the first days of the apocalypse and continuing to protect them since. Shane leaves Rick in the hospital, even though he is still alive, and lies to Lori about his death (1003). I

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<sup>41</sup> Rick is referring to the stand off in the bar where he shot and killed Dave and Tony in order to protect the location of the farm (2008).

read Lori's willingness to trust Shane and to go with him as suggesting that women need men to define and protect them. This willingness suggests that Lori may have been already questioning Rick's suitability in these masculine terms and finds Shane a good substitute. It also reinforces the idea that Lori, like Shane, is pragmatic and sees a sexual alliance with Shane as opportunistic in affording her power<sup>42</sup> and protection in the aftermath of the apocalypse. However, once Lori discovers that her husband is still alive, she returns to Rick out of guilt, because doing so is central to her construction as a good woman, wife, and mother. Lori's comments about Shane's attitude (i.e. Lori is his, the baby is his, and Rick can't protect his family) alert Rick to the idea that his masculinity is being challenged. In this sense, the willingness to fight, or to be violent, that Rick highlights, is an attempt to convince Lori of his masculinity. As Kimmel (2004) states, "the possibilities of being unmasked are everywhere" (p. 190), thus,

Homophobia is more than the irrational fear of gay men, more than the fear that one might be perceived as gay ... it is the fear that other men will unmask us, emasculate us, reveal to us and the world that we do not measure up, that we are not real men (p. 188-189).

Shane's assertion to Lori, that Rick cannot protect his family, challenges Rick's masculinity and Rick is anxious that Shane might "unmask" him.

However, I also read the timing of Lori revealing the paternity of her child to be somewhat "convenient." Lori's remark to Rick that "no matter what, it's yours" suggests that she is unsure of the paternity of her child. Although the timeline for how long Rick was unconscious in the hospital is unclear, another reason the timing seems strange is because of the fact that Lori and Rick have only been separated for a short period of time,

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<sup>42</sup> The idea that Lori can garner power through her relation to a man is something I discuss in the next few pages of this chapter as a longstanding model of power.

and we discover that she is pregnant pretty quickly. This suggests that she has been having an affair with Shane prior to the apocalypse and perhaps even prior to Rick being injured in the line of duty. The shaky tone in Lori's voice and her embarrassment as she converses with Rick constructs her femininity as immoral, as she has begun an affair with a man outside of her marriage (who is possibly the father of her unborn child). Lori's actions strengthen the construction of Rick's masculinity as moral, as it is suggested that she is to blame for the affair, since she has deviated from the discourses of normative femininity that constitute wifely and motherly behaviour, and in contrast to Rick's explanation that from the moment he awoke from his coma, he did everything he could to find his family.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, this also cues us to the idea that women need men to define and protect them, since as soon as Lori discovered her husband was dead, she found a replacement for that masculine role and continued to stick by him until Rick's return. I believe that she returns to him out of guilt and under the realization that being with her husband, and the father of her child (and possibly both of her children), is the socially acceptable thing to do. I also believe Lori senses that Rick's version of power will ultimately prevail in the group, as she realizes that Shane's behaviour is becoming more and more hostile and dangerous, and by returning to Rick, she is acting opportunistically to ensure that she stays where the power is.

My reading also suggests that Lori feels that Rick's power, and by extension, her own power (granted through her connection to Rick) is threatened by Shane. As a pregnant woman, and the "material sign of the reproductive woman," Lori cannot easily avoid "the scrutiny of a fascinated gaze" (Balsamo, 1996, p. 80). As she informs Rick, we

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<sup>43</sup> Rick's explanation also reinforces the scene described earlier (1001), where Rick tells Shane that he would never speak to Lori the way she spoke to him while in front of their son.

are cued to the use of her unborn child to place Rick in opposition to Shane. As Joseph Pleck (2004) asserts, “men restrict women from having power in almost all domains of social life, except child-rearing” (p. 58). In this sense, it is suggested that women only have power (or lose it) through their relations with men. Rick and Lori’s heterosexual, marital relationship enables her to garner power through her relation to Rick, since this type of relationship is acknowledged as legitimate and is privileged within the text.

The idea that Lori can garner power through her relation to her husband is a longstanding model of power. In traditional masculinity, “to experience oneself as masculine requires that women play their prescribed role of doing the things that make men feel masculine” (Pleck, 2004, p. 60). Through Lori’s pregnancy, and her reassurance of paternity to Rick, she is ultimately validating Rick’s masculinity by revealing his “heterosexual success” (p. 60). In other words, Lori confirms that Rick’s hegemonic masculine identity is visible, through his heterosexuality, as a married man, and expectant father (fertility), and through his familial patriarchy. Lori’s pregnant body is disruptive within the text, as it is the mark of her infidelity, but she uses it to fuel and legitimize Rick’s position of authority. By telling Rick that Shane believes the child is his, she is suggesting to Rick that Shane is threatening his masculinity and his patriarchal role. By alerting Rick to this, she is using emotional manipulation to provide him with a reason to legitimate dealing with Shane, through whatever means necessary.

Lori’s concern and insistence that Rick deal with Shane’s behaviour seems to register as a challenge not just to Rick’s masculinity, but his position of power in the group. She uses this challenge to eliminate Shane who is a frightening reminder of her own infidelity; the failure to be contained by the discourses of normative femininity that



prescribe wifely and motherly behaviour. This challenge leads Rick to approach Shane (2010). In this episode, Rick and Shane are driving eighteen miles out from the farm, to release Randall Culver<sup>44</sup> in an attempt to spare his life; a point which they have argued about numerous times. Rick stops the car and exits it, signalling to Shane that he wishes to speak with him. Shane, believing this to have something to do with Randall, exits the car. However, Rick confronts Shane about his behaviour and about his doubts that Rick can lead the group and protect his family:

Rick: I heard what really happened at the school<sup>45</sup> ... was it to survive?

Shane: Ya, one of us wasn't gonna make it out, had to be him. One shot to the leg, Carl lives. The reality is, he had no business being here, or there, whatever.

Rick: You don't think I would have done the same?

Shane: Nah man, I know you wouldn't have!

Rick: You don't think I can keep Lori and Carl safe? Or my baby? Is it going to have to be me too?

Shane: Rick, you can't just be the good guy and expect to live, not anymore!

Rick: I'm not the good guy anymore. To save Carl's life, I would have done anything! (2010).

Shane claims that Rick's version of morality – playing at being the “good guy” — prevents him from being able to make the decisions necessary to protect his family.

Shane's criticism of Rick's morality works to distinguish the different models of authority represented by Rick and Shane, but also different models of fatherhood and of morality.

For instance, an interesting catch-22 is cued through Shane. Through his admission that

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<sup>44</sup> Randall was part of the hostile group that attacked Rick, Glenn, and Hershel in the tavern (2009). After Randall is injured and left behind by his group, Rick and Hershel save him and bring him back to the farm.

<sup>45</sup> This is in reference to Otis' death at the high school (2003).

he killed Otis to save Carl, we are cued to Shane's ruthless and pragmatic behaviour as it is contrasted against Rick's morality. However, this suggests that Shane can't actually love, due to his ruthlessness and self-preserving behaviour. Pleck (2004) acknowledges this, stating: "Men's patriarchal competition with each other makes use of women as symbols of success, as mediators, as refuges, and as an underclass" (p. 64). In each of these roles, women are dominated by men in ways that derive directly from men's struggle with each other. Therefore, Shane doesn't actually love Lori; she is merely a symbol to legitimate his own masculinity.

Rick and Shane's conversation also foreshadows future events, suggesting that these two models of authority can no longer coexist, and eventually, one of these two characters must die. Rick attempts to make it clear to Shane that he will not abandon his patriarchal role or give up his authority over the group or his family:

Rick: You and Lori, I get what happened. When I figured it out, and I figured it out pretty quickly, I wanted to break your jaw, let you choke on your teeth, but I didn't. That wasn't weakness, it took everything! That is my wife, my son, my unborn child. I will stay alive to keep them alive! ... Now Lori says you're dangerous, but you're not going to be dangerous are you? (2010).

In this scene, Rick identifies the problematic between his devotion to his family and his authority, but suggests that this devotion, as well as his morals, make him stronger as a man and as a leader. Through Rick's assertion to Shane, he is attempting to legitimate his masculinity, because "any kind of powerlessness or refusal to compete becomes imbued with the imagery of homosexuality" (Pleck, 2004, p. 62). We are cued to Rick's affirmation that he has authority over his marital relationship and his paternal role, as he makes direct eye contact with Shane and raises his voice in a somewhat condescending tone. Rick also highlights a difference in his authority, suggesting that he is more

restrained and in control than Shane. Although violence, or rather the willingness to fight, is “the single most evident marker of manhood” (Kimmel, 2004, p. 189), Rick’s admission that he has restrained himself (when he figured out Lori and Shane were having an affair) suggests that he is more moral and less ruthless than Shane, by choosing to be the bigger man and not assaulting Shane, but also through giving Shane the opportunity to walk away. So the discourse Rick offers suggests that being a man might mean being strong enough to walk away from violence because of his absolute certainty of his right (both in the sense of his rights as a husband and father, but also the rightness of his moral position), where Shane can consider only violence and force.

This confrontation is also one of the most significant power struggles between these two characters, and Rick concludes by giving Shane an ultimatum: “Now the only way you and me keep on, is that you accept everything I just said right here, right now, and we move forward with that understanding” (2010). This scene takes place as Rick and Shane stand at a crossroads, ironically suggesting that the pair have reached a crucial intersection where a decision must be made that will have far reaching consequences. This power struggle comes to a climax (2012) where Shane makes one final attempt to challenge Rick’s moral authoritative role and masculinity. As the group mourns the loss of Dale, Rick decides that it would be immoral to kill Randall and instead they must let him go. However, Rick insists that lookouts and armed patrols will be situated around the farm, in order to increase security, should Randall, his group, or any other survivors approach the farm.

Shane, however, disagrees and takes matters into his own hands, reaffirming his pragmatic nature. We see Shane lead Randall into the woods under false pretences, and

snap his neck once they are away from the farm. Shane then returns to the camp and fabricates a story about Randall escaping his confines and attacking him. He also suggests that the group split up and search for Randall, coaxing Rick into the woods to search with him, in an attempt to murder Rick as well. However, it is not long before Rick realizes Shane's true intentions:

Rick: So this is where you plan to do it?

Shane: It's a good a place as any.

Rick: At least have the balls to call this what it is – murder! (pause) Do you really believe if you walk back on that farm alone, no me, no Randall. Do you really believe they are going to buy whatever bullshit story you cook up?

Shane: That's just it, it ain't no story. I saw that prisoner (Randall) shoot you down. I ran after him, snapped his neck. It ain't gonna be easy, but Lori and Carl, they'll get over you, they've done it before.

Rick: Why now? I thought we worked this all out?

Shane: (laughs) We tried to kill each other man! Did you think we were just gonna forget about it all?

Rick: You're gonna kill me in cold blood? Screw my wife, have my children call you daddy? Is that what you want? That life won't be worth a damn! You won't be able to live with this!

Shane: What do you know about what I can live with? You got no idea what I can live with! (pause) How about we talk about what you can do. Here I am, come on man, raise your gun!

Rick: (silently shakes his head, denying Shane's request).

Shane: What happened Rick? I thought you weren't gonna be the good guy anymore! Even right here, right now, you ain't gonna fight for them (Lori and Carl)! I'm a better father than you, Rick. I'm better for Lori than you man. It's cause I'm a better man than you Rick! Cause I can be here and I'll fight for it!

Rick: Nothing has happened here. We're gonna lay down our guns, and we're gonna walk back to the farm together. Back to Lori, back to Carl. Put this all behind us.

The darkness and shadows in this scene, both on the characters faces (in close up shots) and throughout the setting, work to illustrate danger, as Rick and Shane engage in their final confrontation. As a viewer, I realized that Rick was aware of Shane's intentions early on, but also that he continued to play along with the charade, giving Shane multiple chances to turn things around, again strengthening his discourse of masculinity (that sometimes being strong means walking away) and further constructs his morality. Rick realizes during this conversation that he must eliminate Shane because the way in which Shane's masculinity is constructed is, ultimately, less desirable and less masculine, in some sense, than his. Rick approaches Shane attempting to hand over his gun and surrender. As Shane reaches for Rick's weapon, Rick pulls him close to his body and drives a knife through his chest. Rick's use of his knife to kill Shane relinquishes his distance and space from this situation; instead, Rick has to get up close, dirty, and bloody. Thus, Rick's method of killing Shane connects to my earlier argument about proximate violence and gender, as Rick (representative of white masculinity) is no longer negated from the intimacy that happens in proximate violence, and is no longer "clean." This could be read as contradictory to my earlier argument, as I argued that overwhelmingly women and walkers are placed into the position of fighting up close, and discursively links are made between being unclean and being not male, not white, and not professional/middleclass, but I believe that in this case Rick's position signifies a

downfall of the authority and space granted to white masculinity within the text, while also disrupting Rick's morality.<sup>46</sup>

Killing Shane is also very emotional for Rick, and we are cued to this through his anger and frustration as he yells at Shane's dying body: "Damn you for making me do this Shane. This was you, not me! You did this to us!" (2012). Rick's statement is ambiguous here, as it is unclear whether he is blaming Shane for forcing his hand, resulting in Shane's death, or causing him to reject and put aside his moral standpoint, or both. Rick's statement suggests that he is angry at Shane for destroying their prior relationship, the strong homo-social bond that they had before the apocalypse (as the men in this series never really have the kind of strong friendship that Rick and Shane share in their memories of times past). Rick's statement also cues us to a new image of contemporary masculinity, by combining such supposedly feminine traits as emotionality and sensitivity, with those supposedly masculine qualities of power, strength, and bravery. This again helps to demonstrate how each model of authority that Rick and Shane represent is discursively constructed through different and competing discourses of power. Whereas Shane is read as pragmatic and ruthless, the typical "action hero" who uses violence in order to prove himself as "powerful, controlling, and masterful" (Neale, 1995, p. 12), Rick is contrasted as a moral authority who "operates through brain, not brawn" (Christopher, 2004, p. 266), a man who would rather protect the group and his family than kill the enemy, a man who wants to be a father to his child, and a man who

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<sup>46</sup> As I suggest in my conclusion, it would be interesting to see if the authority and space from proximate violence granted to white masculinity continues into the third and fourth seasons in the same manner, or if there is a change in the authoritative structures within the text. Also, it would be interesting to consider whether proximate violence is required for the killing of an equal in some sense.

has flaws, and this is the model of authority that ultimately triumphs, at least at this point in the narrative.

### **Expert Knowledge**

Hershel Greene, the third authority figure I identified, is an older, Caucasian, southern man who previously worked as a veterinarian and a farmer. As Foucault contends, knowledge and power are inextricably linked (Foucault, 1995, p. 27), and this understanding, of the discursive construction of authority in relation to specialized knowledge, helps us to analyze a mechanism through which Hershel garners his authority: his “expert knowledge” garnered through his veterinary training and experience. This knowledge makes Hershel a vital and indispensable figure in the text’s apocalyptic setting since previous medical institutions, such as hospitals, and persons with medical knowledge, such as nurses and doctors, are gone but medical concerns and conditions still exist. Hershel’s knowledge draws an interesting connection between his authority and Rick and Shane’s, as policing and medicine are two of the discourses that stay valuable in the text’s new landscape, while the institutions that embody them, such as the prison and the hospital, fall away. Hershel’s experience, however, is with animals rather than humans and thus his stake in claiming a position based on this power/knowledge relationship is resisted early on, unlike Rick and Shane’s. This resistance is perhaps best exemplified when Carl is shot, leaving Rick and Lori desperate to do anything to save his life:

Lori: As soon as they (Shane and Otis) get back, you can perform his surgery?

Hershel: I’ll certainly do my best.

Lori: I mean you've done this procedure before?

Hershel: Well yes, in a sense.

Lori: (in a questionable tone) In a sense?

Rick: Honey, we don't have the luxury of shopping for a surgeon.

Lori: I understand that, but you're a doctor right?

Hershel: Yes ma'am, of course, a vet.

Lori: (relieved) A veteran, a combat medic.

Hershel: A veterinarian.

Lori: And you've done this surgery before on what ... cows? Pigs?  
(2002).

This scene features mostly close up shots of Hershel, Lori, and Rick as they stand around a table discussing the situation. Hershel attempts to calmly explain that his true medical expertise lies in his veterinary training and that he will do all he can to save their son. Lori, frustrated and scared, sarcastically challenges Hershel's authority as a medical professional, indicating that she believes Hershel to be "unqualified" for her son's surgery, since his previous patients were no more than "pigs" and "cows." We are cued to her frustration and lack of confidence through her facial expressions, as she looks exhausted, with sweat dripping down her face, the colour fading from her cheeks and fresh tears in her eyes. Rick and Lori's frustration also establishes a hierarchy between humans and animals which reiterates the us/them dichotomy between humans/walkers.

Rick has recently given two blood transfusions to Carl (since they are the same blood type) and is in an extremely weakened state because of it. Visually, he has lost most of the colour from his face, his eyes are sunken, and he is slow moving. When he learns



that Hershel is actually a veterinarian, he attempts to grab hold of a chair to sit down and stumbles, almost fainting, and relies on Lori to catch him and sit him down. Rick is fairly quiet during this scene, and has removed his uniform, as it is dirty and bloody from carrying Carl's injured body. I read the removal of his uniform to suggest that he has released a majority of his power to Hershel, hoping that he can save his son, but also to his wife, Lori, in making decisions and addressing the situation, since he is physically weakened from the blood transfusions.

Lori is granted authority in this scene because of Rick's weakened state and her maternal role. It is interesting that Lori gets the power and that it does not pass to another one of the men, given the way the text is organized. I read this as signifying that Lori actually does have authority, but that her authority is derived completely from her marriage to Rick. The dialogue and interaction between these three characters also works to illustrate power as circular and dispersed. Foucault (1980) would contend that the important thing to recognize here "is that truth isn't outside of power, or lacking in power ... truth is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it" (p. 131-133). In other words, the institutional location of Hershel's veterinary knowledge is at first a contested site, especially for Lori. However, throughout the conversation, power circulates and is spread out to include Hershel, as Lori realizes that she must release some of her power as a mother with a child in need of medical assistance and cannot hold to previous discourses governing the field of medicine, as the diegesis now suggests that Hershel is Carl's best shot for survival. This also exemplifies how Foucault would suggest that power does not function in the form of a chain, or top-down, never monopolized by one centre, but instead, is deployed and exercised through a net-

like organization (Foucault, 1980, p. 98). Thus, even though Hershel has authority as a medical professional, Rick as an officer of the law, and patriarchal figure, and Lori as a mother, the relations of power in the scene fluctuate, and are also negotiated within existing discourses which are modified within their new set of circumstances but which cannot entirely break free of the logics of the “before.”

The conversation over Carl’s welfare continues in a subsequent scene where we see Hershel taking Carl’s blood pressure and informing Rick and Lori that, in his medical opinion, they may need to operate on Carl without the proper medical supplies. Rick, recovering from his weakened state, attempts to re-negotiate his position of authority, suggesting that he will go after Shane and Otis, since they have not yet returned with the supplies. However, Hershel and Lori argue with Rick about leaving the farm:

Rick: Take some more (blood), whatever he (Carl) needs, then I’m going to go ... they should be long back by now, something’s gone wrong.

Lori: Are you insane? You are not going after them!

Hershel: Rick, listen to your wife ... you’re in no condition to do anything about it. You’ve given too much blood; you’re barely on your feet. You wouldn’t make it across the yard! (2002)

Hershel is providing his “expert knowledge” of Rick’s health in order to negotiate for a position of authority, but he also shares this power with Lori, in their concern for Rick’s wellbeing. Hershel’s knowledge insists that Rick needs to remain near his son in order for Hershel to perform blood transfusions and to decide, if Shane and Otis fail, on whether or not to operate on Carl without the proper equipment (2003).

In this scene, we are also cued to the problematic that develops for Rick between his devotion and love of Carl and the tension this causes with his continued dedication to authority/duty that developed from his previous occupation. This is an old trope from

film and television narratives and these discourses are seen to be antithetical to one another; the hero who loves is at risk of failing at his “duty,” and “success in the public sphere demands a sacrifice in the private realm” (Feasey, 2008, p. 84). Lori verbally helps to identify this problematic by commenting on Rick’s masculinity and indicating to him that his role as a father must outweigh his role as an authority figure:

Rick: I can’t just sit here!

Lori: Your place is here! If Shane said he’ll be back, he’ll be back, he’s like you that way ... if you need to pray, or cry, or tell God he’s cruel you go right ahead. But you’re not leaving. Carl needs you, here, and I can’t do this by myself. Not this one! (2002)

Lori also comments on Shane’s authority here, insisting Rick and Shane are similar in their commitment and devotion to their authority and duty, but insists that he release this devotion and remain close to his son. Additionally, Lori identifies her own weakness in this situation, requiring that Rick remain with her, as she cannot handle Carl’s state on her own. Ultimately, Hershel and Lori’s pleas, along with Rick’s devotion to his son, convince him to remain by Carl’s side, again releasing his authority and suggesting that his devotion to love will always supersede his devotion to authority and duty.

### **Power and Land**

My reading of Hershel’s authority also suggests that he garners much of it through his possession of land. Hershel’s farm, which has been in his family for 160 years, is the setting for the majority of season two. This is significant as Hershel is the only character who possesses land after the apocalypse; the other survivors are essentially “landless,” constantly wandering in search of a safe and secure space. In this text it is not simply land that is sought after, but land that is safe and secure. This is the discourse of the rural

invoked here, used to construct Hershel's farm as a peaceful, tranquil, and untouched space. However, this is a return to an old norm, one that Gill Valentine (1997) identifies in his discussion of the construction of the rural countryside as an idealised place, asserting, "this is a romantic vision based on a nostalgia for a past way of life which is 'remembered' as purer, simpler, and closer to nature" (p. 137). This suggests that the survivors leave the city because it is discursively constituted as a space that is dangerous, overrun, and diseased within the text, and is a space where the masses of "others" congregate.

Analytically, considering why Hershel's land is recognized as legitimate, safe, and idealised in this apocalyptic landscape is particularly interesting, since after the end of season two the survivors begin to simply "take" land because usually there is no one there occupying it.<sup>47</sup> Hershel's land represents "the pastoral ('farmscape')," meaning, "pertaining to shepherds" and reflects the agricultural landscape (Short, 1991, p. 28). In his discussion of the variations of the rural idyll,<sup>48</sup> David Bell (2006) contends, it is viewed as "a restorative resource, a place to go and touch nature (maybe God), to find peace, to meditate ... and perhaps, most importantly, it is a receptacle for national identity – a symbolic site for shoring up what it means to be English, or Dutch, or whatever" (p. 151). In Hershel's case, it is a bountiful heartland that has sustained his family for decades, where he can pause and reflect. The text imagines Hershel and his farm as traversing the line between the before and after. The land has a patriarchal authority

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<sup>47</sup> As season three opens (3001) viewers are cued to the fact that the survivors have taken over a prison, and in the final episode (3016) the survivors take over the fortified town of Woodbury, originally run by a man known as the Governor.

<sup>48</sup> Short (1991) asserts, "from ancient times to the present day, attitudes about the countryside have been shaped by a response we can term the pastoral ... the term "idyll" is now used to refer to an idealized picture of a country scene" (p. 28).

ascribed to it, having been in his family for over 160 years, and passed onto him from his father (2004), which helps to construct it as a space for what it means to be a man, a father, and an American. 160 years is a long history in the context of the United States, and this inherited property affords Hershel additional claim to authority over it. Hershel's feudal authority is constructed as another form of power that belongs to white, masculine, heterosexual, and educated men, and since this farm is in the south, which is a racialized landscape, this is especially the case.<sup>49</sup> Overall, this helps to reaffirm that power and authority in the text is gendered and raced, since Hershel, the last person in possession of land, is a white, heterosexual male.

As Valentine (1997) stresses, "it is well documented that this cultural construction of the countryside – the rural idyll – articulates and reproduces class (Cloke & Thrift, 1987), patriarchal gender relations (Davidoff & Hall, 1987; Hughes, 1994; Little, 1987) ... and is also a concept tightly bound up with notions of heterosexual family life" (p. 137). Drawing on the urban/rural dichotomy, Bell (2006) argues, "if we think of the city as the site of multiculturalism and diversity, then the country is by contrast a monoculture with no space for difference – other than its absolute difference from the urban" (p. 151). Producing this mono-cultural idyll relies on processes of denial and expulsion, which together produce a category of what Bell (2006), calling on Julia Kristeva's work, terms "the *rural abject* – those people and things dispelled from the idyll, rendered other, cast out" (p. 151, emphasis in original). Hershel holds authority over his household,<sup>50</sup> but also assumes it over Rick's group once they arrive on his property (2002). Hershel's possession of the rural idyll helps him garner authority over Rick's group because the

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<sup>49</sup> For instance, the farm is so old we can envision that they might have once had slaves.

<sup>50</sup> This includes Maggie and Beth Greene, his daughters, and Patricia, Otis, and Jimmy (James Allen McCune), family friends and farmhands.

survivors envy it, seeing his land as untouched, isolated, and safe from the events they have witnessed in the city and through their travels. This is cued to us many times throughout the series when the survivors draw on this binary of urban/rural, commenting that the cities are “unsafe,” “dangerous,” and “overrun,” and because, from Rick’s moral position, they cannot just take the land from him (which would be the more pragmatic route, as per Shane).

Valentine (1997), discussing the perception of safety in the rural idyll, asserts, “the story of how ‘the rural’ has been constructed in the discourse of social science, is a story of continual struggle to define what is meant by ‘the rural’ and to establish the extent to which it is distinctive from ‘the urban’” (p. 137). Within the text, the city is seen as dangerous, dirty, and overrun, whereas in contrast, the rural environment, especially the Greene farm, holds to the nostalgia of a past way of life. As Valentine (1997) contends, “this imagining of the rural is seen to offer stability, a sense of belonging, and an escape from the city” (p. 137). Hershel asserts his class power based on his ownership of the land as he articulates and controls who is included and who is excluded from partaking in its resources. This connection between land and power is first evidenced when Rick learns that Hershel expects his group to leave once they find Sophia and Carl is better:

Rick: We could give you more space, set up over by the barn.

Hershel: No need for that. Better you stay close to the house. I don’t say this easily Rick, usually we don’t take in strangers. I can’t have your people thinking this is permanent. Once you find this girl (Sophia) and your boy is fit for travel, I expect you’ll move on. We need to be clear on that (2004).

We are cued to a moment of negotiation in power in this scene, as Rick suggests that his group could move further away from Hershel's house, in an attempt to grant them more space. However, Hershel is wary to accept Rick's group, viewing them as different from his family (highlighting the us/them binary between the survivor groups) and exerting his authority over Rick by indicating that their presence on his land is not "permanent." This is significant to the connection between land and power because Hershel's ownership of the land is recognized and garners him a position of authority from Rick immediately. The thought of simply "taking" Hershel's land never even crosses Rick's mind, even though if he attempted to do so, he would not have much trouble, since Hershel's family is outnumbered and outgunned. If the survivor group simply took Hershel's land, it would be a question of a discourse of feudal power (Hershel) versus a discourse of military/legal power (Rick/Shane), but this scenario never develops as it is displaced by the discourse of moral authority and power (Rick).

Hershel's authority causes tension within the group, especially between Rick and Shane. Whereas Rick wants to grant Hershel authority to make decisions on his property and take his opinion into consideration, Shane often challenges Hershel's decisions, claiming that his isolation from the outside world prevents him from being fully informed on the situation and able to make decisions. Hershel is hesitant to allow the survivors to remain on his land and the power struggle escalates when he informs Rick that the survivors must respect and abide by his rules while they remain. For instance, Hershel notifies Rick that guns are not to be carried while on his property (2004) and that this rule must be obeyed if the survivors are going to remain on his land. Immediately, Shane objects and challenges Hershel:

Hershel: I'd prefer you not carry guns on my property. We've managed so far not turning this into an armed camp.

Shane: With all due respect, what if a crowd of those things wanders in here?

Rick: We are guests here. This is your (Hershel's) property, and we will respect that.

There is a strong negotiation of power occurring in this scene, and we can probe the tension between a variety of discourses of power and authority here. This links to Foucault's assertion that power is in constant flux, as it is multiply constituted and thus always in movement, in negotiation. It also illustrates Foucault's assertion that power is always subjected to resistance (Foucault, 1978, p. 95), which is brought into being within the text through the construction of the models of authority through competing discourses of power and governance. Hershel manoeuvres for a position of authority by insisting on the compliance of the group to his rules, using his possession of land to justify it. This negotiation for authority is cued to us as Rick places his weapon down, acknowledging Hershel's authority, and giving up some of his own. Shane bites his lip, indicating that he is holding his tongue, and hesitantly follows suit. Shane's actions in this scene tell us that he has also released some of his authority, to Hershel, in agreeing to his request, but also to Rick, in standing behinds Rick's decision to relinquish their weapons on the farm.

However, Shane continues to challenge Hershel and re-negotiate for a position of authority:

Shane: I'll gather and secure all the weapons. Make sure no one's carrying until we're at a practice range offsite. I do request one rifleman on lookout. Dale's got experience.

Rick: Our people would feel safer, less inclined to carry a gun.



This struggle for power highlights how these three models of authority are constructed through competing discourses of power and governance. On the one hand, Hershel insists that his family has continued to exist in this apocalyptic landscape without turning his property into “an armed camp,” strengthening the assertion that Hershel’s farm represents isolation and safety. On the other hand, Rick and Shane suffer from their hubris, believing that because of their law enforcement background and experience they should be exempt from having to relinquish their weapons. Their hubris also stresses that guns and therefore, law and order, are still needed in this rural landscape to ensure safety. This attempt by Shane and Rick to re-negotiate for some of their authority helps to reaffirm that guns represent safety and control; as authority figures, and men, they essentially feel helpless without them, and therefore see everyone else as potentially helpless.

A discourse of religious authority also constructs the character of Hershel, which weighs heavily on how he governs his land and household. One way I was cued to religiousness in the text was through my reading of Hershel’s farm as the “promised land,” and Rick as the saviour who leads an exodus out of the dangerous city. Hershel is a German surname and a Hebrew/Yiddish first name meaning “deer” (Kveller, n.d.). This connects to an early scene in season two (2001) just before we meet Hershel, where Rick, Shane, and Carl (in the process of searching for Sophia), come across a deer in the forest. Carl slowly approaches the deer and is mesmerized by it. The presence of the deer suggests a connection to nature, but is also a divine and spiritual symbol, as it signifies benevolence, regrowth, abundance, and hope for the beauty that life still has to offer, which are all traits discursively constituted within the character of Hershel and through his connection to his land (Cooper, 2008, p. 50). Although Carl is accidentally shot by

Otis as he admires the deer, I read this scenario as somewhat divine, highlighting a religious discourse that suggests God is the ultimate source of/arbitrator of power, because Carl getting shot by Otis led to Rick and his group meeting Hershel (the only man with the knowledge to save Carl's life) and find the farm, which provides the group with shelter and sustenance for the majority of the second season.

Hershel's name also sounds biblical, and the pastoral landscape that he possesses, along with the manner in which he tends to his farmland and his family, recalls an image of a shepherd tending his flock. One way the text cues us to Hershel's religiousness occurs as he addresses the new landscape that he finds himself in, and challenges Rick's beliefs:

Hershel: It's good to pause for an occasional reminder.

Rick: Of what?

Hershel: Whatever, comes to mind. For me, it's often God. (Pause) No thoughts on that?

Rick: Last time I asked God for a favour and stopped to admire the view, my son got shot. I try not to mix it up with the Almighty anymore. Best we stay out of each other's way.

Hershel: Lori told me how you were shot, the coma, yet you came out of it somehow. You did not feel God's hand in yours?

Rick: (Laughs) At the moment, no I did not.

Hershel: In all the chaos, you found your wife and son, then he was shot, and he survived. That tells you nothing?

Rick: It tells me God has a strange sense of humour (2004).

In this scene, Rick and Hershel stand on the top of a hill, overlooking the valley below. The position of these two characters cues us to the rural idyll notions of a peaceful,

tranquil, untouched space, completely free of walkers,<sup>51</sup> as viewers can actually see Hershel's land in all of its beauty and entirety from atop the hill. As Hershel presses Rick about his beliefs, we are cued to notions of Hershel as a shepherd, attempting to steer a lost lamb, in this case Rick, back towards the flock, by trying to make him realize his good fortune of overcoming adversity and finding his family in so much chaos. However, Rick appears to become more and more uncomfortable and annoyed with Hershel. Although we are never cued to Rick's religiousness prior to this scene, Rick's comments to Hershel suggest that he has cast aside religion and the "Almighty," since his son was shot a few days ago. There is nothing to suggest that Rick was religious before the apocalypse, so it is possible that Rick is uncomfortable because religion was not a major part of his life, and he sees it as Hershel offering something that he lacks. We see Rick struggle to hold his tongue as he avoids eye contact with Hershel and turns away during their brief conversation. There are two discourses at work here that are competing for power and authority; a religious discourse (Hershel) that constructs God as the ultimate arbiter of power versus a secular discourse of liberal democracy (Rick). My reading of this scene suggests that Rick's struggle to refrain from speaking his mind to Hershel is an attempt to negotiate and manoeuvre his position of power in order to achieve his goal of having the survivors remain on Hershel's farm, something that Rick privileges over discussing whether or not God exists in the apocalyptic landscape.

### **Three's a Crowd**

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<sup>51</sup> As I argue later, this idyll reveals itself to be faulty, as the walkers in Hershel's barn and the walker that has fallen down his well undermine the safety and security the survivors initially believe the rural holds.

Shane becomes the main antagonist of the second season, and is portrayed as increasingly violent and deceptive. The devolution in his character results in many instances where he challenges Rick's authority and plans to overthrow<sup>52</sup> or eliminate<sup>53</sup> Rick and/or Hershel. For instance, the group learns that Hershel has been keeping walkers locked up in his barn (2007), and Shane leads an insurrection to eliminate the undead. This creates an enormous struggle for power between Rick and Shane, and is devastating for Hershel:

Rick: What are you doing?

Shane: Daryl almost died looking for her Rick. Any one of us could have. I'm going to tell you right now, that son of a bitch (Hershel), he knew about Sophia!

Rick: He didn't know. He opened his home to us.

Shane: He put us all in danger! He kept a barn full of walkers!

Rick: So you just start an insurrection? Hand out guns and massacre his family?

Shane: His family is dead Rick.

Rick: Well he doesn't believe that. He thinks you just murdered his family in cold blood!

Shane: (yelling) I don't care what he thinks!

Rick: (yelling) I was handling this!

Shane: You had us out in those woods, looking for a girl that every single one of us knew was dead! ... Rick, you're just as delusional as that guy [Hershel]! (2008)

This scene provides important insight into the different models of authority that Rick and Shane represent. Tensions between the discourses of power and emotions run high in this

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<sup>52</sup> 2011

<sup>53</sup> 1003, 2010, and 2012.

scene, especially between Rick and Shane and we are cued to this as the volume of their voices steadily increases, ending in a screaming match.

Rick, attempting to display that he has the moral upper hand, tries to remain level headed, and explains the gravity of Shane's actions to him. Shane, however, pragmatically attempts to justify his actions, suggesting that he was making the "difficult decision" needed to ensure the safety of the group. He criticizes Rick and Hershel for failing to do so, and instead putting everyone at risk. So, in this instance, a discourse of neoliberalism is called upon, "where the democratic principles and the rule of law are neither guides nor serious constraints but rather tools or obstacles" (Brown, 2006, p. 695). This neoliberal approach taken by Shane parallels Foucault's notion of the "tacticalization of law," where "employing tactics rather than laws, and even of using laws themselves as tactics – to arrange things in such a way that, through a certain number of means, such and such ends may be achieved" (Foucault, 1991, p. 95).

In this sense, when Shane breaks open the barn and leads an insurgence to kill the walkers within, we are cued to his tacticalization of law (p. 95). By using these tactics, Shane ignores the rules and democratic principles within the group and the morals that Rick upholds, in order to achieve his objective of eliminating threats at all costs. His "not in my backyard" approach further strengthens his model of authority as militaristic and consequentialist. As we see Shane take matters into his own hands, we are cued to his rejection of Rick's moral model of authority as he authorizes himself to use lethal force to

combat threats, whether they are actual or perceived; ultimately the threat is constructed through different discourses for each character.<sup>54</sup>

As I argued in the beginning of this chapter, straight, white, middle-class men have the power and the authority to govern, and this binds the characters of Rick, Shane, and Hershel; discourses of white supremacy, heterocentrism, and normative masculinity are part of what constructs authority in the text. What distinguishes these characters is the differences in the forms of authority they attempt to wield (themselves constructed through particular discourses, such as moral authority, pragmatism, feudalism, and Christian virtue/religiousness) that are at issues here. I argue that the series ultimately disavows the form of authority that Shane represents and thus relegates the discourses through which Shane's form of power/authority is constituted to secondary or tertiary status at best. If there is a "winner" it is Rick's version of authority, and, secondarily Hershel's – giving primacy to the discourses through which those forms are constituted.

Another significant power struggle between these three characters occurs when Rick, Hershel, and Glenn return from town with Randall Culver (2009). Rick and Hershel explain to the group that Randall will remain at the farm until his injuries have had time to heal, after which they plan on giving him some supplies and sending him on his way. Rick displays his moral model of authority here, as he stresses to the group that he couldn't leave Randall for dead and brought him back to the farm in order to give him "a

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<sup>54</sup> It is important to acknowledge that a "threat" for Shane is not limited solely to walkers, but often includes human characters as well; Shane shoots Otis in the leg in order to escape with the medical supplies (2002); Shane ignores Rick and Hershel's pleas to leave the walkers in the barn, instead busting it open and gunning down all of the infected inside (2008); Shane releases Randall Culver in an attempt to fabricate a story about his escape in order to lure Rick into the woods so that he can murder him (2012).

fighting chance.” This situation immediately causes Shane to challenge Rick and Hershel’s authority:

Shane: You’re just going to let him go? He knows where we are!

Rick: He’s been blindfolded the whole way here; he’s not a threat.

Shane: You killed three of their men, you took one of them hostage, they’re going to come looking.

Rick: They left him for dead. No one is looking!

Shane: (yelling) Look at this folks; we’re back in fantasyland!

Hershel: You know what, we haven’t even dealt with what you’ve done to my barn yet. Let me make this perfectly clear, once and for all, this is *my* farm! Now, I wanted you gone, but Rick talked me out of it, but that doesn’t mean I have to like it. So do us both a favour, keep your mouth shut! (2009)

Rick, Shane, and Hershel attempt to assert the dominance of their authoritative voice/vision in this scene as they stand around the dining room table of Hershel’s home, conjuring images of a “war room” as they discuss Randall and their venture into town. We already know, to some degree, which positions they will take from earlier episodes of the show. Rick and Hershel stand on one side of the room, and Shane stands on the other, cueing us to their opposing viewpoints as they struggle over how to deal with the current situation. The camera shots are quick and short, constantly cutting back and forth to Rick/Hershel and Shane as they argue about whether or not Randall is a risk to the group. We are cued to the tensions running high between the competing discourses of power as Shane begins to raise his voice and sarcastically challenge Rick and Hershel’s decision to bring Randall back to the farm.

We are also provided more insight into how these three different models of authority are underpinned by competing discourses of power. Rick, as a moral authority,

could not leave Randall for dead, instead choosing to bring him back to the farm in order to give him “a fighting chance,” arguing that Randall is not a threat because he has been blindfolded the whole way. Shane, on the other hand, challenges Rick’s moral authority and demonstrates his pragmatic and ruthless authority, as he believes they should have made the hard decision to leave Randall to his fate in town in order to ensure the safety of the group at all costs. Hershel garners his power here through his feudal authority and challenges Shane by suggesting that he has the power to remove Shane from his property at any time, and indicating that, for the moment, Rick has talked him out of it. This suggests that Rick and Hershel are slowly overturning the us/them binary between their two groups, as they work together through this situation. It also suggests that Rick and Hershel’s versions of authority are similar, particularly in the ways they both use forms of moral and yet very patriarchal rules to guide themselves and others. Thus, this example illustrates how models of authority in *The Walking Dead* are constructed through competing discourses, but also demonstrates that ultimately, only men who discursively embody whiteness, masculinity, middle-class status, and heterosexuality can possess authority within the diegesis, allowing this to emerge as the dominant régime of truth in regards to the power and authority to govern. Although Shane largely fits discursively within this dominant régime of truth, he is ultimately left out because he does not completely embody whiteness as Rick does, since his actions are often self-serving, making him less moral, and he becomes increasingly violent as the seasons progress.

## **Conclusion**



Overall, by critically analyzing discourses of power, authority, gender, race, class, and governance in *The Walking Dead*, I was able to understand the ways in which the concepts I identify are discursively constructed through particular régimes of truth in the text. The first point I addressed in relation to my reading of this text demonstrated that the power and authority to govern is gendered, overwhelmingly male and heterosexual. An analysis of Rick and Shane was successful in providing insight into how hegemonic masculinity was utilized within the text to gender power. An analysis of paternity and how it upholds masculine authority was effective in displaying how power and authority are gendered and revealed that paternity is privileged over maternity within the text. Weaponry was also successfully utilized to interrogate discourses of gender and power, revealing that women, as well as characters who do not fit the constructed profile (of white, male, and authoritative), are overwhelmingly forced to engage in close combat and use weapons other than guns in order to eliminate threats, causing them to be more intimately involved in proximate violence and to become dirty.

Furthermore, my reading suggested that power and authority are raced and classed, ultimately white and middle class. In my view, setting enabled a discussion of how power and authority are raced within the text, revealing that white characters hold the majority of power (and powerlessness), as there are only two racial minorities represented consistently after the first season. A deconstruction of the character Merle, and a comparison of Merle, and subsequently his brother, Daryl, to Rick, was successful in displaying how whiteness is privileged and classed. In this case, terms such as white trash and redneck provided an effective scapegoat, covering up white privilege and revealing that simply being white does not guarantee power and authority.

Finally, an analysis of how the three separate models of authority were constituted through competing discourses of power and governance successfully revealed how the power and authority to govern is gendered, raced, and classed. An analysis of Rick as a moral, democratic, and law and order model, Shane as a ruthless, pragmatic, and militaristic authority, concerned with his own self-preservation and maintaining this at all costs, and Hershel, through his religiousness, land ownership, and medical training and knowledge, revealed that power and authority within the text is predominantly white, male, middle-class, and heterosexual.

In the following chapter, I provide an in-depth analysis of the second theme, “the body and the abject.” I argue that bodies are controlled within *The Walking Dead* through the management of risk, more so than overt physical force or violence. I also call upon Julia Kristeva’s concept of the abject in order to further my critical analysis of bodies in this text. My analysis of the abject body, the management of risk, and how the body is governed in the following chapter connects strongly to the concepts of power and authority discussed in this chapter because, as I argue, the disruptive, abject body helps to fuel and legitimize those in positions of authority.

## 2.3

### **The Body and the Abject**

In the previous chapter, I argued that the power and authority to govern on *The Walking Dead* is gendered, raced, and classed. Throughout this chapter, I argue that the bodies on the series are represented as being governed through the management of risk. This chapter also builds upon my previous discussion of power and authority by discussing how the disruptive, abject body helps to fuel and legitimize those in positions of authority. In this chapter I speak about the physical and the social body and explore biological, scientific, medical, and social discourses of the body, as well as discourses of governance and control of the body. I utilize Julia Kristeva's concept of the abject and Michel Foucault's concepts of bio-power, dividing practices, hierarchical observation, normalization, and resistance to help with my discussion of how bodies are governed in *The Walking Dead*. Some additional concepts I identify and discuss in this chapter include: risk, reproduction, mercy killing, and suicide. I begin by offering a brief overview of how I define risk for the purposes of this work and comment on how I utilize this understanding to discuss how bodies are governed, how the infected body is managed, and how resistance is presented within the text.

#### **The Concept of Risk**

At the most basic level, risk can be defined as “the probability that some undesirable event will occur” (Clear & Cadora, 2001, p. 52). This “undesirable event” may appear in a multitude of forms, but for the purpose of this text, it often involves the

safety of one's life. In this sense, safety becomes one of the ways in which risk is discursively constituted. Largely, the safety of one's life is threatened by the walkers, who are driven to endlessly consume human flesh, and from the survivors, who have weapons and are also capable of enacting violence (towards walkers as well as towards other survivors). Since risk is not an independent concern, the calculation of risk is always done for some purpose in action (p. 58). For instance, Todd Clear and Eric Cadora (2001), in their discussion of risk and correctional practice, distinguish three main purposes to which a calculation of risks may be directed: risk control, risk management, and risk reduction. Control, management, and reduction are all discourses through which risk might be constituted.

The approach of risk control "attempts to exert external controls on the risk in order to prevent the recurrence of a new crime" and often has an incapacitative aim, typically taking two forms: restriction of movement (such as incarceration or electronic monitoring) and psychotropic mechanism, such as behavioural control drugs" (p. 59). The intent of risk management, on the other hand, is not to eliminate risk, but to manage it by accepting the inevitability of error and dealing with it by attempting to shift errors into more acceptable settings and towards marginally reduced levels (p. 59). Finally, risk reduction works to try and reduce risk. The most common example of this method is intervention programs that seek to change behaviour so that risk wanes or disappears (p. 59). In a criminological context, risk and its artefacts "may be found in just about every aspect of the correctional apparatus" (p. 51). Thus, discourses of governance and control (of the body) help to discursively construct risk and are enacted when an individual has broken the normative discourse of behaviour in a certain social institution or situation.

For the purposes of this work, I use various understandings of risk, how it is constituted within the text through other discourses, and how it is mitigated, in order to discuss how the body is governed, which will be further explored below.

### **The Abject Body**

The body is at the centre of Kristeva's theory of abjection and her conceptualization of the abject provided me with an excellent concept from which to interrogate bodies in *The Walking Dead*. Throughout my critical discourse analysis, I read the body in two distinct ways. The first refers to the bodies of the walkers. *The Walking Dead*, similar to other zombie texts, tends towards scenes of extreme gore and rotting flesh, which, as I have determined, is rendered visible in three ways: the physical characteristics of the walkers that position the body as a sight of abhorrence (i.e. bite marks; dangling pieces of flesh; dirty, dried blood covering their bodies; missing appendages; etc.); through the graphic scenes of walker/s devouring a human or animal, which constructs a discourse of endless consumption and hunger, as well as cannibalism;<sup>55</sup> and through a discourse of contagion, in which the body is represented as a sight of disease and infection (i.e. a bite/scratch from a walker will infect a survivor, resulting in a high fever, death, and subsequent reanimation). The text rarely reveals gore, blood, and violence from the point of view of a walker. Instead, the audience is omniscient as we are positioned to watch from outside the action, from the side, above, behind. When we are offered a view of gore, blood, and violence from the survivor's perspective, by contrast, it is more personal and intimate. I read this as constructing a

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<sup>55</sup> Rick's horse is devoured by walkers in Atlanta (1001). This is the first time Rick experiences the walker's monomaniacal drive for flesh.

discourse of the other, as we are positioned to associate, feel, and empathize with the survivors. The absence of a point of view also constitutes the abject nature of the walkers.

The way in which the camera shots differ between walkers and survivors works to construct the walkers as abject. For instance, when walkers are eliminated (generally through a shot/blow to the head) the camera often shows the point of view of the survivor aiming or gazing down the barrel of a gun or weapon, holding the target in their sights for a moment, and then, as the trigger is pulled, the view changes to show a close up of the walkers' head exploding, with brains and blood erupting from it.<sup>56</sup> When a survivor is not attacking the head, the viewer is still subjected to the visual deterioration of the walker's body as it is mutilated in an attempt to slow it down and eliminate it (i.e. blood and guts pouring out; chunks of flesh falling off; etc.). Again this suggests the abject nature of the walkers; the absence of a discourse of selfhood. It also recalls the dirty/clean binary that I discussed earlier and suggests a contagion discourse, as the walkers are positioned as bloody, unclean, and infectious whereas the survivors, in most cases, are positioned as healthy (because they are alive) and (more) clean than the walkers.

However, even if the walker is not being attacked at all, the viewer still sees the body literally decay as it "walks." This provides an important distinction between the inherent state of the body (survivor/undead) versus what is done to the undead body because of its status. Something is done to the walker when it is attacked by others, but when nothing is being done to its body, it is still decaying and is abject because it confronts us with our own mortality. So the walker is constituted, literally, through a discourse of degeneracy and decay, one that is visual as well as narrative. Paralleling

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<sup>56</sup> In the first episode, Rick shoots the walkers credited as the "Bicycle Girl Walker" (Melissa Cowan) and the "Little Girl Walker" (Addy Miller) in the head (1001). Each scene is slowed down and focuses in on the walker, giving a graphic view of the kill.

other zombie texts, such as Romero's *Night* series, the bodies of the walkers violate the binary of living/dead, existing in the space between. The walker is thus a perfect example of the abject. Recalling that Kristeva (1982) defines the abject as,

What disturbs identity, system, and order. What does not respect boundaries, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite (p. 4).

Thus, for Kristeva, abjection refers to the human reaction, such as horror or vomit, to a threatened breakdown in meaning caused by the loss of the distinction between subject and object, between self and other. More specifically, she associates the abject with the eruption of the "real" into our lives, associating such a response with our rejection of death's insistent materiality. Therefore, we recognize abjection in the reactions to such sites and their inhabitants.

The walker is the perfect embodiment of the abject. The corpse, for Kristeva, is "seen without God and outside of science, it is the utmost of abjection. It is death infecting life. Abject" (p. 4). Kristeva explains that when we see a corpse (particularly the corpse of a loved one or friend), we are confronted with the eruption of the "real" into our lives, that is, the trauma of realizing our own fragile mortality. Kristeva describes how the reality of death affects one's existence:

There, I am at the border of my condition as a living being. My body extricates itself, as being alive, from that border. Such wastes drop so I might live, until, from loss to loss, nothing remains in me and my entire body falls beyond the limit – *cadere*, cadaver. If dung signifies the other side of the border, the place where I am not and which permits me to be, the corpse, the most sickening of wastes, is a border that has encroached upon everything. It is no longer I who expel. "I" is expelled (emphasis in original, p. 3-4).

The walker, however, takes this one step further. It is a corpse, a body that was once alive and should be dead, yet it remains animated (walking, groaning, eating, etc.) but without

any trace of humanity. So again, the walkers are discursively constituted through a discourse of abjection. Fear is directed towards the walker and abjection develops because it reminds the survivors (as well as the viewer) of their own mortality, but it also threatens to bring that mortality to an end, although not in the way that one might hope. When a walker infects a survivor, and their mortality is brought to an end, the survivor dies, but does not stay dead, as reanimation occurs shortly after death. This increases the fear of what comes after death, as the walker's body contests spiritual notions of an afterlife and/or rebirth, instead resulting in an infinite existence of eternal hunger.

Kristeva also explains how the body is abjected because of a discourse of permeability:

Refuse and corpses show me what I permanently thrust aside in order to live. These bodily fluids, this defilement, this shit are what life withstands, hardly and with difficulty, on the part of death (p. 3).

As the abject body leaks wastes and fluids, it becomes intolerable because it is “in violation of the desire and hope for the ‘clean and proper’ body, thus making the boundaries and limitations of our selfhood ambiguous, and indicating our physical wasting and ultimate death” (Covino, 2004, p. 17). This version of immortality, cued to us through the representation of the walker's bleeding, gory, dismembered, and decaying body, is also abject because it confronts us with things that are supposed to stay confined within the body as a system. Discourses constitute the limits of the normative and that which falls outside of it. The concept of abjection is therefore constituted through discourses of ability, cleanliness, and life (livingness), which discursively construct and privilege the able, clean, and living (human) body as the normative in this text.



As the human characters in *The Walking Dead* are confronted with this abjection, their initial reaction is to try and re-establish meaning and borders. As the survivors fight to stay alive, they attempt to re-establish their previous lives and circumvent the traumatic experience of being forced to face this new landscape; the thought that they can die, turn, and reanimate. For instance, when the survivor group reaches the Greene farm in season two, they begin to call upon the rural idyll, viewing the farm as a safe haven, serene, untouched, isolated, a space where they can re-build their lives and exist with minimal threat. Ultimately, although they work to secure and build physical borders, such as repairing fences around the farm and ensuring gates are kept closed, being confronted with the abject represents a rip in the fabric of the binary between living and dead, and forces the survivors to face this, as it is not something that fences can defend against and we see this, literally, play out at the end of season two.

Each survivor group originally holds to a different set of accepted truths about how to deal with the infected, affecting their comprehension of the abject and the way in which the survivor groups are governed. These accepted truths are constituted by particular discourses about infection and the undead and organize the three different strategies put forward for dealing with the walkers throughout the first two seasons. One idea of how to deal with the abject is to wait, whether for a cure or divine intervention. We primarily see Hershel and his family hold to this idea, believing that the walkers are sick and corralling them in their barn, hoping that a cure will be discovered or they will get better. Secondly, there is the idea that the abject must be eliminated. This is the idea that Shane strongly advocates for, as well as most other zombie narratives, believing that humans and walkers cannot co-exist. Lastly, is the agnostic idea, sitting on the fence.

Rick often occupies this space, sometimes siding with Shane, believing that the abject must be eliminated to ensure survival, for himself and the group, and sometimes hesitating or refraining from eliminating the abject, usually because of some inner moral conflict. These different strategies are underpinned by the different ways in which the character(s) discursively construct walkers: as sick, as monsters, and as the unknown. Each one suggests a different (moral) course of action for the characters.

A prominent example of how the survivor's deal with the abject body in this text is graphically displayed when Shane learns that Hershel has been keeping walkers locked up in his barn, and witnesses Rick and Hershel return to the farm with two more walkers secured on snare poles (2007). Shane, furious, riles up the survivors, insisting they take a "not in my backyard (NIMBY)"<sup>57</sup> approach to dealing with the situation. He approaches Rick and Hershel:

Shane: Are you kidding me? ... you see what they (Hershel, his family, and Rick) are holding on to?

Hershel: I see *who* I am holding on to.

Rick: Shane, just let us do this (put the two walkers into the barn) and we can talk.

Shane: What do we have to talk about? These things aren't sick, they're not people, they're dead! Ain't gotta feel nothing for them cause all they do is kill! They are the things that killed Amy, they killed Otis, and they're going to kill all of us! (Pause. Shane looks to Hershel) Let me

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<sup>57</sup> NIMBY has been defined as "the protectionist attitudes and exclusionary/oppositional tactics used by community groups facing an unwelcome development in their neighbourhood" (CMHC, 2006, p. 1). NIMBY stems from concerns about change in the neighbourhood, "ranging from expressions about the presumed characteristics of newcomers through to concerns over neighbourhood impacts such as traffic and building form" (ACT, 2009, p. 3). It has also been applied in a criminological context. For instance, "the location of community correctional facilities such as work release centers and halfway houses often prompts a classic NIMBY response from people who live in neighbourhoods where proposed facilities will be built" (Maxfield & Babbie, 2011, p. 284).

ask you something. Could a living, breathing person, could they walk away from this? (Shane shoots the walker Hershel is holding with the snare pole). That's three rounds in the chest. Could someone who is alive, could they just take that? (Screaming) Why is it still coming?

Rick: That's enough!

Shane: Ya man, that is enough! (He shoots the walker in the head, startling the group). (Screaming) Enough looking for a little girl who is gone, enough living next to a barn full of walkers that are trying to kill us. Things aren't like they were before. If you want to live, if you want to survive, then you have to fight for it! I'm talking about right here, right now!

The camera follows Shane as he runs towards Rick and Hershel, with the rest of the survivors behind him. The camera continues to focus on Shane as he circles around Rick and Hershel, who are attempting to put the walkers into the barn. Shane is furious, and we are cued to this through his raised voice and distressed facial expressions. He also looks very militaristic as he marches around the group, yelling, and conjuring images of a drill sergeant.

Shane draws upon a medical discourse and challenges Hershel's medical authority by questioning how a living person could walk away from three bullets to the chest. He yells at Hershel, demanding an answer, but Hershel remains silent and drops his head. This suggests that he does not have an answer to offer Shane, or at least one that he would be able to believe, suggesting that for Hershel, at this point, the walker's ability to survive is a question of faith. As Rick yells "enough" in a final attempt to diffuse Shane, we are graphically cued to Shane's ruthlessness as he approaches the walker Hershel is holding and shoots it in the head at point blank range. The camera focuses in on the walker's head, and slows down as blood pours out from the bullet wound and its body falls to the ground. The weight of the walker's body causes Hershel to fall down next to it, and this is

significant as it suggests that Shane's actions have broken Hershel (and his beliefs). We are cued to the emotional toll that this has upon Hershel, as tears well up in his eyes and he sighs, with a strained look on his face. The rest of the survivors also recognize Shane's ruthlessness, demonstrated by the shock and fear they experience when he eliminates the walker in front of them. This is cued to us through the silence, as soft music is overlaid into the scene, and many of the survivors take a step back, and express grief across their faces, through tears in their eyes, and holding their hands to their hearts and/or their mouths.

Immediately following this scene, Shane runs toward the barn and picks up an axe, demanding that the survivors "fight" if they want to survive. Rick, screaming, pleads with Shane to stop, and we hear a few other survivors also ask this of Shane (Glenn and Lori). Ignoring them, Shane breaks the lock on the barn door, cuing us to an "eruption of the real," as dozens of walkers pour out of the barn. As this occurs, the abjection of the walkers is revealed through the extreme fear and horror they evoke, as well as an overwhelming emotional response, ultimately ending in elimination as Shane, Andrea, T-Dog, Daryl, and Glenn gunning down the wave of walkers that have erupted from the barn. This scene is significant because it presents us with a crisis in abjection – a space where the way to understand the object (in the form of the walkers) is up for grabs. Here, the competing discourses of how to deal with abjection have collided. Hershel attempts to persuade Rick that there are alternative ways to handle the walkers, whereas Shane insists that they must be eliminated.

However, this moment of crisis in abjection is quickly nullified. As the survivors believe they have eliminated the last walker, a final figure emerges from the barn, Sophia,

the young girl they have been desperately searching for. As she exits the barn, the survivors are stunned and unable to move, as the appearance of Sophia cues us to a loss of hope. Up until this point, there was a 50/50 possibility of finding Sophia alive or dead.<sup>58</sup> However, until the barn is opened, the survivors do not know for sure, and therefore, there is optimism (hope) that she is alive. When the barn is opened, this hope vanishes, as Sophia is no longer human but now represents the abject, forcing the survivors to come face-to-face with their own fragile mortality once again. The music that has been playing in the background now comes to a crescendo and the camera focuses on Rick as he walks toward Sophia. The camera pans out, allowing us to see Rick walk through the line of survivors that previously shot down the barn walkers, including Shane. As Rick approaches Sophia, he shoots her in the head, killing her. This suggests that the text repudiates Hershel's idea of how to deal with the abject. Shane's argument that once the body becomes abject it is disposable ultimately prevails, as in the end, the walkers, including Sophia, are destroyed. His argument also suggests that that which is (was once) familiar is the most terrifying form of the abject.

I read Rick's killing of Sophia as a response to the abjection of her infected body. In relation to the multiple and competing discourses through which such a body is constructed on *The Walking Dead*, I read this scene as signifying that Rick is siding with Shane and against Hershel but also as illustrating that Shane is incapable of acting and becomes, in a sense, paralysed when confronted with the abjection of Sophia. Rick's

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<sup>58</sup> This parallels the hypothetical Schrödinger's cat experiment, in which a cat is placed in a sealed box along with a radioactive sample, a Geiger counter, and a bottle of poison. If the Geiger counter detects that the radioactive material has decayed, it will trigger the smashing of the bottle of poison, and the cat will be killed. The experiment was designed to illustrate the flaws of the Copenhagen interpretation of quantum mechanics, which states that a particle exists in all states at once until observed. Thus, it follows that the cat is both alive and dead until the box is opened (Merz, 2013).

actions cue us to the manner in which he constructs the abject, as the unknown. He eliminates Sophia because she now represents this unknown, abject body, highlighting the us/them (living/dead) binary. Sophia is the first survivor to reanimate and be seen in this undead state. Up until the barn is opened, the survivors have been good at ending the lives of loved ones before reanimation occurs, helping to cue us toward the theme of mercy killing in *The Walking Dead*. For instance, when walkers attack the survivor camp in season one (1004), several survivors are killed and infected, including Andrea's sister (Amy), Carol's husband (Ed Peletier [Adam Minarovich]), and Jim. Mercy killing is a concept I read from this episode and draws on the us/them binary as the survivors ensure that their members will not become "one of them," by shooting the deceased in the head before reanimation occurs.

The fact that it is Rick who kills Sophia furthers my reading of the response to abjection, as his action of ending her life suggests that he agrees with Shane's philosophy that walker's must be eliminated and also suggests that other options of dealing with the abject are flawed. This scene is also significant in showing that Rick is a leader and can make difficult decisions when it counts, which, as argued in the previous chapter, Shane always argues he cannot. Thus, it offers us discourses through which to shore up Rick's construction as an authority, as a person with power to govern, since he is ultimately the one who kills Sophia, whereas Hershel is distraught and even Shane is incapable. However, mercy killing is constituted through the moral discourse that constructs Rick's character but is also used as a method of mitigating risk since mercy is not so much for the victim, but to ensure the safety of the survivors. Sophia's abject body again forces the survivors to confront their own fragile mortality, forcing them to gaze at her bloody, gory,

and decaying body, conjuring fear, horror, and disgust. Sophia's infected body is not only positioned as abject, and a site of disease and infection, but is also viewed as a risk to the natural order (since she is a walking corpse) as well as to the survivors themselves as the diegesis suggests that Sophia's monomaniacal drive to consume living flesh can never be satisfied. Thus, Sophia's undead, dirty, and abnormal body must be eliminated.

### **Suicide and Abjection**

The concept of suicide is prevalent in the text as another example of a response to the abjection of the infected body. For instance, in the opening episode Rick is searching a farmhouse for supplies (1001) when he comes across the Siggard family who have taken their lives and have written a sign above their heads that reads: "God forgive us." Further examples are depicted when Rick and Daryl are searching for Sophia. In this episode the pair come across a tent with a man who has "opted out" by putting a gun in his mouth, and find another man who attempted to end his life by hanging himself from a tree (although he reanimated because his brain was still intact) (2001).

Many survivors also contemplate or discuss suicide as they seek to avoid becoming "one of them." For instance, when the group meets Dr. Edwin Jenner (Noah Emmerich) (1006), he questions the survivors' existence in this apocalyptic landscape:

Jenner: You should have left well enough alone, it would have been easier.

Lori: Easier for who?

Jenner: You! You know what's out there. A short, brutal life, and an agonizing death ... (looking at Rick) Is that what you want for your wife and son?

My reading of this scene revealed that the concept of suicide illustrates a loss of hope in the apocalyptic landscape. Suicide is constituted through a series of conflicting discourses, such as agency and nihilism, for example, and highlights the fear of losing subjectivity and becoming an other.

Here, Jenner acknowledges that death is imminent for everyone, that is, there is no escape, an element often observed in other zombie narratives according to Bishop (2009). Jenner attempts to convince the group to remain inside the CDC building as it is set to self-destruct as per a decontamination protocol when the generators run out of power:

Jenner: This (referring to the infection) is what takes us down. This is our extinction event ... one tiny moment, a millisecond, no pain ... wouldn't it be kinder? More compassionate to hold your loved ones and wait for the clock to count down? (1006).

Jenner's suggestion illustrates that he views death as preferable to living in a world where the end is terrible and inevitable. In this sense, "it is not the cannibalistic monsters but the zombification that makes zombie stories so horrible ... the ambiguous image as neither subject nor object, arouses the deep set anxiety over the core issue of the borderline of subjectivity" (Lin, 2013, p. 2). While "I am afraid of being bitten," relates to the fear of death, "I am afraid of biting," reveals a more profound horror: the loss of subjectivity and the fear of becoming "one of them" (p. 2). Ultimately, Jenner, Jacqui, and Andrea opt to stay behind as the CDC building self-destructs. This demonstrates the significance of suicide as a discourse that constitutes agency in the face of zombification within the text, illustrating that it is a human choice to attempt and maintain a space for the living. It suggests that suicide is constructed as resistance to abjection, since it provides a way to escape losing one's subjectivity if bitten, but also suggests that suicide is a method to mitigate risk, since ending one's own life in the specific way required within the diegesis



(i.e. destroying the brain) helps to ensure that reanimation will not occur and therefore helps to guarantee the safety of others.

During the last moments of season one (1006), Dale rushes to Andrea's side and refuses to leave the building without her; during the last few seconds of the episode he is successful in coaxing her out of the exploding building. In the second season, Andrea approaches Dale, requesting her gun back. Here, Andrea's acknowledgment that suicide is a way to mitigate the risk of the potential for her body to become abject highlights a discourse of control/agency that helps to constitute suicide:

Andrea: What do you think I'm gonna stick it (the gun) in my mouth and pull the trigger the moment you hand it to me?

Dale: I know you're angry at me, that much is clear, but if I hadn't done what I did you'd be dead.

Andrea: Jenner gave us an option, I chose to stay.

Dale: You chose suicide!

Andrea: So what's that to you, you barely know me.

Dale: I know that Amy's (Andrea's sister) death devastated you.

Andrea: Keep her out of this. This is not about Amy, this is about us, and if I decided that I had nothing left to live for, who the hell are you to tell me otherwise. To force my hand like that.

Dale: I saved you're life!

Andrea: No Dale, I saved yours! You forced that on me. I didn't want your blood on my hands, that is the only reason I left that building. What, did you expect I'd have some sort of epiphany, some life affirming catharsis?

Dale: Maybe just a little gratitude?

Andrea: Gratitude? I wanted to die my way, not torn apart by drooling freaks! That was my choice, you took that away from me Dale. (Pause) When Amy died, all I wanted was to get out of this endless, horrific

nightmare we live every day. I wasn't hurting anyone else. You took my choice away Dale (2001).

Andrea's insistence that Dale took away her choice touches on the anguish she is experiencing. She acknowledges that she is suffering (presumably since the death of her sister) and does not want to become abject, which we are shown through her previous decision to stay inside the CDC building as it self-destructed (1006). Andrea believes that Dale took away her chance to exercise control/agency over her own life by forcing her to leave the CDC. This also suggests that dying is accessible through a discourse of control. Thus, since Andrea did not die, if she returns to the apocalyptic landscape and is bitten, then she loses her control permanently. Her conversation with Dale is very emotional, cued to us as tears begin to well in her eyes; her voice becomes strained and loud as she attempts to choke back the tears. I read Dale's refusal to return Andrea's gun as a method of control that cues us to discursively read suicide as a risk and abnormal. Since Andrea's previous occupation, as a civil rights attorney, suggests that she challenged the system and pushed the limits of the law, her attempted act of suicide can be read as a way of extending this challenge permanently. In other words, if she were successful in killing herself, then she would have been successful in utilizing suicide as a method of resistance to abjection, allowing her to reassert her own control over her body and her environment, but also as a method of resistance to Dale's desire to control her through his moral leadership.

Foucault contends: "For a long time, one of the characteristic privileges of the sovereign was the right to decide life and death," but explains that this was eventually replaced by a power to "foster life or disallow it to the point of death" (Rabinow, 1984, p. 258 – 261). He argues that since the classical age, the West has undergone a very

profound transformation of these mechanisms of power, resulting in the primary interest now existing over life, and how to secure, extend, and improve it (p. 262). This is what Foucault terms bio-power and explains that this concept involves two main forms. First, the “administration of bodies,” where the human body is treated like a machine: productive and economically useful. The aim here is to create a more disciplined and effective population. Secondly, the “calculated management of life,” focuses on the reproductive capacity of the human body and the regulation of the population (p. 262). Thus, death became power’s limit and during the classical era there was an “explosion of numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations” (p. 262). In other words, death is constituted through a discourse of control of the body.

Although never explicitly stated in the text, I read the apocalyptic setting of *The Walking Dead* as suggesting that the population (at least in Georgia where the series is set) has been astronomically reduced due to the infection, and that the relentless hordes of walkers drastically outnumber the survivors. If I read suicide within the text through Foucault’s discussion of bio-power, it becomes clear why this act is disallowed within the diegesis and frowned upon by other survivors. Taking one’s own life in this apocalyptic space is detrimental to the group as it diminishes the overall reproductive capacity and regulation of the population, as well as destroying the economic and productive uses of the body and touching on the religious construction of the body as a gift that is sacred and must be preserved (Hershel). Thus, there is a discursive framing of suicide as a risk, as abnormal, and counter-productive to the overall norms of the survivor group, and therefore cannot be tolerated.

### **Bio-power and the Discourse of Contagion**

As discussed in the previous chapter, the method of reproduction for the walker suggests disease and illness, as the victim, after being bitten or scratched, becomes ill, usually with a high fever, and dies before reanimation occurs. This connects us to Foucault's concept of bio-power, by encouraging the survivors to "gaze" at bodies to ensure they are not infected, for example checking for bite marks after encounters with walkers. Thus, a discourse of contagion is constructed to help us make sense of the walkers. A particular scene (1006) alludes to this: Jenner demands the survivors submit to a blood test before he will let them into the CDC compound. The group agrees to Jenner's "price of admission" and enters the building. Once inside, they begin to question Jenner, the last remaining American scientist (that we know of), about the cause of the infection and he resolves to show them a video that "few ever got the chance to see":

Shane: What are those lights?

Jenner: It's a person's life; experiences, memories, it's everything. Somewhere in all the organic writing, in all those ripples of light, is you. The thing that makes you unique, human ... Those are synapses, electric impulses in the brain that carry all the messages, they determine everything a person says, does, or thinks, from the moment of birth, to the moment of death.

Rick: Death? That's what this is a vigil?

Jenner: Yes, or rather the playback of the vigil.

Andrea: This person died. Who?

Jenner: Test subject 19 (TS-19). Someone who was bitten, infected, and volunteered to let us record the process. (Jenner then informs the computer to scan forward to the "first event") It invades the brain like meningitis. The adrenal glands haemorrhage, the brain goes into shutdown, then the major organs, then death. Everything you were, or

ever will be ... gone. (He then tells the computer to scan forward to the “second event”). The resurrection times vary widely, we have reports of it occurring in as little as three minutes, the longest we heard of was eight hours.

Lori: It restarts the brain?

Jenner: No, just the brain stem. Basically, it gets them up and moving.

Rick: But they're not alive?

Jenner: You tell me.

Rick: It's like nothing before; most of the brain is dark.

Jenner: Dark, lifeless, dead. The frontal lobe, the neo-cortex, the human part, that doesn't come back, the “you” part. It's just a shell, driven by mindless instinct.

This scene is very dark, with the little to no light, beside the computer screen, and soft, sad, instrumental music is laid in over the dialogue. The video that we are shown is of Jenner's wife, a fellow scientist, who became infected and allowed them to record the process. We are provided an enhanced, internal view of her brain (through an MRI scan) as the infection spreads, killing her, and subsequently causing reanimation. As the survivors gaze at the brain image, we are cued to a developing binary between light and darkness. In the beginning, the brain is full of ripples of light and activity, that Jenner explains are synapses; what makes a person who they are. However, when Jenner instructs the computer to move forward to the first event, the brain goes dark, suggesting that death has occurred. Following this, in a concentrated area (the brain stem), little ripples of light begin again, and this cues us to the fact that reanimation has occurred. In this sense, Jenner draws on scientific and medical discourses to demonstrate that light represents life and normalcy, and is privileged, whereas darkness is pushed to the opposite side of the dichotomy, representing death, reanimation, and the abnormal.

As Jenner shows the survivors this visual information, he is encouraging them to gaze at the body, and, in doing so, is constructing a discourse of contagion within the diegesis to explain the walkers. This discourse is constituted much like other contagion narratives, through tropes of disease, abjection, and abnormality. Gazing at bodies in this manner allows his examination to establish over individuals “a visibility through which one differentiates and judges” (Rabinow, 1984, p. 197). The binary of us/them (living/dead) is perpetuated in this narrative as the gaze helps to discursively construct the normal body and the abnormal body, the sick body and the healthy body, helping to determine who is a risk and who is not.

This discourse of contagion is also supported through a scientific discourse, suggesting that by gazing at the body the cause of the infection can be determined and resolved. Acknowledging this scientific discourse is significant, as it perpetuates the overarching régime of truth within the text that privileges white, male authority. Jenner is arguably in a privileged position as the last surviving person of authority at the CDC, representing the last vestige of scientific authority, which is a male authority (rationality belonging to white, educated men). Although, in the end, the survivors do not take up his version of authority, in this moment Jenner has the authorizing discourse within the text. The diegesis does not support this discourse, as ultimately Jenner reveals that science has not been able to come up with an answer, and there are no more resources or people available to continue researching possible causes/cures for the infection. This is a moment where we see a disruption in the legitimacy of discourses which enshrine white, male power as dominant, only to find that no other figures of authority emerge from the rubble to continue Jenner’s work.

The diegetic denial of Jenner's authority also suggests a critique of the power given to scientific discourse, highlighting the hubris of science and modern medicine in their attempts to reveal the "truth." In this case, this truth would be the cause of the infection. This critique is graphically demonstrated, again through the theme of suicide, as Jenner opts to remain inside the CDC building as it self-destructs, referring to the infection as humanity's "extinction event" (1006). Jenner is constructed as a privileged male authority figure as he has the means to quickly and painlessly end his life, without having to "pull the trigger" himself. His action of committing suicide and taking one of the major scientific hubs with him suggests that he has lost hope and cannot continue to exist, as a subscriber to science, within a world where the "truth" about the provenance of the infection will never be known. When the CDC building explodes, killing Jenner and Jacqui (who also opted to remain behind), we are cued to the end of Jenner's authority, and the authority previously granted to scientific discourse, being viewed as legitimate, as all of the CDC's knowledge and research is destroyed along with him.

### **Bio-Power and the Fear of Reproduction**

Foucault's concept of bio-politics underlines how the biological body is a part of the regulatory systems or structures in our society. Therefore, I also utilized Foucault's discussion of bio-power to read reproduction in the text. I found it significant that there is no rush to encourage the young women in the series to become pregnant, compared to other apocalyptic narratives, such as *Battlestar Galactica*, in which a violent attack on all human settlements in space leaves the human race with less than 50,000 survivors and women are encouraged to begin having as many babies as possible in order to rebuild the

population (Hellstrand, 2011, p. 9). In comparison, the explicit link between the female body and survival in *The Walking Dead* seems to repudiate Foucault's discussion of bio-power. Whereas the walkers reproduce at an extremely fast rate, the human survivors in *The Walking Dead* do not even want to entertain the idea of bringing children into the world.

Two strong examples of this discourse through which reproduction is constituted are illustrated in the text. The first occurs when Lori confesses to Rick that it might be better if their son, Carl doesn't survive his injuries after being shot (2003):

Lori: Maybe this isn't a world for children anymore ... why do we want Carl to live in this world? To have this life? So he can see more people torn apart in front of him? So he can be hungry and scared? So that he can run, and run, and run, and even if he survives, he ends up just another animal that doesn't know anything except survival? If he dies tonight, it ends for him.

Another example occurs when Lori discovers she is pregnant and considers aborting the baby by taking an overdose of the morning after pill before forcing herself to throw them up (2006). Both of these scenes are very emotional, as Lori weeps and raises her voice to her husband, and Rick gives her frustrated and angry glances, while at the same time, remaining silent. I read the fact that it is Rick, the paternal figure, who argues for the continued existence of his children, as commenting on the morality of the male, paternal figure, furthering the argument from the previous chapter that the text privileges the paternal role over the maternal. Although these scenes are commenting on how a woman's right to choose remains a key political concern in late modern society, it also suggests that abortion goes against the "calculated management of life," by denying reproduction and the regulation and control of the population, which is a source of power for Foucault. On the other hand, the paternal figure, in this case Rick, encourages



reproduction and wishes for the continued existence of his children. This demonstrates how Rick, as a man of power, has calculated the value of his children versus the “children” of the walkers. Relatively traditional discourses about reproduction and life are privileged in the text, however, here they are uncoupled from the feminine and are added to spaces of power and authority over which men have control.

### **The Power of the Norm**

I utilized Foucault’s concept of “the power of the norm” to further analyze how the body is governed and managed within the text. Foucault acknowledges that at the heart of all disciplinary mechanisms, structures of power have the ability to define what is “normal” and also how to deal with those who do not conform (Weber, 2002, p. 21). Discourses help to define what is normal in a social world and utilizing CDA enables us to focus on how the social power of groups and institutions as discourses, that are part of those disciplinary mechanisms, can help to organize an understanding of normalcy. Foucault suggests that in a regime of disciplinary power, discipline is used as a method of controlling the operations or positions of the body, but does not always have to involve overt violence or force. Subsequently, the art of punishing, in this regime of disciplinary power, brings into play the binary opposition of the permitted and the forbidden. In this sense, an idealized norm of conduct is constructed and individuals who deviate from or do not conform to this ideal are considered to be a risk, either to themselves, the group, or both. Thus, one significant way the body is controlled within the text is through the governance of *risk*, and this is managed through the deployment of various discourses that explain risk, what it is, how it can be mitigated, and so on.

Overt violence or force against one another, on the part of the survivors, is not always necessary to gain control and cultivate authority because there exists another threat of violence, the walkers. As discussed above, the survivors view the walkers as abject, helping to construct the us/them binary, but also demonstrating that discursively, the able, clean, and living body is normal and privileged. This other kind of violence, the fear of death and becoming other, is often enough to encourage the survivors to conform and to continue self-regulating their behaviour, by following the rules and norms of the group. Those with the authority to govern (previously established through discourses rooted in particular understandings of gender, race, class, etc.) do not need to use violence explicitly to get their people to submit. The threat is that if they do not follow the rules, they will inevitably fall victim to the violence of the walkers. Foucault's understanding of the power of the norm helps us to comprehend that there are rules within the diegesis. When these rules are broken, or an individual does not conform, they are identified as a risk. Even though they may not yet be abject, the diegetic setting reinforces the need for these individuals to be managed and brought back into line if they are to remain within the group. The idea of managing risk is developed through various discourses of power and authority and establishes the experts (those with authority) as best able to manage risk. Therefore, it becomes the responsibility of the others to self-regulate their behaviour in order to ensure risk is mitigated. In order to further understand how bodies are controlled through the governance of risk, and why this is significant to the text, it is helpful to explore Foucault's work on "modes of objectification." In other words, the three organising principles used by Foucault to explain how individual human beings

become subjects: dividing practices, scientific classification, and subjectification (Rabinow, 1986, p. 8-11).

### **Dividing Practices**

“Dividing practices” involve the exclusion of people who are viewed as a threat to a community. Some infamous examples include:

The isolation of lepers during the Middle Ages, the confinement of the poor, the insane, and the vagabonds in the great catch-all Hôpital Général in Paris in 1656, the new classifications of disease and the associated practices of clinical medicine in early-nineteenth-century France, the rise of modern psychiatry and its entry into the hospitals, prisons, and clinics throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and finally the medicalization, stigmatization, and normalization of sexual deviance in modern Europe” (Rabinow, 1986, p. 8).

Essentially, these dividing practices are “modes of manipulation that combine the mediation of a science (or pseudo-science) and the practice of exclusion – usually in a spatial sense, but always in a social one” (p. 8). In this sense, dividing practices can be equated to the strategy of “risk control,” since they are aimed at individuals who have been identified as a risk that needs to be managed and attempt to exert external controls on the risk in hopes of preventing a recurrence in risky behaviour (Clear & Cadora, 2011, p. 59).

Within the text, we see dividing practices utilized when a person poses a risk or threat to the group. For instance, Jim begins to dig holes outside of the survivor’s camp, due to a dream that he cannot remember (1004). Dale approaches Jim with a canteen of water, offering him a drink, as the outside temperature is over one hundred degrees. Dale asks Jim why he is digging the holes, to which Jim does not reply. Dale approaches the other survivors and expresses his concern about Jim’s behaviour. We realize that Dale

recognizes Jim's behaviour as abnormal when he approaches the rest of the survivors. We are cued to the group's acknowledgment that his behaviour is abnormal when they all approach Jim a second time, questioning his actions and trying to persuade him to take a break. Jim attempts to justify his actions by stating that he is not bothering or hurting anyone, and insists that the group should simply leave him alone. However, as Shane approaches Jim, Jim becomes hostile, pushing Shane and swinging a shovel at him, and Jim is subsequently restrained. Following this scene, we are cued to the spatial dividing practices utilized by the group, as Jim is tied to a tree away from the main campsite. We are also made aware of the social exclusion of Jim from the group, as Shane informs him that he will be restrained and separated from the group until he is "no longer a threat to himself or others" (1004). This develops a medical discourse on mental illness in which this kind of illness is seen as a risk to be managed.

This scene is significant because it helps to establish rules for normalcy within the text. Jim is acting abnormally, but not in a way associated with "the change." Rather, he is exhibiting signs of psychological stress that are probably more familiar to the old-world, pre-apocalypse. The representation of Jim in this scene, sweaty, racing heart, blank look, experiencing bad dreams, frightening thoughts, being on edge and having angry outbursts, conjures images of a person experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder (National Institute of Mental Health). Thus, the survivor's reaction to Jim demonstrates another line of continuity between the "before" world and the present: the segregation of those represented as different or damaged as a risk to be managed. Jim does not represent the abject, yet the survivor's concern and reaction toward him makes it clear that he is identified as a risk and needs to be managed.

### **Hierarchical Observation, Normalization, and Control**

The Enlightenment “brought with it a number of new sciences that which were concerned with understanding the nature of individuals, defining what is normal so that the abnormal could be treated” (Weber, 2002, p. 21). The key tool for these new sciences was examination and this tool “transformed visibility into power, classified people into cases, and trapped them in a straightjacket of documentation, that clearly stated whether or not they were normal” (p. 21). Foucault refers to this as hierarchical observation: “a mechanism that coerces by means of observation; an apparatus in which the techniques that make it possible to see induce effects of power and in which conversely, the means of coercion make those on whom they are applied clearly visible” (Rabinow, 1986, p. 189). The body, for Foucault, is no longer a site of penal repression, but instead, is subject to forces of discipline and control.

In *Discipline and Punish* (1995), Foucault developed the theory that the disciplinary effects of power, which had originally been developed in prison, gradually spread throughout society in all kinds of manifestations aimed at correcting and normalizing individuals (p. 27). In other words, he argued that power relationships are based upon surveillance and need not be based upon physical punishment. Foucault suggests:

A whole problematic then develops: that of an architecture that is no longer built simply to be seen, or to observe the external space, but to permit an internal, articulated, and detailed control (Rabinow, 1986, p. 190).

The hospital is used as an example of a building that was gradually organized as an instrument of medical action, as well as the school, developed to be a mechanism for

training. As Foucault contends, “the perfect disciplinary apparatus would make it possible for a single gaze to see everything constantly” (p. 191). This idea of a constant observation, or gaze, is used by Foucault to illustrate a particular dynamic in power relations and disciplinary mechanisms. The gaze “is integral to systems of power and ideas about knowledge,” concerning how individuals self-regulate their behaviour under the belief that they are constantly being watched (Sturken & Cartwright, 2009, p. 94).

One way this understanding of discipline and control is represented in *The Walking Dead* is exemplified through the constant presence of a survivor atop the RV, most often Dale Horvath. The RV represents a tower like place, raised above the rest of the survivors in the middle of the camp, recalling images of Bentham’s panopticon. Although the survivors are never truly able to occupy the position of the gaze, since in the Panopticon, the person who is watching is not visible, the idea of a constant presence does encourage other characters to self-regulate their behaviour. This constant presence also cues us to the third organising principle Foucault used to explain how humans become subjects: normalizing judgement. Subjectification is concerned with the process of self-formation, self-understanding, and the way in which conformity is achieved. As Foucault asserts:

In short, the art of punishing, in the regime of disciplinary power, is aimed neither at expiation, nor even precisely at repression. It brings five quite distinct operations into play: it refers individual actions to a whole that is at once a field of comparison, a space of differentiation, and the principle of a rule to be followed. It differentiates individuals from one another, in terms of the following overall rule: that the rule be made to function as a minimum threshold, as an average to be respected, or as an optimum toward which one must move. It measures in quantitative terms and hierarchizes in terms of value the abilities, the level, and the “nature” of individuals. It introduces, through this “value-giving” measure, the constraint of a conformity that must be achieved. Lastly, it traces the limit that will define difference in relation to all

other differences, the external frontier of the abnormal (Rabinow, 1986, p. 195).

Thus, the art of punishing, in this regime of disciplinary power, compares, differentiates, hierarchizes, homogenizes, and excludes. This is what Foucault termed the power of the norm, as all individual actions are now within a “field of comparison” which both pressurises and normalizes (p. 196).

A prominent example of how this type of conformity is achieved within the text is demonstrated through the character of Daryl Dixon. As argued in the previous chapter, Daryl is already marginalized from the group as he is positioned as white trash, believed to be similar to his brother, Merle, who is presented as racist, violent, irrational, and a redneck. After Daryl is injured while searching for Sophia (2005), his marginalization from the group is again highlighted. In this episode, Daryl has fallen down a ravine, and landed on an arrow, which pierced his side. He attempts to climb out of the ravine, but his wound keeps him from making it to the top, and he falls again. As Daryl lies injured and losing consciousness, we see Merle appear to him in a hallucination:

Merle: What’s going on here? Are you taking a siesta?

Daryl: Shitty day bro.

Merle: Aww, would you like me to get you a pillow? Or rub your feet?

Daryl: Screw you!

Merle: Uh-uh, you’re the one screwed by the looks of it. All these years I spent trying to make a man out of you and this is what I get? Look at you! You’re going to die out here little brother, and for what?

Daryl: A girl, they lost their little girl.

Merle: You got a thing for little girls now? Cause I noticed you ain’t out looking for old Merle no more.

Daryl: Tried like hell to find you bro. All you had to do was wait. We went back for you, Rick and I.

Meryl: Is this the same Rick that cuffed me to the rooftop in the first place? Forced me to cut off my own hand? You his bitch now?

Daryl: I ain't nobody's bitch!

Merle: You're a joke is what you are. Playing errand boy to a bunch of pansy-asses, niggers, and democrats. (Laughs). You're nothing but a freak to them. Redneck trash, that's all you are. Ah, they're laughing at you behind your back, you know that don't ya. They ain't your kin, your blood. Ain't nobody ever gonna care for you except me little brother. Come on, get up on your feet before I have to kick your teeth in.

Daryl realizes that Merle is a hallucination following the conversation, when what he originally thought was Merle kicking his boot, taunting him to get up, is actually a walker attempting to bite through his shoe. Immediately, adrenaline causes Daryl to jump up and fight the walker. Using a tree branch from nearby, he wrestles with the walker and violently smashes its head in, covering himself in more blood from his kill. Another walker closes in, and Daryl rips the arrow from his side and struggles to load it into his crossbow. Successful at both of his kills, he begins to dress his wound, although he does not clean it, as we see that he is still dirty and covered in blood. Although Daryl is alone, viewers are cued to his further developing abnormal behaviour, as he proceeds to skin a squirrel and eat it raw, with his bare hands, which are now bloody as well. He also cuts off the ears of the two walkers he killed, and ties the ears to a shoelace, which he then places around his neck. The discourses of the body within the text suggest that Daryl's behaviour is abnormal because it becomes harder and harder to distinguish him from a walker. In this sense, Daryl's bleeding, wounded, and dirty body violates the desire and hope for the clean and proper body and highlights his abjection: his behaviour blurs the



boundaries and limitations of his selfhood, and imitates his physical wasting and ultimate death (Covino, 2004, p. 17). Kristeva (1982) asserts that the orderliness and stability of the body are always under threat, and always illusory: “The more or less beautiful image in which I behold or recognize myself rests upon abjection that sunders it as soon as repression, the constant watchmen, is relaxed” (p. 13). Thus, the “clean and proper body” is a condition for our ability to be articulated as subjects in the social world (Covino, 2004, p. 35). The clean and proper body also charts the ambivalence of these discourses because Daryl is strong and able, often in ways the others are not.

The makeup effects used on Daryl also help to bring our attention to him in various ways. In this scene Daryl is presented as dirty, sweaty, bloody, and unclean. What makes this significant is that Daryl is often presented as more “unclean” than the rest of the survivors. This demonstrates difference between him and the rest of the group, but also suggests that there is a connection between the walkers and those that were marginalized before they came, in this case, the poor. It is the apocalypse and everyone should look this way (dirty, sweaty, unclean), since there are no hot showers and the survivors spend their days outside in the hot sun. Yet somehow Daryl is different, as the representation of his body is in excess of the “clean and proper,” and therefore, closer to the abject (Covino, 2004, p. 17).

As Daryl returns to camp, his difference and abnormality are further illustrated as he causes confusion amongst the group with regards to the living/dead binary. Andrea, while atop the RV, spots Daryl, and mistakes him for a walker because of his appearance: dirty, bloody, limping, and slow. She alerts Rick, but suggests that she can “nail it” from her position. Rick denies Andrea’s request, suggesting that she “better let us

(Rick, Shane, Glenn, and T-Dog) handle this.” Andrea ignores Rick and assumes a position on top of the RV in order to line up her shot. As the men run toward what they believe is a walker, they are confused when they realize it’s actually Daryl returning to camp. Upon this realization, however, we hear a shot, and Daryl falls to the ground.

Andrea runs to join the group out in the field, beside what she believes to be her first kill protecting the group. Upon the grim realization that it is Daryl, we hear Andrea scream, “Oh my God, is he dead?” Rick explains that he is just unconscious, as the bullet grazed his head. This scene further illustrates the existing arc about Andrea’s refusal to stay within the grounds of conventional feminine behaviour as defined by the text. We are cued to a disruption of this normalcy as Andrea ignores Rick’s authoritative decision to let the men handle the situation. Andrea’s crossing of boundaries almost results in the loss of Daryl, someone who, although marginalized, is useful and a strong hunter and fighter.

Daryl’s abnormal behaviour is again highlighted as Glenn points to the necklace and asks “what’s wrong with him? He’s wearing ears.” Rick, seeing Hershel approach, rips the ears off of Daryl’s neck and throws them to the side claiming “let’s keep that to ourselves.” This scene is significant in literalizing “normalizing judgement,” as well as the link between the walkers and those who were marginalized before they came. It is suggested that Daryl is shot because his appearance and behaviour make him difficult to distinguish from the disruptive, abject body of a walker. This confuses the group because it disrupts the norm for physical self-control, social propriety, and the clean and proper body thus, Daryl is posing a risk to the constructed understanding of the us/them (living/dead) dichotomy. Although the text has depicted Daryl in this manner, the survivors, especially Rick, recognize that Daryl needs to be brought back into line or

normalized, as he too closely resembles the abject other and is not conforming to the social norms constructed within the group. The discourse at work here is linked to the idea of the risk of having an improper body that strays too closely to the limits of understanding in terms of living/dead, man/woman, or white/other. In this sense, Rick's action of removing the ear necklace helps to fuel and legitimized his authority as he works to normalize Daryl's disruptive and (closely) abject body.

Foucault's concept of normalcy, coupled with his concept of resistance, allowed me to further analyze instances where survivors are seen as a risk to be managed. Rick's action of removing the thing that most marks Daryl's abnormality (the ear necklace) is an attempt to uphold his promise to Hershel that he will "control his people."<sup>59</sup> As Foucault (1978) contends, "power relations are intentional and non-subjective ... they are imbued, through and through, with calculation: there is no power that is exercised without a series of aims and objectives" (p. 95). Thus, it is suggested that Rick believes if Hershel sees Daryl as abnormal, it may jeopardize the group's chances of being allowed to remain on Hershel's land, again constructing Hershel's authority as feudal. Rick's removal of the ears is an attempt to normalize Daryl's body, which is kind of ironic since Hershel is the one keeping walkers locked in his barn. Rick's suggestion that the survivors should "keep that (Daryl's behaviour) to themselves" is an attempt to keep the "truth" from Hershel and highlights how Rick is using his authority to guarantee his objective of keeping the survivors on the farm.

Thus, when an individual is identified as abnormal, they are compared and judged against others to determine if they are a risk. The power of the norm then works to

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<sup>59</sup> This is in reference to an earlier scene during which Hershel demands that things need to be cleared with him. When Rick asks what he suggests, Hershel replies, "Keep it simple. I'll control my people, you control yours" (2005).

encourage conformity and normalcy or to suggest exclusion. As I outlined in the previous chapter, for the majority of season two, the rural and isolated nature of Hershel's farm, with its fences, and other amenities (such as fertile land, functioning well, and generator), construct a safe and secure space for the group, and they do not want to leave. I read the survivors' willingness to conform to the rules of the norm as evidence that they fear exclusion from this space, which, in this text would result in a survivor being forced to face this apocalyptic landscape on their own, with limited resources and ammunition, and thus, constructing conformity to group norms as the best option for survival.

### **Resistance**

Although Daryl is separated from the group and seen as a risk due to his abnormal behaviour, his behaviour also presents a strong example of resistance within the text. If we recall that for Foucault, "power is to be understood relationally, and such relations are defined by constantly shifting states of disequilibrium, then resistance cannot be conceived as opposed to power, as it has traditionally, but instead must be thought of as intrinsic to it" (Thompson, 2003, p. 117). A reading of resistance is required because it is intrinsic to power and demonstrates the cyclical nature of power that Foucault describes.

There are two ways that I read Daryl's body as constituting resistance within the text. The first is through his physical appearance, as he is often dirty, sweaty, and bloody. It is important to remember that Daryl is "made up" this way; it is in fact strange that all of the survivors are not dirty. Yet the dirt seems to stick to Daryl in ways that it doesn't to the others, suggesting that he is more familiar with dirt and thus less afraid of it or perhaps, that it is his normal state and not theirs. I read Daryl's behaviour, wearing the ear

necklace for example, as a form of resistance, as he tries to assert dominance over the walkers in a way that resonates more with his own sense of normalcy. Since he is quite familiar with hunting and tracking, I read the ears as representing a trophy of his kills. His action of wearing this necklace liberates him from the norm within the text of completely eliminating the abject body.

Wearing the ear necklace also demonstrates resistance because he is refusing to uphold the standard of the clean and proper body and utilizing aspects of something (ears of walkers) that the ascendant force, that white, masculine, heterosexual authority, has targeted for eradication and domination. Foucault insists, “resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power” and in order to understand how resistance works, we need to understand “the strictly relational characters of power relations” (Foucault, 1978, p. 95). In other words, power relations are relational to the extent that the ascendancy of one force is resisted by the exercise of another and this can take a variety of forms:

In the classic and most obvious cases, this ascendant force can be opposed by a genuine enemy, an adversary, or by something that the ascendant force targets for eradication or domination. But relations of power obey no general form of binary opposition, no simple and universal division between rulers and the ruled, principles and punishment, oppressors and oppressed. There is resistance in purely instrumental or even supportive relationships. What these relations all have in common is the element of friction, of something, even when it is employed effectively by something else, nonetheless presenting a plane to be overcome, a recalcitrance to being exercised in a specific way, for a specific set of purposes (Thompson, 2003, p. 117-118).

Resistance does not have to be a response to oppression, but it always allows for power to be decentralized. When Daryl returns to camp, his appearance resists the dominant régime of power and the ways in which this régime requires him to act. He is creating confusion in the group, since they believe that walkers and humans are immediately differentiable

from one another, but Daryl shows this to be false, thus challenging this ascendant authority and the us/them (living/dead) binary. Although Daryl kills the walkers, he uses pieces of them to demonstrate his dominance over abjection, suggesting that he is not as afraid or as disgusted by the abject body as the other survivors and this showcases his resistance as he refuses to conform to the constructed norm of the clean and proper body, similar to Michonne, a character I analyse later in this chapter.

Although Daryl's physical body is viewed as disruptive to the clean and proper body and his appearance is resisting the ways in which the dominant régime of power requires him to act. Daryl's social body, cued through his survival ability could be considered a type of authority. Even though he is marginalized from the group and classed, his survival ability is often legitimized as authoritative because he is a productive and useful member of the group (who is also male and white). Survivors turn to him for hunting and tracking advice and when seeking a strong team member to complete tasks for the group (such as patrols, supply runs, or security).

Secondly, Daryl resists masculine power and authority as it is constructed within the text as he generally opts to use a crossbow, instead of a gun. Daryl's use of a crossbow resists Rick and Shane's notion that guns are needed to ensure safety. His crossbow is also a class symbol, as bow hunters are distinguished from gun hunters, even though the crossbow is an alternative and, arguably, a better method of elimination, as Daryl can silently take down walkers while still maintaining a safe proximity from them. However, Daryl must be more intimately involved in violence than those who use guns, as he must retrieve his arrows after they are fired. As he retrieves the arrows, he must pull them out of the walker's bodies, tearing and ripping flesh and entrails out along with it.

Ultimately, this forces him to more closely confront the abject body and often results in him becoming more dirty, further isolating him from the clean and proper body and more closely aligning him with the ways in which femininities and non-white masculinities are constructed in the text.

One other significant moment of resistance within the text happens in the last few minutes of the first season (2013), when we are introduced to hooded figure, Michonne. She keeps two walkers chained to her at all times, in an attempt to avoid detection from other infected. This enables Michonne to disrupt the discourse that walkers must be eliminated, as she uses the decaying and dead smell of the walkers to conceal her living smell, an idea that was utilized by Rick and Glenn (1002)<sup>60</sup> but was never carried forward, even though it was successful. The fact that Michonne chooses to keep these two abject figures close to her is also representative of resistance, since she has successfully discovered a method to coexist with the infected and does not respond to them in fear or horror. In a sense, she embraces the abject, although her reasons for keeping these walkers is revealed in the fourth season. As a viewer, I am never privy to how she actually gained this knowledge (in the first/second seasons at least), but in her utilization of it, she exposes the us/them binary and successfully overthrows the violent hierarchy constructed in the films of George A. Romero, and most other zombie narratives.

The walkers Michonne keeps cannot infect her because she has removed their jaws and arms, so they cannot scratch or bite. This helps to constitute resistance since she has removed the walkers' method of reproduction, in a sense, castrating them.

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<sup>60</sup> Rick and Glenn cover themselves in walker guts, blood, and entrails in an attempt to mask their "living" smell. This normalizing behaviour is successful, allowing them to pass through the infected unnoticed, until a rainstorm washes away the guts and reveals the farce (1002).

Michonne's position over the infected she keeps with her also reveals her as having broken with the "second generation" of the zombie (i.e. Romero's living dead) and returned to the first or "Haitian" representation (Boluk and Lenz, 2011) as the walkers appear as her slaves: silent, submissive, and literally lead by chains around their necks. These chains illustrate their loss of freedom, even in their undead state, and their presence recalls historical images of slavery through their unkempt appearance (dirty, matted hair), ragged scraps of clothing, and tired, beaten bodies. The fact that the two walkers are African American also parallels Kyle Allkins (2000) argument that zombie films "show racism through the representation of African American characters and the ways zombies function as racial "others," who exemplify the non-normative and inhuman" (p. 112). However, since Michonne is a strong African American woman, she challenges Allkins argument, and the white conventions of the narrative, as it is atypical that she is represented as the slave owner, thus disassociating the narrative of slavery and colonialism from whiteness and white supremacy.

Unfortunately, although Michonne has discovered an alternative method, the dominant régime of power constructed in the narrative of the show, regarding white, masculine power and authority, denies her the ability to use her knowledge to construct an accepted alternative discourse for dealing with the infected, because she is not white, and because she is not male. Her utilization of the abject body to hide in plain sight amidst other walkers is disruptive to the survivors' normative method of dealing with the undead. Also, in a text where traditional gender norms exist, the fact that Michonne is a strong willed, African American woman, cues us to the idea that her character is disruptive to the dominant authoritative structures within the text.



## Conclusion

My analysis of how the body is governed demonstrates how the text is biased toward a particular ideology, wherein the clean, able, living body comes to represent normality. The disruptive, abject body helps to fuel and legitimize those in positions of power and authority as my reading suggests that bodies are governed in *The Walking Dead* by determining whether they are productive or disposable, eliminating disposable bodies, and governing productive bodies through the management of risk. Kristeva's concept of the abject was successful in distinguishing the useful body and the disposable body, and what must be done to the abject body because of its status. The abject body violates the living/dead binary, as well as the desire for a clean and proper body, causing a loss of distinction between self and other, as well as fear and repulsion. An analysis of Sophia's re-appearance in the middle of season two presented a moment where there was a crisis in abjection, a space where the way to understand the object (i.e. the walkers) was up for grabs. Before Sophia left the barn, there was optimism and hope that she was still alive. However, Sophia's infected and abject body helped to legitimize those in positions of authority by demonstrating that once the body becomes abject it is disposable, and ultimately must be eliminated. The competing discourses of the body revealed that discursively, the able, living, and clean body is privileged and comes to represent a dominant régime of truth and thus, the text revealed that the abnormal, disruptive, and abject body must be eliminated.

An analysis of suicide within the text was successful in further illustrating the response to the abjection of the infected body. By discussing Jenner, Jacqui, and Andrea's

insistence on remaining inside the self-destructing CDC building, I demonstrated how suicide is constituted through a discourse that constitutes agency in the face of zombification and is presented as a human choice, and an attempt to maintain a space for the living to have control over their body, while death is constructed through a discourse of control. The choice to end one's own life is demonstrated as an effective method to resist becoming abject, offering a way to mitigate risk by providing an alternative way to escape losing one's subjectivity if bitten, while also ensuring that reanimation will not occur.

My reading of bio-power was effective in extending my reading of suicide, demonstrating why this act is disallowed within the diegesis and frowned upon by the survivors: suicide diminishes the overall reproductive capacity of the group, and the regulation of the population, while also destroying the economic and productive uses of the body, especially in an apocalyptic setting. Foucault's concept of bio-power allowed for a reading of reproduction within the text, which successfully revealed how a discourse of contagion is constructed within the text to explain the walkers. This discourse is constituted much like other contagion narratives, through tropes of disease, abjection, and abnormality and encourages the survivors to gaze at the body. Medical and scientific discourses also suggest that the gaze can successfully determine the normal body and the abnormal body, the healthy body and the sick body, the risky body and the safe body, although the diegesis provides a critique of modern medicine and science, ultimately denying that it can provide the "truth."

By analyzing Foucault's concept of the power of the norm, I illustrated how the body is governed through the management of risk. Utilizing the three organising

principles that Foucault used to explain how individual human beings become subjects (dividing practices, scientific classification, and subjectification), I successfully demonstrated how normalcy helps us to comprehend the rules of the diegesis for determining risk and how individuals are encouraged to conform and self-regulate their behaviour. This allowed for an understanding of how those with the authority to govern do not need to explicitly use violence to get people to submit, since, the threat is that if they do not follow the rules, they will inevitably fall victim to the violence of the walkers. Jim and Daryl provided examples of how the disruptive body helps to legitimate those in positions of authority. This was evidenced through a discussion of how an individual is seen as a risk when they are not conforming to the overall group rules and illustrates how the diegetic setting reinforces the need for risky individuals to be managed, even if they are not completely abject.

Finally, an analysis of the characters Daryl and Michonne effectively demonstrated how the discourses of the body are used to resist dominance and inequality in the social world of the text. Daryl's unclean, injured body, and his donning of the ear necklace, violates the desire and hope for the clean and proper body and highlights his abjection as his behaviour blurs the boundaries and limitations of his selfhood, and constructs him as similar to the walkers. Michonne's possession of, and proximity to the two walkers she leads around by chains also assimilate her to the other. Ultimately, although they utilize different methods, Daryl and Michonne's appearances represent resistance because they create confusion in the group, making it more difficult to distinguish themselves from the abject other (walkers), as well as resisting dominant discourses of power, authority, governance, and inequality through the text

## Conclusion

In this thesis, I have located and deconstructed the dominant discourses of power, authority, and governance through which particular régimes of truth are constructed on AMC's *The Walking Dead*. I have argued that the power and the authority to govern in this post-apocalyptic world are gendered, raced, and classed, with power and authority being found in hands that are overwhelmingly white, male, heterosexual, and middle-class. I have also argued that bodies within this textual universe are governed through the management of risk, more so than overt violence, because the disruptive, abject, and risky body poses a threat to the normative authoritative structures and those in positions of authority within the text. I have supported these claims through a critical discourse analysis of the first two seasons of *The Walking Dead*:

- Using Derrida's concept of deconstruction to identify binary oppositions and their violent hierarchies,
- Applying Foucault's ideas about power, knowledge, subjectification, normalization, the body, and resistance to specific moments of the show,
- Employing Kristeva's concept of the abject to distinguish the useful body from the disposable body, as well as to elucidate what must be done with abject bodies because of the risk they pose to the non-abject and through their violation of the "clean and proper" body.

### Summary of Main Arguments

In my first analytical chapter (2.1 – Binary Oppositions in *The Walking Dead*), I provided an overview of the binary oppositions I uncovered in *The Walking Dead*, as an

understanding of these was vital to my analysis of this text. The binaries were urban/rural, white/black, male/female, and us/them (living/dead). The urban environment was often represented as dirty, contagious, overrun, and dangerous, in contrast to the rural environment, which was presented as pristine, untouched, isolated, and safe. There was a gendered binary in the text that positioned male characters as capable, rational, and authoritative, while female characters were positioned as incapable, irrational, and not authoritative. Women were largely constructed in the domestic sphere, as lovers and mothers, and as beneath men, both intellectually and morally, suggesting an understanding of what it means to be a man in the text, that is, not being like a woman. There was also a racial binary within the text which demonstrated the overwhelming and prominent role that white characters have in the series. Whiteness was also read to represent law, authority, morality, and knowledge in the text, whereas blackness represented darkness, lawlessness, and the unknown. Finally, the us/them binary was shown to have been produced as a reference point to distinguish between the living and the undead. The survivors were portrayed as still recognizably human, thinking, feeling, talking, whereas the walkers were often portrayed as dirty, dangerous, diseased, and as other than human, as lacking not just humanity but even humanness. The us/them binary also operated between members of the survivor group, and was often highlighted when a survivor acted abnormally, by not adhering to the norms of the group, or when they became infected (but had not yet “turned”) and were immediately othered and placed on the opposite side of the binary.

In my second analytical chapter (2.2 – “Power/Authority”), I argued at great length that power and authority are produced within *The Walking Dead* as belonging

primarily to those represented as white, male, middle-class, and heterosexual. By critically analyzing discourses of power, authority, gender, race, class, and governance in *The Walking Dead*, I was able to understand the ways in which the concepts I identify are discursively constructed through particular régimes of truth in the text. An analysis of hegemonic masculinity was utilized to discuss how power is gendered within the text. This version of masculinity – white, middle-class, and heterosexual – is the standard against which all other forms of manhood are measured and evaluated today (Kimmel, 2004, p. 184) and is constituted as being embodied most fully by the authoritative figures of Rick, Shane, and Hershel. Motherhood, maternity, and femininity were discussed in this thesis, but were used as a way to locate and talk about fatherhood, paternity, and masculinity. Furthermore, an analysis of reproduction revealed that children were also used within the first two seasons as a way of helping men define their masculine and male authority.

Throughout this research, the question of gender was something that I was always aware of. A very conservative construction of gender is presented in the first two seasons of this text. Women are restricted to domestic space, cooking, cleaning, and caring for the children, with little opportunity to break out of traditional gender roles. Due to the nature of the text and my research question(s), I focused heavily on masculinity, power, and authority. I did touch on aspects of gender, femininity, and motherhood, but I employed these to further my interrogation and discussion of the masculine and patriarchal power and authority structures within the text. For instance, an analysis of weaponry helped to reveal that women, as well as characters that do not fit the text's constructed profile of the white, male, heterosexual authority, are overwhelmingly forced to engage in close combat

and use weapons other than guns in order to eliminate threats, causing them to be more intimately involved in violence and to become dirty. This reading of weaponry suggests that guns, and those who most often possess them (white males, in positions of power and authority), negate the intimacy that happens in proximate violence because they allow the shooter distance from those they injure or kill. Thus, this illustrates how weaponry is used to further gender systems of power.

Through an interrogation of two characters, Rick and Merle, I argued that whiteness is privileged but also classed, and that simply being white does not guarantee power and authority. Similar to gender, race was discussed and acknowledged as important within the text, as it offered a way of interrogating the construction of normative masculinity as authoritative. For instance, when Merle viciously beats T-Dog,<sup>61</sup> a big African American man, violent and racist imagery exists as we are cued to the unequal, racialized power relations that are not necessarily supported by the text, but that are continuous with the “real” world. When Rick intervenes and subdues Merle, we are cued to how whiteness is at play, as Rick uses Merle as a scapegoat to help obscure his white privilege. Rick’s comments to Merle also work to provide a conflation of racism with the lower class; with terms like “white trash” signalling an absence of whiteness rather than its presence, and suggesting that people like Rick (white, middle-class) are not racist.

*The Walking Dead* constructs a world where traditional patriarchal and racialized versions of power, authority, and governance exist. This is a world in which all forms of order and traditional power structures have been destroyed, leaving the small group of

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survivors to reassemble themselves into (potentially) new kinds of communities. As Hassler-Forest (2011) argues, “this has made the zombie genre one of the most politically invigorating narrative paradigms in genre fiction, as it has expressed a sustained critique of conservative ideology and the political status quo, while also creating a space within its narrative where (sometimes radical) social alternatives can be explored” (p. 345).

Although *The Walking Dead* opens up these possibilities, I do not think that this text really makes use of them (at least in the first two seasons). As the world comes to an end, the text posits the opportunity for a critique of characters and institutions associated with traditional patriarchal power and offers a chance for the survivors to create a whole new world, with different models of authority, power, and governance, such as women taking on more authoritative roles of leading the group and/or making decisions. However, unlike other zombie narratives, such as *Day of the Dead* (1985), *28 Weeks Later* (2007), or *The Crazies* (1973 & 2010),<sup>62</sup> the world in *The Walking Dead* remains, for the most part, as close as possible to the previous way of life, and a retro one at that, at least in the way that it imagines power, authority, governance, and identity. This suggests that the *post*-world in this apocalyptic zombie narrative continues to function under the same dominant discourses and authoritative structures as the previous world, that is, it clings to a vision of white, male, and heterosexual authority, and fights challenges and resistance to this norm.

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<sup>62</sup> In *Day of the Dead* (1985), the government’s military branch is responsible for the community’s downfall, while the scientist character is depicted as slovenly and helpless; in *28 Weeks Later* (2007), the family is betrayed and attacked by the infected and cowardly patriarch; and in both versions of *The Crazies* (1973 & 2010), the government itself is to blame for the apocalyptic events” (Hassler-Forest, 2011, p. 345).



In my third analytical chapter (2.3 – The body and the abject), I examined the governance of the body based on the management of risk. Kristeva’s concept of the abject provided me with an analytical tool to interrogate how bodies were governed in the text. I used the abject successfully to distinguish the useful body from the disposable body; it helped me to comprehend what is done to the disposable body because of its status. It was suggested that the disruptive, abject body had to be eliminated because it violates the living/dead binary, as well as the desire for a “clean and proper body” (Covino, 2004, p. 17). This violation results in a response of fear and repulsion from the survivors, as the presence of walkers causes a loss of distinction between self and other, as well as confronting them with their own fragile mortality.

Utilizing Foucault’s understanding of “the power of the norm,” I further developed my discussion of how the body in *The Walking Dead* is governed through the management of risk. By employing the three organising principles that Foucault uses to explain how individuals become subjects (dividing practices, scientific classification, and subjectification), I successfully demonstrated how normalcy helps us to comprehend the rules set out in the diegesis for determining risk, as well as how individuals are encouraged to conform and self-regulate their behaviour. A study of the characters Jim and Daryl provided examples of how the disruptive body helps to legitimate those in positions of authority by allowing me to demonstrate how an individual is seen as a risk when they do not conform to the rules set out by the group, or at least by those within the group who have the authority to say/insist on what the rules are. Using these characters as examples demonstrated a line of continuity between the “before” world and the present:

the segregation of those represented as different or damaged as risks to be managed, even if they are not completely abject.

Overall, I have utilized Derrida's concept of deconstructionism, Foucault's ideas about power, knowledge, subjectification, normalization, the body, and resistance, and Kristeva's concept of the abject to locate and deconstruct the dominant discourses of power, authority, and governance through which particular régimes of truth are constructed on AMC's *The Walking Dead*. This analysis has revealed that the power and authority to govern in this post-apocalyptic zombie world is gendered, raced, and classed, with power and authority being found in hands that are overwhelmingly white, male, middle-class, and heterosexual. In this sense, the text imagines that in the post-apocalyptic landscape power belongs to the people who had it before. Furthermore, my analysis holds that bodies within this textual universe are governed through the management of risk and the abject body is destroyed because it violates the norm for a "clean and proper" body, but also because it is a risk to the non-abject. In this sense, the text imagines another line of continuity to the world "outside," as those represented as different or damaged are segregated and viewed as risks to be managed.

### **Contributions and Future Research**

When I started this research, it was my intention to answer the following question(s): What are the dominant discourses surrounding power, authority, and governance that are in operation within AMC's *The Walking Dead* and how do these discourses construct régimes of truth within the series? What I found is that *The Walking Dead* is a show that garners many critical reviews, but is also one, as I demonstrate, that

offers a narrative in which, even after the apocalypse, power and authority remains in the hands of middle-class, straight, white men. Abnormal behaviour and/or resistance to this norm of authority demonstrates a line of continuity between the *pre* and the *post*-apocalyptic worlds, suggesting that those represented as different or damaged are a risk that need to be managed, even if they are not abject. This suggests a relationship to television network attempts (AMC included) to “build audiences” by aligning *The Walking Dead* with viewers understandings of dominant discourses of violence, power, authority, and governance (Abelman & Atkin, 2011, p. 105). This must be done cautiously of course, as too much of a deviation from these discourses and AMC risks losing ratings, viewers, and getting cancelled. As Harker (2013) suggests, the TV series has had more time to flesh out characters, and therefore storylines and sub-plots have begun to deviate from the graphic novel. It would be interesting for further research to analyze the differences between the graphic novel version of *The Walking Dead* and the television series, in order to examine whether similar dominant discourses exist, or whether, because of the different mediums, the graphic novel portrays different discourses of power, authority, and governance in its apocalyptic narrative.

My research contributes to the study of zombie texts and I was eager to offer my reading of *The Walking Dead*, as this text is relatively new and there is not a huge amount written about it. *The Walking Dead* is unique in comparison to most other zombie narratives, which tend to end with everyone being eaten<sup>63</sup> or the epidemic curtailed<sup>64</sup>. Few zombie texts have taken the years following the crisis as their focus, and none have ever attempted this through the medium of television. Presenting this apocalyptic zombie

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<sup>63</sup> Fresnadillo (2007), Snyder (2004), and Wirkola (2009).

<sup>64</sup> Boyle (2002), Currie (2006), Forster (2013), Levine (2013), and Wright (2004).

narrative on television allows *The Walking Dead* to help keep interest in the series by providing an ongoing, evolving narrative, in contrast to film, where the narrative would have to be presented within a limited timeframe.

Even the topics I have addressed in this work could be continually expanded upon as the series progresses. For instance, how power and authority are articulated on the series keeps changing as the show develops into the third and fourth seasons and thus would be worthy of an ongoing analysis. It took a lot of effort for me to refrain from analysing and critiquing the later seasons of *The Walking Dead* (perhaps I shouldn't have even watched them at all until I was finished). For example, in the third season, we are introduced to an authoritative and powerful character known as "The Governor," who controls the barricaded town of Woodbury; the original survivor group from seasons one and two hole up in a maximum security prison for most of the third and fourth season. Both of these developments hold enormous potential for critical criminological deconstruction. I speculate that in the future, more academic literature will focus on *The Walking Dead*, as the show is not only popular, but offers many chances to interrogate different discourses including, but not limited to those addressing issues related to social, economic, and political life, and the construction of race, gender, class, and other forms of identity.

As I conducted my research, I was always aware of representations of gender within the series. Although I did include a discussion of gender, femininity, and motherhood within this work, it was not in the manner I had originally thought I would. In the early stages of this research project, I had many discussions with my supervisor about the ways in which gender was represented in this text. However, as I began my

analysis, and the countless edits and re-writes of my chapters, I struggled with how to include a discussion of gender in this work. Ultimately, I decided that I would use gender, femininity, and motherhood as a way to locate and discuss masculinity, paternity, and authority, as I realized that a discussion of gender in *The Walking Dead* could be a thesis in itself. Furthermore, femininity, womanhood, motherhood, and pregnancy, especially as they relate to abjection, are all topics that were beyond the scope of this research project and could not be fully articulated in my analysis. As I continued to watch the third and fourth seasons of *The Walking Dead*, I began to see the role of gender, femininity, and motherhood evolve and challenge some of my previous readings. However, according to my methodology, I had to restrict my reading to the first two seasons. Future research might consider the relationship between gender and authority within this text, as well as the relationship between femininity, motherhood, and abjection, as there is much to be said about these topics, especially once the character of Michonne is introduced, but unfortunately, this was beyond the scope of my research.

My research supports and expands upon the literature that argues for researchers to deconstruct the binary oppositions that are present in texts (Derrida, 1981; Eicher, 2001; Sarup, 1989). Before I engaged in my analysis of *The Walking Dead*, I feel that I underestimated the importance of the binary oppositions within the text. When I began my research, I knew that there was some sort of us/them binary occurring within the text, largely due to the fact that I saw the survivors as “good” and the walkers as “evil.” However, I underestimated the role that the us/them binary played within the survivor group. I also did not expect the urban/rural dichotomy to play such a pivotal role in my analysis of the power and authority, as well as how this connected to the setting of the

show and the representation of safety/danger. When I began writing my analytical chapters, and researching urban versus rural environments, I was astonished with how much more of a dialogue between these two points developed within my analysis. What I had originally thought would be a mere paragraph or two, developed into so much more, helping to lend credence to, and dramatically expand upon, my reading of Hershel's character and how he garners authority in the text, while also adding to the discussion of gender and class.

My research also contributes to a discussion of the ways in which paternity is represented on television and how this version is connected to representations of reproduction. The importance of paternity was something that I never could have imagined including at the start of this work. Not only did an analysis of this help to highlight how power is gendered within the heterosexual family, but it also worked to comment on the importance of children within the text, as well as the significance of reproduction in the series. For instance, my reading of the walkers determined that they are essentially "fathered," not requiring a heterosexual union to reproduce. This highlighted the disruption of the norm of heterosexuality with the text, but also worked to suggest that paternity is privileged over maternity. As the walkers reproduce (through biting/scratching), femaleness is eliminated, as each attempt to reproduce is successful and ultimately everyone (infected) becomes male.

I struggled a lot with my third analytical chapter. It went from being about "truth and knowledge," to "governance and risk," and finally ended up discussing "the body and the abject." I think the reason that I struggled so much in this section was that when I began this research project, I underestimated the significance of the body to this text. I

originally saw bodies on a largely biological level, believing that there were humans and there were the undead (walkers): humans were alive, and walkers were (mostly) dead. I also believed that violence or the threat of violence would be largely responsible for determining how bodies were controlled within this series. However, as I continued my analysis, I began to see that violence was not as significant a factor as I had originally assumed. As I considered Foucault's ideas on the importance of the body, for instance his understanding of the productive and economic uses of the body (bio-power), his understanding of "the power of the norm," and the principles he uses to explain how individuals become subjects, coupled with Kristeva's concept of the abject, I wanted to uncover other ways bodies (both alive and dead) were controlled in *The Walking Dead*. This developed into a far more stimulating chapter, which centred on how the body is controlled through the management of risk. The idea that violence or force is not at the forefront in controlling bodies within *The Walking Dead* fundamentally changed the outlook of the part of my thesis question that asked what the dominant discourses surrounding violence were within this text. I suppose that the reason for this was due to the fact that at the beginning of this work, I assumed that because there was a lot of graphic violence in the series (i.e. walker's attacking humans, blood, gore, rotting flesh, bullet holes in corpses, etc.) that violence would be the controlling factor of the survivor group, when, in reality, it had more to do with the body, normalcy, and the abject. Future research might consider whether this holds true in the later seasons, especially with the introduction of the Governor, or if new methods for control and governance exist.

In conclusion, it is important for me to acknowledge that in the third and fourth seasons of *The Walking Dead*, there are story arcs and events that counter some of my

arguments, which would allow my reading to be expanded upon or critiqued. The character of Michonne for instance, could be read as representing a form of resistance and a new version of femininity within the series. The third seasons' antagonist known as the Governor could also enable an alternative understanding of power and authority, allowing for a reading of it as violent and corrupt. Ultimately, due to the poststructuralist framework from which this thesis operates, this research will always be subject to ongoing deconstructive readings and counter-interpretations and this is most definitely acknowledged and welcomed. Further exploration of this text will allow for greater understanding of not only the topics discussed in this work, but for the many other diverse and complex messages that lie within.



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## Appendix A

## Glossary of Terms

<b>Atlanta</b>	Atlanta, Georgia is home to the <i>CDC</i> . In the show, the survivors, acting on a rumour, begin to make the journey to Atlanta in hopes of finding a quarantined safe zone within the city. However, upon reaching the city, Rick learns that walkers have overrun it.
<b>CDC</b>	An acronym for the Centre for Disease Control. It is located in Atlanta, Georgia. The survivors make their way here in “Wildfire” (1005), hoping to find a safe haven, as well as answers to the many questions they have.
<b>Chupacabra</b>	A <i>Chupacabra</i> is a legendary cryptid rumoured to inhabit parts of the Americas, although sightings have been disregarded as uncorroborated or lacking evidence. Daryl Dixon admitted to the group that he once saw a <i>Chupacabra</i> . In “Chupacabra” (2005), Daryl sets out on horseback alone to look for Sophia, and the group teases him that he might find his <i>Chupacabra</i> during the search.
<b>Fort Benning</b>	<i>Fort Benning</i> is a United States Army post in Georgia. After realizing that the <i>CDC</i> held no answers or safety, the survivors attempt to travel through the ruins of Georgia to reach the imagined safety of <i>Fort Benning</i> . However, they never actually reach this destination, but hear from Dave and Tony that it too has been overrun.
<b>Geeks</b>	This is a term that Glenn Rhee sometimes uses to refer to the <i>walkers</i> in the series.
<b>Herd</b>	This term is used by the survivors in reference to the massive horde of <i>walkers</i> that attack them in their camp outside of <i>Atlanta</i> , that pass them on <i>Interstate 85</i> , and that attack them on <i>Hershel’s farm</i> .
<b>Hershel’s Farm</b>	Located in rural Georgia, <i>Hershel’s farm</i> is the main setting for season two of the series. It is mentioned by Hershel, that the farm has been in his family for over 160 years. Even though power and water were cut off in the beginning of the apocalypse, the farm has its own generator that runs on fuel and wells that contain fresh water. After Carl Grimes is accidentally shot by Otis, the group meets Hershel and his family and continue to stay on his land while looking for Sophia Peletier.
<b>Interstate 85 (I-85)</b>	<i>Interstate 85</i> is a major interstate highway in the South-eastern United States. This is the interstate that the survivors travel on trying



to reach *Fort Benning* in season two. It is also the site of the survivor's second encounter with a *walker herd*.

- Lame Brains** This is a term that we hear Dave and Tony use to refer to the *walkers*.
- Nebraska** When Rick, Glenn, and Hershel meet Dave and Tony, the two suggest to the group that Nebraska is probably the best bet for a safe zone to hold up in, from what they have heard on the road. When Glenn questions why, Tony replies, "low population and lots of guns."
- Vatos** They are a Hispanic gang, organized by Guillermo, and consisting of Felipe and Miguel, as well as other unnamed members. They have remained behind in a nursing home and use whatever means necessary to protect the elderly residents who were abandoned and the medical supplies and food that they have left.
- Walker(s)** The term used by many of the survivors to describe the "zombies" of *The Walking Dead*, although they are never referred to as such at any point during the series. Robert Kirkman has stated that the survivors exist in a world where they have never heard of the term "zombie," nor any of George A. Romero's influential films, or any other zombie narratives. The term is also dichotomous, significant of the feared "other" in the us/them binary, which is present throughout the series.

## Appendix B

## Character Description

**MAIN CHARACTERS**

<b>Character</b>	<b>Portrayed By</b>	<b>Starring Seasons</b>	<b>Episode Count</b>	<b>Status<sup>65</sup></b>
<b>Rick Grimes</b>	Andrew Lincoln	1, 2	19	Alive
<p>Rick Grimes is a Caucasian man, in his mid-thirties and the series central character. He was a former sheriff's deputy in a small Georgian town prior to the apocalypse. Rick is married to Lori Grimes and father to Carl Grimes. His best friend and partner is Shane Walsh. Before the apocalypse began, Rick was shot in the line of duty and is left in his hospital bed by Shane, presumed to be dead. Upon awakening, he is completely unaware as to what has happened while he was unconscious. However, he is determined to reunite with his family, and eventually does (1003).</p> <p>Rick is a natural leader, someone his fellow survivors will turn to in a crisis, but is also stubborn, clinging to his personal moral code and often only seeing problems in black and white. Rick's morality and his overwhelming need to do the right thing and protect those who can't protect themselves often pull him away from his family. This causes tension within his marriage, as well as in his relationship with his son and between him and Shane.</p>				
<b>Lori Grimes</b>	Sarah Wayne Callies	1, 2	19	Alive
<p>Lori is a Caucasian woman, in her early-thirties and is Rick's wife and Carl's mother. Lori makes it out of Atlanta, along with Carl, with the help of Shane Walsh. Believing Rick to be dead, Lori engages in an intimate relationship with Shane. However, once Lori and Rick are reunited, she is loyal to Rick and fiercely protective of their son, Carl. Lori is portrayed as the emotional center of the survivor group and is often considered (by the other surviving females) to be the group's unofficial "first lady." In the second season, Lori becomes pregnant, although it is unclear whether the child's father is Rick or Shane.</p>				
<b>Carl Grimes</b>	Chandler Riggs	1, 2	18	Alive
<p>Carl is a twelve-year-old, Caucasian boy, and Rick and Lori's son. Carl admires his father, Rick, but he also confides in and looks up to Shane, Rick's former partner. Carl is good friends with Sophia Peletier, and very loyal to her. Carl is a kind boy, but struggles to maintain his innocence when confronted with the realities of the harsh new world</p>				

<sup>65</sup>**Status** refers to whether the character is alive or dead. If they are the latter, it indicates in what season/episode they died.

**NOTE:** Episode count, starring seasons, and status only includes season 1 & 2 of *The Walking Dead*.

<p>within the text. Throughout the series he gradually begins to mature in his actions and his thoughts. Carl is shot in the chest in the beginning of season two (2001) but is saved by Shane and Otis, who find the appropriate medical supplies, and by Hershel Greene, the owner of the farm and the only character with thorough medical training. Carl proves to be resilient after surviving his injuries and begins to show interest in helping his father protect the group. However, Carl is profoundly affected by the death of Dale Horvath, feeling that he is responsible, and vows to never touch a gun again. His father convinces him otherwise and the gun proves useful when Carl saves his father's life by killing an (un)dead Shane (2013).</p>				
<b>Shane Walsh</b>	Jon Bernthal	1, 2	18	Deceased (2013)
<p>Shane is a Caucasian man, in his early-to-mid-thirties. He was a sheriff's deputy in a small Georgian town; he was Rick's partner in the sheriff's department and best friend since high school. When the apocalypse occurs while Rick is in a coma, Shane helps Lori and Carl Grimes by fleeing with them toward Atlanta. Shortly after the evacuation, Shane begins having an affair with Lori. When Rick finds them among a group of survivors outside of Atlanta, Shane suddenly finds his affections for Lori unreciprocated and his status as the group's de facto leader challenged.</p> <p>Shane is the primary antagonist in season two, becoming increasingly prone to bouts of irrational violence and bloodlust, and challenging Rick's position of authority within the group. Shane continues to try to pursue Lori, especially after finding out that she is pregnant, as he believes that he is the father and the only one who can keep Lori and Carl safe. This breakdown of conscience results in the deaths of Otis and Randall Culver, and life threatening gestures toward Dale and Rick, until Rick ultimately kills Shane in an act of self-defence (2013). After Shane dies, he reanimates as a walker, tries to bite Rick, and is finally shot in the head and killed by Carl.</p>				
<b>Glenn Rhee</b>	Steven Yeun	1, 2	19	Alive
<p>Glenn is a young, Korean-American, who used to deliver pizzas for a living, allowing him to develop a thorough knowledge of the geography of Atlanta. This knowledge proves to be extremely useful to the group of survivors, who often recruit Glenn to scavenge supplies and move unnoticed throughout the city. Glenn thinks well on his feet and shows great compassion and humanity. Glenn witnesses Rick's assault by walkers (1002) and guides him to safety via a handheld radio.</p> <p>Despite all the horror he's seen, Glenn maintains an enthusiasm for life and its unexpected pleasures. He is an integral part of the camp, showing surprising depth and emotion when the group experiences devastating tragedy and helps to bridge the gap between Rick's group and Hershel's in the second season. While at the farm, Glenn meets Maggie Greene, Hershel's oldest daughter and the two develop an intimate relationship.</p>				

<b>Andrea</b>	Laurie Holden	1, 2	18	Alive
<p>Andrea is a Caucasian woman, in her mid-thirties. A successful civil rights attorney, Andrea was on a road trip with her younger sister Amy when the apocalypse occurred. They were rescued by Dale Horvath and lived with him in his RV. Andrea is headstrong, opinionated, and extremely protective of her sister. When a walker kills Amy, Andrea becomes distraught and loses hope. She laments to Dale that “there’s nothing left,” and opts to stay inside the CDC as it self-destructs rather than live on (1006). Dale, however, convinces Andrea to leave the building by vowing to stay as well.</p> <p>Andrea goes through a significant transformation in the second season, gradually becoming more independent and seeks to help protect the group by honing her shooting skills, having received tutelage by Shane. However, Andrea’s relationship with Dale never fully recovers after her suicide attempt and this haunts her after Dale is brutally killed by a walker. At the end of season two, Andrea gets separated from the group, and finds herself alone in the woods and low on ammunition. During what she believes to be her last moments, as walkers close in around her, a hooded stranger wielding a katana sword saves her.</p>				
<b>Dale Horvath</b>	Jeffrey DeMunn	1, 2	16	Deceased (2011)
<p>Dale is an older, Caucasian man and former car salesman. His age, calm affect, worldly experience, and RV provide the nucleus around which the small community of survivors forms. He is wise, sometimes profound, and is the respected elder of the group, not afraid to speak his mind. Dale acts as a father figure to Glenn especially, whom he counsels on everything from car maintenance to girls. Dale also forms a close bond with Andrea and her sister Amy, finding their friendship invaluable in getting beyond grieving for his late wife. After the death of Amy, Dale and Andrea’s relationship is challenged when he prevents her from committing suicide.</p> <p>Dale often sits atop his RV on surveillance and lookout for walkers, but this enables him to keep a watchful gaze on the changing dynamic of the group. Rick places Dale in charge of keeping account of the group’s weapons, which he stores inside his RV. In the second season (2011), Dale finds himself at odds with the rest of the group as he argues to spare the life of the young prisoner, Randall Culver. Dale is devastated at the group’s lack of humanity on this issue and leaves the farmhouse. While walking in the fields, Dale is attacked by a walker who was accidentally lured by Carl earlier that day. As Dale lies on the ground dying, the rest of the group huddles around him, mourning. Ultimately, Dale’s death leads Rick to spare Randall’s life, which in turn extremely upsets Shane, and leads to the climatic end of season two.</p>				
<b>Daryl Dixon</b>	Norman Reedus	1, 2	17	Alive
<p>Daryl is a Caucasian man, in his mid-to-late thirties and Merle Dixon’s younger brother.</p>				

A Southern redneck with a tough background, Daryl is a survivalist. He is one of the top experts with hunting weapons, killing deer and other animals for food. Daryl's signature weapon is a crossbow, which is valuable due to its stealth properties, reusable ammunition, and low noise emission. He develops a relationship with Carol Peletier, having saved her multiple times, tirelessly searching for Carol's daughter, and makes a connection with her through their abusive backgrounds. Daryl constantly struggles with his own insecurities and when he realizes that Sophia is dead, he pulls away from the rest of the group.

## RECURRING CHARACTERS

ATLANTA SURVIVORS				
Character	Portrayed By	Starring Seasons	Episode Count	Status
<b>Theodore "T-Dog" Douglas</b>	IronE Singleton	1, 2	17	Alive
<p>Theodore Douglas, more commonly known as "T-Dog" is an African American, in his mid-thirties. T-Dog is a muscular and well-intentioned man, yet somewhat clumsy and lacking in common sense. He faces grief and regret after dropping the key to Merle Dixon's handcuffs (1002), leaving him trapped on a rooftop while the group flees the city. After Jacqui dies in season one, T-Dog is the only remaining African American character in the show.</p>				
<b>Carol Peletier</b>	Melissa McBride	1, 2	16	Alive
<p>Sophia Peletier's protective mother and Ed Peletier's abused wife, Carol is a Caucasian woman, in her mid-forties. She is very caring and often puts herself out for others within the group. She also develops somewhat of a relationship with Daryl Dixon, who saves her multiple times and tirelessly searches for her daughter when she goes missing.</p>				
<b>Sophia Peletier</b>	Madison Lintz	1, 2	8	Deceased (2007)
<p>Sophia is a twelve-year-old, Caucasian girl, and daughter of Ed and Carol Peletier. She is a good friend of Carl Grimes and the two are often inseparable. In the second season (2001) Sophia is separated from the group as she runs off into the woods, scared, after a herd of walkers overwhelms the survivors. The group searches for her many times, but it is revealed that Sophia has become a walker and was kept in Hershel's barn (2007). Rick remorsefully shoots her and she is buried on the farm.</p>				
<b>Jacqui</b>	Jeryl Prescott Sales	1	6	Deceased

				(1006)
<p>Jacqui is a middle-aged, African American, and a former employee of the Atlanta City Zoning Office, which comes in handy for the scavenging group as they attempt to navigate the city. She opts to stay behind in the CDC as it self-destructs, realizing that there is no cure and expressing that she does not wish to continue living.</p>				
<b>Amy</b>	Emma Bell	1	5	Deceased (1004)
<p>Amy is a young, Caucasian college student and is Andrea's younger sister. Amy and Andrea were on a road trip back to college when the outbreak occurred. Amy makes her home with Andrea and Dale in the RV and she also helps to look after the younger kids in the camp. Amy is bitten by a walker and killed in the first season (1004). When she reanimates as a walker, her sister, Andrea, holds her closely, sobbing, and puts a bullet in her head.</p>				
<b>Jim</b>	Andrew Rothenberg	1	5	Deceased (1005) Undead
<p>Jim is a Caucasian man, in his mid-forties. He was an auto-mechanic living with a large family in Atlanta prior to the apocalypse. Jim was among the few to escape when the city was overrun, though his entire family died in the chaos. During the walker attack on the camp (1004), Jim is bitten, but says nothing to the group until Jacqui finds out. Refusing a mercy killing, Jim is willingly abandoned on the road as the survivor's head towards the CDC. It is assumed that Jim dies and reanimates as a walker.</p>				
<b>Ed Peletier</b>	Adam Minarovich	1	4	Deceased (1004)
<p>Ed is a Caucasian man, in his mid-forties and is the husband Carol and the father of Sophia. Ed is lazy, abusive, and sexist. It is also heavily implied that Ed harbours underlying sexual feelings towards his daughter. When Shane witnesses Ed beating Carol, he brutally assaults him. Ed, suffering from his injuries, refuses to leave his tent and is therefore the first victim of the walker attack on the camp (1004).</p>				
<b>Morales Family (Morales, Miranda, Louis, and Eliza)</b>	Juan Gabriel Pareja, Viviana Chavez, Noah Lomax, & Maddie Lomax	1	2, 3, 4	Unknown
<p>Morales is a middle-aged, Hispanic American, who goes by his last name. Miranda is his wife, and Louis and Eliza are their two young children. Morales, who is well informed about parts of the city's infrastructure, accompanies the scavenging group in Atlanta. When the survivors decide to try to go to the CDC, the Morales' decide to try their luck locating their family in Birmingham, Alabama. They are never heard from or seen again</p>				

(1005), leaving their status unknown.

<b>THE GREENE FARM</b>				
<b>Character</b>	<b>Portrayed By</b>	<b>Starring Seasons</b>	<b>Episode Count</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>Hershel Greene</b>	Scott Wilson	2	11	Alive
<p>Hershel is an older, Caucasian, Irish-American. Hershel is a religious man and former alcoholic, clinging desperately to the old-world values in order to preserve his sanity. His extensive veterinary medical training and farming knowledge prove to be valuable assets for the group. He initially regards the walkers as dangerous but curable patients, and therefore lets Otis keep walkers in his barn. However, after a close encounter with walkers (2007), Hershel re-evaluates his position and sides with Rick, believing the walkers to be hostile and dangerous.</p>				
<b>Maggie Greene</b>	Lauren Cohan	2	12	Alive
<p>Maggie is a young, Caucasian, farmhand, Hershel's oldest daughter and Beth's older half-sister. A tomboy at heart, she scavenges town for supplies for her family. She has held a strong sense of faith throughout the years, but begins to have doubts about what she believes in when she has a close encounter with a walker (2006). She begins to develop feelings for and an intimate relationship with Glenn Rhee, and often worries about his safety, trying to convince him to give up his risk taking behaviour as the group's errand boy.</p>				
<b>Beth Greene</b>	Emily Kinney	2	11	Alive
<p>Beth is a Caucasian, high-school student, half-sister to Maggie, and Hershel's youngest daughter. She sinks into a deep depression after watching her loved ones gunned down (2007). Beth attempts to convince Maggie to commit suicide with her, and shortly afterward, attempts it on her own by cutting her wrists. However, she is unsuccessful and does not attempt to kill herself again.</p>				
<b>Patricia</b>	Jane McNeill	2	11	Deceased (2013)
<p>A middle-aged, Caucasian woman, who is friend's with Hershel and resides at the Greene farm along with her husband, Otis. She has some limited medical skills and Hershel often uses her as an assistant when he performs procedures on other members of the group. Patricia is deeply distraught over Otis' death and begins to seek comfort in befriending Lori and Carol. She is killed by walkers while trying to escape the farm (2013).</p>				
<b>Jimmy</b>	James Allen McCune	2	10	Deceased

				(2013)
<p>Jimmy is a seventeen-year-old, Caucasian high school student, who is in a relationship with Beth and who resides at the Greene farm. He is shown to be eager to have a gun and attempts to get one from Rick without Hershel's permission. He successfully rescues Rick and Carl from the burning barn (2013), but is killed when walkers overrun the RV.</p>				
<b>Otis</b>	Pruitt Taylor Vince	2	3	Deceased (2002)
<p>Otis is a portly Caucasian man, in his mid-fifties, Hershel's ranch foreman, and Patricia's husband. In the second season (2001), he accidentally shoots and wounds Carl while hunting for a deer, and subsequently leads Shane and Rick to Hershel's farm to get help. Guilt ridden over Carl's injuries, he volunteers to go with Shane to the local high school to gather supplies needed to save Carl's life. Shane shoots him in the leg while on their mission, and leaves him to be devoured by walkers so that he can escape. Otis was also the one initially responsible for keeping the walkers in the barn, and holding out for a cure.</p>				
<b>Nelly</b>	Blade	2	2	Unknown
<p>Nelly is Hershel's horse, who is often seen being used by the other characters to go on excursions into the nearby town, the woods, etc., as well as maintaining the farm. Nicknamed "Nervous Nelly" by Hershel due to her willingness to buck off her riders when spooked. Daryl is bucked off of Nelly in the woods while searching for Sophia and falls down a steep ravine, severely injuring himself (2005). The group flees Hershel's farm after it becomes overrun by walkers (2013) and forget to bring Nelly with them, leaving her fate unknown.</p>				
<b>Annette Greene</b>	Amber Chaney (uncredited)	n/a	n/a	Deceased
<p>Annette was the second wife of Hershel Greene and mother of Shawn Greene. Hershel's family only speaks her about, since she passed away in the early days of the apocalypse, before the survivors ever reached the Greene farm.</p>				
<b>Shawn Greene</b>	Travis Chapentier (uncredited)	n/a	n/a	Deceased
<p>Shawn is Hershel and Annette Greene's son. He is only spoken about, having passed away in the early days of the apocalypse, before the survivors ever reached the Greene farm.</p>				

### MISCELLANEOUS SURVIVORS



<b>Character</b>	<b>Portrayed By</b>	<b>Starring Seasons</b>	<b>Episode Count</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>Merle Dixon</b>	Michael Rooker	1	3	Unknown
<p>Merle is an older, Caucasian redneck and Daryl Dixon's older brother. Merle is handcuffed to a rooftop by Rick Grimes (1002) and left by the group as they flee the city when T-Dog accidentally drops the key down a drainage pipe. When the group returns (1003), Merle is gone, and all that remains is his sawed off hand. His status is unknown, although he appears to Daryl (2005) as a hallucination.</p>				
<b>Dr. Edwin Jenner</b>	Noah Emmerich	1	2	Deceased (1006)
<p>Dr. Edwin Jenner is a Caucasian man, in his mid-forties and is the last surviving staff pathologist at the Atlanta CDC. Working with surviving samples of infected tissue, he attempts to create a possible cure but repeatedly fails. When the survivor group arrives at the CDC looking for help, Jenner hesitates to assist and only allows them in once the walkers have them surrounded. He reveals that his wife succumbed to the disease and provided his limited tissue samples, until they were accidentally destroyed due to his fatigue. Despairing and suicidal due to his failure, he attempts to lock the group in the CDC building, which is programmed to self-destruct when the fuel runs out. Relenting, he allows them to flee shortly before the building is destroyed, but he dies in the explosion, along with Jacqui who opts to remain. Before parting ways with Rick, Jenner whispers something to him (as revealed in the end of the second season [2013]) that everyone carries the infection and will reanimate after expiring, no matter how they die.</p>				
<b>Morgan Jones</b>	Lennie James	1	1	Unknown
<p>Morgan is a middle-aged, African-American man, and the first survivor that Rick encounters. During the outbreak, Morgan was attempting to head for Atlanta in search of safety with his wife, Jenny, and their son, Duane. Unfortunately, Jenny was attacked and killed by a walker, forcing Morgan and Duane to remain fearful to move on and leave Jenny behind, even though she is now a walker. Morgan declines Rick's offer for him and Duane to go with him, so Rick parts ways with the pair. The two do promise to meet up again after Duane learns to shoot and Morgan puts his wife out of her misery.</p>				
<b>Duane Jones</b>	Adrian Kali Turner	1	1	Unknown
<p>Duane is a young, African American and Morgan's son. He finds Rick Grimes wandering the streets (1001) and knocks him out, believing him to be a walker. He stays with his father, Morgan, when Rick offers to take them to Atlanta.</p>				
<b>Guillermo</b>	Neil Brown Jr.	1	1	Unknown
<p>Guillermo is a Hispanic/Latino American, in his late-twenties. Originally a janitor, he, his associate Felipe, and others members of the "Vatos" gang protect a nursing home full of</p>				

<p>elderly people after the rest of the staff abandons it, leaving the residents for dead. He comes into conflict with Rick and his group when they fight over weapons and he abducts Glenn as a hostage. Guillermo and Rick have a standoff that looks like it will turn out violent, but which is interrupted by Abuela, who is Felipe's grandmother. Afterwards, Rick makes amends with Guillermo, realizing his cause and struggle for survival, and leaves him a few supplies from his weapons bag.</p>				
<b>Felipe</b>	Noel Gugliemi	1	1	Unknown
<p>Felipe is a Hispanic American, in his early thirties. He is the tough guy associate of Guillermo and the grandson of Abuela. Prior to the apocalypse, he worked as a nurse practitioner at the retirement home where he and the rest of the "Vatos" now reside, intent on protecting and caring for the elderly there.</p>				
<b>Miguel</b>	Anthony Guajardo	1	1	Unknown
<p>Miguel is a young, Hispanic American, who is the cousin of Felipe and a member of the "Vatos." Daryl captures him after being assaulted by other members of the gang. Rick uses him as leverage in an attempt to get Glenn back from Guillermo.</p>				
<b>Abuela</b>	Gina Morelli	1	1	Unknown
<p>Abuela is an elderly, Hispanic American woman. She is the grandmother of Felipe, who resides at the nursing home that the "Vatos" protect and watch over. She accidentally interrupts a stand off between Rick's group and the "Vatos" and innocently solves the disagreement between the two groups by leading Rick to Glenn and opening his eyes to the true cause of the "Vatos."</p>				
<b>Randall Culver</b>	Michael Zegen	2	4	Deceased (2012)
<p>Is a Caucasian boy, in his late teens and who is a member of Dave and Tony's group. When he impales his leg on a fence post, Rick, Glenn, and Hershel rescue him. When they realize his group may be dangerous, Rick and Shane have conflicted viewpoints over keeping him alive or killing him. He attended the same high school as Maggie Greene, which is a major reason the group considers him a threat, believing that he knows the location of the farm and will bring his group to it. Shane leads him out into the woods (2012), snaps his neck, and then heads back to the farm with a fabricated story of his escape. Glenn and Daryl later discover Randall as a walker, but notice that he has no bite or scratch marks on him, raising many questions and concerns.</p>				
<b>Dave &amp; Tony</b>	Michael Raymond-James & Aaron Munoz	2	2	Deceased (2008)
<p>Dave and Tony are middle-aged, Caucasian men from Philadelphia and are travelling with a group of thirty armed men. They encounter Rick, Hershel, and Glenn in a bar.</p>				

After Rick refuses them safety, Tony steps behind Rick and reaches for his shotgun, giving away the ambush. After Rick kills Dave in self-defence, he turns around and shoots Tony.				
<b>Michonne (Hooded)</b>	Danai Gurira	2	1	Alive
Michonne is an African American woman, in her early thirties. She appears in the last episode of season two as the hooded figure that saves Andrea (2013). She wields a katana as her weapon of choice and is accompanied by two walkers that are chained to her side-by-side and have their lower jaws and arms cut off (to prevent them from attacking her).				

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## Appendix C

## Episode Guide

*The Walking Dead* – Season 1

- Episode #:** 1
- Episode Title:** Days Gone By
- Premiered:** October 31, 2010
- Director:** Frank Darabont
- Cast:** Andrew Lincoln, Lennie James, Adrian Kali Turner, Jon Bernthal, Sarah Wayne Callies, Chandler Riggs, Jeffery DeMunn, Steven Yeun, Laurie Holden, Emma Bell
- Synopsis:** Sheriff Deputy, Rick Grimes, wakes up alone in the hospital after being shot on duty to find it deserted with bodies strewn everywhere. He returns to his home to find it abandoned but he believes that his wife and son may still be alive. As Rick naively walks through the streets, he meets Morgan and Duane Jones, who worry that he is infected. After Rick reveals that he received his injuries due to a gunshot, Morgan informs him that the world has been overrun by flesh-eating zombies (known in the series as "walkers"). Morgan also tells Rick that he heard of a refugee center in Atlanta and Rick sets off in hopes of finding his wife and son. Once in Atlanta, he becomes surrounded by hundreds of walkers and is forced to take refuge in an abandoned military tank, with little hope of escaping. The episode ends as Rick hears a voice come over the radio inside the tank.
- Episode #:** 2
- Episode Title:** Guts
- Premiered:** November 7, 2010
- Director:** Michelle MacLaren
- Cast:** Andrew Lincoln, Jon Bernthal, Sarah Wayne Callies, Chandler Riggs, Jeffery DeMunn, Steven Yeun, Laurie Holden, Emma Bell, Michael Rooker, Juan Gabreil Pareja, IronE Singleton, Jeryl Prescott Sales, Andrew Rothenberg
- Synopsis:** Guided by the voice on the radio, his rescuer, Glenn Rhee, Rick makes it to a department store, where he meets a group of survivors who have come to Atlanta in search of supplies. However, the group soon informs Rick that his gunshots have brought the unwanted attention of hundreds of walkers. One member of the group, Merle Dixon, begins shooting off his gun and the survivors criticize him for wasting ammunition and attracting even more walkers to their location. After Merle starts a violent fistfight, he is subdued by Rick

and handcuffed to a pipe on the roof. As walker's break through the storefront, chaos ensues and the survivors scramble to escape, resulting in Merle getting left behind.

**Episode #:** 3  
**Episode Title:** Tell it to the Frogs  
**Premiered:** November 14, 2010  
**Director:** Gwyneth Horder-Payton  
**Cast:** Andrew Lincoln, Jon Bernthal, Sarah Wayne Callies, Chandler Riggs, Jeffery DeMunn, Steven Yeun, Laurie Holden, Norman Reedus, Emma Bell, Michael Rooker, Juan Gabreil Pareja, IronE Singleton, Jeryl Prescott Sales, Andrew Rothenberg, Adam Minarovich, Melissa McBride, Madison Lintz, Vivana Chavez, Noah Lomax, Maddie Lomax  
**Synopsis:** Rick finally unites with his wife, Lori, son, Carl, and his best friend and partner, Shane Walsh. However, this reunion is short when Rick decides to return to Atlanta to rescue Daryl Dixon's brother, Merle. Upon realizing that her husband is alive after all, Lori ends her tumultuous affair with Shane.

**Episode #:** 4  
**Episode Title:** Vatos  
**Premiered:** November 21, 2010  
**Director:** Johan Renck  
**Cast:** Andrew Lincoln, Jon Bernthal, Sarah Wayne Callies, Chandler Riggs, Jeffery DeMunn, Steven Yeun, Laurie Holden, Norman Reedus, Emma Bell, Michael Rooker, Juan Gabreil Pareja, IronE Singleton, Jeryl Prescott Sales, Andrew Rothenberg, Adam Minarovich, Melissa McBride, Madison Lintz, Vivana Chavez, Noah Lomax, Maddie Lomax, Noel Gugliemi, Neil Brown Jr., Anthony Guajardo, Gina Morelli, James Gonzaba  
**Synopsis:** Rick, Daryl, T-Dog, and Glenn return to downtown Atlanta in search of Daryl's brother, Merle. The group is later targeted by a Hispanic gang, known as the "Vatos" who threaten to kill them if they do not relinquish their weapons. Meanwhile, the relationship between Lori Grimes and Shane Walsh begins to crumble and there is a disruption at the camp, resulting in the deaths of Amy and Ed, as well as countless others.

**Episode #:** 5  
**Episode Title:** Wildfire  
**Premiered:** November 28, 2010

- Director:** Ernest R. Dickerson
- Cast:** Andrew Lincoln, Jon Bernthal, Sarah Wayne Callies, Chandler Riggs, Jeffery DeMunn, Steven Yeun, Laurie Holden, Norman Reedus, Emma Bell, Juan Gabreil Pareja, IronE Singleton, Jeryl Prescott Sales, Andrew Rothenberg, Melissa McBride, Madison Lintz, Vivana Chavez, Noah Lomax, Maddie Lomax, Noah Emmerich
- Synopsis:** In this episode, the survivors deal with the aftermath of the walker attack, and decide to move to the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) facilities, hoping to find a cure for an infected Jim. Meanwhile, Shane, finding his leadership position challenged by Rick, succumbs to his inner demons and considers killing Rick.
- Episode #:** 6
- Episode Title:** TS-19
- Premiered:** December 5, 2010
- Director:** Guy Ferland
- Cast:** Andrew Lincoln, Jon Bernthal, Sarah Wayne Callies, Chandler Riggs, Jeffery DeMunn, Steven Yeun, Laurie Holden, Norman Reedus, IronE Singleton, Jeryl Prescott Sales, Andrew Rothenberg, Melissa McBride, Madison Lintz, Noah Emmerich
- Synopsis:** The survivors finally find a secure safe haven in the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) headquarters. However, the only scientist there, Dr. Edwin Jenner, hides many secrets that lead the group to demand answers about the apocalypse.

*The Walking Dead – Season 2*

- Episode #:** 1
- Episode Title:** What Lies Ahead
- Premiered:** October 16, 2011
- Director:** Ernest R. Dickerson, & Gwyneth Horder-Payton
- Cast:** Andrew Lincoln, Jon Bernthal, Sarah Wayne Callies, Chandler Riggs, Jeffery DeMunn, Steven Yeun, Laurie Holden, Norman Reedus, IronE Singleton, Melissa McBride, Madison Lintz
- Synopsis:** The group of survivor's head towards Fort Benning, holding out hope for military protection and resources. However, along the way, they encounter a herd of walkers and Sophia runs off in fear. Now Rick and the others try to track her down, which leads to dire consequences when Carl is accidentally shot.
- 
- Episode #:** 2
- Episode Title:** Bloodletting
- Premiered:** October 23, 2011
- Director:** Ernest R. Dickerson
- Cast:** Andrew Lincoln, Jon Bernthal, Sarah Wayne Callies, Chandler Riggs, Jeffery DeMunn, Steven Yeun, Laurie Holden, Norman Reedus, IronE Singleton, Melissa McBride, Scott Wilson, Emily Kinney, Lauren Cohan, Pruitt Taylor Vince, Jane McNeill, James Allen McCune
- Synopsis:** After Carl is shot, Rick and Shane find Dr. Hershel Greene and his family in a nearby house. But Carl has lost too much blood and Hershel doesn't have the supplies he needs to operate. This leads Shane and Otis, the man responsible for shooting Carl, to make a run to the local high school in hopes of finding the equipment needed to complete the procedure.
- 
- Episode #:** 3
- Episode Title:** Save the Last One
- Premiered:** October 30, 2011
- Director:** Phil Abraham
- Cast:** Andrew Lincoln, Jon Bernthal, Sarah Wayne Callies, Chandler Riggs, Jeffery DeMunn, Steven Yeun, Laurie Holden, Norman Reedus, IronE Singleton, Melissa McBride, Scott Wilson, Emily Kinney, Lauren Cohan, Pruitt Taylor Vince, Jane McNeill, James Allen McCune
- Synopsis:** Shane and Otis, now surrounded by walkers, try to doge them and

carry the supplies as they make their way back to the farm. Meanwhile, Carl is getting worse and Hershel worries that time is running out.

**Episode #:** 4  
**Episode Title:** Cherokee Rose  
**Premiered:** November 6, 2011  
**Director:** Bill Gierhart  
**Cast:** Andrew Lincoln, Jon Bernthal, Sarah Wayne Callies, Chandler Riggs, Jeffery DeMunn, Steven Yeun, Laurie Holden, Norman Reedus, IronE Singleton, Melissa McBride, Scott Wilson, Emily Kinney, Lauren Cohan, Pruitt Taylor Vince, Jane McNeill, James Allen McCune  
**Synopsis:** Shane makes a deadly sacrifice, shooting Otis in the leg and leaving him behind in order to escape the high school with the supplies needed for Carl's surgery. This leads to unusual behavior and self-distancing in Shane. Later on, with Carl recovering, the group, once again, puts their focus on finding Sophia.

**Episode #:** 5  
**Episode Title:** Chupacabra  
**Premiered:** November 13, 2011  
**Director:** Guy Ferland  
**Cast:** Andrew Lincoln, Jon Bernthal, Sarah Wayne Callies, Chandler Riggs, Jeffery DeMunn, Steven Yeun, Laurie Holden, Norman Reedus, IronE Singleton, Melissa McBride, Scott Wilson, Emily Kinney, Lauren Cohan, Jane McNeill, James Allen McCune, Michael Rooker  
**Synopsis:** While searching for Sophia, Daryl becomes injured and stranded in the middle of the woods. He begins to hallucinate and see his brother, Merle, everywhere. Meanwhile, Lori has just discovered that she is pregnant and she doesn't know how to tell Rick. In addition, Shane begins to train the survivors on how to properly carry, clean, and shoot a gun.

**Episode #:** 6  
**Episode Title:** Secrets  
**Premiered:** November 20, 2011  
**Director:** David Boyd  
**Cast:** Andrew Lincoln, Jon Bernthal, Sarah Wayne Callies, Chandler Riggs, Jeffery DeMunn, Steven Yeun, Laurie Holden, Norman Reedus, IronE Singleton, Melissa McBride, Scott Wilson, Emily



- Synopsis:** Kinney, Lauren Cohan, Jane McNeill, James Allen McCune  
Now that Glenn knows there are walkers in the barn, Maggie begs him not to tell anyone as her father believes they are sick and in need of a cure. Hershel's isn't the only secret Glenn is asked to keep as Lori asks him to go into town and get her some medication (which is later revealed to be the morning after pill), which puts Glenn's and Maggie lives in danger. Andrea and Shane head to a nearby suburb in search of Sophia, while Lori finally breaks down and tells Rick she is pregnant.
- Episode #:** 7  
**Episode Title:** Pretty Much Dead Already  
**Premiered:** November 27, 2011  
**Director:** Michelle MacLaren  
**Cast:** Andrew Lincoln, Jon Bernthal, Sarah Wayne Callies, Chandler Riggs, Jeffery DeMunn, Steven Yeun, Laurie Holden, Norman Reedus, IronE Singleton, Melissa McBride, Scott Wilson, Emily Kinney, Lauren Cohan, Jane McNeill, James Allen McCune, Madison Lintz
- Synopsis:** Glenn, breaking Maggie's trust, reveals to the group that there are walkers in the barn. Now, the group debates whether they should stay or go. Worried about Shane, Dale takes the bag of guns and heads out to the swamp to attempt to hide them. Shane tracks him down and threatens Dale to get the guns back. When Shane returns to the farm, he takes matters into his own hands and opens the barn doors, making the rest of the group decide whether they want to fight or die. The last walker to exit the barn is Sophia, whom Rick shoots.
- Episode #:** 8  
**Episode Title:** Nebraska  
**Premiered:** February 12, 2012  
**Director:** Clark Johnson  
**Cast:** Andrew Lincoln, Jon Bernthal, Sarah Wayne Callies, Chandler Riggs, Jeffery DeMunn, Steven Yeun, Laurie Holden, Norman Reedus, IronE Singleton, Melissa McBride, Scott Wilson, Emily Kinney, Lauren Cohan, Jane McNeill, James Allen McCune, Madison Lintz, Michael Raymond-James, Aaron Munoz
- Synopsis:** The group buries Sophia's body, along with Hershel's wife, and stepson. Hershel disappears just as Beth falls into shock. Rick and Glenn head out to find him and end up getting into trouble when they encounter outsiders, Dave and Tony in the local tavern.
- Episode #:** 9

**Episode Title:** Triggerfinger  
**Premiered:** February 19, 2012  
**Director:** Bill Gierhart  
**Cast:** Andrew Lincoln, Jon Bernthal, Sarah Wayne Callies, Chandler Riggs, Jeffery DeMunn, Steven Yeun, Laurie Holden, Norman Reedus, IronE Singleton, Melissa McBride, Scott Wilson, Emily Kinney, Lauren Cohan, Jane McNeill, James Allen McCune, Michael Raymond-James, Aaron Munoz, Michael Zegan  
**Synopsis:** Rick, Glenn, and Hershel come under enemy fire in the nearby town. As they fight their way out, the gunmen abandon one of their own. Rick makes a decision to rescue the young, wounded member of the enemy group, Randall Culver. Meanwhile, back at the farm Shane is turning more savage and Lori fears for her family.

**Episode #:** 10  
**Episode Title:** 18 Miles Out  
**Premiered:** February 26, 2012  
**Director:** Ernest R. Dickerson  
**Cast:** Andrew Lincoln, Jon Bernthal, Sarah Wayne Callies, Chandler Riggs, Jeffery DeMunn, Steven Yeun, Laurie Holden, Norman Reedus, IronE Singleton, Melissa McBride, Scott Wilson, Emily Kinney, Lauren Cohan, Jane McNeill, James Allen McCune, Michael Zegan  
**Synopsis:** Rick and Shane try to decide what to do with their new captive, Randall Culver. As the drive 18 miles out from the farm in an attempt to release Randall, Rick confronts Shane and tries to mend their relationship, which causes a violent fight between the two. Meanwhile, Lori and Maggie try to stop Beth from committing suicide.

**Episode #:** 11  
**Episode Title:** Judge, Jury, Executioner  
**Premiered:** March 4, 2012  
**Director:** Gregory Nicotero  
**Cast:** Andrew Lincoln, Jon Bernthal, Sarah Wayne Callies, Chandler Riggs, Jeffery DeMunn, Steven Yeun, Laurie Holden, Norman Reedus, IronE Singleton, Melissa McBride, Scott Wilson, Emily Kinney, Lauren Cohan, Jane McNeill, James Allen McCune, Michael Zegan  
**Synopsis:** Daryl interrogates Randall about his group and learns that it consists of thirty dangerous and armed men. Rick and Shane decide to kill Randall, who is perceived as a threat to the other survivors.

Dale, however, opposes their decision and tries to convince the group to hear him out and keep their humanity.

- Episode #:** 12
- Episode Title:** Better Angels
- Premiered:** March 11, 2012
- Director:** Guy Ferland
- Cast:** Andrew Lincoln, Jon Bernthal, Sarah Wayne Callies, Chandler Riggs, Steven Yeun, Laurie Holden, Norman Reedus, IronE Singleton, Melissa McBride, Scott Wilson, Emily Kinney, Lauren Cohan, Jane McNeill, James Allen McCune, Michael Zegan
- Synopsis:** The group of survivors mourns the loss of Dale, and Carl feels guilty and responsible for his death. Lori reveals to Shane that she is unsure whether the baby is his or Rick's. Shane takes drastic measures and releases Randall, lures him out into the woods, and breaks his neck. When he arrives back to the farm, he has fabricated a story about Randall escaping to lure Rick into the woods. Rick realizes that Shane intends to kill him, and defends himself successfully. When Shane rises as a walker, to Rick's surprise, Carl arrives and shoots him down, saving his father.
- Episode #:** 13
- Episode Title:** Beside the Dying Fire
- Premiered:** March 18, 2012
- Director:** Ernest R. Dickerson
- Cast:** Andrew Lincoln, Sarah Wayne Callies, Chandler Riggs, Steven Yeun, Laurie Holden, Norman Reedus, IronE Singleton, Melissa McBride, Scott Wilson, Emily Kinney, Lauren Cohan, Jane McNeill, James Allen McCune, Danai Gurira
- Synopsis:** Rick and Carl return to the farm but quickly realize that they are being followed by a large group of walkers. Mayhem ensues as the survivors try to save the farm, but are eventually forced to flee realizing that it is lost. Several of them do not survive the onslaught and others are separated into small groups. Feeling challenged in his authoritative role, Rick reveals a secret that he has been keeping since the last season. Meanwhile, Andrea, whom the others believe is dead, escapes into the woods by herself and is saved by a hooded stranger.

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**For a more detailed account of each episode refer to:**

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