

1. Blindness, Fernando Meirelles, 2008

Blindness is a special type of journey that takes the audience from the beginning of a crisis to the end of it. As the story first starts, we learn that a strange type of blindness is infecting the unnamed city. The blindness becomes parallel to that of a deadly viral virus, and throws everyone into a panic. Some of the first people to be quarantined include a doctor and his wife. The doctor's wife is the only one who can see, therefore she slowly becomes the story's protagonist. While in the asylum, the people learn that they are alone. The soldiers treat them like animals or even monsters, the internees become separated, a war erupts, and living conditions result even worse. Throughout the movie the theme appears to be that, during a time of crisis, what should be feared or trusted the most are humans themselves. The blindness did cause chaos, but with the help of each other, many were able to get through it. Internees weren't hurt the most by the disease, instead by the vile and twisted thoughts of others. Those, and many other, scenes made the characters more believable. The struggle to survive and find happiness for themselves helps connect oneself to the characters. For example, when the man with the black eye-patch takes out his radio, everyone in the asylum quietly and peacefully listens. A calmness brings the people together that is entirely relatable in real life. Another example is after the women came out of ward three. They all held the poor beat woman, and mourned for her death both in anger and sadness. That iconic scene shows how strong of a bond they formed with each other, and there is nothing more real than friendship born from painful experiences. This entire drama was filled with relatable characters that one could point them all out.

This was a great film, and I really enjoyed watching it. I loved how strangers became everlasting friends through pain and suffering. That is something I want to be able to exert in my own story. The way the characters were so expressive and were brought into conflicts they couldn't control also impressed me. I really loved how the doctor's wife became the protagonist without the realization at first. That is something I want to do as well. I wanted Eileen to become the protagonist through a slow journey and end up turning Alex, the supposed protagonist, into an antagonist. The idea that the sickness is not the only enemy is something I want to implement very well. Everything about this film really helps me learn the importance of making your characters more human. Ultimately, making Alex, Alice, and Eileen more human is something I will strive for.

2. Thale, Aleksander L. Nordaas, 2012

As Elvis and Leo, a crime scene cleaning crew, do their business, they discover a strange female hiding in a basement. Her name is Thale, and she is the protagonist of this film. It is learned that Thale was originally from the wild, and was taken by doctors to take advantage of her power. She is genetically engineered to look more human, but her abilities remained. Because of this superhuman power she holds, paramilitary men are after her. One doctor hid her away, from both her sisters in the wild, and the men after the power. After she is found again, the conflict begins to be revealed that she is still a target. When the movie first begins, the viewers believe it is her creepy wild sisters that lurk outside and scare her. The truth is, what scares her the most is the paramilitary men. After the men fail to capture her and end up dead, she is free to do as she chooses. Finally, after many years, she decides to return to the wild. The theme, don't change what is not your business to your own advantage comes to mind. The man that saved Thale from the other doctors and raised her, still ended up dead. Therefore, wild things, should stay in the wild. The characters were very unrealistic. Other than the obvious Thale with her superhuman strength and ability to cure people, Leo and Elvis are also not believable. Leo shows no emotions and has no reactions--ever. While Leo shows to be very disgusted and afraid of crime scenes, yet he has the bravery to waltz around a creepy basement. He was almost killed by Thale, but still sticks his nose in her business. They both don't do much to help her, except maybe give her some food and water. Most of the action comes from Thale's unrealistic attacks on the paramilitary men. The cheesy ending also did little to save these flat characters.

I first chose this movie because of its genre, "Supernatural horror". I wanted to see if I could get something, like maybe the suspense in the movie or the well developed characters. It was very difficult. I think the only thing I can take away from this, is how to not have floating useless characters. I believe that the story could have gone well without the need of Leo and Elvis. They were just there, and it disturbed me. Okay, I guess there was one thing I liked and that was how I was super afraid that her wild sisters were going to come into the basement and attack them. The beginning showed me that it was the wild things that killed the doctor, and those creepy "huldras", as they are called, kept showing up around the movie. Yet in the end, the truly frightening things, were humans themselves. It happened again, nothing is scarier than the people around you. Since I want to make Alex look like the good guy, but reveal that he is not as innocent as he thinks he is, this really helps. I want to build suspense around the infected and the dead, but in the end, it is Alex, whom should be feared.

3. Pan's Labyrinth, Guillermo del Toro, 2006

Pan's Labyrinth is an excellent example of Fantasy horror with its beautiful writing, storyline, production, and monsters. The story taking place in post civil war Spain, introduces protagonist Ofelia and her pregnant mother traveling to her new stepfather, Vidal. Vidal is a cruel man with a mental disorder torturing those who get in his way. Ofelia creates a fantasy world where she believes she is the lost princess of the underworld, to escape from the cruel reality. She is given tasks to be able to return to her father, in which she fails once due to disobedience. That is where the conflict is revealed, and viewers understand that evil comes from within. Being oppressed by higher authority due to fear of death, result in doing things that cause harm to others. This is understood by Ofelia's story to her little brother, the one where soldiers rather not reach for the rose due to fear of death, and by the tortuous events Vidal creates. Ofelia overcomes this conflict by continuously disobeying orders and doing what she feels is right. For example, Ofelia was told to open the middle lock, but instead chooses to open the first and therefore finds the dagger. It is difficult to find just one theme, because the film is filled with them. The most major theme seems to be, that even if it means death, true kindness and bravery comes from putting oneself before the others. The war plays a big role in this theme because those who are led by someone who protects and shows empathy for the weak win. The doctor shows his bravery when he chooses to euthanize a caught rebel to prevent anymore pain and leakage of information. He knew it meant his death, but still proceeded. Ofelia, the protagonist, although told that her only way to her father was to kill her little brother, chose not to knowing it would mean her death. These events also created very round and dynamic characters. The tears, joy, and even madness they went through were easily relatable.

I am in love with this film, and I still go crazy trying to figure out what the true theme was. I can't seem to understand if Ofelia was hallucinating the fairytale world, or if she really was the princess of the underworld reincarnated. I just feel like I have to rewatch this over and over to understand. The reason I choose this, was because of the title "fantasy horror". It was a great choice because it helped me understand the importance of theme and the beauty in a film. The fantasy is separate from the real world, yet it does so well to connect themes together. In my film, I hope to create a world just as eerie, but full of beauty through the words of my characters. Making several minor themes throughout, but a major one that's obvious. It seemed that every detail in this film was crafted perfectly, from the aging faun to the continuous image of a uterus. Every symbol had a meaning, every meaning was beautiful. This is just a step to understanding the use of imagery, and how it was done the right way.

4. Tale of Two Sisters, Kim Jee-Woon, 2003

In this South Korean horror film, two sisters struggle to live at peace with their stepmother in a house that appears to be haunted. Su-Mi, the protagonist, has just returned from psychiatric help and shows great resentment to her stepmother. She shows a great struggle to protect her younger sister, Su-yeon, who is revealed to be already dead. Su-Mi experiences some horrific events all because of her multiple personality disorder. The conflict in this film is surviving the loss of her sister by making it through her mental disease. Su-Mi developed this disorder after the death of her younger sister, feeling both guilt and anger. Su-yeon was dying and calling for help, but even though Su-Mi felt something was wrong at the time, she didn't go check on Su-yeon because of the confrontation with her stepmother. Su-Mi feels anger towards her stepmother for not saying anything when Su-yeon was in danger, but also feels regret for letting pride take over and ignoring her instincts. Thus the theme, regret can drive people insane, comes to mind. Su-Mi made up so many events in her head to try and justify herself. For example, she would pretend the stepmother was there torturing her younger sister, and even made up an event that Su-yeon was actually murdered by her stepmother. It's interesting to find out about the death halfway through the movie, and watch as things get worse for Su-Mi. The audience believes that all the events were from her head, but by the end of the movie it's clear the house was truly haunted. Seeing the hate towards her new mother, and anger towards her father, yet a love towards Su-yeon, shows how round of a character Su-Mi was. Every time a disturbing event occurs, the character's reactions were very relatable and not over-reacting/annoying.

I just happened to stumble across this dvd when I went to the store. The title caught my eye, reminding me that my story has two siblings as well. I really enjoyed the horror in this film because it was just as meaningful as it is creepy. Every event had a clue as to what happened in the past, and I had to pay close attention or else I would miss something. That made the film such a success because it kept me at my toes, without feeling like it was okay to look away. Although the horror was fantastic, what caught my eye the most were the characters. Su-Mi showed protection and love towards her younger sister that was so strong and beautiful that I myself didn't want to accept Su-yeon's death. It brought me to tears just watching as Su-Mi hallucinated all the events due to regret and anger towards her sister's death. That is something I want to portray as well. I want to show an endearment between Alex and Alice so sweet, that it's painful to find out what Alex had been trying so hard to protect is already gone. I was so surprised the way this film went, because those were the feelings I wanted to portray in my film the most. This wonderful surprise became an instant favorite and has shown me the correct way to bond two characters.

5. The Crazies, Breck Eisner, 2010

In fictional town, Ogden Marsh, the protagonist David Dutten tries his best to protect what is left of his world from a virus named “trixie” spread by the military. The virus, which appears to be the conflict, causes its victims to lust for blood and violence and become absolutely insane. David is constantly trying to protect his wife and keep order within the small group he has. There is fear within the group, worried about who is infected and who isn’t even though it is possible they are all already infected. They stay close together and work hard for each other’s survival. All of them do end up killing someone, further proving that they may be infected themselves. The theme can be simple; the military can also become corrupt. It can also be much deeper. At the time of an outbreak, humans become selfish in their attempts to survive and justify themselves as heroes. When the military realizes their mistake, all they do is decide to kill off everyone and fly off. David is also trying his best to protect his wife, and ends up murdering several people because of it. Even in the beginning when he shot Rory, David’s first instinct was to shoot the man, “To protect the people”. Although that is a scary thought to have, it is very realistic. Humans will do anything, even murder, if it means protecting those they love. If it is for pure glory, for fear, or for love, they always try to justify the death of someone. The characters, although a little boring and cliché, we’re very human.

I actually really enjoyed this film because of the way the virus was introduced. There was a flow in the film that helped me understand what was going on. I liked how the infected were acting, literally crazy. I could take them seriously because there was no annoying. “Brains!” type of scenarios. The infected were obsessed with killing, and it was just not them anymore. The reason I liked these, “Zombies” could be because I was introduced to this town to be quiet and kind. Then suddenly, all these sweet people want to kill everyone. I feel this is a good example of what the focus on your infected characters should be like. I want to make even the minor characters stand out by giving them that choice of lust for violence or not. I also don’t want to make my characters so cliché. I feel like a sheriff and his wife is just too boring. The audience knows the sheriff can shoot and will do anything to protect his wife. What was maybe least expected was the wife herself picking up the gun and shooting a man. Ultimately, this helps me make the choice to create unexpected turns in my characters personalities.

6. Time of the Wolf, Michael Haneke, 2003

In this French drama film, a family tries to survive the dystopian world they now live in. Although the cause of the disaster is not exactly given, the outcomes of it are very devastating. Our protagonists, the family, have difficulty trying to find refuge and weakness between them is evident. At the beginning of the film, the family looked well off with a car full of supplies and on their way to a cottage. After everything went downhill for them, they were forced to make with what they could find. That there is the conflict-- to survive in a world where you have nothing but the clothes on your back. The family was able to make it to a train station due to the guidance of a rebellious boy. They met people of all kinds there and were able to either bond with some, or stay out the way from some. It is revealed to viewers how humans can bond when they are all in the same situation. When feeling weak, people will seek help from those that display power and strength. That there seems to be the theme. It first is revealed when the family follows a boy for safety after he displays survival skills. When at the train station, all the people seem to be under the control of one man. Even though they dislike it, it's clear that without him they would be having a harder time. Later in the movie a large group of people arrived at the station. They all followed men with guns and horses, in hopes of survival. The film went by slow and somber leading to some very flat characters. The reactions of most of the characters were very boring. The children at some point had their moments, but still too melancholic. That was probably where Haneke was trying to go-- a Sad and slow journey.

Although this film was very slow and not exciting, it was very beautiful. I had a hard time trying to stay awake throughout the entire film. The biggest reason I did finish was because I didn't understand what the problem was, and I wanted to find out how the family would make it through. Slowly I realized how manipulative humans can be, or how they fight to keep humanity. It shared a similar theme to *Blindness*; We humans don't like to feel alone. Music is played, people tell stories, have sex, and cry together. When Eileen is living with the outcasts, I want to show these feelings too. I want her to feel like she is part of a family, and it slowly is being taken apart by the virus until she is completely alone. Eileen's name means light. I want to show that she is like the light to those she meets. Even though she is alone, she will not give up because her purpose is to be the light of people. In *Time of the Wolf*, I couldn't really enjoy any of the characters. That being said, even though Eileen is the main character, those who she interacts with should have just as much development as her.

7. Carriers, Alex & David Pastor, 2009

In this post-apocalyptic horror film, four friends flee the country from a viral epidemic. Our protagonists, Brian, Daniel, Bobby and Kate learn that the true conflict of this world is not the virus but themselves. The theme can easily be detected as survival of the fittest. The film took this theme to the extreme by having their characters leave behind anyone who got infected for the purpose of their own survival. Even if the infected was a child and her loving father, or a girlfriend, or even a brother, everyone infected was no longer cared for. The characters each had different traits that were easily cliché and stereotypical. The one in charge is the mean, tough, and “jokester” older brother with a spunky, fun girlfriend. The ones who survive in the end are the smart and quiet ones sitting at the back of the car. The characters were way too cheesy to the point of annoyance.

Was this the bad film? I could see that they really tried to bring in some deep meanings to this film with the brothers, but it failed. I couldn't grasp a good bond between the brothers, so it was not touching at all when Daniel was dying. The characters were all just so annoying! Especially Daniel. The virus was not the issue at all, and I get that. The issues here was the level of trust between each other. I understand that when there is a crisis, we selfish humans care for our safety first. Yet, this film made it seem so much more annoying than ever. It might have also been the acting though. The story had a great plot line, but the characters just ruined it all. Everyone of my characters will show that they care for something, and that there is REAL pain when having to part. Real psychological pain, and it drives them crazy. Eileen is that one percent of the world that quietly cares about everyone's safety--even those who hurt her. I have seen too many, “kill 'em all” zombie films where the characters are extremely selfish. I will take this as an example of how to not portray teens in a crisis.

8. Right at Your Door, Chris Gorak, 2006

Brad, the protagonist, is an out-of-work musician that finds his life dramatically change after he finds out that dirty bombs were detonated across downtown Los Angeles, where his wife had gone to work. He is desperate to find her and save her, but is also worried about his own health. By the time his wife, Lexi, returns he had already been convinced that she was done for. He doesn't let her in, causing her anger to break a hole through the door plane. The conflict for Brad is deciding whether or not to let in Lexy. Unfortunately, audience learns at the end of film that the toxins had gone into the house. Brad had sealed the house so well, that the virus only multiplied and became extremely deadly. The theme is that more paranoid people will result with the worst, or in other words karma. He left his wife outside, poured bleach all over himself, and even fought with his wife. His paranoia only brought the worst to him. Karma in this film can also be seen where Lexi was saved after saving the life of the little boy Timmy. This film was very intense when it comes to hard decisions. Brad was displayed as a very loving character that just completely changes. It made him that much more real. The crying of Lexi and her attempt at a normal conversation with her brother also made her very relatable.

Right at your door is a much better example of how one will react when they are forced to choose between their own safety, or the safety of a loved one. Brad expressed paranoia throughout the film, and his frustration was so real. It really helped bring back more sympathy for him at the finale. I feel like this type of frustration is what I want to display when my characters are faced with difficult decisions. Alex, when he finds out he can't save Alice, then must decide what to do with the cure. Eileen, when her two friends beg for their deaths, must decide or figure out how to keep them alive. These types of struggles I want to make seem so difficult, as Right at your door did.

9. 28 Weeks Later, Juan Carlos Fresnadillo, 2007

In this British-Spanish post-apocalyptic horror film, two siblings try to survive the returning rage virus. The virus causes those infected to become instant murderers, and viciously lust for the death of anyone. As the protagonists, Tammy and Andy, try to survive through this conflict, they are faced with some very difficult obstacles. Though they are protected by two soldiers, their journey does not end well. This film follows the theme, there is no escaping your fate. It is revealed everywhere throughout the film starting with the kid's father. He did manage to escape death when he left his wife behind, but, he still ended up infected and even killed by his own family. His wife, although she wasn't a complete monster, still ended up brutally killed. The delta sniper, Doyle, also faced death even after leaving his post and planning to just escape the place. The list goes on, and at the end of the film, knowing Andy is infected, the rage is seen to continue into France. Losing loved ones is very difficult, and this film portrays that well. Characters died because of love and longing. If everyone was emotionless and flat, then the virus would have never spread. The characters are very relatable and real because of that same reason. Humans are so drawn into love and embrace that they can forget about survival.

I thought this was an excellent example of a brother and sister trying to survive an apocalypse! They were having a hard time trying to understand why things we're happening to them, and how they could survive them. The bond between them, (although I don't believe to be as sweet as Su-Mi and Su-yeon's from Tale of Two Sisters), made me want to see the survival of both. I was afraid that either of them would die, so it didn't surprise me when Tammy killed her father. It's kind of bitter seeing Andy running away because he didn't want to hurt his sister, and then Tammy lying to him to protect her little brother. Just like I said before, I want to make it hard for the viewers to accept that Alice is already dead, but I also want them to feel hope that Eileen can still save her brother. The bond between family, to me, is the most emotional one. In this film though, the kids were protected by adults, and in my film these kids will truly be alone. I want to stress that difference and difficulty.

10. World War Z, Marc Forster, 2013

This American action horror film follows one man as he desperately looks for a solution to a worldwide zombie outbreak. This man's name is Gerry, and he is also the film's protagonist. Gerry was a former UN investigator, but after this conflict, (the outbreak), erupts, he is immediately asked to help. All Gerry wants is to protect his family, but he finds it difficult as he is moved around the world to try and find the solution to the outbreak. The theme to this film is that a dangerous outbreak affects the entire world, and everyone in it. As Gerry fights to figure out the problem, he meets people of all nationalities, and also moves around the world. From Korea, to Israel, to Wales, Gerry finds that this problem is gigantic, and he needs the help of all sorts of people. Gerry himself isn't a very believable character, due to the way he can dramatically figure everything out. Even the justification that he was a UN investigator doesn't help. His family was very believable, because they were extremely worried and in danger all throughout the film. The pain Gerry's wife reveals as she can't get a hold of her husband, or even when she can, makes her relatable. The roaming fear that everyone experiences is also believable, because humans can grow a disturbing amount of insecurity at times of a crisis.

I watched this film to get an idea of the action side of a zombie movie. I actually find it funny that most action zombie films include the military or a source of public defense. I liked how the infection worked in this film though. It was something different, and it had a solution towards the end. People in Alex and Alice's world will have to fight off the dead. I know Alex will have had to develop some sort of skills, but I want to show as well how bad he is at shooting or fighting since he's never done it before. Eileen and her group would be fighting off dead people with obscure weapons, because they don't own guns. I do want some action in my film, and this fast paced zombie film really gleams of action. I also loved that this film stressed how the problem is worldwide, and it followed people of different nationalities. I want my film to be diverse in its actors as well.

11. Warm Bodies, Jonathan Levine, 2013

Warm Bodies is a romantic zombie comedy film told by the perspective of a zombie. The protagonist is R, a zombie that “feels alive” after eating people’s brains. He encounters and saves a healthy girl named Julie. In this film, the conflict is not the zombies or infection itself, but the ability to come back to life. Rebirth is shown to occur as the zombies begin to feel emotions, thus causing the heart to beat again. Zombies that lose all traces of humanity turn into skeletal corpses called boneyes. The protagonist falls in love with Julie, and is slowly regaining humanity. As other zombies observe the romance, they also slowly begin to feel their hearts beat once more. As the film progresses, they are able to choose to save humanity from boneyes, and join together for good. The theme in this film is seen that, what makes humanity strive is the ability to feel the heart beat for love. Those who can’t feel love, don’t have a heart, and are therefore not able to be human again. The characters were oddly very relatable and believable. Even though most of them were dead, the idea that love could bring them back made them more believable. All of Julie’s friends seemed like the typical people met in highschool, and that is refreshing. Even the angry leader of survivors was relatable, as he was also given the image of a protective father. This film did a great job at portraying believable characters.

I really enjoyed this film, and I rarely enjoy comedies. I think it was because of the very funny and relatable characters. They all seemed like I could have met them somewhere, and at some point of my life. I also really enjoyed the fact that the zombies had a choice to continue living by feeling emotions. The way the dead interacted with each other, and even thought themselves as friends was very enjoyable. Although my film won’t be a comedy, I also want to show that some of the infected still have their conscious. Just because they are hurt doesn’t mean that they suddenly lost all connections to humanity. They have a choice of feasting on humans or not, and the true inner feelings of humans will be revealed. Since this film will be more somber, horrific, and yet heartwarming, I need to make my characters show those relatable emotions viewers see all the time. Warm Bodies is an excellent film in such a strange way.

12. I Am Legend, Francis Lawrence, 2007

I Am Legend is an American post-apocalyptic science fiction horror film, with protagonist Robert Neville believing he is the last man on Earth. In this film, the virus was a mutated cure for cancer that rapidly spread all over the world. Robert, a US Army virologist, attempts to save his family, but unfortunately fails and is left behind in New York. Three years later, the virus had turned its victims into nocturnal predatory monsters. The conflict of this film is how Robert is able to survive as the only man on Earth. Robert talks to mannequins, watched old broadcasts on television, and listens to music. All at the same time that he is constantly looking for a cure. The theme of this film has the audience asking whether a man can survive knowing he is the last man on Earth. There is great loneliness, and the biggest reason he is still alive is because he still has Sam; his German Shepherd. Robert experiences nightmares from the trauma of not being able to save his family, and for not having contact with any other humans. Once Sam dies, Robert is ready to give up and commit suicide, but right at the moment, two humans appear before him. Finally being able to socialize gives him strength to continue living, and to work hard at keeping them safe. At the end of the film, Robert did not have trouble sacrificing himself in order to save the other humans. Robert was a very believable character because not only did the audience follow his emotions during the apocalypse, the audience also saw what he went through before it. He went from having a loving family and important connections, to being completely alone. He tries to be strong, but his fear is very clear. This film does very well at showing the struggle of feeling completely alone.

I rewatched this movie remembering how strong it displayed the emotions of loneliness. The suffering Robert was going through was believable, especially after Sam passed. He tried so hard to pretend everything was alright, and talked to mannequins and the television in order to keep his humanity. The man expressed hopelessness and anger. Those same emotions are the ones I want Alex to express well. Alex believes he is completely alone after his sister's death, and goes completely insane. Having Alice was the only reason he kept trying to live, and he will react just as Robert did when Sam died. Alex will give up on humanity, and feel that nothing has a purpose anymore. Eileen, on the other hand, will follow him for two reasons. One, she feels like he could help her regain memory, and two, she is left completely alone and seeks the company of another person. These are all themes I would like to include in my story.