

Chapter 4

The Dead Are Rising: Gender and Technology in the Landscape of Crisis

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*I guess in my pictures you're either doomed or you've got
yourself a hell of a job*

(George A. Romero)

This chapter investigates the gender-technology divide through the Zombie Apocalypse. Zombies ‘provide indexes of how we collectively [grapple] with past (and present) social issues’ (Platts 2013: 551), indicating that they are a social barometer of both our past and present situation. They may be “read” in a variety of ways, suggesting that the zombie is both metaphor and symbol, and that the zombie apocalypse narrative is largely allegorical. George A Romero’s *Living Dead* series begins in 1968 with *Night of the Living Dead* and has had numerous sequels.¹ For the purposes of this chapter, *Diary of the Dead* (2007) has been selected for exploration. While *DOTD* did not have a major cinematic release in the US, it has been selected for three very important reasons: it fits into the wider *Night of the Living Dead* (1968) franchise; it privileges an unorthodox, amateur filming and editing style that has become increasingly employed in the contemporary horror film²; and, finally, it represents American university students engaging with filmmaking education and simultaneously applying this amateur style to their own project before the Zombie Apocalypse pans out.

As this chapter investigates how technology and gender are bound together and questions the implications of this gender and technology relationship, *DOTD* offers a lens through which we may scrutinise the visual depictions of technology and how gender is determined generically through that depiction. The chapter, therefore, is broken down into three main areas of inquiry. The first deals explicitly with the textual representations of the gender-technology divide within the Zombie film. The

¹Romero’s Living Dead Franchise is comprised of these films: *Night of the Living Dead* (1968), *Dawn of the Dead* (1978), *Day of the Dead* (1985), *Land of the Dead* (2005), *Survival of the Dead* (2009).

²Was popularised by the *Blair Witch Project* (1999) and utilised sporadically until *Paranormal Activity* (2009) repopularised it with such a profound impact on contemporary horror films.

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second explores how George A. Romero's *Diary of the Dead* portrays women in education, with a particular emphasis on cinema production education. This links the debates surrounding women filmmakers and educational practices that remain gendered (Jacobs 1996; Ayalon 2003). The last area questions *how* women join specific disciplines that may be predominantly male-oriented, which is evidenced through *DOTD*'s apocalypse narrative as experienced through university students.

There is a common discourse regarding technology and gender that highlights a worrying division between male and female users and/or creators (Wajcman 1991 and 2006; Grint and Gill 1995). Keith Grint and Rosalind Gill define the gender-technology relationship as one that conceives 'masculinity and technology...as being symbolically intertwined, such that technical competence has come to constitute an integral part of masculine gender identity, and, conversely, a particular idea of masculinity has become central to our very definition of technology' (Grint and Gill 1995: 8). Further, Judy Wajcman considers how technology is 'both a source and a consequence of gender relation' (Wajcman 2006: 7), which 'when a new piece of technology arrives...it is already inscribed with gendered meanings and expectations' (Wajcman 1991: 90). Furthermore, gender-technology relationship is a problematic term in itself, suggesting that there is reciprocation between both gender and technology, whereas in actuality, and as suggested through Wajcman and Grint and Gill, technology is inextricably bound to masculinity, maleness and patriarchy. Therefore I have elected to employ the term gender-technology divide, as there is a clear distinction between the encoded gender of the technological device and the creation of that device (read male). As Wajcman identifies: 'the masculinity of the engineering world has a profound effect on the artefacts generated' (1991: 102) and 'particular technologies are produced not in relation to specific and objectively defined needs of individuals, but largely because they serve the interests of those who produce them,' (1991: 100). These notions bind technology to a masculine arena, whereby the user may or may not be male, but the creator *is* male.

Whilst this debate typically is situated within the fields of sociology and gender studies, little interest has been devoted to its impact upon film studies. Though there is key critical work in feminist film theory that questions the representation of the female body (Mulvey 1975) and female filmmakers (Kaplan 1983), the visual depiction of this gender-technology divide is highly prevalent within many, if not most, mainstream texts, and is often, if not determinedly, excluded from feminist film theory. However, what remains to be discussed is the intrinsic link between technology and the horror film (and subsequently the Zombie film).

To join technology, gender and the Zombie film, an exploration of the filming style itself is integral to our understanding of the role technology plays not just within the creation of the film, but also the film itself. *DOTD* is shot in a style commonly referred to as 'Found Footage' or 'shaky cam'. These types of films centralise technology within a film's diegesis as the camera becomes both prop and medium. Many of the films that have employed this aesthetic are films that focus on the domestic sphere, such as *The Poughkeepsie Tapes* (2007), *Quarantine* (2008), the *Paranormal Activity* Franchise (2009–2014), *Paranormal Entity* (2009), *The Last Exorcism* (2010), and *Sinister* (2012).

More importantly, the domestic sphere (typically the 'feminine' domain) has been controlled by technology, culminating in a prison-like space for traditional gender formations. Judy Wajcman argues that 'domestic technology has reinforced the traditional sexual division of labour between husbands and wives and locked women more firmly into their traditional roles' (Wajcman 1991: 87). Because of these domestic, technological advancements, men have further ensnared women into their roles as housewife, regardless of their ability to work outside the home. Of course, these technologies were designed to make housework lighter, but they were still time-consuming (83).

Diary of the Dead follows Jason Creed (Joshua Close) and Debra Moynihan (Michelle Morgan), two university students who are part of a film crew shooting a student film in the woods near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (the location of most *Living Dead* films). The film begins with a camera crew filming the exterior of an apartment building that has two ambulances positioned diagonally in front of the building's entrance. There are three stretchers with covered bodies being wheeled to the ambulances. A voice over indicates that there was a double murder and suicide, explaining why the local news crew is there. While the female news anchor begins telling the tragic story of a father murdering his son and his wife, then taking his own life, the medics begin shouting that the woman is moving on the stretcher. The dead woman sits up, gets off the stretcher and bites one of the EMTs in the throat. Pandemonium ensues as the other bodies begin to move and the local police shoot at the walking dead, unable to stop them from eventually killing the female news anchor. As the scene continues, Debra begins speaking over the action, informing the viewer that this was a live broadcast that was unaired and has been included in the documenting of events she and her boyfriend Jason decided to compile to ensure that the 'real story' is told.

The scene jumps to the students filming in the woods, which, not so ironically, is a horror film about a mummy called 'Death of the Dead'. The filming ceases as news reports begin to flood in about the dead rising, notifying people to return to their homes and wait for governmental assistance. At this point, two of the actors leave to return to their homes. Jason's girlfriend Debra is still in her dormitory and he insists that they go collect her. Upon arriving, the dorm is completely empty, save for a looter and Debra. Debra is frantic and states that she wants to go to her parents' house as she has been unable to get into contact with them. The rest of the film crew, their elderly white, British, male teacher, Jason and Debra begin their long journey to her house. Along the way many in their group die by being bitten by zombies. They encounter three different groups of people along their journey, the first being an elderly mute man who helps them repair their broken down RV, a group of African American militiamen who are intent on dominating the new terrific landscape, and a group of American soldiers that rob the group of their supplies and weapons. They end their journey (after discovering Debra's family has all been turned into Zombies) at the actor's house who left at the beginning of the film. He has turned into a sociopath, keeping his zombified family in his outdoor pool, and picks off the remaining members of the group, save Debra, who has locked herself in a panic room. At the end, she states that she had to finish the film; that the world must know the truth about what really happened that day that the dead began to rise.

Dead Rising

Zombie films are a sub-genre of the larger horror genre. As such there are universal properties that can be associated with these films. For instance, horror films, argues Carol Clover, often feature female victims in compromising situations where they need to be rescued or saved by the patriarchal figure (1992: 8). Often times, these patriarchal figures are white males, usually situated within some authority role, such as the police officer, the father or the doctor. Though Clover presents her evidence through a psychoanalytic framework, relying heavily upon spectatorial positioning and highly indebted to Laura Mulvey's 'male gaze' (Mulvey 1975), the zombie film often employ these similar spectatorial positions to elucidate inherent horror from the text, the context and the victim's certain peril. Whereas in the slasher film, the camera often takes on the property of the stalker figure through use of the I-Cam or what Clover refers to as the 'primary identification' (Clover 1992: 8). The victim is the object of that 'primary identification' and is referred to as the 'secondary identification'. These positionings are rendered binaristically as male/female, dominator/dominated. In the Zombie film, the characters are often the main source of 'primary identification', not the Zombies, and thus, the empathic character has been reversed, and the viewer experiences the inherent horrors of the Zombie film through 'primary identification'. Regardless of camera identification, the positioning of the spectator remains the same within the horror film, and thus the Zombie film, as the 'primary identification' remains with the victim over the monstrous (1992: 8). However, most horror scholarship identifies the primary horror viewership as being white male between the ages of 17–24 (Twitchell 1987; Clover 1992; Creed 2007; Wells 2000; Worland 2007), and thus implicates this spectatorial positioning as being coded male.

Moreover, where the Zombie film has traditionally rendered the monstrous other as indicative of the masses (Dendle 2007: 45; Platts 2013: 547–9), the stalker figure from the slasher film and the demon from the demon possession film typically are rendered masculine or substitute for the patriarchy (Jancovich 1992; Clover 1992; Berenstein 1996; Cherry 2009). As these readings suggest a rendering of the spectator as primarily male for the horror film, and subsequently the Zombie film, it also leads to the notion that the horror film is primarily a male genre (though this has been contested by several scholars, most notably by Brigid Cherry in 1999; 2001 and 2009).

Like with the horror film, the Zombie film is built upon generic conventionality (Platts 2013: 547), meaning that there are certain recurring features of a Zombie film that are identifiable across the medium (and extended into other forms of Zombie media). The most primary example of one of those generic conventions is the Zombie itself. For instance, in Romero's zombie films, the zombies move at a slow pace and can only be killed by severing the brain. Romero's zombies have set the model for most Zombie films, until *28 Days Later* (2002) and the *Dawn of the Dead* (2004) remake, gave the zombies the ability to run; though destroying the brain still kills the zombies.

Conversely, genre conventions and genre films also suggest an inherent gender trait. In other words, as horror scholars have previously noted, horror films typically draw in a large male viewership. The Gothic, often deemed the Female Gothic, has a similar tradition of attracting gender-specific readership, here being a primarily female tradition (Auerbach 1982, 1995; Ellis 1989; Heller 1992; Wolstenholme 1993; Kelley 2001; Clery 2004; Hanson 2007; Wallace 2013). Kate Ferguson Ellis even goes so far as to divide Gothic literature into two strands: the feminine Gothic and the masculine Gothic (Ellis 1989). It is a distinction evidenced through narrative structure, where the feminine Gothic centres itself on the home and the masculine Gothic typically concentrates on a travelling or re-conquering narrative. The Zombie narrative often involves a group travelling from one infested destination to an uninfested one, remaining within that 'safe place' until they are forced to evacuate the 'safe place' as it eventually becomes overrun by zombies, forcing that group to go in search of another.

Whilst the Gothic may seemingly be a disconnect from the Zombie film,³ it uses similar tropes and themes. Mark Edmundson negotiates the contemporary Gothic along two strands, one more (inter)personal deemed 'Terror-Gothic', and the other, which is more societally focused is referred to as the 'Apocalyptic Gothic'. It is his renderings of the 'Apocalyptic Gothic' that are particularly striking for the debates around the Zombie:

Apocalyptic Gothic is collective Gothic: as terror Gothic would haunt the individual, so exercises in apocalyptic Gothic would haunt the society at large. The vision that affirms that when we usurp nature's role, especially through technology, what we create will turn on us, punishing us for our hubris, is first and most memorably rendered in...*Frankenstein*. (Edmundson 1997: 23).

Edmundson's claims immediately echo the contemporary zombie narrative⁴ in that most zombies and the mass zombie infection of society are usually explained as consequences of governmental experiments (bio-medical, nuclear, radiation, etc.), our failure to protect the environment, or something that springs up out of our chaotic nature. Therefore, Edmundson's notion of the 'Apocalyptic Gothic' then suggest that there is a blurring of the masculine Gothic travelling narrative with the feminine Gothic domestic narrative, as identified by Ellis. As much of the Zombie narrative involves travelling, it also involves re-domestication, setting up a new life and starting over. For example, in *The Walking Dead* (2010), much of the characters' time is reinventing society (Rick's initial camp, the CDC, Herschell's Farm, Woodbury, the Prison), maintaining humanity and performing day-to-day chores (the women do the cooking, the cleaning and the laundry, whereas the men forage for supplies). Zombies disrupt this pursuit of recivilisation and the travelling aspect

³For a more in-depth study of the connections between the Gothic and the Zombie, see Kyle W. Bishop's (2010) *American Zombie Gothic: The Rise and Fall (and Rise) of the Walking Dead in Popular Culture*.

⁴By contemporary, I am suggesting from Romero's 1968 *Night of the Living Dead* on ward, as this has been the most influencing film on both the Zombie and the Zombie narrative (Heffernan 2002: 75; Platts 2013: 550).

of the narrative repeats, leading the survivors to explore new territories and set up new safe spaces. In essence, the ‘Apocalyptic Gothic’ constantly negotiates gender roles, whether that be reaffirming them or transgressing them.

Dead Technology

Diary of the Dead links these gender interrelationships in numerous ways, particularly in its travelling narrative in search of the ‘safe space’.⁵ But where Romero’s most recent iteration of the *Living Dead* series departs from its original installments is through employment of the ‘shaky-cam’ aesthetic. This aesthetic champions amateur style for the purposes of legitimisation, but, in terms of the film’s narrative, it also predicates who the filmmakers are and why they are filming in this manner. The ‘shaky-cam’ employs hand held camera work as a means to capture the action and the narrative, purports an intimate portrayal of its characters and gives agency to a larger population. It provides an opportunity for anyone to be a filmmaker as opposed to the traditional Hollywood method of filming. ‘Romero-influenced zombie texts are often read progressively’ (Platts 2013: 550) indicating that this particular style “choice” suggests a break with traditional filmmaking techniques to provide a ‘progressive’ message. Further, Nicole Birch-Bayley reads *Diary of the Dead* as social commentary on the global media and their inability to present ‘the truth’ (Birch-Bayley 2012: 1144). It therefore puts power and the ability to create into the hands of anyone with a camera. Though Birch-Bayley makes an astute reading regarding the questionability of the global media, she ignores the ramifications gender have upon the global media and the dominance of technology over the media. Global media, then, being bound together with technology, still privileges the patriarch, which is further reinforced through *DOTD* as Debra is merely a participant in her boyfriend Jason’s documentation of the facts surrounding the devastating zombie apocalypse.

Foregrounded at the onset of the film is a news media investigation into the murder/suicide of an immigrant mother and son by the immigrant father. The lead female reporter, escorted by two camera men, is on the scene as the bodies are rolled out on stretchers and about to be carried away by waiting ambulances. This scene sets the precedence for the entire film, as Debra and Jason subsume their roles as lead reporter and head camera man. After the general details of the gruesome event are shared with the public by the female reporter, the bodies begin twitching behind her, allowing for the camera man to pan away from her figure and zoom in onto the bodies. The first zombie figure to arise is that of the immigrant mother and the camera man unrelentingly captures her grab a male rescue worker, bite his neck, sit up and get off the stretcher. Everything that is happening is done in a long-shot, giving the viewer a full picture of the zombie body as it moves slowly towards the camera

⁵This notion draws from Ellis’ division of the Gothic narrative into two strands: the masculine and the feminine, where the former being the travelling narrative and the latter being the domestic.

(read, spectator). Debra provides the voice over for the opening sequence, contextualising it through the camera man's documentation of the unaired events, and Jason and Debra's desire to tell the 'real' story of what is occurring across the globe. The viewer learns through the voice over that this "documentary" has been pieced together and filmed by her boyfriend and finished by her.

Strewn within this scene are several implications surrounding the gender-technology divide. The lead reporter and the voice over narrating the events are both female. They are in front of the camera, part of the visual world, whereas behind the camera lies the male realm. As Judy Wajcman argues 'Technology is a key source of men's power and a defining feature of masculinity. This approach served as a compelling critique of popular and sociological arguments that were, and still are, characterized by technological determinism' (Wajcman 2006: 6). Deborah G. Johnson reiterates this claim, arguing that, 'technology and engineering represent the last bastions of male domination and appear somewhat impervious to gender change' (Johnson 2006: 3). Thus, like the development of that technology, men are both creators and created for, whereas women are the passive consumers. This interplay reinforces the traditional, patriarchal binary of man/woman, creator/consumer. The first position within these binaries assumes the position in power and the second one inferior and subservient. Evidenced from the text itself, the female reporter is only able to transmit her narrative through technology, which is controlled and developed by some patriarchal authority, inferred through the global media's dominance by technology, and thus by the patriarch. Debra's voice over has agency only through her deceased boyfriend's efforts to document the "real" events. Technology, then, stands at the forefront of *how* media is controlled and begs the question of *who* is controlling it.

As this harrowing opening scene fades away, the narrative slips into a montage of "real" recorded events, providing the relevant context for their documentary efforts. The montage highlights the "media's" inability to define or control what is occurring and shows man's efforts to control the uncontrollable. A continuous voice over from Debra provides further contextualisation for their role in the documentary, but what is constantly overstated is the role her boyfriend played to make the documentary happen. She details with technological agency the two high-tech cameras they used for shooting the film, how she overlaid music and narration, along with editing the final project, to provide effect to the completed piece. But what is most striking is that everything is indebted to Jason, her boyfriend. Debra claims that it 'was his idea' or 'his computer', seemingly dissociating herself from the project, that she had to complete *his* project. Her final words before "their" events are, 'Anyway. Here it is. Jason Creed's *The Death of Death*.'

What is at stake is not the issue of due credit and Jason's role, rather, it is the apparent subjugation of her role to his idea. In other words, she is positioning her part and role as inferior to his, which has little to do with it being his idea and more to do with the inherent role of men and women surrounding technology. Judy Wajcman argues that:

Cultural notions of masculinity stress competence in the use and repair of machines. Machines are extensions of male power and signal men's control of the environment. Women can be users of machines, particularly those to do with housework, but this is not seen as a competence with technology. (Wajcman 1991: 89)

Therefore, ideas bound up within technology do not illustrate competency, rather they signal that women are merely users. Debra does not see herself as the true creator of the documentary, though there are many instances within the film that she must 'wield' the camera and direct the action. Further, that direction is central to Mulvey's theory of the 'male gaze'. The property of the 'male gaze' indicates male primacy, male direction and continued dominance by the patriarch. He objectifies 'she,' whereas, even if she subordinates her position in front of the camera as objectified 'she,' she remains in that position because he remains the 'wielder' of that technology (Mulvey 1975).

The zombie is therefore rooted within the 'very definition of technology.' Even the very notion of Romero's zombies are bound up with technology, as 'Romero's undead are created by a vague technology run amok,' (Pulliam 2007: 734). From this point, then, zombies, in Romero's diegetic *Living Dead* world, are in essence a product of male creation and male dominance. What does that say, however, about zombies and the zombie apocalypse?

If, as I am postulating, zombies are a result of a masculinist technology, then zombies should be read as masculinely encoded androids. They are a product of science and engineering, whether they be directly made in a lab, or infected through a virus as a result of science, as Wajcman, Grint and Gill, and Johnson suggest, engineering, the sciences and technology are bound together with masculinity and male agency. Essentially, they are the progeny of the patriarchy, no matter what the cause for their existence. Moreover, these are then the similar, hyper-real monsters from 1950s science fiction, they are indicative of the robots that take over the world en masse (depicted in *The Matrix* Franchise (1999–2003), *I, Robot* (2004)). But their claim over the human race still boils down to the patriarchal domination over society and culture. Though Steve Jones may be apt in referring to the zombie as a figure that is 'disruptive' and one that '[denaturalizes] norms, calling fundamental aspects of our social relations into question,' (Jones 2013: 526), the zombie's evolution both cinematically and within the diegetic realm of the *Living Dead* franchise (and subsequently most zombie film's under Romero's influence) still remains a product of maleness, masculinity and, ultimately, the oppressive patriarch.

Dead Students, Dead Ringer

Where the figure of the zombie and the zombie apocalypse do destabilise the *status quo* of entrenched patriarchy is in terms of social organisation and the reformation of microcosmic civilisations. In other words, the small group of students in *DOTD* must unite to form a new albeit, nomadic community that must make sense of their new world and the horrendous dangers that come with it. Even though the focus on group formation and banding together to survive is a major narrative structure for the zombie film, it still revolves around individuals making sense of their situation, coming to terms with newly formed, collective ideals/ideologies, and ultimately about the individual's survival in that torrid environment. Students, then, are the

natural representational tool to reflect these aims. In other words, higher education students must be both guided and make his/her own way in the larger world outside of university and within it.

Diary of the Dead hyperbolises this situation through the zombie apocalypse by portraying how university students are affected by the world around them and that they are not immune to the dangers of the world around them. Moreover, university-aged students typically must find themselves alongside navigating their new adult selves through varying social and personal challenges. Kristen A. Renn (2004) highlights this very notion, summarising Arthur Chickering and Linda Reisser's (1993) work *Education and Identity*, claiming that:

College students engage in a process of examining the systems of values and ethics taught to them by family and peers, creating new systems of beliefs and behaviors to match their self-definitions and lifestyles. They emerge from college with an identity forged in the academic and peer culture of the campus. This sense of self includes conceptions of body and appearance, as well as clarification of gender, sexual, and racial identity. (Renn 2004: 49)

What Renn is positing, through summarising Chickering and Reisser's work on identity and education, is that the post-university self is defined through the personal experiences and the re-evaluation of one's personal beliefs before entering into university and arrives at the end transformed and reshaped. In other words, university changes the student from a dependent individual into an independent one. Along that path, the student is challenged socially and academically, which challenges previously held systems of belief and previously formed social structures. Thus, Debra's character is simultaneously in the stages of self-definition as a university student, but also must adjust to the zombie apocalypse. The dire situation forces her, and the others in her group, not only to re-evaluate their day-to-day beliefs and identities, but also forces them to question and adapt to the newly terrific and infected world into which they have been catapulted.

Moreover, arriving to that stage requires hurdles and testing events. Not only are the students working on a collaborative film, learning relevant skills surrounding team work and learning to communicate, those skills must be applied instantly to band together to maintain existence in a world that is literally "ready to eat them alive." This innocuous project and the skills developed by it and that application is highly suggestive of Erik Erikson's (1968) theory of development in that, in order to grow both as an individual and as a student, a "crisis" to overcome must exist.⁶ However, what is at stake for the individuals within the newly formed community(ies), both diegetically and within the university system, foregrounds issues of gender; and speaks largely to the ways in which women are represented diegetically, academically and through the gender-technology divide.

This recentralises the intentions of the essay, which considers how Romero has employed a specific aesthetic ('shaky cam') to raise issues between the media and its 'subjects;' but what has often been ignored in most filmic and education scholarship

⁶I am not suggesting one theory of developmental stages over the other; rather, I am illustrating the application of those stages to the representation of students in *Diary of the Dead*.

is the representation of the student. As has been previously stated, countless work has been done on the representation of gender within the horror film (Clover 1992; Creed 2007; Badley 1995; Berenstein 1996; Cherry 2009; Jones 2013), gender within education (Jacobs 1996; Ayalon 2003; Bagillhole and White 2011), but not how gender is represented alongside the notion of being a student within film. This is an important area of inquiry that speaks largely to the representation of the (here) American university system and practices and how students make their way through those institutions.⁷ Moreover, by exploring filmmaking education on film, it centralises those notions of the gender-technology divide, as certain disciplines have been identified as rather more masculine or rather more feminine (Ayalon 2003). The gender-technology relationship, and the scrutiny thereof, offers an insight into *why* more men enter, say engineering degrees, and more women (arguably) enter into the more liberal arts focused degrees (such as English literature and the modern languages).⁸

Immediately after the montage of news real footage of the impending and escalating zombie apocalypse, the narrative refocuses and surrounds the students' project. The viewer is transported from the chaotic urban landscape to a desolate, isolated one. Dense forest and oppressive darkness comprise the *mise-en-scene*, before the action plays out. The polished visuals from the opening sequence and the media footage montage are jarringly disrupted as the viewer must adapt to an unsteady, 'shaky camera' aesthetic. It navigates around trees, peering into the darkness, signalling to the viewer that the events happening here are somehow related to the previous narrative context. Even though there is darkness, there is a false brightness to the scene that does not register with the type of camera being employed. Thick trees and the looming branches are noticeably visible, but that oppressive darkness seeps between the gaps in them.

Without warning, the camera jilts downward, upward and side-to-side, as a woman screams in the distance. She appears in centre frame, wearing what looks to be a wedding dress that is extremely dishevelled and her hair is coming out of place in tufts. Initially, the viewer is lead to believe a zombie is chasing her, though he/she is immediately contradicted when a bandaged mummy appears mere steps behind her. The camera's personal gaze focuses intensely on the woman in peril, alters shots to capture the mummy close up, using a shot/reverse shot to intensify the woman's terror. Upon closer scrutiny, she looks out of place temporally as her dress has an aged, costumed-look to it. The camera joltingly captures the chase segment, when, outside the frame 'CUT' disrupts the action. This disruption foregrounds why she looks displaced from the opening narrative events. Upon further inspection of her facial features indicates that she is younger than previously registered. This is

⁷This is a highly understudied area of film studies, particularly as universities and university students feature in numbers of major Hollywood productions with a large portion of them falling within the genres of comedy and horror. See, for example, *Black Christmas* (1974 and 2006), *Animal House* (1978), *The House on Sorority Row* (1983), *Scream 2* (1997), *Dead Man on Campus* (1998), *The Blair Witch Project* (1999), *Cry_Wolf* (2005), *Sorority Row* (2009).

⁸This is not to ignore the important contribution and continuous enrolment of men in these humanities-based subjects, rather highlights how women have historically been "conditioned" to enter into these liberal arts subjects (Bagillhole and White 2013).

when the notion that some type of (amateur) horror film is being recorded enters into the frame of narrative reference.

In spite of the fact that the action has ceased, the camera continues to capture its surroundings and the viewer is carried to the onset RV, where the director, the actors, the students and the teacher are waiting silently. This provides the viewer with additional context (mainly visual) about the student-led project and their project becomes an homage to Universal mummy movies from the 1930s, the original zombie films that followed and the low-budget filming style of Romero's original *Night of the Living Dead*. Furthermore, the (male) director maintains generic horror conventions by objectifying a woman-in-peril. Though women are present for the filming, their main roles are actress, the costume design and makeup application. They represent the stereotypical gender roles that have traditionally dominated the home (de Beauvoir 1953; Friedan 1963) and that have (here) carried into film(making) education. Furthermore, these female students do not have technological agency, in that they are rather in front of the screen (objectified) or accoutrements to the masculine role of directing the action. Their position does not dictate what the action is or how it will pan out, rather their role is to *enhance* that action, and much like woman was to enhance man within the home.

Technology, therefore, has huge dominance within film(making) education, which is further evidenced through the *male* teacher's/professor's (colloquial term for US university lecturers) presence. Beyond gender filmmaking practices, there is a clear reiteration here between filmmaking as being gendered masculine and film viewing or consumption being gendered masculine in terms of the zombie film. A male student chose to make a horror film, chose to incorporate the objectification of the female body, chose to make the mummy male (revealed once the action ceases, but also through the mummy's tall and stocky stature) and chose to employ female students in traditionally feminine roles.

Though gendered education is typically divided along the humanities versus sciences line, the implementation of high-tech, visual technology suggests that there is also a division within the different faculties themselves. More technical disciplines within the humanities, then, are gendered masculine, and highlight unchallenged gender divisions within the university system.

The convergence of these issues is hyperbolised through the zombie apocalypse in *Diary of the Dead*. Thus, the juncture of the gender-technology relationship and issues of gender parity across the university system become central to Romero's representation along gender lines and through the status 'college student'. In other words, by portraying students as such, it shows that personal development and growth are foregrounded and forced upon these younger members of their society – the zombie apocalypse sends this process into overdrive, and hence, the development of multiple microcosmic communities springing up across the *Living Dead* franchise, and more locally, within the immediate world of the characters in *DOTD*. The viewer follows the development of this (student-led) new community formation from its inception until its dwindling-down to two members. What has yet to be stated, though, is that Debra is the survivor of her relationship (Jason dies at the very end of the film) and becomes the ostensible new leader of her newly founded

community. Moreover, as the narrative progresses, Debra becomes a cogent leader that is able to negotiate across hostile lines of communication and force (running into the rough gang in the warehouse) and must also overcome her newfound independence from her parents (she is forced to kill her undead father and mother in her family home). She is supported and encouraged by the other members, growing from her initial rescue from her university dorm (coded helpless or damsel – her dorm is a tower) and moving up the hierarchical ladder towards eventual leader.

Seemingly, this narrative arc would be seen positively, as she is fighting the patriarchy (both in terms of leadership and fighting off the zombies) for her survival and for the survival of her community. But what disadvantages the positivity revolved around these struggles remains rooted within the gender-technology divide, which consequently begins at home (Friedan 1963; Wajcman 1991, 2006; Grint and Gill 1995), carries forward into the university system by dividing gender through discipline (Jacobs 1996; Ayalon 2003) and is reinforced in university educational roles and responsibilities (Bagilhole and White 2011, 2013).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I explored the ways in which gender intersects the zombie film, technology and education through *Diary of the Dead*'s presentation of student filmmakers making sense of and surviving the zombie apocalypse. Moreover, it also explored how the zombie apocalypse is used to hyperbolise the role of women within these three disparate areas that have been aptly united through the film's narrative and visual style. Through this investigation, I illustrated *how* film studies through both the practical side, in regards to the film and its narrative, and the theoretical side may work to expose gendered educational practices within itself, but how that works as a case study to highlight the gendered division across the university system, and thus, the originations of this problem. By breaking the chapter into the three areas of first zombies, then technology and finally education, it allowed the process to work as a layering function, whereby the root or central, defining narrative of gender (dis)parity may be highlighted, explored and challenged. Furthermore, as Romero's work is often seen to be more socially progressive and a challenge to the *status quo* (Heffernan 2002; Pulliam 2007; Platts 2013), illustrating how the patriarch resurfaces to maintain dominance is heightened and demonstrates that there is an unrelenting grip even amongst those who would wish to challenge and/or destroy the very notion of it.

There are many more modes of inquiry to be made in these three areas about gender (dis)parity. Further, there are many differing methodological approaches that could yield different results. The restraints of this chapter do not allow for every type of inquiry. However, there is much more to be said about the representation of students across the media and how they are a reflection of their academic environments; as is there much more to be said about maleness and masculinity in horror studies, zombie media scholarship and education.

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