



Korstanje. (2013) “Tourism, Mobility and Zombie War”. *International Journal of Safety and Security in Tourism*. Issue 4, pp. 51-55

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ISSN 2250-5105

Tourism, Mobility & Zombie War.

WORLD WAR Z. 2013. English Language. UK, US. Directed by Marc Foster.

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World War Z is a fascinating movie recently released and starred by Brad Pitt, Mireille Enos and Daniella Kertesz, that narrates the life of Gerry Lane (a retiree official from UN skilled in conflict zones), and his family to survive a pandemics generated by a Zombie-virus. Emulating the effects of rabies, this new virus expands rapidly to the greater capitals of the world. Infected people who are beaten by zombies develop their symptoms in 12 seconds. The Z virus is known to put people in catatonic conditions by seconds or minutes. When they wake up, they become zombies, undead walkers. The movie synopsis, no need to say, draws the attention of audience combining convincing visual resources with a good and polished argument, but as we will see in this review, it rests on an ethnocentric discourse because it alludes to the old sentiment of exemplarity in US. As every day, Lane is in his way to the work when the cars stuck in a traffic jam. In few minutes, he hears shouts and perceives something is bad. Some unusual movements of passer-bys immediately pass to a situation of emergency and chaos. Hundred of people are running everywhere to escape from zombies. At the same time, Gerry is called by his friend Thierry who actually works for United Nations. Gerry and his family are brought to an army shelter on the ocean where they are temporarily safe. Extorted to lead a suicide mission to South Korea, where specialists think the virus originally surfaced, Lane should decide on his acceptance of the mission or the evacuation to other less safer place. One of the great minds of expedition, a youth scientist, dies tragically which leads Gerry to Jerusalem, Israel in quest of answers. Lane recognizes that this city has constructed a wall of contention that keeps zombies away. Starting from the premise, Israel was familiar with the virus outbreak; Lane supposes they have vital information to save the world. Not only he was wrong, but also witnesses how zombies trespass the wall killing all people there. Accompanied by a youth army official, Lane is accompanied to Cardiff Wales, at a laboratory of UN where supposedly there was a vaccine for this new terrible virus. But worse come to worst, everything turns in chaos, when a zombie eats a beauty flight attendant on board. This

becomes in a real nightmare but Lane throws a hand-grenade to evacuate the flight. As a product of this, Lane is badly injured resulting from a forced landing of the plane. Once hospitalized in the laboratories of Cardiff for three days, Lane works jointly with Scientifics to find a cure. Originally, the thought struck him that an infected organism needs from healthy guests to survive. Therefore, Lane assumes correctly that zombies only attack those people who are sane. If these assumptions are correct, by injecting some virus as H1N1 or Smallpox it would give to people a camouflage not to be eaten by the zombies. His idea not only is successful but is communicated to high-commands in the shelters. Although, humanity did not eradicate the zombie threat, it at least was given a hope to fight against them.

To here, we have shortly enumerated the general facts as happened through the synopsis. One might speculate that this movie would represent a good entertainment or fiction of what can be called, horror or disaster-related genre. Nonetheless, there are some secondary elements which merit to be explored. One of the first alarms respecting to the possibility to suffer an apocalyptic and globalized virus is oriented to the air-commerce companies and tourism, because they exhibit a high degree of mobility. US and Europe are portrayed as civilized and organized societies which are in danger because of the style of life of other nations. The virus outbreak emerged abroad, where there are not scheduled procedures to mitigate globalized risks. The high degree of mobility developed by the West, which at least alludes to the well functioning of production machines, seems to be a point of vulnerability when viruses are disseminated in days from one geographical point to the other. Mobility, therefore, plays a pivotal role in the social imaginary of the West. On another hand, Western civilization is based on a strong oculo-centrism, this means a visual technology posed to exert control over bodies. Viruses like many other organisms not only defy the Western omnipotence, but, unlike migrants or workforce, they may go and come back avoiding the national boundaries.

Philosophically speaking, viruses are terrible and awful because they are uncontrolled. In this movie, the protagonists are Anglo-Saxons, American in the case of Lane or British as his wife. Less is known about the world, other survivors or the efforts devoted by other governments to mitigate the threat. The solution to this trouble comes from the bravery of Anglo-heroes and his technical skills to overcome the adversity. What seems to be interesting to discuss here is that while the risk, like Z virus, are global, the

solution remains local. The humankind is saved thanks to America. In other terms, this signals to the belief that United States alone has developed the necessary technology to find and eradicate a risk. At the time, the globalized risk are horizontally distributed, the solutions are horizontally monopolized in few hands. The loyalty of a group depends on the ability of the leader to solve their problems. As this argument is given, World War Z constructs an ethnocentric discourse to recreate the sentiment of exemplarity that lived in US during long time. Americanness not only has been historically forged by divine mandate, but also denotes virtue and sacrifices to reach the collective well being of all community. Although many people have survived to Z virus, the movie is based on the story of Americans. The rest of the world is covered to the lens of camera. Hope is given only to those who have showed to being part of selected group; being a survivor after a disaster means to deserve to live. Unlike the fatal victim who has been condemned to death, survivor emulates an exemplary nature because exhibits the fortune of destiny. They, survivors, after all the suffering, are privileged actors of destiny. Not surprisingly, after a disaster takes room a much wider and strong sentiment of nationalism and patriotism upsurges. This type of “ethnocentrism of disaster” has been successfully explained and documented by R. Fernández Montt & M. Korstanje (2011), who has examined the case of Chilean earth-quake. Even if the survivor feels a great pain for its loss, this feeling is offset to a sentiment of superiority. Thanks to this mechanism the society avoids its own disintegration. Ideologically, Governments appeal to feed the national sentiment post disasters not to be accounted of their responsibilities. Lay people who had the luck to be counted as a survivor, believe they were protected by the fate because their strength or virtue. The same ideological discourse is observed in almost all disaster or fiction movies. On one pole, US exploits its sense of exemplarity leading the world to liberation (see for example Independence Day, Contagion, and so forth). Whether risks are posed as global threat that equals to humanity all, without classes, races or other cultural assets, the hegemony alludes to the idea that only a selected community, as Americans, can overcome the situation. The Anglo-centric discourse of exemplarity as it has been formulated by Americans is not only present in War World Z, but in a plenty of other movies as well. As Slavoj Zizek (2009) put it, ideology works by what it covers in lieu of what it overtly accepts. Of course, one might speculate that horror or disaster-related movies may illustrate to people respecting to process of evacuation, or valid guidelines to survive but at the bottom what, movies like this are an ideological mechanism that keep the social control. Given in these terms, if

US is one of the powers of international well being, how may 9/11 happen?. A tentative answer would be, American officials were familiar with the possibilities of an attack. The theory of conspiracy represents the other pole of ideology. Any conspiracy exhibits valid efforts to make controllable what in nature is uncontrollable. Whenever the reality overrides the fiction, the theory of conspiracy responds the questions that ideology keeps open.

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