

THE UNSETTLING THRILLER GENRE: REVISITING NARRATIVE CONVENTION OF PANDEMIC FILM.

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Abstract

Generic conventions aid audiences to comprehend a film framework, identify characters, settings and narrative trajectories. According to several film critiques, thrillers are about real life mystery, criminal conspiracy, suspense, and images of blood, as the dominant components. Films about pandemics, according to film critic, Roger Ebert, contain aspects of science and the impact on people's lives, as well as how their very existence is suddenly threatened because of a virus outbreak. This study aims to investigate the thriller conventions narrative which stands in contrast to pandemic film conventions, as it is unmatched in thriller films from Hollywood's industry-made canon. This study will revisit and revise four pandemic films released after the millennium by considering the decade as an inception to the global pandemic era. This paper uses textual analysis of pandemic films and also examines the narrative conventions of films in the thriller genre to find out why pandemic films are so utterly dissimilar from those conventions. This study employed Chatman's five elements of Plot Constituents and analyses the pandemic film corpus of (*Contagion*, 2011, *The Crazies*, 2010, *Carrier* 2009, and *The Happening* 2008), which are dissimilar to thriller narrative conventions. The findings showed that all four narrative conventions in pandemic films are consistent in highlighting the issue of pollution that is linked to infectious diseases.

Keywords: pandemic films, narrative conventions, film pattern and genre.

Introduction

The concept of categorizing a genre is beneficial as it functions as a shorthand description of a film in a simple manner, serving to structure and clarify the analysis of creative texts. According to Lanjari (2016), art as part of culture is born, grown, and developed along with its social environment, and never stand-alone or separated from its society (Kayam, 1981, p 38). Art in this case presents two issues. The first is a film that works as an artistic communicable to deliver knowledge about a virus, and the second is a film that looks like a disaster film, but is deemed a thriller by the film industry community. However, regardless of the cultural text, it seldom fits perfectly into the discrete categories of genre expectation or of any kind of prescriptive categorization. Rick Altman (1999)

argues that the categorization of film genres is always problematic because much of genre theory is a discourse that follows certain rules, but is contestable to the evidence of the film themselves. He argues that the film genre is hardly fixed or discrete, and probably never has been. This could be possibly due to Hollywood's practice of mixing genres within individual films to broaden the audience's interest in their cultural productions. The pattern for the generic operation of pandemic films that this study will seek to identify is an adaptable one; for example, the films are defined as thrillers by IMDb, a credible movie and TV website. This study employed textual analysis to explore the pandemic film conventions by analyzing their plot pattern in the following films: (*Contagion* (2011), *The Craziest* (2010), *Carrier* (2009) and *The Happening* (2008).

The pandemic film releases after the year 2000 are likely to present fictional viruses that correspond with the actual viruses that exist around the world. Briggs and Nichter (2009) pointed out the 21st Century pandemics—SARS, Avian Flu, Ebola, pandemic influenza—are marked by what is referred to as bio-communicability. These viruses including the recent covid 19 are virulent and capable of killing people in a short time. These viruses are easily transferable from one individual to another that can lead to death. Gaspar Mairal (2011), posited that the idea of the pandemic threat is formed by the news media and pandemic events. He also perceives that the idea of pandemic narrative is concerned with public health and beyond where the media brings knowledge about pandemics to the general audience. The pandemic narrative has intrigued filmmakers' interest to the extent of producing such films to increase awareness of communicable despite knowing that pandemic films tend to be dry and not as welcome at the box office. Filmmakers have speculated that the existing virus can become serious like the Spanish Flu due to air travel, their concern is not without basis. Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) is a respiratory illness that was caused by a coronavirus, (SARS-CoV). It was reported that the illness spread to 29 countries, where 8,096 people were infected and 774 of them died (Kenneth, 2018). Soderberg and Scott Z Burn in an interview with New York Times (2011), admitted that the Nipah virus inspired them to produce *Contagion*. Both filmmakers wanted to create awareness among society about the dangers of viruses that can spread easily due to air travel. However, like other Hollywood films, such movies should be dramatized to give a cinematic impact to the audience. The portrayal of a terrified society and fragile government to handle the pandemic are key narratives conventions. After twenty minutes into the film, images of people around the world being infected are presented in mosaic which indicates that the virus had spread across different continents.

In *The Happening* the director and screenwriter M. Night Syamalan said the idea of his film was based on plants that release airborne toxins which can rewire the human brain. The plants contain neurotoxins that trigger a reverse-survival instinct by prompting people to kill

themselves. (Hart, 2008). The scenes in the film show people committing suicide in big cities across America and Paris either by jumping from tall buildings or killing themselves by using sharp objects. The scenes suggest that the representation of the virus from the plants is harmful and contagious. Similar to the representation of the virus in *The Crazies*, the toxin turned the people of Ogden March into killer maniacs which later shows how the virus becomes contagious. The original writer George A. Romero said the idea of the film was inspired by the bioweapon that was used in Vietnam War. The bio-weapon resulted in human deformity and in some cases, death. He translated his concerns of a possible pandemic by creating the fictional virus Trixie. In the film, a scene shows hunters finding a military plane that had a chemical on board that was submerged into a river and contaminating the drinking water supply of the residents. In *Carriers*, most of the scenes show the viral pandemic survivors were surrounded by streets and cityscapes. The writer Alex Pastor speculates that the pandemic is capable of wiping out the human population and eradicating the international border system. As such, pollution is a key theme signature in pandemic film narrative conventions, which surrounds fictitious viruses that are presented in various plots.

The pandemic narrative is not recent. The first film about pandemics was released in 1931 and was followed by a few pandemic films. The films mainly showed sickness caused by diseases that have a specific time and place configuration of either biological, environmental, zoonotic disease, or hybrid entity. Historically, each pandemic film has presented the pandemic narrative as novel, disquieting, unfamiliar and deadly. Other films about diseases also exhibit death but with nowhere near the emotional and institutional impact. The pandemic narrative is presented as an unfolding crisis, reflecting our world's technological capacities and its interdependencies. For example, almost all pandemic films portrayed novel viruses as powerful change agents which are able to make a country's entire healthcare systems collapse. The narrative of pandemic films covers issues that might happen in future, but are not set in an imaginative or futuristic era.

This study will use the term “an emergency” to explain that the pandemic is not a phenomenon as presented in other disaster films. Emergency refers to any natural or man-made situation that may result in substantial harm to the population or damage to property (Shen and Shaw, 2014). An emergency can also be defined as a state in which normal procedures are suspended and extraordinary measures are taken to save lives, protect people, limit damage and return conditions to normal (Alexander, 2003; World Health Organization (WHO), 2002). Technically, the aspects of disaster presented in these films are related to an emergency rather than disaster because of a difference in timeline between the two events. A disaster is something that has already happened, while an emergency can still be pending (Lighthouse Readiness Group, 2015). In addition, in considering a virus attack as an emergency concerning public health and policy, World Health Organization (WHO) and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) are the agencies that manage all epidemic and pandemic around the world. It is impossible for a country to manage the issue of viruses without the aid of the CDC and WHO. Therefore, after considering the issue above, environmental pollution suitably frames the narrative of pandemic films.

2. Materials and Methods

This research uses textual analysis to identify the pattern of narrative conventions by analyzing the visual clues and the interpretation of cinematic form of these films. The method “itself involves stretching out the cinematic image to allow space and time for associative thought, reflection on resonance and connotation, the identification of visual clues, the interpretation of cinematic form and style” (Mulvey, 1975).

Previous scholars generally refer to plot as an event and characters’ actions in a story and how the arrangements, in turn, lead to motives and consequences. Over the decades, plot has gone through many changes, although the basic structure remains, which aimed to systematize the development of narrative interest. However, the contemporary narrative structure can be traced to global events and situations. Among them are (Propp, 1968) thirty-one narrative functions and (Todorov, 1971) scheme of

equilibrium. Other plot structures are more complex such as constellations of story words and characters’ private worlds (Ryan, 2007), patterns of coincidence (Dannenberg, 2008) and human experience (Booker, 2006).

Meanwhile, Chatman defines plot as ‘story as discourse’, which stresses that story events are reordered through narrative discourse. The contemporary plot structure according to previous scholars can be either a historical narrative, which employs the actual events or fictional narrative which is plotted without reference to actual events. The researcher believes the difference between the two narratives is unquestionable as it is accepted by readers. More importantly, a narrative must be meaningful and be able to relate plot and story. Chatman regards beginnings and ends are only meaningful in the realm of discourse. To Chatman, the plot is not necessarily in chronological order. His concept of the plot includes events, characters and conflicts. Therefore, these factors are essential to constitute a plot. Chatman also states that story helps explain the relationships between events in a process of narrative. Chatman outlines five elements of Plot Constituents. The first is exposition in which the narrator tries to lay out the time, place, local color and participants, which in film language is known as introduction of the film time, characters and settings. The plot in *Contagion* was varied as there are many key characters in the film. In *Contagion*, the scene starts on day two by showing the first group of victims was at the same casino at the same time in Hong Kong and the virus carried by them then spread violently after they reached their respective home countries. When the virus became an outbreak on day 3, the CDC led by Dr. Cheever urges his staff, Dr. Mears and Dr. Hextall to work hard on treating the victims and develop a vaccine after the report showed the number of deaths had reached 275,000 worldwide. At the same time, another plot is developed to show Allen, a blogger journalist and conspiracy theorist, who thinks that the virus is caused by worldwide fish poisoning. Meanwhile, in Switzerland, the scene shows Dr. Orantes who works for WHO being briefed about the mysterious virus that caused infections in the US, Hong Kong, Japan, and London where she was then sent to Hong Kong on day 5 to track the movement of Beth the host of the virus.

3. Results and Discussion

In *Contagion*, the plot was given a twist, where the last scene shows Beth in a casino in Hong Kong. The scene is a flashback to show how the pandemic started. The casino scene exhibits everybody happily socializing with each other. The plot began with Beth at the airport coughing while waiting for her flight home and the camera then cuts to show other characters from different nationalities arriving in their home countries, showing similar symptoms which indicates that they were infected too by the virus.

The Crazies begins with a long shot of the raging fire that burned the town and ends with the whole town exploding into ashes. The scene thus instills curiosity in the audience of what is actually happened. As the film progresses, the scene shows a beautiful, serene and occupied the town with people enjoying themselves. The plot of *The Crazies* begins with a long shot of a peaceful town where everybody is doing their daily activities. The camera focuses on the sheriff's hand on the wheel, and his badge suggests that he is the authority or the person-in-charge of the town of Ogden Marsh. The scene then changes to show a lady doctor and her assistant in a clinic having a conversation. The doctor is the sheriff's wife suggests that she is the main actor as well. As the film progresses, we are able to see the townspeople are excited watching a baseball game.

Carriers begins its opening scene by showing four friends, Danny, his brother Brian, his girlfriend, Bobby and Kate, who is Danny's school friends on the way to the beach which the brothers are convinced is a safe place from pandemic disease. This exposition stage emphasizes on their driving down an empty road, passing abandoned towns with no humans in sight, which instills curiosity as to what actually happened. Meanwhile, the introductory scene of *The Happening* shows a science teacher, Elliot, explaining to his students about an insect. The classroom scene is quite lengthy because it depicts a question and answers session between Elliot and his students. The exposition purpose is to reveal details of the precedence that surrounds the narrative. Does the first stage arouse the viewer's curiosity as to what is actually happening here? Usually, the death scene appears in the middle or towards the end of the film in contrast to

pandemic films where the scene of the death are shown ten to twenty minutes into the film. Life is threatened and the characters' being unable to predict what dangers they are running into is the embodiment of the pandemic plot.

The second is the complication in which problems occur that contribute to the story development. At this stage, the audience is able to see the main issue, usually being a problem that arises. In *Contagion*, the complication began after Beth start having seizures and was foaming at the mouth in her kitchen. At the same time, the scene cut to show other people in Tokyo, London and Hong Kong that had contact with her in a casino in Hong Kong succumbing to exactly the same symptoms. The situation forced the CDC and WHO to investigate the virus and its origin. The complication stage exhibits how key characters in a casino were sick after they reached their home countries. The symptoms of the mysterious sickness were displayed by the techniques of fast cuts from one victim to another victim. In this stage the situation worsened when the victims were pronounced dead.

In *The Craziest*, the complications begin when the virus starts infecting the townies. After fifteen minutes into the film, the scene shows a crowd watching a baseball game. Suddenly, the game is distracted when a man with a rifle walks into the field and tries to shoot the players. The man acts strangely and the sheriff assumes that he is under the influence of alcohol. After reasoning with him to put down the rifle, the man refuses and tries to shoot the sheriff. However, the sheriff manages to stop him by shooting at him in an act of self-defense. The man is the first virus victim and the scene presents the second part of the film's narrative structure. The complications begin when the hunters find the pilot's body in the swamp and the situation worsens after the results of the post-mortem found zero alcohol in the man's blood, suggesting that his strange behavior is associated with a virus infection. The sheriff later goes to the mortuary to check on the where he was attacked by the undertaker who is trying to kill him. As the sheriff's assistant walks in, he immediately guns down the man. The man was infected as well. The third victim with strange behavior has burnt down his house with his family in it. The cause

of this crazy behavior was revealed when the body of the missing military plane that carried bio-toxic chemicals was found in a river that supplied water to the town residents. The later scene shows the repeated mysterious camera that constantly follows the sheriff can be seen in a few scenes, suggesting that the sheriff is under the supervision of 'someone'. The camera then suddenly zooms out from the figure of the Sheriff followed by a satellite image of Ogden Marsh suggesting that the government is aware of the existing virus.

The complication in *Carriers* begins from the road scenes. In this scene, the audience sees a lone group of people driving on the way to the beach on the empty road where suddenly they are stopped by Frank and his infected daughter Jodie. Both of them are stranded due to their car running out of fuel. The group did not stop to help Frank but continued their journey until their car broke down. The four returned to Frank to take his car but ended up taking Frank and Jodie along to an abandoned school, which had been converted into a temporary hospital. This scene suggests that the virus has infected million of people which has forced the government to convert a school into a hospital to treat those infected. This scene also shows a shortage of staff and equipment that makes the situation worsens, in which we see many children die untreated. In conclusion, the complication in *Carriers* appears when the couples meet a man named Frank and his daughter whose car has run out of fuel. He needs them to help his daughter, who has evidently been, infected by the virus, to the hospital. After deciding to travel together to the hospital, they discovered that the daughter could not be cured and abandoned them at the abandoned hospital. They continue their journey without realizing that Bobby too was infected and has complicated the situation.

The Happening sees the New Yorkers suddenly acting strangely by committing mass suicide.



Figure 2.7 shows a shot of suicide involving New Yorkers at Central Park.

This strange behavior is reported by the media as caused by a bio-terrorist attack. The suicide epidemic then quickly spread to other cities in the United States forcing Elliot, his wife Alma, his friend Julian and daughter Jess and other city folks to leave the city by train and travel to Harrisburg. The train has to stop at a small town because the train loses all radio contacts end-route. Julian decides to find his wife in Philadelphia and leaves Jess with the couple. The couple and Julian's daughter meet a nurseryman and his wife and decided to ride with them to safer places that are virus-free. On the way, they are joined by other survivors and split into two groups. When members in the groups start repeating words, Elliot realizes that the groups are infected by the toxin. The scenes in Central Park and construction site in New York indicate the complication that arises in *The Happening* when the scenes show the public strange behavior by repeating words and killing themselves. In this stage of development, the participants are aware of the situation and are ready to take action either by helping the authorities or running away. Obviously, all selected films displayed similar acts among the main casts –running away from the pandemic situation. In regular thrillers fight and chase scenes are common methods, but in a pandemic, the methods are either stay and find a solution as in *Contagion* or escape from the pandemic zone as shown in the others three films. However, the thriller complication stage of the suspense element usually begins in this stage.

As the film progresses, which marks the third part or climax, *Contagion* shows the virus speedily spreading and infecting many people. Realizing that the killer virus has begun to run amok, the authorities, in this case, WHO and CDC take charge to curb the virus by hunting and testing a vaccine antidote where the main action they took was quarantine and prevention

policies. The third constituent, which is the climax displays debacle. At this stage, everything is botched up and the participants will do everything to resolve it. The pandemic in *Contagion* has reached dangerous levels where the scene shows a digital world map in red color suggesting that the virus has spread to almost every country and killed millions of people. Later scenes show that Dr. Mears has also been infected in the following scene, she is covered in a translucent plastic bag and waiting to be buried in a mass grave. The camera cuts to a scene that shows the situation in Hong Kong where Dr. Orantes is kidnapped by the Chinese as a ransom in exchange for a vaccine. The climax scene can be seen when the CDC has a press conference, stating that the pandemic has killed 26 million people worldwide. At the same time, the film shows the scene of empty buildings, offices, streets, and places of worship that suggests that many people had confined themselves in their homes and did not leave for several days.

The scenes in *The Craziest* shows a series of anxiety-inducing and suspenseful feeling when the town was infected, and the narrative structure at this stage is surrounded by an indecisive leader who refers to the sheriff as the sole authority in the town. The scene later shows that he is in a dilemma; should he work together with the military to restore peace to the town or escape from the town? At this point, the preventive and quarantine policies are enforced. In order to stop the virus from spreading to other cities, two acts were displayed in this part of the story. The first act was exhibited in the scenes of the government's response to the virus attack by having to quarantine the whole town, and the second act shows an attempt by the Sheriff, his assistant, the sheriff's wife and her assistant to escape the town. The sheriff team's escape is considered as the climax because there are many scenes at this stage that provides audiences with a feeling of suspense and anxiety. The peak of the film is started when the armed forces take charge and lockdown the town. Then, they build a field hospital at the high school, followed by separating sick people from healthy people to avoid the virus from becoming contagious.

The Craziest shows a series of focused shots and scenes emphasizing that the virus has spread quickly and infected many people. The

field hospital scenes suggested the pandemic situation is crucial that forcing the military to interfere. Meanwhile, in *Carriers* the climax commences after the survivalists found themselves at the abandoned resort. The scenes in *Carriers* were similar to *Contagion*. Both films show repeated scenes of abandoned places with no humans suggesting that the pandemic has caused mass death.

The Happening climax can be seen when Elliot and other escapees were trapped in the county where the virus already spreading. At this stage, Elliot discovers that trees caused the virus. The wind and tresses released a toxin that makes an individuals becomes lunatics and suicidal. Therefore, he splits the group into smaller groups (Elliot's family, Jess, Josh and Jared) and continues their walk to a model house. While they are leaving the model house, another group arrives, but the property is already infected with a toxin from the wind blowing the tresses. They stop at a house that has been sealed by the residents of the house. Josh and Jared ask the residents for food and are shot to death as the residents believed the group was infected. There are two significant scenes in this stage. The suicidal scenes are shown in a dramatic way suggesting the seriousness of the pandemic. Another scene shows empty buildings, streets, cities, and towns which is regarded as a hallmark for pandemic films. I describe the scene as 'eerie to the bone' which means upon seeing these images, the audience experiences very deep feelings that affect and disturb them regarding the possible situation that might be happening in the future; only when and how it happens is another question mark. Echoing Scott Burn, the screenwriter for *Contagion* predicted the possibility of the pandemic in the future, but the question he posed to the journalist was 'of when'. He also imagined all the scenarios except the incompetent government in response to the emergency of the pandemic. (Washington Post, 2020).

The conflict stage sees the issue affecting action and psychological among actors. In the film, we are able to see images of suffering or other unpleasant images displayed by the actors. Usually, at this stage the participants attempt to restore the situation if faced with various hurdles. In *Contagion*, the conflict was tense in the scenes between Dr Cheever and Dr

Hextall when the CDC reported 26 million deaths from the pandemic, but the vaccine was not yet ready. Dr Cheever was seen as a stern boss as displayed in a scene where he is pushing Dr Hextall to speed up the vaccine process. Psychologically, any individual who loses their family members to a natural disaster will feel emptiness enveloping them. In the other three films, feeling of loneliness, fear, anxiety, and panic forces the viewers to suspend reality in regards to a possible pandemic happening in the future.

In *Craziest*, the conflict began when the couple's assistants were infected, forcing the couple to continue their journey without them. A similar scene occurs in *Carriers*, where the conflict began after Bobby was infected, and they had to abandon her at an empty gas station and continue their journey without her. This scene suggests that during the pandemic, compassion and sympathy were missing because everyone was only thinking about their own health and safety. *Carriers* and *The Craziest* show that in the midst of a pandemic, people often suffer from selfish and narcissistic moralists. This act was reflected by the trio as they continue their journey, and on the way, they were blocked by two women desperate to get fuel for their car, but Brian has lost his senses and ended up shooting the women where in return he was shot in the leg by one of the women. They continue the journey and stop at an abandoned house in search of medical supplies to treat Brian's wound where Danny found that his brother was infected too. Kate urged Danny to leave Brian alone in the desert. Brian refused to be left alone and keeps the car keys. Danny plead and finally, Brian gave the key and urged Danny to shoot him.

The conflict in *The Happening* was exhibited in a series of scenes when the virus was travelling fast across the whole country forcing the government to impose policy on citizens to quarantine themselves in a safer place such as houses or buildings from the toxin virus. In this film, the technique of fast cut was used to show citizens locking themselves in their houses, bathtubs, and in garages, while listening to the radio and watching TV about the news on the virus. Meanwhile, Elliot and his family later find Mrs. Jones' house and spend the night there. The next morning, Eliot found Mrs. Jones was infected by the toxin virus and

locked himself in the basement. Meanwhile, Alma and Jess were in a separate house at the back. Elliot tells them what happened to Mrs. Jones and warns them about the threat through the old communication tube. Later Elliot, Alma, and Jess decided to walk out from their shelter and meet outside the buildings towards each other and find that they are uninfected although the wind is blowing strongly. The quarantine, lockdown, and home isolation were another hallmark plot where it should be given attention to detail on how to deal with a pandemic, except in *Contagion*, where the Standard Operating Policy was presented in detail in a few scenes. These scenes I describe as 'torment of imprisonment, where all characters have been subjected to confining themselves in their domiciles until the pandemic situation is resolved.

The last stage is denouement, which is considered the folding stage. The last stage in the film is usually associated with restoring order where the issue is almost solved. In the final stage, the film exhibits that a situation of normalcy has been restored. The cure has been found and the cities or towns are declared as a clear zone. In *Contagion*, towards the end of the film, viewers are able to see the scene of a sunny day with people lining up to get a vaccine which is associated with the beginning of a new status and new life and possibly of a virus-free zone. However, the ending of the film shows a flashback of how the pandemic started. In *The Craziest*, the denouement was brief in which the final scene exhibited the town had vanished in the mass explosion and the film implemented a long shot on the sheriff and wife who escaped the town and survived, with the city buildings in the background suggesting that they were immune to virus and would start a new life in the city. The film was considered ferocious because the authorities acted mercilessly by destroying the town and not doing their finest to solve the pandemic. This scene shows that, in the worst situation, the authority has no option because everyone in the town was infected and at that particular time, no cure was found. Although absent discussion among the government and the local authority was exhibited in the film. The film suggested that the virus was too dangerous and lethal, therefore the authorities decided on an unsympathetic severely inhuman in the human act by destroying the town. The tough decision

had to be made to save the virus from spreading to other places.

The denouement in *Carriers* was considered brutal and merciless. When Brian realized he was infected and would not survive, he demanded Danny to shoot him, which is a quick way to die. With a heavy heart, Danny shoots Brian and later burns him. Kate and Danny continue their journey to the 'safe' pandemic-free zone beach. The merciless act in this film is important to show that a person can be inhuman and lose their sense of love and becomes too individualistic in order to survive. Killing their own flesh and blood is not an option but a must to save others from the virus.

In *The Happening*, the denouement was exhibited in a scene where Elliot, Alma and Jess have adjusted to their new life. On a TV show, an expert discusses the epidemic from trees that may be a warning and might be a threat to humans. Later a long shot of a garden in Paris is struck by the toxin virus. The film ends with people screaming as the wind whistles through the tresses.

The denouement concludes the constituent in which the crucial situation was resolved. For instance, in *Contagion* the denouement was managed when the vaccine was found and the government successfully restored the situation. In *The Craziest*, the military restores the denouement by brutally burning the town to stop the pandemic from spreading. The scene ends with the town exploding and the couple walking to a new life which means living in a city. The *Carriers* ending is loose because the film did not show any authorities managed the pandemic. Meanwhile, in *The Happening*, the pandemic was temporarily over when the virus disappeared. However, the ending shows the virus had reached Paris and was possibly airborne.

This summary result is to identify the similarity patterns of pandemic films which are based on Chatman's theory. All films present similarities in the exposition stage in which the citizenry enjoys their contented life. These can be seen in various scenes in the beginning about ten minutes into the film. As the progress of the film, the narratives change to complications where we see the citizenry losing their senses and lives after the virus attack. At this stage, those who are infected die instantly or suffer

for a few days. This is in contrast to the zombie narrative as it offers a view of the world where the citizenry loses their emotion and turns themselves into living corpses. In the climax stage, all films present worsened situations forcing them to escape the contagious area. These survivalists try to escape and some of them die before they reach their intended destination. In the thriller genre, the climax stage usually has twists and turns compared to a pandemic which is aligned and direct.

As the films continue, conflict in thriller films is to restore justice. Meanwhile, pandemic films present the action taken by the authorities by forcing quarantine or isolation policies or separating these infected from uninfected individuals. The last phase of the pandemic film is the denouement, which differs between films. *The Craziest* and *Contagion* show the peace has been restored when the contagious town was destroyed in *The Craziest* and a vaccine works in *Contagion*. In *Carriers*, the pandemic situation was not shown, but the film ends with the survivors successfully reaching the uninfected beach. In *The Happening*, the film shows peace has been temporarily restored, however, the endings show another possible outbreak might occur. Hence, the virus issue within the ending appears to be unresolved and possibly becomes another pandemic.

4. Conclusion

These films present an outbreak plot that integrates with the emergency in which the pandemic requires immediate response from the authorities to protect people and save lives, and also restore the conditions to normalcy. Throughout these films' progression, issues related to environmental pollution create the respective viruses which later cause a pandemic are highlighted either at the beginning, middle, or the end of the film. The government's immediate was to save lives by imposing lockdown, isolation or quarantine to separate infected and non-infected individuals. The plot is associated with the speculation of a possible future pandemic caused by animals, plants, or water that contains a toxic substance or bacteria that pollutes the physical world. The bacteria then transform into a pathogen which makes the virus lethal and rapidly kills people. The

killer virus usually comes in different forms which can cause mass human death, resulting in a nation's collapse. Although films are an artistic way to communicate about issues surrounding viruses which some of us may take lightly, however, these films have also been used as a reference by the public and government in handling and understanding the recent coronavirus pandemic Covid 19.

Declaration of Interest Statement

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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References Page Basics

Step 1: Format your reference page

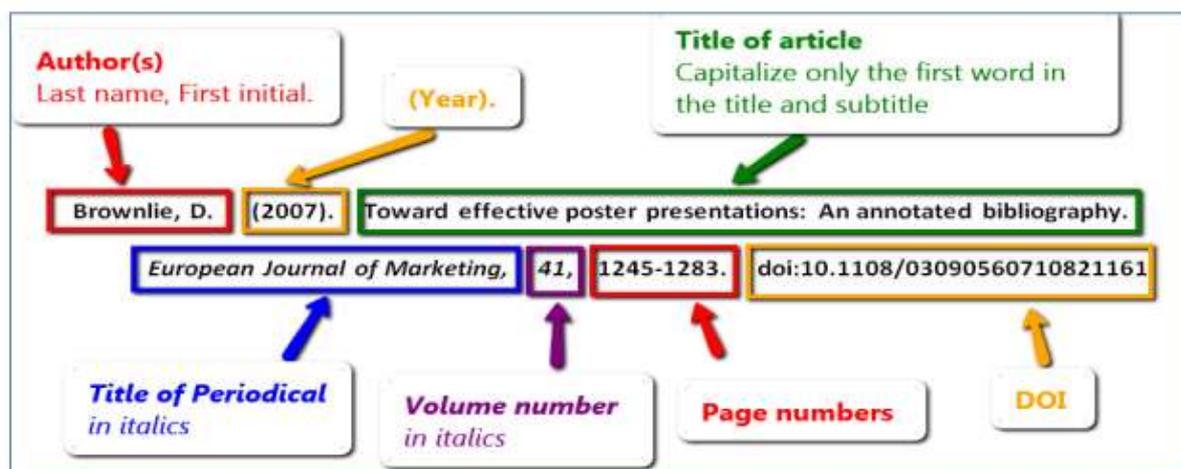
- Start a separate page at the end of your paper and title it: “References”.
- Single-space throughout the page.

- Arrange all works cited in alphabetical order. Ignore beginning articles such as: “the,” “a,” and “an.”
- Put references by exactly the same author/s in chronological order (earliest first) on the reference list.
- For an in-text reference to two sources with similar or related ideas, put the work that is first on the reference list first, followed by a semicolon (;) and then the work that is second on the reference list (alphabetically) e.g. (Amsel et al., 2009; Habel 2009).

Step 2: Determine the type of source you are citing

- Are you citing from a book, newspaper article, magazine article, journal article, or website?
- See the sections below for the citation format for specific types of sources.

Step 3: Find the citation elements



Name(s) of author(s) – list the author by last name, first name initial. Put a period after the first name initial.

- More than one author – List authors by last name, first name initial (up to 7 authors); put a comma in between the names, and put & before the last author. [e.g. Hayward, D., Smith, A., & Brown, J.]
- More than 8 authors – List the first 6 authors and insert three ellipsis points [...] then add the last author.
- No author – when there is no author, start with the article title or the book title.

Date of publication – Put the year, and enclose it in parentheses

- If there is specific date information – put the year then a comma and then the month and day [e.g. (2011, July 4)]
- If no date is available – write “n.d.” in parentheses.

Title of the work

- Article title – Capitalize only the first word of the title and subtitle, and any proper nouns.
- Periodical title – Capitalize all the major words in the periodical title and put in italics (i.e. magazine, newspaper or journal title)

- Book or report title – Capitalize only the first word of the title and subtitle and any proper nouns; put in italics.

Periodical Publication information

- Volume number – Give the volume number after periodical title in italics; do not use “vol.”
- Issue number – Include the issue number in parentheses after the volume number; do not italicize.
- Page numbers – Include the page numbers after the volume and issue number; end with a period.

Electronic resources

- DOI (Digital Object Identifier) is a unique string of numbers and letters assigned to some journal articles to make them easier to locate. If your article has a DOI, include it in your citation.
- If no DOI is provided for the article, include the URL of the journal article. You do not need to include the name of the database.

Citation Examples

[For an article in a printed journal]

APA format structure:

Author, A. (Publication Year). Article title. *Journl Title*, Volume (Issue), pp-pp.

APA format example:

Nevin, A. (1990). The changing of teacher education special education. *Teacher Education and Special Education: The Journal of the Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children*, 13(4), 147-148

[For an article in an online journal]

APA format structure:

Author, A. (Publication Year). Article title. *Periodical Title*, Volume(Issue), pp-pp. doi:XX.XXXXXX or Retrieved from URL

APA format example:

Jameson, J. (2013). E-Leadership in higher education: The fifth “age” of educational technology research. *British Journal of*

Educational Technology, 44(6), 889-915. doi: 10.1111/bjet.12103

[Book]

APA format structure:

Author, A. (Year of Publication). Title of work. Publisher City, State: Publisher.

APA format example:

Finney, J. (1970). *Time and again*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.

[Magazine - Print]

APA format structure:

Author, A. (Year, month of Publication). Article title. *Magazine Title*, Volume(Issue), pp.-pp.

APA format example:

Tumulty, K. (2006, April). Should they stay or should they go? *Time*, 167(15), 3-40.

[Magazine - Online]

APA format structure:

Author, A.A.. (Year, Month of Publication). Article title. *Magazine Title*, Volume(Issue), Retrieved from <http://xxxx>

APA format example:

Tumulty, K. (2006, April). Should they stay or should they go? *Time*, 167(15) Retrieved from <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1179361,00.html>

[Newspaper article in print]

APA format structure:

Author, A. (Year, Month Date of Publication). Article title. *Newspaper Title*, pp. xx-xx.

APA format example:

Rosenberg, G. (1997, March 31). Electronic discovery proves an effective legal weapon. *The New York Times*, 1-2

[Newspaper article online]

APA format structure:

Author, A. (Year, Month Date of Publication). Article title. *Newspaper Title*, Retrieved from newspaper homepage URL

APA format example:

Rosenberg, G. (1997, March 31). Electronic discovery proves an effective legal weapon. *The New York Times*, Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com>

[Citing a general website article with an author]

APA format structure:

Author, A. (Year, Month Date of Publication). Article title. Retrieved from URL

APA format example:

Simmons, B. (2015, January 9). The tale of two Flaccos. Retrieved from <http://grantland.com/the-triangle/the-tale-of-two-flaccos/>

[Citing a general website article without an author]

APA format structure:

Article title. (Year, Month Date of Publication). Retrieved from URL

APA format example:

Teen posed as doctor at West Palm Beach hospital: police. (2015, January 16). Retrieved from <http://www.nbcmiami.com/news/local/Teen-Posed-as-Doctor-at-West-Palm-Beach-Hospital-Police-288810831.html>

[Citing a film/Citing a movie]

APA format structure:

Producer, A. (Producer), & Director, A. (Director). (Release Year). Title of motion picture [Motion Picture]. Country of Origin: Studio.

APA format example:

Bender, L. (Producer), & Tarantino, Q. (Director). (1994). *Pulp fiction* [Motion Picture]. United States: Miramax.

[Citing a film from YouTube]

APA format structure:

Author, A. [screenname]. (Year, Month Date of Publication). Title of video [Video file]. Retrieved from URL

APA format example:

Smith, Rick. (2013, September 20). Favre to Moss!. [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gOP_L6hBjn8

Appendix

Include other supplementary details here