

The Supernatural, Nazi Zombies & The Play Instinct: A Study of The Gamification of War
and The Reality of the Military Industrial Complex.

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That zombies have evolved to jump cultural and media boundaries is beyond doubt. They have undergone a Darwinian journey that parallels humanity's journey from mere primate to *Homo sapiens*. The predominance of the zombie in a vast array of popular media raises questions about whether they resemble our own prehistoric past, act as a mirror reflecting our own social anxieties regarding unfettered capitalism and an errant military industrial complex, or provide insight into our own evolutionary future.ⁱ A constant in both our own evolutionary tale and that of the zombie, however, is the unending and irrepressible act, that is both harbinger and signifier of human evolution: war. It appears that the zombie, like war, is here to stay—a totem of shifting signifiers that cannot be killed off and simply relegated to the mausoleum of cultures past. Like many manifestations of the fantastic, the zombie has diversified into multiple varieties: fast zombies, slow zombies, dumb zombies, thinking zombies, slapstick zombies, slave zombies, and even romantic zombies. One in particular, however, has become increasingly popular in videogames; the Nazi zombie.

The modern zombie has its roots in the work of the independent filmmaker George A. Romero and our anxieties regarding late-twentieth century society. Romero's genius was not just to reinvent the zombie by bringing the classic Haitian zombie *drone* together with the taboo of cannibalism, he also politicized the zombie, recreating horror as social critique.ⁱⁱ Beginning with *Night of the Living Dead* (1968), Romero is credited with the creation of the

ideologically charged survival space. A recurring motif in Romero's films is the subjectivity of the survivors—repeatedly they glimpse the *tabula rasa* of a new beginning, free of repressive injunctions causing the old society to collapse under the undead hordes. However, hubris and desire sees the group implode in internecine ideological frictions. Whilst Romero's survivors are destroying themselves, however, they are being slowly displaced by the Other of the zombie who, as they decay, are becoming Subjects, apparently able to live quite peacefully in the absence of human contact.

Romero's greatest achievement is his construction of a dialectic regarding subjectivity and otherness, and the functioning of fantasy in the Atomic Age.ⁱⁱⁱ Nuclear anxiety is evident in many of the science fiction films of the 1950s, the *Godzilla* series from Japan and *Them!*, the first of the 'big bug' movies from the USA, being clearly representative. By the end of the 1950s, and President Eisenhower's warning about the unwarranted influence of the new Military Industrial Complex in 1961, movies portrayed everything from giant arachnids to monstrous war machines. These films relied on a consistent motif—Otherness was so huge, so terrifying, that it seemed impossible for it to occupy the same physical and conceptual space on screen as its human victims.^{iv} This period of 1957 - 1962 saw a peak in Cold War hysteria supported by constant civil defence drills, and new perspectives derived from outer space that opened multiple contingent and radically new security futures, auguring a new psychosocial reality for US citizens increasingly connected via images of their own imminent death.^v Indeed few societies have prepared for collective destruction as did the USA, and the period can be considered as a foundational *ur*-moment in terms of technology, theory, politics and the motivations supporting US security state, raising questions as to how a society that pursues war as a normalized condition should pause and reflect on its own

intellectual and psychosocial processes.^{vi} The release of *Night of the Living Dead* in 1968 signified the growing questioning resistance to this quotidian reality. The film was a watershed moment for the horror genre as Romero's zombies embodied the monstrous Other and Subject together in a single cannibalistic entity. Popular cinema had now become the modern fantasy space to screen the paradoxical juxtaposition of a societal *Weltschmerz* regarding war, suppressed in mainstream media, with the heroic and sacrificial calling of patriotism; zombies had become the modern projection of an ancient and primordial anxiety over humanities dualistic identity, and unconscious desires.

War, Fantasy and Ideology

" In man, there's already a crack, a profound perturbation of the regulation of life..."

Jacques Lacan and Sylvana Tomaselli (translator), Seminar II (1954-55)

The modern study of war can trace its foundations to a similar *ur*-moment in our collective history. War Studies intellectual origins evolved with the birth of the modern nation state following the French revolution. Prior to the French revolution war in Europe had been largely inconclusive in terms of political expediency. European leaders played the game of war in the summer campaigning seasons with very little changing in real terms, apart from the loss of life and livelihood to the civilian populations. This status quo dramatically changed after the French revolution and the rise of Napoleon. Such was the dominance of Napoleon and the destruction waged upon Europe's old military caste that commentators clamored to find reason for the tectonic shift in war's fortunes. The two most prolific

commentators, and the founding fathers of modern War Studies, were Carl von Clausewitz (1780-1831) and Antoine-Henri Jomini (1779-1869).^{vii} Jomini's ontological understanding was largely a product of the enlightenment - war could be studied as a science and didactic doctrines produced through the process of the rational observation of events. Clausewitz was a Romanticist, focusing on the non-linear and irrational realm of human emotion, seeking constants in the human experience of warfare and identifying war as a continuation of *politik*.^{viii} Despite these differences both theorists agreed on the utility of combining war-gaming with the study of history to understanding warfare, and both men agreed that waging war successfully was more art than science. Thus, the study of war has had a long affinity with games, but the analysis of the role of play in war has been unable to bridge the gap inherent in the dyadic of Clausewitzian philosophy and Jominian doctrine. This gap coalesces into our inability to differentiate the capacity of war from the act, an inability to analyze the logics of war from within war itself,^{ix} obfuscating attempts to evaluate the irrational motivations and unconscious desires that support our reality of war; a gap synonymous with the irrational human need for fantasy.

The edifice of psychoanalysis, like that of Clausewitzian war studies and Marxism, has been attacked as belonging to a cabal of pre-scientific and obscurant quests for hidden meanings and phantasmal conspiracy theories. Perhaps the most damning criticism against psychoanalysis is that its fixation on the irrational fantasies, desires, the unconscious and the drives, are to psychiatry what creationism is to science. However, it is this obsession with the irrational that enables psychoanalysis and the Clausewitzian study of war to be juxtaposed in order to analyze the significance of the evolution of the zombie from ghoul to supernatural Nazi in the modality of play.

The most common psychoanalytic concept applied to the supernatural is Sigmund Freud's idea of the uncanny.^x However, the most useful concept is Jacques Lacan's topological model of the Subject, and his creation of the Symbolic realm of human existence.^{xi} Lacan returned to the work of Freud and proffered a linguistic reading that considered subjective reality was an unconscious Symbolic construct of language, with the irrational drives existing in a different psychic realm than language - in the Real, a realm beyond that of speech, containing knowledge which cannot be brought into existence and signified in language. For Lacan fantasy underpins the subjects conception of reality, acting as a screen on to which the subject stages fantasy and projects desire, thus coordinating reality. However, the Symbolic reality of language, law, and order is inconsistent and ruptured, containing holes and gaps into which particulars of the Real can leak; it is the job of fantasy to paper over these ruptures and screen access to these particulars, administering psychically acceptable dosages of the Real to the subject.

It is the role of the energy of the drives not to fulfill a goal but to endlessly reproduce the drives themselves and circle the object cause of the subjects desire staged in their fantasy space of identity. Partaking in the energy of endless cyclic nature of the fantasy and the drives results in a unique form of enjoyment - *jouissance*- a surplus of enjoyment compelling the subject to transgress prohibitions placed on enjoyment, and creating a form of pleasure that can be exhilarating and excruciating, orgasmic and unbearable, sublime and terrifying. The truth of the object cause of desire is not to obtain 'it', as proximity causes horror and anxiety - the more we fight against the impossible relationship the more it can take on the form of the horrifying thing, the more its power over us increases - but to endlessly dance around it.^{xii}

It is important that Lacan's concept of the object cause of desire is not an object in the real sense, though it may inscribe itself into physical objects, but a lack or gap in the very construct of the subject (created by the split of the subject between the conscious imaginary and unconscious colonizing power of human language) and that *jouissance* is the product of the repetitive movement within this closed circuit of the self-replicating drives.^{xiii} Therefore, for Lacan, fantasy sutures the subject to enjoyment and reality, dictating not what to desire, but how to desire, and thus fantasy is the lodestone of ideology which dictates in the Symbolic what, where, how, and how much, the subject can enjoy. Moreover, the role of fantasy in ideology is both ambivalent and ambiguous, any object when staged against the Real of the drives can delude us with its seemingly powerful significance and impose ideological imperatives upon us.^{xiv} That is why in Lacanian analysis it is vital to '*traverse the fantasy*' to situate the subject into the fantasy, diffusing the traumatic doses of the Real and discovering the contingency behind the objects positioning against the Real, and thus developing an understanding of how baseless and irrational its ideological mandate really is.^{xv} Popular culture abounds with such objects that when viewed in eclipse with the destructive irrationality of the *death drive* become suspended in an undead state, existing *between two deaths*, with horrifically sublime bodies exempted from normal mortality.^{xvi}

SECTION

Nazism, Horror and Zombies

"...Let's be honest: People don't play *Call of Duty: World at War* to play *Call of Duty: World at War*; they play it to play Nazi Zombies."

Nervous Nick - ScrewAttack.com

Academic speculation over the link between the supernatural and Nazism began shortly after World War II, and stems from the horrid fascination Nazism holds for the our modern psyche and the suggestion the Third Reich represented an uncanny lapse into paganism.^{xvii} Overt links between Nazism and paganism included the swastika, a symbol found in Paleolithic Europe, ancient hieroglyphics, Asian religions, and Germanic mythology, which was mobilized for ideological ends. Hitler reveled in his recreation of the swastika. "A symbol it really is!" he exclaimed in *Mein Kampf*. In the swastika...[we see]...the mission of the struggle for the victory of the Aryan man." Hitler himself designed the Nazi standards, taken from old Roman designs, consisting of a swastika topping a silver wreath surmounted by an eagle, from below which hung a swastika with "Germany Awake" emblazoned on it.^{xviii} The manipulation of social meaning through the creation of these sublime icons of Nazi aesthetics has a long, carefully planned, and privileged history.^{xix} It is a history not without irony, as suturing these icons to a paganistic belief system entangled the fantasies and supernatural of a pre-civilized and barbaric symbolic order with the fascist ideology of capitalist revolution.^{xx} Following the great depression the German populace of the 1930s were grappling with social breakdown, as the law and intuitions failed them, and people sought answers not provided by the establishment and mainstream newspapers. Nazism offered revolution and meaning, it mobilized the solidarity and collectivity of social democracy whilst mouthing words of socialism, but offered instead a conservative revolution - modern science, a future of technology and industry, but invested with a feudal hierarchical social structure, devoid of class struggle, and the social antagonisms inherent in modern capitalism. Nazi ideologues saw the new order as irreconcilable with Christianity, seeking

instead to substitute old Germanic tribal gods and the paganism of Nazi fundamentalism.^{xxi} This unity of barbaric pre-civilized mythology and modern capitalism required and enabled the creation of an ideological narrative of the *untermenschen*; an Other as a collective for universal fears and inconstancies in the new social order. This combination allowed for the ethically acceptable mobilization of industry, science, technology and medicine in the destruction of the Other in the prosecution of Nazi goals. Before the outbreak of the war Carl Jung spoke of dark portents, not because Hitler was leader of Germany but because he had *become* Germany. Jung argued Hitler had ceased to be a man and had become myth: a loudspeaker to broadcast all the previously unutterable murmurings of the German unconscious.^{xxii} Fantasy was fundamental in founding the social policy of *Volksgemeinschaft*, and the associated military rhetoric focused on creating national ideological unity that justified cleansing society of anything un-German. The mythological foundations were set for the horrors of the Nazi regime; the precursor of the Holocaust was the euthanasia (*Aktion T4 programme*) of the handicapped in asylums, and Nazification of the sciences saw the start of sadistic medical experimentation.^{xxiii}

The presence and popularity of Nazi Zombies in gaming has not developed in a vacuum. Nazi Zombies have been a small but significant subgenre of films since the mid 20th century. The most significant of these films drawing on the association of Nazi ideology with morally unfettered science and technology whilst also drawing heavily on the visual appeal of Nazi aesthetics on screen. In later iterations the Nazi zombie film has become an amalgam of the horrific, humor, and the sexual tension of the teen movie situating the Nazi zombie in the ethos of contemporary popular culture as they become ghastly characters, void of their original ideological power but still rich in social meaning.^{xxiv} This same alignment

of horror with humor and Nazi aesthetics is not new to games either, and has been a popular subgenre since the release of *Wolfenstein 3D* in 1992.^{xxv} Moreover, the franchise has perhaps been somewhat ahead of the trend in Nazi Zombie cinema overtly playing on themes of the undead, horrific ideology, sexual repression and Nazi aesthetics since the release *Return to Castle Wolfenstein* in 2001.^{xxvi} However, the question as to what Nazi Zombies signify, and what it means to play with them has been largely neglected in game studies. Zombies in horror and action games are seen as allegorical vehicles for postmodernist interpretations of otherness, and the perfect enemy for game designers, as they are relentless, already dead, and their artificial intelligence routines are easy to develop. Nazi Zombies, in the most prolific franchise to date *Call of Duty*, are dismissed as mere "*re-contextualized shooting gallery props*" and that the use of low-brow humor and simplistic game mechanics discourages attempts at interpretation other than that of "*oddball*" and "*harmless fun*."^{xxvii} The franchises popularity is evident on the internet with a large number of fan made game modifications, fan art and fiction collections, but the proliferation and success begs deeper interpretation, and debate has even spilled over into AMCs *Breaking Bad*.

Badger: "That's a fair point, I guess. OK, OK, OK, Call of Duty: World at War zombie mode. Now that's the bomb, man. Think on it, bro. They're not just zombies: they're Nazi zombies."

Skinny Pete: "Nazi zombies..."

Badger: "Yeah, man! SS Waffen troopers, too, which are like the baddest ass Nazis of the whole Nazi family!"

Skinny Pete: "Zombies are dead, man! What difference does it make what their job was when they was living?"

Badger: “Dude, you are so historically retarded! Nazi zombies don’t wanna eat ya just ’cause they’re craving the protein. They do it ’cause, they do it ’cause they hate Americans, man. Talibans. They’re the Talibans of the zombie world.”^{xxviii}

There is something significantly appealing about Nazi Zombies: They hate. They are not the mindless, protein-craving shambling horde of the Romero's films, who have no biological need for protein, and they are not the virus-infected sprinting corpses of post 9/11 popularity.^{xxix} Nazi Zombies are motivated by the thing that was meant to have expired with the Cold War—ideology. Like the Taliban they appear to be motivated by a violent determinism easily identified in the Other, but absent in ourselves. But that is of little consequence: No matter how free of ideology you think yourself - a Nazi Zombie is always going to get you in the end.

This latest gaming outbreak of Nazi zombies outbreak began, unexpectedly, in 2008 with a sequel released in the video game franchise *Call of Duty*. The game, *Call of Duty: World at War*,^{xxx} featured a last-minute addition by the developer: a scenario in which players struggled together to defend a WWII bunker against hordes of "Nazi zombies."^{xxxi} *Nazi Zombies* became hugely popular. Additional downloadable scenarios using the theme were developed for *Call of Duty: World at War*, and it is now an established part of the franchise.^{xxxii} To date, *Nazi Zombies* enables players to battle ideological supernatural entities across a total of seventeen locations, including the trenches of the Great War, a Nazi occult research station and mental asylum, Cold-War-era Soviet rocket silos and the halls of the Pentagon, modern Asia, and the nuclear wasteland of a post-apocalyptic USA.

The first scenario, *Nacht der Untoten* (Night of the Undead), was the smallest and most accessible. The premise was simple—defend the bunker, and survive as long as

possible. Players control soldier avatars, and zombies spawn outside and break in through the windows, whilst players earn points by killing zombies and boarding up open windows. Players can "spend" points to buy more powerful weaponry or open doors and access-ways in order to explore the bunker further. The zombies attack in waves, starting as slow shambling zombies and gradually becoming the quicker, sprinting variety, as well as more numerous and harder to kill. There is no narrative other than that of survival, and no possible outcome but ultimate failure. Players strive to stay alive for as many waves as possible, with results logged on high-score tables, but ultimately the Zombies are always victorious due to a failure of teamwork, or the greed of players hoarding points to purchase the best weapons for themselves.

Later downloadable-content scenarios grew increasingly complex, with the introduction of different playable characters and buildings containing hidden objectives and traps. A narrative was also retroactively imposed on all the scenarios in the series, requiring players to solve rebus-like puzzles revealing the origins of the Nazi zombies and the *raison d'être* of the players' involvement. The fashioning of the narrative accounts for the fact, that even though players may be fighting GI zombies in the Pentagon, native zombies in Shangri-La or cosmonaut zombies on the Moon, they are still battling undead enemies motivated by Nazism in a universe where Nazis ideologues have been able to cross time, space, and the inter-planar boundaries of realities. Several of the maps are based on real-world locales - *Verückt* takes place in the Wittenau Sanatorium Berlin, which played a role in the T4 program. *Der Riese* is set in a giant, unfinished underground complex in Lower Silesia, built by concentration camp slave labor under the oversight of the *Todt* organization: Nazi Germany's preeminent construction company. *Origins*, the last installment, unfolds in the

trenches of World War I, establishing the origins of the narrative, but also significant in the spiritual origins of Nazism and the actual and conceptual origins of total war and the military-industrial complex.^{xxxiii}

Traversing the Battlefield of Post-Ideology - Play, War & Fantasy

"All wars are things of the same nature ... War is the continuation of **Politik** by other means."

Carl von Clausewitz, *On War* (1832)

In 1938 Johan Huizinga posited that play, rather than work, was the formative element in human culture. For Huizinga humankind's most important activity belonged to the realm of fantasy; play was the structuring element of all culture, the function by which man created subjectivity.^{xxxiv} In Huizinga's understanding the need for the mind to impose a symbolic order on the chaos of reality resulted in the birth of mythology, ritual, sports, games, drama, philosophy and warfare. At the time of writing Huizinga's thesis was shocking; most conventional notions held that it was the development of the stone tool that rewarded man with the ability to tame the natural world.^{xxxv} Most shocking was Huizinga's assertion that war and play were inextricably linked—play created the myths and rituals that enabled war to become self-renewing; a cycle of ritual violence justifying the creation of cultural institutions. War is the game of the highest order, he wrote, governed by rules and intuitions. When cultures are at war, and are seen to share common rituals, limiting rules are understood as they are in a game; when one side can perceive the other as Other, they can justify genocidal brutality.^{xxxvi} Writing during Nazism's ascendancy Huizinga saw ominous developments in the cycle of the play instinct and war—total war, with its emphasis on mass mobilization and airpower, was expunging the play instinct from the ritual of warfare.^{xxxvii} Huizinga warned that ideologies are "*unholy...Whenever there is a catch word ending in -ism*

we are hot on the tracks of a play community." Such play communities bring about an unrivalled rise in aesthetic enjoyment, becoming the substitute for religion, and the play form of myth is utilized to conceal ideological design. Political rallies participants' display behavior as old as the world, and of the lowest order of play: hails, yells, signals of mythical greetings, and insignia make up a political haberdashery that, alongside ritual marching and chants, form a rigmarole of "...collective voodoo and mumbo-jumbo."^{xxxviii}

A generation later Lewis Mumford held that man's true evolutionary achievement was utilizing his own mental resources and expressing his latent potential to fulfill his subjective desires. The creation of symbolic networks of meaning in the service of the play instinct far outweighed the importance of creating tools, Mumford argued; symbolic spoken language was far more sophisticated at the birth of civilization than the Egyptian or Mesopotamian tool-box. Tools were an important corrective for man, however, for he was wont to utilize his mastery of the symbolic to substitute magical formulae for efficacious work.^{xxxix} Mumford considered man primarily not a nature-mastering animal but a self-mastering animal, whose ultimate creation of technics, were mega-machines; huge hierarchical organizations with humans as components, culminating with the MIC and nuclear super powers of the cold war. Mumford raises a pertinent point, non-human species practice warfare - the most obvious of these is the ant. Ants have their own mega-machine, including institutions, division of labor, Queen-ship, warrior-cast, the domestication of other species, and even proto-agriculture. However, Man differs radically in his contribution to this 'anthill' complex; the play instinct and the stimulant of irrational fantasy enabling total war and genocide on an apocalyptic scale.

To identify constants in war Clausewitz sought to identify the nature of war, and in doing so created the dialectical concepts of "Absolute" and "Real war." Absolute war is mythic war, war in its Platonic ideal, war's pure essence: overkill, and the drive to destroy. Absolute war never occurs, however, because it is consistently repressed by Real war and its web of human affects, rituals, and rules - the constant of *politik*. In the dialectic of war Real war exists chimerically, dynamically shifting, suspended within three registers of the People representing primordial violence, passion and desire, the State representing reason, order and political control, and the Army representing chance, uncertainty and creativity. In these terms even WWII, the paradigmatic 'total war' of the 20th century, is an extreme form of Clausewitzian Real war. Clausewitz, Huizinga and Mumford all identify an underlying determinism in the symbolic network of rituals and institutions of warfare, thus straying into the realm of the Subject, Other and Lacan's Symbolic order —society, law, the complete set of hypotheses within which the Subject is constituted.^{x1} The Symbolic regulates kinship, trade, marriages, and acts as a constraining force found in alliances, religion and rituals, and formulates prohibitions and taboos encompassing all human activity. It is all language and the unconscious organization of all human existence, and

if man comes to think about the Symbolic order, it is because he is first caught in it in his being. The illusion that he has formed this order through his consciousness stems from the fact that it is through the pathway of a specific gap in his imaginary relationship with his semblance that he has been able to enter into this order as a subject. But he has only been able to make this entrance by passing through the radical defile of speech, a genetic moment of which we have seen in a child's game, but which, in its complete form, is reproduced each time the subject addresses the

Other as absolute, that is, as the Other who can annul him himself, just as he can act accordingly with the Other, that is, by making himself into an object in order to deceive the Other.^{xli}

Lacan considered that passing through "the radical defile of speech" as in a game, into the symbolic order of language forever split the Subject from the unconscious, but the unconscious is structured as a language, an inchoate mix of pictorial signifiers formed as a rebus, in the form of phonetic and symbolic signifying elements, the essence of which can be seen in archaic glyphs and hieroglyphics and encoded in dreams.^{xlii} In short, the unconscious itself functions as a game, forming rebus-like meanings that become inscribed in our symbolic reality through play instinct of fantasy. This most famous of Lacan's dictums of the unconscious is an idea he continued to develop, until the end of his career, with his addition of his concept of the *sinthome*, the basic unconscious building block of *jouissance*, a kernel of enjoyment in its pre-ideological state. For Lacan the end of analysis occurred when the analyst played through the subjects unconscious associations, and the subject traversed his fantasy, accepting their enjoyment of the unconscious, and identifying with the structuring necessity of the phantasmal *sinthome*.

As to war as an extension of *politik* Lacan considered war to be an indomitable fissure in the Symbolic, where language ends the game "... of violence begins, and that violence reigns there already without us even provoking it? Thus, if you bring war into it, you should at least be aware of its principles and realize that we misrecognize its limits when we do not understand it, as Clausewitz does, as a particular form of human commerce. We know that it was by recognizing, by the name of total war, its internal dialectic that Clausewitz was able to formulate that war is in command because it considered to be an extension of political

expedients."^{xliii} Thus, war has always escaped the conscious control of man, and through play, has unconsciously structured our symbolic reality accounting for the animal-hunt turned man-hunt, the dualism of religion and civilization, and total war's monolith of the MIC.

We are no longer in the epoch of total war, however; war has changed in form, in our post-ideological conflicts videogame technologies have been used to plan for, simulate and prosecute what has been called "Nintendo Warfare." The technology created by the MIC and used to prosecute the nuclear brinkmanship of the Cold War (and subsequently cemented the MICs place in the symbolic order) created the internet and videogames, it controls the battlefields, structures and creates news and propaganda; it sutures the horror and reality of war with the mass production of war-fighting and entertainment technology to the enjoyment of the commercial products of the MIC. The images of Real war on our TV screens and the images of computer games and cinema are near indistinguishable - created by the same logics, technics and technology. Moreover, the same logics and technologies have been utilized as part of war's wider ideological context, to mobilize mass media and political rhetoric in order to justify the declaration and the escalation of a new form of war, "Virtuous War."^{xliv} From the strategy of "Shock and Awe," drone warfare and counter insurgency operations, through commercial off-the-shelf games, game logics and technology are now employed as simulators and means of kinetic delivery, they underpin a just war where high technology trains a new breed of soldiers who can fight war virtually, delivering necessary violence in a virtuous manner. This virtuous war of "smart technology" and precision weapons, appears as a war without the need for warriors or ideology; a war on behalf of the just and a panacea to the conundrums of warfare since September 11th 2001.^{xlv} However, the

technics and logics of this new war belie the fact that since 1992, 99.15% of recorded wartime casualties have been civilians.^{xlvi}

Playing with Nazi zombies reflects our injunction to enjoy the technology of late-modernity, including the video game—itself a product of the nuclear arms race and perhaps the ultimate consumer product of the military-industrial complex.^{xlvii} Determined by our exigency to be free, and our instinct to play, the Nazi zombie is the revenant of our unconscious need for the void of ideology, and the *jouissance* of destruction. The message is in the form of the medium and the unconscious structure of the modality of play - the game itself is allegorical, the ideological survival space is the fantasy screen of the post-ideological bunker of our symbolic reality, repeatedly invaded by the return of the ideological monstrous other. The more Nazi Zombies you kill, the more horrific they become, they become increasingly motivated and increasingly dangerous - the game only ends one way with the closed circuit of the self-replicating Nazi Zombie reaching a zenith of frenetic action and the players ultimate destruction; narrative consistency has to be drawn from the game through the completion of complex and irrational dreamlike puzzles. Traversing the battlefield of Nazi Zombies is to invest the subject in the fantasy that we exist outside of Real war and the reality of the MIC, whilst invested in the baseless decree of the *jouissance* of its products, and the nullity of their play.

Playing Nazi Zombies represents anxiety over virtuous war in a post-ideological age, war without ideology to conquer ideology—a surplus of enjoyment drawn from the horrific proximity to the object cause of unconscious desire, a transgression of the prohibition on ideology, to be annulled by the Other, to enjoy the lack in, and the duality of, human nature. Playing *Nazi Zombies* is symptomatic of Subjects formed as in a game; we have simply

come full circle as Huizinga thought—what started as the play-instinct is now the dominant form of existence, and the Nazis zombies are just the messengers able to cross time, space, and realities. Nazi Zombies are the Lacanian sinthome - the foundational ordering of jouissance that sutures subjective reality together preventing psychosis. Nazi Zombies as sinthome allow the subject to enjoy the fantastical pre-ideological elements of Nazism, to enjoy the Real of the death drive, to destroy ideology from inside ideology itself, to enjoy the unconscious structuring of war in the formation of the subject whilst keeping an ironic distance from its reality - whilst the Nazi Zombies themselves are iterative of the true Real of war; that to defeat Nazism is to enjoy its fantasy, WWII ended in 1945 but fantasy is the war the Nazis will always win.

Alternatively the appeal of playing *Nazi Zombies* is an embodiment of mass psychosis, a refusal to address the authority of the Other as absolute, a refusal to be objectified, a refusal to be duped by the Other. An appeal symptomatic of the refusal to accept a reality that demands political responsibility, of a society addled by an ideology of free will driven by an ceaseless injunction to enjoy; dazed in the eclipse of the sublime, knowingly subscribing to a fantasy that promises absolution. Nazi zombies represent the baseless repetition of consumption in post-ideology, the fantasy tenuously papering over the inconsistency in the symbolic order limiting our knowledge of the Real of the killing of innocents. In transgressing the prohibitions on enjoying ideology, ideology and war are the things that always return; the Real WWII ended in 1945 but to play with Nazi zombies is to enjoy the surplus pro-fascist meaning hidden in the form and texture of the product itself - fantasy and the play instinct are the battlefield of ideology, and phantasy is a battle that Nazism will always win.

Reading Clausewitz through Lacan enables the virtuous war of the military-industrial complex to be witnessed as the extension of *politik* in our contemporary context—as an inchoate aggregate of the conscious and the unconscious, the rational and irrational, a sublime chimerical admixture of politics and policy that will always be in command of human nature—and that anxiety over the ethics of virtuous war has to be inscribed in the play instinct and the fetishistic disavowal of the military-industrial complex's organization of enjoyment, revealing insights into beliefs and practices that underpin society that we cynically refuse to acknowledge, but organize our values and actions. Reading Clausewitz through the lens of psychoanalysis and suturing warfare to fantasy, play and the ideological supernatural consolidates an interpretation that, whilst still marxisant, underpins previous socioeconomic discourse of the ideologically charged survival space and the consumerism of the *Romeroesque* zombie. The game of war has evolved and Total War has been sublimated by something much more horrifying.^{xlviii}

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Notes

ⁱ Lauro 2011

ⁱⁱ Loudermilk 2003

ⁱⁱⁱ Russell 2007, 71-92

^{iv} Brougher 2013

^v Masco 2013

^{vi} Masco 2013

^{vii} The Clausewitz Homepage is an extensive academic source on the writings of the military theorists and the surrounding debates. <http://clausewitz.com>

^{viii} Clausewitz 1832 1993 The term *Politik* is a German conceptual term that defies translation and metaphor, and is a term that is usually simply translated as meaning 'politics.' However, it can be considered as a concept that contains both the meanings of politics and policy. Politics can be read as how power is delineated and distributed amongst a society and policy defined as the means by which power is maintained, gained and sustained by members of that society

^{ix} Masco 2013

^x Freud's concept involves the standard German negation of the word *heimlich* homely, cozy, intimate, security etc and is thus suggested to infer its opposite. Implied within *heimlich* is also the concept of hidden away, concealed from the outside world, secretive, and

by extension, what is hidden may be threatening, fearful, occult, dismal, ghastly—uncanny. However, the concept of the trauma and anxiety of the *unheimlich* is exactly at the point that the two terms come together, at the point of negation. What is homely and restful can in a sublime instant insist in its true guise of the uncanny that negates any barriers between subject/object, mind/body, spirit/matter psychic/real etc. Freud's use of the uncanny was the central "Knot" of universal human experience, a dimension that emerged within subjectivity and haunts humanity in close unity with societal and cultural change. See Dollar 1991

It is pertinent to mention the theme of the "double" as integral to the evolution of the concept of the uncanny. Freud considered the "double" to be an important part of the ego's defense mechanism and accounts for man's fascination with his reflection, shadows, guardian spirits—an energetic denial of the powerful inevitability of death. This idea of "immortal soul" is the same desire that motivated the ancient Egyptians to the making of art in the lasting images of their dead. However, Freud considered that once this desire had moved on from archaic man to modernity the double takes on a new aspect—from being an assurance of immortality the double becomes the harbinger of death and self-destruction. Freud 1955

^{xi} Lacan was an intellectual magpie, utilizing the central tenets and concepts inherited from Freud, Lacan constructed a formidable, and notoriously complex, construct of anthropological and psychoanalytical concepts and paradigms to explore the subject's wants and mores. Of importance is both Lacan's and Clausewitz' reliance on topology in their constructs. Topology is a branch of mathematics that studies the properties of a space that are preserved under constant deformations, that looks to identify constants no matter how much the appearance of a space changes. Lacan constructed a paradigm of three registers, or orders, of the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real [ISR] to explain the subject's relation to,

and existence within, the human society and functions. Whereas Freud's model of the mind envisioned it as an interior space, Lacan's subject is far more abstract—it exists "out there" akin to a force-field within a universal matrix. Bailey 2009, 80. The ISR registers are properties of this matrix and are in every existing phenomenon associated with the human mind: they provide us with a framework that can be applied to draw understandings of the functioning of all human creations and institutions. Bailey 2009, *ibid.* Each register in the ISR paradigm are distinct but conjoined, Lacan used the notion of the Borromean knot as an analogy—the family crest of an Italian noble family that has three interlinking toruses. This notion of the registers being interlinked underlines the fact that situating a phenomenon in one or other of the register becomes equivocal because of their interdependent nature suggests it is in fact impossible to disengage any single phenomenon from all three realms. The structure of the knot signifies that it would fall apart if any one of the three rings was removed, all normal psychological phenomenon take place in the space between the toruses, but psychosis signals its unraveling. Bailey 2009, 89-90 In forming a sense of subjectivity the being enters the Imaginary order, the realm of the senses, in which our first false sense of identity is formed by the images of ourselves we see mirrored in others. It is far too simple to state that the Imaginary is the realm of the imagination - although there is contained within the seductive force of the foundations of creativity - it is the home of the conceptions that emerge directly from sensorial perceptions that humans first recognize in the Other and is the proto-conception of the Subject. Bailey *ibid.* The primal intellectual act of self-recognition is an important moment in the development of the Imaginary realm as it lays the foundations of the ego, simultaneously figuring out and hiding reality. Roland Chemama wrote: *"In the relationship between subjects, there is always something false that is introduced - this is the*

imaginary projection of the one onto the screen that the other becomes. The Imaginary is the register of the ego, with its obliviousness, alienation, love and aggressiveness in the dual relationship with the other." Bailey *ibid*. The Real is the realm beyond language containing all that cannot be signified. it is the realm of human psyche before it becomes colonized by language and slips into the unconscious symbolic ordering of society. The Real is experienced as traumatic gaps in the symbolic. The drives, laughter and abject terror all belong in the Real, as does the *thing* that always returns and the compulsion to repeat. Bailey 2009 92-97.

^{xii} The workings of this paradoxical libidinal economy can be witnessed in Nazi ideology and the Holocaust - the more Jews were exterminated and the fewer their numbers that remained the more of a threat they were perceived to be to equilibrium of the Nazi state, their threat growing in proportion to their declining numbers. Žižek, 1991 *Awry*, 5-6

^{xiii} Žižek, 1991 *Awry*, 5-6

^{xiv} Kay, 2003, 54

^{xv} Kay, 2003, *ibid*

^{xvi} Kay, 2003, *ibid*

^{xvii} Goodrick-Clarke 2003, 107-128

^{xviii} Shirer 1972, 41-43.

^{xix} (Miller n.d.)

^{xx} Ironically in German pagan mythology the gods themselves were overthrown by the forces of darkness. Shirer 1972, 41-43

^{xxi} Forster 1997, 239-241

^{xxii} Post 1988, 22-24

^{xxiii} Shirer 1972, 979-991

^{xxiv} Miller nd

^{xxv} id 1992

^{xxvi} id Software 2001

^{xxvii} Aarseth 2013

^{xxviii} Mastras 2011

^{xxix} Bishop 2009

^{xxx} Treyarch 2008

^{xxxi} "Survive the Zombie hordes alone or cooperatively. Repel wave after wave of increasingly deadly Zombies in a number of locales. But be warned: there are more than just Zombies lurking these dark hallways..." - Call of Duty Black Ops manual description. Call of Duty Zombies Mode n.d.

^{xxxii} *Call of Duty: Black Ops* Treyarch 2010 [CoD:BOPs] and *Call of Duty: Black Ops 2* Treyarch 2012 [CoD:BOPs2].

^{xxxiii} WWI & WWII led the historian Arthur Marwick to coin the phrase "*Total War*," to account for what he saw as arrival of a new age of destructive capacity for conflict that required nation-state's to mobilize all components of their societies to secure victory. Marwick considered that war could be considered *Total* when it was envisioned as an ideological and cultural conflict between fully mobilized nations whose war aims were national-racial survival through the defeat and subjugation of their enemies. Marwick's principle examined the effects and affects of Total War as it pertained to four dimensions of societal change and upheaval. The first dimension was the new "destructive and disruptive" capacity of war that necessitates rebuilding and reconstruction of society—sometimes

creating a better society than the previous incarnation. The second dimension explores the "test" of conflict directly on military institutions and their related elements of society such as the economy and politics regarding their suitability and survivability. The third is the "participation dimension," war creates conditions that requires or grants previously excluded members of society the right to finally participate in previously prohibited activities. The fourth and final dimension implements a deep "psychological impact" that leads to the members of a society acting on the trauma and anxiety caused by the conflict to stimulate the creation of something new. Marwick 1968 Ishizu 2014 In Marwick's terms, by the end of WWII, war was indeed total in size and scope.

^{xxxiv} Huizinga 1949

^{xxxv} The notion *Homo Faber* man the maker had been so dominant that when the first Paleolithic cave paintings had been discovered in 1879 they were dismissed out of hand as hoax. Mumford 1967, 7-9

^{xxxvi} These concepts and rituals colonize our language, as ever since words have existed for fighting and playing, war has been referred to as a game—the two concepts seemingly blending absolutely in the history of civilizations. This blending goes beyond metaphor; both war and play escape absolute definition—both are concepts language struggles to define.

^{xxxvii} Huizinga 1949, 90

^{xxxviii} Huizinga 1949, 197-203

^{xxxix} Mumford 1967, 8-9

^{xl} Bailey 2009, 93-97

^{xli} Lacan, *Ecrits* 2006, 40

^{xlii} Bailey 2009, 55-60

^{xliii} Lacan, Ecrits 2006, 313

^{xliv} Derian 2009

^{xlv} Singer 2010

^{xlvi} This figure is up from 10.74% in WWI. PeaceAware Factsheet: War is

Increasingly About Civilian Dead.

http://peaceaware.com/documents/factsheets/War_is_Civilian_Death.htm

^{xlvii} The MIC is undergoing something of an involuntary revolution. The very technology that powers computers and the software that creates computer games were developed as part of the nuclear weapons programs of the 1960s. These technologies then trickled down into the entertainment industries. However, since the 1990s the technology and intellectual output of the entertainment sector has far outstripped the military sector and a reverse process is now in operation. Products and technics from the games industry are being weaponised, and fuel a new epoch of war-fighting and new era of "smart weapons." For a comprehensive breakdown on the relationship between entertainment and the MIC see. Ruby 2005 Halter 2006 Turse 2008 Derian 2009

^{xlviii} Alternatively it's all just oddball harmless fun.