How danny boyle film 28 days and marc forster's marc forster uses anthropology

Entertainment, Movie

28 Days Later vs. World War Z

The 2013 zombie action movie and the 2002 post-apocalyptic horror incorporate interesting concepts of anthropological science. Unlike the basic, Romero flick where the monsters are assumed to have " risen from hell," or the source is just left unnamed, these were zombie movies where the epidemic is actually due to viral outbreak, and may even have been caused partly by humans. They conceptualize anthropological ideas, such as the relationship between primates and humans, natural selection by population bottleneck, and balanced polymorphism.

28 Days Later was probably the first zombie film where the plague on humanity came from a viral disease, therefore transmittable by blood and biting. In retrospect, the zombies are technically not dead. No one dies from the disease and then becomes a reanimated corpse. The virus, as the scientist in the beginning states, is concentrated rage (it is literally called the Rage Virus), causing people to lose their consciousness and viciously attack other people, like rabies. Scientists wanted to study concentrated rage to " find a cure" for conflict. Chimpanzees are the test subjects for this contagion. When one of the chimps got loose, due to animal rights activists thinking they could save the chimpanzees, the disease could be transmitted to humans. Our close relation to primates played a role in the movie because humans and chimpanzees were the only species that could carry the virus. Other animals could not become sick (as seen from the rats running in the tunnel, crows pecking at dead flesh or the horses galloping at the farm). World War Z, however, had no definite explanation for where the undead

virus originated from, other than a soldier who infected a doctor in South Korea.

The method for getting rid of the zombies has similarities to theories of evolution. In the last third of 28 Days Later, the main characters reach a mansion fortress set up by a group of soldiers, who plan to eliminate the infected people by having them starve to death.. This is an example of natural selection by the bottleneck effect, in which an event causes a drastic reduction on the population and genetic diversity is compromised, leaving only fit survivors with certain genes to repopulate. The small population of soldiers also plans to repopulate the city with their normal genes after the zombies have died off, which would be a form of the founder effect.

In World War Z, the humans think of another method to kill off the undead. The main character discovers that the zombies pass over old people, or injured or already diseased humans, and prefer to attack perfectly healthy ones. This gives the soldiers the idea to infect themselves with pathogens for common, yet curable, diseases, so they'll be protected from the zombies using bacterium camouflage. They are able to then decrease the population percentage of zombies without worry of being attacked, thereby eliminating the zombie virus from the world. This, in retrospect, is related to balanced polymorphism, except that the advantage to surviving is not a heterozygous allele but the pathogen for a curable disease. In a way, it's similar to the sickle cell vs. malaria case. Malaria cannot affect people with sickle-cell anemia, so people with SCA are immune. In areas where Malaria is common, the population is mostly people with a heterozygous allele for SCA because

the Malaria affects people without the blood disorder, yet people cannot die from SCA because they need to have a homozygous recessive allele for SCA. In World War Z, the zombie virus is the “ malaria” and the masking pathogens are the “ heterozygous allele,” except there is a cure for the pathogens.

One interesting note from 28 Days Later that I found interesting is that in one scene, a soldier asks what it means for the world to return to normal. He says that man has only been around on Earth for a little while, so if humans become extinct by the virus, the world will return to normal. Humans have become sentient enough to bend the planet to their will, instead of us evolving according to the planet. Will humans be the saviors or the doom bringers of this world?

In conclusion, World War Z and 28 Days Later took a very interesting route of film-storytelling when they used anthropological science to support the plotlines of their gory stories. Either one established our connection as primates to chimpanzees, cleverly used natural selection as a plot device, and introduced balanced polymorphism as a way to defeat the apocalypse. People don’t need religion, magic or some other unnatural phenomena to make a good horror story. If they use science to support their horror movie, then maybe science will be kind enough to give a happy resolution.