

The human condition

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The human condition is the experiences in life which makes us who we are. Aspects of the human condition are conveyed to the audience through Les Murray's, *The Widower in the Country*, Anna Maria Dell'oso's *Homeland*, and the 2002 film directed by Danny Boyle, *28 Days later*. Such ideas include loneliness and isolation and how we respond to the consequences encompasses all the experience of being human. Isolation plays a profound effect on humans, and our capacity to cope with this notion is what makes us mortal entities.

In Les Murray's *The Widower in the Country* the poem discusses the mundane life of a man suffering from the death of his wife. The choice setting of the poem—the countryside—clearly reflects the widower's isolation; the vastness and emptiness of the setting conveys to the responder the experience of the man himself. Furthermore, Polysyndeton with the listing of his normal everyday routine such as " I'll get up soon," " I'll stand out on a hill" represents the mundane circumstance and how the protagonist cannot escape from his monotonous life due to the isolation resulting from his heavy loss.

Along with first person narration, the repetition of his everyday normal activities also causes cumulative effects highlighting the widower's loneliness and need for companionship. The use of irony in " Christmas paddocks" also shows the Widower's situation. Christmas is a time for unity and celebration while the persona is alone emphasizing the fact that one joy in life has been lost. In addition, the personified words, in the lines " paddocks ACHING in the heat", " the windless trees", " visions smeared", "

the screaming of claws" acts as metaphors of the widower himself describing his situation.

Thus we can see solitude has caused change and how we react to this is what makes us human. Change emanating from isolation is a human condition defining who we are. Captured in Les Murray's *The Widower in the Country* Isolation is also conceptualized but transposed into a different context in Anna Maria Dell'oso's *Homeland*. This short story recounts the life of Anna, a migrant and her growing concerns about losing her heritage since her parents moved back to Italy.

Isolation has caused change and Anna transfigures; her heightened awareness of the possibility of the severing of ties is suggestive by the repetition of "36 years" This continual referral accentuates Anna's longing to belong and her worry that, "if my parents go, the old country inside me vanishes with them", that is she will lose her unique identity. The use of rhetorical questions also makes Anna more reflective, "how could they leave to sit in the sun of sepia photographs and light candles in the church of memory? the rhetoric device also expresses her confusion and mounting dissatisfaction due to her isolative state.

Anna also yearns for her past and a happy future, shown by the allusion to *Snowwhite* and the "apple of time". She too wishes that she could stereotypically in fairytale stories, "live happily ever after". Evidently, we can see Isolation conjure up a mixed array of emotions and how we react to them is what makes us humans. Isolation is a common thematic idea and how we respond to this conviction is a fundamental of the Human Condition.

Just as Isolation has caused changed in Les Murray's *The Widower in the Country* and Anna Maria Dell oso's *Homeland*, sequestration is also a factor in human alteration in the 2002 film directed by Danny Boyle, *28 Days Later*. This post-apocalyptic horror film depicts the breakdown of society after the release of a highly contagious virus and focuses upon the struggle of four survivors to cope with the subsequent isolation and ruination of life they once knew.

The eerie and baneful feel to this movie is created by the use of a Barren London City, devoid of all life including its 7million citizens as the main setting of the film. One of the best shots which show Jim's isolation and reaction is the mis en scene of him standing in disbelief on Westminster Bridge at the quiet and lonesome surroundings, amidst a shadow cast by Big Ben. The shadow gradually falls on Jim, symbolizing the demise and departure of society.

Further emphasis is placed on the theme of isolation by the filming of scenes in secluded and gothic environments such as abandoned mansions and a dilapidated mental asylum. Use of cool colours shown by the dark grey clouds and always overcast and rainy skies, coupled with the use of staccato orchestral music with heavy beats rapidly articulates Jim's feelings of despair from his isolation. One of the best shots which incorporates and encapsulates Jim's reaction, is a close up shot of Jim's appalled face as he reads the transcripts of those dead on a notice board at Piccadilly Circus, showing his incredulous shock.

Inevitably, his mounting frustration from his isolative state is his downfall. In the latter stages of the film, Jim goes on a rampage distinguishing neither friend nor foe, obliterating all in his way. We are given a final medium shot of Jim, dripping wet, standing amidst a storm, caked in blood and mud with a baseball bat in his hand; a rather graphical change from the innocent young man he was portrayed to be in the beginning of the film.

Thus we can see, solitariness can drive people to the point of aberration, causing horrendous change, and our reaction to this is what makes us human. Isolation is a key aspect and how we respond to this notion is a critical idea of the human condition. As shown in Les Murray's *The Widower in the Country*, Anna Maria Dell'oso's *Homeland* and the 2002 Danny Boyle film, *28 Days Later*, Isolation plays an astounding effect in our lives, shaping and defining who we are.