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Dawn Keetley (ed.), *"We're All Infected": Essays on AMC's The Walking Dead and the Fate of the Human* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2014, \$35.00/£28.50 print, \$35.00 e-book). Pp. 256. ISBN 978 0 7864 7628 2, 978 1 4766 1452 6.

Dawn Keetley has assembled an impressive array of essays that argue that AMC's television adaptation of Robert Kirkman's *The Walking Dead* comic series represents an allegorical zombie narrative that breaks new ground in its exploration of violence and what it means to be human. The first section of the collection, "Society's End," examines the series' depiction of violence – particularly *justified* violence – in terms of the post-9/11 social, legal, and political landscape of the United States. The second half, "Posthumanity," looks more specifically at what the complex narratives of the series say about humanity, posthumanity, and surviving a postapocalyptic wasteland. With the popularity of AMC's program showing no signs of abatement, Keetley's anthology represents a timely collection of important and relevant scholarly work.

Philip L. Simpson uses Hobbesian philosophy to draw parallels between the escalating violence depicted in the series and the "age of terror" in which our real-world society currently finds itself. The world of *The Walking Dead* suggests only aggressive, naturalistic, and even atavistic male leaders are equipped to survive, notably at the expense of the female characters, who are regularly subordinated to stereotypical domestic roles. Similarly, Steven Pokornowski's chapter argues that the violence of *The Walking Dead* – this time focussing primarily on Kirkman's comic series – reflects the gradual acceptance of racially motivated and exclusionary violence, which is escalating in the twenty-first century. Seeing the narrative of *The Walking Dead* in terms of biopolitics, Pokornowski claims that a fear of infection leads to the (initially) logical deployment of self-defense tactics that invariably result in the sanctioning of violence, against the zombie Others and the other humans alike. Both essays read *The Walking Dead* as a criticism of violence being justified in terms of security.

Other chapters in the book's first section provide readers with interesting arguments on the cultural significance of the television series. P. Ivan Young's chapter, for example, reads *The Walking Dead* in terms of a modern-day retelling of the classic Western, focussing specifically on parallels between the zombie narrative and the 1953 classic *Shane*. Angus Nurse, on the other hand, looks at the problematic depiction of law and order in a world where lawlessness has become the rule rather than the exception. And Laura Kremmel presents one of the strongest chapters in the collection, using *The Walking Dead* to explore the limits, and deficiencies, of our real-world mourning practices and rituals. The anthology's first section ends with Paul Boshears's strong essay on the potential for AMC's series to function as "mass shock therapy" for a world that has suffered a collective trauma.

The second half of *"We're All Infected"* emphasizes what *The Walking Dead* has to say about posthumanity, looking particularly at the body politics of both zombies and humans alike. Chris Boehm argues, somewhat unexpectedly, that the apocalypse of the series should be read in terms of an optimistic new beginning for the human race, a potential utopia in which the mistakes of the past can be erased as an intentionally constructed society is crafted in its place. Keetley's contribution to the collection is

particularly strong, as she offers perhaps the most compelling and convincing investigation into what “zombie consciousness” means both in narratives of the walking dead and within our own human existence. Her argument is firmly grounded in psychology and neurological science, eschewing the increasingly popular “zombies are people too” polemic. Gary Fernell takes a complex and theoretical approach to the discursive nature of the otherwise mute zombie monsters, creatures that “speak” through their decaying corporeality, and Gwyneth Peaty finishes the collection on a strong note with her excellent close reading of the recurring symbol of watches throughout the series, arguing the significance of failed temporality in an apocalyptic wasteland.

While some of the arguments and observations in *“We’re All Infected”: Essays on AMC’s The Walking Dead and the Fate of the Human* are familiar and represent well-trodden ground, the collection as a whole offers many exciting insights into the theoretical potential of the hugely successful television series. As the book only addresses episodes from the first three seasons of *The Walking Dead*, more critical work certainly remains to be done, but Keetley’s collection does a fine job laying the foundation for those future investigations.

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