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The Place of Faith, Doubt, and Sacrament in the Post- Apocalyptic Worlds of *The Leftovers* and *The Walking Dead*

Scott Culpepper

The apocalyptic takes many forms in the world of fiction. It can arrive in the form of natural disasters, alien incursions, or supernatural interventions by higher powers. While the concept of apocalypse in Western culture has often been interpreted in light of Christian and Jewish writings, cultures throughout the world and across the span of time have recounted their own versions of apocalypse. These tales generally involve the dissolution of civilization as we know it and sometimes the world itself. It is not surprising that television has turned to apocalyptic ideas and imagery for inspiration given this universal obsession with apocalyptic speculation. More than just appealing to human fascination with the specter of our own doom, apocalyptic television, like the apocalyptic in other genres, is focused as much on communicating truths about our present world through the use of apocalyptic imagery. The presentation of a world of apocalyptic or post-apocalyptic extremes highlights cultural questions or conflicts and reframes them in ways that enable us to approach them with new eyes. This reframing process equips us to see aspects of these issues that we could not process as clearly before because we were too close to them or at least too accustomed to the way they are presented to us in our own experience to see them from different angles.

The post-apocalyptic worlds imagined by writers and producers include events and images that prompt reflection on the nature of religion and ethical values against the backdrop of a world unmoored from the conventions of "civilization." Two recent television adaptations have translated literary depictions of the world in post-apocalyptic states to live action on the small

screen. *The Walking Dead* and *The Leftovers* attempt to show the way life might look in the wake of apocalypse, including the life of faith. The treatment of issues of faith, doubt, and sacrament in these very different post-apocalyptic worlds provides the viewers with the opportunity to ask ultimate questions about their own religious and philosophical perspectives when those perspectives are tested in the radical world of imaginary post-apocalypse. The shows do this most effectively when they explore the perspective of particular characters whose beliefs are challenged by the new situations in which they find themselves.

The Walking Dead premiered on the AMC network in 2010. Created by Frank Darabont, it is an adaptation of the graphic novel series produced by Robert Kirkman.¹ The series portrays a world in which some mysterious infestation has caused a zombie apocalypse. It follows the adventures of Sheriff's Deputy Rick Grimes (portrayed by British actor Andrew Lincoln) and his group of survivors as they seek to carve out a place for themselves in the midst of threats from both "walkers" and humans. As the series continues, it becomes evident that all people in the world bear the mysterious "infection" and are destined to become walkers when they die unless they are killed by direct damage to the brain. The social destabilization that rises in the wake of the walker infestation creates a post-apocalyptic world in which survival takes primacy and the most basic social bonds are severely tested, posing issues for belief in transcendent meaning and basic ethical commitments. While the walkers present the direct cause of social breakdown, the resulting survivalist mentality among the surviving humans makes fellow human beings as much of a physical threat as the walkers.

A scene that explicitly highlights the continuing influence of religion in the world of *The Walking Dead* occurs in the first episode of season 2, titled "What Lies Ahead."² Rick's group stumbles onto a church labeled "Southern Baptist Church" while looking for group member Carol's (Melissa McBride) daughter Sophia (Madison Lintz), who is separated from the group as they travel from Atlanta. This "Southern Baptist Church" is a curious one, prompting those familiar with the Southern Baptist tradition to wonder if the set designers or writers had ever attended one. While the shape of the sanctuary resembles the general layout of Baptist churches in the south, there stands a statue of Christ suspended on the cross at the front of the sanctuary that resembles a Catholic church more than a Protestant one. Such statuary would be unacceptable to Southern Baptists.

Carol Peletier occupies an interesting role in the televised world of *The Walking Dead*. She meets her end early in the graphic novel series, allowing

herself to be bitten by a walker before an assault of the prison where the group is living.³ Her story in the television series has been extended into season 7, making her one of the few surviving original characters. Carol might be the character who has transformed the most since the beginning of the series. Her husband had physically abused Carol and sexually abused Sophia. When he is killed by walkers, the death is liberating for Carol rather than debilitating.

In the church scene at the beginning of season 2, Carol holds on to a faith commitment that seemingly carried her through her difficult marriage. She begs for the return of Sophia and confesses her sins, even admitting that she feared Sophia's disappearance was punishment because she had prayed for her husband to die. At this point in the series narrative, Carol is still an emotionally fragile and damaged survivor of abuse. There is a desperation in her prayer that reveals her need for something to give her a sense of security in the troubled world of the post-apocalypse. Her prayers are sadder if the viewer has looked ahead and knows that Sophia will be revealed as a walker later in the season, having probably died soon after she disappeared.⁴

After the revelation of Sophia's death, Carol begins a personal journey that will carry her from a weak, traumatized survivor to become one of the most capable and dangerous members of Rick's team. In the process, she lets go of her faith commitment or at least of a sense that things are going to turn out well because of providential care. Carol pursues a course of violence as she embraces a survival of the fittest mentality. She kills easily and adopts the perspective that tough decisions that seem devoid of compassion are really the truest expression of love in the world of the post-apocalypse. The most graphic example of her cold-blooded approach to ethical issues surfaces at the beginning of season 4, when she begins instructing the children in the group in the use of weapons and also decides to kill two members of the group in their sleep because they carry a disease that threatens to infect everyone. Carol's murder of the two infected members is discovered despite her attempt to burn the bodies and earns her a temporary exile from the group enforced by Rick.⁵

In seasons 6 and 7, Carol begins to show signs of regret over how easily she has embraced death and survival of the fittest. She has attempted to separate herself from the community in order to avoid the killer instinct that has dominated her. Whether or not her remorse is a sign of her former faith commitment warring with the harsh realities of the post-apocalyptic world has not been made clear on the show. Carol realizes that her willingness to kill is linked to her desire to protect those she loves, leading to her decision to

cut herself off from others. Her weariness about shedding blood is overcome by her loyalty to the group when she learns that members of the group have been killed by the tyrannical Negan and his band of "Saviors." Carol returns to her warrior persona in order to help Rick in his battle against Negan.⁶ It remains to be seen whether Carol has come full circle or if she will continue to struggle with her identity once the crisis with Negan is resolved.

The other survivors in Rick's group do not share Carol's faith in season 3 and in fact seem to pity her as she desperately cries out to a God who seems to have abandoned them. Daryl Dixon (Norman Reedus) cynically comments to the statue of Christ, "Yo, J. C., you taking requests?"⁷ The survivors take refuge later in season 2 with the Greene family on their farm. Hershel Greene (Scott Wilson), the family patriarch, pursues a devout life of Christian faith and secretly believes that walkers are still people who can be brought back to some semblance of humanity. He holds on to this conviction in part because members of his family, including his wife, have been turned into walkers. He keeps them in a barn until Rick and his crew eventually free and destroy them. Hershel becomes a leader in the group after the destruction of his farm in season 2 and their move to the prison in season 3. While Hershel seems to harden somewhat with the demands of survival, he continues to serve as a peacemaker and source of spiritual inspiration until his death at the hands of "The Governor" (David Morrissey) in season 4.⁸

Another interesting figure who personifies both the irony and survival of faith in the post-apocalyptic world of *The Walking Dead* is Father Gabriel Stokes (Seth Gilliam). Gabriel was an Episcopal priest at St. Sarah's Episcopal Church in Georgia. He is introduced in the season 5 episode "Strangers."⁹ The group rescues Gabriel from a walker attack. He takes them back to his church where he has been hiding out, subsisting on food from the church's food pantry. Gabriel seems nervous and exhibits suspicious behavior that puts Rick on his guard. It is revealed that Gabriel lost his wife in the early outbreak and barred the doors of his church to protect himself, shutting out parishioners who were begging Gabriel to save them. They all perished at the teeth of the walkers, and Gabriel bears guilt for condemning them to death. When Gabriel's church is destroyed, he joins Rick's group on their journey to Alexandria, Virginia.

Like Carol, Gabriel undergoes a transformation over the next two seasons. He finds his place in their new community at Alexandria by establishing a church and resuming his priestly duties for the community of survivors. His new ministry gets off to a rocky start when he leaves a gate open, allowing walkers to enter the community, and mocks Sasha (Sonequa Martin-Green)

when she comes seeking spiritual guidance.¹⁰ Gabriel's duplicity and carelessness deepen the community's mistrust of him. Season 6 includes the strongest turning points for Gabriel's character as he finally learns combat techniques and works to provide for the community as a show of good faith. He demonstrates throughout the course of several crises that he can be trusted, leading Rick to depend on him to encourage the community. When the community is attacked by a rogue gang that releases walkers into the compound, Gabriel proves his worth to Rick by rescuing Rick's daughter, Judith, and rallying the community to support Rick in his fight to rid the compound of the walkers. He recovers his faith, albeit a more tempered version of his previous perspective, and becomes a source of spiritual guidance for the community. Rick's growing trust in Gabriel is demonstrated when he leaves Gabriel in charge of the community in the season 6 finale, "Last Day on Earth."¹¹ Gabriel has taken on the persona of a warrior priest, serving as a spiritual mentor for the community while being just as willing to take up a weapon and fight as to lead in prayer.

Gabriel's ministry to the Alexandria community and scattered moments of reflection on ultimate matters throughout the series reflect the ubiquitous survival of faith, ritual, and sacrament in the world of *The Walking Dead*. In many ways, these elements provide some semblance of order in which the civilized world survives for the beleaguered remnants of humanity. For instance, though one never sees depictions of worship on the series, the church building often serves as the communal gathering place when important matters have to be discussed. Rituals of grief such as burial of the dead continue to be observed when possible. The presence of the church and of Father Gabriel in the community indicates that there is an openness on the part of some people to maintaining their confidence in the possibility of a divine plan even in the chaos of a post-apocalyptic world. The nature of that faith, however, is tempered by the reality that one must be violent to survive in a violent world. *The Walking Dead* presents an earth in which the meek are consumed. They will not inherit this post-apocalyptic earth. When the weak survive, it is because of protectors like Rick Grimes, Darryl Dixon, and Carol Peletier who are strong enough to save them or because they have become strong themselves.

The Leftovers, in both its literary and television incarnations, chronicles the state of the world after an event that mirrors the "Rapture" mythology of dispensational premillennial Christianity without the obvious religious cause. The disappearance of people in *The Leftovers* appears to be random, which defies attempts to give the event a religious interpretation. Author

Tom Perotta describes in the book version how Christians seek to interpret the event as something else:

Interestingly, some of the loudest voices making this argument belonged to Christians themselves, who couldn't help noticing that many of the people who'd disappeared on October 14th—Hindus and Buddhists and Muslims and Jews and atheists and animists and homosexuals and Eskimos and Mormons and Zoroastrians, whatever the heck they were—hadn't accepted Jesus Christ as their personal savior. As far as anyone could tell, it was a random harvest, and the one thing the rapture couldn't be was random. The whole point was to separate the wheat from the chaff, to reward the true believers and put the rest of the world on notice. An indiscriminate rapture was no rapture at all.¹²

Characters deal with the metaphysical implications of their plight in those moments when they can pause from fighting for survival or stability. *The Leftovers* differs from *The Walking Dead* in the sense that the post-apocalyptic world here, with the exception of the missing people who have disappeared, continues to function at a basic level much as the world functioned before the "Sudden Departure," as the disappearances are called by those who remain.¹³ The main evidence that things have changed is the continuing trauma experienced by those left behind and the ways they change their society as a consequence, as well as the persistent fear that the disappearances could happen again without warning.

Kevin Garvey (played by Justin Theroux in the television series) serves as the main character in both the book and the television series, but he is depicted differently in each. Tom Perotta's literary version of Kevin works as mayor of the town of Mapleton in rural New York. As mayor, he deals with the continuing fallout from the Sudden Departure on the citizens of his town while also trying to salvage his broken family. This troubled family includes his troubled daughter Jill (Margaret Qualley), stepson Tom (Chris Zylka), and estranged wife Laurie (Amy Brenneman).¹⁴ Laurie has abandoned her family to join the "Guilty Remnant," a cult whose influence figures prominently in both the book and television series. Kevin is fairly well adjusted and stable in the books even as he deals with a world of insanity around him. In the HBO television series, Kevin serves as the sheriff of Mapleton, a role that Perotta and series creator Damon Lindelof felt would provide more opportunities for the kind of action audiences crave on television than Kevin's book role as the mayor. Perotta admitted that he and Lindelof set out to make the television series significantly darker than his novel.¹⁵ Kevin's character is one strong example of this darker tone. He is disturbed,

unhinged, and often seems on the edge of insanity throughout the first and second seasons of the series.

Two of the most vivid portrayals of faith in the wake of post-apocalypse in *The Leftovers* can be seen in the characterizations of Laurie and her fellow members of the Guilty Remnant as well as in the character of Matt Jameson. The Guilty Remnant formed as a nihilistic religious society the members of which live a communal lifestyle, dress all in white, smoke regularly as a ritual, and impose a vow of absolute silence on group members. They are people who are obsessed with the tragedy of the departures and determined to live as silent witnesses to the rest of the culture so that no one can forget their loss. The members of this cult roam the streets of Mapleton making their presence felt in every way they possibly can. They follow citizens around town wearing white as a form of harassment so that they can constantly remind people of those who have departed. Their religion is a strange form of mournful devotion to maintaining the memory of the departed, possibly as a way to insulate the world against these disappearances happening again or maybe just as an act of penance for the perceived guilt that may have caused the disappearances. The novel versions of the Guilty Remnant tend to be more of an annoyance than a real threat. The primary violent act in which they participate in the books, a riot in Mapleton that is also recreated for the first episode of the television show, results more from a misunderstanding than an intentional plan on their part. The demonstrations led by the Guilty Remnant are annoying but generally peaceful. The television version of the Guilty Remnant is more threatening. They are willing to push people harder and use creepier methods to achieve their goals. In the final episode of the first season, members of the Guilty Remnant actually place dolls of the departed in the places where they disappeared, sparking a riot that leads to their expulsion from Mapleton.¹⁶

Laurie's decision to leave her family for the Guilty Remnant is driven by a strange sense of dislocation resulting from losses suffered by her friends and, the audience discovers toward the end of season 1, her own loss of an unborn child to the Sudden Departure. Her family was intact after the Sudden Departure, but she suffers vicariously for close friends who lost loved ones, as well as for her infant. Laurie's self-imposed separation from an intact family provides an interesting contrast to Nora Durst (Carrie Coon), who lost her entire family in the Sudden Departure. Laurie spirals into the hands of the Guilty Remnant while Nora struggles to reintegrate into the real world and eventually succeeds by stepping into the family that Laurie left behind. As a member of the Guilty Remnant, Laurie has taken a vow of silence and started

smoking cigarettes all the time. The ritual of smoking seems designed to underscore the group's lack of concern for the trappings of ordinary existence or for preserving their own lives. She is tasked with training a young convert, Meg (Liv Tyler), in the philosophy and lifestyle of the Guilty Remnant. Her relationship with Meg forces her to confront some of the harsher realities of life with the Guilty Remnant, as does the arrival of Jill toward the end of the first season seeking to join the Guilty Remnant as well. Several events unfold that demonstrate the ugly side of the Guilty Remnant and compel Laurie to reject the cult at the end of season 1.

One aspect of *The Leftovers* television adaptation that differs from *The Walking Dead* is that they have gone beyond the source material in only one season. While Kirkman continues to crank out new chapters of *The Walking Dead*, Perotta and Lindelof moved into their second season having exhausted the story contained in Perotta's novel. This circumstance created a situation in which Perotta had to sketch out a continuing story for his characters beyond the ambiguous ending at the close of his novel. In Laurie's case, she teams with her son, Tom (Chris Zilka), to become a cult deprogrammer and aspiring author. They are both trying to overcome their separate experiences with cults, but they ironically begin to employ some of the same methods. Their work with clients discloses that what they have to offer is only the deconstruction of incorrect beliefs. This lack of hope results in many people returning to the domination of the cult. Laurie and Tom attempt to create an alternative belief system for the converts mimicking the same techniques used by "Holy" Wayne Gilchrest, the cult leader who had once controlled Tom. The irony is that Laurie and Tom use the same lies that they are trying to refute in order to provide comfort for people.

The Leftovers, in both its televised and print forms, provides an excellent study in cult psychology and group formation. Tom's narrative parallels Laurie's in that he also joins an alternative religious group to provide meaning in the wake of the Sudden Departure. "Holy" Wayne's ministry centers on Wayne's supposed ability to provide healing and wholeness through a simple hug and practicing an intentional ethic of love. Like most cult leaders, Wayne is soon enmeshed in a world of adulation, multiple wives, and shady deals on the side. Tom ends up being saddled with one of Wayne's young brides, who is pregnant with his child. Tom goes through a series of misadventures to protect her until she abandons the baby, leaving Tom to care for the child. Tom leaves the baby on his father's doorstep, where she is discovered by Nora. Tom's second season arc working with his mother reignites the internal conflict caused by his abusive experience with Wayne and places

him in personal danger when his mother tasks him with infiltrating the Guilty Remnant. Meg exacts her revenge on Laurie by assaulting Tom and involving him in her plots to expand the influence of the Guilty Remnant. Both Tom and Laurie make their way to Texas to join the other characters in the mysterious town of Miracle by the end of the second season.¹⁷

One of the more compelling personal stories involving religion in *The Leftovers* is the pilgrimage of Matt Jamison (Christopher Eccleston). Matt is the priest at the local Episcopal church in Mapleton. In the television version, Matt is caring for his wife, Mary (Janel Maloney), who was injured in a car accident on the day of the Sudden Departure and has been comatose since that day. Perotta and Lindelof added Mary's character to the television show to enhance Matt's story. She is not present in the book, nor is Matt Nora's brother in the book like he is in the television series. Matt's role in the book is primarily to serve as another example of religious responses to the Sudden Departure. In his case, Matt publishes a newsletter in which he exposes the secrets of people who have departed. His publication supports the notion propagated by Christians that the Sudden Departure could not be the Rapture because many people who were not believers departed. And many "righteous people," such as themselves, remained. Matt is obsessed with demonstrating the unworthiness of the departed by revealing their darkest secrets. His crusade extends to Nora when he reveals that her husband was having an affair with a teacher at her kids' school. This revelation is all the more awkward and callous in the television series because she and Matt are siblings.¹⁸

The Matt Jamison Lindelof and Perotta created for the television series is a more complex and conflicted character. He pursues his paparazzi role in the television series, but he is also saddled with the burdens of caring for Mary and trying to save his congregation. The church membership is dwindling, one clear sign that the Sudden Departure has taken its toll on traditional religion. At the same time, alternative religious movements are booming as people have lost faith in traditional religion. Matt clashes with members of the Guilty Remnant several times throughout the first season of the series. In desperation to save his church, he resorts to gambling at a local casino to raise the funds to pay the bank. When a thief attempts to steal the money, Matt resorts to violence. At just the moment when it seems that Matt's humanity and faith may be compromised, he steps in to protect two members of the Guilty Remnant who are being attacked. The assailants turn on Matt and knock him unconscious. He wakes up in the hospital and hurries to the bank, only to find that he has been in the hospital for three days. The time

has expired for him to keep his name on the deed to the church. The property has been purchased by the Guilty Remnant, who remodel the building to indicate their conquest of this last citadel of traditional religion.¹⁹

Matt Jamison occupies the unfortunate role of the hapless "Charlie Brown" figure in the post-apocalyptic world of *The Leftovers*. The intent is to portray him as a "Job" figure, an intention that is made evident when Matt sits gazing at a painting of Job just before his misadventure at the casino in "Two Boats and a Helicopter." Yet the situations created for him have a darkly comedic tone that often cast Matt as simply hapless rather than nobly suffering. Nothing goes right for him. He and Mary migrate to Miracle, Texas, at the beginning of season 2. Mary appears to recover briefly one night and the two have sexual intercourse. She soon returns to her former comatose state. Matt carries her in for a checkup only to learn that she is pregnant. The hospital staff wants to have Matt arrested for raping his wife because a comatose woman is not able to give consent under Texas law. They do not believe Matt's story that Mary temporarily recovered. The audience is also left to ponder whether Mary's recovery was real or a hallucination of Matt's. Now a fugitive, Matt takes up residence in a local camp outside Miracle while Mary is cared for by Kevin and Nora. He even spends time in the stocks overlooking the camp as a form of penance and outreach to the people.²⁰

Matt's character arc underscores the tragedy of those whose religious beliefs seem inadequate to deal with the world of the post-apocalypse. Traditional religious orthodoxy has been dealt a serious blow by the Sudden Departure and Matt is the ultimate casualty. At the same time, Matt's own decisions render him complicit in his downfall. His obnoxious crusading to expose the wrongs of the departed only intensify the wounds suffered by the loved ones they have left behind. The viewer is never really sure if Matt's crusade to save his church is more about preserving the gospel witness in Mapleton or saving Matt's position of influence. In spite of all the ridiculous suffering Matt endures, there remains a strain of nobility that survives despite his deep flaws. His devotion to Mary, persistence in ministry, and willingness to sacrifice for others continue to frame even his humiliation with a sense of strength.

Laurie and Tom illustrate the other end of the spectrum. They reject traditional beliefs in favor of radical new ones. These innovations end in authoritarianism and nihilistic hopelessness that offer no more answers than their previous belief systems. The other characters hover somewhere in between these extremes as they wrestle to make sense of their post-apocalypse. Their attempts to find answers range from the practical to the metaphysical and take some bizarre detours along the way. The close of season 2 seemed to

affirm family and relational bonds as the glue that holds people together as well as giving meaning to their existence. Folk Singer Iris DeMent's "Let the Mystery Be" appropriately serves as the theme song for the second season of *The Leftovers*.²¹ The overall message of *The Leftovers*, to the extent that there is a consistent one, reinforces the notion that we will only know peace when we embrace the reality that life is mystery. That mystery extends especially to matters of faith and transcendence.

The world of post-apocalyptic television offers viewers the opportunity to explore their deepest convictions regarding ultimate questions from the safety of their living rooms. They accomplish this feat by immersing fans in imaginary worlds that push every social and ethical convention to radical extremes. This immersion in the post-apocalyptic enables us to play in the experimental sandbox of imaginary angst without risking real harm in a way that only the best fiction can facilitate.

The struggle of Rick's survivors to reconstitute bonds of community and return to some semblance of basic humanity illustrates our continuing struggle as a race to resist the pull of an animalistic survival of the fittest mentality. Religious faith is a key component of combating that mentality as religious movements propose systems of morality and advocate compassion for our fellow creatures. But while *The Walking Dead* affirms the ability of community to ultimately triumph over savagery, the series also presents the reality that the world is a dangerous place and protecting community sometimes demands that people act in ways that cut against the grain of compassion and passivity in order to protect those they love. It is in this ethical exploration of the tensions between our dual capacities for humanity and savagery that *The Walking Dead* makes some of its most profound points about the nature of religious belief and behavior in the post-apocalypse.

The Leftovers portrays a world in which religion is inadequate to explain the most crucial event that has happened to the main characters. Their attempts to grasp for meaning often lead to even more complications. Religious faith disappoints characters like Matt Jamison who struggle to hold on despite the failure of their faith to answer their deepest questions or remove their suffering. On a more ominous note, religious faith presents the danger of manipulation by people who are willing to use it as a tool to control others. The experiences of Laurie and Tom, the delusional actions of Wayne and the Guilty Remnant, and the fanaticism found in the town of Miracle all illustrate the dangers of abusive religiosity.

Images of the apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic in shows like *The Walking Dead* and *The Leftovers* continue to spark reflection on ultimate questions

and our shared humanity. They call us in their own twisted way to strive to become our best selves even in the midst of living hells. This art and these artists call us to revel in the mystery rather than to fear it.

Notes

1. Robert Kirkman, *The Walking Dead: A Continuing Story of Survival Horror*, Vol. 1, illustrated by Tony Moore, Charlie Adlard, and Cliff Rathburn (Portland, OR: Image Comics, July 2006).

2. Frank Darabont and Robert Kirkman, "What Lies Ahead," *The Walking Dead*, DVD, dir. Ernest Dickerson and Gwyneth Horder-Payton (October 16, 2011, Anchor Bay, 2012).

3. Robert Kirkman, *The Walking Dead*, Vol. 7: *The Calm Before* (Portland, OR: Image Comics, October 2010).

4. Scott M. Gimple, "Pretty Much Dead Already," *The Walking Dead*, DVD, dir. Michael MacLaren (November 27, 2011, Anchor Bay, 2012).

5. Matthew Negrete, "Indifference," *The Walking Dead*, DVD, dir. Tricia Brock (November 3, 2013, Anchor Bay, 2014).

6. Scott M. Gimple, Angela Kang, and Matthew Negrete, "The First Day of the Rest of Your Life," *The Walking Dead*, dir. Greg Nicotero (April 2, 2017).

7. Darabont and Kirkman, "What Lies Ahead."

8. Seth Hoffman, "Too Far Gone," *The Walking Dead*, DVD, dir. Ernest Dickerson (December 1, 2013, Anchor Bay, 2014).

9. Robert Kirkman, "Strangers," *The Walking Dead*, DVD, dir. David Boyd (October 19, 2014, Anchor Bay, 2015).

10. Scott M. Gimple and Seth Hoffman, "Conquer" *The Walking Dead*, DVD, dir. Greg Nicotero (March 29, 2015, Anchor Bay, 2015).

11. Scott M. Gimple and Matthew Negrete, "Last Day on Earth," *The Walking Dead*, DVD, dir. Greg Nicotero (April 3, 2016, Anchor Bay, 2016).

12. Tom Perotta, *The Leftovers* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2011), 3.

13. *Ibid.*, 1–5.

14. *Ibid.*, 12–52.

15. Joe Keller, "'Leftovers' Creator Tom Perrotta on How He and Damon Lindelof Made His Book Darker for HBO," *IndieWire*, July 6, 2014, accessed March 21, 2017, <http://www.indiewire.com/2014/07/leftovers-creator-tom-perrotta-on-how-he-and-damon-lindelof-made-his-book-darker-for-hbo-24587/>.

16. Damon Lindelof and Tom Perrotta, "The Prodigal Son Returns," *The Leftovers*, DVD, dir. Mimi Leder (September 7, 2014, Warner Brothers, 2014).

17. Tom Perotta and Damon Lidelof, *The Leftovers* (Warner Brothers, February 9, 2016).

18. Damon Lindelof and Jacqueline Hoyt, "Two Boats and a Helicopter," *The Leftovers*, DVD, dir. Keith Gordon (July 13, 2014, Warner Brothers, 2014).

19. Lindelof and Hoyt, "Two Boats."

20. Damon Lindelof and Jacqueline Hoyt, "No Room at the Inn," *The Leftovers*, DVD, dir. Nicole Kassell (November 1, 2015, Warner Brothers, 2016).

21. Iris DeMent, "Let the Mystery Be," *Infamous Angel* (Warner Brothers, CD, October 7, 1992).