

1. Zombies zombies everywhere, what is one to think?

Stephen Webley

For decades we have been besieged by a growing pop-culture phenomenon – a zombie themed phenomenon. True to themselves zombies seem to be multiplying and infecting all forms of cultural production and discourse! Zombies have found their way into everything from music videos to pornography – we won't go there – and are even employed in academic studies where they have been used to test disease vectors, utilised in philosophical mind-games, and mobilised to extrapolate on theories of international relations. (Drezner 2011) Scholars have charted the evolution of the zombie and uncovered a myriad of meanings and signifiers. Recent scholarship has questioned whether the zombie represents our own prehistoric past, acts as a mirror reflecting present anxieties, and our fears of a post-human technological future. Or, perhaps more significantly, represents the repressed knowledge that we are a fated civilisation (Christe & Lauro, 2011).

In her seminal study of zombies, the sociologist Jennifer Rutherford (2013) warns against the simple consensus that zombies are so popular because the frivolous are the zombie slaves of consumer culture and its trends. Rutherford (2013) considers the zombie mirrors the variances of cultural development and progress – zombies are breaking down barriers and cannibalising what is on the other-side. Just as they relentlessly struggle to break down barriers built by survivors of the apocalypse, zombies' breakdown all social, genre, political, historiographical, familial, gender and demographic barriers that are put in their way. Zombie signification is liquid, meanings flow everywhere and defy binary and arbitrary definitions of any imposing authority; millions of fans enjoy the zombie because they can make it mean whatever they want it to mean (Rutherford, 2013). They are accessible to everybody and

whilst outwardly repulsive simultaneously denote conformity and belonging (Rutherford, 2013). Zombies have not just evolved within narratives they have consumed and transformed narratives and conversely transformed how narratives are created and consumed (Christe & Lauro, 2011). Perhaps nowhere is this transformation more evident, and least studied, than in the field of games and play.

Rutherford (2013) argues that at the level of language itself the zombie has become an all-consuming metaphor that is running amok in the human sciences. She observes that zombies are viruses and parasitic infections. They are stars' that won't die. They are neurological conditions. They are vacant tenements, office buildings, and mall-space. They are banks and financial institutions that were raised from the dead by tax payer bailouts following the financial crisis of 2008 and that consume the still living private businesses that survived the apocalypse. They are stalled economic projects of varying nature. In the social sciences they are theories and concepts from the 19th century that refuse to die. There is a zombie for everybody whether you've never seen a zombie film or played a zombie video game (Rutherford, 2013).

On the semantic level of language, Rutherford argues they denote a lack - a something vital that is missing. A lack that is one of plasticity and loss of consistency – “as if one knows there is something missing, but we are blinded to exactly what” (Rutherford, 2012, p. 22).

Within the signifying chains of language zombies appeal through their ability to function as a negation. Perhaps part of their appeal is that they come-into-being as what Heraclitus would have labelled a unity of opposites - defined by their simultaneous alive and deadness. True to Heraclitus' notion they are both more and less than this unity, they don't simply exist as a negation of what is living, or what is dead, but at the very point of the negation itself; they are the emptiness of a negation of negation, a free flying and autonomous signifier, meaningful in its meaninglessness. Like some mutagenetic infectious cell the zombie as signifier floats free

on the Petri dish of contemporary culture attaching itself to and mutating the authority of any codified structure of meanings. Zombies are the ultimate metaphor operating within our 21st century milieu. The zombie as metaphor “condenses elements of the present that we most need, and are least able, to think about.” (Rutherford, 2012, p. 23) To paraphrase Frederik Jameson (2007) - it would appear easier to imagine a thousand different apocalyptic zombie scenarios, than to imagine a positive change to the status quo of our crisis riddled reality.

Whilst other cultural phenomenon come and go in fads and waves of consumerism, zombies will just not stay dead! Zombies bite into our lived-in reality like some revenant of a dead culture. Within the postapocalyptic narratives the zombie dominates, humanities mistakes of antecedent social projects arise once again from the grave of past civilisations. Once powerful utopian ideals subject survivors yet again to the dystopias of totalitarianism, primitive patriarchal overlords, misguided and foolish social contracts. The future of a zombie apocalypse holds nothing but the repetitions of a wrecked and wretched human history akin to the human waste of Walter Benjamin’s historicism. As Rutherford (2013) observes there is nothing positive for us, in the feelgood ‘Hollywood’ sense, in the future of a zombie apocalypse, and yet zombies will not be repressed, they are nothing if not exponentially popular. Zombies are, like our unique human trait to keep making the same mistakes that forms the lodestone of the survivor’s stories, repetitious. They continually reappear, sometimes reimagined as sprinting rage infected disease carriers, other times as the familiar shambling rotting hordes of cannibals we see in the hugely popular television series and graphic novel *The Walking Dead*, but always essentially the same – like us they don’t do change. What has become clear is that they will not be contained to established modes of entertainment, whether literature, graphic novel or cinema. They are now literally and metaphorically everywhere, relentlessly looking for new cultural territory to infect,

clamouring for their pound of consumer flesh, and gathering in a vast horde that besieges the video game industry!

However, there remains a gap in the current zombie literature – a book dedicated solely to the phenomenon of zombie themed video games. Since the early 2000s and the beginnings of the War on Terror zombie themed video games have grown in popularity. In fact, it appears hard to avoid video games that somehow includes a zombie and its associated apocalyptic tropes. Zombies appear to dominate all gaming markets from app store based mobile and casual games, through indie titles and fan made mods, to megalithic AAA productions. The zombie has become a video game character par excellence, starring in dedicated franchises such as *Resident Evil* (Capcom 1996-2017) or featuring in hugely popular downloadable content and add-ons such as ‘Nazi Zombie mode’ for *Call of Duty* (Activision 2003-2018). Moreover, even games that are not overtly of the zombie canon contain both antagonists and protagonists that can effectively be labelled ‘zombie.’ Titles as diverse as *World of Warcraft* (Activision Blizzard 2004 – 2018), the *Fallout* franchise (Bethesda Softworks 1997-2018), or the *Darksouls* franchise (Namco Bandai Games 2011-2018) utilise the tropes of the zombie to create deep and meaningful characters and interactive experiences for players to indulge their fantasies.

Game Studies scholars have pondered over this ‘rise of the zombie’ in papers and conference proceedings but there has been no attempt to collect together a focused publication like you hold in your hands here. In fact, there has been no real collective academic consensus on the zombie in games that attempts to account for its popularity or analyse its form as viewed through the lens of play and interactivity. Individual scholars in the field have made sterling contributions, the best of whom have continued their research in this volume, but no real consensus exists beyond the most basic of collective understanding. It appears the only firm agreement amongst zombie game scholars is that the zombie is so prevalent because a zombie

makes for a less controversial victim to dispatch in the most violent fashion, and that its basic behaviour and uniformity of appearance makes for easy artificial intelligence programming routines and easily replicated game art; in short, they are convenient. (Aarseth & Backe 2013)

In 1938 Johan Huizinga developed a thesis that placed the role of fantasy and the human instinct to play and create games as the principle formative behavioural characteristic of humanity. For Huizinga (1938/49) ... 'All play means something ...!' Play is the psychic mechanism by which the human mind creates and mediates new meanings and new ways of understanding the world. Play creates and establishes rituals for interacting with the world and its inhabitants. Understanding play was, for Huizinga (1938/49), central to understanding the ceremonies and rituals that define what we call the human condition. Much ink has been spilt by the students of game studies about Huizinga's (1938/49) fleeting use of the concept of the Magic Circle. Huizinga's (1938/49) concept has been bunked and debunked more times than anyone now cares to mention. So many times, that the intellectual and social context within which he was writing has seemingly been forgotten. Huizinga (1938/49) was theorising in the wake of the birth of modern psychology and anthropology, and the tensions they produced within the entrenched epistemological hegemonies of the sciences.

The early 1900s saw Descartes Subject of Certainty challenged, then lost for certain in the trenches of the Great War, to be replaced interbellum with the notion that we were not who we thought ourselves to be. A new Subject for a new age of uncertainty – victim to hidden drives and dark impulses. In both an intellectual and social context Huizinga's (1938/49) conceit of the Magic Circle was nonconformist. During the rise of Nazism and Communism, when social and intellectual conformity was becoming increasingly populated by technocratic and antisemitic ideologues, Huizinga (1938/49) argued against the prevailing wisdom that humanities power over nature was due to its ability to deploy rational reasoning and make practical tools. Play created new realities, mankind was not principally a toolmaker, humanity

thrived and died due to its ability to make magic. The reality of our social systems was born not from the necessity of reason, but from the symbolic fantasies created by the magic of communities at play. To evoke a Lacanian quip, play enabled humans to cross the bar of metaphor, and in doing so created the gods and monsters that regulated all aspects of our lives. What we played mattered, and what we thought was real was always built on the foundations of fantasy; ideology regulated life and was the product of crossing the ludic bar of metaphor. Humankind was not a tool maker, not even a maker of science, at its core humankind depended on magic and the imaginary identifications produced by play. Even a cursory glance at sheer volume of zombie themed video games would suggest the play instinct is still inherently linked to some primordial human fear of the dead returning to life. If Huizinga (1938/49) tells us anything it is that playing zombies matters.

Building on the cultural fascination with zombies this book offers readers different ways to think about zombies and begin to understand the function and form of zombies, in video games. This book brings together the work of a range of disciplines to consider what a focus on the interactive nature of zombie themed video games can bring to the growing corpus of work developed on zombies in film and other media. Collectively the chapters here trace the origins of the zombie in play and asks a range of questions to consider what underpins the fascination with zombies in video games. Why do we still consume such a vast array of zombie themed titles? What do zombies in games really mean to gamers? What practices have evolved in games design that have helped expedite the exponential growth in zombie themed video games? How and why are these games developed? What opportunities, barriers, and controversies await the zombie game designer? What does it mean to participate in an interactive zombie apocalypse? And perhaps most pertinently, what does it mean to play with, or even as, the undead?

What really is a ‘zombie?’

“Yeh they’re dead - They’re all messed up!”

Chief McClellan – *Night of the Living Dead* (1968)

On close inspection this appears to be a question that defies a simple answer! In fact, it is a question answered only recently by experts at The Zombie Research Society (ZRS). The ZRS, as well as many zombie aficionados, trace the origins of the modern zombie to the work of one man – the independent film maker George A. Romero. In 1968 Romero released a low budget horror flick *Night of the Living Dead*. Searching for a new monster that had no literary baggage Romero created the undead flesh-eating ghoul. *Night* resurrected the cinematic Haitian zombie taking the somnambulistic ‘living slave zombie’ of Voodoo and transforming it into the undead cannibal we recognize today. Romero’s monster flick also politicised the horror genre by drawing on the social angst of the late 1960s and the fermenting cultural anxiety over the repressed memories of colonial slavery and racism. It was a stroke of genius that cemented in the popular conscious not only the modern zombie, but the idea of the ideologically charged survival space where the survivors fought each other in disastrous displays of non-cooperation and a clash of world views. *Night* and Romero’s thematic sequels *Dawn of the Dead* (1978) and *Day of the Dead* (1985) oversaw an explosion of imitators and homages that have seen the zombie slowly evolve into the myriad of forms we recognise today. Romero’s influence has been so great that defining a modern zombie is not as simple as it may first appear.

The ZRS founder and chief researcher Matt Mogk was surprised to find that despite the constant deluge of zombie themed cultural artefacts, as late as 2011 there was still no standard definition of the modern zombie in the Oxford English Dictionary, or Encyclopaedia Britannica. Instead, both publications focused definitions on the slave-like Haitian zombie of

voodoo mythology and spiritual belief, cocktail drinks, and virus infected computers terminals. As all zombie fans are aware this is not what springs to mind when one thinks ‘zombie.’ Today the modern zombie is defined by ZRS on a three-point scale (Mogk, 2011), as:

1. **Human Corpse:** modern Zombies are dead, reanimated, ambulatory, human beings. They occupy a body that is, being dead, utterly imperfect and thus far from invincible. They may be relentless and determined, and the processes of decomposition significantly slowed due to the biological processes of zombieism, but they are subject to the same laws of ‘science and reason’ as the rest of reality. The exact cause of zombieism may be unknown by survivors and audience, or even attributed to supernatural causes by those dealing with the zombie crisis; but the modern zombie is real!
2. **Relentlessly Aggressive:** For ZRS relentless aggression is a defining trait of the modern zombie. Whether the outbreak is caused by radiation or disease and spread by bite or travels in aerosol fashion on the wind, zombies are utterly and relentlessly aggressive. Whether fast zombies that can outrun Olympic athletes, or ‘ambulatory challenged’ ‘roamers’ that struggle to remain upright on escalators - they can’t be negotiated with, they will never stop, and they will never ever surrender their desire to hunt down and attack living survivors.
3. **Biological Infection:** here’s the rub! For those dedicated researchers at ZRS the modern zombie IS biological in nature, even if dead. It is not supernatural or magical and is thus subservient to scientific rationale, which makes for an essential element of understanding of how the coming pandemic will occur and be spread to new hosts. Whatever the causal effect of the upcoming apocalypse, from radiation to chemical weapons or medical research ‘gone wrong’, the zombie *appears* to spread an infection

to the living - often through biting and attempted cannibalism and/or the transfer of bodily fluids. (Mogk, 2011, pp. 6-7)

As we will come to see the modern zombie is not too far removed from its origins in Haitian lore or the myths from our earliest records of human civilisation. Stories of the undead are intrinsically part of human social mores, rituals, injunctions, and taboos. Narratives of the undead coalesce with those of cannibalism and abound in the anthropological record where they are indexed to the origins of civilisation and how we still narrativize our behaviour towards each other. As the chapters in this book explain, zombie themed video games contain the traces and tropes of zombies ranging from ancient long forgotten narratives of possession to the modern shambling cannibal and to the ‘living zombie’ of a human infected by disease, mysterious chemicals, or parasitic entity. The modern phenomenon of the video game has accommodated the zombie in many forms and has utilised the zombie to mobilise a mosaic of significations for the gaming public.

Zombie Evolution – just what do we know?

*“Death has climbed in through our windows
and has entered our fortresses;
it has removed the children from the streets
and the young men from the public squares.....”*

Jeremiah 9:21

It is commonplace to consider the modern zombie, unlike vampires, ghosts, mummies and numerous other monsters, has no literary heritage. This, however, is something of a simplification, as the zombie has a cultural legacy that shares its origins with that of human

society. It is a legacy entwined with taboos such as cannibalism and our cultural traditions of 'othering.' What ZRS consider modern zombies are, and have been since time immemorial, part of the psychic mechanisms that repress the crippling realisation that human consciousness is mortal. The zombie, or what we consider the undead, have long functioned within the human psyche as part of constellation of memes that work to identify others that we should fear, and codify and justify our behaviour whilst we busily go about the daily rituals of life pretending not to think about our own impending demise. Gods, monsters, heaven and hell, death - all quite rightly belong to the realm of faith. However, so does human culture and all the artefacts that it industriously produces.

If there is such a phenomenon as the collective unconscious the undead are the oldest archetypal meme that haunt it. For anthropologists and archaeologists rituals surrounding death and its narratives are of a weighty significance when trying to read the discourses that shape our modern lives and our understanding of what it means to be human. Fear of the dead returning is a trace of animism that still exists in all the burial rituals of our modern societies. Fear of the dead as primordial 'other' was thought to be the defining trait of humankind. The fear that upon death loved ones no longer belong to the familial and social unit in the same way as the living, that they become vengeful and demonic and need to be ritually 'dealt with,' was thought to have been a foundational element of the cognitive revolution. Indeed, postmodernity has been coloured by our belief that concerns about [im]mortality and complex mortuary rituals were a unique trait of homo sapiens that had their origins in the cognitive revolution and the birth of symbolic storytelling circa 70,000 years ago. However, recently our understanding of our 'uniqueness' has been called into question. In 2013 fossils of new hominid species (*Homo naledi*) were found in the deepest most inaccessible parts of a labyrinthine cave system in South Africa. What startled the scientists who managed to access these deepest parts of the cave, some access points were a mere 20 cm across, was sheer

number of fossils there. 250,000 years ago, a tiny brained ape-like ancestor was ritually burying the dead members of its society, making it capable of symbolic thought and ritualistic beliefs.ⁱ Roll forwards time some two millennia and the archaeological record is an alarming portent of possibilities. Caves have been found that belonged to early homo sapiens that appear to contain the remains of ritually consumed and buried Neanderthal children (Stringer, 2011). Whilst the evidence is debatable, it is not beyond reason that we homo sapiens did not just ‘breed-out’ and war against the Neanderthal, we may also have ritually eaten the other in the most primordial act of aphanisis; the complete obliteration of the other through the negation of their potential to return. The discursive narrative power of the dead, and the fear of their return, is thus both significantly older than we previously believed and perhaps not a uniquely human perturbation. Huizinga’s Magic Circle may have been invested with the power of the undead long before homo sapiens evolved.

Our eldest written record of anything resembling a zombocalypse appears in the ancient Mesopotamian Epic of Gilgamesh, written in its earliest form circa 2100bc. The epic follows the king of Uruk, Gilgamesh, and his best buddy Enkidu on numerous adventures. During their adventures Gilgamesh spurns the advances of the Goddess Ishtar. Not taking the rebuttal at all well she runs to her father the God Anu and threatens to smite the earth with a zombocalypse unless he aids her by sending the Bull of Heaven to avenge her wounded pride; she seethes – *“I will knock down the gates of the netherworld, I will smash the door posts and leave the doors flat down, and will let the dead go up and eat the living!”*ⁱⁱ Rightly alarmed Anu releases the Bull of Heaven, however, it is dispatched by the intrepid duo. Angered the gods convene to decide a punishment and Enkidu is killed. Gilgamesh becomes enraged and sets of on his most epic-quest yet; to destroy death itself. Ultimately, he fails in his quest and returns to Uruk with the knowledge that when the Gods created humans, they

kept immortality for themselves. Mortality is humanities' lot, and they had better get used to it as the only form of immortality they will ever know is zombification.

Even the cultured ancient Greeks were not without their zombie fears. We know a great deal about the ancient Greeks from their myths and entertainments, enough for us to make the reasonable assumption that for most city dwelling Greeks their myths were just myths, they believed them as stories not as necessarily as religious fact, stories that clearly demarked taboos, such as cannibalism, and cultural injunctions and social mores. Yet recently it has been discovered that they still had a deep concern about revenants – essentially ancient zombies.ⁱⁱⁱ Archaeologists detail how a combination of ritual magic and dismemberment was used to prevent the dead from returning from their new homes in necropoli. In some cases, large stones were placed on top of the dead to stop them clawing their way out and attacking the living, practices that date back to circa 5000bc in the archaeological record. More surprisingly the ancient Greeks were not without their own real-world version of rage infected living-zombies that cannibalised the living. The Greeks developed complex familial relations between their deities resulting in many strange cults and weird devotees. Dionysus, the god of wine, ritual madness, religious fervour and entertainment could also represent Hades, the underworld, indestructible life essence, and the undead. Cult followers of Dionysus, who sought reincarnation and immortality, celebrated communion with their god through consuming raw flesh and large amounts of wine whilst working themselves up into an ecstatic fervour. (Diehl & Donnelly, 2008) The undeadness of a trancelike religious fervour was a sought after 'state' of immortality for a very excitable minority of predominantly female cultists. In a practice that horrified the civilised Greeks it was not unknown for the annual revelries to get a little out of hand. Female acolytes of the god would become over enthused and attack young boys whilst dressed as their god, rip them limb from limb, and eat them raw. (Diehl & Donnelly, 2008) On more than one occasion things got

even more zombpocalyptic – acolytes would become so rage infused and intoxicated that they would rampage across the countryside en mass killing and consuming any man who could not outrun them. Despite, perhaps even because of, their civilised society it was a practice that the ancient Greeks had some difficulty eradicating and is argued to be the origins of the Roman Catholic practice of transubstantiation – the wholly communion of bread and wine as the body of Christ (Diehl & Donnelly, 2008).

Undeadness is thus inscribed in our archaic consciousness and most ancient of rituals and written stories. It forms the frame of reference for the fantastical epics and ‘heroes’ journeys’ of mythology and functions within classical tragedy as a narrative ‘cut’ in that the Gods always get their share of humanity, no matter how deific our rituals and practices. Undead also form a central tenet of European mythology and its slightly more optimistic narratives of folkloric tradition. In Norse mythology Odin is often referred to as *Drauga Drott* – Lord of Spectres – because of his ability to raise ghosts, the Draugr of mythic sagas (Chadwick, 1946; Morton, 2015). Yet ghosts in Scandinavia are not the wraiths and disembodied spirits of orthodox tradition they are corporeal reanimated bodies of the dead. Scandinavian myth is rich with stories of the undead, the Draugr, Haugbúi, and Gjenganger being the most commonly encountered. (Morton, 2015) The Draugr are true in their interpretation in Bethesda’s *Skyrim* being the reanimated bodies of dead warriors often interned alive in their barrows when they became too old to continue joining battle. Stories abound with heroic battles with these undead who jealously guard their wealth, or who wonder forth from their tombs on cold and misty evenings to rampage across the Scandinavian countryside; scenes evocative of the White Walkers in the hugely successful *Game of Thrones*. (Morton, 2015) The Haugbúi, and Gjenganger are perhaps even more like our contemporary zombies as the former prey on living flesh and the later attack the living spreading vile necrotic flesh-eating contagions.^{iv}

Myths, legends and the pessimistic classical tales tell of great individuals and their adventures with the undead. However, they also appear in the more optimistic and transformative tales of folklore where they are utilised as tropes in stories about the ‘everyman.’ Often, they appear in common people’s lives changing them forever. Russian and Slavic folktales carry stories of reanimated corpses like their Scandinavian cousins. However, here they appear to right wrongs, or in at least one example chase a young soldier through a graveyard in order to catch and consume him (Morton, 2015; Ralston, 1880). Here the undead and the ‘other’ function not as tectonic archetypes in pseudo religious narratives framed by the necessity to inform society of its larger mores and taboos and binary codes of conduct, but as cursory stories of individuality and the internal world of personal development and mental well-being (Bettelheim, 1991). Interestingly the modern zombie enters our popular consciousness from a combination of folkloric storytelling and the foundational basis of storytelling in colonial propaganda. This is of course the birth of the popularity of Haitian Zombie in western stories, and tales of the dark and mysterious world of Voodoo priests and its magical practices. The zombie we know today was the culmination of the processes of othering that began in the colonial tradition of narratives produced about Haiti following a series of slave revolts in the 1790s (Christe & Lauro, 2011).

Slave revolts in Haiti always coalesced around the rituals and personalities of Voodoo gatherings. In 1804 ritual Voodoo gatherings erupted in revolt and Haiti became the first black nation in the Western Hemisphere (Christe & Lauro, 2011). To external commentators Voodoo’s central role in the revolution presented the fledgling nations opponents with the ability to narrativize the link between a slave revolt, the foundation of a black nation, and revolutionary politics with a supposedly barbaric belief system. Moreover, the heroes of the revolution were also heroes to slaves throughout the Americas, many of whom shared their spiritual beliefs. Cut off from trade and wealth by embargoes, plagued by violence between

the freed slaves and the remaining whites, and stressed by its own internal political battles, Haiti entered a period of rapid economic decline. Haiti's narrative then oscillated back and forth in the ideological battle waged between abolitionists and slavers, however ultimately Haiti had to be demonised so as to create "... a situation where the civilizing forces of the white world could save the nation from itself." (Christe & Lauro, 2011, p. 11) In short, Haiti could never be a successful nation. Perhaps disturbingly the modern zombie is increasingly popular as an 'other' today and so is the West's direct interference in Haitian politics and social institutions in the 21st century.

From then on popular myth of the 19th century purported that along with Voodoo, Haiti was rife with cannibalism, grave robbing and ritual child sacrifice. The concept of zombie first entered western parlance in 1889 courtesy of the journalist Patrick Hearn (Vuckovic, 2011). Hearn spent two years touring Martinique where he became fascinated by stories of 'corpse cadavers' and the 'walking dead.' Stories that both fascinated and troubled Hearn as the nickname given to the island by the locals was 'Le pays des revenants;' 'The Country of the Comers-Back.' (Vuckovic, 2011) Hearn's following 1989 essay '*Country of the Comers-Back*' is the first recorded study of what we today call zombies (Vuckovic, 2011). The actual term '*Zombie*' was unheard of outside of Haiti prior to the 1929 publication of William Seabrook's *The Magic Island*. Seabrook embarked on a quest to get to the bottom of the wild tales told in Hearn's account. A self-confessed cannibal, alcoholic, hedonist, sadist, sex addict and all-out thrill seeker Seabrook was the first author to claim he witnessed the mythical Haitian Zombie-Drone plodding slavishly like automatons in broad daylight (Vuckovic, 2011).

The etymological and folkloric evidence points to the possibility that the Haitian zombie has its origins in a long history of African beliefs in the reanimation of the dead and the magical stealing of souls that travelled to Haiti via slave trading routs (Rutherford, 2011). Once

embedded in the Haitian tradition of Voodoo the Zombie then became the zombie drone. A slave to powerful magicians who had the power to raise the dead would control the spirit of the victim to produce a mindless worker. Amongst the Haitians themselves the zombie became the depository for the horrific past of slavery, a constant reminder and threat (Rutherford, 2011). Scholastic opinions as to the reality of Haitian zombies and their creation differs wildly but most concur that the zombie exists, at least as fable, "... as carrying the threat of the return to enslavement." (Rutherford, 2011, p. 32) Seabrook's book has been labelled a "...culturally denigrating.." autobiography 'festooned' with sexually explicit rituals and illustrations of voodoo priestesses (Vuckovic, 2011). It did, however, detail the concept of the zombie as a spiritually reanimated or controlled person that may or may not have been raised from the grave. His book also detailed the idea that, quoting from Haitian criminal code, that a zombie maybe chemically induced state of altered consciousness. In that it will be held as attempted murder any administration of substance to people in order to produce a prolonged lethargic like trance (Vuckovic, 2011). Seabrook's autobiographic travelogue was a sensational hit in the USA and went on to inspire a Broadway play closely followed the what is commonly argued to be the first ever zombie film *White Zombie* starring Bel Lugosi in 1932 (Vuckovic, 2011).

Hollywood had always had a penchant for tapping into the American Dream's dark undercurrents. The horror flicks of the 1920s were pockmarked by the portrayals of twisted men, like those wounded and scared individuals returning from the Great War traumatised, to be subjected to the Volstead Act and the Great Depression. Interbellum years bought with them immigrants from Europe who were to bring a plethora of new types of monsters with them from the old world, that coloured Hollywood's visions of horror, the other and the monstrous. However, the zombie was largely to remain as the subject of otherness and the location of evil as 'out-there' in the dark heart of colonial fears until it was dramatically

reinvented by George Romero in the wake of the failed countercultural revolution of the 1960s. This new zombie was to suggest another location for evil, it was internal to us all; the other in question was the other in us that went unquestioned as we went about our individual lives and treated each other thusly.

Today we still exorcise the dead in our burial rituals to prevent their return, lay them to rest with respect and ceremony, and practices still exist such as bolting down coffin lids (despite the fact they will be cremated or buried deep beneath the earth) and carrying the coffin from the deceased's home feet first so the dead cannot look back into the home to spite the living. Even today our modern cultures still ritually honour the dead so they when they do return, they do so on positive terms, even today we celebrate these rituals even if tempered by contemporary social beliefs and consumerism. The Mexican Day of the Dead and even our westernised appropriation of All Hollows Eve - Halloween - are direct decedents of ancient belief systems to try to control and mollify the dead and their demonic associates (Morton, 2015).

Furthermore, any anthropologist will tell you that human cultures deploy their dead to colonise the future and ritualise the present, ideologically at least, the dead produce discourses by which reality is controlled and narrativized. Whether as a society we name distant planets after our scientists, or raise monuments to our dead leaders, or simply place gravestones for our dead family members, anthropology highlights an important detail we always overlook about the dead; they simply don't stay dead but continue to manipulate the living.

This book has been a labour of fandom for the contributors', and if I suspect correctly the editors' own experience has been mirrored by all – it has been a great excuse to submerge

ourselves in playing some great games and call it work. However, despite the horrendous amount of ‘play hours’ taken to complete this volume it is still far from a definitive account but opens the door to further investigation to those brave, or stupid, or stubborn enough to venture forward and indulge themselves in interactive zombpocalyptic mayhem. It’s now open season on interactive zombies for students of all disciplines. The zombie we recognise and enjoy despatching in great numbers in our video games does not just call into question how we develop definitions and create new meanings, but also opens new doors towards understanding the mechanisms and processes of consumerism, social and cultural discourses, cultural appropriation, postcolonialism, feminism, and even ideology and that thorny and convoluted self-referential condition we call postmodernity. This is just the beginning..... of the end.....

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**** THE ABSTRACTS COMES AFTER HERE ****

ⁱ <https://www.sapiens.org/culture/hominin-burial/>

ⁱⁱ <http://www.ancienttexts.org/library/mesopotamian/gilgamesh/tab6.htm>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.livescience.com/51335-greek-undead-spirits.html>

^{iv} http://zombie.wikia.com/wiki/Zombies_in_folklore