The ‘bare life’ of the human in conflict contexts: the static behaviour and autonomous movement of the zombie in war.

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This interdisciplinary paper combines non-fiction war accounts and zombie theory on the subject of movement. The purpose of this paper is to expose the ‘horror’ of humanity reduced to ‘bare life’ under dominating systems and how this has been visually presented through the cultural phenomenon of the zombie. This paper predominantly focuses on the quintessential zombie activities of group marching, walking and static behaviour.

The paper opens with specific reference to Holocaust survivor Primo Levi who described Auschwitz victims as ‘bare life’ and the ‘living dead’. A brief visual investigation of movement within the concentration camp will be juxtaposed against zombie movement in contemporary television and films. Video clips featuring real wartime footage (including Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq wars), clips from *The Walking Dead* (2010-), *The Crazies* (2010) and *28 Days Later* (2002) and game footage from *Call of Duty* (2008 -) will be used to highlight the movement and appearance of the zombie in conflict contexts.

My research suggests that since the ‘Auschwitz zombie’ the fight to be perceived as human in times of conflict and scientific dominance has fallen under pressure. Ultimately, this paper seeks to draw parallels between dehumanised victims of war and the visual presentation of the zombie. The central thesis of this paper explores the psychological implications of group mobility and considers the metaphorical significance of static behaviour and group, autonomous movement. Reference is also made to group conformity through movement and the ‘disease’ of war as dehumanising the assailant, the victim and the bystander. In the concluding comments the paper consults the metaphor of the ‘living dead’ and questions whether conflicts do indeed render the human race ‘bare life’.