21st Century Zombies:
New Media, Cinema, and Performance

By

Joanne Marie Taylor

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Committee in charge:

Professor Peter Glazer, Chair
Professor Brandi Wilkins Catanese
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Abstract

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This project began with a desire to define and articulate what I have termed cinematic performance, which itself emerged from an examination of how liveness, as a privileged performance studies concept, functions in the 21st century. Given the relative youth of the discipline, performance studies has remained steadfast in delimiting its objects as those that are live—shared air performance—and not bound by textuality; only recently has the discipline considered the mediated, but still solely within the circumscription of shared air performance. The cinema, as cultural object, permeates our lives—it is pervasive and ubiquitous—it sets the bar for quality acting, and shapes our expectations and ideologies. The cinema, and the cinematic text, is a complex performance whose individual components combine to produce a sum greater than the total of its parts. The cinema itself is a performance—not just the acting—participating in a cultural dialogue, continually reshaping and challenging notions of liveness, made more urgent with the ever-increasing use of digital technologies that seem to further segregate what is generally considered real performance from the final, constructed cinematic text.

Liveness and presence have remained defining forces within the field. In her now-canonical *Unmarked* (1993), Peggy Phelan assertively concludes, “Performance’s only life is in the present. Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations *of* representations: once it does so, it becomes something other than performance” (146). At the end of the same decade, however, Philip Auslander begins to play devil’s advocate in *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture* (1999) by troubling what he sees as a “reductive binary opposition of the live and the mediatized” (3). Through a genealogical consideration of live and

mediated forms of performance, Auslander concludes that the live cannot be considered outside of or as separate from the mediated (7).

With the rise of digital products, and the ever-increasing incorporation of the digital into our daily lives, Auslander's initial troubling of the traditional concept of liveness expands and becomes more complex. The cinema, as an art and as an analytical object, continually foregrounds its absent presence, its present absence. By the turn of the 21st century, cinema studies had firmly established claims of indexicality in the relationship of the cinematic text to reality: the celluloid captures the light, is imprinted by the profilmic event. Yet, the rise of new media and digital technologies at the end of the 21st century have allowed for the creation of photorealistic scenes created wholly outside the images captured with the camera, requiring no relationship to the profilmic event.

At the same time that cinema seemed to be losing its indexical relationship to reality, and as digital technologies increasingly permeated the fabric of daily existence, zombie cinematic production witnessed a renaissance in popularity and surge in quantity. It is no small coincidence that zombie cinema also rose in popularity during film's transition to sound (1930s-1940s), again during the proliferation of televisions into every American home (1960s), and then again most recently with the explosion of digital technologies. In each of these moments zombie cinema thematizes presence, absence, and liveness. Combining performance theory, film theory, new media studies, and zombie popular culture, this project seeks to account for the most recent surge in zombie cinema and zombie culture, arguing that 21st century zombie cinema performs new media.

The introduction provides a theoretical background, outlining the beginnings of this project and providing some initial grounding in the theoretical terminology that structures the project. In Chapter One, I provide the historical and genealogical grounding, surveying the history of zombie cinema. Chapter Two, "Inaugurating the 21st Century Zombie: Embodying Biomedia and Liminality in Danny Boyle's *28 Days Later* (2002)," begins my analysis of new media—in this case, Eugene Thacker's concept of biomedia—and how it emerges within and is represented by zombie cinema, leading to an assertion of zombie liminality. I continue to expand upon new media and zombie cinema in "Liveness and Living Dead: Remediation and Intermediality in George A. Romero's *Diary of the Dead* (2007)," introducing the concept of remediation and demonstrating some of the potentialities of liminality. Chapter Four, "Networked Dispersal: Performance Process, Multiplicity, and Connectivity in 21st Century Zombie Cinema," expands from the single film examination to a larger consideration of 21st century zombie cinema and how it performs network connections. In the last chapter, Visceral Viewing: Zombies "In Real Life" (IRL), I step away from screened representations of zombies to a consideration of zombies embodied in real life: zombie walks, zombie theater, and community formations. I conclude by returning to the beginning: cinematic performance. And here I offer a continuation of the project, a new branch, taking-up another aspect of cinematic performance and considering how digital post production creates performance and is its own performance.

For Sydney Clementine and Savannah Hazel
girls can do anything

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INTRODUCTION:

CINEMATIC PERFORMANCE, NEW MEDIA, AND THE WALKING DEAD

> [P]erformance is about doing, and it is about seeing; it is about image, embodiment, space, collectivity, and/or orality; it makes community and it breaks community; it repeats endlessly and it never repeats; it is intentional and unintentional, innovative and derivative, more fake and more real.[1]

In the epigraph, Shannon Jackson outlines the vastness of what performance is, which seems to both include and exclude anything and everything performance studies scholars engage. Rather than being drained of import and power, performance's potential as a ubiquitous force only enhances the urgency of performance as a field of study. To this end, performance studies scholars necessarily employ a diverse set of analytical tools culled from multiple disciplines in order to investigate an equally wide variety of topics and objects: everything from Victor Turner's anthropological approach to ritual and ceremony,[2] to Peggy Phelan's psychoanalytic approach to photography.[3] Yet, there is a surprising dearth of material on the cinema, and this lack demands attention.

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[1] Shannon Jackson, *Professing Performance: Theatre in the Academy from Philology to Performativity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 15.

[2] See Victor Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play* (New York: PAJ Publications, 1982); and *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1969).

[3] Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

This project on the walking dead emerges from a desire to forge a disciplinary intervention. Performance studies, as a field, privileges live events, neglecting the cinematic and relegating its objects to the margins of cursory consideration. The possible reasons for this are many, and conjecture may lead us to surmise that performance studies, as a relatively new discipline, aims to delineate its own object: although many performance theorists are also enmeshed in theater studies, performance studies often seeks to focus on the ephemerality of the moment of performance itself rather than the dramatic text from which performance often emerges; therefore, the cinema, having not only a more established discipline and set of scholarly discourses,[4] but also being a form of cultural representation that is well beyond the stage and live performance,[5] need not and cannot be a performance studies object. For the sake of brevity, let's continue with this line of thinking (as if performance studies, as a discipline, had just *one* voice and *one* line of thinking), and the need to focus on the presence and liveness of shared air performance emerges—*that* is what makes the performance studies object unique, and *that* is what elevates the field of performance studies to loftier levels of academe: performance is grounded in the body and embodied experience, while at the same time performance is nearly impossible to freeze and materialize.

Zombies provide an unlikely, and interesting, corollary: they are all body and seeming pure physicality, they further problematize notions of liveness, call into question notions of presence, and seem to exist on a threshold between two states. Zombies are also cinematic monsters; their American cultural life began on the screen.

Cinematic performance as a whole (although a fluid and unbound whole) is not *there* materially for us, as scholars and spectators, to literally pin-down, circumscribe, and subsequently dissect. Similarly, cinematic performance as a scholarly subject has yet to be articulated and described. As performance studies scholars have already made clear, performance is always in excess of anything in specific, and cinematic performance is no different. As a mode of performance, the cinema is comprised of multiple individual performances, which combine to create a performance text that is itself more than the sum of these parts. Simply stated, cinematic performance is, of course, the acting (a practice that many people assume is synonymous with the term cinematic performance), but it is also the mise-en-scène, the editing, the cinematography, and so on. The performance is *in* each one of these elements but cannot be *reduced* to any one. Like so many other performance texts, that of the cinema is not metonymically definable. In other words, it is not possible to examine any single aspect—the acting, for instance—and make larger, universalizing claims about the greater cinematic performance of which that acting is a part; it is incorrect to say that the acting *is* the cinematic performance.

It is important to note the distinction of the term "cinematic performance" as specifically *not* "film acting." The acting observed by the spectator is a component part of cinematic performance, or as Russian film director and theorist V. I. Pudovkin articulates, "the work of the film actor in creation of his filmic image is bounded by a

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[4] By 1980 when the first performance studies department emerged at NYU.

[5] Of course, the cinema has a history firmly entwined with the theater, first drawing its key creators from the theater, and then having to establish itself as distinct from the theater.

technically complex frame of conditions specifically proper to the film."[6] Cinematic performance includes the ephemeral object of acting (the gestures, the voice, the way of speaking, the way of being), as well as the means of production (i.e., shooting the scenes out of order based on the availability of location rather than a concern for linearity), the structuring of the filmic apparatus, the editing process, and the process of viewing. I introduce this key term and its meaning as I have defined it in order to draw a necessary distinction between cinematic performance and film acting, as well as to establish the cinema as a mode of performance and a viable genre of study within performance studies. Articulating this term also assists with framing my scholarly approach to the cinematic objects in this project as dynamic and fluid, and part of a constant dialectical cultural discourse.

Cinematic performance serves as a larger, framing term for this project, but there are other key terms, threads which bind the entire project together: within performance studies, the already mentioned notions of liminality and liveness; the cinematic apparatus is a key theoretical term emerging from decades of film theory and history; and new media, along with the accompanying notions of biomedia, remediation, and networks. I will offer a brief definition of each of these terms in order to help ground the reader in a basic familiarity as well as offer the necessary grounding for how I understand and use the terms throughout this project.

*

LIMINALITY. French anthropologist Arthur van Gennep first coined the term in 1909, as the middle of three stages in rites of passage. British anthropologist Victor Turner invigorated the term in the 1960s with his works *The Forest of Symbols* (1967) and *The Ritual Process* (1969). The term suggests an in between moment or phase where a person or group is neither one thing nor another, but moves between the two. "Thus, liminality is frequently likened to death, to being in the womb, to invisibility, to darkness, to bisexuality, to the wilderness, and to an eclipse of the sun or moon."[7] Liminal entities are stripped of distinction and social attributes, "as liminal beings they have no status, property, insignia, secular clothing indicating rank or role, position in a kinship system—in short, nothing that may distinguish them…"[8] Once stripped of distinction and status, liminal beings form a social community that Turner has termed "communitas," where these figures come together in the most structure-less and basic of human togetherness. The "liminal phenomena" present moments both within and outside of time, "and in and out of secular social structure, which reveals, however fleetingly, some recognition (in symbol if not always in language) of a generalized social bond that has ceased to be and has simultaneously yet to be fragmented into multiplicity of structural ties."[9] Communitas then serves as both thing and a state of relationship because communitas comes into

[6] V. I. Pudovkin, "Film Technique," *"Film Technique" and "Film Acting": The Cinema Writings of V. I. Pudovkin* (New York: Bonanza Books, 1949) 120.

[7] Turner, *The Ritual Process* 95.

[8] Turner, *The Ritual Process* 95.

[9] Turner, *The Ritual Process* 96.

being as itself, as a potential object, through the in between-ness of the liminal state or passage.

LIVENESS. This term came into prominence within performance studies in the 1990s as the discipline became more established but still sought to distinguish itself from other disciplines and to further define itself as a discipline. Initially conceived of as a shared air moment when performers and audiences are in the same place at the same time during performance—thus making the object of performance studies ephemeral and unique, supposedly unlike that of television or cinema—Philip Auslander troubled this understanding with the publication of his book *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture* (1999). Auslander demonstrates that "live performance cannot be shown to be economically independent of, immune from contamination by, and ontologically different from mediatized forms," and therefore does not hold the same discursive clout as "a site of cultural and ideological resistance" that so many performance theorists assume it to have.[10] Auslander's troubling of the term, particularly considered within the context of a 21st century digital culture, is where I, too, begin to reconceive its workings.

NEW MEDIA. On a basic, literal level there have always been new media: writing was a new medium for Socrates, the printing press was a new medium in the 16th century, and photography was a new medium in the 19th century; but as a cultural and theoretical term, new media applies more specifically to computer and digital media. The term "new media" has been used since the 1960s, but came to prominence in the mid 1990s[11] coinciding with the rise of the consumer Internet. By the late 1990s academics and cultural theorists began publishing theories and articulations of new media. In this project, new media refers to the digital media of the 21st century, having evolved from those of the 1980s and '90s, such as mobile communications and the Internet.

New media, or computer media, have also restructured the cinema's relationship to indexicality. For decades the cinema could claim a material relationship to reality because the camera could capture a footprint of the filmed event on celluloid. According to Lev Manovich, the cinema "emerged out of the same impulse which engendered naturalism, court stenography and wax museums. Cinema is the art of the index; it is an attempt to make art out of a footprint."[12] But new media technologies have made it possible to create entire photorealistic scenes on the computer and incorporate them into traditional celluloid images, making it nearly impossible to differentiate the footprint from the digital artifact.

BIOMEDIA. As a means of theorizing and accounting for the intersection between the technological and biological, cultural theorist Eugene Thacker has developed the concept

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[10] Philip Auslander, *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1999) 7.

[11] Wendy Hui Kyong Chun, "Introduction," *New Media, Old Media: A History and Theory Reader*, eds. Wendy Hui Kyong Chun and Thomas Keenan (New York: Routledge, 2006) 1.

[12] Lev Manovich, "What Is Digital Cinema?" *The Visual Culture Reader*, ed. Nicholas Mirzoeff (New York: Routledge, 2002, 1998), 406.

of biomedia.[13] Biomedia demonstrates that information is material and that biology itself is "informational but not material."[14] Ultimately, the concept of biomedia offers further questions into the concerns of liveness and the living—"What is the difference between the living and the nonliving, the biological and the technological?"[15] Thacker's concept provides a way of articulating our position as biological beings in a world that seems to be ever increasingly driven by informational code. Additionally, biomedia can potentially provide a means for further complicating the notion of liveness already troubled by Auslander by condensing the discussion to a basic level of code (genetic and computer). By incorporating the technological (non-organic, not-live) with the biological (organic and live), Thacker complicates assumptions of what it means to be alive in the traditional sense of being purely organic, living things.

REMEDIATION. As a new media term, remediation was coined and developed by Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin in their book *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (1999). Remediation accounts for the processes of new media incorporating old media in defining themselves as similar to and yet distinct from the old. As a process, remediation involved both hypermediacy—the foregrounding of the technological capabilities of the new media—and immediacy—the erasing of the technological apparatus in an attempt to have a more immediate experience with that which said apparatus/technology mediates. As contradictory and impossible as this process may seem, it is the interworkings of both hypermediacy and immediacy together at once that makes remediation possible. What Bolter and Grusin gloss over, and what becomes more interesting in this project, is the way the body functions as a medium and performs the processes of remediation. The zombie offers an interesting site for further exploring remediation because of their unique status as dead yet animate: as a figure that exists in between states of being (living and dead), the zombie remediates notions of what it means to be human.[16]

NETWORKS. Networks are webs and chains. Networks connect people, ideas, and things—whether intentional or accidental. Networks, though always in existence, have become more of a theoretical interest with the rise of new media technologies. Networks are inconsistent, unstable, fluid, flexible, rigid, self-generating, and self-destructive.[17] Networks are a part of socio-cultural history, and have taken on new forms and possibilities with evolution of digital new media and the Internet. For Alexander R. Galloway and Eugene Thacker,[18] networks are about power structures and formation.

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[13] This is done most explicitly in his book-length publication of the same name: Eugene Thacker, *Biomedia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004).

[14] Thacker, "Biomedia," *Critical Terms for Media Studies*, eds. W. J. T. Mitchell and Mark B. N. Hansen (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010) 123.

[15] Thacker, "Biomedia," 128-9.

[16] Thanks to Kristen Whissel for help articulating this.

[17] Alexander R. Galloway, "Networks," *Critical Terms for Media Studies*, eds. W. J. T. Mitchell and Mark B. N. Hansen (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010) 282.

[18] Alexander R. Galloway and Eugene Thacker, *The Exploit: A Theory of Networks* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007).

This interest in power emerges from the inevitably social and basically human aspect of networks—bridging gaps, binding people.

A Look Ahead

I am drawn to the renaissance in zombie subculture—zombie walks and flash mobs, live theatrical remakes of zombie films, the resurgence in the cinematic subgenre, zombie proms, zombie podcasts—and I seek to uncover the work that zombies do in 21st century western popular culture. In line with Stuart Hall,[19] I see representation not as an effort to re-present some true and real thing, but rather as a process of meaning making. This is what I seek to uncover in this project: how zombie cinema of the 21st century takes part in making meaning of our new media moment. Zombies are not real. Zombie cinema does not offer us a window into something real. But zombies do help us make sense of our world. They may be sense-less but they provide a means, serve as a catalyst, for cultural meaning making.

In the chapters that follow I employ new media terms and structures as a means of understanding the thematic work of 21st century zombie films. Additionally, through my analyses of these films, comes a better understanding of the major trends and cultural conditions that have emerged with new media. In Chapter 1, "Introducing Zombies: Genealogies, Histories, and Cultural Contexts," I provide a brief history of zombie culture from its folkloric roots to current 21st century position. In Chapter 2, "Biomedia," I use Eugene Thacker's term (biomedia) as a means of analyzing Danny Boyle's *28 Days Later*. In this film, the zombies embody and represent biomedia—a uniquely new media realization of the technological and the biological as being indistinct from one another and without differentiating borders—and biomedia offers a way to understand these zombies. Into the zombie as metaphor argument, I add an examination of the narrative devices of the zombie film in Chapter 3, "Remediation." Here I maintain my focus on a single new media term, this one (remediation) developed by Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, but expand my objects: I focus on Romero's *Diary of the Dead*, using the concept of "remediation" to understand the zombie as liminal figure, as well as explore the levels of remediation that take place in these zombie films. Chapter 4, "Networks," foregoes the focus on a film and rather explores a narrative device within the 21st century zombie movie: one of mobile nodes networked together. In chapter 5, "IRL," I move beyond the cinematic genre to explore instances of the zombie "in real life," where each of these major terminological and thematic concerns (the network, remediation, and even biomedia) are literally embodied and performed "in the flesh." I return to the key terms as articulated above in the Conclusion, showing how zombies have infected them and evolved them.

Zombies walk. Zombies consume. Zombies air. Zombies film. They digitize. They materialize. They're dead. They're alive. We are zombies. Zombies are us.

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[19] Stuart Hall, *Representations and the Media*, Northampton, MA: Media Education Foundation, 1997.

CHAPTER 1.

INTRODUCING ZOMBIES: GENEALOGIES, HISTORIES, AND CULTURAL CONTEXTS

They're coming to get you, Barbara.[20]

In the opening paragraph to his article, "Raising the Dead: Unearthing the Nonliterary Origins of Zombie Cinema" (2006), Kyle Bishop asks "[z]ombie cinema is clearly as popular today as it was fifty years ago,[21] but is the genre socially relevant beyond being simply a successful entertainment venture?" And he provides an answer just half a sentence later: "the zombie film retains its ability to make audiences think while they shriek."[22] This claim assumes an audience that works against, beyond, and outside of an Adornian model of lump-sum passivity and evacuated agency.[23] Rather than being members of the undifferentiated masses who are unable to employ active agency, cinematic audiences are able to not only be active participants in their film viewing experience, but they are also critically aware, actively engaging with the film text not only on a physical level but on an intellectual one as well, thereby, I argue, turning "the film text" into a cinematic performance text.

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[20] *Night of the Living Dead*, dir. George Romero. Image 10 Partners, 1968.

[21] Unfortunately Bishop's math is a little off. The zombie cinema to which he refers emerged in 1968, as I've stated, with George Romero's *Night of the Living Dead*, making it forty, not fifty, years.

[22] Kyle Bishop, "Raising the Dead: Unearthing the Nonliterary Origins of Zombie Cinema," *The Journal of Popular Film & Television* 33 (Winter 2006): 196.

[23] Theodore W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception," in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (New York: Continuum, 1999) 120-167.

To "think while they shriek," that audience should be critically engaged with the film text they consume; they must be willing, and even excited, to comment on that which seeks to move them viscerally. In other words, the audience must paradoxically maintain an intellectual distance while they simultaneously allow their visceral responses to run rampant with the ride that is the film. Being an academic, this makes perfect sense to me: I often attend films with the intention of allowing myself to be swept away not in order to disallow critical engagement, but to offer another form of analysis: one where *performing* with the film text is a mode of academic investigation. Vivian Sobchack, in her book *Carnal Thoughts: Embodiment and Moving Image Culture* (2004), is interested in a similar project: in this book Sobchack seeks to bring phenomenological experience into the equation of discovering how we, as spectatorial subjects, make sense out of the moving image texts we encounter. She states, "I am struck by the gap that exists between our actual experience of the cinema and the theory that we academic film scholars construct to explain it—or perhaps, more aptly, to explain it away."[24] Importantly, this "experience of the cinema" involves my body. And the theory "that we academic film scholars construct to explain it," need not "explain it away," rather that theory can actually become part of the experience itself, or the experience can become part of the theory (this, I believe, is what Sobchack seeks to accomplish in her book).

Our inevitable (academic) spectatorial position has resulted in a proliferation of critical writing on spectatorship: from the sociological and cultural (Kracauer, Mayne, Williams); to Laura Mulvey's psychoanalytic reading in "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (1973); the historical work of Tom Gunning in such essays as "The Cinema of Attractions: Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avant-Garde" (1990); and even the more recent phenomenological accounts of the spectatorial experience (Vivian Sobchack's *The Address of the Eye: A Phenomenology of Film Experience* (1992) as well as *Carnal Thoughts* (2004)). Each of these film scholars seeks to account for the position of the spectator within the larger cinematic event, respectively as cultural receptacle, participant in an historical myth or trope, and as phenomenologically embodied subjects. The spectator performs a role in the cinematic viewing event, with varying levels of agency and awareness. Even when not directly addressing the experience of movie going, the critic approaches her text from the theater seat—even if she seeks to deny or willfully ignore this given position.

Zombie cinema provides a poignant site for an embodied approach to cinematic analysis. When the concern is visceral engagement as a component of cinematic performance, understanding the way meaning is made with and through viewing bodies is an important component of that analysis. Zombie cinema, as a subgenre of horror cinema, seems to compel visceral, embodied engagement during the act of viewing. In order to make intellectual sense out of what is being watched, the spectator must literally use her activated, material senses. This subgenre of cinema is about physical and psychological engagement as well as physical and psychological response on the part of the spectator. This spectator responds to a cinematic subject (a narrative about a zombie outbreak) that is about making sense (understanding) how figures who were once human and still resemble their human existence, seem to exist as *only* bodies, as *only* psychoanalytic

[24] Vivian Sobchack, *Carnal Thoughts: Embodiment and Moving Image Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004) 53.

drive. In other words, how do we, as spectators, understand, become intrigued by, and potentially sympathize with,[25] walking dead creatures that resemble ourselves in feature and form yet who do not have the ability to literally make sense out of their embodied engagement with the world?

The body figures prominently in understanding not just a new mode of critical scholarly engagement, but also, and more to the point, in understanding how we can "think while [we] shriek." And it is the body that serves as a key site of inquiry into zombie films and how they engage in representations of contemporaneous cultural events and anxieties. Even though these anxieties may not, on the surface, appear physical or bodily, ultimately these anxieties boil down to issues of interpersonal engagement; and as we, as a society and culture, move deeper into the internet age this revolves more and more around our physical selves. We exist as bodies-in-the-world. We process information as corporeal selves. We cannot divide with rigid precision our thoughts from our feelings, the one informs the other. And this, I argue, is where so much of our experienced anxieties and fears stem from: being physical selves in a technological world that seems to ignore or even disavow the physical, where 1s and 0s (binary code) dominate information and informational processes, and it seems as though everything we encounter is mediated through a screen.[26]

A film "means" most basically through its workings—moments of production, processes of post-production, and all that these encompass—but more specifically at the moment of reception. This assumes that a film's meaning is contingent upon its completion as a text through the active engagement of the spectator. This also assumes that a film's meaning is never fixed within some abstract notion of the film as autonomous—removed from the conditions of its consumptive purpose—but is always tied to its historicity. Of course, understanding the way a film text works and means, and the nuances of each concept, is wrapped-up in an understanding of the film event; and the film event both depends on, and is a precursor to, those same workings and meanings.

Horror movies, and zombie films, have been read as a means of gauging current societal angst. Kyle Bishop points out "all literature, both in print and on screen, addresses society's most pressing fears."[27] Tony Magistrale, writing a few years earlier, further bolsters Bishop's claim:

> The art of terror, whether literary or celluloid, has always addressed our most pressing fears as a society and as

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[25] As Romero's collection of zombie films progresses, the zombies within them do seem to develop intention and a shallow understanding of cause and effect—similar to the way a household pet will—therefore it becomes apparent that we, as spectators, are meant to align our sympathies with these creatures. My argument, here, concerns the zombie as initially conceived and generally understood: simply a reanimated corpse without any sense of sociality, ethics, or sentient thought.

[26] I am positing an extreme, even melodramatic, position here in order to drive home my point that is, of course, much more nuanced and subtle in reality.

[27] Kyle William Bishop, *American Zombie Gothic: The Rise and Fall (and Rise) of the Walking Dead in Popular Culture* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2010) 9.

> individuals. Like any other art form, horror cannot and should not be viewed as separate from its social and historical context; it is nothing less than a barometer for measuring an era's cultural anxieties.[28]

From nuclear fall out and the space race of the Cold War, to the excessive masses of un/familiar others of the Vietnam War, to the fear of bio-warfare and viral pandemics at the turn of the 21st century—each of the anxieties manifest in the plot, characters, and subthematic story lines of horror cinema. Bishop, writing in 2010, goes on to argue, in line with my own assertions, "that zombie cinema is among the most culturally revealing and resonant fictions of the recent decade of unrest."[29] This argument is variously articulated in numerous articles and other publications on the subject of zombies and zombie cinema: the zombie as metaphor for the post-capitalist consumer[30]; themes of race relations in an era of postcolonialism[31]; issues of immigration[32]; war,[33] among many others. And even anthropological investigations into the folkloric and religious roots of the zombie point to anxieties around a return to a condition of slavery through the loss of free will and/or not being allowed to rest in peace after passing.[34]

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[28] Tony Magistrale, *Abject Terrors: Surveying the Modern and Postmodern Horror Film* (New York: Peter Lang, 2005) xiii.

[29] Bishop, *Gothic* 10.

[30] Kyle Bishop, "The Idle Proletariat: Dawn of the Dead, Consumer Ideology, and the Loss of Productive Labor," *The Journal of Popular Culture* 43.2 (2010): 234-48; and Stephen Harper, "Zombies, malls, and the Consumerism Debate: George Romero's *Dawn of the Dead," Americana: The Journal of American Popular Culture (1900-present)* 1.2. (Fall 2002): n. pag.

[31] Edna Aizenberg, "*I Walked with a Zombie*: The Pleasures and Perils of Postcolonial Hybridity," *World Literature Today: A Literary Quarterly of the University of Oklahoma* 73.3 (Summer 1999): 461-66; and Kyle Bishop, "The Sub-Subaltern Monster: Imperialist Hegemony and the Cinematic Voodoo Zombie," *The Journal of American Culture* 31.2 (2008): 141-152.

[32] Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, "Alien-Nation: Zombies, Immigrants, and Millennial Capitalism," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 101.4 (Fall 2002): 779-805.

[33] Sumiko Higashi, "*Night of the Living Dead*: Horror Film about the Horrors of the Vietnam Era," *From Hanoi to Hollywood: The Vietnam War in American Film*, eds. Linda Dittman and Gene Michaud (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990) 175-188.

[34] In addition to the work Bishop does in *Gothic*, see, as an example: Hans Ackerman and Jeanine Gauthier, "The Ways and Nature of the Zombi," *Journal of American Folklore* 104.414 (Fall 1991): 466-94; Nicole Aljoe, "Zombie Testimony: Creole Religious Discourse in West Indian Slave Narratives," *Assimilation and Subversion in Earlier American Literature*, ed. Robin DeRose (Newcastle upon Tyne, England: Cambridge Scholars, 2006) 40-67; Erika Bourguignon, "Religion and Justice in Haitian Vodoun," *Phylon (1960-)* 46.4 (4th Qtr., 1985): 292-295; Wade Davis, *Passage of Darkness: The Ethnobiology of the Haitian Zombie* (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina Press, 1988); and Peter Dendle, "The Zombie as Barometer of Cultural Anxiety,"

With this project I seek to take part in these various discourses surrounding zombie cinema and culture. I argue that 21st century zombie cinema, inaugurated in 2002 with Danny Boyle's *28 Days Later*, enacts and thematizes larger cultural concerns surrounding new media and the socio-cultural shifts generated by the technological revolution of the early-mid 1990s. These films—through the specificity of the zombie body to the larger, more general dramatic structure of the films in which these walking dead appear—variously perform issues of biomedia, networks, communication, mobility, mediation, and liveness. In this dissertation I will enact a cross-disciplinary approach engaging scholars from performance studies, film studies, cultural studies, and new media in order to demonstrate a link between the new renaissance in zombie cinema and the proliferation and accessibility of new digital technologies.

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In this opening chapter, I offer some historical and cultural contexts for my research and theoretical inquiries, introducing some key theorists and terminology. I then provide a brief genealogy of the cinematic zombie, beginning with its roots in Haitian voodoo folklore, and the subsequent importation into American popular culture via the (brief) US occupation of Haiti and the contemporaneous publication of popular, somewhat anthropological, travelogues. These in turn inspired cinematic representations, beginning with *White Zombie* in 1932 and continuing through the classical Hollywood period. I then turn my attentions to George A. Romero and his film *Night of the Living Dead*, released in 1968, and the subsequent 20th century zombie trilogy. I will be devoting a substantial portion of my inquiry to this particular director and his first three zombie films because of the canonical, foundational position they hold in popular zombie subculture. From here I turn to the explosion of zombie film production and culture in the 21st century, introducing some key cinematic texts that I will explore in more detail in the dissertation. I close the introduction with a brief look forward into the chapters that comprise "21st Century Zombies: Performing New Media in the Cinema."

Zombie Genealogy

Haitian Voodoo Zombie

The zombie, as understood and imagined today, has roots in Haitian voodoo folklore.[35] Voodoo itself is a complex hybrid of African animism and Roman

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Monsters and the Monstrous: Myths and Metaphors of Enduring Evil, ed. Niall Scott (Amsterdam, Netherlands: Rodopi, 2007) 45-57.

[35] Sarah Juliet Lauro and Karen Embry, "A Zombie Manifesto: The Nonhuman Condition in the Era of Advanced Capitalism," *boundary 2: An International Journal of Literature and Culture* 35.1 (Spring 2008): 90; Shawn McIntosh and Marc Leverette, eds. *Zombie Culture: Autopsies of the Living Dead* (Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2008); K. Silem Mohammad, "Zombies, Rest, and Motion: Spinoza and the Speed of Undeath," *Undead and Philosophy: Chicken Soup for the Soulless*, eds. Richard

Catholicism, combined with indigenous belief systems. The notion of the zombie (or zombi) emerged as a means of explaining, or explaining away, the conditions of slavery and oppression enacted by European colonizers and the subsequent oppressive Haitian governments. "Zombies by vodoun definition are the living dead—individuals raised in a trance from their graves by malevolent sorcerers and forced to toil indefinitely as slaves."[36] The zombie state, allegedly scientifically explained by the use of tetrodotoxin[37]—a poison culled from the puffer fish, which induces a state of profound paralysis, "marked by complete immobility during which time the border between life and death is not at all certain, even to trained physicians"[38]—creates a victim who ceases to have autonomy and will, and as a result serves as a slave. Even after emancipation and the establishment of Haiti as the first nation-state ruled by people of African descent in the early 19th century, zombie folklore continued to develop. In this context the zombie represented a fate worse than death: the return of the undead self as the slave of a voodoo priest, called a *Bokor*, who uses the walking dead for their own nefarious purposes, or sells their undead creation to wealthy citizens to commit crimes or simply work in the fields. So while in American popular culture it is the zombie itself that produces fear, for the Haitians *becoming* a zombie is the cause of anxiety and fear.[39]

In Kyle William Bishop's well-researched chapter on the subject, "Raising the Living Dead: The Folkloric and Ideological Origins of the Voodoo Zombie,"[40] he traces the long and complex history of zombies as "important ethnographic and anthropological creatures, embodying both folkloristic and ideological beliefs and traditions [which are] directly linked to the political and social life of postcolonial Haiti. […] Indeed, [the zombie] is a creature born of slavery, oppression, and capitalist hegemony and in that way a manifestation of collective unconscious fears and taboos."[41] Bishop investigates the pre-Haitian roots of the zombie, noting such creatures as "the 'hopping corpses' of China," the story of Lazarus, and the Tibetan *ro-lang*—"dead corpses brought back to life by both human and demonic means."[42] Ultimately, however, these creatures do not have a direct link to the walking dead of the cinema as clearly and directly as the Haitian zombie.

Bishop foregrounds two key points of the zombie as cultural, folkloric creation: unlike other undead monsters such as the vampire, the zombie has no literary tradition; it is a uniquely New World creature that emerged from the importation of African belief systems via slavery and combined with colonial Catholicism to make the zombie "purely

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Greene and K. Silem Mohammad (Chicago: Open Court, 2006) 93; and Bishop, *American Zombie Gothic* 37-63.

[36] Wade Davis, "American Scientist Interviews: Wade Davis on Zombies, Folk Poisons, and Haitian Culture," *American Scientist* 75.4 (July-August 1987): 412.

[37] Wade Davis, *The Serpent and the Rainbow* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985).

[38] Davis, *Serpent* 123.

[39] Davis, *Serpent* 187.

[40] Bishop, *Gothic* 37-63.

[41] Bishop, *Gothic* 37.

[42] Bishop, *Gothic* 41.

a monster of the Americas."[43] Just as voodoo developed and evolved with the emancipation and establishment of Haiti as the first "Black Nation" in the early 19th century through its violent beginnings as a sovereign nation state, to the American occupation in the early 20th century, so, too, did the zombie evolve in cultural and ideological import and purpose from being an explanation of slavery to serving as a means of maintaining the social hierarchy. And so, with the adoption of the zombie into American culture, the monster continues to evolve and develop, emerging an emblem able to give expression to anxieties surrounding social, political, and cultural change.

Classical Hollywood Zombie

Americans began to develop a keen interest in Haiti and Voodoun culture with the American occupation of Haiti in 1915-1934. During this time a number of American anthropologists, and those who fancied themselves adventurers and travelers, published a handful of accounts of Haiti, voodoo, and the zombie.[44] These accounts heightened American interest in Haiti; as a result, Haitian culture began to inform American popular culture, most notably in Hollywood cinema. The first zombie film produced in the United States was *White Zombie* (1932) directed by Victor Halperin. In this film, *White Zombie* employs

> the exotic setting of the postcolonial Caribbean to entrance eager viewers, while accentuating the prevailing stereotypes of the "backwards" natives and Western imperialist superiority. In fact, *White Zombie* anticipates the socio-political theories and criticisms of Césaire, Fanon, and Said, emphasizing a type of Hegelian master/slave dialectic as well as the dominance of one culture (embodied in the voodoo master) over another (that of the zombie slaves).[45]

The film opens with Neil Parker (John Harrington) and Madeline Short Parker (Madge Bellamy), a recently engaged couple, traveling to Haiti to visit Parker's friend Charles Beaumont (Robert Frazer)—a wealthy, white local. Beaumont quickly falls for Parker and seeks the help of his sinister friend, aptly named "Murder" Legendre, played by Bela Lugosi, to help Beaumont steal the affections of Parker. Legendre turns Parker into a zombie on her wedding day via a mysterious powder; Beaumont regrets the decision now that the life has gone from Parker. Rather than help Beaumont restore Parker, Legendre turns the former into a zombie as well to join his current legion of plantation-working zombies.

White Zombie is a representational, cultural medium that gives (pleasurable) articulation to the current interests and anxieties in American culture, while also serving

[43] Bishop, *Gothic* 38.

[44] See, as good examples, W. B. Seabrook, *The Magic Island* (New York: Paragon House, 1929, 1989) and Zora Neale Hurston, *Tell My Horse: Voodoo and Life in Haiti and Jamaica* (New York: Harper & Row, 1938, 1990).

[45] Bishop, *Gothic* 65.

as a medium for articulating change and addressing the possibilities and perils that go along with it: the status of nation as an imperial power, race relations, and even echoes earlier anxieties of the white slave trade, which

> emerged most prominently in the United States in 1907 after the publication of the first of George Kibbe Turner's three influential articles on the topic. According to Turner, the abduction of white women into prostitution was carried out by various 'racial others.' Almost invariably coded in terms of race, these 'white slavers' became threatening symbols of the dangerous and immoral sexuality of other races and nations.[46]

Silent films of the early 20th century, similar to the later *White Zombie*, picked-up on and played-off of these fears: *Traffic in Souls* (1913), *The Inside of the White Slave Traffic* (1913), *The House of Bondage* (1914), *Smashing the Vice Trust* (1914), and *Is Any Girl Safe?* (1916).[47] These echoings of the white slave panic are subtle, but speak to a larger racial "panic" occurring: one surrounding the Great Migration of blacks from the south to the north, and one that foreshadows the conditions and situations leading to the Civil Rights Movement.

Subsequent zombie films more closely associated with the first half of the Classical period of Hollywood cinema followed suit in their stance on race relations, most notably with Jacques Tourneur's *I Walked with a Zombie* (1943), a film that gives us the iconic image of a very tall and dark-skinned Haitian man, eyes staring blankly in his zombified state, carrying the limp, delicate, fair-skinned body of white woman. The implications of such an image in American culture at this time go well beyond the fear of the walking dead: this being a period of legal segregation and heightened xenophobia, the sexualized image of a half-naked black man towering over a limp and vulnerable white woman necessarily further "othered" the black male. With this image comes the manifestation of the black male as sexual predator, a threatening figure poised to take over the position of the white male in the sexual and, by extrapolation, domestic sphere—an anxiety potentially produced or heightened by the exodus of white males to Europe to fight in WWII.

After WWII, and the onset of the atomic age, zombie films take a marked turn towards aliens, nuclear bombs, and radioactive vapors as the possible causes of zombieness. In 1952 Fred C. Brannon's *Zombies of the Stratosphere*, a film about space aliens and *not* zombies, gestures toward this genre marriage. It is Edward L. Cahn's 1955 *Creature with the Atom Brain* that truly foregrounds this by using radioactive elements to resurrect the recently deceased.

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[46] Lee Grievson, "Fighting Films: Race, Morality, and the Governing of Cinema, 1912-1915," *The Silent Cinema Reader*, eds. Lee Grievson and Peter Krämer (New York: Routledge, 2004) 175.

[47] Grievson, 178.

Romero's Postmodern Zombies (1968-)[48]

1968 was a watershed year in American society and across the globe; it was a year of unrest and change, and an historical moment that can be viewed as a turning point in politics and cultural production. This was the year when the North Vietnamese launched the Tet offensive, which served as a key turning point in the Vietnam War, eventually leading to Johnson's official withdrawal (though gradual) of troops and support later that same year. Three key humanitarian, political, and artistic figures were assassinated or had assassination attempts made against them: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Robert F. Kennedy, and Andy Warhol. Numerous riots and global student protests having to do with unfair race relations, basic freedoms such as free speech and choice, and other perceived moral issues took place at Columbia University, in Baltimore city, Chicago, Detroit, Washington, D.C., in Paris and later across France, Mexico City, Poland, Italy, and others. President Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1968, a follow-up to the same of 1964, which performatively marked a cathartic moment for the Civil Rights Movement. 1968 also saw the introduction of the MPAA's film rating system, which served as a final kiss of death to the old Hollywood system, which had already been dissolving, and the abandonment of the Motion Picture Production Code (MPPC).

Each of these events, like socio-political events occurring at any other cultural moment, proved symbiotic one to the other. Nothing occurs in isolation, but rather every incident is necessarily interconnected with other events both in the possibility of their happening and in the means of how they unfold; and all together these events can be seen as representative of the general mood of the era—one of transition, exploration, and a sense of shedding one cultural skin for another due, in part, to the violence and unrest of burgeoning social movements. It is in the middle of this political and cultural atmosphere that George Romero, then a young, burgeoning film director, co-wrote and directed the now seminal *Night of the Living Dead* (1968). This seemingly minor horror film, at the time, became a cultural phenomenon, spawning not just a trilogy in the 20th century,[49] but also establishing the parameters for an entire subcultural phenomenon that has generated novels, video games, poetry, board games, and both adaptations and original live theater productions.[50]

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[48] For more on George A. Romero and his cinema there are three book-length studies published (as well as numerous articles that I will not list here): Paul R. Gagne, *The Zombies that Ate Pittsburgh: The Films of George A. Romero* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1987); Tony Williams, *The Cinema of George A. Romero: Knight of the Living Dead* (New York: Wallflower Press, 2003); and Kim Paffenroth, *Gospel of the Living Dead: George Romero's Visions of Hell on Earth* (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2006).

[49] This trilogy—*Night of the Living Dead* (1968), *Dawn of the Dead* (1978), and *Day of the Dead* (1985)—has, since the turn of the millennium, become a quatrology with the 2005 *Land of the Dead*, and Romero has even begun a new series of zombie films: *Diary of the Dead* (2007) and *Survival of the Dead* (2009).

[50] *Day by Day Armageddon (A Zombie Novel)* by J. L. Bourne, *Resident Evil* videogame produced by Capcom, *Zombie Haiku: Good Poetry for Your … Brains* by

Thanks to the work of Steven Shaviro, the creatures in Romero's initial trilogy, and the number of other films these three inspired, can be read as "postmodern zombies."

> These walking corpses are neither majestic and uncanny nor exactly sad and pitiable. They arise out of a new relation to death, and they provoke a new range of affect. They are blank, terrifying, and ludicrous in equal measure, without any of these aspects mitigating the others. Romero's zombies could almost be said to be quintessential media images, since they are vacuous, mimetic replications of the human beings they once were.[51]

The films in which these postmodern zombies are made manifest "knowingly exploit the ambiguity of their position: they locate themselves both inside and outside the institutions and ideologies—of commercial film production and of American society generally—from which they have evidently arisen."[52] The films themselves—and Shaviro refers specifically to Romero's initial, genre-defining trilogy[53]—represent the ambiguity, excess, and vacuousness of troped postmodernism. Unlike the clearly located viral beginnings of 21st century zombiedom, the ghouls within Romero's zombie films have no known originating cause or reason.

In the first trilogy, people use religion, medicine, and science fiction in search of an explanation, but how the zombies became zombies remains unanswered and ambiguous.

> Of course, the whole point is that the sheer exorbitance of [Romero's] zombies defies causal explanation, or even simple categorization. The living dead don't have an origin or reference; they have become unmoored from meaning. They figure a social process that no longer serves rationalized ends, but has taken on a strange sinister life of its own.[54]

This is not to say that the zombie as a creature of fiction is without meaning, rather Shaviro is speaking of the zombie within the fictional frame of Romero's films. In part because the zombies are unlocatable, unexplainable, mimetically empty, and excessively exorbitant in numbers, as creatures within Romero's films, the zombies become metaphors for the seeming emptiness of postmodern life in which people perform the

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Ryan Mecum, *Zombies!!!* board game by Twilight Creations), *Night of the Living Dead, LIVE!*, and *Zombie Town*.

[51] Steven Shaviro, *The Cinematic Body* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993) 85.

[52] Shaviro 88.

[53] *Night of the Living Dead* (1968), *Dawn of the Dead* (1978), and *Day of the Dead* (1985).

[54] Shaviro 88.

same repetitive task day in and day out, in which people seek the trappings of empty symbols (fashion, advertising, commodities) to fill the emptiness that superficiality of daily life has created.

As these postmodern zombies lumber about they retain the markings of individual identity—hospital scrubs, military uniform—but they are completely evacuated of the substance associated with these identities—they no longer perform medical procedures or military operations. "They continue to participate in human, social rituals and processes—but only just enough to drain them of their power and meaning."[55] Shaviro is speaking specifically of Romero's zombies, which display a deep-seated, animalistic drive to perform the basic actions of their living self—a now-empty mimesis drawn from the firmly engrained repetitious gestures of their former, living life. For instance, in Romero's fourth and final installment in his initial zombie series,[56] *Land of the Dead* (2005), a zombie, Big Daddy, goes through the motions of his living self as a gas station attendant: he removes the nozzle from the pump and turns to insert it in an imaginary car, and so on. This action, repeated over and over in a seemingly desperate attempt to invigorate it with meaning, only succeeds in demonstrating the futility of quotidian actions. In this way, like the tropes of postmodernism, postmodern zombies are empty signifiers, endlessly replicating something and someone for which there is no clear referent.

At the time of its creation Romero and his co-filmmaker John Russo claimed their decision for producing *Night of the Living Dead* "was made purely for commercial reasons," that a "low-budget horror film is simply more marketable than a low-budget art film."[57] They were just making a movie and did not intend to offer any social critiques or resonances. For instance Romero even asserts that the casting of Duane Jones, a black man, in the lead role of Ben was simply because he auditioned well and that the filmmakers were not trying to make a political statement at the then heightened moment of the Civil Rights Movement.[58] Romero's claim that the critical cultural mirroring seen in *Night* was unintentional, calls attention to the impossibility of creating cultural text *without* it engaging in a dialectical process of meaning making within the socio-historical moment of its creation; and the text inevitably has a life beyond the intentions of its creator and beyond the moment of its initial dissemination and reception. As is made clear with *Night of the Living Dead*, cultural texts often mean more than their author intends: these texts resonate the significant social, political, and cultural events occurring during the moment of their creation; and, significantly, these texts live on beyond their initial moment of creation and reception, becoming fluid objects that circulate within and throughout socio-historical periods.

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[55] Shaviro 88.

[56] With Romero's films, even those produced in the 21st century, and I argue influenced by the cultural climate of the time, still maintain connective threads to his original, pre-21st century series of zombie films; just like postmodernism, though generally considered in the past, maintains connective threads to our current cultural condition.

[57] Gagne 23.

[58] George Romero in John Russo, *The Complete Night of the Living Dead Filmbook* (Pittsburgh: Imagine, Inc., 1985) 7.

Sumiko Higashi, in her article "*Night of the Living Dead*: A Horror Film about the Horrors of the Vietnam Era" (1990), conducts a socio-historical analysis of the film, arguing that *Night* is more than a film about flesh-eating zombies.[59] *Night*, having been released in "a year of tumultuous events such as the Tet offensive, the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr., and Robert Kennedy, and the Chicago police riot that spilled onto the floor of the Democratic convention,"[60] is unwittingly a "classic that can be viewed as part of the process of cultural production registering both repression and resistance during the sixties."[61] Writing at the end of the 1980s, Higashi was interested in moving beyond (though still building upon) the textually-specific confines of a purely poststructuralist and psychoanalytic reading of the cinema,[62] a mode of analytical engagement that largely ignores the socio-historical context of "production, distribution, audience reception,"[63] and other key, socially-aware elements of cultural production that inevitably inform cultural products (such as *Night of the Living Dead*). Higashi turns, instead, to the work of Robin Wood,[64] a key film theorist in the reading of the horror genre. Wood "concludes that the horror film is a collective nightmare masking repressed desires that are a threat to the existing social order."[65] By taking-up Freudian ideas of oppression and repression, but in a specifically non-Lacanian manner, Higashi (via Wood), sees oppression—specifically those of a monolithic, capitalist society such as ours—as managing the excesses of repression: "What escapes *re*pression has to be dealt with by *op*pression."[66] The excesses of repression often manifest in what is commonly termed "the Other: that which the bourgeois mentality cannot recognize or accept but

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[59] Higashi 175-188.

[60] Higashi 175.

[61] Higashi 179.

[62] C. Altman, "Psychoanalysis and the Cinema: The Imaginary Discourse," *Quarterly Review of Film Studies* 2 (1976): 257-272; Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981); Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986); Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989); Michael Grant, "Psychoanalysis and Film Theory," *Screen* 31.3 (Fall 1990): 341-5; R. S. Hamilton, "Between the First and Second Semiologies: Psychoanalysis and Film Theory," *Camera Obscura* 7 (1981): 67-86; Christian Metz, *The Imaginary Signifier: Psychoanalysis and the Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982); Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," *Feminist Film Theory: A Reader*, ed. Sue Thornham (New York: New York University Press, 1999) 58-69; Kaja Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror: The Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988).

[63] Higashi 175.

[64] See Robin Wood, "An Introduction to the American Horror Film," in Movies and Methods II, ed. Bill Nichols (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985): 195-219.

[65] Higashi 176.

[66] Robin Wood quoted in Higashi, 176.

must deal with by annihilating, rejecting, or assimilating."[67] In 1968, this excess included woman (feminist movement), blacks (Civil Rights movement), homosexuality (burgeoning gay rights movement), the seeming disintegration of the nuclear family (a greater acceptance of divorce as well as the stronger position of feminism, and thus the perception of the disintegration of the nuclear family), and communism (the Cold War and the Vietnamese, who are doubly Othered because of their foreignness).

In his two subsequent zombie films of the 20th century, *Dawn of the Dead* (1978) and *Day of the Dead* (1985), Romero develops the story established in *Night* while more explicitly exploring culturally resonant themes. The heroes of *Dawn* ultimately take refuge in an abandoned mall, fortress themselves inside, and take part in a consumer paradise by selecting wares to construct a modern domestic abode, adorn new clothes, and partake in a dining experience; while the hordes of walking dead instinctually make their way to the consumerist oasis: all that remains of the psychological functions of the brain are those buried deep within the unconscious—the drive to consume (thus the consumerist setting) and, in the case of the zombies here, the instinctual drive to consume flesh. In both the living and the dead we watch the Western desire to consume unfold in starkly different ways, but ways that ultimately result in the same vacant need to simply have, possess, use, and then discard.

After his foray into consumer culture with *Dawn*, Romero takes an incisive look at the scientific-military complex of the Reagan era. In *Day of the Dead* (1985) the living have moved underground in a bunker-like situation run by the military, providing shelter as well as a space for scientists to conduct experiments on the walking dead. We witness the military abuse their power and the scientists take part in strange, inhuman, and irresponsible studies. Each of these three films, considered Romero's "trilogy" until the early 21st century, occur in chronological succession from one another with *Dawn* starting mere weeks after *Night* left off, and *Day* taking place a few years after the end of *Dawn*. At this point in the zombie infestation of *Day* zombies have completely taken over the streets forcing the living to take refuge underground where the only semblance of a pre-zombie world order takes the form of military control and scientific research.

After a 20-year hiatus, Romero returned to the zombie genre in 2005 with *Land of the Dead*. This film continues the general chronology and story developed in the initial trilogy: the living have created a highly stratified social system with the extremely wealthy living in a meticulous high-rise building, which is surrounded by the detritus and wreckage of the poverty-stricken lower classes, who live out of makeshift homes, participate in brutal and animalistic activities and modes of social interaction. Both classes live within close quarters on an island barricaded against the walking dead who have taken-over the majority of the landscape. This is Romero's (as-of-now) final big-studio film, and one that overtly critiques and criticizes the eroding of the middle class and growing economic gap between the wealthy and the poor in the United States.

From here Romero returned to working independently—as he began his career with *Night*—and began anew the zombie chronology with his 2007 *Diary of the Dead*. In this film, which I will explore in more detail in chapter three, the dead suddenly begin to rise and attack the living. The film follows a group of college film students as they attempt to return to their homes and families. One student, Jason Creed (Joshua Close),

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[67] Higashi 176.

takes it upon himself to record their journey. The zombie apocalypse is recent enough that not all communications technologies have been destroyed, and so Jason takes time now and again to upload his footage to the Internet in the hopes of sharing the "truth" about what is going on. Jason dies before the completion of his documentary, and so his girlfriend Debra Moynihan (Michelle Morgan) finishes his project, which is the film the spectator views. *Survival of the Dead* (2009), the next film in Romero's newest zombie series, received limited release and luke-warm reception (Romero's firmly established and widely-accepted position as the father of modern zombie films provides him the necessary safety net to continue to produce movies both within and outside of the zombie subgenre always knowing he will have a fan-base on which to draw).

Rule Breaking Zombies

As a template for a genre,[68] Romero's 1968 classic *Night of the Living Dead* establishes certain rules that have been generally accepted by the larger zombie subculture[69]: the term "zombie" is never used within the film; the only way to kill a zombie is to destroy the brain or completely eradicate the body, such as burning it; zombies, as recently reanimated corpses, move in a lumbering and uncoordinated manner; they only feed on living, human flesh—once the body upon which they had been feeding grows cold they stop feeding, and they do not feed on animals. The reason why the recently dead are beginning to reanimate is never established or fully explained. These rules, as they are generally understood in zombie fan culture, are evident in the films themselves, particularly, as I have stated, in Romero's films; and Romero is, for most fans, the definitive producer in the genre: he "has defined the zombie genre ever since its [*Night*] release, and has even spilled over into the depiction of zombies in any medium, including books, comic books, video and board games, and action figures."[70] I would add to these live action role-playing, live theatrical representations, and the larger general cultural conception of zombie-ness.

While Romero and more "traditional" zombie filmmakers adhere to these rules, a surprisingly good number of zombie films made after *Night* break at least one rule: namely, revealing the cause of the zombie outbreak. Prior to *Night*, the majority of zombie films tend to associate zombieness with voodoo witchcraft,[71] or atomic bombs/threats,[72] or alien[73] forces, and the zombies were not cannibalistic, though they

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[68] Bishop, "Raising the Dead" 197.

[69] The Wikipedia article on the "Living Dead," though never explicitly laying-out the rules, does make reference to "the rules" (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Living_Dead). As part of the Associated Content on Yahoo!, L. Vincent Poupard provides a succinct version of these rules (http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/280265/the_unwritten_rules_of_zombie_movies.html?cat=40).

[70] Paffenroth 1.

[71] *White Zombie* (1932), *Ouanga* (1936), *Revolt of the Zombies* (1936), *The Ghost Breakers* (1940), *The King of the Zombies* (1941), *I Walked with a Zombie* (1943), *Zombies on Broadway* (1945), *The Face of Marble* (1946), *Blood of the Zombie* (1961), *I Eat Your Skin* (1964), and *The Plague of the Zombies* (1966).

[72] *Creature with the Atom Brain* (1955), and *Teenage Zombies* (1959)

were certainly deadly.[74] Those films produced after *Night* (but before the marked introduction of the 21st century zombie with Danny Boyle's well-known *28 Days Later* in 2002) employ a wide range of possible zombie "causes" from reanimation/resurrection and science[75]; curses, the occult, and the supernatural[76]; outer space and alien[77]; chemical and atomic[78]; virus[79]; and voodoo.[80] With these consistent and varied alterations it is safe to assume that the cause of zombieness is rarely, if ever, at the heart of the problem: the zombie infestation is never "solved" by locating the cause and eradicating it; once the problem manifests, it is a matter of survival, not cure. However, maybe rather than "rules," as many zombie fans seem to want to apply to all things zombie, Bishop's understanding of certain "generic protocols" and "conventions" might prove more appropriate:

> Unlike many other tales of terror and the supernatural, the classic zombie story—i.e., the apocalyptic invasion of our world by hordes of cannibalistic, contagious, and animated corpses—has remarkably specific conventions that govern its plot and development. These generic protocols include not only the zombies themselves and the imminent threat of a violent death, but also a post-apocalyptic backdrop: the

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[73] *Zombies of the Stratosphere* (1952), *Plan 9 from Outer Space* (1959), *Cape Canaveral Monsters* (1960), and *The Earth Dies Screaming* (1964)

[74] The rare few who don't fit any of these three classifications: *Zombies of Mora Tau* (1957) (curse), *Doctor Blood's Coffin* (1960) (heart transplant), and *The Incredibly Strange Creatures Who Stopped Living and Became Mixed-Up Zombies* (1964) (hypnosis and acid)

[75] *The Astro-Zombies* (1969), *Re-Animator* (1985), *Deadly Friend* (1986), *Raiders of the Living Dead* (1986), *Dead Heat* (1988), *The Chilling* (1989), *Bride of Re-Animator* (1990), *Chopper Chicks in Zombie Town* (1991), *Legion of the Night* (1995)

[76] *Dead of Night* (1972), *Children Shouldn't Play With Dead Things* (1972), *Messiah of Evil* (1972), *House of the Living Dead* (1973), *Corpse Eaters* (1974), *Dead of Night* (1974), *Shock Waves* (1977), *Dawn of the Mummy* (1981); *Dead & Buried* (1981), *The Evil Dead* (1981), *Kiss Daddy Goodbye* (1981), *Hard Rock Zombies* (1985), *The Evil Dead II* (1986), *The Dead Pit* (1989), *Hellgate* (1989), *Army of Darkness* (1993), *The Necro Files* (1997), *The Dead Hate the Living* (2000), *Biker Zombies from Detroit* (2001)

[77] *Alien Dead* (1980), *I Was a Zombie for the FBI* (1982), *Bloodsuckers from Outer Space* (1984), *Night of the Comet* (1984), *Night of the Creeps* (1986), *The Boneyard* (1989)

[78] *Bloodeaters* (1980), *The Children* (1980), *Night of the Zombies* (1981), *The Aftermath* (1982), *Surf II* (1984), *Return of the Living Dead* (1985), *I Was a Teenage Zombie* (1987), *Return of the Living Dead Part II* (1988), *Return of the Living Dead, Part III* (1993), *Zombie Bloodbath* (1993)

[79] *The Dead Next Door* (1988), *I, Zombie* (1998)

[80] *The Hidan of Maukbeiangjow* (1973), *Sugar Hill* (1974), *Zombie Nightmare* (1986), *Zombie 4: After Death* (1987), *The Serpent and the Rainbow* (1988), *Zombie Cop* (1991), *Ghost Brigade* (1993), *Buttcrack* (1998)

> collapse of societal infrastructures, the resurgence of survivalist fantasies, and the fear of other surviving humans.[81]

This leads one to conjecture that part of the cultural work zombie films do is to propose and dramatize a hypothesis about how humanity will persist in the face of a, presumably, incurable apocalyptic situation.

I mention these conventions, or rules, and the inconsistent adherence to them, in order to foreground the influence of Romero's films on the zombie sub-genre. Even as zombie films in the 21st century tend to assign viral origins to the zombie outbreak, some filmmakers pointedly pay homage to Romero with overtly rule abiding works.[82] The notion of "rules" extends to plot device as well, as with the recent *Zombieland* (2009) in which the lead character provides a list of rules for surviving the zombie apocalypse.[83] Similarly, just as fans have discerned the unspoken rules established in more canonical zombies films—especially those of Romero—fans have developed various rules and advice for surviving a zombie apocalypse, notably from Zombiephiles:

> Ten WORST Things to Do During a Zombie Outbreak
> 10. Don't set zombies on fire. Burning zombies smell terrible.
> 9. Don't get sentimental. Zombies won't.
> 8. Don't forget to shut the door behind you. Zombies often come over without calling first.
> 7. Don't keep zombies in the basement. Even if they are your zombie family.
> 6. Don't try to reunite with friends/family over long distances.
> 5. Don't go down. Zombies can go down too.
> 4. Don't broadcast your presence. Zombies may be listening.
> 3. Don't stand in front of the window. That's just foolish.
> 2. Don't get too creative with zombie defense.
> 1. Don't be "that one asshole" in your group.[84]

Generic protocols and conventions become most interesting, however, in the ways in which they are broken or manipulated. The fissure that results from the rule breaking, or manipulation, foregrounds (or realizes) the prominence of those same rules; while at the same time the act of dissension in breaking/manipulating the rules reifies those same rules that have been broken. With 21st century zombie cinema, for example, we often find

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[81] Bishop, *Gothic* 19.

[82] An exemplary example of this being Simon Pegg and Edgar Wright's *Shaun of the Dead* (2004).

[83] *Zombieland*, directed by Ruben Fleischer, 2009.

[84] <http://www.zombiephiles.com/zombies-ate-my-brains/zombie-outbreak-ten-worst-things-to-do> accessed 9 January 2010

a virus as the cause; and zombies tend to be fast and cat-like in their movements rather than the slow, lumbering bodies hindered by various states of rigor mortis.

The New Millennial Zombie (2002-): Terrorism or New Media?

By the 21st century digital culture seems to be replacing postmodern culture, but around this time (c. 2001) people are still describing what this replacement looks like. Alan Kirby, from a more textual perspective, calls the new cultural paradigm "Digimodernism,"[85] which "owes its emergence and preeminence to the computerization of text, which yields a new form of textuality characterized in its purest instances by onwardness, haphazardness, evanescence, and anonymous, social and multiple authorship."[86] And although this new cultural paradigm does have philosophical implications in regards to subject-formation, identity, space, time, and so on, Kirby chooses, instead, to focus on "a new textual form, content, and value, new kinds of cultural meaning, structure, and use."[87] Kirby provides a means of understanding the ways in which computer and digital technologies reshape and reconfigure the textual, which has been the dominant means of communication since the 14th century.

Digimodernism, as a term, might help us to interrogate our new cultural relationship to texts and textuality, which are a means of configuring subjectivity and identity, but Kirby does not adequately address materiality and embodiment, which are key components of cultural experience. Whereas it might be argued that postmodernism and the postmodern zombie of the last 35 years of the 20th century struggled with authentic locations of identity, and of an authentic notion of identity itself, both individuating and collectivizing the figure of the zombie,[88] the supposed digimodernism of the 21st century zombie is a way of working-through the tension between individual and community, a way of locating the self within a network of shifting notions of ownership and hierarchy. Or, to put it another way, it is a way of understanding the self—the biological—in relationship to new media—the technological.

It is in 2002, after a period of sub-cultural latency that extended well over a decade,[89] that a new wave of zombie cinema officially emerges with Danny Boyle's *28 Days Later*. This film, though generally accepted as a part of the genre, breaks with a number of established generic rules as discussed earlier in this section. *28 Days* opens with a scene that establishes the premise, or reason, for the zombies—blood infection—unlike all other traditional zombie films (traditional in the sense of following the generic

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[85] Alan Kirby, *Digimodernism: How New Technologies Dismantle the Postmodern and Reconfigure Our Culture* (New York: Continuum, 2009).

[86] Kirby 1.

[87] Kirby 3.

[88] See, again, Steven Shaviro, "Contagious Allegories: George Romero," in *The Cinematic Body* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 83-106.

[89] George Romero's third zombie installment, *Day of the Dead*, opened in 1985; and Tom Savini, who worked on special effects in the original *Dawn of the Dead* (1978), remade *Night of the Living Dead* in 1990. During this time (1985-2002) there were, of course a large number of low-budget, independent zombie films released across the globe. For more information on these films see Jamie Russell's *Book of the Dead: The Complete History of Zombie Cinema* (Surrey, England: FAB Press, 2005).

formula created by Romero) in which no reason is given or established; this film maintains the notion of infection associated with zombie invasions—that the dead have been infected or that the dead infect the living, and the walking dead are akin to an infestation. Rather than the recently dead reanimating, the living become zombie-like through an easily-transmitted and fast-acting blood infection; and because the zombies of *28 Days Later* are not reanimated dead but members of the living who are diseased with rage, and thus pumped on adrenaline with a singular drive to furiously destroy the Uninfected, their movements are quick and almost cat-like rather than awkward and lumbering, and they can be killed in more ways than simply destroying their brain (starvation, etc.).

This breaking with the accepted rules of zombie cinema is important, particularly because so many die-hard zombie fans accept this film as part of the canon, because it demonstrates both a clear connection to its cultural-historical roots as part of the zombie subgenre while also moving the subgenre forward into the 21st century thereby allowing it to evolve and hopefully sustain itself. Both the divergence and the acceptance may be due in part to the experiential shift that *28 Days* comments upon: this film, as part of a new technological era encompassing both social milieu and means of production, cannot maintain the rigor of an old set of rules, but must inevitably venture onto a new path while still maintaining ties to the old; and, it might be argued, zombie fans, being equally enmeshed in the fury of the new technology, were eager not only to see their favorite subgenre return anew to the screen, but also to see a cine-metaphoric representation of their own experiences.

The 21st century has also witnessed an explosion in the production of zombie films. In the Classical Hollywood period, there were about two dozen zombie movies produced; during the postmodern, or Romero, period there were about eighty; yet since the release of *28 Days Later* (just the past nine years), there have been over 120 zombie films released—a figure that does not account for the large number of straight-to-video or minor-league production studio releases.[90] I see this exponential surge as also directly related to the availability of consumer technologies such as digital video cameras, computers, and film editing software; a surge akin to that in independent cinema more generally because of the same availability and accessibility of the equipment required to produce a film.

As I have stated, my argument suggests that this recent explosion, or renaissance, in zombie cinema is a direct result of and response to the technological revolution of the mid-1990s and its continued development and evolution. The zombie as figure embodies and metaphorizes certain aspects of this (see Chapter two, in which I argue that Boyle's zombies serve as metaphor for the concept of biomedia; or, conversely, that the concept of biomedia serves as a theoretical tool in uncovering the representational work that these zombies do); and the zombie film—via narrative, representational techniques, form, and so on—also gives expression to and responds to these new techno-cultural developments.

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[90] These figures are limited to those films produced originally in the English language, and do not account for the rather large Italian, German, Spanish, and French markets (among others). See the filmography at the end of the document for a list of these films.

My argument stands in contrast to those arguments recently put forth by other cultural theorists examining the zombie cinematic subgenre in the 21st century.

Although useful and well-researched, Kyle William Bishop's *American Zombie Gothic* (2010) fails in one of its most basic arguments: that zombie movies have "returned to prominence because [of] the social and cultural conditions of a post-9/11 world."[91] I agree that the events of 9/11 have shaped cultural texts, including zombie films, but I do not read zombies as terrorists ("The fear that anyone could be a suicide bomber or a hijacker parallels a common trope of zombie films, in which healthy people are zombified by contact with other zombies and become killers"[92]) or zombie films as directly representative of a post-apocalyptic terrorist world. To me, that mapping is too obvious and facile, and does not really uncover the deeper cultural interworkings of these films.

Like Bishop, there are a number of authors who consider a larger historical breadth and/or include works beyond the zombie genre, while ultimately making an argument about zombie subculture in the 21st century. Kim Paffenroth, in *Gospel of the Living Dead* (2006), examines (at the time) each of Romero's zombie films through a religious and moralist lens, arguing that zombie films show us (humans, the living) at our ethical worst.[93] In his 2003 *The Cinema of George A. Romero*, Tony Williams considers the filmmaker's work in the context of the American cultural tradition of Naturalism.[94] In the final chapter of his dissertation "Pity Poor Flesh," Jesse James Stommel employs the zombie as the final object of analysis in his study on dismemberment and the postmodern body.[95] And, Casey Dawn Evans employs trauma theory in her 2009 dissertation "'They're Us': Infectious Trauma and the Zombie Apocalypse," a study in which, contrary to what the title suggests, she examines works that fall outside of the zombie canon.[96]

Each of these recent book-length studies consider more than just 21st century zombie films; films that are about and incorporate the zombie into their narrative and representational visual frame. Furthermore, the main analytical lens employed by each of these authors, though interesting and important in their own way, falls short of examining the most pressing cultural phenomenon that directly influences and shapes these zombie films: the digital, new media revolution. I see the new renaissance of zombie cinema and the resulting subculture as directly connected to the rise of new media. Furthermore, my project is the first book-length study to focus its analytical attentions on zombie cinema since the turn of the millennium, as well as the resultant subculture that reaches beyond the screen.

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[91] Bishop, *Gothic* 25.

[92] Bishop, *Gothic* 29.

[93] See Paffenroth, *Gospel of the Living Dead*.

[94] See Williams, *The Cinema of George A. Romero*.

[95] Jesse James Stommel, "Pity Poor Flesh" (PhD diss., University of Colorado at Boulder, 2010).

[96] Casey Dawn Evans, *"'They're Us': Infectious Trauma and the Zombie Apocalypse*," diss., University of Louisiana, 2009, (Ann Arbor, UMI, 2009, 3361700).

Cultural Context(s) / Cultural History (in brief)

2002 gave us *28 Days Later* and the beginnings of a second wave of zombie cinema. 1968 gave us *Night of the Living Dead* and the emergence of the modern horror genre (as well as the contemporary conception of zombie cinema). Moving even further back in cinematic history is the birth of film in 1895 with the premiere of the Lumière Brothers' "The Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat Station" at the Salon Indien of the Grand Café. The mythology surrounding this event is well known: the spectators, overcome with fear and anxiety at what appeared to be an actual train, panic and flee from the viewing. As Tom Gunning so clearly argues in his well-cited essay "An Aesthetics of Astonishment" (1989), on a very basic historical level the source of this account "does not figure in any report of the first screening" that he has located.[97] Never mind that this origin myth conveniently reduces the spectator to a passive, mindless consumer, thereby underpinning "certain contemporary theorizations of spectatorship" where audiences are imagined "submitting passively to an all-dominating apparatus, hypnotized and transfixed by its illusionist power."[98] Yet, the myth is compelling and insistent, it remains as a troped moment in film history, one that metaphorizes the cultural shift in experience due to the rapid changes brought on by the Industrial Revolution and modernity. I point to this cultural moment to foreground the ways in which cultural shifts such as the technology explosion of the Industrial Revolution impact the ways in which we, as individuals in a particular socio-historical moment or era, experience the world and interpersonal relations, and by extension how representational media can change and inform those experiences and relations.

In 1995 Microsoft released their much-hyped Windows95 operating system for personal computers, a product that borrowed heavily from Apple's Graphical User Interface (GUI), which was developed for Macintosh computers in the early-mid 1980s.[99] 1995 marked film's centenary. 1995 also marks the "grand opening," as it were, of "the global communications revolution" (a term I have borrowed from the performance artist Ping Chong).[100] Although the Internet and computers as means of communication and networking functioned and existed well before 1995, I see that year as marking a distinct shift in digitality from the realm of the elite (i.e., computer programmers, scientists, engineers, etc.) to the larger realm of the everyday user. As computers and the Internet became increasingly user-friendly (Windows95 playing a key part in that), notions of "new media" and "the digital" entered an assumed daily parlance where laypersons were able to gain some level of access to what was once considered the elite realm previously mentioned. Screened interfaces, mediated encounters, and other flickering images grounded in 1s and 0s (binary code) have become ever-more present, prominent, and assumed. This "new media revolution"[101] of the 21st century, which is a "shift of all

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[97] Tom Gunning, "An Aesthetics of Astonishment: Early Film and the (In)Credulous Spectator," *Art and Text* 34 (Spring 1989): 31.

[98] Gunning, "Aesthetics" 32.

[99] Lev Manovich, in *The Language of New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), also sees 1995 as a key and pivotal year; see pages 4-6.

[100] Ping Chong, *The East-West Quartet* (New York: Theatre Communications Group, 2004) 6.

[101] Manovich, *Language* 19.

cultural to computer-mediated forms of production, distribution, and communication,"[102] is still shaping the way we, as global citizens, do business, experience the world, access information, etc., as computers and other digital media are continually improved, redesigned, honed, and massaged.[103] As technologies move away from the analogue and more towards the digital, concerns of what "new media" are or how "the digital" can be defined are no longer of pressing concern; while "technology never simply determines, it cannot but effect the context in which ideas are formed."[104] The concern now is how this technological shift is still manifesting on a cultural level (and how this shift might be understood, made sense of, and represented).

The term "new media" has been used since the 1960s, but came to prominence in the mid 1990s[105] coinciding with the rise of the consumer Internet. By the late 1990s academics and cultural theorists began publishing theories and articulations of new media. Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin's 1999 book *Remediation: Understanding New Media* examined new media across history, beginning in the Renaissance and moving through to Virtual Reality. Bolter and Grusin employ the organizing terms "remediation," "immediacy," and "hypermediacy," as a means of understanding and theorizing shifts in the types of media and the uses of these various media. Just three years later, Lev Manovich published *The Language of New Media* (2002), in which he expressly defines current new media as "computer media." Manovich convincingly argues that our current technological revolution of "computer media," unlike the previous ones of the printing press and photography (and industrialization more generally), "affects all stages of communication, including acquisition, manipulation, storage, and distribution; it also affects all types of media—texts, still images, moving images, sounds, and spatial constructions."[106] For Manovich, then, "new" or "emerging" media come implicitly and explicitly from the computer.[107]

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[102] Manovich, *Language* 19.

[103] As I allude to above, I see an interesting, though not necessarily teleological, parallel between this current technological revolution and that of the Industrial Revolution a century previous.

[104] Laura Mulvey, *Death 24x a Second: Stillness and the Moving Image* (London: Reaktion Books, 2006) 9.

[105] Chun 1.

[106] Manovich, *Language* 19.

[107] There are, of course, many more publications that deal with understanding, articulating, and analyzing new media. Many of them will be used in this dissertation, though not all. Some of these volumes include: Roger Fidler, *Mediamorphosis: Understanding New Media* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press, 1997); Peter Lunenfeld, ed, *The Digital Dialectic: New Essays on New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999); Noah Wardrip-Fruin and Nick Montfort, eds, *The New Media Reader* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003); Lisa Gitelman and Geoffrey B. Pingree, eds, *New Media, 1740-1915* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003); Martin Lister, et al, *New Media: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2003); Nick Couldry and Anna McCarthy, eds, *MediaSpace: Place, Scale, and Culture in a Media Age* (New York: Routledge, 2004); James Curran and David Morley, eds, *Media & Cultural Theory* (New York: Routledge, 2006); Anna Munster, *Materializing New Media: Embodiment in*

The cinema, also, has experienced a digital turn. According to Manovich, "[c]omputer media redefines the very identity of cinema,"[108] by altering its indexical relationship to reality. The digital, "as an abstract information system, made a break with analogue imagery, finally sweeping away the relation with reality, which had, by and large, dominated the photographic tradition."[109] The process of capturing images onto celluloid is one of inscription,[110] one in which the camera literally imprints the light emanating from the profilimic scene (however grandiose and staged, or simple and "untouched") onto the material film, serving as an index of reality.

> But what happens to cinema's indexical identity if it is now possible to generate photorealistic scenes entirely in a computer using 3D computer animation; to modify individual frames or whole scenes with the help of a digital paint program; to cut, bend, stretch and stitch digitized film images into something which has perfect photographic credibility, although it was never actually filmed?[111]

For Manovich, this speaks to the cinema's return to animation: "*Digital cinema is a particular case of animation which uses live action footage as one of its many elements*."[112] The digital image no longer bears the same direct relationship to reality that had once been the technological drive of photography and cinema[113]; digital technologies can now produce images that are photorealistic in their appearance but which have no real world referent, returning the cinema to a position of animation rather than pure indexicality.[114]

Even in its indexical form, the cinema combines "two human fascinations: one with the boundary between life and death and the other with the mechanical animation of the inanimate, particularly the human."[115] Put another way, the cinema offers an

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Information Aesthetics (Dartmouth, N.H.: Dartmouth College Press, 2006); Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (New York: NYU Press, 2006); Susan Broadhurst, *Digital Practices: Aesthetic and Meuroesthetic Approaches to Performance and Technology* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); James Lyons and John Plunk, eds, *Multimedia Histories: From the Magic Lantern to the Internet* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2007); David Buckingham, ed, *Youth, Identity, and Digital Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008); Gerard Goggin and Larissa Hjorth, eds, *Mobile Technologies: From Telecommunication to Media* (New York: Routledge, 2009); Nicola Green and Leslie Haddon, *Mobile Communications: An Introduction to New Media* (New York: Berg, 2009).

[108] Manovich, "Digital Cinema?" 405.

[109] Mulvey, *Death* 18.

[110] Mulvey, *Death* 19.

[111] Manovich, "Digital Cinema?" 406.

[112] Manovich, "Digital Cinema?" 410.

[113] Mulvey, *Death* 18.

[114] Manovich, "Digital Cinema?" 409-14.

[115] Mulvey, *Death* 11.

uncannily ideal medium through which to narrativize and represent the zombie, which serves as an object that aids in making sense of this new media, digital, technological turn. “Necessarily embedded in passing time, these [cinematic] images come to be more redolent of death than of life.”[116] From these contexts and understandings emerges my argument that 21st century zombie cinema responds to and comments upon our cultural moment.

[116] Mulvey, *Death* 11.

CHAPTER 2.

INAUGURATING THE 21ST CENTURY ZOMBIE: EMBODYING BIOMEDIA AND LIMINALITY IN DANNY BOYLE'S *28 DAYS LATER* (2002)

With the premiere of Danny Boyle's *28 Days Later* (2002), zombies emerged in the 21st century with blatant departures from what might be considered more traditional conceptions of the zombie figure. Rather than the slow-moving, awkward, and lumbering zombie created by George A. Romero, or the reanimated corpse of the Haitian zombie, equally as vacant and mindlessly trudging as the former, though typically without visible decay and presumably under the control of an outside source, Boyle's zombies are not dead, and they are quick and agile, moving with a consuming, single-minded purpose. These deviations, though not fully taken up by all subsequent zombie films outside the *28* franchise, do mark important contemporaneous cultural thematics that the film both represents and comments upon by performatively thematizing socio-cultural concerns around the intersections of biology and technology, and the increased speed of connection and contagion. *28 Days Later*, is overtly marked by generic heterogeneity (borrowing from the survival and road film genres as well as horror), and takes place in early-21st century, post-apocalyptic England. After the release of a synthetic infectious disease known as the "rage virus," the population of England, and presumably the world,[117] is decimated to a mere handful of uninfected humans. Those who have contracted the virus, referred to as the Infected, are overcome with blind rage, which leaves them lacking in social and critical consciousness and reduces them to a mindless, zombie-like state in which their only active impulse is to brutally kill and consume any and all sentient (uninfected) people.

[117] Whether the rage virus spread beyond the British Isles or not is debated on both sides within the film, but never fully established. The suggestion is, however, with the sequel *28 Weeks Later* (2007), that the rage virus did not make it off the Island.

The viral zombies of *28 Days* do not need to be biologically dead to mimic the mindlessness of the walking dead. Rather, in their living state of raged infection, Boyle's zombies directly thematize the potential reaches (or lack thereof) of critical consciousness in a post-capitalist, posthuman age. Recalling the social critiques of Romero's zombies in *Dawn of the Dead* (1978) that lumbered about aimlessly through a shopping mall (emblematizing the mindless consumer[118]), Boyle's zombies become metaphors for the mediated body where the distinction of living or dead becomes irrelevant in an age where machines can keep someone "alive" indefinitely: we have entered an age of biomedia.

Furthermore, as the concept of biomedia suggests, a stasis of in-between, of both/and, has become ever more pervasive as a condition of cultural and personal existence. In an era of postcapitalism, one beyond even postcolonialism, there are numerous diasporic communities, stateless nationalities, and hybrid cultures. We have moved beyond the multiculturalism of the late-1980s and '90s and into a state of not just plurality but of plurality of identity. How does one articulate being both black and gay?[119] Is there a box on the U. S. Census Bureau form for Afro-Filipino-American? What gender does an intersex person claim, and how does the layperson make sense of this claim within their rigid binarized concepts of gender and sexuality? An update to the century's-old concept of "the liminal" assists us in further making sense of cultural identities, (in relationship to) new media, and how zombie cinema creates analytical meaning through its representations.

I will demonstrate how each of these concepts—biomedia and liminality—function within *28 Days Later*; and in demonstrating their functionality I also foreshadow or imply their continued use and development within 21st century zombie cinema. More importantly, I will develop and expand upon these terms, bringing biomedia into a more embodied and lived context showing how zombie cinematic production performs biomediation, while also introducing my own concept of zombie liminality, one that, though akin to permanent liminality, as I will argue later in the chapter, speaks more specifically to a new media cultural context of postcolonialism, postcapitalism, and globalization. I further establish a common vocabulary by taking a moment to explain the common use and understanding of biomedia and liminality, building upon my work in the preface. I then turn to the film, analyzing key moments that illuminate not only how these terms help us to make better sense of the cultural workings of *28 Days*, but also how Boyle's film offers a platform on which to develop and complicate these terms, making them more relevant to an embodied everyday experience as well as giving these terms leverage in a wider theoretical context.

BIOMEDIA

Eugene Thacker began developing his concept of biomedia in his 2001 dissertation with an examination of the ways in which biotechnology reconfigures the

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[118] For more on the discussion of a critique of consumerism in George A. Romero's *Dawn of the Dead* (1978), see Harper, "Zombies, Malls and the Consumerism Debate."

[119] *Tongues Untied*, dir. Marlon Riggs. Frameline, 1989.

relationship between the body and technology,[120] and further developed the critical term with the publication of a book-length study on the subject in 2004.[121] Technology is the development, use, and application of tools developed by man; these would include language, the printing press, trains, automobiles, film, computers, and so on. Biology includes organic, non-manmade, entities: humans, animals and plants from single-cell organisms, and the complex blue whale and redwood tree. As technologies have evolved and developed, becoming ever more complex and nuanced, people have increased the use of technology interfacing with biology, and vice versa, such as: prosthetic limbs and organs, cloning, "test tube" babies, and DNA mapping.

Biomedia offers a means of understanding the position of the biological, the embodied, in a world seemingly driven by computer code and information. Through the concept of biomedia, Thacker reminds us that the biological, which can be traced to a series of DNA and RNA strands, is itself informationally based.[122] The biological emerges from genetic code not unlike the binary system of 1s and 0s that makes-up computer code, the same code that, just as magically as the assemblage of base pairings in DNA strands produce complex biological beings such as humans, generates the complex images, graphics, and video that spectators and users encounter everyday on computer desktops and elsewhere.[123] This is not to "reduce" complex biology to "simple" information, thereby evacuating the nuanced experience of life to pure data; rather, biomedia "*proceeds via a dual investment in biological materiality, as well as the informatic capacity to enhance biological materiality*."[124] In short, biomedia accounts for the indifferentional interrelationality between the organic and the digital[125] that has arisen since the late 20th century.

LIMINALITY

The concept of liminality holds a much longer and stationed position within cultural anthropology and multidisciplinary theory. Anthropologist Arnold van Gennep first coined the term liminality in his 1909 publication *Rites de Passage*, in which he conducted an enthnographic study of small communities, using the term to describe the in between stage of initiation rites.[126] A few decades later, anthropologist-turn-performance-theorist Victor Turner reinvigorated the term by returning to sites similar to those of van

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[120] Eugene Thacker, "Bioinformatic Bodies: Biopolitics, Biotech, and the Discourse of the Posthuman" (PhD diss., Rutgers University, 2001).

[121] Thacker, *Biomedia*.

[122] Eugene Thacker, "Data Made Flesh: Biotechnology and the Discourse of the Posthuman," *Cultural Critique* 53 (Winter 2003): 91.

[123] Eugene Thacker, "Bioinformatics and Bio-logics," *Postmodern Culture* 13.2 (January 2003).

[124] Eugene Thacker, "What is Biomedia?" *Configurations* 11.1 (Winter 2003): 52-53, original emphasis.

[125] By digital I mean the reduction of all 21st century new media technological processes to a basic informational series of 1s and 0s: binary code.

[126] Arnold van Gennep, *Rites de Passage* (Paris: E. Nourry, 1909).

Gennep, and expanding the terms use beyond the specificities of tribal ritual applications to assist in the examination of social rituals, structures, and play.[127]

Now a key performance studies term, liminality suggests an in-between state or the place of transition from one normative location to another within established social roles. The liminal is a state or space of in between,[128] where, speaking in medial terms, "the interplay of two or more media propagate new ideas, new forms, new ways of seeing and being."[129] Liminality is about bridging and connecting two locations or states.[130] According to Turner, the "passage from one social status to another is often accompanied by a parallel passage in space, a geographical movement from one place to another."[131] The liminal is often geographic. It is also temporal: "there has to be an interfacial region or, to change the metaphor, an interval, however brief, or *margin* or *limen*, when the past is momentarily negated, suspended, or abrogated, and the future has not yet begun, an instant of pure potentiality when everything, as it were, trembles in the balance."[132] People engaged in liminal experiences resemble their static, nonliminal selves, and yet are removed from or are outside of their social status and categorizations.[133]

Significantly, the concept of liminality helps to theorize and make sense of cultural shifts from the regime changing (the still on-going Iraq), to the technological (new media and the Internet), as well as states of being (the zombie). "As a fundamental human experience, liminality transmits cultural practices, codes, rituals, and meanings in-between aggregate structures and uncertain outcomes."[134] In one sense, society and culture are in a continual state of flux and transition, making all moments liminal. In a more productive imagining, however, there are key events that prove more rupturing and destabilizing; these are times when experience and expectations shift so radically in such a short period of time that it takes a moment, so to say, to make sense of what has

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[127] Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre*.

[128] Coco Fusco and Ricardo Dominguez, "On-Line Simulations/Real-Life Politics: A Discussion with Ricardo Dominguez on Staging Virtual Theater," *TDR* 47.2 (Summer 2003): 156.

[129] Hans Breder, "Intermedia: Enacting the Liminal," *Performing Arts Journal* 17.2/3 (May-Sept 1995): 114.

[130] Dwight Conquergood, "Performance Studies: Interventions and Radical Research," *TDR* 46.2 (Summer, 2002): 152.

[131] Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre* 25.

[132] Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre* 44.

[133] Consider, for instance, members of a pilgrimage. People from all walks of life and social standings come together to experience this spiritual journey. While on the pilgrimage these people are no longer their original selves—banker, line cook, actor, lawyer, gardener, doctor—but maintain the distinct appearance and mannerisms of their pre-liminal self. All who participate in a pilgrimage are pilgrims; they experience this transitional journey as a common group. See, Turner and Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture* (New York: New York, Columbia University Press, 1978).

[134] Agnes Horvath, Bjørn Thomassen, and Harald Wydra, "IPA3 Introduction: Liminality and Cultures of Change," *International Political Anthropology* 2.1 (2009) 25 March 2010 < http://www.politicalanthropology.org/the-journal-current-a-past-issues/past-issues/171>.

happened and to reimagine our relationship to the social and cultural. This making sense occurs in critical writing, such as that of Thacker and Turner, as well as in cultural objects, such as popular cinema; employing the concept of the liminal to help analyze our new media cultural moment is a fruitful endeavor.

The liminal also helps in further investigating biomedia, and both terms assist in understanding the dialogic meaning at work in *28 Days Later*. This chapter is divided into four sections. In the first, "Zombie Virus," I jump directly into *28 Days Later*, where, through analytical close reading, I illustrate how the zombie body functions as a site for performatively exploring the possibilities of biomedia. With "Zombie Athletes," I turn my attention to a non-medical consideration of the body (specifically the body of the actors playing zombies) and technologies (in this case, the digital video camera used to shoot the movie) in order to further extrapolate the possibilities within the term "biomedia," arguing that this concept applies across fields beyond the medical and scientific and helps to articulate the processes at work in producing an image when physical prowess meets technological image capturing. In "Zombie Coding," I develop this further by mapping Thacker's definitional biomedia process of encoding, recoding, and decoding onto the process of Infection in the movie, where the Rage Virus serves as a catalyst for this process. This discussion develops into one of liminality and the introduction of the term "zombie liminality," which is one of a permanent liminal state where one is eternally positioned in between: in between racial signifiers, in between nationalities, in between identities; in between life and death, in between human and non-human. In the fourth and final section, "Zombie Contagion/Containment," I continue to develop the concept of zombie liminality by applying the term directly to real-world conditions and situations. With the help of Barbara Browning's work on Africa in *Infectious Rhythm*, I argue that "zombie liminality" helps us to understand culturally transitional situations emerging from a new world order of globalization—one encouraged and even engendered by the fast connectivity of wired new media—such as the racially-charged displaced diaspora, illegal immigrants, and state-less nationalities, to the less-publicized experiences of intersex or transgendered communities.

Zombie Virus

28 Days Later (2002) opens with images of civil unrest, chaos in the streets, wailing widows, crying mothers, mob lynchings, police brutality, and other scenes of rage and destruction caught on b-roll news footage.[135] The screen erupts with the kinetic movements of a handheld camera in the middle of energetic chaos. From behind a red pick-up truck the shot quickly stumbles into a violent scene of men attacking one another; there is too much movement and the camera is so immersed in the action that individual identifiers are nearly impossible to determine—a swatch of color here, a patch of skin there as the camera pans back and forth—while the unpaved ground and dusty air belie a rural poverty, one on the outskirts of Westernization. After just five seconds the camera quickly cuts to a close-shot of a hijab-clad woman holding what might be a baby or small

[135] According to Danny Boyle in the commentary track of the Blu-ray release of the movie, all of these images were shot specifically for the film and were inspired by images emerging from war-stricken Sierra Leone.

child (wrapped in a blanket), her face contorted in cries of mourning. The camera pans to a crowd of people either lifting or lowering a body out of/into the ground. Cut to a row of policemen in full armor, holding crowd-controlling shields as they march down a city street toward some unseen protest. Back to the more rural scene, this time with a chaotic group of men beating a hung corpse. Cut to the city streets, now full of the chaos of riot police beating and tasing protestors. The edits between the rural and urban scenes come fast and furious (nearly twenty cuts in only thirty seconds), matching the chaos of the shots they contain, and obfuscating any clear picture of what the viewer is seeing.

The camera pans back to reveal the seven television screens on which these scenes flicker, positioned in a semi-circle in direct eye-line of a chimpanzee that is tethered to a flatbed with electrodes taped to his head.[136] We are in the Cambridge Primate Research Centre where three animal rights activists (Alex Palmer, Bindu De Stoppani, and Jukka Hiltunen) gain illegal entry in order to free the captive chimpanzees currently being used for medical testing. In the large, dimly lit laboratory there are no walls or partitions to demarcate specific testing areas. Rather, everything is loosely grouped in the open space of the lab: off to the side near the entry sits an autopsy table with partially-dissected chimp; in the background there is an area with computers and other pieces of technology; the center of the room holds a number of long Plexiglas cages, which allow the imprisoned chimps to pace back forth, as well as traditional metal cages—all of which contain clearly disturbed chimpanzees making a variety of aggressive gestures, movements, and sounds;[137] and the *Clockwork Orange*-like video station of the film's first moments.

As the shocked activists walk slowly through the room taking photographic evidence while trying to make sense of the horrific scene before them, an unwitting scientist (David Schneider) returns to the lab with his coffee. The camera pans from a now-frozen activist staring across the great space of the lab to the momentarily dumbfounded scientist, who then drops his coffee and runs to call security. From here the awed stillness erupts into chaos: one activist runs across the room to stop the scientist and rips the phone from the wall; the scientist desperately pleads with the activists to not release the chimps because they've been intentionally infected. The activists yell over the scientist, uninterested in what he has to say and the chimps echo the tension and urgency.

SCIENTIST

The chimps are infected! They're highly contagious; they've been given an inhibitor…

ACTIVIST #1

Infected with what?

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[136] Upon closer inspection it seems that these external electrodes are just the surface-level portions of electrodes that have been implanted in his brain.

[137] At this point in the scene, the chimps, although agitated, remain muted to allow the paralyzed stillness of the moment to exist. This then serves in stark contrast to what occurs next.

SCIENTIST
In order to cure you must first understand!

ACTIVIST #1
Infected with what!?

SCIENTIST
(pause)
Rage.

[…]

The animals are contagious! The infection is in their blood and saliva.
One bite….

Activist #2 walks over to a chimp cage with a large pair of wire cutters. She cuts the lock off the cage and opens the door.

SCIENTIST (CONT'D)
Wait! You've no idea!

The chimp comes running out of the cage and leaps onto Activist #2, attacking her.[138]

From here the speed with which infection takes hold of the body is demonstrated. Activist #3 has, presumably, killed the chimp with the same wire cutters used to release the animal, thus freeing Activist #2. She immediately vomits a large amount of blood onto the floor, yells "I'm burning!", and with rapid yet awkward movements sits-up and coughs more blood into the face of Activist #3, thereby infecting him. Meanwhile, the scientist desperately calls for the immediate death of Activist #2 while he searches for an instrument—finally landing on a metal lab stool—with which to kill her. The scientist holds the stool in an aggressive stance about to smash it on her skull, but he pauses. The camera cuts to an extreme close-up of now-infected Activist #2, whose eyes, the focus of the close-up, are yellowed and almost cat-like: a visual marker that the infection has taken complete hold of her body. The camera then pans away from the immediate action of the infection taking hold of and spreading amongst the humans, to the monkeys who continue to scream and beat on their cages. From point of initial contact (monkey attack) to first sign of the infection taking hold (vomiting blood) only twenty seconds have passed; and only another five-to-ten seconds to full consumption by the virus.

In less than ten minutes Boyle has established a connection between the mediated (the technological) and the biological. At the center of this primate research lab clearly marked for biological research sits a research station filled with screens (cathode ray tube

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[138] All scenes quoted in this chapter are a transcription of the film as presented in the following edition: *28 Days Later*, dir. Danny Boyle, Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, LLC 2002, Blu Ray.

(CRT) televisions)[139]—the central positioning of this particular research station may be more figurative if not literal given that perspective and proportional relationality are intentionally distorted in this scene. In the middle of this research station lies a tethered chimpanzee, a test subject chosen because they are the one species whose DNA most closely matches that of humans.[140] The significance of this lies in the close genetic relationship between chimpanzees and humans, and the use of both media images and biological creatures in the research because of the way the virus so seamlessly translates from primate host to human host.

Although we are not privy to the scientific mechanics of constructing the virus, and we neither witness nor learn precisely what the researchers were doing, we are still able to extrapolate and propose a theory based on the information that is made available to the viewer. On the one hand, the film seems to suggest that there is a connection between watching violent images and the creation of the rage virus—an argument often made about violent video games and images and the engendering of aggressive and violent behavior in children and even adults who consume those representations—but there is also a suggestion of something more complicated. Watching the scenes as described earlier in this section invariable trigger certain emotional responses in the chimp, which can be traced and presumably captured via chemical reactions in the brain—thus the electrode implants in the chimps skull and brain. In other words, these emotional responses—something very personal, real, and embodied—can be extracted to pure data stored in the chemicals produced by the brain. What we don't see is how the scientists are able to capture those chemicals, that data, and manufacture a virus; but based on the information given us in the film thus far—*"The chimps are infected! They're highly contagious, they've been given an inhibitor…*"—it is safe to infer that such a process, or one similar, has taken place in order to actually infect the chimps with Rage.

Not only are the chimps infected, which causes them to behave in an overly aggressive and violent manner, they've also "been given an inhibitor." This nearly imperceptible assertion on the part of the scientist is actually very important in further theorizing the way the virus is not only constructed but how it interacts with the body on an informational level. As I will explain in more detail later in the chapter, the virus actually combines with and alters the basic genetic code of the host, informatically recontextualizing the biological,[141] thereby having a material effect on who/what the host

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[139] The type of screens is apparent for a number of reasons: when the camera pans back we, the audience, plainly see that a series of monitors have been set-up to transmit these images; there are also horizontal lines across the images when we see them in close-up (not fully aware that what we see is the filming of another screen displaying images), belying the image display quality of CRT monitors; and when we are able to see the monitors for what they are, it is very clear that they are not flat screen models (in 2001-2002, during the production of this film, flat-screen monitors were still rather rare and expensive) because of the curved glass screen.

[140] Stefan Lovgren, "Chimps, Humans 96 Percent the Same, Gene Study Finds," *National Geographic News* 31 August 2005, Web, 4 November 2010 <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2005/08/0831_050831_chimp_genes.html>.

[141] Thacker, "Bioinformatics and Bio-logics."

is. The presence of the inhibitor is important because, although it does not function like a cure or antidote, it does reduce its effects on the thing it inhibits. I would argue that the inhibitor causes the Rage virus to function more like a flu virus in that it does not combine with, override, or alter the genetic information of the host. Rather, the presence of the inhibitor causes the Rage virus to combat the host's system in such a way that symptoms still manifest—as they do with the flu—but the virus does not recode into the host's system, thereby never overriding or otherwise altering the genetic make-up of the host body. Just as the flu virus does not alter who we are on a basic genetic, informational level, the presence of the inhibitor in the chimps prevents full viral recoding so that the chimps display symptoms. In other words, whereas the chimps are still extremely aggressive and violent, they do not exhibit the same extreme level of transformation that humans undergo when infected with the same virus. We see the chimps for what they are—just very agitated. When the Rage virus passes to a human host without an inhibitor, we witness a material transformation, as metonymically represented in the close-up of the eyes.

These "zombies," the Infected, are recognizable as still living and human, but not in the sentient sense we assume when relating to one another. The ways in which the Infected respond to Uninfected humans is reactive and reflex-like; they do not display a sense of give and take, they hear and respond in a very primal, visceral sense. For instance, when the protagonist of the film (Jim) encounters a priest in a Catholic church, Jim calls to him repeatedly, referring to the priest as "Father," but the Infected priest displays no cognitive reception or recognition, he mindlessly and awkwardly continues to advance toward Jim in strange jerking movements while making eerie gurgling sounds.

The virus, a synthetic biotechnology, has "recontextualized [….] the biological."[142] As introduced above, Thacker offers a useful and insightful term with which to better understand the work of these 21st century zombies: biomedia. As I articulated earlier, Biomedia as a concept has been developed and deployed since the early 21st century by Thacker, and some of his earliest publications on this topic date from 2001,[143] contemporaneous with the making of *28 Days Later*. In noting the contemporaneous production of the film and Thacker's research I do not suggest some teleological connection, rather, I foreground the cultural climate from which these works emerged: one in which new media (being those that distinguish themselves "from earlier [screened] media such as film or television"[144]) have become inculcated into daily discourse and experience. Both Boyle and Thacker, via different disciplines (cinema and philosophy respectively) and different levels of intention, seek to examine and represent how these new media find embodiment: whether through the cinematic representation of the Infected—the new zombie—or the theorizing of the intersections and conjoining of the biological and technological. These zombies, the Infected, are literally viral. Zombieness spreads through a virus, and although *28 Days Later* does not provide a clear answer to the technicalities of *how* this virus came to be, we can extrapolate a virus-

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[142] Thacker, "Bioinformatics and Bio-logics" np.

[143] Eugene Thacker, "The Science Fiction of Technoscience: The Politics of Simulation and a Challenge for New Media Art," *Leonardo: International Journal of Contemporary Visual Artists* 34.2 (April 2001): 155-158.

[144] Thacker, *Biomedia* 8.

creation theory by incorporating the work of Thacker: this virus has been created through the combination of digital technologies, where genetic code and binary code inform each other to the point of becoming nearly indistinguishable. The virus, and thus the zombies, spread with the speed of an uncontrollable computer virus.

28 DAYS LATER…[145]

The scene cuts to a deserted London—no people, no operational vehicles, no voices—just detritus marking the now absent human presence: old newspapers in the street, money blown about some steps, and a "notice board at Piccadilly Circus" covered in hand-written letters to missing persons as a means of trying to communicate.[146] The narrative follows our hero, Jim (Cillian Murphy), having woken from a coma inside a locked hospital room,[147] wander the empty London streets eventually reaching a Catholic church where he first meets the Infected. From here, Jim is saved from the roused Infected by Selena (Naomie Harris) and Mark (Noah Huntley), who give a brief synopsis of what Jim has missed since being in a coma: rumors of rioting in small villages and towns that quickly spread to the major cities becoming a reality right outside their windows; the police and army blockades were overrun, and efforts at evacuation proved impossible.[148] The three, against Selena's advice, travel to Jim's house in Deptford to find his parents. Upon arriving, Jim discovers his parents, dead in their bed, having committed suicide—his mom holding a childhood picture of Jim. That night, Jim inadvertently alerts their presence to a few of his now Infected neighbors, who break through the living room window in an effort to kill him, Mark, and Selena. During the brief melee it appears that Mark has become infected, and he is instantly dispatched by Selena who claims to leave no room for hesitation given the speed with which the infection takes-hold—about twenty seconds—and the instantaneous, violent and destructive effects the virus engenders within the Infected. From here the trio-turned-duo stumble upon a father-daughter pair hiding out in their flat, and the four embark on a journey following the information of an automated radio broadcast towards "the" supposed "answer to infection."[149]

The infection in *28 Days Later*, a virus simply referred to as "rage," is presumably synthetic and man-made, but based in the organic biology of natural human-like beings. The precise details of its construction and origins remain open to assumption and theorization within the parameters of the film, as I suggested above, because the scientists are never actually shown making the virus and infecting the chimps; what is clear,

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[145] *28 Days*.

[146] According to Danny Boyle in the documentary *Pure Rage: The Making of* 28 Days Later this particular moment in the film is inspired from an image in China after a major earthquake where people posted notes to one another as a means of communication and trying to locate lost loved ones because all normal means of communication had been eradicated in the disaster.

[147] This same scene begins the graphic novel-turn-AMC television show, *The Walking Dead*. Both the graphic novel/television series and Boyle's film have borrowed this scene from *Day of the Triffids* (1962).

[148] *28 Days*.

[149] *28 Days*.

however, is that scientists intentionally created the virus and infected test animals (chimpanzees) in order to understand the psychological state of rage. “In order to cure you must first understand!” In an effort to “cure” the emotional and psychological state of human rage, scientists manufactured this emotional state as a virus and used it to infect a number of chimpanzees in order to study the effects of this emotion and, hopefully, then locate a cure, like an antidepressant or valium.[150] The parallels to contemporaneous events and concerns surrounding disease and infection are not accidental, in fact *Pure Rage: The Making of* 28 Days Later—a documentary about the making of the *28 Days*, released on the home video version of the film—foregrounds the media responses to contemporaneous hoof and mouth disease,[151] HIV and AIDS,[152] SARS,[153] and anthrax[154].[155] With roots in biotechnology, the transference from primate to human, and the ease with which the infection spreads, the rage virus does echo events of the past quarter century relating to infectious diseases.

Yet, there is something more interesting going on with this film than the apparent representation of contemporaneous infectious diseases. In fact, the focus on infectious diseases, as made clear in the documentary, is an oversimplification of what this film thematizes as part of its reinvigoration of the zombie genre: the speed of the viral spread of a psychologically-based disease.[156] As Boyle states, “[s]omething very interesting happened while we [the production crew of *28 Days Later*] were filming: two German scientists created a totally synthetic polio virus, and they got all the material off the web.”[157] After a painstaking two years, “researchers at SUNY Stony Brook succeeded in synthesizing poliovirus from its chemical code, producing the world’s first synthetic virus.”[158] The detail of where these scientists obtained their source material—the Internet—is significant; this detail suggests that the digital—binary code, the most basic

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[150] *Pure Rage: The Making of* 28 Days Later, dir. Toby James, Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, LLC, 2007.

[151] The first major outbreak in the United Kingdom, at least the first one covered by the media on a massive and global scale, occurred in 2001, then another in 2007. For one of many articles related to this epidemic see T. R. Reid, “Animal Disease Alarm Isolates in Rural Britain,” *Washington Post*, 21 February 2010, Web, 16 November 2010.

[152] HIV and AIDS has been an ongoing global health epidemic since their early 1980s.

[153] For more on the SARS scare of the early-mid 2000s see John Pomfret, “China Orders Official to Give Full SARS Data,” *The Washington Post*, 14 May 2003, Web, 16 November 2010.

[154] For one of many articles related to this epidemic see Steven Milnoy, “Anthrax a weapon of mass bioterrorism?” *The Washington Times*, 15 October 2001, Web, 16 November 2010.

[155] *Pure Rage*.

[156] The notion of a psychologically-based disease such as the rage virus of *28 Days Later* is still the stuff of fiction.

[157] Danny Boyle in *Pure Rage*.

[158] “Poliovirus,” *Absolute Astronomy*, Web, 17 August 2010, <http://www.absoluteastronomy.com/topics/Poliovirus>.

material that the Internet is made from—plays a key part in the creation of the synthetic poliovirus, thereby further reinforcing the conjoining of the technological and the biological. The parallel developments of the first synthetically created virus using materials obtained from the Internet, and a film that revitalizes a popular subgenre of cinema (zombie films) by enacting contemporary concerns around the intertwined possibilities of biology and technology, suggest a need for a more nuanced investigation of how biology and digital technology mutually inform one another, and how this emerging interpenetration provides an analytical lens through which to better understand the performative work this new cycle of zombie films enacts.

Zombie Athletes

28 Days Later performs biomedia through the creation and use of a virus that has the ability to informatically alter genetic code. Pure materiality has both manifested and altered through code (information).[159] I have suggested the ways in which "zombie cinematic production performs biomediation." I would now like to expand this, moving from content to form, suggesting how the virus operates as technological enhancement by exploring a scene in which the means of production—digital camera—works to alter and enhance the bodies of the Infected, thus also suggesting a more grounded reading and employment of biomedia, one that hopefully returns us to a layperson's understanding of how the term might be deployed in everyday parlance.

A key element of my discussion here is the filming apparatus, most commonly understood as simply the camera, which is itself part of a larger cinematic apparatus consisting of "objective reality," scene being shot, the camera, editing, the projector, screen, and spectator.[160] Of course, the filming apparatus is never "simple" and is never unbiased; in fact, it has been a topic of much interest throughout the history of film theory because of the strong ideological effects the filming and cinematic apparatuses hold.[161] The purpose of studying the cinematic apparatus "is not to instantiate some kind of simplistic technological determinism."[162] In fact, the theorists who have undertaken its study "have been concerned precisely with the *junctures* of film and culture. That is, they have been concerned with the cultural determinations which produce the cinematic apparatus, and, inversely, how and why certain realms of representation serve as components of sociocultural formations."[163] Although here I look specifically at the digital camera, I do so within the context of the larger cinematic apparatus.

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[159] N. Katherine Hayles, "Afterword: The Human in the Posthuman," *Cultural Critique* 53 (Winter 2003), 136.

[160] Jean-Louis Baudry, "Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus," *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology: A Film Reader*, ed. Philip Rosen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 288.

[161] Some of the key film theorists include the already-cited Jean-Louis Baudry, Christian Metz, Laura Mulvey, Stephen Heath

[162] Philip Rosen, "Introduction" to "Part 3: Apparatus," *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology: A Film Reader*, ed. Philip Rosen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 282.

[163] Rosen 282, original emphasis.

28 Days Later enacts the bridging of technology and biology with the zombies themselves: using athletes with seemingly superhuman physical abilities to perform the Infected, and taking advantage of the effects inherent in digital video to capture the "seemingly superhuman" performance. For Boyle, when "you do a film that features monsters of some kind or other, you have to have a very clear way that you're going to manifest them on screen and I'd always wanted the monsters—the 'infected'—to be moving at almost inhuman speed."[164] To this end, Boyle became interested in hiring athletes where possible: "When you watch an athlete actually perform, you realize that they are doing things that you *should* be able to do but that you *know* you'll never be capable of."[165] As a means to further create the effect of uncanny other-humanness, Boyle relied on the way the digital video creates accelerated motion: by adjusting the shutter speed to slightly slower than the standard 24 frames per second, Boyle is able to generate an eerie "staccato" quality to the zombies' movements rather than the streamlined and "fluid" appearance generally present with celluloid image capture.[166]

In a scene titled "In Death's Path," the strange and urgent quality resulting from the blending of athletic prowess and digital video capture in low-light scenarios emerges. In this scene the makeshift family of four—Frank, Hannah, Jim, and Selena—have taken the quickest route towards the "answer to infection" through an underground tunnel, which is unknowingly clogged by a multi-car pile-up. Rather than allow this roadblock to deter him, Frank drives his taxicab over the mountain of vehicles. In a shower of sparks as metal hits asphalt, the cab emerges seemingly victorious on the other side of the ominous pile of automobile detritus. The camera cuts from behind the retreating cab to a medium close-up shot of the vehicle's front driver-side tire.[167]

The car comes to a stop. Frank peers out his window, half his torso exposed.

CLOSE SHOT - FRANK

FRANK
Fuck.

Frank steps out of the car and opens the back door.

CLOSE SHOT – JIM

JIM
World's worst place to get a flat, huh?

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[164] Production Notes, *28 Days Later* 13.
[165] Production Notes, *28 Days Later* 13.
[166] Production Notes, *28 Days Later* 13.
[167] A minor note to better orient the reader as to the position of the camera: this is a British film so the front, driver's side tire is the same as an American passenger's side front tire.

FRANK
Agreed. I think we better do this quick.[168]

The camera maintains a tight proximity to the actors, giving us a series of close shots and medium close-ups in order to heighten the claustrophobic effect of the tunnel. Boyle does reveal one brief establishing shot: the camera is on the ground a few yards from the car showing us the car's position—up against the left side of the tunnel—and the tight blocking of the characters—they remain close to one another and the vehicle while they urgently complete their various tasks (Hannah under the car, Frank doing the heavy lifting, Jim and Selena on look out). A strange humming and scratching sound interrupts their work as they all look intently up the tunnel, from where they have come, the light displaying strange shadows on the wall: a stream of rats scurrying through the tunnel en masse.

Cut to CLOSE SHOT – SELENA

SELENA
They're running from the Infected.[169]

The camera cuts back to the shadow wall revealing hazy reflections of the Infected running into the tunnel. The position of the light in relationship to the bodies running into the tunnel casts numerous shadows of varying sizes thereby echoing the uncanny quality of the Infected: they are familiar in their human form yet no longer the sentient creature capable of complex emotion and thought. The rage virus has consumed their bodies and minds to the point where just hearing a human voice triggers the uncontrollable impulse to destroy its source. At this point in the film Boyle still plays with the unreality of the Infected: he has yet to reveal one close-up, they are never alone or individuated, and their presence on the screen is always part of a scene of confusion and chaos.[170] To this end, the camera cuts from a medium close-up of Hannah changing the tire and glancing over her shoulder in the direction of the Infected, to an almost-indecipherable shot: screen left holds an in-focus, yet unrecognizable object, but something that is presumably part of one of the many vehicles in the tunnel; the rest of the frame remains out of focus as the Infected continue to sprint into the tunnel. The lack of focus on the Infected, which are really the subject of the shot, causes the bodies of the

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[168] *28 Days*.
[169] *28 Days*.
[170] The Infected being representationally problematic stems from the film's narrative position as coming from Jim's point of view; and given that the film really begins with his waking from a coma, which he had been in since before the spread of infection, the confused and uncertain visual representation of the Infected for the first half of the film makes sense as it parallels Jim's coming to terms with what is going on around him.

Infected, who have now entered the tunnel, to remain indecipherable from their shadows—the Infected are still a ghostly haze even as their physical presence manifests and encroaches upon our heroes. As the Infected run further into the tunnel their shadows condense and disappear; what first appeared to be a horde of Infected reveals itself to be only a half dozen or so, but the threat remains just as powerful.

By casting athletes to play the Infected, Boyle draws focus on the physicality of this viral-state of being. As rage takes hold of their bodies, the Infected transform from socially and critically conscious, complex humans to the physical manifestation of pure rage, fueled by adrenaline. And the technologically mediated (or digitized image of) physical prowess of athletes helps to foreground this. When the Infected run, which is what they do when they're not sleeping or killing, their form is perfect: bodies tall and erect, movements focused and precise, and all attention drawn to the enhancing of speed and quick overcoming and attainment of target (the uninfected). When the shadowy figures finally emerge as singular bodies, their focused movements become more apparent. Although the individual details of each Infected are hard to make out, and although they move in packs, each Infected moves as a distinct singular entity.[171] They do not run into each other, they do not get in each other's ways, the Infected move with clear purpose within seemingly choreographed and rehearsed paths.[172]

By using technology as an inherent element in the representational product of the Infected, Boyle is, yet again, bridging the technological with the biological. It goes without saying that the cinematic representation of a biological entity (i.e., human subject) is always altered and different from that same entity not mediated by the cinematic apparatus. But what Boyle has done in *28 Days* is to merge the technical capabilities of digital video with the physical abilities of the athletic actors such that the one is indivisible from the other—the technological requires the biological for its effect, and vice versa. With these shifts in shooting processes and technologies, the focus of analysis shifts from how the filmed subject is different from the un-filmed subject; to, instead, how the (biological) subject, the filming of the subject, and the filming apparatus (technology) work together to produce something that is both biological and technological yet is a representational manifestation of the two working together to produce this third thing—the zombie.

Zombie Coding

Thacker's concept of biomedia eradicates the division between the biological and the technological, pointing to the almost arbitrary and no longer useful dichotomy often set-up between the two.[173] As a means of both understanding this concept as well as the representational-cultural work that Boyle's zombies do let's return to the rage virus itself.

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[171] In chapter four I will address the topic of networks and mobility, issues we see at work here and that necessarily inform my reading of the zombies and this scene.

[172] At the end of the scene, as our heroes speed away in their repaired taxicab and the Infected realize defeat their manner of ceasing the chase is very reminiscent of a racer or sprinter completing a race: a gradual reduction of speed by opening the body and limbs to increase friction and resistance.

[173] Thacker, *Biomedia* 11-15.

From the information given in the film, the Rage virus is both synthetic and organic. By dissecting the information given to us in the prologue of the film (the scene that takes place in a lab at the Cambridge Primate Research Centre), we can uncover how this virus, when introduced to a biological host (primate or human), demonstrates the concept of biomedia. Or, to put it another way, by dissecting this opening scene, and subsequent moments throughout the film, we discover how the concept of biomedia elucidates the performative workings of this film.

Biomedia is very much an embodied and technological process and state, which exists as an interdiscipline where the technological and biological are not two distinct bodies/things but, rather, one informs the other in a nonhierarchical fashion. Biomedia becomes a way of understanding and articulating how the realm of pure information (the digital and the binary; the world of ones and zeros), and the phenomenological world of the purely embodied (the organic) relate and inform one another in new and complex ways. Danny Boyle's Infected are a metaphorical representation of this. I have demonstrated this with Boyle's decision to hire athletes to play the Infected and shoot on digital video; in the ways representational technologies combine with the actions of the framed or captured body to produce a digitally enhanced image, even if post-production effects are not employed. Biomedia, then, becomes a means of conceptualizing our simultaneously embodied and mediated selves.

Bolter and Grusin[174] have theorized a concept of remediation[175] as a process embedded in the development, circulation, and consumption of new media; remediation is, according to Thacker, "a complex dynamic between two technological processes: 'immediacy' and 'hypermediacy.'" Immediacy "involves the use of new media to the extent that the media themselves—the 'window'—disappear, bringing forth a kind of direct experience where technology is transparent and unnoticed by the subject." Hypermediacy "involves the overcoding, heterogeneity, and saturation of the subject by different media." And if these concepts are considered in combination with Thacker's own extrapolation of the term as focusing on the concept and action of "transcoding"[176]—a term itself borrowed from Lev Manovich[177]—then we can begin to uncover the complex relationship the body bears to new media.

The body is both "a medium (a means of communication)" and it is "mediated (the object of communication)."[178] At this point my considerations are well removed from the realm of subjectivity and individual agency, topics that still enter into the larger discussion, but in order to get at the nuances of biomedia in this discussion the more objective (de-humanized?) aspects of the concept should be considered. In other words, my discussion is still concerned with the singular, embodied experience: what new media means for how the individual encounters the world. But in order to reach the deeper

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[174] In chapter 3 I develop Grusin and Bolter's concepts of remediation, immediacy, and hypermediacy more fully in relationship to George A. Romero's *Diary of the Dead* (2007).

[175] Jay Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000).

[176] Thacker, *Biomedia* 8.

[177] Manovich, *The Language of New Media*.

[178] Thacker, *Biomedia* 9.

nuances of this "singular, embodied experience," I must step back momentarily and examine it in a larger context, thereby allowing a return with a greater understanding. Thacker wants us to realize that, as explained by N. Katherine Hayles, information "does not exclude materiality… rather, materiality, is seen as the site at which information patterns exert control over form and function."[179] Recalling my earlier theorization about the way in which the virus might have been created and how it works, this becomes clearer. The most basic "reduction" of who we are is genetic code, and this code provides a means for organizing and communicating information. The virus, like all viruses, also contains information in a similar way; the difference between the Rage virus and most other viruses is that the Rage virus will encode its information into the genetic code of the host, thereby altering the structuring, material information of the host, and thus the embodied expression of that host. (You'll recall that the chimpanzees were also given an inhibitor when the scientists purposefully infected the chimps with the Rage virus, thereby preventing the virus from altering the coded information in this way, but still allowing symptoms to emerge.) This is best demonstrated when the rage virus infects a human, and the clearest example of this occurs when Frank, Hannah, Jim, and Selena reach the source of the transmission—"the answer to infection."

FRANK
The 42nd Blockade. This is it.[180]

They arrive at the military blockade, which appears unpopulated and empty, an echoing of the empty London streets that Jim walked through earlier in the film. There are multiple vehicles, a helicopter, a mess hall, supplies, and other grey metal makeshift military objects that serve to locate us within a militarized space; but not a single (living) person is present.

SELENA
Frank.

FRANK continues to look around, knowingly in vain.

SELENA (CONT'D.)
Frank.

FRANK
(calmly)
We have to go.

SELENA

[179] Hayles 136.
[180] *28 Days.*

Yeah.

FRANK
(erupting in frustrating)
Go fucking WHERE?!

Frank meanders for a moment and finally sits on the edge of a truck or box or something. Above him a few feet to his right hangs the corpse of an Infected with a crow picking at its remains. […] Frank, now annoyed, gets up to scare the crow away. He kicks some metal siding, which only causes the crow to jerk its head in reaction, dislodging a drop of blood. The camera cuts to a pov shot from the position of the descending drop as it falls directly into the eye of the unsuspecting Frank.[181]

From here the camera reveals the process of infection. Frank realizes what has happened to him. As one of his last acts as an Uninfected, Frank takes on the role of the loving father and apologizes for his earlier behavior.

FRANK
Hannah, I love you very much.

HANNAH
(Confused. Stepping closer to FRANK)
What?

FRANK
Keep away from me. Stay where you are.

HANNAH
(Continues to move closer to her father.)
Dad?[182]

As Frank repeats the command, "Keep away from me!" the quality of his voice changes from one of an attempted calmness to an urgent and frenzied screeching. Frank pushes Hannah away; his body contorts in strange gestures and positions as he seems to fight against the infection, but to no avail: Frank is now Infected.

Blood and saliva are media of viral transmission, which can occur in any place at any time; and blood is a life force of the human body, thereby making the body a medium for the communication of the information contained within the Rage virus, which is a type of code. Thacker elaborates further on the intermingling of genetic and computer codes, and the case of the synthetically created poliovirus, as mentioned above, demonstrates the ways in which computer code is used to construct DNA code, and how

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[181] *28 Days*.
[182] *28 Days.*

DNA informs the digital.[183] "Change the code, and you change the body."[184] And this is what happens to Frank as his bodily code, or information, changes with the introduction of the rage virus: a "Biomolecular Transport Protocol"[185] occurs, or informatic protocol of encoding, recoding, and decoding the information contained within the viral strain. With these 21st century zombies there is the encoding of the Rage virus, which was likely produced with the aid of digital technologies, into the organic body such that the materiality of the body becomes a medium for decoding, recoding and performing the original information contained within the virus.

When the virus transfers from the drop of blood across Frank's ocular membrane it "encodes" the data from the virus into Frank's body.

> In biotech research, practices of encoding take place daily in the lab: in genome sequencing, in gene expression profiling, in protein analysis and modeling, in digital microscopy, and in cellular diagnostics using silicon chips. At another, more biopolitical level, a different type of encoding takes place in the hospital: the creation, transmission, and modification of medical records, patient-specific data from examinations, computer-based X-ray, MRI, CT, or other scans. But encoding in these contexts does not simply mean translating the body into data, if by this we mean a process of dematerialization. This is so for two reasons: because biomedia's moment of encoding is contingent on a corollary moment of 'decoding' (more on this a little later), and because biomedia's informatic approach implies that, in designating patterns of relationships (data), something essential—and functional—is transported from one medium to another.[186]

Frank's basic genetic information is encoded with the viral information, "a boundary-crossing process,"[187] which, in performance studies terms can also be seen as a liminal transition. Here, the virus is "in-between" material substrates, and the virus serves as a catalyst for the host body to enter into a transitional or liminal state. At the point of transference from the drop of blood, across "Frank's ocular membrane," and into Frank's system, the virus exists on a threshold—but it is not the virus that is liminal, rather, the virus serves as a catalyst in promoting a liminal state in the host.

Once the virus has been encoded into its new medium, the process of recoding takes place. This is the point at which Frank transitions from Uninfected to Infected: the process of recoding occurs. The recoding process takes the viral information and translates it into psychological data (the rage virus is a psychological-based one). While it

[183] Thacker, *Biomedia* 7.
[184] Thacker, "Bioinformatics and Bio-logics" 15.
[185] Thacker, *Biomedia* 15-26.
[186] Thacker, *Biomedia* 17.
[187] Thacker, *Biomedia* 16.

can be argued that the virus is still in a liminal state because it has not yet been decoded into Frank's system (more on decoding shortly), it is more clear that Frank himself is in a liminal state: the liminal is a threshold, it is characterized by ambiguity of social status and cultural locationality, and it is a state of transition. In other words, the virus is an agent of liminality rather than itself existing in a liminal state.

The processes of recoding are always transitional, "the so-called computerization of biology is only legitimized by a third procedure"[188]: decoding. This final state or process is a making sense of and enacting on the data. It is the state of "change the code, and you change the body." With DNA this is obvious: you change the DNA coding and you will inevitably change the information the DNA transmits and thus the body the DNA transmits to. In the case of Frank, the decoding process occurs at full infection; when Frank has become one of the Infected the decoding of the viral strain information has occurred, and is occurring. Frank, in basic ways, has moved through liminality. But, to complicate the matter, it could also be said that the Infected exist in permanent liminal transition. Again, to be in a liminal state is to be in a state of transition, it is that space or moment of moving from one normative social status or location to another. In this sense, then, the concept of permanent liminality appears contradictory and even impossible. But even Victor Turner has considered the possibilities and existence of a permanent liminal state in monastic cultures and elsewhere,[189] and the concept of permanent liminality has been employed with varying levels of theoretical rigor by numerous scholars to help explain or articulate a number of contexts and situations.[190]

If, as I've asserted, liminality is a state of being in between two normative social locations, and to be liminal is to be in transition, then what happens when traditional, expected normative social processes begin to break down? Does the anthropological concept of liminality simply cease to function as a descriptor? I argue that, rather than simply dismissing an established and useful descriptive concept, in fact new possibilities

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[188] Thacker, *Biomedia* 22.

[189] See *The Ritual Process*, *From Ritual to Theatre*, and *Image and Pilgrimage*.

[190] See: the courtesan (S. –C. Kevin Tsai, "Ritual and Gender in the 'Tale of li Wa'," *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews (CLEAR)* 26 (December 2004), 109); the Ṣuʿlūk poem (Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych, "The Ṣuʿlūk and His Poem: A Paradigm of Passage Manqué," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 104.4 (October-December 1984), 663); permanent virginity (Richard Seaford, "The Eleventh Ode of Bacchylides: Hera, Artemis, and the Absence of Dionysos," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 108 (1988), 135); banishment of the scapegoat in Communist China (Donald S. Sutton, "Consuming Conterrevolution: The Ritual and Culture of Cannibalism in Wuxuan, Guangzi, China, May to July 1968," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 37.1 (January 1995), 165); those suffering from an incurable disease, like lepers (Marcia Kupfer, "Symbolic Cartography in a Medieval Parish: From Spatialized Body to Painted Church at Saint-Aignan-sur-Cher," *Speculum* 75.3 (July 2000), 639); expatriates in Bangkok (Eric Cohen, "The Dropout Expatriates: A Study of Marginal Farangs in Bangkok," *Urban Anthropology* 13.1 (Spring 1984), 112); and even life itself (Ingvild Saelid Gilhus, "Gnosticism: A Study in Liminal Symbolism," *Numen* 31.1 (July 1984), 125).

and sub-definitions emerge—thus a state of permanent liminality becomes possible. In permanent liminality, an individual begins the transition from one social state to another, but the process of reintegration never happens—the process of transition is halted and the individual becomes stuck in a permanent liminal state. Reintegration is that moment in the transitional process when an individual, who is in the liminal phase, returns to normative society, but in their new social position—they *reintegrate* into society. Just as the speed of viral transmission and contagion stands in for the speed of digital information transference (from computer to computer, or from user to user, as in the case of the viral video, and so on), the state of Infection could be seen to parallel a transitional state from traditional sociality to some as yet to be determined location. The Infected have been separated, but not yet reintegrated, leaving them in a permanent liminal state: zombie liminality.

The zombie as a figure stuck in permanent liminality is enforced by the narrative structure of the story, which is the playing out of a social drama that results in what Turner calls "schism." In his theory of social drama, Turner indicates "four phases" that he labels "breach, crisis, redress, and *either* reintegration *or* recognition of schism."[191] "Although it might be argued that the social drama is a story in [Hayden] White's sense, in that it has discernable inaugural, transitional, and terminal motifs, that is a beginning, a middle, and an end,"[192] Turner sees the social drama as more of "a spontaneous unit of social process and a fact of everyone's experience in every human society."[193] This parallel or mimicking between story and social drama, between representation and "a fact of everyone's experience," further illuminates the mirroring reciprocity between cinema (or any "story") and daily cultural moments and social events.

> A social drama first manifests itself as the breach of a norm, the infraction of a rule of morality, law, custom or etiquette in some public arena. This breach may be deliberately, even calculatedly, contrived by a person or party disposed to demonstrate or challenge entrenched authority—for example, the Boston Tea Party—or it may emerge from a scene of heated feelings. Once visible, it can hardly be revoked.[194]

This moment of breach or infraction in the normativity of daily public, social life is heightened in horror films—almost parodically so. In the film under analysis here, this breach occurs with the release of the Rage virus: not only can it "hardly be revoked" it seems *impossible* to revoke, rapidly moving the social drama or story to crisis, which is "a momentous juncture or turning point in the relations between components of a social field—

[191] Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre* 69, original emphasis.

[192] Victor Turner, "Social Dramas and Stories about Them," *Performance: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies*, ed. Philip Auslander (New York: Routledge, 2003) 115.

[193] Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre* 68.

[194] Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre* 70.

> at which seeming peace becomes overt conflict and covert antagonisms become visible. Sides are taken, factions are formed, and unless the conflict can be sealed off quickly within a limited area of social interaction, there is a tendency for the breach to widen and spread until it coincides with some dominant cleavage in the widest set of relevant social relations to which the parties in conflict belong.[195]

Again, this period of crisis is clearly evident in *28 Days* with the factions of social groups—the alternative family structure versus the new military order—as well as the sheer comprehensive spread of the crisis itself: the Rage virus has taken-over the entire nation-state, and presumably the globe, suggesting a similar "dominant cleavage" in all major socio-political arenas.

It is clear that zombie films, like many horror and disaster movies, move through these phases. I argue, however, that the narratives of zombie cinema result in the "recognition of schism" phase, suggesting a continual return to that position even as efforts are made by certain strata of the living to reintegrate. Whereas more typical horror subgenres often have order restored in a moment of cathartic closure,[196] most zombie films refuse a sense of comfort and finality. The "recognition of schism" phase does not necessarily result in a new order, but rather a state of permanent transition. As Jamie Russell notes in his *Book of the Dead*, "the old order is overturned without *anything* being offered in its place."[197] It is not the closing moment to the drama, but an inability to find necessary closure. This inability to move beyond the "recognition of schism" is due mainly, I argue, to the ongoing liminality of the zombie figure. Unable to define a social structure, or to move beyond the transitional state of zombieness, the zombie comes to stand in for a type of permanent liminality, and the social drama of the zombie narrative ends in a permanent schism. Given that reintegration proves impossible because the zombie cannot move through the liminal, the social drama in which the zombie participates cannot find an end, or, rather, ends in a schism, which suggests a permanent in-between or permanent division. Furthermore, the living, or Uninfected participants in this social drama do create their own communitas in a way the zombies are unable: race, class, gender, and familial position are erased at these moments of extreme crisis and change.

Communitas is a mode of social relationship that is not dependent on and exists beyond the structural.[198] Though often associated with liminality, communitas exists both within and beyond the circumscription of ritual or transition, and can come to identify groups existing in a more permanent liminal state or situation. Turner identifies three

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[195] Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre* 70.

[196] In the slasher or final girl sub-genre, such as *Halloween* or *Nightmare on Elm Street*, the killer (Michael Myers and Freddie respectively) are dispatched and order is seemingly restored.

[197] Russell, 83.

[198] Turner, *The Ritual Process* 131.

types of communitas: the existential or spontaneous, which he links to the happening, a moment of unplanned coming together outside the normal structures and routines of life; normative communitas, which is what occurs within a bound set of circumstances and a finite space of time, often associated with "the liminal phase of tribal initiation rites"[199]; and ideological communitas, "which is a label one can apply to a variety of utopian models of societies based on existential communitas."[200] In each of these three types of communitas a general set of characteristics binds them: the notion of structure and hierarchy is gone, traces of distinction and difference are effectively erased, and all participants (voluntary or imposed) eschew "private property, with its bourns and bounds of land, tilth, and vineyard, and [rely] on nature's bounty to supply all needs."[201]

Thus far it would seem that communitas is associated with the ideal commune, or hippy ideology,[202] where everyone comes together to realize the harmony of togetherness, shares equally in wares and fruits, and "live without sovereignty" in "innocence and purity."[203] Yet, Turner does recognize the greater complexity of this system, offering an account of apocalyptic communitas where people are brought together under great societal upheaval.[204] In each of these instances—the three types of communitas outlined above as well as this additional mode of apocalypse—communitas is transitional or temporary, it "can seldom be maintained for long. Communitas itself soon develops a structure, in which free relationships between individuals become converted into norm-governed relationships between social personae."[205] Needless to say it is Turner's addition of an apocalyptic communitas that most directly relates to 21st century zombie cinema. In understanding communitas, the shift in social and political systems represented in *28 Days* takes on a greater import. There already exists a precedent for the restructuring and imposed communities forged in the apocalyptic landscape unfolding on the screen. Communitas, then, is a more poignant, and performatively relevant, means of analyzing the representational work of these films.

Other scholars also address the concept of the zombie as existing in a "permanent liminal state," or what I have termed "zombie liminality." In "A Zombie Manifesto: The Nonhuman Condition in the Era of Advanced Capitalism" (2006), Sarah Juliet Lauro and Karen Embry offer an insightful analysis of the zombie figure, particularly in relationship to our posthuman age,[206] and one that helps us to get at the work of the zombie in the 21st century. The zombie is "a figure defined by its liminality," it

[199] Turner, *The Ritual Process* 133.

[200] Turner, *The Ritual Process* 132.

[201] Turner, *The Ritual Process* 135.

[202] Please note that it is Turner himself who refers to the hippy in his discussions of communitas. I also think of the Free State of Christiana in Denmark where the inhabitants live in a state-less, yet seemingly state-sanctioned, commune.

[203] Turner, *The Ritual Process* 136.

[204] Turner, *The Ritual Process* 153-4.

[205] Turner, *The Ritual Process* 132

[206] This notion of the posthuman emerged with Donna Haraway's influential essay "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century," published in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 149-181.

> illustrates our doubts about humanity in an era in which the human condition may be experiencing a crisis of conscience as well as a crisis of consciousness. [The zombie is] a model of posthuman consciousness (one that is postcyborg) in dispute with the capitalist era's homo-laborans, as well as a body that speaks to the psyche's fears of dissolution; the zombii is both an effective model for imagining the condition of posthumanity and, quite literally, a post(mortem) human. Above all else, the zombii's "negative dialectic" reshapes the way we think about the boundary between subject/object, resonating especially with the roles of master/slave that so profoundly inform our own sense of human embodiment.[207]

The zombie is both/neither living and dead, both/neither subject and object, it recalls/disallows the master-and-slave dialectic,[208] both/neither single and/nor multiple. This liminality, or the "paradox" to which Laura and Embry refer, emerges from under the capitalist system where subjects and objects are confused "as the commodity fetish animates objects" and the worker-subject is objectified as pure labor.[209] Taken to a global economic level (large-scale industry and global capitalism)—where the notion of the worker as a "living appendage of the machine" has become so literal, troped, and assumed as to be ignored and considered a non-issue—the zombie is an apt, though pessimistic, metaphor "for our current moment, and specifically for America in a global economy, where we feed off the products of the rest of the planet, and, alienated from our own humanity, stumble forward, groping for immortality even as we decompose."[210] The postmodern denial of individuality—or the trappings of individuality as themselves empty signifiers, making the notion of the individual a farce—takes the commodification of individual expression and folds it back in upon itself so that the (non-)individual becomes lost in an indistinguishable sea of other (non-)individuals.

This commodification of the non-individual as outlined here recalls Romero's *Dawn of the Dead* and the hordes of zombies, each in the outfits they died in—the Hare Krishna, the cheerleader, the doctor, etc.—mindlessly stumbling through the mall in a

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[207] Lauro and Embry, 91. This is the only point in the essay where the authors employ the term "liminality," therefore suggesting that it is a term from which their work emerges rather than one in which they remain.

[208] The contemporary zombie has cultural, folkloric roots in Haitian voodoo and slave narratives. For more on this see Edmund Wade Davis, *The Ethnobiology of the Haitian Zombi (Ethnobotany, Vodoun, Tetrodotoxin)*, Diss. Harvard University, 1986; Glenda R. Carpio, "Conjuring the Mysteries of Slavery: Voodoo, Fetishism, and Stereotype in Ishmael Reed's *Flight to Canada*," *American Literature: A Journal of History, Criticism, and Bibliography* 77.3 (September 2005), 563-89; and Bishop, "Raising the Dead" 196-205.

[209] Lauro and Embry 93.

[210] Lauro and Embry 93

subconscious drive to reclaim the trappings of life. As I will address in more detail in the next section, Boyle never gives us the same type of caricatured individuality in *28 Days Later*, implying that we, as a culture, have moved beyond humanist (unifying and universal) and even postmodern (fragmented and surface) considerations of individuality and subjecthood to something else: a struggling with an experienced sense of self and individuality in the face of encountered multiplicity and variance; a postcapitalist refusal of individuality against the seemingly infinite outlets for expressions of the same individuality (Web 2.0); a coming to terms with organic materialism and technology.

For Lauro and Embry, the contemporary ubiquity of the zombie (in films, books, games, and as metaphor for corporate, computer, and even neurological functions) "speaks to some of the most puzzling elements of our sociohistorical moment, wherein many are trying to ascertain what lies in store for humanity after global capitalism—if anything."[211] In this essay, the authors seek to correct (what they see as) the utopic vision of Haraway's cyborg for another that more accurately reflects "our historical and economic moment"[212]: the zombii's (their term) "lack of consciousness does not make it pure object but rather opens up the possibility of a negation of the subject/object divide. It is not, like the cyborg, a hybrid, nor is it like Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's schizophrenic, a multiplicity; rather, the zombii is a paradox that disrupts the entire system."[213] As a means of accounting for a truly posthuman imagining, Lauro and Embry outline the zombii as embodying a posthumanist subject (I use this last term with tongue-in-cheek) because, "as walking antithesis," the "subject position is nullified not reinvigorated."[214] The system of subjectivity within a postcapitalist society cannot exist as the Enlightenment, humanist subject whose individuality exists as a universal precondition; the multiplicity of the postmodern subject is equally as untenable because it still allows for binarisms and the potential for a dialectic resolution; furthermore, the notion of hybridity suggested by Haraway gives agency and complexity to the subject that, according to Lauro and Embry, does not actually exist. The paradox to which the authors refer is the liminality I mentioned above: the zombie disrupts our conventional notions of subjecthood—Enlightenment, postmodern, and first-wave posthumanist—because it refuses a binary structure, even when that structure gestures toward hybridity where the binary terms (living/dead) become confused into one (not entirely unlike the way in which Thacker theorizes the relationship between biology or embodiment and technology or new media), and thus further suggesting a recurring liminal state.

This tension between the subject/object, and the (non-)individual can also be read as a manifestation of negative dialectics in which the liminal status of living/dead, subject/object never reaches resolution, but rather, according to Lauro and Embry, "proposes no third term reconciling the subject/object split, the lacuna between life and death."[215] I would here like to expand upon Lauro and Embry's proposition of the zombie as anticathartic and as a manifestation of negative dialectics, by returning to the zombie as materialization of biomedia. As I argued earlier, the virus in *28 Days Later*, itself

[211] Lauro and Embry 86.
[212] Lauro and Embry 92.
[213] Lauro and Embry 94.
[214] Lauro and Embry 95.
[215] Lauro and Embry 94.

synthetically manufactured and thus a product of biomediated techniques, is an agent or catalyst for liminality. As seen with Frank's process of infection—encoding, recoding, and decoding—he moves through a liminal space of being (from Uninfected to Infected) in a matter of seconds, but this brief liminal transition brings Frank to a permanent zombie liminality. Frank's liminality and the virus that served as catalyst point to our moment of cultural crossroads. At a time when a technological explosion is reshaping our understanding of the embodied and the material, the zombie surfaces as a key metaphor in working-through and understanding this shift. The zombie, as neither/both living or/and dead, as both/neither subject and/nor object, offers a familiar, yet uncanny, site onto and through which to represent the interface of the biological and the technological.

The virus, an agent or catalyst of liminality, locates an origin or reason for the state of zombie-ness. Danny Boyle gives us a cause for the zombie outbreak in *28 Days Later* with the rage virus. And in the 21st century remakes of Romero's initial classics—Zack Snyder's *Dawn of the Dead* (2004) and Steve Miner's *Day of the Dead* (2008)—the narratives follow suit, though with less specificity, by ambiguously asserting viral roots to the zombie epidemic. The virus, itself of technological origin, also serves as a locational interface for the biological and technological; the virus straddles biology and technology, it is both/and while at the same time it is neither/nor. As Thacker clearly argues, biomedia are not simply a joining of technology and biology; biomedia render the biological and technological realms as no longer ontologically distinct.[216] Similarly, the zombie is both living and dead, both object and subject, thereby making the distinction between life and death a nearly arbitrary philosophical state.

Zombie Contagion/Containment

There are material imperatives, as well, embedded in the destruction of the line between life and death. The concept of zombie liminality is not simply a way to make sense of how various cultural representations incorporate fictional and folkloric figures into their narrative structure; zombie liminality, as a concept and as performed in these films, aids in the making sense of a cultural situation prevalent in our globalized, post-postcolonialist, networked moment. Zombie liminality, unlike permanent liminality, recalls a colonialist root,[217] and is grounded in material experience.[218] The idea of a permanent liminality exists as a dual or forked concept, on the one hand it is purely theoretical, a state impossible to achieve because of the basic defining element of

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[216] Thacker, *Biomedia* 7.

[217] See also Jennifer Fay, "Dead Subjectivity: White Zombie, Black Baghdad," *CR: The New Centennial Review* 8.1 (2008), 81-101.

[218] Of course, the anthropological concept of liminality is itself grounded in colonialist, Western-dominated positions considering that Arnold van Gennep, a French ethnographer and anthropologist from the early 20th century, coined the term, which was then taken-up and redeployed on a larger scale by British cultural anthropologist Victor Turner who studied a series of "ethnic," non-Western cultures and societies, through which he was able to further develop and hone the term.

liminality as transitional,[219] and on the other hand this purely theoretical concept is deployed in an attempt to explain moments of personal "in-between-ness."[220] Marlon Riggs, in his documentary *Tongues Untied* (1989), as referenced above, also foregrounds a personal state of crisis that could be argued as one of permanent liminality: being both a black male subject and a gay male subject, one who occupies both of these subject position can never just "be"; there is a sense or imperative to choose one's main identifier—gay OR black, *not* both.

Permanent liminality, emerges when the third stage, as explained by Arnold van Gennep, of cultural or ritual passage does not occur: first is the moment of separation, which is the forceful removal of an individual or corporation from normative routine, such as when an individual becomes exposed to the Rage virus; second is transitional, or liminal, phase in which the individual or corporation moves from one normative state to another, and in which said subject undergoes a supposed metaphorical death; and finally the incorporation stage in which the individual or corporation is reintegrated into normative sociality with their new position and identity.[221]

Victor Turner also recognized the possibility, and even existence, of a permanent liminal state in his consideration of St. Francis, his monks, and the Catholic Church. In describing the rules and regulations to which one must adhere in order to fulfill the demands of the brotherly order, "Francis appears quite deliberately to be compelling the friars to inhabit the fringes and interstices of the social structure of his time, and to keep them in a permanently liminal state…"[222] Drawing on Turner's work, cultural theorist Arpad Szakolczai has also theorized the possibility of permanent liminality, listing three types: the monastic (just discussed), the royal court, and Bolshevism.[223] With Bolshevism, the royal court system, or Communism more specifically, a permanent liminal status is perpetuated and maintained by the political structure itself as it seeks to maintain a permanent state of reconstruction.[224] With the royal court system individuals perform their ceremonial positions over and over. The problem with permanent liminality as articulated here is its more privileged position vis-à-vis non-white, non-Western European modalities of social framing. If permanent liminality is to be employed as a concept, a fair and potentially useful endeavor, the one established by Szakolczai seems

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[219] Charles La Shure, "What Is Liminality?" Web, 27 March 2011, <http://www.liminality.org/about/whatisliminality/>.

[220] Andrea Grimes argues that female comics occupy a permanent liminality because they are always both female and a comic, occupying numerous locations (domestic and public, to put it broadly) at the same time. For more on this see: <http://www.heartlessdoll.com/2010/04/chicks_arent_funny_the_tina_fey_backlash.php> accessed 27 March 2011.

[221] Arnold van Gennep, *Rites de Passage*, trans. Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffe (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960).

[222] Turner, *The Ritual Process* 145.

[223] Arpad Szakolczai, *Reflexive Historical Sociology* (New York: Routledge, 2000) 220.

[224] Agnes Horváth, "Tricking into the Position of the Outcast: A Case Study in the Emergence and Effects of Communist Power," *Political Psychology* 19.2 (June 1998) 345.

to be geared towards Western conditions of in between, and many of those suggesting choice and agency as a part of the catalyst for the state of permanent liminality.

In contrast to this, zombie liminality, as I stated briefly above, is more of an imposed condition (as opposed to a ritual process through which one, more or less, voluntarily submits), and one that has roots in colonialism, disenfranchisement, and unequal power structures. Zombie liminality necessarily recalls Haitian roots: a nation formed through slavery and subjugation, even after becoming the first black nation-state in the Western world in the early 19th century,[225] while maintaining specifically contemporaneous cultural resonances. "Rapidly developing communications technologies are facilitating transnational economic relationships, as well as global cultural exchanges. These changes are leading to a proliferation of theoretical models for configuring the 'spread' or dispersal of national performative and representational practices."[226] Writing in the mid-1990s, Barbara Browning begins to describe a situation that only grew stronger as these "communications technologies" went from "developing" to well developed (though, admittedly, still constantly developing and improving). She goes on to note, "associations have been made between the AIDS pandemic and African diasporic cultural practices."[227] It is this diaspora, particularly one emerging from the inequalities of disease and war in the late-20th and 21st centuries, which ties into zombie liminality because of the diaspora's migratory, transitional, and unlocatable status.

Zombie liminality can be seen in diasporic communities, in state-less nations (the Kurds), illegal immigrants, and displaced refugees and peoples (the Palestinians).[228] These are people who lack subjecthood because they are not part of an ideological state apparatus and therefore cannot be interpolated.[229] They form structureless communities—or communitas as necessitated by their "betwixt and between" status—based on their shared experience of in-between, forced into a sociality beyond class and social differences. These groups often suffer at the hands of strong hierarchical inequalities and lack the structurally recognized power needed to assert themselves beyond their liminal position.

The notion of zombie liminality is also tied to new media. Recall the opening images of the film, images created for the film but inspired by events emerging from places like Sierra Leone.[230] These images, and images like these, often created on mobile technologies such as digital video, circulate across new media networks—the Internet, satellite television, email—nearly instantaneously. The ability to connect, to reach people in countries the image-producer has never been to, is exciting and even exhilarating while

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[225] Please refer back to the first chapter for more information on this.

[226] Barbara Browning, *Infectious Rhythm: Metaphors of Contagion and the Spread of African Culture (*New York: Routledge, 1998), 6.

[227] Browning 7.

[228] I would also add to this list intersex/transgender folk, non-normative sexualities, and disability; but for the purposes of this chapter I have chosen to remain focused on more racially and ethnically organized groups.

[229] Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*," Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Motnhly Review Press, 1971) 127-186.

[230] Danny Boyle, *28 Days Later*, commentary track.

also provoking anxiety, because not only are these images faster and more prolific, people and other bodily things are also able to reach new, as-yet-penetrated locations with new found rapidity. Thus Browning concerns herself with the AIDS epidemic in Africa and how the diaspora of African peoples emerging from this crisis becomes mapped onto the circulation of African cultural expressions such as music. The numerous nations and cultures within Africa become blanketed into one large continental grouping, and the spread of anything African is immediately layered with suggestions of disease and contagion.

Zombie liminality, then, returns us to biomedia: the circulation of images (technology and media) becomes inextricably intertwined with the spread of disease (biological)—something that Browning indirectly suggests throughout *Infectious Rhythm*. If *28 Days Later* inaugurates the 21st century zombie, what has Boyle given us? Zombies, the sometimes walking dead, are tied to contagion and viral disease that spreads with a speed echoed by the dissemination of images through various new media outlets. The zombies in this film are not dead, recalling the roots of zombie folklore and Haitian voodoo, which by extension suggests a postcolonial thematics within the creation of the representation. In the presumably transitional status of the apocalyptic society, new communities are forged as people from various walks of life come together for survival under the new and strange circumstances in which they find themselves. The zombie within the film creates an apocalyptic environment that foregrounds the Uninfected as metaphors for a larger cultural condition of zombie liminality, one in which marginalized groups find themselves in permanent transitional states. The Uninfected here serve as the metaphor for marginalized communities and zombie liminality because the Uninfected become refugees within this apocalyptic world, they are people without a permanent place. The communities engendered here become a networked set of mobile nodes: groups constantly shifting and always on the move (more on this in chapter four). And both the zombie and the living/Uninfected serve as different representational sites for metaphorically understanding the work of technology and new media in our 21st century cultural situation.

CHAPTER 3.

LIVENESS AND THE LIVING DEAD: REMEDIATION AND INTERMEDIALITY IN GEORGE A. ROMERO'S *DIARY OF THE DEAD* (2007)

Lens attached, we see a shot of a tenement building rack into focus. The camera's operator uses an air duster to clean the lens and the camera pans to a police officer, who is speaking into a radio handset. An ambulance rolls into frame, and after a brief exchange, the driver pulls forward to clear the shot to make a better composition for the camera. We pan to a female reporter readying herself for a broadcast. We pan again to see a corpse being wheeled out on a gurney, and the reporter steps into the shot to begin her report. Suddenly the corpse sits up, attacks an EMT worker, and chaos ensues. Unflinching, unblinking, the camera captures it all until the zombie attacks the operator. The camera topples to the ground and the camera flickers dark. Its last image is that of the reporter being killed before digital artifacting distorts the image beyond recognition.[231]

This is the opening scene to George A. Romero's *Diary of the Dead* (2007), the first in a new series of zombie films produced by the godfather of the subgenre. With this film Romero continues his interest in using the zombie film as a medium for cultural critique,[232] here turning his attention to new media, social media, and Web 2.0. *Diary*

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[231] Thanks to Dave Taylor for help with this brief summary. "Digital artifacting" is a (usually unwanted) visual flaw in digital images (still or moving) because of data error caused either by corruption of the code or through hardware malfunction.

[232] A brief rearticulation of what I have already discussed: *Night* (1968) and the Vietnam War; *Dawn* (1978) and consumerism; *Day* (1985) and the Cold War military-

also functions as a meta-examination of the filmmaking process: this is a film with three narrative layers (base story or narrative proper, documenting of that story, and the final production of that documentation), and throughout the interweaving representations of these three layers, Romero continually points to the means of production while also delighting the viewer with displays of photorealistic digital special effects—the zombies. The narrative proper, which gives us the motivation for the other two framing narratives, is set during the early stages of a zombie apocalypse and follows a group of college students traveling across Pennsylvania in an attempt to reach their respective homes and families. Framing this base narrative is the making of a video diary by Jason Creed (Joshua Close), a film student who makes it his mission to capture everything he encounters in an effort to record the truth of what is happening and disseminate the footage on the Internet.[233] And then the outer frame narrative, which opens the film, is the final production of that video diary in the form of mockumentary by Debra Moynihan (Michelle Morgan). Debra informs the viewer that Jason was killed before he was able to finish the documentary, and as his girlfriend felt it her duty to finish his project, titled "The Death of Death."[234] Romero's film *Diary of the Dead* is the fictional found footage film, or video diary, "The Death of Death" by Jason Creed and Debra Moynihan, and this video diary—which exists as real within the narrative frame of *Diary*—is a documenting of the zombie apocalypse, the making of this video diary, and a meta-commentary on some of the particular filmmaking processes the spectator watches taking place.

To assist in the unraveling and making sense of these tightly knit narrative layers, I would like to spend a moment unraveling them and analyzing their unique characteristics. The narrative proper is like any story or narrative occurring in film, television, novels, and so forth. To borrow from David Bordwell's principles of narration, the narrative proper is the *fabula*, "a chronological cause-and-effect chain of events occurring within a given duration and a spatial field."[235] In the *fabula* of Romero's *Diary of the Dead* a group of college students are shooting a mummy film for a class project when the zombie apocalypse begins. Upon learning the news via news broadcast, these students jump into action to find their loved ones. It is only a matter of hours in which everything seems to go from "normal" to crisis mode: when they began their shooting in the evening there was no sign of danger or concern, by the time they reach the end of their shooting session people have already vacated the college and others have begun

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scientific complex; and *Land* (2005) and corporate capitalism and the ever-growing gap between the classes.

[233] Because of his mission, we almost never see Jason's face, most of what we (the audience) see is through Jason's camera, and when another camera or operator manages to capture footage of Jason it is either of a man holding a camera in front of his face, or if Jason happens to not be holding a camera in front of his face, the face we do see is unfamiliar because throughout the course of the film there exist maybe two brief shots of Jason's un-obscured face.

[234] Also the name of a comic series adapted from a failed novel by George Romero (2004). For more information see < http://www.comicbookdb.com/creator_title.php?ID=1880&cID=3333&pID=1>.

[235] David Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 49.

plundering deserted buildings. Ridley Wilmott (Philip Riccio) and Bree (Laurs DeCarteret) take off in Ridley's car to his parents house, while the rest of the group pile into Mary Dexter's (Tatiana Maslany) RV toward Debra's home in Scranton, Pennsylvania. On their road trip, the group encounters zombies, some become zombies, and after discovering Debra's parents and brother have fallen victim to the walking dead, finally make their way to Ridley's compound-like home. It is here that Jason perishes, as well as Ridley, leaving Debra, the film professor emeritus Andrew Maxwell (Scott Wentworth), and Tony Ravello (Shawn Roberts) to hole away in the panic room.

Jason documents these events in his attempt to produce a video diary, in order to share it with the world and counteract the false images of the mass media by showing the world the truth of what is happening. A video diary, as its name suggests, is the documenting of events through video in lieu of the more historically traditional written journal. Jason's desire to document events through video inevitably informs and is part of the narrative proper, but his video diary also functions as a framing device because, as within the conceit of the diegetic frame of *Diary*, the *fabula* would still occur even if Jason did not seek to create a video diary of the events. Framing this frame is the production of the mockumentary, a found footage documentary within *Diary*, as produced by Debra. A mockumentary is a film that presents itself as a documentary, but is entirely fictional.[236] The found footage film is a cinematic genre inaugurated in 1999 with the popular *Blair Witch Project*—coincidentally the same year Bolter and Grusin published *Remediation*. In these films, presumably the footage seen by the spectator has been recovered, having been shot by filmmakers now dead and/or missing. Because of this, these films highlight the apparatus, with the filmmaker present in the narrative, thereby foregrounding the camera as an agent in the action.

Romero's overt interest in new media informs this film as an exemplar through which to further examine the workings of new media and zombie cinema. Bolter and Grusin also seek to account for, and explain, a cultural shift still occurring at the end of the 20th century, a shift directly linked to the rise of new media. The technological explosion at the end of the 20th century—similar to that of the Industrial Revolution at the end of the 19th century—has necessarily altered the ways in which individuals interact with the world and each other; and it is the rise of new media that has served as the catalyst for this experiential shift. This shift results from the exponential increase in screened interfaces—computers at work, computers at home, more and different ways to use televisions—that frame our perceptual field, reimagine what presence and liveness are, and simultaneously expand and shrink our social net. Although there have always been "new" media, the term "'new media' came into prominence in the mid-1990s,"[237] and is most commonly applied to digital technologies that emerged along side the proliferation of a consumer Internet and user-friendly interfaces for computers and other similar screened devices. "What is new about new media comes from the particular ways

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[236] Well known examples of the mockumentary include: *This Is Spinal Tap*, dir. Rob Reiner, Spinal Tap Productions, 1984, film; *Waiting for Guffman*, dir. Christopher Guest, Sony Pictures Classics, 1996, film; *Best in Show*, dir. Christopher Guest, Castle Rock Entertainment, 2000, film; *Quarantine*, dir. John Erik Dowdle, Andale Pictures, Screen Gems, and Vertigo Entertainment, 2008, film.

[237] Chun 1.

in which they refashion older media and the ways in which older media refashion themselves to answer the challenges of new media."[238] Lev Manovich puts forth a similar argument using the term meta-media, drawing connections specifically to software: "*A Meta-media object contains both language and meta-language* – both the original media structure (a film, an architectural space, a sound track) and the software tools that allow the user to generate descriptions of, and to change, this structure."[239] Bolter and Grusin argue that new media always refashion older media by incorporating those older media into the design and/or function of new media, or by referencing or comparing themselves to old media.

Diary can also be seen as an object of new media through which to unpack Bolter and Grusin's concept of remediation. Put simply, remediation is the way in which new media incorporate older media into their design, function, and/or conception. Employing a Foucauldian approach, Bolter and Grusin trace a genealogy of remediation, beginning with the Renaissance and the development of perspectival painting and moving through the printing press, photography, cinema, television, and the Internet.[240] Remediation is simply the "representation of one medium in another," and, according to Bolter and Grusin, this "is a defining characteristic of the new digital media."[241] Remediation can take many forms: the reproduction of a typical newspaper layout on a webpage or video streaming through the Internet, as well as the reproduction of a photograph in a magazine or a poem in a novel. In defining remediation, Bolter and Grusin go to lengths to argue that the interplay between immediacy and hypermediacy is inextricably bound-up in understanding remediation.

One half of the double logic of remediation is immediacy, the notion that the subject can have or experience a real connection with the thing being accessed and the medium will simply disappear. "The logic of immediacy dictates that the medium itself should disappear and leave us in the presence of the thing represented."[242] In performance studies, I see this most closely linked to notions of presence and liveness, where the spectator privileges a presumably unmediated performance experience with the performers, and is able to connect directly to the ephemeral and amorphous "performance." This also recalls Konstantin Stanislavsky's theatrical ideal in which the proscenium frame would disappear for the audience and they would become completely absorbed within the supposed reality of the theatrical production[243]; stage art for Stanislavsky is not mimesis, it is metamorphosis. The aim is not merely to convince but to create. The subject is not life but its transcendence."[244] With immediacy comes a

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[238] Bolter and Grusin 15.

[239] Lev Manovich, "Understanding Meta-media," *Critical Digital Studies, A Reader*, eds. Arthur Kroker and Marilouise Kroker (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 107. Original emphasis.

[240] It is worth noting that this list is by no means exhaustive or even thoroughly representative of what the authors cover.

[241] Bolter and Grusin 45.

[242] Bolter and Grusin 5-6.

[243] Thanks to Peter Glazer for pointing this out and for assisting in its articulation.

[244] Shomit Mitter, *Systems of Rehearsal: Stanislavsky, Brecht, Grotowski, and Brook* (New York: Routledge, 1992) 10.

window to the world, a window which itself seems to disappear, allowing us a direct experience of that world. For Bolter and Grusin, virtual reality is the object they return to over and again in *Remediation* as a prime example of the search for immediacy. The "goal of virtual reality is to foster in the viewer a sense of presence," where the "mediating presence of the computer and its interface" diminish and are ultimately denied.[245] The desire for immediacy in representational works of art extends back to the introduction of linear perspective in painting, and can be traced genealogically (following a non-teleological, Foucauldian method) through photography, film, and digital media.

The other half of remediation's double logic is hypermediacy, which is the desired experience of media foregrounded as media. Like immediacy, hypermediacy also has a long genealogy that can be traced back to baroque furniture,[246] Dutch oil paintings,[247] and "even in the mechanical technologies of reproduction of the nineteenth century."[248] "In every manifestation, hypermediacy makes us aware of the medium or media," which give us access to the representation.[249] I link this to the recent turn in performance towards intermediality, articulated by Freda Chapple and Chiel Kattenbelt as "a space where the boundaries soften—and we are in-between and within a mixing of spaces, media and realities."[250] Also, vis-à-vis Stanislavsky, Bertolt Brecht's conception of the theater as a laying bare of the production apparatus would be the theatrical equivalent of hypermediacy. Rather than the transparent window of immediacy in which the means of representation disappears and seems to give us direct access to the thing represented, hypermediacy offers a conception of representation that is itself "windowed," "with windows that open on to other representations or other media."[251] In other words, the representational mode of hypermediacy foregrounds the experience of the media used to gain access to that which is represented; within the realm of the hypermediated, the user or viewer might even revel in the experience of using the apparatus that mediates her relationship to the thing accessed. The contemporary windowed desktop is an obvious example of hypermediacy where a user will employ multiple applications appearing as "windows" on their computer desktop: employing multiple web pages as a research tools while writing a thesis with a word processing application:[252]

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[245] Bolter and Grusin 22-23.

[246] Bolter and Grusin call our attention to the *Wunderkammer*, a baroque cabinet with "its multiplicity of forms and its associative links" (36).

[247] Here Bolter and Grusin point to "the Dutch 'art of describing'" where artists held a "fascination for mirrors, windows, maps, paintings within paintings, and written and read epistles," which often resulted in a representation of "the world as made up of a multiplicity of representations" (36-37).

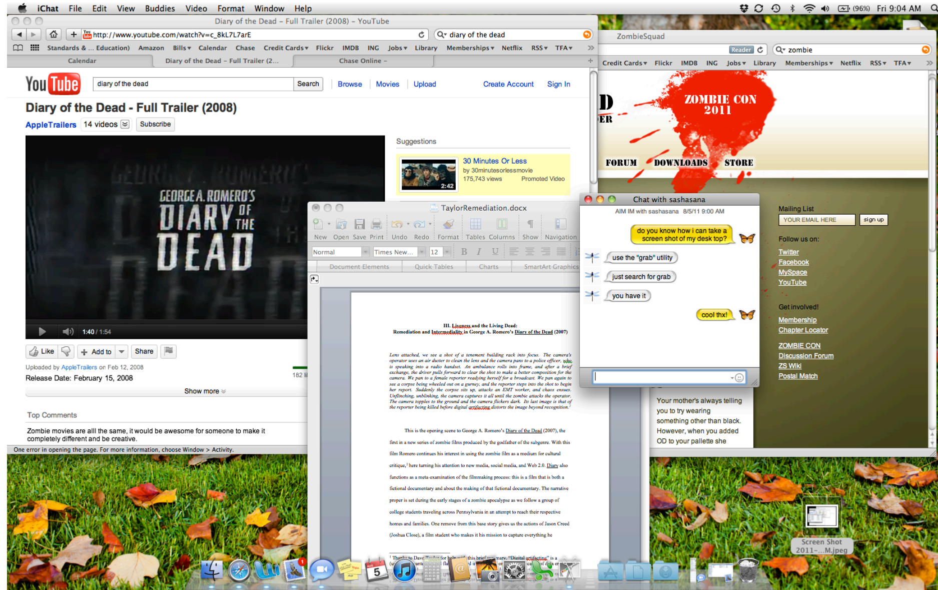
[248] Bolter and Grusin 37.

[249] Bolter and Grusin 34.

[250] Freda Chapple and Chiel Kattenbelt, "Key Issues in Intermediality in Theatre and Performance," *Intermediality in Theatre and Performance*, eds. Freda Chapple and Chiel Kattenbelt (International Federation for Theatre Research: 2006) 11.

[251] Bolter and Grusin 34.

[252] An over-simplified, non-hypermediated example of this would be a more linear and systematic approach to research and writing where the author researches one



Or, Blu-ray players that allow the viewer to pull up the operating menu while simultaneously viewing the film, such as this image, which is a shot from *Diary of the Dead* with the Blu-ray pop-up menu laid over it:[253]

topic or concept at a time with one piece of evidence at a time, and then sits down to write (with pen and paper?) based on the knowledge gathered.

[253] Again, a non-hypermediated example of this might be the more traditional, classical Hollywood approach in which moviegoers sit in a darkened room to watch a film, and they allow and want the fact of the apparatus to disappear so they can become more directly sutured into the experience.

The figure of the zombie serves as a site of remediation on a couple of different levels. First, on a representational level, the zombie embodies an ambiguous state: as a moving, consuming body, the zombie is familiar, especially when it is someone known (brother, sister, friend), the immediacy comes from the appearance of the familiar, it seems to be "like us"; as the dead animated, the zombie is also pure materiality, it does not reason or feel, and its single-focused drive to consume flesh only reinforces the prominence of the material, of the bodily—the zombie hypermediates the body as thing and medium. On a presentational level, the 21st century zombie as imagined by Boyle with its cat-like reflexes and adrenaline-induced speed is less visible and therefore more immediate and terrifying as a monster than its lumbering predecessor that seems to revel in its presentation as monster. The hypermediacy of the zombie comes from how those bodies are visually produced using digital special effects where an actor's body undergoes digital post-production processing resulting in the photorealistic image of an emaciated, dismembered zombie. As spectators, we marvel at how real this presentation appears, marking this updated zombie as spectacle of hypermediation, while at the same time we experience this hypermediated representation as immediate because the special effects employed merge seamlessly with the photorealistic image of the walking dead. The performer is remediated as zombie, which is itself remediated through the various special effects.

These layers of remediation are further complicated and explored in *Diary* where multiple levels of remediation take place overtly and covertly throughout both the narrative and formal structures of the film, as the characters, performers, and ultimately spectators, grapple with immediacy and hypermediacy (the apparent disappearance of the medium and the overt display of the medium's thereness, respectively). On the one hand, because *Diary* is a horror film, there is an assumed desire to feel the action, to connect directly to the action on the screen, to be right there with the protagonists as they battle the walking dead. But the viewers' attention is continually drawn to the ways in which the documentary, "Death," is made, foregrounding the use of new media and other

technology: Debra's voiceover explains how certain technological decisions were made and enacted; and the spectator watches Jason edit together a short scene that had just been displayed as part of the visual narrative. And it is this hypermediacy of the film, the pointing to the various technologies and means of production, that also gives us a more intimate relationship to the film: by foregrounding the "how" of cinematic production, the film becomes more immediate to the individual viewer because she feels as though Debra addresses us directly, and tells us the secrets of how she made her film. Herein lies the ways in which *Diary* functions as remediation: if remediation is the interplay of immediacy and hypermediacy, as Bolter and Grusin argue, then it is the use of the hypermediated to reinforce the immediacy, and the creation of immediacy through the deployment of hypermediacy, that firmly locates *Diary* as producing, representing, and being about remediation.

New media are not fixed or stable, but are always in process; they are always developing; they are always in transition. This should recall my discussion of liminality in the previous chapter, of being on the outside of normative society, but with the expectation of being reintegrated in a new social position. Again, as I discussed, what is at work within zombie cinema are those moments when reintegration fails and a permanent liminal state—specifically, zombie liminality—emerges. Although new media suggest a liminal state or process, they are not themselves liminal. New media might be more productively considered intermedial, particularly as they are represented within 21st century zombie cinema generally, and Romero's *Diary of the Dead* specifically.

Within performance studies, the concept of intermediality has been taken up more recently, having really come to prominent discourse within just the past couple of years, and is an attempt to theorize the increasing use and presence of new media within live theatrical contexts.[254] When considered alongside Bolter and Grusin's concept of remediation, a more authentic examination of new media and technology, one embedded in materiality and lived experience, can be parsed. Remediation is a means of understanding how new media incorporate a history of representational forms into their expression and usage, combining both the illusion of immediate connection and the dramatic display of multiple new technologies. Intermediality is the interconnected incorporation of multiple media (technologies) in the production of representational texts—cultural communications. Within both these terms, there is an implied core of connection, communication, and relationality. Each becomes a means for articulating the ways in which people connect and communicate with and through technologies. And, each of these terms demonstrates how two distinct disciplines—performance studies and new media and film studies—intersect around lived socio-cultural realities, ones that involve the inevitable intersection of the personal and the public through screens that continually shift our understandings of self and world.

As Thacker reminds us in considering biomedia, the body always figures into any discussion of the technological, and these examinations begin with both remediation and intermediality. Zombie cinema in the 21st century, however, offers a unique and unusual text through which to push at the reaches of embodied intermediality/remediation because of the use of digital technologies combined with subject matter (the walking dead) that is itself unlocatable in a singular position—the zombie is always "inter" and

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[254] Chapple and Kattenbelt, *Intermediality.*

"re." Zombie cinema in the 21st century, as *Diary* so clearly demonstrates, is often shot on digital video, foregrounds the use of numerous technologies within its narrative frame, and employs a wide range of technologies in its post-/production. Zombie cinema is, of course, also about *zombies*: beings, dead or similarly lacking sentient capabilities, that nearly become pure physicality. Zombies remind us that bodies are both a medium and mediated; that bodies remediate various cultural and social meanings, even beyond the intentionality of the sentient person that same body materializes; zombies also foreground the significance of liveness within the technological ubiquity of the 21st century. Always an undercurrent within performance studies discourse, liveness becomes highly problematized in the cinema, particularly the cinema under investigation in this dissertation. As a performance text, where does the cinema figure into meta-disciplinary discourses about the urgency of "shared air" performances? Complicating this, the zombie as walking dead materializes similar concerns about liveness. Philosophically speaking, even when two individuals (for instance, within the diegetic narrative frame of a film) share the same air, where is the ontological line between the zombie as living and the zombie as dead? Adding yet another layer to this ontological, metaphysical, as well as meta- and inter-disciplinary discourse, where do new media technologies figure into considerations of liveness? And this last question, in particular, takes on even more significance given how much our contemporary daily experiences are informed and framed by digital mediating technologies.

A medium is simply a means of communicating: a newspaper, a photograph, a business card, etc. But the medium used to communicate inevitably alters the content of the message: what is communicated via print media (newspaper), is not that same as that communicated via television (news station), even if both media are owned by the same company—thus an assumed aligning of politics and intent—and produced by the same team. Media, thus, as Marshall McLuhan argued, are an extension of ourselves because not only are media created by us (the television, the newspaper, the road, the cinema, ads, games, and so on), these media serve to communicate us: our ideas, our thoughts, and our feelings. In understanding media one must consider: *what* is communicated, *who* communicates, *how* it is communicated, *who* receives it, and *how* they receive it.[255]

A medium mediates, it always-already alters the message, it becomes part of the message, and remediates other media, itself, and the message. Bolter and Grusin describe new media at the turn of the millennium as remediation, wherein a medium encompasses both the immediacy and hypermediacy of its possibilities. Freda Chapple and Chiel Kattenbelt employ intermediality as a means of understanding how live performance and various new media and technologies interact to create new forms of expression and representation. These terms link directly to 21st century zombie cinema and further illustrate the work these films and their creatures do as part of a cultural dialectic of meaning making.

In this chapter I will use the concept of remediation to uncover the performative workings of 21st century zombie cinema; and, in doing so, I will also contribute to and expand upon remediation as more than just technologically bound. In the next section, "Remediating *Diary*," I conduct an examination of Romero's film as both embodying and

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[255] Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man, Critical Edition* (Corte Madera, CA: Gingko Press, 2003, 1964).

representing remediation, thereby demonstrating the ways in which new media impact experience, and the implications cinematic remediation holds for larger considerations of new media and society. I then turn to the zombie as remediated figure in "Remediating Zombies," further complicating Bolter and Grusin's term by incorporating the work of other theorists and considering the zombie body as a medium of remediation. I close the chapter with a consideration of the experiences of the non-zombie figure—us—and how the zombie causes us to rethink notions of liveness in our new media world.

Remediating *Diary*

As a film that performs remediation, *Diary* gives us layers of narrative, complex use of camera, and a nuanced relationship to the body. To perform remediation means that this film not only takes part in larger technological discourses and representations, but that it actively engages remediative processes within and through various bodies: the actors, the characters, the living, the walking dead, the mechanical, and so on. Before delving further into the nuanced realm of remediation in zombie cinema, I want take a moment to analyze the many layers and forms of remediation that are possible on a formal, representational level, and the ways in which horror cinema and the zombie subgenre participate in these many levels. In doing so I seek to show the reader the multiple cultural interconnections at work in zombie cinema. Refashioning is a form of remediation, and one that occurs within a medium: remakes (Tom Savini's 1990 *Night of the Living Dead* is a remake of Romero's same film produced in 1968); or borrowing, such as the play within a play or film within a film (the play *Mousetrap* in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, or the film of the same name within Michael Almereyda's cinematic adaptation of *Hamlet*). Remediation is very common within the horror genre. Many traditional horror stories are remediations of folk tales and gothic literature such as the many tales of Dracula,[256] including F. W. Murnau's *Nosferatu* (1929); as well as those movies of Dr. Frankenstein's monster such as James Whale's *Frankenstein* (1931) and Kenneth Branagh's *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* (1994). There is also the use of other media within the diegetic space of the horror film: the television plays an ironically central role in Romero's *Night of the Living Dead* (1968); the television is also central in Tobe Hooper's *Poltergeist*, a technological medium which is itself diegetically remediated serving not only its traditional function as a medium for television broadcast (images, narrative, etc), but also as a ghostly medium for the souls who have possessed the Freeling house; the prominent position of the television news reporter and her attempt to capture the news as it happens in Wes Craven's *Scream* (1996); and the strange montage video in *The Ring* (2002). This list of films and remediations are, of course, only a small selection in the century-long history of horror cinema.

On one level, zombie films engage in these more accessible forms of remediation: remakes, adaptations, and the use of technologies represented within other technologies. There are the remakes of *Night of the Living Dead* (1990), *Dawn of the Dead* (2004), and

[256] Here are a few of the more noteworthy films about the infamous vampire Dracula: *Dracula* (1931) directed by Todd Browning; *Dracula* (1979) directed by John Badham; *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992) directed by Francis Ford Coppola; and *Dracula 2000* (2000) directed by Patrick Lussier.

Day of the Dead (2008); and Wes Craven's *The Serpent and the Rainbow* (1988) is a cinematic adaptation of Wade Davis's already-influential dissertation-turned-book about the botanical-chemical roots of the Haitian zombie. Just as television plays a central, thematic role in Romero's *Night*, television monitors appear in the primate lab of *28 Days Later*, as well as radios and home video, and *Diary* itself is a meta examination of new media and digital technologies serving as a documentary within a film about the making of that documentary.

Returning to the opening of *Diary*: ambulance sirens sound as the first image emerges: a blurry shot with some vignetting screen left suggesting the changing of a lens. The camera shakes a bit, vignette disappears, and the image racks into focus: a three story brick building, most likely an apartment or office building given the regular placement and sizing of the windows. A white male, the camera operator, steps in front of the lens and uses an air duster to clean it—the final act of prepping the camera—and then begins to shoot some b-roll footage of the activities surrounding the building. From the first moments of the film, we are in the realm of remediation. What is shown, presumably through the familiarly omniscient movie camera, is funneled through a news channel's camera, which is also the direct point-of-view of the cameraman. This sets the tone for the rest of the film, which also takes place through a camera that is supposed to be one other than the omniscient camera of the larger film (*Diary*), and one that is also the direct point-of-view shot of a character—Jason Creed. In other words, everything we, as audience, see in this film is doubly mediated: we see not only through the original cinematic apparatus—the omniscient camera of Hollywood cinema—we also see through the eyes of a character, which is always only through the camera that character is holding, as well as through the larger cinematic apparatus.

The layering of vision here is important because the cinema is all about looking. When considered within the context of remediation, it becomes evident that vision, the process of looking, is also mediated and it mediates. Yet, this gaze is never simple or direct, it is always complicated and multifaceted. What Romero is doing here is foregrounding this complex process of looking; in this film, Romero calls attention to the act of looking and observing in the formal structures of the film. Although the viewer may not realize this on a conscious level—and I would argue that Romero himself did not directly incorporate this into his film—by having her line of sight, her field of vision, framed and reframed in so many layers of agency and intention, her relationship to her own viewing process becomes hypermediated in that she is made aware of what has traditionally been a very immediate (innate) process.

The camera pans left to a medium close-up of a cop car with two police officers standing just outside their open car doors. The driver is using the vehicle's two-way police radio to report the current situation:

POLICE OFFICER

(speaking into the two-way radio using a very casual and unprofessional tone)

628 Tremont. 6-2-8. Three dead. No, just the usual. Fuck. Usual. It's no big deal these days, right? Some guy—what's his name? Oh, who knows his name? Who cares? Fuckin' shoots his wife and kids then eats the

licorice. Sticks it in his mouth and blows his own brains out. This guy had no ID, no fucking papers. Probably squirreled over the goddamn border.[257]

The camera tracks the arrival of a second ambulance, which stops in the middle of the main shot between the camera and the apartment building.

CAMERA OPERATOR
(Runs up to the ambulance)
Hey, guys. Channel 10 News. Listen, you're kinda blocking our shot. Can I get you to move forward a bit?[258]

The ambulance moves forward once again giving the camera a clear shot of the apartment building. The camera operator continues to shoot b-roll while the news reporter readies herself.

Female Voice Over (V.O.)
We downloaded this video off the 'net. Some time in the last three days I can't remember exactly when. […][259]

The camera continues to catch b-roll, including more satiric commentary. The news reporter moves to occupy center frame, holding her microphone, and delivers the beginning of her report in an appropriately somber and monotone voice. As she finishes her introductory report the covered corpses, having been wheeled out on gurneys to the ambulances, reanimate and attack the EMT workers.

V.O. (cont'd)
Some of this footage was never broadcast, it was secretly uploaded by the cameraman who shot it. It was his way of trying to tell the truth about what was happening.[260]

The police fire numerous rounds into the walking dead, none of which deter the zombies, until they are shot in the brain. One zombie lumbers toward the camera operator who, in his moment of panic, knocks the camera over as he trips and falls. Next appear the denimed legs of the news reporter as the same zombie attacks her. The now-askew

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[257] *Diary of the Dead*, dir. George A. Romero, Bac Films, 2008.
[258] *Diary*.
[259] *Diary*.
[260] *Diary*.

camera continues to capture footage: the news reporter, her face now half-gone crumbles to the ground; the camera operator rushes to her aid, yelling in disbelief and desperation "this can't be fucking happening!"[261]

The screen cuts to black, the sound of sirens return as images of more b-roll news footage, guerilla cameras, and other modes of image capture appear. Much like the images at the beginning of *28 Days Later*, the clips that have been montaged together come from numerous sources; though unlike *28 Days* the editing is less frenetic—the shots are longer and cuts fewer—and the cameras tend to be removed and positioned at high angles, rather than in the action, suggesting the use of news station helicopters. Some of the scenes come from within the news stations, and news reports can be heard in numerous languages. While these images appear, the voice over continues: "We downloaded a lot of what we found on television on the 'net off blogs, images and commentary over those first three days. Most of it was bullshit. None of it was useful. This is what we were getting from the news networks…"[262] From here the soundtrack cuts from Debra's voice over to sutured bits from various news reports; these more official reports offering "plausible" explanations as to what the spectator just witnessed—not that the dead were returning to life, but that perhaps it was a hoax, or the people were not actually dead when they rose from the gurneys. The competing authority of Debra's voice over and the newscaster's commentary, introduce a tension of plausibility volleyed throughout the film; and these disembodied voices, particularly those emanating from behind the camera, contribute to the tension between the gross physicality of the zombies, and the cognitive materiality of the still living by playing on the import and weight of the voice as visceral actor vis-à-vis the empty materiality of the physically *there* ghouls.

Debra's voice over continues as the content shifts, though the method and form remain the same. The words "THE DEATH OF DEATH, A film by Jason Creed" in white, block letters appear in the center of the screen and the images now shown come presumably from the shooting of the film.

> We made a film, the one I'm going to show you now. Actually, Jason was the one who wanted to make it. Like that cameraman from Channel 10, he wanted to upload it so that people—*YOU*—could be told the truth. The film was shot with a Panasonic HDX900 and HVX200. I did the final cut on Jason's laptop. I've added music occasionally for effect hoping to scare you. You see, in addition to trying to tell you the truth I am hoping to scare you so that maybe you'll wake up—maybe you won't make some of the same mistakes we made. Anyway, here it is: Jason Creed's "The Death of Death."[263]

Diary, as a mockumentary posing as a video diary—and one that serves to document not only its subject (the zombies), but also to reflexively document the making of that

[261] *Diary*.
[262] *Diary*.
[263] *Diary*.

originally intended video diary as an homage to the video diary's creator (Jason)—this film opens with the disembodied voice of its narrator (Debra) explaining the significance of the B-roll news footage that we're watching. Debra's voice tells us that the scene in front of the apartment building had been downloaded from the Internet just "three days ago," having been uploaded by the news network cameraman who captured the images.

Debra's voice provides the familiar grounding of the mockumentary's omniscient narrator: she explains the significance of what we're seeing, contextualizing it within a larger narrative that is about to unfold—the documenting of a highly unusual crisis. We, as spectators, are conditioned to consume her voice as omniscient and all-knowing, which is something Romero troubles by putting Debra within the visual frame of the film: she serves as actor within the video diary (the found footage) and the narrative proper, as well as omniscient, disembodied narrator of the mockumentary. Similarly, and by way of introducing this ambivalent status of disembodied voice as supposed all-knowing narrator of a scene and as materialized subject within that same scene, Romero first gives us the cameraman who narrates from behind the camera what we're/he's seeing through the camera to the film's audience and anchorwoman who is positioned in front of and facing away from the unfolding event.

From the beginning, the movie encourages identification with the voices heard not only because of our training as good fans of horror, but also because of the relationship of these disembodied voices to the visual frame. The cameraman provides a voice to the 1st person camera through which the spectator witnesses the (supposed) first documented instance of the dead coming back to life.[264] The spectator sees what he sees and his voice comes, mainly, from "within our heads": not quite a voiceover because his voice, although emanating from a source out of the visual frame, is nevertheless diegetic—the spectator sees what he sees and therefore his voice functions almost as our own. After this opening scene, much of what is seen comes from Jason's camera, thus Jason's direct point-of-view; and much of the spectatorial relationship to Jason comes from his voice, which is usually situated behind this camera—though not always. The spectator sees characters interact with Jason as they stare directly into the camera he is holding, the same camera that provides the majority of our visual experience of *Diary*, because that is the only way to meet and return Jason's gaze.

These various disembodied, and variously disembodied, voices are disembodied through and because of technological bodies: the news cameraman behind his camera, and Jason behind his; both of these cameras also serve as the medium through which the viewer gains visual access to these two cameramen; and then there is Debra, the narrator of the mockumentary, whose disembodied voice glues the visual narrative together offering the context to what is shown, putting it in relationship to Jason's project, the contemporaneous events, and the post-Jason life of the project. And Debra also becomes

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[264] First person camera is a technique in which the camera shows us what a character sees. This is used famously in the opening scene of John Carpenter's *Halloween* (1978), in which the visual frame and soundtrack position us (the spectator) as seven year old Mike Meyers: what he sees we see and what he hears we hear thereby aligning us with the killer and making us murderers. For more on this see Carol Clover's *Men, Women, and Chainsaws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992).

a visual subject within the film as the main human focus of Jason's camera-gaze (she is his girlfriend and it is her house that the group of film students are driving toward). As these voices move in and out of the realm of visual embodiment—as the body producing the voice appears in the visual frame, and as their voices are heard without the physical grounding of the body—a further juxtaposition emerges: the tenuous physicality and presence we all seem to hold on this earth next to the seeming pure physicality of the walking dead. Additionally, this tenuous physicality as represented on the cinema screen also mirrors the complex notion of cinematic physicality: these voices are the ephemeral limbs of the mediated bodies seen in the film; they serve as markers or reminders of the ambiguous physicality we all embody as members of a screened culture.

It appears that Debra, as disembodied narrator and character within the visual frame, occupies a space somewhere between Michel Chion's notion of "acousmetre" and Pascal Bonitzer's "silences of the voice." On one end, the acousmetre is that voice which is heard but whose source is not revealed until the end. This disembodiment gives the voice undefined powers because the voice seems to come from anywhere and everywhere.[265] Yet, this is not entirely the case with Debra because she is visually present throughout the course of the film, though her voice-over and the dialogue produced by her screened self are not the same—Debra has two voices in *Diary*, and each occupies a different realm of cinematic space (the narrative, or diegetic, and the voice-over, or extra-diegetic). Debra as narrator of the mockumentary seems to drive the film and frame it within a certain point of view, yet what the audience sees is through the point of view of another character, Jason, and both characters repeatedly assert that what is shown—though treated heavily in post-production—is the "truth" of an event.

Bonitzer figures the spectator into his calculation of voice and point of view.[266] For him, there is a continuum of the voice-in-relation to a screened body. Point of view emerges somewhere in between, depending on the prominence of the voice-over in relationship to that voice's screened materialization. In both cases, the tension between the disembodied voice and its screened materialization come to the fore. This impacts the spectator's relationship to the material viewed, to their field of vision, and to the reliability of the information presented (even if that information is acknowledged as purely fictional). The tropes of the found footage horror film (i.e., *Blair Witch*, *Quarantine*) mimic that of documentary footage, suggesting a "truth" to what is shown. Romero's addition of the traditionally derived voice-over narrator to *Diary*, further accentuates this connection to truth or reliability by adding another mark of authority: Debra's voice.

Employing the technique of first-person camera throughout the film, Romero foregrounds the technology used to produce the film. Not only is the camera as apparatus of visuality remediated through layers of multiple cameras, the spectator is repeatedly made aware of various recording technologies: in her introductory voice over, Debra recites the exact models of the cameras used; Tracy Thurman (Amy Lalonde) uses a small, portable, "pocket" flip camera, the images of which are incorporated into the final

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[265] Michel Chion, *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

[266] Pascal Bonitzer, "The Silences of the Voice," *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology: A Film Reader*, ed. Philip Rosen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986) 319-334.

film; and Eliot (Joe Dinicol) and Jason pull security camera footage, to name a few. Romero also draws attention to the means of production: the camerawork, of course, but also the extra-diegetic soundtrack—Debra informs the viewer that she's added music to the film "for effect"—and scenes in which actual video production take place.

This all suggests that a sense of immediacy—as produced through the effects of documentary voice-over and found footage style—isn't necessarily a guarantor of truth. The position of "truth" as itself a discourse that is always mediated emerges as an unstated theme throughout the film as Debra presents the news footage that explains the "truth" of an event, and Jason and Debra intentionally present the editing of the footage shown. What then emerges alongside the conflation of immediacy and truth is a triadic complication of truth-real-fact, which the hypermediacy of the audio and visuals simultaneously exposes and obscures. By having access to so much visual information—at least suggested by the way this information is presented—the viewer is immersed in a hypermediated world, which should and does foreground the act of viewing; but at the same time the filmmaker (Romero, not Jason) seems to want the viewer to a feel direct connection to the film—the typical suturing effect of Hollywood cinema—thereby confusing the troped message of "mass media is bad" by using a mode of mass media to communicate said message.[267]

After having traveled a fair distance from campus to a hospital—where they lost both Gordo Thorsen (Chris Violette) and Mary—through an Amish farm—where they lost the mute farmer, Samuel—the remaining group stumble upon a semi-militarized warehouse run and guarded by ex-/members of the National Guard.[268] Having reached a moment of stasis in a location deemed reasonably secure, Jason asks the Stranger if they have Internet access, and they do. Jason and Eliot, each holding the two cameras, head through the towering rows of warehoused goods and navigate the labyrinthine hallways of the warehouse to a dimly lit room with the aforementioned Internet access. Eliot records as Jason sets up his camera on a tripod in order to record their editing process: in the visual frame is shown a camera being set up to record the screen of a laptop computer on which the two filmmakers upload footage from three different cameras and edit it together. The position of the camera in relation to the laptop captures the reflections of the room on the laptop screen. Faint ghost images of Jason and Eliot can be seen, but it is

[267] Here, mass media are those media that are produced and consumed en masse, usually by corporations for millions of people: the news through Fox News or CNN, any number of sites through the Internet, etc.

[268] It is no coincidence that the group of people populating and running the warehouse are entirely African American, and the Stranger—the unnamed, seeming leader of the group—even calls attention to the fact, which is unusual in a Romero zombie film. Ever since the "color blind" casting of Duane Jones, a black man, in the non-raced, lead role of Ben, Romero's zombie films have always cast black men in strong, independent roles: Ken Foree as Peter in *Dawn* (1978); Terry Alexander as John in *Day* (1985); and, in an interesting turn of expectations, Eugene Clark as the organizing zombie Big Daddy. In each of these first four Romero zombie movies, race is never foregrounded—no racial slurs, no calling attention to race relations—but, as I just mentioned, the Stranger does call attention to it *Diary*, which throws a curve ball into an otherwise troped Romero casting and script.

when Debra enters the room that a clear reflection emerges: her entire face fills the far left side of the laptop screen.

DEBRA
What the hell are you guys doing?

Cut to Eliot's camera, which stays positioned on Debra.
JASON
Uh, editing.

DEBRA
Editing what?

JASON
The stuff we shot. […] I just wanted to upload our shit. Look…

Cut to first camera shot of the laptop screen, which holds Debra's reflection in the black bar along the left-hand side of the screen. Jason has logged in to his MySpace account for "The Death of Death."

JASON (cont'd)
72,000 hits, in eight minutes.[269]

This is Jason's main argument for his actions: the number of people searching for answers, seeking others experiencing what they are experiencing, trying to share in each other's misery. Jason wants to show others the truth of what is happening, something the news media has failed to do: in the warehouse a television, still not entirely out of its packaging, airs a news broadcast of a police officer (notably played by Romero) reinterpreting the same news footage that opened the film; the people on the gurneys were not actually dead when they rose attacked the EMTs, it was the gunfire by the officers that finally killed these people—a twist of the story that the spectator knows to be untrue. Of course, Jason, as a film student, will not simply upload raw footage. So he edits the footage, hoping to expose the editing process as a means for exposing the truth, a naïve exploit because of the impossibility of pure, unmediated representation, especially when the means of representation is so heavily media-reliant.

And that is the strange paradox of this film: as a metarepresentation of a metarepresentation—a video diary within a mockumentary that is also the making of that same video diary, which both contain the narrative proper—it is impossible to expose any one truth. Rather, what is presented is the truth of one person's, a group of people's, experience of that event in the way they have chosen to represent it (the hypermediacy of the remediation). In an age of social media and Internet 2.0, a time when consumers have relatively easy access to recording and production technologies, when everyone has a

[269] *Diary.*

voice and they can promote that voice in any number of representational forms, notions of truth become skewed. Jason's urgent need to show everyone the truth, a mantra throughout *Diary*, becomes Romero's way of exposing the problematic position of truth in such a multivocal, media saturated society. At the same time, this is not the suggested eradication of truth, but rather a means of exposing how truth is individual; it is experienced as real, and how it is then communicated and altered through various media.

At the same time, in this desire to break down the means of representation and get at the truth of the experience, the filmmakers, in this case Jason Creed and Debra Moynihan, seek to make the experience of watching their film immediate. They claim to want the viewers to have a sense of unmediated (or minimally mediated) access to the content, so that they will be moved, "scared," and hopefully not make the same mistakes made by this filmmaking crew. Even as Debra continually calls attention to the means of production through her expository voice-over narration, it is intended for the spectator to draw closer to the content, feel the experiences she watches, become more intimate with Debra and Jason and the others (the immediacy of the remediation). Jason employs multiple technologies—various cameras, recording devices, computers, and software—in order to get beyond the representational media themselves and expose what he sees as the truth. Of course, the irony here, like in Bolter and Grusin's analysis of remediation, is that in order to produce, represent, and have an immediate experience that reveals the truth about something, multiple levels of mediation are not just employed but even required.

Within the formal construction of *Diary*, of 21st century zombie films, remediation emerges. The generic conventions of the found footage film, with its use of handheld camera, swift panning, and rapid editing, suggests immediacy. In these moments the audience is meant to be within the action, feel directly connected to what is occurring. On the other hand, the heavy use of special effects, particularly with the zombies and gore, foreground the hypermediacy of these films. The zombies and their world, with their photorealistic insertion into the fabric of the film, display the possibilities and presence of digital effects, of media.

Then there are the zombies of *Diary*, which seem to materialize the notion of remediation. When I use materialization here I mean within the fictional frame of *Diary* that we as audience members watch, not necessarily in the real world space of the video diary (which is, of course, still fictional to us, the audience) or its making (again, still fictional to us, but presented as real, "found footage," within the world of *Diary*-as-mockumentary). Whereas earlier I argued that the zombie figure can be read as a remediation of life-in/as-death, in this film the zombie-as-remediation also functions on another, more representational level. Given that Romero is the godfather of zombie films, and that all modern zombie films in some way point back to his series of films beginning with *Night*,[270] the zombies in *Diary* remediate the previous zombies produced by this same director. *Diary* presents us with the beginning of a new zombie outbreak in a world without zombie cinema. The characters, a group of *film* students, never once make reference to *Night of the Living Dead* or *Resident Evil* or any other large number of zombie films, video games, or comic books. It's as though zombies have never existed in popular culture. In part because of this, the zombies of *Diary* remediate the zombies of

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[270] *The Fear Files: Zombies!*, dir. Jon Walz, The History Channel, 2006, DVD.

Romero's previous zombie films. Recalling the "double logic" of remediation—immediacy and hypermediacy—the zombie in *Diary* offers its own double logic by seeming to erase the cultural and historical past from which this film and its zombies emerge, thereby offering the "new" experience of zombies, while at the same time blithely foregrounding the decades-long history upon which the film draws because we are, as consumers of popular culture, presumably already so familiar with the zombie figure and excited by the mere fact of its presence in yet another zombie film. By not calling attention to the now firmly established, nearly forty-year history of zombie cinema, Romero posits a large metaphoric elephant in the room, which creates an oddly self-conscious and awkward zombie representation.[271]

The ambiguous physicality of the mediated bodies (which come to us only as images thereby making more ambivalent their materiality) and their accompanying disembodied voices serve in stark contrast to the very "real" bodies of the zombies (real within the diegetic context of the film's narrative). Of course these "real" bodies are simply physical vessels of base, primordial impulse: to consume the living. Although the spectator gains access to the zombies only through the intra-diegetic camera, and oftentimes through a meta-cinematic representation of that intra-diegetic camera, thereby making the zombies as equally mediated as the living, the zombies still serve in physical and material representational contrast to the more liminal-physicality of the living. These walking dead bodies are *disconnected*, they do not participate in the representation of representations that circulate and layer throughout the film; and yet they are represented within the diegetic space of the film (as real), and then by the film itself (as fictional beings).

The zombies of *Diary* call attention to themselves as zombies, as Romero's zombies,[272] with their lumbering awkwardness, blank stares, and uncanny ability to mobilize into swarms. They *are* the original creation; there has been no gap. But at the same time, because of this forty-year history, the zombies of *Diary* foreground their cult-status as Romero zombies. Fans of zombie and horror cinema know they are watching a Romero film, the first in a new series of independent zombie films by the originator of modern zombie cinema. These fans delight in the zombies because these zombies are familiar, the rules of the films are familiar, the means of destroying these zombies are known. For those less familiar with zombie cinema, you are still entrenched in a familiar trope you may not know inside and out, but it's there in popular culture, redeployed on

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[271] The only exception to this exists at the beginning of *Diary of the Dead* where, after the opening sequence thoroughly examined above, we cut to a forest scene of a woman running from a mummy, which turns out to be the student film Jason is making when the zombie outbreak takes over. During this scene, in referring to the mummy, the characters make tangential reference to the history of Romero's zombies and comments with phrases such as "dead things don't run."

[272] As I discussed in chapter one, zombies, as we understand them within popular culture today emerged most directly from Romero's first zombie films—*Night* (1968), *Dawn* (1978), and *Day* (1985). I can state with absolute certainty that any person interested in zombie cinema, or even horror film more generally, will have some basic knowledge of the Romero zombie—one that is slow, lumbering, and flesh-eating—even if that person cannot articulate this zombie figure in those exact terms.

sitcoms,[273] cartoons,[274] and music videos.[275] *Diary*, as a film about new media, as a film produced by George A. Romero, as the first a new series of zombie films by Romero, presents remediation in every fiber, in every 1 and 0 of its digital binary code, in every ounce of its celluloid.

Remediating Zombies

> [A] consideration of the body as a remediation also means that it is caught, in its own unique way, between the poles of immediacy and hypermediacy. As an instance of immediacy, the body is situated by the phenomenological concept of "embodiment" or lived experience. However as an instance of hypermediacy, the body is simultaneously framed by sets of knowledge on the body, including medicine and science. The incommensurability between these—between embodiment and technoscience—is perhaps the zone of the body-as-media…[276]

Here Thacker lays bare the groundwork for my argument of the zombie as a figure for remediation. If the body is a medium, then it can take part in the processes of remediation. But the body is more than just a medium, and it becomes dangerous to think in such terms. For the body to be communicated and to communicate—to be a medium and a message—there must be a receiver of the message, and the receiver is human (whether directly or after a series of transmissions and transferences). Because of the way the psyche figures so prominently into our (the living) processing of the zombie, the psychoanalytic implications of the zombie-as-remediation demand further exploration. The human-turned-zombie is a remediation in the newly configured relationship of immediacy to hypermediacy. That which is mediated shifts, and how the body functions as a form of mediation also shifts. These shifts are invariably informed by the psychic processes of the living, such as the continual readjustment of self-perception and identity when confronted with another subject—particularly an uncategorizable one—and the problematic attempts at categorization when encountering an uncanny figure.

Each form of remediation seeks to erase or ignore the host medium (immediacy) while also calling attention to the host medium (hypermediacy). This is particularly important to new media because when new forms of technology emerge they must position themselves within and against existing, established media as being "both, and" the older media: the photograph does what realistic painting does, "only better," by being ontologically closer to (or an "index" of) the real thing represented. Similarly, the cinema

[273] "Epidemiology," *Community*, NBC, 28 October 2010, Television.

[274] "Which Witch is Which?" *Scooby Doo, Where Are You!*, CBS, 6 December 1969, Television.

[275] Michael Jackson, "Thriller," *Thriller,* Epic Records, 1983, Dir. John Landis, 2 December 1983.

[276] Thacker, *Biomedia* 10-11.

emerged as photography "only better," while at the same time foregrounding itself as a new technology.[277] In doing so, new media (whether that be the new media subject of this dissertation, or new technologies and new forms of representation) are able to secure an audience via resemblance to the already established, while at the same time promising greater immediacy through the marvel of their hypermediacy.

The notion of accessing greater immediacy through hypermediacy—admittedly seemingly counter-intuitive, though a key element of remediation—functions as a driving subtheme within zombie cinema. The zombie figure is one in which the familiarity of the body suggests an intimate knowledge or connection—part of the immediacy—whereas its state of decomposition and uncanniness foregrounds its physicality—its hypermediacy. Additionally, the zombie as special effects creation presents as immediate in the photorealistic image projected on the screen, but it is the employment of a highly mediated process during post-production that permits the zombie to appear so immediately real. There is a contradictory allure: we recognize the walking figure as human, and therefore sentient, presuming an intimate relationship with this figure, even if we may not be socially familiar with him/her, because we initially recognize this figure as one through which we continue to evolve as a social being. In other words, we first recognize this figure as an O/other—in Lacanian, psychoanalytic terms—because we (even zombie fans) assume that a human body walking around is living, capable of complex psychological engagement, and can therefore serve as a mirror against which to position ourselves and further construct our own identities and sense of self. Yet, upon closer inspection, the raw physicality of the figure emerges: it devolves into all flesh and impulse. This tension between assumed familiarity as a creature with an ego (pace Freud) and the realization of it as pure id-like drive, foregrounds the body as medium.

There are two forms of the zombie figure that I focus on in this dissertation: the traditional, dead, lumbering figure linked to George Romero and his zombie films; and the updated, 21st century zombie initiated by Danny Boyle in *28 Days Later* that is not necessarily dead, and whose now-permanent state of zombieness is the result of a viral infection. In the case of Boyle's zombies, the immediacy lies in the relationship of the virus and the body: once infected, a person becomes an Infected; their physicality and psyche no longer distinguishable from the virus itself, thereby seeming to do away with the medium of the body as viral communicator (to put it in more familiar media-related terms). In terms of Romero's zombies, which can also be extrapolated to Boyle's, the immediacy lies in the duality of apparent-life and seeming-death: neither truly dead nor alive, the once assumed impenetrable boundary separating the two seems to dissolve so that death is experienced in life and vice versa.[278]

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[277] Tom Gunning, "Cinema of Attractions: Early Film, Its Spectators and the Avant-Garde," *Early Film: Space, Frame, Narrative*, eds. Thomas Elsaesser and Adam Barker (British Film Institute, 1989).

[278] Of course, this notion of "experiencing" life in death is a misnomer of sorts if one argues that the dead cannot "experience." This level of semantic discussion belongs more to the realm of philosophical and medical inquiry. Even so, my initial reaction would be to assert that the dead cannot have an experience, but upon further reflection I realize this situation is much more complicated than a simple "yes or no" regarding the

As relating specifically to the figure of the zombie, Freud's concept of the uncanny and Masahiro Mori's elaborated concept of the Uncanny Valley,[279] help to define the hypermediacy of the zombie. Examining the zombie as remediation exposes some of the deeper inner workings of cultural meaning making occurring within this subgenre; in exposing the remediative qualities of the zombie figure we can better understand why it is we are simultaneously intrigued by, drawn to, and yet repulsed by this walking dead figure, and thus how this subgenre participates in larger cultural discourse. As stated above, the immediacy of the zombie figure is two-fold: in the traditional pop culture zombie—emerging as Romero's brain child—immediacy lies in the apparent-life and seeming-death, the erasure of the boundary separating life from death; with the 21st century update to the zombie genre where the virus-as-zombie-agent supersedes the necessity of death as part of the equation, it is the virus that becomes immediately available to the body, removing any distinction between the virus and the body—the virus is the body, the body is the zombie, the zombie is the virus. The hypermediacy of the zombie-as-virus is our attraction to its uncanny visage. The body of the zombie, in all its material and physical un/familiarity, is what draws us to this creature: the strange (uncanny) familiarity of the figure; its disgusting pure physicality; its lifelike death; its rotting and decaying form; it is us, but isn't.

Freud's concept of the uncanny (*das Unheimliche*) posits that frightening or disturbing objects, events, and creatures strike us as familiar or known—the unfamiliar is familiar—resulting in a psychic disconnect that may be viscerally experienced. For Freud, of course, this has psychoanalytic implications wherein the uncanny relates to the return of the repressed; but the uncanny is not strictly reserved for the psychoanalytic and emerges, even for Freud, from aesthetics and responses to aesthetics. Kyle Bishop asserts that the concept of the uncanny "is key to understanding the ability of the zombie to instill fear: Those who should be dead and safely laid to rest have bucked the natural order of things and have returned from the grave."[280] Since Aristotle, *life* has been defined by animation and movement; with the zombie the dead are reanimated and the corpses *move*, thereby confusing this basic distinction between life and death.[281] It is because the zombie resembles the human, echoes the vestiges of humanity, that this creature becomes both so alluring and so grotesque.[282]

Mori applies this notion of the uncanny to robotics in accounting for a gap, or valley, in a graph of positive human reaction to anthropomorphized creatures and objects[283]:

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abilities of experiencing, and because of the intricate nature of this discussion, is best reserved for another thesis.

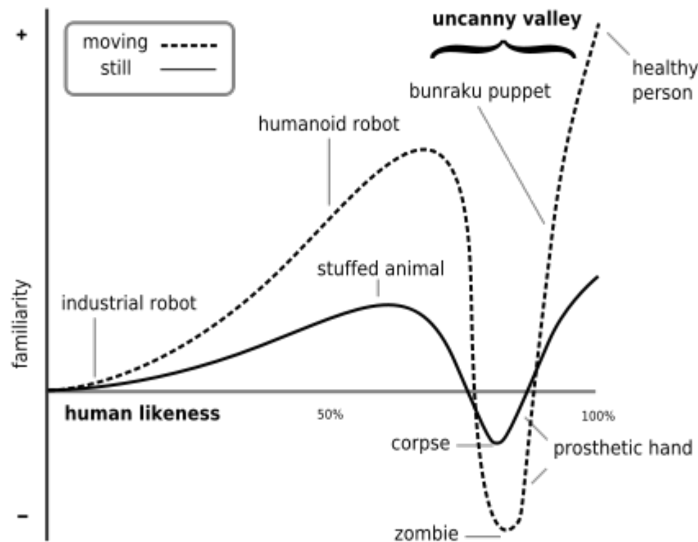
[279] Masahiro Mori, "The Uncanny Valley," *Energy* 7.4 (1970) 33-35.

[280] Bishop, "Raising the Dead" 198.

[281] Thanks to Kristen Whissel for pointing this out.

[282] Bishop, "Raising the Dead" 201.

[283] This particular version of the graph from Wikipedia, Web, 20 April 2011 < http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uncanny_valley>.



In Mori's graph the zombie occupies the nadir of the valley, as the uncanniest of the nonhuman, humanlike objects. Romero, in particular, plays with the uncanny possibilities of the zombie in the ways he uses visual signifiers to differentiate, and even individualize, each of the walking dead[284]: the baseball player in uniform, the nun in habit, the hare Krishna, the priest, the wealthy lady, and so on. Each of these zombies seems familiar and knowable as a "type," yet upon second glance is strange and unreal. What repels us from the walking dead is that which compels us: their uncanny nature. It is the seeming knowability or familiarity that is so intriguing—the zombie's immediacy—and it is the fleshly physicality of the medium itself, the zombie, which attracts us—its hypermediacy. Death serves as the lynchpin in this conception of the zombie as remediation: it is immediate in the medium of the corpse; when that corpse animates as the walking dead, death becomes hypermediated. Humanity, or what it means to be human remediates through the liminal figure of the zombie.

Remediation is embodied and technological, recalling biomedia. The position that Bolter and Grusin posit for the body as remediated is an external one: it is something done to the body rather than something in which the body participates.[285] Thacker argues for those moments and situations where the biological and the technological are completely bound-up within one another so as to be indistinct, thereby marking Bolter and Grusin's argument as incomplete. Remediation is not simply an external process, and it does not only involve the application of alien technological objects (prostheses) to the body. In their conception of remediation involving the body, Bolter and Grusin fail to consider the more nuanced and subtle ways in which the body both functions as a medium and serves as the subject of mediation.

Thacker's concept of biomedia serves as a means through which to understand the new relationships the biological and the technological bear to one another such that they are not "ontologically distinct." In fact, because the technological and biological are so

[284] The zombies in this particular list appear in *Dawn of the Dead* (1978).
[285] Thacker, *Biomedia* 9.

intertwined, remediation must be rethought as not exclusively an external process, but an internal one as well: remediation is not only a top-down or imposed process; it is also a process that emerges from within such that two almost dialectical forces work together. This is important because of how interconnected the disciplines of biology and technology have become, as well as how intertwined the biological (the body) and the technological (new media) are—in fact, as Thacker posits, not just intertwined, but a singular, fluid, whole, thereby complicating Bolter and Grusin's binarized conception of remediation. Furthermore, when applying Thacker's theory of biomedia as a means of complicating our understanding of the zombie, we find that the zombie also further illustrates Thacker's claim for a more nuanced consideration of remediation as techno-biologically combined, such as in the Biomolecular Transport Protocol.[286]

To aid in the formulation of the zombie as remediation, I return to the idea of transcoding as bound up within the tripartite process of encoding, recoding, and decoding. Thacker queries: "if it is possible to transcode and remediate various objects from the real world—what effect would this have on the body of the human subject, as an object? Can the body be 'transcoded'? Is the body a type of 'remediation'?"[287] I argue that the answer to these questions is "yes," and Thacker does as well: the body serves "both as medium (a means of communication) and as mediated (the object of communication)."[288] Given that the body is a medium and the body is mediated, the body can function as a type of remediation, it can be transcoded. The virus in *28 Days Later* uses the body as medium when it, upon contact with a porous human surface, encodes its data into the body, recodes its data to the "language" of the body (psychological data), and is finally decoded by the body. In this situation the body functions as a medium for the virus. What is less clear in this context is how the body becomes an object of communication. Of course the zombie body, like other bodies, is mediated across various forms. In *Diary of the Dead* this is Jason's main motivation: to record the zombie phenomenon and broadcast it across the Internet; thus to remediate the zombie body. But on a more abstract level, akin to the way in which the body mediates the rage virus in *28 Days*, the zombie is remediated through the appearance of the once-living individual.

Later in their study Bolter and Grusin do turn to the embodied ramifications of their theoretical inquiry:

> In its character as a medium, the body both remediates and is remediated. The contemporary, technologically constructed body recalls and rivals earlier cultural versions of the body as a medium. The body as enhanced or distorted by medical and cosmetic technologies remediates the ostensibly less mediated bodies of earlier periods in Western culture.[289]

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[286] Thacker, Biomedia 15-26. See also Chapter 2 of this dissertation.
[287] Thacker, *Biomedia* 9.
[288] Thacker, *Biomedia* 9.
[289] Bolter and Grusin, 238.

For Thacker, this indicates "that cultural attitudes toward the body are the same as those toward media: our culture wants to render the body immediate, while also multiplying our capacity to technically control the body."[290] Whereas for Bolter and Grusin the body as medium and mediated occurs at a more superficial level—"fashion, bodybuilding, cosmetic surgery"[291]—Thacker complicates this concept by considering the body from within: "the body as seen in biotech research generates its technicity from within; its quality of being a medium comes first and foremost from its internal organization and functioning."[292] So the body as mediated is just as internal a process as the body as medium for Thacker.

Turning to Chapple and Kattenbelt's reconfiguration of intermediality for theater and performance a better understanding of how the body is both mediated and a medium can be gained. They note: "reality changes as we experience it… intermediality leads us into an arena and mental space that may best be described as *in-between realities*."[293] Intermediality is not a new concept, it has existed within communication theories for some time, but what remains constant is the notion of interrelatedness, of multiple media working together representationally to construct and communicate meaning.[294] The intermedial "is a space where the boundaries soften—and we are in-between and within a mixing of spaces, media and realities […] intermediality becomes a process of transformation of thoughts and processes where something different is formed through performance."[295] These two performance theorists like so many before them, work primarily within a theatrical milieu. Though they incorporate new media into their discussion of how theater and live performance have changed, it is still the live body on stage in front of a live audience that occupies their central area of concern. I am interested in moving performance theory beyond the circumscribed location of the stage, beyond the realm of the privileged shared air performances. The theoretical work that Chapple and Kattenbelt have done helps to bridge new media theory and performance, but performance theory must encompass screened performance that moves beyond the simple capturing or recording of a performance.

In considering the concept of remediation in relationship to his own work, Thacker assists in a further definition of zombie liminality:

> To return to Bolter and Grusin's concept of "remediation," we can suggest that a consideration of the body as a remediation also means that it is caught, in its own unique way, between the poles of immediacy and hypermediacy. As an instance of immediacy, the body is situated by the phenomenological concept of "embodiment" or lived experience. However as an instance of hypermediacy, the body is simultaneously framed by sets of knowledge on the

[290] Thacker, *Biomedia* 9.
[291] Thacker, *Biomedia* 10.
[292] Thacker, *Biomedia* 10.
[293] Chapple and Kattenbelt 11.
[294] Chapple and Kattenbelt 13-19.
[295] Chapple and Kattenbelt 11.

> body, including medicine and science. The incommensurability between these—between embodiment and technoscience—is perhaps the zone of the body-as-media… [T]he body is a remediation, a process in which a functioning, biological materiality self-manifests, caught in the midst of the poles of immediacy and hypermediacy, the "body itself" and the body enframed by sets of discourses (social, political, scientific).[296]

Similarly, the zombie body is caught "between the poles of immediacy and hypermediacy," between being life-in-death, or a pure expression of the rage virus, and pure, decaying physicality, and the subject of theoretical, scientific, and cultural inquiry. Just as remediation includes both immediacy and hypermediacy, the zombie is both an expression of pure death/virus and an overtly physical creature. On a very simple level, the zombie as body and scientific curio marks it as a parallel equation of the remediation as set forth above by Thacker. The zombie, in its cinematic representational form as well as its folkloric form and everything in between, is always already "enframed by" social, political, scientific, and I would add cultural, "sets of discourses"[297]—the zombie is always already hypermediated. The social discourse emerges in the abrupt disruption of normative social systems and recognizable social categorization: the zombie figure at first appears to be normal, like us (the living/Uninfected) but that misperception is quickly corrected when the zombie behaves or performs well outside what are considered normal social behaviors. The zombie is enframed by the political because of how quickly the figure spreads, converting other bodies into non-normative sociality, causing a crisis in the hegemonic, political structure. Scientifically, the zombie becomes an immediate object of this discourse because of how the zombie figure so clearly defies expected biological functioning. And, finally, cultural enframing through the interworkings of the three previous categories as well as the ways in which the zombie so abruptly and profoundly disrupts and alters cultural discourses as they have come to be assumed: as suggested by the *28* franchise, at what point does the viral alter the foundation of who a person is at the genetic level; on a philosophical level, what, or even where, is the ontology of liveness and presence; and even when does death occur, and what is death, given the increase in technological capabilities of artificially keeping someone alive—when is that body no longer the person we knew and loved? One need not be a fan of zombie films, or horror cinema and culture at all, to recognize that the zombie has become a mainstay within popular culture, piquing our interest, drawing our curiosity; it is a figure that infuses multiple genres, from horror to comedy and even romance; and, the zombie serves as repository for working through dramatic shifts in cultural production, such as the move to the digital.

What becomes more difficult to map or parallel to Thacker's description of the body as remediation is immediacy. For Thacker this becomes a simple restatement of embodiment, as phenomenologically conceived—"lived experience." In order to have a phenomenological experience, in order for lived experience to occur and be embodied,

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[296] Thacker, *Biomedia* 10-11.

[297] Thacker, *Biomedia* 11.

the body under consideration must be part of a larger complex of sentient physicality. In other words, can animals or zombies—creatures with brains but arguably without "minds"—have embodied, phenomenological experience? This is a philosophical question and debate that is still ongoing, and one beyond the purview of this project, but one worth mentioning and considering momentarily to unearth the potential embodied experience, or immediacy, of the zombie figure. The term "mind" is used to indicate a critically aware, thinking subject, one that is capable of self-reflection—"mind" is more than the material brain itself. Briefly speaking, the phenomenological subject exhibits or has *Dasein* ("being in the world") and *Mitsein* ("being with others"). Both *Dasein* and *Mitsein* require an awareness of the self, and an awareness of the self as part of a larger network of objects, which *Dasein* knows, and others, again, which *Dasein* recognizes.[298] The problem with non-human animals—and zombies—is that it is unknown whether they are capable of *Dasein*, and if they are not, then they cannot be phenomenological subjects or have embodied experiences. If this is the case, then, is the cognitively disabled human a non-human? This line of discourse and questioning is not to lead us down a slippery slope of denying various human subjects their rightful position as human. Rather, my aim here is to demonstrate the very problematic nature of determining and qualifying embodied experience.

I've engaged, however briefly, phenomenological discourse here in order to further unpack Thacker's assertion that the body as immediacy is situated in the embodiment of the phenomenological subject. Because of the still-ongoing debates as to where one draws the line determining what animal subject fulfills the requirements of *Dasein* necessary to participate as a phenomenological subject, I will not be so bold as to assert my own line. I simply want to foreground that blurry line that already exists in philosophical discourse, thereby foregrounding the possibility of the zombie (walking dead or Infected) as bearing the potential for embodied experience and thus demonstrating one side of the double logic of remediation: immediacy.

By considering the zombie as remediation it is possible to further develop the concept of the zombie as permanent liminality—or zombie liminality. Because the zombie, as a fictional and folkloric creature, is discursive, it is always already mediated: through oral histories and tales, through literature and the written word, through screens, and through our own bodies. Similarly, the state of zombie liminality, as I argued in the previous chapter, is one embedded in diasporic and post-/colonial roots. On a basic level, to be remediated is to have ones image and life circulated as media images; to be oneself and in some sense choose one's path, but on the other hand to also be an object of media examination, a statistic, some "other" as represented "elsewhere." This figure is immediate as an individual with experiences; this figure is also hypermediate as many

[298] This very brief discussion draws on numerous texts, including: Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997); Michael Inwood, *Heidegger: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); Joohan Kim, "Phenomenology of Digital-Being," *Human Studies* 24.1/2 (2001) 87-111; Corinne Painter and Christian Lotz, eds., *Phenomenology and the Non-Human Animal: At the Limits of Experience* (Netherlands: Springer, 2007); Simon P. James, "Phenomenology and the Problem of Animal Minds," Web, 20 October 2011, < http://www.environmentalphilosophy.org/iseeiaeppapers/2007/James.pdf>.

images across media networks, as one of many versions of the same condition. To understand remediation as bodied is to understand zombie liminality because remediation is to be both immediate and hypermediate, to be located within two realms, and yet to not be exactly one or the other; further more, remediation speaks to the circulation of images and information in the 21st century, to the ways in which individuals can access and know a disparate group and yet not be directly responsible to them. Furthermore to understand remediation as an embodied process is to understand a post-global media experience: the embodiedness of remediation locates a highly technological process and term within lived experience; it relocates the seemingly abstract and removed to the now of our today. This, in part, is why I focus attention on these cultural objects about or containing zombies: these cultural objects offer a lens into a larger entangled social situation.

The Remediated Self

In her essay "Reload: Liveness, Mobility and the Web" (2002),[299] Tara McPherson reminds us of the embodied, phenomenological experience of encountering the objects of new media:

> Rather than simply cataloging a typology of digital data focused primarily on its formal elements, I am also interested in exploring the specificity of *the experience of using the web, of the web as mediator between human and machine, of the web as a technology of experience*. Put differently, I am interested in how the web constitutes itself in the unfolding of experience.[300]

McPherson then goes on to conduct a "phenomenology of websurfing,"[301] in which she walks us through the experience and its real-time analysis of using the Internet, a medium that she continually juxtaposes to television because of their shared ideology-masking-as-ontology[302] of immediacy. She reads this experience as one of immediacy and now-ness, of "being in the moment," and of liveness. This last term she qualifies as "the *illusion* of liveness," the "feel" of liveness rather than the "fact" of it.[303] McPherson writes of using chat rooms, television-centered websites, forums, E-Bay, E*Trade, and email, all within "the unyielding speed of the present."[304]

Here, liveness takes on a very vexed position. McPherson describes a feeling of liveness that shapes her experience, but one that is an illusion. Rather than adhering to an

[299] Tara McPherson, "Reload: Liveness, Mobility, and the Web," *The Visual Culture Reader*, 2nd edition, ed. Nicholas Mirzoeff (New York: Routledge, 1998, 2002) 458-470.
[300] McPherson 460, original emphasis.
[301] McPherson 461-6.
[302] McPherson 461.
[303] McPherson 461-2.
[304] McPherson 461.

assumed shared air presence often associated with the concept of liveness,[305] I suggest that moving beyond this now archaic use and troubling it will prove more useful and even materially grounded in the 21st century[306]—and zombies help us to get there. Zombies trouble what it means to be present to another. Whether living or dead, a zombie is not there in the same sense as sentient beings have the propensity to be. This necessarily calls into question the privileged position liveness has held in considerations of "real" experience. If the zombie can be physically present and animate—and here I speak mainly in a fictional sense, but one can also recall the possibility of the Haitian zombie as real—but otherwise cognitively absent, then the live can no longer maintain the same cultural currency. And here the zombie does representationally and figuratively what new media have been overtly challenging since the late-20th century (and film and television throughout the 20th century): challenging us to reconsider what liveness and presence mean—the zombie is simultaneously present as physical figure and absent in its capacity as a rational being—and how this concept might be rethought in a more productive way.

To rethink liveness in a more productive way one needs to move beyond a traditional, shared-air understanding that has been privileged within performance studies. The turn to intermediality as a motivating theoretical term is certainly productive in this direction, offering a means by which to consider technology and the mediated alongside live bodies in a live performance milieu. But I believe that Philip Auslander's more direct engagement with liveness and new media, particularly his early 21st-century article "Live from Cyberspace: Or, I was sitting at my computer this guy appeared he thought I was a bot,"[307] articulates this more clearly and directly. In this work, Auslander queries what "live" is when individuals may be live to one another on cyberspace, but don't share the same real-world space; or a bot may be live to a person in cyberspace, but a bot is a software program designed to pose as a real user, not an actual user.

The rise in popularity of the zombie in the 21st century is, I argue, in response to this new configuration of what liveness is and might mean; with the rapid increase of screened interface technologies (i.e., Skype, Auslander's articulation of the bot, etc.), what we have traditionally considered live no longer holds the same weight, and the zombie serves as a unique figure through which to represent this potential conundrum because the zombie appears live, it appears to be the loved one we just lost, but it is *not*. New representational technologies, from cinematic prototypes through television and new media, have always sought to stage liveness as means of covering over their stark absence. The zombie, with its liminal status and remediative qualities, appears to make literal a cultural obsession around screened cultures as being unable to fully be live or immediate. The zombie enacts and embodies the problematic of a present absence, or absent presence, through the staging of both presence and absence, of both life and death, in the same animated body. In the same way that the 21st century zombie remediates issues around life, liveness, and death, as well as the way it embodies presence and

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[305] See: Richard Schechner, *Performance Theory* (New York, Routledge, 1977, 1988) and Phelan, *Unmarked*.

[306] This is something Philip Auslander initiates in *Liveness*.

[307] Philip Auslander, "Live from Cyberspace: Or, I was sitting at my computer this guy appeared he thought I was a bot," *PAJ* 24.1 (January 2002): 16-21.

absence, new media (mobile devices, skype, etc.) seems to promise to (at last) overcome problems of liveness and presence, but manages to only remediate them.

As Auslander makes clear, what is perceived as a real-time experience, may in fact be delayed, or the user at the other end may not in fact be a user but a machine. Furthermore, the ideological concept of liveness as being political charged is itself archaic and somewhat off the mark. To be live is to be connected, and that connection does not necessarily entail immediate shared space. Given that the zombie troubles our understanding of what it means to be alive, they also trouble notions of liveness as they have emerged in a specifically 21st century milieu. Hypothetically speaking, to share air with a zombie is not necessarily to be live to one another, because in doing so though the two material bodies may be in the same place at the same time (sharing the same air) the zombie is not *live* the way we, as human beings who have never been dead, are. Furthermore, that zombie (and I'm speaking within the fictional, metaphorical frame of the cinema in which zombies appear), whether the reanimated corpse of Romero's imagining or the Infected of Boyle's world, walks the line between what is live and what isn't, troubling what liveness is and can mean. Thus, the zombie in the 21st century serves an object through which to examine liveness as that concept shifts and evolves allowing for an exploration of the limits of liveness and presence, where the line might be drawn between actual separation of space and time—akin to an analog syndication—and the many shades of being present to one another in a world where being in the same space at the same time is no longer required for the assertion of being present and live to one another.

McPherson's account also recalls the experience of remediation: of being in the moment and directly linked to the thing accessed (watching the news as though on television, chatting with someone "directly"); while also employing multiple applications in multiple windows at the same time. According to Bolter and Grusin, "we understand media through the ways in which they challenge and reform other media, we understand our mediated selves as reformed versions of earlier mediated selves." Furthermore,

> there are two versions of the contemporary mediated self that correspond to the two logics of remediation. When we are faced with media that operate primarily under the logic of transparent immediacy (virtual reality and three-dimensional computer graphics), we see ourselves as a point of view immersed in an apparently seamless visual environment. […] At the same time, the logic of hypermediacy, expressed in digital multimedia and networked environments, suggests a definition of self whose key quality is not so much "being immersed" as "being interrelated or connected." The hypermediated self is a network of affiliations, which are constantly shifting.[308]

New media, then, foreground the ways in which identity is fluid, fleeting, and always in a state of becoming because of the ways in which we experience ourselves as embodied

[308] Bolter and Grusin 232.

while interfacing with new media, while at the same time we (our individualistic, Cartesian sense of identity) find ourselves mediated through our own bodies.[309] The embodied self is the networked self, and new media not only enhance this fact of interrelatedness, but foreground it and prioritize it.

The zombie mobilizes and functions in roving groups, or herds.[310] Where there is one zombie, others are sure to follow. Additionally, as unique to the 21st century zombie, the living or Uninfected in these zombie films also move and function along networked paths. The living have no home-base, but are always on the move, traveling in small nodal groups, as they seek some form of sanctuary and cross paths with other groups. One's sense of self and identity necessarily shifts as one's world is destroyed and distorted, as we become simultaneously more dependent on one another and more isolated. Remediation is a networked process, connecting past media to present and potential future media. The body and self as remediated connect one to others, foregrounding the ways in which identity is formed through interpersonal connections. Just as remediation offers a materialization of biomedia, of the bridging of technology and biology, so too does remediation offer an embodied materialization of network theory. Zombies are remediated. Zombies are networked.

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[309] Bolter and Grusin 240.

[310] This herd functioning of the zombie was recently made explicit in the episode "What Lies Ahead" of the television series *The Walking Dead*, AMC, Dirs. Ernest Dickerson and Gwyneth Horder-Patyon, 16 October 2011, Television.

CHAPTER 4.

NETWORKED DISPERSAL: PERFORMING PROCESS, MULTIPLICITY, MOVEMENT, AND CONNECTIVITY IN 21ST CENTURY ZOMBIE CINEMA

28 Weeks Later (2007), directed by Juan Carlos Fresnadillo, the sequel to *28 Days Later*, opens in a farmhouse.[311] A match lights up the darkness illuminating the clean, Uninfected eyes of a woman. Together with a man she looks over the ill-lit pantry and they begin to prepare dinner as other people fiddle with bric-a-brac, read the newspaper, and wait. They are a collection of Uninfected, an alternative kinship structure formed by the recent zombie apocalypse, residing in a farmhouse that they have completely boarded up, windows and all, blocking all light and thereby putting the group in perpetual night. They sit down to what we assume is dinner given the candles and complete darkness of the scene, the mood is tense, people have lost loved ones, some do not know where their family even is, whether they're alive or dead, Infected or Uninfected. They talk to each other with intimacy, and with the casual contempt of squabbling siblings rather than strangers. Dinner progresses with idle chatter until a pounding at the door interrupts them. It's a child. A suspense filled decision is made to let him in. Chains are un-chained and, once unbarred, the door is thrown open to reveal blinding daylight. They're eating dinner in the daytime. The world is upside down. The child—alone, dirty, and starving—is taken in and embraced by the woman, with a mother's touch.

As the child tells his story a housemate, a girl, looks through a peephole to see that the view is clear. He wasn't chased. No. We're wrong. He was followed. There's an Infected at the peephole and he busts through the planks like they are paper mâché. This seemingly small kindness turns out to be their doom, as the boy has inevitably led the Infected to the farmhouse, who then infiltrate the home with relative ease because of their

[311] This opening scene, actually directed by Danny Boyle, inevitably points to Romero's *Night of the Living Dead*, which took place almost entirely in a farmhouse.

andrenalized state of Rage. The girl is bitten and becomes Infected within ten seconds. It's pandemonium. One by one, the Infected are dispatched by the Uninfected and the Uninfected become Infected in even greater numbers. As the scene advances, the inhabitants struggle against the Infected as the house becomes more and more overrun; we then follow the woman, Alice (Catherine McCormack), to a top story room, where zombies overtake her in the broken sanctuary of a farmhouse. Her husband Don (Robert Carlysle), seemingly unable to rescue her without also submitting himself to dismemberment and death, mournfully departs to safety on a small rowboat while his wife watches from a second story window.

Twenty-eight weeks later she is discovered hiding in the attic of their home, Uninfected. Though clearly a victim of the Infected, Alice has managed, somehow, to remain Uninfected; living in the attic of her home, dirty, and nearly-animalistic, her young son finds her nonetheless alive, sane, and infection-free. Alice is brought back to the newly formed military safe-zone intended as the beginnings of British repopulation. When she and her husband reunite and kiss, the virus, living in her saliva, encodes into his system: though her body never decodes the virus, thus leaving Alice Uninfected (she is simply a host for the virus), her husband becomes Infected and the scare of Infection begins again.[312] *28 Weeks Later* exposes a breakdown in the tripartite process of biomediatic infection: in some bodies, the recoding and decoding phases of the process never take place and the virus remains in a permanent liminal state of encoding. These people are carriers, and although their bodies never recode and decode the virus, they still participate in the chain of contamination: the virus still lives in their blood and saliva. This rupture in the smooth network flow of contagion does not stop or impede infection; rather these ruptures create new pathways in the networks of contagion.

The networks of contagion introduced in the *28* series mimic the emergence of network culture that pervades, even informs or structures, the digital Internet culture within which we still seek to locate ourselves.

> For the last decade or more, network discourse has proliferated with a kind of epidemic intensity: peer-to-peer file-sharing networks, wireless community networks, terrorist networks, contagion networks of biowarfare agents, political swarming and mass demonstration, economic and finance networks, online role-playing games, personal area networks, mobile phones, "generation Txt," and on and on.[313]

As people, nations, governments, and cultures are able to connect more rapidly and in more ways, the connection itself and the map those connections make become as telling and illuminating as the things connected and the information transferred across those connections. In order to uncover the nuances of people, culture, and communication, it then becomes necessary to understand how these things connect and what those connections look like. Part of my argument here is that networks map a performative

[312] *28 Weeks Later*, dir. by Juan Carlos Fresnadillo, 20th Century Fox, 2007.
[313] Galloway and Thacker, 25.

exchange and are themselves a means of performance, and by examining the network expressions represented through 21st century digital zombie cinema, in particular, we learn what a performative exchange looks like and how we might understand it.

Defining networks, like defining performance, is unstable and slippery. On a most basic level, networks are a system of interconnected people, organisms, technologies, or objects, but are of course more complex and nuanced in their working forms. "So, by 'networks' we mean any system of interrelationality, whether biological or informatic, organic or inorganic, technical or natural—with the ultimate goal of undoing the polar restrictiveness of these pairings."[314] In *Professing Performance*, Shannon Jackson uncovers a similarly encompassing definition of performance:

> performance is about doing, and it is about seeing; it is about image, embodiment, space, collectivity, and/or orality; it makes community and it breaks community; it repeats endlessly and it never repeats; it is intentional and unintentional, innovative and derivative, more fake and more real. Performance's many connotations and its varied intellectual kinships ensure that an interdisciplinary conversation around this interdisciplinary site rarely will be neat and straightforward. Perhaps it is time to stop assuming that it should.[315]

Jackson's articulation of the very slippery term "performance" both embraces its seeming ubiquity and seeks to locate it specifically. We could make an argument that Jackson's definition of performance could quite easily be mapped onto networks, but I have instead taken inspiration from her work in my own definition of networks: Networks are a multiplicity and are individuated; they are ubiquitous and are specifically located ("glocal"); they are mappable and fluid; they offer a topography and are in constant flux; they are internally differentiated and externally defined; they are the individual, the group, the social, the political, the technological; they are biologically and technologically located.

Networks, of course, also serve to structure *Diary of the Dead*, as discussed briefly at the end of the previous chapter: the remediated self is the networked self. Through network connection—commonly via the Internet and smart phones—we communicate a version of ourselves, one that is carefully circumscribed within the parameters of the medium as well as within the context of the transmission. This then must inform our reading of *Diary*, particularly they key players (Jason and Debra) because they project themselves via networked media and therefore are both self-constructed (the self-derived networked dissemination of their work and themselves) and have a construction imposed upon them (the way their work is taken-up, used, reconfigured, etc.). Consider Jason Creed's almost obsessive need to share his experiences not only by recording every moment of his journey, but also editing and uploading the footage to his MySpace page whenever possible; as well as the way Debra

[314] Galloway and Thacker 28.

[315] Jackson 15.

reframes his work in a way he could not have anticipated within the context of his death. We see a similar narrative and formal network structuring at work in Boyle's *28 Days Later*, as well, with the constant migration and fluid membership of various nodal groups: Jim and Selena traveling along established routes/vectors (highways), interfacing with other groups—Frank and Hannah—reconfiguring and dispersing/redeploying along new routes/vectors. Networks become a thematic trope in 21st century zombie cinema, serving as a means of organizing the narrative; while at the same time, this sub-genre performatively reenacts the ways networks structure our experience and understanding of socio-cultural existence. 21st century zombie cinema aids in the making sense of our network culture and networked selves by offering a representational materialization of what these networks can and might look like.

In what follows, I build upon a basic understanding of networks, one that has been redeployed by other theorists,[316] and use it to investigate what 21st century zombie cinema is doing formally and narratively both in response to network culture and as a way of producing meanings of and within network culture. In the next section, "Defining Networks" I continue to define and establish a terminology for networks, drawing on the work of Galloway and Thacker. In "Zombie Networks," I return to a larger trans-historical consideration of zombie cinema in order to foreground how the narrative and formal structures of 21st century zombie cinema are a clear departure from the previous eras of this sub-genre, and to demonstrate how this departure is clearly aligned with its socio-cultural conditions of production. This in itself illustrates the workings and power of networks because the history of zombie cinema itself—like many things—networks into other genres, modes of cultural life, social expression, and even politics. I then return to the performance studies concept of liminality in the next section, "Network Liminality," in order to develop this term, showing how networks are a performance, networks are performed, and how networks perform and enact liminality. In the final section, "Naming Networks," I call into question the process of naming and demarcating,

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[316] Here is a short list of the number of the number of scholars who have employed Galloway and Thacker's theory of networks as a leaping-off point for developing their own arguments: Jack Bratich, "When Collective Intelligence Agencies Collide," *Post-Global Network and Everyday Life*, eds Marina Levine and Grant Kien (New York: Peter Lang, 2010) 11-26; John Freeman, "The Steorn Exploit and its Spin *Doktors*, or "*Synergie ist der name of das Spiel*, my boy!" *Postmodern Culture* 18.3 (May 2008): n. pag., *Project Muse*, 14 November 2011; Ulrike Gretzel, "Travel in the Network: Redirected Gazes, Ubiquitous Connections and New Frontiers," *Post-Global Network and Everyday Life*, eds Marina Levine and Grant Kien (New York: Peter Lang, 2010) 41-58; Marina Levina, "Health 2.0 and Managing 'Dividual' Care in the Network," *Post-Global Network and Everyday Life*, eds. Marina Levine and Grant Kien (New York: Peter Lang, 2010) 113-126; Marina Levina and Grant Kien, "Control and Fear in Post-Global Network," *Post-Global Network and Everyday Life*, eds. Marina Levine and Grant Kien (New York: Peter Lang, 2010) 1-10; Susan Elizabeth Ryan, "Re-Visioning the Interface: Technological Fashion as Critical Media," *Leonardo* 42.4 (August 2009) 307-313, *Project Muse*, 14 November 2011; Jason Stanyek, "Deadness: Technologies of the Intermundane," *TDR: The Drama Review* 54.1 (Spring 2010) 14-38, *JSTOR*, 12 November 2011.

a process that is necessary yet fallible; a process that permits a making sense of the world, situates locale, and connect communities by reference a cultural history within and outside of that name.

Defining Networks

Networks, like performance and new media, are multifaceted and complex; they give the impression that everything is everywhere, and appear to encompass everything. They are seemingly ubiquitous. But does this provide a sufficient understanding of networks? To talk of networks as everywhere-all-the-time reduces the organizing concept of the network to a vacuous placeholder; or, equally as counterproductive, conceiving of networks in this way—as ubiquitous—introduces a more determinist view, which suggests that networks then create or determine the conditions of society. But this is merely part of their "affect"; along with Galloway and Thacker, we should instead think of networks as being "*constitutive* of social, cultural, and political phenomena" and not the "*foundation* on which society is constructed."[317] Viewing networks in this manner offers a constructive and generative position from which to base a particular analysis—namely, how networks are variously conceived and materialized in the cinema.

In *The Exploit: A Theory of Networks* (2007), Alexander R. Galloway and Eugene Thacker come at networks through global politics and power, where the network, or networked alliances, "has emerged as a dominant form describing the nature of control today, as well as resistance to it."[318] The new politics of symmetry referred to above, is one in which networked powers fight networked powers. The authors argue that even a seemingly sovereign power such as the United States necessarily employs network-like modes of global political engagement and tactics; in fact, "networks create the conditions of existence for a new mode of sovereignty," a "sovereignty-in-networks," for which the United States "is merely the contemporary figurehead."[319] This takes the form of the new, global, neo-colonialism in which the United States establishes a "curious dual rhetoric of the 'international presence' in peacekeeping operations combined with an 'American-led force,' an equivocation held together only by the most flimsy political fantasy."[320] So the supposed sovereign power of the United States branches out and establishes nodal presence in Afghanistan, Israel, Syria, Iraq, and so on. It is the authors' concern not whether networks exist on the global-political stage, but how they exist and what they look like. This exploit necessarily involves a discussion of what networks are, how we understand them today, where they might exist, and how they function.

Given that networks have come to shape global-political structures and exchanges, networks necessarily inform our daily lives as well. Computers connect across networks—intranets and the Internet—collapsing space and invading the private. We unsuspectingly form communities and groups in chat rooms, through multiplayer games, and these communities and groups expand across continents while continually morphing. With 21st century zombie cinema, all of this representationally manifests on

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[317] Galloway and Thacker 10.
[318] Galloway and Thacker 4.
[319] Galloway and Thacker 20.
[320] Galloway and Thacker 21.

the screen in a post-apocalyptic world where individuals are forced to group together and remain in motion, traveling from location to location. The post-apocalyptic setting offers a reason for their continual movement: survival. In these zombie films we watch players perform network connection as they literally move between seemingly stable infrastructures—infrastructures that themselves ultimately prove unstable as inner turmoil erupts and the players must, again, move.

Networks also fail, and the possibility of network failure is also embedded in these films. In the post apocalyptic landscape of the 21st century zombie film infrastructural networks that are taken for granted as always there have failed. The political, economic, and communication networks that seem to just always be on, moving, and functioning have nearly completely, or even entirely, disintegrated. It is in the failure of these manmade networks, in combination with seemingly indestructible biological viral networks that also permits the zombie to thrive. By tracing the hallowed shells of civilized network paths, zombies are better able to increase and thrive, bolstering their own unintentional networks.

Pinpointing and locating these networks, failed or otherwise, is difficult. Galloway and Thacker provide a means of fixing networks: graph theory.[321] "Mathematically speaking, a graph is a finite set of points connected by a finite set of lines. The points are called 'nodes' or vertices, and the lines are called 'edges.'"[322] Employing this conceptual methodology in imagining networks, we see networks as displaying "three basic characteristics: their organization into nodes and edges (dots and lines), their connectivity, and their topology."[323] The nodes and edges (appearing as dots and lines on a mathematical graph) are the actors and actions respectively; "while nodes refer to objects, locations, or space," edges are the "actions effected by nodes."[324] In the case of *28 Days Later* we have the nodal unit of Jim-Selena-Frank-Hannah actively seeking the source location of a radio broadcast ("the answer to infection"); their action of seeking is the edge, it is the mobilized effect of that node. These actions, or edges, then connect multiple nodes: Jim-Selena-(Frank)-Hannah[325] connects to the node of Major Henry West and his troops. The living/Uninfected rely on networks: transportation networks such as roads and railways offer a familiar and hopefully clear line of travel; the comfort and strength in numbers provided by social networks; and, as seen in both *28 Days* and *28 Weeks*, the structuring familiarity of both political and military networks. Even with the numerous forms of network and modes of connectivity employed and enacted by the living/Uninfected, it is the zombie networks that prove truly dynamic. The walking dead also exploit these existing networks, easing their passage while also centralizing their target—the living. This exploitation assists in their dynamic expansion as a network. Finally, the topology is the overall landscape of the network, a larger

[321] Galloway and Thacker 31-35.

[322] Galloway and Thacker 31.

[323] Galloway and Thacker 32.

[324] Galloway and Thacker 33.

[325] I have here put Frank in parentheses because, as we know from chapter 2, when this group reaches what the source of the radio broadcast, a military outpost, Frank becomes Infected and is immediately shot and killed, thereby altering the topology of this particular node.

picture of the various nodes, edges, and connections all working together at once to comprise the larger network; and this is where the piece of graph paper with a graph depicted comes in handy: it is a snapshot of the network frozen in space and time such that we can better analyze the constituent parts and their functionality. In 21st century zombie cinema we have a circumscribed rendering of the network-as-graph theory proposition, which allows for a freezing of moments, a capturing of the topology, through which to analyze how networks might function and exist.

It is important to keep in mind that networks have fluid and flexible core characteristics consisting of "dynamic temporality, the lack of fixed node/edge divisions, and the existence of multiple topologies in a single network."[326] So to analyze a network as it is, is to describe that network as it was; in other words, even in the moment of observing and articulating a network in action, we—as observer and analyzer—are already discussing that network as it *was* not as it *is* because of the fluid and transitional nature of networks. Again, like performance, networks are fleeting and transitory: they are fleeting in their fluidity and constantly changing nature, they are in a continual state of transition, which is to be in flux and changing. The network of Uninfected, moving and connecting across the English landscape, continually alters, changes and morphs: Mark is lost, Frank and Hannah are gained, the environment in which the group exists changes as they move, and so on. Thus one network morphs into another, refusing to remain fixed or static—the network is transitory. Networks "operate through ceaseless connections and disconnections,"[327] but this is all the more reason to locate and understand them. In order to do so, Galloway and Thacker offer a methodology of defining networks that employs four key sub-characteristics: individuation, multiplicity, movement, and connectivity.[328]

Individuation

> Individuation is the process by which an entity is demarcated and identified as such.[329]

Individuation is both an internal and an external event, one that is ongoing and continually shifting, much like the process of subjecthood and identity. As part of establishing and recognizing various power relations, Louis Althusser posits an interpolative mode of individuation in his classic example of the subject being hailed by the policeman and in that hailing being established as a particular subject both by the police officer doing the hailing and by the subject in recognizing and responding to that hailing.[330] This process has also been analyzed within a psychoanalytic model by Jacques

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[326] Galloway and Thacker 57.

[327] Galloway and Thacker 156.

[328] These four characteristics resonate with Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's six principles of the rhizome: connection, heterogeneity, multiplicity, asignifying rupture, cartography, and decalcomania. (Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).

[329] Galloway and Thacker 58.

[330] Althusser, "Ideology."

Lacan and his theory of the Mirror Stage in which the small child realizes herself as individual and subject with the self recognition of her image in the mirror, and that self-image as being in relationship/opposition to an other.[331] This is not to posit networks as individuals, but to recognize the "mobilization of forces,"[332] both internal and external, both psychoanalytically-derived and socially-constructed, required to realize a network as such.[333]

The process of individuation is one applied to individuals as well as larger entities such as networks; this is a process that comes from within, it is internal as the individual or entity seeks self-definition; and this process occurs from without, it is external in that environmental and social elements help to shape and determine the individual's or entity's perceived identity. Networks are comprised of individuals, which means that not only are networks individuated, but the component parts of networks are also individuated. With networks, then, we have multiple layers of individuation occurring as the individuals within the network take part in the on-going process of individuation, and as the network itself individuates from other networks and other entities.

> Hence the first type of individuation [internal] is in tension with the second type of individuation [external] in networks, the individuation of all the nodes and edges that constitute the system, for while the whole is greater than the sum of the parts, it is nevertheless the parts (or the localized action of the parts) that in turn constitute the possibility for the individuation of "a" network as a whole.[334]

Returning to *28 Days Later* as an illustration, the network of Uninfected is comprised of unique individuals making up the nodes (Selena-Jim-Hannah) who have themselves been individuated even before this particular network could exist, and whose individuation

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[331] Jacques Lacan, "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the I Function as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience," *Écrits, the first complete edition in English*, trans. Bruce Fink (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1999, 2002) 75-81.

[332] Galloway and Thacker 58.

[333] Given their interest in politics and power as an organizing theoretical theme throughout their book, Galloway and Thacker pointedly turn away from interpolation and subject-formation, suggesting that we must now move beyond such models to one where we no longer speak of "being individuated as a 'subject' but instead of being individuated as a node integrated into one or more networks. Thus one speaks not of a subject interpolated by this or that social force. One speaks instead of 'friends of friends,' of the financial and health networks created by the subject simply in its being alive" (60). I think that this type of move is a dangerous one ethically speaking because in doing so they remove agency and motivating experience from the individual. Within Galloway and Thacker's new model of individuation, one that supposedly moves "beyond" the subject, we run the risk of evacuating diverse experiences of their import and thus of reifying a white, male hegemonic, patriarchic, socio-political power structure.

[334] Galloway and Thacker 59.

continues, shifts, and alters with their participation, albeit undesired, as a nodal member of the network of Uninfected.[335]

In understanding the processes of individuation as applied to networks, we realize that networks are inextricably intertwined in interpersonal modes of formation. In other words, a network, even one seemingly devoid of human make-up, is always already wrapped up in processes of identification. Thus, when we watch the network of Infected or walking dead morph and reshape, move and centralize, we are watching the performative representation of network potentiality in our own real-world, lived experiences.

Multiplicity

Networks "are a multiplicity" and they are "robust and flexible."[336] Multiplicity means to be comprised of many parts and entities, and to be numerous and replicating as an entity. Not only are networks comprised of many parts (nodes and edges), which are also comprised of many entities (organic, informatic, technological), but "networks are configurable in new ways and at all scales" and are "capable of radically heterogeneous transformation and reconfiguration."[337] This allows a network to work with change, whether planned or sudden, to be always in flux, both identifiable as a unique entity while also continually undergoing a process of change and morphing. If we consider the Infected as a network, on a very basic level it is abundantly clear that this particular network is constantly shifting due to the simple fact of the continual addition of new Infected, as well as the occasional reduction in numbers due to deaths within their population. Furthermore, as I discussed in chapter 2, the Infected become so through a virus constructed by scientists using biological creatures (chimpanzees)—the Rage Virus. Viruses are self-replicating networks, connecting to as many nodes and along as many vectors as possible. As a multiplicity, the Infected, then, also function similar to viral networks in the way they seek to self-replicate and connect along as many nodes and vectors as possible.

Connectivity

With this robust flexibility through multiplicity, this processual and multifarious condition of individuation, comes the necessary condition of *movement* and connectivity. Without connectivity a network cannot exist as a network. Networks connect points and nodes, and this connectivity occurs through movement: the movement of information connects worlds; the movement of goods connects industries; the movement of people connects nations. Connectivity is movement, and movement implies action, activities, and change; movement allows for fluidity and adaptability: "networks are only networks

[335] To move this outside of the purely representational, consider the network of *World of Warcraft* (*WoW*) players who, as unique individuals, connect through the Internet to the virtual space of the *WoW* landscape where these networked individuals create alternate egos, or avatars, with their own self-expressed individuation as well as the top-down imposed individuation within the *WoW* universe.

[336] Galloway and Thacker 60.

[337] Galloway and Thacker 60-1.

when they are 'live,' when they are enacted, embodied, or rendered operational."[338] This is a key characteristic for this chapter because part of my interest here, and in the dissertation as a whole, is the way conditions and features of new media are embodied and represented in the cinema, particularly zombie cinema. And with movement comes connectivity, a final qualifying characteristic of networks. Networks necessarily connect nodes, people, entities—that is what makes them networks. This connection comes through the movement of information, objects, and people—from a multiplicity of materialities that themselves comprise the network. And within and through this composition of multiplicity emerges individuation, a *process* of locating and defining that network and its component parts both from within and without.

Zombie Networks

> … the high modern mode of political conflict is characterized by symmetrical war (power centers fighting power centers, Soviet and American blocs and so on). Then, in postmodernity, the latter decades of the twentieth century, one witnesses the rise of asymmetrical conflict (networks fighting power centers). But after the postmodern mode of asymmetrical political conflict, and to bring the discussion up to the present day, we recognize in recent years the emergence of a new politics of symmetry.[339]

The trajectory of power that Thacker and Galloway trace here—symmetry (power centers), asymmetry (power center and networks), back to symmetry through networks fighting networks—is one reflected in the history of zombie cinema. The Classical Hollywood zombie, as I laid out in the first chapter,[340] presents us with a more symmetrical mode of conflict, one in which the zombies are pawns rather than one of the power centers. We can read these power centers as being America versus Haiti or American citizen versus ambiguously European expatriate (i.e., *White Zombie* (1932) or *I Walked with a Zombie* (1943)), and Americans/Earth versus aliens/robots (*Zombies of the Stratosphere* (1952) or *Creature with the Atom Brain* (1955)). With each of these binary pairings of symmetrical conflict it is possible to see the cinema taking part in the construction of American identity vis-à-vis the events of WWI, WWII, and the emerging Cold War: in one case (*White Zombie* and *I Walked with a Zombie*) we have the white, American male in conflict against the creepy, effete Eastern European male, over the innocent, virginal, white, American woman[341]; in the other (movies such as *Zombies of*

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[338] Galloway and Thacker 62.

[339] Galloway and Thacker 15

[340] 13-14.

[341] With Halperin's *White Zombie* this power struggle takes place in Haiti when Neil Parker (the white, American male played by John Harrington) must combat the American expatriate Charles Beaumont (Robert Frazer) and "Murder" Legendre (the

the Stratosphere and *Creature with the Atom Brain*) we encounter a German/Russian employing radioactivity in an attempt to subvert American democratic order.[342]

In these early zombie films, the walking dead do not figure as the dominant threat; rather, they are used by one power center—this being a representation of an American foe—as mindless pawns in effecting harm against the protagonist. When transitioning from WWII to the Cold War the zombies in these films are the Nazi soldiers or Communist masses. The walking dead function as a metaphor or representation of the perceived brainwashed citizens of Nazi regime or Communist countries. By representing the enemy in this way the individual citizen loses their power and uniqueness; they are simply pawns in the service of the greater power of the Nazi or Communist government. The people, as figured above—or zombie, as representational figured in zombie cinema—become a threat only in so far as they mindlessly obey and do the bidding of their malicious and evil rulers.

As American culture transitioned from a "high modern mode" into a postmodern one, George Romero inaugurated the asymmetrical mode of political conflict as represented in zombie cinema with *Night of the Living Dead* (1968). The zombies become "insurgent networks"[343]—networked entities working to upset, if not overthrow, the hegemonic norm (zombies disrupting and destroying normal life)—rather than simply a plot device or tool, while various American institutions—the nuclear family, capitalism, and the military—become the power centers—in *Night* (1968), *Dawn* (1978), and *Day* (1985) respectively. In each of these films a seemingly disorganized zombie swarm magnetize toward, and thereby threaten, the dominant, localized, socio-political power center; the networks (zombies) infiltrate, invade, and infect the integrity of various American institutions (and even networks).

Scholars have read the zombies as insurgent networks in the postmodern mode of political conflict as the product of American political and cultural excess. In *Night* we have the political and economic excess of the North Vietnamese and lower classes, both products of excessive American capitalist imperialism.[344] The hordes of zombies in *Dawn*, seemingly more populous and omnipresent, clearly represent the excess of an American capitalist system: they are the mindless consumer driven by a singular, primal urge to consume, whether that be commodities or flesh.[345] And since networked "power is additive," propagating "through 'and,' not 'or,'"[346] when we reach *Day* the living are found, ironically, underground, because the sheer exorbitant numbers of walking dead have usurped the streets—the rebel forces seeming to have overcome the same military-political complex that allowed and even aided their existence and propagation.

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creepy European expatriate played by the Hungarian-born Bela Lugosi) over Parker's fiancé Madeline Short (Madge Bellamy).

[342] In Cahn's *Creature with the Atom Brain* it is deranged ex-Nazi Willhelm Steigg (Gregory Gaye) paired with Italian immigrant and mob boss Frank Buchanan (Michael Granger) who threaten the American legal and justice system, and thus democracy, with radioactive, voice-controlled walking dead.

[343] Galloway and Thacker 14.

[344] See Higashi 175-88.

[345] See Harper, "Zombies, Malls, and the Consumerism Debate."

[346] Galloway and Thacker 18.

Twenty years after *Day*, Romero concluded his first series of zombie films in 2005 with *Land of the Dead*. This film is interesting in the way it straddles two different power pairings. On one hand, in this film we witness the tension between network and sovereign powers, a struggle that had been occurring in the socio-political landscape that informed the production of this film and is reflected in the narrative. Just as the middle class of American society has been eroding since the trickle-down tax policies of the Reagan era, resulting in a greater disparity between those that have and those that do not, as well as the move from an American-Russian conflict to an America-as-centralized-power versus smaller networked powers; we can read *Land* as yet another power center versus insurgent network with the CEO-like Paul Kaufman (Dennis Hopper) in apparent control of Fiddler's Green—the luxury living community in the center of an otherwise chaotic island of the living—fighting the insurgency of the walking dead who manage to organize and infiltrate his sanctuary. Yet within this dominant good-versus-evil structure familiar within Romero's zombie films, there is also the early development of networks fighting networks: there are the zombies, of course, but the majority of the barricaded city is inhabited by a lower class who form their own insurgent network to overthrow the city's elite while at the same time continuing to fight the flood of walking dead. "While in the past networks may have posed significant threats to power in everything from the grassroots social movements of the 1960s [*Night*] to guerilla armies and terrorist organizations [*Day*], it is not the case today […] networks are the medium through which America derives its sovereignty."[347] Even in Romero's first zombie film of the 21st century we witness this tension between types of power structures unfold: sovereignty in networks, networks creating a new form of sovereignty. We can then read *Land* as a reflection of the last bastion of postmodern power struggle and as a tracing of the shift from the postmodern power centers versus networks, to the current symmetry of networks versus networks (which Romero ventures into with his next film, *Diary*, where networks of mobile survivor nodes interface and negotiate with zombie networks).

Even more, in *Land*, we also witness the fluidity of power centers and networks, and the ways in which power centers employ network logic in order to meet the combative challenges of new insurgent network forces. As the fourth and final film in Romero's initial zombie series, the zombie apocalypse is quite advanced, and the living have developed routine systems for survival. The film opens with what seems to be an organized collection of outlaws[348] pilfering stores in surprisingly untouched towns,[349] who we soon discover are the networked extension of a highly stratified power center.[350]

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[347] Galloway and Thacker 20-1.

[348] Riley Denbo (Simon Baker), Cholo DeMora (John Leguizamo), Charlie (Robert Joy), Pretty Boy (Joanne Boland), and Foxy (Tony Nappo).

[349] The availability of seemingly untouched stores is surprising in that not only *Land* is the fourth installment in a zombie quadrilogy, implying that the zombie apocalypse has been ongoing for a while—years, even—but also that the city has been established and functioning for quite a while so the idea that there are untouched stores with supplies within its neighboring vicinity is quite a leap of faith for the viewer!

[350] As part of the problematic sovereignty in this film, the middle class is extinct. We first encounter the residents of "Fiddler's Green," a very well to do high-rise with penthouses and a mall. It is immaculate and opulent, and very white. Not long after, we

The people who venture outside the city walls to locate supplies are doing so at the command of a centralized authority—Kaufman and his elite group of colleagues—thereby connecting this motley crew to a power center. Not only have the living reconfigured their familiar form of power—centralized—they have also adapted a networked form of action to meet the challenges of the walking dead, a mode of action animated through the deployment of working class denizens to gather supplies and fight zombies. At the same time, the walking dead—usually a fully disorganized collection of randomized entities drawn together by their drive to consume the flesh of the living—begin to systematize at the seeming behest of one particular zombie known as Big Daddy (Eugene Clark).

In 21st century zombie cinema, the quality and existence of networks—biological, social, or otherwise—come to the fore. It is networks that engender and sustain the spread of infection. And various forms and systems of human networks are created, developed and even destroyed throughout these films. People both make and populate networks, sometimes both at once, yet networks are specifically nonhuman; it is this quality that "makes them so difficult to grasp."[351] Even as networks are "a medium of contemporary power,"[352] it is not possible to locate the locus of that control. Even as humans clearly flourish in networks and within network interaction such as social groups and family structures, it is when a network excess is reached—such as the mob or swarm, contamination or infection—that disorientation and systemic disintegration occurs at both the larger societal level and the individual level.[353] And we see this tension between an adherence to sovereign control and a releasing to the communal sense of network flow at play throughout each of the 21st century zombie films. There is, of course, the spread of infection as seen in *28 Days Later* and mentioned in *28 Weeks Later*; in the remakes of two of Romero's classic zombie films—Zak Snyder's remake of the 1978 *Dawn of the Dead* (2004) and Steven Miner's remake of the 1985 *Day of the Dead* (2007)—the zombie phenomenon is also strictly attributed to a virus that is transmitted through penetration of the flesh by a zombie (usually a bite or scratch), or the invasion of the body through simple bodily fluids such as saliva or blood. At the same time, we see an adherence to "network interaction" in the various kinship groups that form and in the ways that they shift: in *28 Days*, for instance, the alternative kinship group of Selena-Mark-Jim becomes Selena-Jim, Selena-Jim-Frank-Hannah, and finally Selena-Jim-Hannah.

In zombie cinema we have an interesting case of different expressions of network forms emerging—living, walking dead; Infected, Uninfected—and in contest with one another. These films provide a materialized representation of how these networks forms might manifest. As I've already explained, the living/Uninfected give us expressions of "kin groups"—Frank and Hannah—"class"—(*Land*)—and "the social." I have not spent as much time on the zombies themselves. With the zombies we have an extreme expression of network logic taking over: with the <u>28</u> franchise, it is not only "contagion

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cut to a scene in the streets where the other half lives: it is overcrowded, dirty, loud, debaucherous, and dangerous.

[351] Galloway and Thacker 5.

[352] Galloway and Thacker 5.

[353] Galloway and Thacker 5.

or infection" manifesting in the Infected, but also the "mob or swarm" mentality possible in large networked groups.[354] As is evident in every prominent zombie film beginning with Romero's *Night of the Living Dead* (1968), the walking dead have an uncanny ability to flock towards the same location—they are seemingly self-organized.

As Galloway and Thacker make clear, the tension within networks—speaking specifically in contemporary, real-world terms, and *not* within the terms of zombie cinema—is their necessarily human construction and make-up in contrast to their non-specificity of singular human authorship or ownership. In *28 Days Later* we can, technically, point to the first human infected, but we cannot give ownership or control of the contagion network to this person. Similarly, we can point to a group or corporation supposedly responsible for the creation and ultimate spread of the virus, but no single person or group of people can be posited with authorship, and thus centrality, of that network.

Even more interesting in these films, beyond the network of contagion, are the networks and mobile network nodes created by the survivors and Uninfected. In *28 Days* we have the immediate mobile node of Jim and Selena joining forces with Frank and Hannah, who seek out the military node of the automatic radio transmission. When the hapless heroes do reach "the answer to infection" their utopic commune of equal ownership is challenged and even momentarily destroyed by the rigid hierarchal system of the military group, who rely on a sense of a single sovereign power, even if that power exists in a chain of command.

In the remakes of *Dawn* and *Day* the viral quality of zombiedom, and the speed of the zombies themselves maintains a connection to *28 Days Later*. But, in order to remain true to the original, these films ultimately find themselves centrally located: in a mall and in an underground military bunker respectively. These makeshift and even ephemeral communities enact the new modes of community-formation in the digital age: new media offer new ways of communicating, in farther reaches of location, oftentimes creating unlikely and fleeting communities.[355] When all normal means of communication break down, and people are physically separated by a sea of the infected, as in *Dawn*, characters rely on older means of communication: a white board and binoculars to play a game of chess on two distant rooftops (this is the case with Kenneth, played by Ving Rhames, and Andy, played by Bruce Bohne, who espy one another and eventually take-up a game of distant, rooftop chess).

The mall, or underground military bunker, are "like a theatre or a stage: a space demanding action and transformation."[356] This space of the postmodern zombie films is contained and centrally located, but when our own, real-world political landscape transitions to our contemporary power system of networks vs. networks, this space of transformation and action becomes unbounded: the spaces of transformation are diffuse like the empty city streets and countryside of *28 Days Later* or the open landscape of a

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[354] Galloway and Thacker 5.

[355] As a brief example, take *World of Warcraft* (*WoW*), an on-line game that brings together people from all over the world; people who forge communities and relationships within the game through avatars.

[356] Harper, "Zombies, Malls, and the Consumerism Debate."

vacated Pennsylvania in *Diary of the Dead*. And networks demand this diffusion because they are multiplicity, they are movement, they are connectivity.

Network Liminality

Networks can be mapped (graph theory) and they are defined by their internal and external processes of individuation, their fluctuating multiplicity, their enacted and embodied modes of movement, and their connectivity. This mapping is the snapshot of performance, permitting a freezing in time of something that is otherwise impossible to circumscribe in this way. Just as theater and dance (and the cinema) are each a type of performance, networks also suggest a type of performance; and just as a person performs dance or performs theater, networks are also performed (again, like the cinema); but unlike these more familiar and traditional genres of performance, networks *perform*. In other words, people or entities perform or enact networks—networks are performed like a play is performed or choreography is performed—and networks, consisting of enacting entities/people, also enact or perform actions. Networks are objects that are both enacted upon and serve as agents in their own actions. Recalling my discussions in the previous two chapters, the concept of liminality offers a means through which to theorize cultural and social moments of transition and in-between; the liminal can occupy temporal and/or geographical locations; and liminality is often an embodied and experienced position. Liminality as a state of in between and transition suggests a sense of movement—even if this movement is purely conceptual. Similarly, networks suggest transition, in between, and as such also suggest a form of conceptual movment, they are never fixed or stable—though, as Galloway and Thacker demonstrate, we can artificially "fix" or offer a "mapping" of networks—their multiplicity is always in flux, and they are further defined by process. Networks are liminality enacted through performance; networks materialize the space between two states or locations (liminality).

Zombie cinema, as differentiated from other genres of cinema, offers a nuanced text through which to unearth what networks mean in the 21st century and how they perform because of the multiple types and layers of networks at work in these films: viral network of the Rage virus or other infection usually situated as the cause or origin of the zombie phenomenon; the network of Uninfected or living; and the networks of Infected or walking dead. Each of these three main forms of networks within the diegetic frame of 21st century zombie films serve as the structuring threads within the films—21st century zombie cinema has emerged as a subgenre that organizes itself around various formations and layers of networks. The virus moves across a seemingly random, though internally organized, network as it rapidly infects person after person. The living or Uninfected attempt to organize and structure their groupings and paths, but are often thwarted and interrupted by the networks of walking dead. The zombies offer a seemingly less coordinated network, one that may appear randomized but polarizes around a common desire: the living. These films, however, also suggest that networks that appear random may not actually be so, as some of the 21st century zombie films imply, at times, causal relations and intentional actions on the part of some, if not all, zombies.[357] Similar to

[357] *Land of the Dead* is a good example of this with Big Daddy seeming to organize the zombies and infiltrate the island.

networks structured by and through the living, the zombie network is relational: zombies herd and swarm like a hive of bees or an army of ants; upon the locating of a living, Uninfected target, all zombies within the vicinity mobilize toward that target. 21st century zombie films also represent the literally mobile network with the now-displaced humans scouring the landscape for safety, community, and sustenance.[358] And herein lies part of the apocalyptic landscape of the zombie film: the very networks that seem to define civilization and modernity—the social, economic, political, military, religious, and technological—dissolve once the originally networked organism (the virus) uses the same networks to spread.

The process of individuation is both internal and external, both a self-generated procedure and one contributed to by forces outside of the elemental constituency of that same network. Though not particular to zombie cinema or cinema as a mode of representation, it is important to unpack the process of individuation in order to understand its cultural impact and importance, as well as the work it does in cultural representations, the cinema, and zombie films. To be individuated, as Galloway and Thacker make abundantly clear, is *not* to be marked as an individual.[359] Rather, individuation, as a process—and as a process it is constantly on-going and never fixed—delineates an entity, whether this be a group, a network, or, in fact, an individual. Consider, again, Boyle's *28 Days Later*. The nodal group of Selena, Frank, Jim, and Hannah is a collection of individuals within the large (diffuse and dispersed) network of Uninfected. As individuals each of these nodal members has undergone, undergoes, and will continue to undergo individuation. Take, for instance, Jim. From the information we are given in the film, Jim's external process of individuation comes from his employment and familial status: he is a bike messenger and an only son to a still-married, heterosexual couple living in the suburbs of a major global city. Again, from the information given to us in the film, Jim's internal process of individuation comes primarily from his position as a son, with his employment status being secondary if not arbitrary. The two processes—external and internal—though not in conflict, are clearly in tension.

When we then move to the nodal level—Jim, Selena, Hanna, Frank—Jim's individuation shifts: he is now the orphan of two parents who have committed suicide, his bike messenger status has become completely irrelevant, and he is a contributing member to a group of mobile Uninfected survivors. This node, effecting actions across multiple edges, can be read—from an external individuation process—as an alternative family formation consisting of the "real" father-daughter pair of Frank and Hannah, who have their own history as a family unit (now minus the third member—Hannah's mother), combining with the very new coupling of Jim and Selena, a pair so new that they are still navigating their internally-articulated relationship as a duo when they meet up with the father-daughter pair.

As a node within the larger network of Uninfected, this group connects to the one other node of Uninfected presented in *28 Days Later*: that of Major Henry West and his

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[358] This nomadic movement of the living also suggests a diasporia, possibly condensing the experience of numerous nationalities (i.e., Jewish, African) into the bodies of the living, thereby instilling in these usually disenfranchised and maligned groups with more humanity than their oppressor (or zombie).

[359] Galloway and Thacker 58.

troops. This military node, of course, consists of individuated members who together work to individuate their nodal group. Again, working from the information given to us by the film, this military node self-individuates as a collection of heterosexual, male soldiers who believe themselves to be among the last, if not *the* last, group of "survivors" on the planet. External individuation of this node shifts throughout its representational positioning within the film; at first, this nodal group is hospitable, inclusive and protecting—we suspect that the two nodes might, in fact, merge into one. Yet, before the day is over, this external individuation quickly shifts as we realize that this particular node of men lured other Uninfected nodes with the intention of repopulating the earth—using rape as necessary—thus immediately shifting their external individuated status from one of benevolence to malevolence. *28 Days* presents the possibility of a world devoid of structuring networks, where the function of the military is no longer shaped and defined by an external system, thereby demonstrating just how dependent we, as a society, are on these same systems and networks.

Considered within the context of a larger network system, these two nodes themselves work in constant flux and tension, further demonstrating the continual processual state of networks largely construed. The tension that emerges later in their relationship is foreshadowed upon their first interaction: the killing of Frank. When this primary node reaches their intended destination—the "answer to infection"—Frank becomes infected. In the moment of confusion and excitement that immediately ensues—Jim's hesitation at killing Frank, Selena's nearly hysterical demand for action, and Hannah's mournful confusion—it is a gunshot from one of the soldiers that actually ends Frank's life.

Our primary node is brought to the soldiers' sanctuary, a palatial estate surrounded by acres of lawn and forest, and immediately met at the door by Major West. His voice is deep, calm, and steady; he exudes calm, control and comfort. He shakes their hands firmly, meets their gaze in a welcoming manner, and informs them of the domestic comforts available.

MAJOR WEST

Well, we've got beds with clean sheets and a boiler that produces hot water so you can have a shower. You look like you need one. Please.[360]

The camera cuts to an above-shot of Jim showering, then out the window to a view of the courtyard below where the soldiers are goofing around with one another by driving Jim-Selena-Hannah's car in circles, thus wasting gas, and preventing one of their colleagues from getting his work done. This is another foreshadowing of the nodal tension to come: their disregard for each other, their lack of efficiency, and their general adolescent attitude.

Yet, again, it is Major West who reassures us. Soon after his shower we see Jim meet West on a set of stairs outside.

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[360] *28 Days Later*.

WEST

We must be a disappointment. You were hoping for a full brigade, an army base with helicopters and a field hospital.

JIM

(shrugs. mumbles.)

We were just hoping for…

WEST

(matter-of-factly)

"The answer to infection."

JIM

Yeah.

WEST

Well as I said before, it's here. Though it may not be quite what you imagined. […] The fire drove hundreds of Infected out of Manchester. The area is teeming with them. But don't worry; you're quite safe here.

The two men get up from the stairs and begin a tour of the grounds and house.

WEST (CONT'D)

Flat terrain all around the house. Floodlights, which we've rigged up to a generator. High perimeter wall, which helps. And we've been lacing the gourd with trip wires and land mines. You wouldn't want to mow the lawn but if they get in we hear them. Second to protection our real job is to rebuild, start again.

The belly of the house, a heart. A wood fire boiler providing us with hot water, the first step to civilization. The kitchen.

And lastly, meet Mailer. Mailer, Jim. Jim, Mailer. Got Infected two days ago. Mitchell managed to knock him out and we got a chain around his neck. […] The idea was to learn something about Infection, have him teach me. […] He's telling me he'll never bake bread, grow crops, raise livestock. He's telling me he's futureless. And eventually he'll tell me how long the Infected take to starve to death.[361]

Embedded with all this paternal assurance and sharing of knowledge are suggestions of what is to come, of this particular node's terms of self-individuation. With a focus on domestic comforts (of his home) and matters (when discussing Mailer), West suggests what their "answer to infection" might be: as the "father" to a group of "adolescent" boys who are going stir crazy due to the surrounding zombie apocalypse, their "answer" is one

[361] *28 Days Later.*

of repopulation, the re-establishment of hetero-normativity through the assuming of familiar gender roles, and the maintenance of a white, patriarchal power structure embedded in military order.[362]

In the next scene we follow West to the dining hall and an already populated dinner table. The absurdity of a male cook, Private Jones (Leo Bill), is foregrounded by his wearing a very feminine apron—complete with pink gingham pattern and ruffles—as well as his apparent inability to cook—the omelet he has made is inedible. West, of course, then asks if Selena or Hannah (the women) can cook, and when it Hannah makes it known that she is not hungry and thus will not eat, he proceeds to lecture her on the importance of eating. The explosion of a land mine on the front lawn interrupts this tense scene—an Infected has infiltrated the grounds and set it off. Everyone jumps to action, confusion ensues, and the scene ends with West revealing that he has lured people to the compound in the hopes of bringing women. West has made the promise of women, and thus repopulation, to his men, even via rape if necessary. Jim and Sergeant Farrell (Stuart McQuarrie)—who had been defending our protagonists—are imprisoned and ultimately sentenced to death; and with this scene it seems that this network node, moving along their particular vector, has come to a stop.

Even when the network seems to have come to a halt, i.e. stopped functioning as a network, we find it at work in subtle ways: the individuation of the two nodes, seemingly joined as one, reinforces their distinctness while also shifting in membership, internal understanding, and external perception. Most significantly this occurs with Jim, Selena, and Hannah in that this group undergoes significant and rapid external shift in individuation causing the immediate internal restructuring. Realizing that they are perceived as objects, pawns, or even obstacles—and not as individuals who have suffered loss and pain—Hannah disengages from sociality and even herself (via the ingestion of valium), Selena shifts her self-preservation to one more socially oriented, and Jim takes on the appearance of an Infected in order to infiltrate the compound and reintegrate himself into his primary node.

Additionally, as a process, as always shifting, these networks suggest a liminal state. We can extrapolate that individuals, as individuated entities, never occupy a static position; rather, their position is in constant flux given both external as well as internal (personal) forces. In a sense, then, our understanding of identity, as a process of individuation and as a mode of individuation, is itself liminal because identity is always in between and never fixed or static. Again, to consider subjectivity and identity as liminal poses a potential danger in that such positions allow for a devaluation of human experience and therefore individual subjugation because with suggesting this transitional status of personhood comes the problematic assertion that a person is not a person because they are not fixed or stable as a subject. Thus, we encounter one of the many tensions at work in our self-perception as participants in the current consumer digital, Internet culture. As I have argued earlier in this project, the introduction of a consumer Internet and the subsequent proliferation of a digital culture have expanded our sense of interpersonal connections and increased the number of connections we make both in terms of quantity and geography. Identity as formed through interpersonal interactions

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[362] This should recall *Day of the Dead* (1985) and Romero's critique of the military complex as organizing power structure.

then shifts in perception and process as these connections accelerate and expand: we participate in numerous networks interweaving throughout the globe.

At the same time, to re-imagine subjectivity, and thus identity, as a state of liminality, in a sense frees us from the constraints of maintaining a fixed perception/projection of self in an ever-shifting culture. And in many ways, this in-between-ness of identity is one that is performed over and again throughout various networked cultures we encounter on a daily basis. Examining individuation within the context of networks recalls discussions of posthumanism initiated in chapter two. "Social reality is lived social relations, our most important political construction, a world-changing fiction."[363] Moving beyond the unmoored, fragmented self of postmodernism, which is already well beyond the privileging of the individual subject in humanism, posthumanism offers us an imagining of the subject as contextual and fluid in a constructive and productive manner, and situating the individual/entity within a network of external and internal forces that inform—not determine—who/what that same individual/entity may be at any given moment.

Individuation, then, in networked culture, implies a non-fixity, fluidity, and processual transition that recalls liminality. And liminality, according to Agnes Horvath, et al, is "a fundamental human experience."[364] As a "fundamental human experience," liminality becomes the structuring methodology for understanding oneself within a network of other entities. As I stated in chapter 2, "liminality suggests an in-between state or the place of transition from one normative location to another within established social roles."[365] Adding the notion of liminality to Galloway and Thacker's theorization of networks, then, provides yet another means of understanding this important performance studies term as well as offering a more nuanced methodology for further investigating the work these films are doing. In these films we see how networks are performed, and how they are a performance: the actors embody characters; these characters in turn enact a series of actions; these action have direct and realizable results on the screen; and what occurs on the screen inevitably touches us in the audience. As part of the cultural feedback loop, which includes all cultural products and experiences, 21st century zombie cinema offers a representation of networks as they have been re-imagined through Internet culture, this representation as informed by lived experience in turn informs actions and reactions, thereby inevitably impacting the processes of individuation.

The process of individuation becomes problematic when considering the walking dead or Infected because of this assumed incorporation of agency on the part of the entity undergoing individuation. When examined from this level we begin to question some of the claims put forth in chapter two about zombie liminality. As "a figure defined by its liminality,"[366] the zombie exists in between: life and death, subjection and objection, consciousness and unconsciousness. Whether the dead reanimated or the living infected,

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[363] Donna Haraway, "Cyborg Manifesto."

[364] Agnes Horvath, Bjørn Thomassen, and Harald Wydra, "IPA3 Introduction: Liminality and Cultures of Change," *International Political Anthropology* 2.1 (2009): n. pag., Web, 25 March 2010 <http://www.politicalanthropology.org/the-journal-current-a-past-issues/past-issues/171>.

[365] 32.

[366] Lauro and Embry 91.

the zombie functions on pure drive, seemingly devoid of the basic complexity of higher functioning required to be individuated, and thus to be part of a network as defined by Galloway and Thacker. Yet, again recalling the work from chapter two, the zombie as figure for the concept of zombie liminality as discussed and developed, is metaphorical—a means of performatively representing and working through real, lived conditions and situations.[367] Therefore the process of individuation for the zombie network also becomes more metaphorical because of the zombies' inability to take part in that process. It is this metaphorical nature that provides part of the representational system we in turn ingest. Representations are all, in some sense, metaphorical because they are not direct; and using metaphor to represent a cultural system or condition not only offers a more complex reading of our own experience, and thus allows for a multifaceted rendering and understanding of that same shared experience, but also speaks to the complexity of the meaning-making process.

Networks also speak to zombie liminality because they are always in transition; they are a multiplicity of many component parts; they are enacted and embodied; and they are connected on a seemingly structureless plane, a feature that should recall communitas with its requisite lack of system or hierarchy. As part of a network, the individual is structured by a larger, though non-centered, power, therefore each individual functions on the same plane. 21st century zombie cinema, then, offers us a topology of Galloway and Thacker's network mapping as performed—as the active and non-locatable enactments that they are. These films represent networks manifesting liminality performed, activated and in motion.

Naming Networks

> Any instance of naming always produces its shadowy double: nominalism, that is, the notion that universal descriptors do not adequately represent the referents they are supposed to name or demarcate.[368]

I opened this chapter with a working definition of networks. I then analyzed the ways in which networks find expression in 21st century zombie cinema, both as being performed and as a performance, leading to the expression of a new concept: network liminality. This chapter, like the chapters before it, this dissertation, and similar academic projects, seeks to name something that has not yet been identified or articulated. Identifying network liminality assists us in further understanding the ways in which liminality is embodied and experienced, the ways in which networks—which are an organizing cultural structure—perform and are performed, and how all of this participates in locating the experiencing subject in contemporary sociality.

At the same time, as the epigraph to this section suggests, by naming something we also point to the ways in which that naming does not encompass the totality of that which is named. And as Galloway and Thacker go on to point out "networks never claim

[367] 55-8.
[368] Galloway and Thacker 11.

to be integral whole objects in the first place."[369] As is by now clear, networks are multifaceted and complex, consisting of the processes of individuation, they are multiple and always in flux, they serve to connect infinite points, which are as equally as prolific, shifting, and complex as the networks that connect them. As a performance studies project, we find ourselves within another slippery moment of conceptualization and identification: networks and liminality, like performance, always exceed the naming they are given. To identify something as liminal is to define it as unlocatable and transitory; to point to liminality is to define something that isn't entirely there. In bridging these concepts—networks and liminality—we further complicate the endeavor by attempting to employ two unboundable concepts in an effort to further delineate an entity that is even more ephemeral than those two defining names.

To call an entity a zombie is also an act of naming. "Everything's in a name. And everything's everything the name is not. It is both referential (presupposing an already-existing thing to which a name corresponds) as well as evocative (articulating a foreground and a background where one did not previously exist)."[370] This may be, in part, why the zombies of zombie films are never referred to as zombies within those films or most other fictional representations. By naming the zombie as such would give the ghoul power while at the same time bring it into being. The zombies in the *28* franchise are the Infected. Romero's zombies are ghouls. They are variously walkers and crawlers,[371] dead heads,[372] zeds,[373] zed heads,[374] the unfortunate afflicted,[375] stragglers,[376] and even the-people-who-used-to-work-here.[377] In fact, one of the only moments in popular zombie cinema in which the zombies are referred to as zombies is one of self-referential awareness intended to point to itself as a moment of naming within a subgenre that self-consciously side-steps in taking serious this act of naming.

ED
Are there any zombies out there?

SHAUN
Don't say that!

ED
What?

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[369] Galloway and Thacker 12.
[370] Galloway and Thacker 12.
[371] *The Walking Dead*, AMC, Television.
[372] *Survival of the Dead*, dir. George Romero, Artfire Pictures, 2010.
[373] *Shaun of the Dead*, dir. Edgar Wright, Working Title Films and Studio Canal, 2004.
[374] Max Brooks, *World War Z* (New York: Crown Publishing, 2006).
[375] Seth Grahame-Smith and Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* (Philadelphia: Quirk Books, 2009).
[376] Colson Whitehead, *Zone One: A Novel* (New York: Doubleday, 2011).
[377] *Resident Evil*, dir. Paul W. S. Anderson, Constantin Films, 2001.

[…]

SHAUN
That. The 'Z' word. Don't say it.

[…]

ED
Alright... Are there any out there, though?[378]

This exchange takes place in the zomedy[379] *Shaun of the Dead* (2004), written by zombie cinema fanatics Simon Pegg (who also plays Shaun) and Edgar Wright (the director). Shaun is a zombie parody, one that lovingly foregrounds the tropes of zombie cinema, as established by Romero, while also paying tribute to this now well established subgenre. This is a film that opens with a morning scene in which Shaun (Simon Pegg) passes a number of zombie-like characters—really pre-coffee 9-to-5-ers—on his way to work, and proceeds to follow this lovelorn everyman on his journey to win back his girlfriend, please his mother, all the while fighting off the walking dead.

By calling attention to a refusal to name, *Shaun* references a history of the zombie cinematic subgenre, the problem of naming, and itself as a film within a larger cultural system of representational meaning making. In the act of naming-yet-not-naming, *Shaun*, as a film, gives weight and power to the subgenre in Ed's moment, or slip, in calling the walking dead figure a zombie, and Shaun's refusal to allow that naming. In this film we have networks—various, morphing nodes effecting actions (edges)—connecting, intersecting, and fluctuating within a general mood of concern, confusion, apathy, role playing, and witty banter. In a sense, one could argue that *Shaun*, as a film, embodies a generation molded within the digital, new media era: seemingly hapless, going through their daily routines, but connecting and moving across vectors, intersecting with other groups, spanning space. This film, as itself and as a metonymic stand-in for the larger sweep of 21st century zombie cinema, unconsciously produces the network in its narrative: the key players are on the move, intersecting with other nodes, in their attempt to reach safety and normalcy. While we watch these characters rove about the English landscape, we are also watching networks in action, embodied, and enacted. The primary node of the story shifts and changes, but is always recognizable as that particular node. It effects actions, visually represented in graph theory as edges, that impact this primary node itself, other nodes, and even other networks.

By analyzing the formal and narrative structure as informed by network theory—even as a network—we engender the creation and marking of the genre as such. In its playful handling of the genre, *Shaun* adheres to the expected conventions of zombie cinema while having fun, effectively taking part in the launching of the subgenre into the mainstream. *Shaun*, being a film about zombies produced by zombie fans who take

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[378] *Shaun*.
[379] Short-hand for "zombie comedy."

pleasure in their playful yet serious homage to the subgenre, also marks a turn in popular culture in which zombie fans explode upon the scene as zombies: zombie walks, zombie flash mobs, zombie theater, zombie dance troops, and more.

CHAPTER 5.

VISCERAL VIEWING: ZOMBIES "IN REAL LIFE" (IRL)

Zombies, it seems, are everywhere.[380]

The viral. Biology. (Intersections.) Technology. Mobile technologies. (Communications.) Networks. Nodes. Im/Hypermediacy. Remediation. These multifaceted threads and themes migrate toward what game theorist Jane McGonigal has termed "Ubiquitous Play and Performance."[381] Employing the networking possibilities of mobile Internet technologies such as cell phones and handheld Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs), users come together to enact spontaneous spectacles. Communities of actors, forged through on-line technologies, meet in the flesh to realize the ultimate expression of their virtual social networks: "massively scaled," public collaborations that "comprise the avant-garde of an emerging constellation of network practices that are both *ludic*, or game-like, and *spectacular* – that is, intended to generate an audience."[382] In my final chapter, I turn my analytical attentions away from the cinematic screen, away from representations of new media as performed in 21st century zombie cinema, and to manifestations of zombies "in real life" (IRL), as a means of theorizing the ways in which

[380] Shawn McIntosh, "The Evolution of the Zombie: The Monster That Keeps Coming Back," *Zombie Culture: Autopsies of the Living Dead*, Eds, Shawn McIntosh and Marc Leverette (Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2008), 1.

[381] Jane McGonigal, "SuperGaming: Ubiquitous Play and Performance for Massively Scaled Community," *Modern Drama* 48.3 (Fall 2005), 471-491.

[382] McGonigal, "SuperGaming" 476, original emphasis.

the above-mentioned 21st century, technological paradigms have real-world impacts and consequences.

I am interested in the ways communities are formed and forged, and how new media enable these meetings. Furthermore, I am also interested in how these new forms of new media-enabled communities differ from more traditional forms of community in their creation, manifestation, communication, and materialization. In examining zombie-inspired manifestations of these communities I consider *play* as a key element of social networks, while also continuing to push at the definitional boundaries of liveness and the tensions between cinematic and stage presences. I begin with an examination of Smart Mobs, a term coined by Howard Rheingold,[383] and how these serve as an intersection of "virality," social communication networks, and remediation; where real bodies, in real space, and real time performatively embody and reenact the cultural phenomenon of the walking dead. I then turn to theatrical reenactments of zombies, both adaptations of cinematic versions (*Night of the Living Dead*) as well as original productions that draw on and offer a meta-critique of the zombie subgenre and live theater (*Zombie Town*). Both of these "real life" performance objects—zombie mobs and zombie theater—offer an intersection of new media, embodiment, and performance.

I see *play* as a key concept for theorizing the work popular subcultures do in 21st century Western society. Fans of zombie cinema do not simply watch these films, but playfully reenact the zombie phenomenon from cross-genre adaptations to actual embodiment of the zombie figure.[384] Play is a key element in the development of toddlers and young children where they engage in free- and role-playing as a means of working through social situations they've witnessed and participated in. As adults, play becomes more bounded by explicit rules, time, and location; yet, both "child play and adult play involve exploration, learning, and risk and yield flow or total involvement in the activity for its own sake."[385] By fully participating in fan culture, adults are able to immerse themselves in an imaginary world where alternative social structures emerge and new communities are forged. And play can be read as a secular form of ritual where known social subjects, connections, and situations move through phases of liminality and social bonds are created, founded, and strengthened.[386]

In examining zombies in real life I take the next necessary step with my analyses: I have been asserting a dialectical reflection and response at work within 21st century zombie cinema—and the history of zombie cinema—but have not yet considered what it looks like when zombies actually invade the space of real, quotidian existence. I see this step as necessary because part of my arguments have hinged on the discursive relationship the cinema bears to lived daily existence, therefore examining the appearance of the zombie (as play-acted and performed, not as somehow an actual reanimated corpse

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[383] Howard Rheingold, *Smart Mobs: The Next Social Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Basic Books, 2002).

[384] Play can be found in many different types of activities, not just the role-playing I focus on here, such as competition (sports) and chance (gambling).

[385] Richard Schechner, *Performance Studies, An Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 82.

[386] Emile Durkheim (1912), Arnold van Gennep (1908), Richard Ling (2008), Erving Goffman (1959) and (1967).

lumbering through the streets) in lived space further connects the work of this cultural object to what can possibly occur beyond the screen for the spectator. The zombie is a uniquely cinematic creature demanding visual representation because of its pure physicality—the zombie is all body and psychoanalytic drive. The walking dead lose their discursive power when they leave the screen; but this is not to say the zombie loses purpose. The zombie figure becomes unstable, though no longer liminal, they are still not fixed "in the flesh." Zombies continue to build and maintain networks through the subculture that emerges, grows, and continues to morph around this figure.

The zombie, simultaneously as fictional creature and as a creature driven solely by the Id and thus incapable of reasoning and choice, has no agency in its representation and refashioning. When zombies do appear IRL the agency behind that decision and construction invariably works with different intention and goals than to analyze and critique the current new media culture. The zombie invasions of the 21st century, however innocently fun their authorial intent may be, exist because of the same new media technologies I have been analyzing: these invasions require the use of networked telecommunications and the Internet in order to garner the numbers required for a zombie horde. Given the need for new media and technology, zombies IRL also function as a conceptualization of biomedia as an embodiment forged through and because of technology, which makes this particular zombie embodiment unique to the 21st century.

I've divided this chapter into three sections: "Zombies Walk Among Us," "Staging Zombies," and "The Undead Project." In "Zombies Walk Among Us" I examine one particular zombie flash mob that occurred in San Francisco, California on May 25th, 2007 as a foray into the current cultural phenomenon of zombie flash mobs and zombie walks,[387] which serve as crystallizations of the intersection between biomedia ("the biological 'informs' the digital, just as the digital 'corporealizes' the biological"[388]), networks (rhizomatic interconnections between multiple nodes), and remediation (the refashioning of media within other media). I turn to live theatrical events in "Staging Zombies," examining both theatrical adaptations of cult favorites—in this case, *Night of the Living Dead* (1968) transformed into *Night of the Living Dead, LIVE!* (2007)—and original theatrical productions about zombies—specifically, *Zombie Town* (2009)—in order to complicate further the propositions and analyses put forth in my discussion of zombie flash mobs, as well as offering new insights into the interrelationship of the terms liveness and remediation. I argue that in order to best understand the phenomenon of representing the walking dead, live, on stage, and the culturo-historical work this enactment does, we need an analytical concept that accounts for our post-postmodern/-

[387] Some recent examples demonstrating that zombie walks and their kin are still current cultural events include a not fully deployed zombie gathering for the most recent Royal Wedding (<http://hannahdoublebarrel.wordpress.com/2011/04/30/royalweddingzombie/> accessed 24 October 2011); on Saturday, October 22nd 2011 Denver had its 6th annual zombie crawl (<http://blogs.westword.com/latestword/2011/10/denver_zombie_crawl_2011_photos.php> accessed 24 October 2011); and Seattle is host to numerous zombie events, they even have their own webpage—http://www.seattlezombies.com/; I could go on…

[388] Thacker 7.

capitalist cultural position; and the near-dialectical work of liveness in combination with remediation provide the stepping stones necessary for this work.

Zombies Walk Among Us

Zombie Day
in
San Francisco

May 25th, 2007[389]

It is Friday; late-afternoon, maybe early evening; the end of a workweek. If you were to mosey into downtown San Francisco at this time you would expect to see some seemingly brain-dead bodies lumbering through the streets as the weekend slowly emerged. But on one particular day (5/25/07) there is no "seeming" about the brain-dead. It began in downtown San Francisco along Market Street: the walking dead infiltrated the streets of San Francisco demanding "brains." Driven in part by their need for human flesh as well as by an instinctual drive leftover from their days as a member of the living, the walking dead slowly made their way to familiar locations such as the glowing silver and white allure of the Apple Store on Stockton Street, the Westfield Mall on Market Street, and the Disney Store in Union Square;[390] all the while searching for and demanding "brains," and leaving a trail of carnage as their numbers continued to increase.[391]

Although one wouldn't think the living dead to be particularly techno-savvy, it was the Internet that made such a bloody mob possible: organizing efforts began with the San Francisco Zombie Mob on their website, eatbrains.com. This anonymous group of individuals keeps the living appraised of any and all walking dead activities by maintaining and updating a blog that serves as an information hub for whenever and wherever zombie activities may occur. Ostensibly, this collective is interested in warning the living about potential zombie threats; for instance, their first post, "Zombie Threat Level: May 2007," stated simply, "Something sinister is brewing in San Francisco. Stay tuned for further updates if you value your life." They were quick to provide more

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[389] For video coverage of this event see http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JJHhkNdTerA and http://www.mccullagh.org/theme/zombie-flash-mob-2007.html

[390] This need for shopping on the part of the living dead is in direct reference to George Romero's 1978 film *Dawn of the Dead*, in which a handful of the living barricade themselves inside a mall against hundreds of the living dead, who are inexplicably drawn to this public place. Of course, what explains it is need to consume instilled in American society on the part of advertisers, etc. *Dawn* proves to be a critique of consumer culture in America.

[391] Of course this carnage isn't literal, though the increasing numbers of "zombies" is. A system had been predetermined as to which "civilians" were ok to "attack" by the appearance of duct tape on their clothes.

pertinent information just a few days later with "Zombie Route Released": "May 25th, 6pm. No need to dress up, the zombies have plenty of spare blood. Our zombie containment team has placed special radio transmitters that interfere with zombie's sense of direction, so that we can funnel them down market to Union Square […]." What is initially framed as information warning about zombies quickly morphs into a veiled set of rules in which one can learn how to ensure being attacked by, and thus becoming, a zombie ("the only thing [zombies] can sense is Duct tape. If you are wearing duct tape on your torso, the mob will attack you, ruin your clothes"); as well as a set of rules of etiquette the zombies are to follow in public: "Zombies will not get blood on innocent bystanders or their things" and they "will leave private property reasonably soon after being asked." And all this because of supposed "radio waves."[392]

The language of this post, like the entire blog, is campy and self-conscious, thereby foregrounding the performative nature of San Francisco Zombie Mob as a collective that attempts to maintain their self-shaped identity as zombie fighters while giving pertinent information about zombie flash mobs. In other words, San Francisco Zombie Mob actually serves to network and organize groups of people into flash zombie mobs under the pretense of zombie invasion warnings. By following the blog, receiving their Tweets,[393] and from there branching off into isolated clusters that then communicate via email, text messaging, and even phone calls, people can participate in one of many zombie events initiated by San Francisco Zombie Mob.

The San Francisco Zombie Mob is just one example of the ubiquity of performance and technology. The performance text of zombie cinema extends well beyond the circumscription of the screen, even beyond the circumscription of the genre into other modes of embodied participation. What began as a cult fascination with zombie cinema has evolved into a blurring between the "fictional" world of zombies and our own "real" world experiences (this "real-world" zombie infestation moving beyond the circumscribed events of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* to invade the lives of non-

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[392] http://eatbrains.com/2007/05/

[393] Twitter is a relatively new social networking phenomenon. It began in March 2006, and "has grown into a real-time short messaging service that works over multiple networks and devices" (http://twitter.com/about#about). Users can personal updates, using up to 150 character at a time; users can also link their updates to post in real-time to other networking sites such as Facebook (facebok.com) and Livejournal (livejournal.com) in order to ensure that the terse information they post reaches the widest possible audience. As a Twitter user you have the option of "following" other users so that their Tweets post to your homepage. You then also have the option of having the Tweets of certain users you follow sent to your mobile device as a text message so that you can be sure to receive up-to-the-minute information in real-time. This feature is particularly useful for organizing flash mobs: for those of us that follow San Francisco Zombie Mob we can learn of minute-by-minute updates about current zombie events. For instance, most recently, San Francisco Zombie Mob organized a zombie walk up Van Ness Ave to the AMC Van Ness 14 for the opening of *Zombieland* (2009) on September 30th, 2009.

participants on a much larger and more pervasive scale).[394] Zombie flash mobs are an opportunity for fans of the living dead to embody, and be, zombies. In these mobs we have a demonstration of the way in which performance and imaginary play are a necessary and vital part of existence.[395]

Clearly, mobile Internet technology has altered the way we connect and interact. Back in 2003—a significant leap in technological terms, a baby step for academe—Bill Wasik, then senior editor of *Harper's Magazine*, orchestrated the first successful flash mob thanks, in part, to remote social organization made possible through mobile technologies (namely: the cellular phone). In other words, because Wasik was able to use text messaging and email to communicate instructions in real time simultaneously to groups of people located in four distinct Manhattan bars, the first flash mob was born on 3 June 2003 at a Macy's department store when a group of one hundred individuals gathered around an expensive area rug.[396]

A flash mob is the sudden appearance of a large group of people in a public place. Usually this group of people performs a highly unusual act—a pillow fight[397] or standing frozen in time amongst a throng of busy commuters[398]—for a brief period of time and then immediately disperses. In order to qualify as a flash mob, the orchestrators must use telecommunications or social media devices to connect with and organize the participants. The mobilization must be purely grass roots; if a flash mob were organized

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[394] *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975) is an adaptation a British stage show called the *The Rocky Horror Show*; it is a sci-fi, horror, musical; and it is the longest running film in history, with screenings occurring to this day. These screenings, which generally occur at midnight (this is the first movie from a major film studio to hit the midnight screening market), involve active participation from the viewers at key moments in the film, including dancing and singing along with the musical numbers.

[395] Victor Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre*.

[396] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flash_mob

[397] On Tuesday, February 14, 2006 nearly one thousand people converged on Justin Herman Plaza in San Francisco with concealed pillows. At 6pm pillows emerged from their hiding places (backpacks, shopping bags, etc.) and those holding pillows began hitting others holding pillows. The event lasted thirty minutes and left a blanket of down all over the Plaza. The pillow feathers proved to be a sanitation hazard leaving the City with thousands of dollars worth of clean-up costs. San Francisco Chronicle coverage of the original event (http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2006/02/14/BAGIAH8L5D5.DTL), and the city's response to the cost of clean-up (http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2009/03/08/BA4D169H59.DTL&tsp=1).

[398] On January 31, 2008 the collective Improv Everywhere orchestrated an event at Grand Central Station in New York City where 207 people froze in place for five full minutes (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jwMj3PJDxuo). Although the highly organized nature of this event, and the possible lack of technological means of communication, make its categorization as a "flash mob" dubious and open to debate, the sentiment is still the same: a group of people, unaffiliated with any corporation or firm, inconspicuously descend upon a pre-determined location and instantaneously begin some action in unison and stop just as suddenly and harmoniously.

as a publicity stunt and/or by any corporation or firm the event would not qualify as a "flash mob."[399]

This definitional qualifier—grass roots, community-based—is an important one because it reaffirms the primary intent of flash mobs as an embodied demonstration of new modes of social networking and connecting in action. Rather than being the still-touted "problem" of a loss of social presence "in real life," devices such as the Blackberry and iPhone, which give us immediate access to the Internet and email (and thus to technological forms of social communication), provide a new means of staying connected to current, and forging new, social networks, and locating one another "in the flesh."[400]

The flash mob, then, is a demonstration of how new, screened technologies, and the modes of communication deployed through them, both hinder and encourage physical social connectivity; rather, these new technologies encourage a new means of connecting to one another, meeting new people, and forging new relationships.[401] Although the flash mob is, by definition, fleeting and transitory, the communities it demands, encourages, and engenders are permanently fluid—they are there but always shifting and altering as the network grows, reforms, adds, and subtracts. In fact, it is this fluidity that is key to understanding the new types of social connections established through screened technologies. Instead of being bound to a circumscribed location, limited by an inability to reach-out beyond our immediate social environs, the Internet and subsequent mobile technologies provide us the means of reaching a large network of people, encouraging that group to come together in one location at one time, and then give us the means to stay connected to the individuals we meet in the singular time and place in order to potentially create more real-time social gatherings.

The zombie flash mob is just one example of "the new social form made possible by the combination of computation, communication, reputation, and location awareness."[402] Social technology theorist Howard Rheingold explains how communities

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[399] And, in keeping with the grass roots, public nature of flash mobs, this information is generally available on Wikipedia <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flash_mob>, here http://journal.fibreculture.org/issue6/issue6_nicholson.html, and here <http://web.archive.org/web/20071012195306/aglomerarispontane.weblog.ro/2004-12-05/20168/Manifestul-Aglomerarilor-Spontane---A-Flashmob-Manifesto.html>

[400] For instance, there is a service provided by Google called "Latitude" that you use on your mobile device in order to locate your friends in real time. This does require that they also register with Latitude and agree to have their location made available, but you simply load the webpage (http://google.com/latitude?dc=lato) on your mobile device, this page will bring you to a list of "friends" to whom you have access to locate, and if you click the "See Map" button in the bottom left-hand corner of the screen a Google map will load with all of your active friends displayed.

[401] Flashmobs, in addition to foregrounding the new fluidity and mobility of social networks, also walk the line between performance art and social movement. This is significant because of the cultural, political, and social impact these events can have: they are not simply fun gatherings, but important and culturally significant moments.

[402] Rheingold 169-170.

are formed and networks forged. Drawing on a report by the Wearable Computing Group at the University of Oregon, "When Peer-to-Peer Comes Face-to-Face: Collaborative Peer-to-Peer Computing in Mobile Ad Hoc Networks," Rheingold further defines this phenomenon, what he calls the smart mob:

> The *mobile* aspect is already self-evident to urbanites who see the early effects of mobile phones and SMS. *Ad hoc* means that the organizing among people and their devices is done informally and on the fly, the way texting youth everywhere coordinate meetings after school. *Social network* means that every individual in a smart mob is a "node" in the jargon of social network analysis, with social "links" (channels of communication and social bonds) to other individuals. Nodes and links, the elements of social networks made by humans are also fundamental elements of communication networks constructed from optical cables and wireless devices—one reason why new communications technologies make possible profound social changes.[403]

In this brief passage, Rheingold brings together many of the thematic elements discussed throughout this dissertation: networks, nodes, mobility, new technologies, and community. Although the phenomenon of networked communities emerging and shifting is not particular to zombie flash mobs, and even though these cultural themes find expression in other cinematic genres, it is the crystallization of all these things together around contemporary popular zombie culture that marks 21st century zombies as a vibrant site for such explorations.

With zombie flash mobs we have a unique and complex manifestation of liveness and screened, mobile, digital culture onto a singular site. The marriage here is imperfect and messy, with its shifting signifiers and confused borders. The bodies are live, but portray the reanimated dead. The people come together in real life, and are physically present to one another, but it was their use of mobile and screened technologies that allowed this physical meeting to materialize. Additionally, the community as physically materialized in that meeting, is fluid and transitory, not unlike the migratory and diasporic communities found throughout all global hemispheres. And it's not just any flash mob that suggests these larger global connections and unique, lived situations, but the *zombie* flash mob proves even more poignant a manifestation because of the complex layers of philosophical and political problems that lumber along with the zombie: roots in colonialism and slavery; questions of ontology; biological reimaginings; and the ethics of interpersonal relations and networks.

Furthermore, when we recall zombie liminality with its real world implications for marginalized communities and cultures, the smart mob again emerges. Rheingold often references the political activism in the Philippines and Senegal as illustrative sites for the real world, political effective potential of smart mobs. And I would add to this list

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[403] Rheingold 170, original emphasis.

Egypt and Libya. In these cases mobile technologies connected people and communities and helped to organize them into political protests with regime changing effects.

Staging Zombies

An urgent and interesting site for the expression of zombie fandom and an examination of what liveness means in the 21st century is the emerging world of live theatrical zombie productions. Though staging the dead is nothing new in the theater—the Greeks did it, and Shakespeare—I argue that staging zombies offers an extra layer of complexity in regards to liveness and discourses surrounding presence and performance because zombies are reanimated dead. Unlike the ghosts who, within the diegetic frame of the dramatic text, populate theater history as apparitions of their once worldly selves, the zombie remains as a material body, once dead, now reanimateds. The zombie is a corpse brought back to animated life but still lacking the capacity of critical consciousness—only the impulse of subconscious drive to consume. The zombie as staged gives us the utopic presence only the theater can offer in the presentational form of reanimated dead. My interest in the ways in which the screened zombie thematizes problems of liveness, presence and absence, the animate and inanimate, emerges from a scholarly discourse within performance studies around live, theatrical performance.[404] Because the zombie is a well-known *screened* creature, its appearance on the stage only further foregrounds issues of presence and liveness that seem so particular to the theater, and so troubled in the cinema.

The staged zombie began with adaptations of classic cult films like *Night of the Living Dead* and *Evil Dead*. Theater companies have taken these films and adapted them to the stage, focusing on the campy qualities these films offer, particularly the latter, and milking that camp for all it is worth to create an evening of shriekingly good fun. A necessary part of this event is the blood; the more blood the production employs the more fun the event. *Evil Dead: Live* was done in San Francisco in 2005 as a joint project by C.A.F.E. (Combined Art Form Entertainment) and The Primitive Screwheads.[405] Produced in a very small, very non-professional performance space, the Screwheads crammed the entire trilogy—*Evil Dead* (1981), *Evil Dead 2* (1987), and *Army of Darkness* (1992)—into a two-hour live event. The draw, of course, is to be part of an inside joke; to know the films so that you can laugh in recognition at the key moments represented from the films; and to laugh at the moments you know are "bloopers" or "mistakes" during that particular night's run.

A similar sentiment is maintained with *Night of the Living Dead: Live!* (2007), also produced by The Primitive Screwheads. Again, the focus is on mayhem and blood, not acting or production value; and the intended audience is people already fully enmeshed in the world of zombie fandom.[406] Each of these productions unknowingly

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[404] Thanks to Kristen Whissel assistance in articulating this.

[405] See the Thursday, February 24th 2005 San Francisco Chronicle review by Jane Ganahl at http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2005/02/24/DDGO0BFCR51.DTL

[406] See Hannah Goldfield's review of the performance event with KQED Arts at http://www.kqed.org/arts/performance/article.jsp?essid=17082

enters into the ongoing performance studies debate about liveness. What does it mean to have live theatrical representations of the walking dead, that are part of a stage production which is itself an adaptation of well-renowned cult film? These layers of living/dead, theatrical/cinematic speak to similar layers within *Diary of the Dead*. Whereas in *Diary* we are offered multiple camera layers—the traditional, "omniscient" camera showing us always and only the point of view of a camera within the diegetic space of the film, which is often also the direct point of view of a character—in productions such as *Night of the Living Dead: LIVE!* we have the theatrically traditional layering of actor playing character, but with the added layer of living actor playing dead character—a character who has some of the attributes of the living. The complex layers of framing and representation at work in *Diary*, reorganize in *Night: LIVE!* as the complex layers of living bodies playing dead bodies and the problems of liveness within the theater and other performance modes. With both of these live theater events the world of zombie film begins to more clearly and fully infest the "real" world of the spectators. This is made more evident by the performance of *Night of the Living Dead: Live!*, which begins before the announced "curtain" time (there wasn't an actual curtain, of course) with cast members, as zombies, attacking the theater patrons waiting patiently to enter the warehouse-turn-theater.[407]

Most recently, in fall of 2009, Sleepwalkers Theater in San Francisco has produced Tim Bauer's *Zombie Town* at The Exit Theater (stage left).[408] This original play employs the classic zombie tale—the recently dead begin mysteriously to come back to life and feed on the living—combining it with a faux version of the now-familiar genre of documentary theater (made popular by the Tectonic Theater Project with their production of *The Laramie Project*, which premiered in Denver in 2000).[409] In my opinion, the play is well produced, finely directed, and populated by a cast of seasoned and serious actors.[410] Although the play seems more interested in serving as a meta-commentary on theater, theater companies, and documentary theater styles in particular, it is also clearly an homage and comment on the still-vibrant subculture of zombie fandom (which all began with Romero's 1968 *Night of the Living Dead*).

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[407] 2007, San Francisco, CA, 15 June 2007 <http://www.kqed.org/arts/performance/article.jsp?essid=17082>

[408] Tim Bauer, 2009, *Zombie Town: A Documentary Play*, directed by Tore Ingersoll-Thorp, Sleepwalkers Theater, Exit Theater, San Francisco, CA, 9 October 2009.

[409] In creating the now-canonical *Laramie Project*, members of the Tectonic Theater Project traveled to Wyoming to interview the people of Laramie about the murder of Matthew Shepard. Their form of documentary theater involved reenacting the interviews they created as both themselves and the interviewees so that multiple levels of meta-reflection of the theatrical process are a part of the theatrical presentation. This is exactly the form employed in *Zombie Town*: although completely fictional, the members of the theater troup go to this zombie-infested town in order to interview the townspeople about the tragedy. We see the actors playing actors playing themselves (including one actor/character who calls his mom asking for more money to support him) as the actors-within-the-play interview various people about the "truth" of the dead walking.

[410] *Zombie Town*, 9 October 2009.

Zombie Town, "a documentary play chronicling the Harwood, Texas, zombie attacks,"[411] takes place in the small, backward town of Harwood, Texas where a theater collective from San Francisco, California—The Catharsis Collective—has come to interview the people of Harwood about the recently reanimated corpses. This collective, like the members of the Tectonic Theater Project, want to turn their ethnographic research into a play. The script calls for five actors, four male and one female, each playing 4-6 roles of theater collective members and Harwood townspeople. As the play progresses, the audience members, hear multiple perspectives about the experiences surrounding the reanimation of the dead, as well as many theories as to why it happened.

Unlike its predecessors of cinematic adaptations, *Zombie Town* is completely original and the walking dead do not appear on stage until the final moments when the playwright and director relent to the camp and excitement they know their audience expects from a live zombie play (minus the sprays of blood). By withholding theatrical representation of the zombies until the end, *Zombie Town* also calls into question whether zombies, as creatures who are neither dead not alive, can be adequately represented in a live theatrical setting. By withholding the representation of the zombie until the end, the producers potentially instill a sense of marked absence in the viewer because the discourse within the play is all about zombies. So when zombies continually refuse to appear on the stage, the continued discussion around zombies only makes that absence more palpable. When the zombies do appear at the end of the play, the shift is awkward and clearly very self-conscious, more so than the rest of the already critically aware production. It seems then that the producers of the play are uncertain as to how best to represent these walking dead figures, and whether it is appropriate to do so in a purely live production. Yet, here they are, engaging with the subgenre of zombie cinema and extending into another medium seemingly incapable of unselfconsciously handling the complicated issue of liveness presented by the ontological (fictional) fact of the zombies.

When a zombie does enter the playing space of *Zombie Town* it does so as a conceit within the context of the play: Slash Murphy, a citizen of Harwood, Texas, informs Dave Winfrey, one of the theater anthropologists, that he's kept his zombified neighbor handcuffed in his (the zombified neighbor's) apartment. Slash suggests that Dave Winfrey and other members of the theater collective might want to do a little more research before leaving, helping them "to get the whole. Like, from all sides. Like, ALL sides."[412] Robbie Darling, Slash's zombie neighbor, comes onto stage, supposedly handcuffed (at this point the characters are still being played by the theater collective actors who are being played by the cast of Sleepwalkers Theater).

SLASH MURPHY

Hey, Robbie. Come on out!

A zombie, played by Actor 2 (Connor), shuffles onstage, hands behind his black. ROBBIE has a blank expression, tattered slothes, a pale face: classic signs of zombification.

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[411] Bauer.

[412] Bauer 62.

ROBBIE DARLING
Grrr. Argghh.

ANNIE DALTON
Robbie Darling, Harwood resident. Or, former resident. Or, formerly-living current resident, I guess it'd be.[413]

Although still within the frame of the fictional play, the problem of introducing a resident-turn-zombie is marked as problematic by Annie Dalton's attempted introduction.

DAVE WINFREY
It's, uh… pleased to meet you, Robbie.

ROBBIE DARLING
Grr. Argghh.

SLASH MURPHY
Shut up, man.

DAVE WINFREY
No, no. We want to hear his point of view. It wouldn't be true cultural anthropology if we didn't hear from all sides. James, come here. Bring the recorder!

JAMES SUMNER
Whoa!

DAVE WINFREY
Robbie, can you tell us why you feel compelled to eat people?

ROBBIE DARLING
BRAAAAINS!!

DAVE WINFREY
Brains? You like brains better than the rest of the body?

ROBBIE DARLING
BRAAAAINS!!

DAVE WINFREY
Why brains? Is it because stem cells in the brain can replicate, so you're looking to get back some of the brain mass that you've lost by

[413] Bauer 64

decomposing? Or is it just that brains have protein and fat and cholesterol to sustain you?

ROBBIE DARLING
BRAAAAINS!!

JAMES SUMNER
Maybe they're trying to cut out the competition. Like it's Darwinian. Like they eat the brain, and so that dead body can't reanimate, and so there are fewer zombies for them to compete with.

DAVE WINFREY
Is that it? Is that why you eat brains?

ROBBIE DARLING
The pain.

DAVE WINFREY
What pain? What about the pain?

ROBBIE DARLING
The pain of being dead.

SLASH MURPHY
Wow. I guess it hurts to be dead.

ROBBIE DARLING
I can feel myself rot. Eating brains makes the pain go away.

DAVE WINFREY
I knew it! It's metaphorical. It's the subtext that makes the play make sense. The undead crave the soul that they've lost, and it's only by eating brains that they –

ROBBIE DARLING/CONNOR MARX[414]
BRRRRRAAAINNNNNNSSSS!!!!!

ROBBIE/CONNOR lunges at ANNIE. Apparently, though his hands were behind his back, he wasn't handcuffed. He gets his hands around ANNIE's neck and begins choking her. JAMES pounds on who we should now call CONNOR's back.[415]

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[414] Connor Marx is the theater collective member playing the part of Robbie Darling.

[415] Bauer 64-67.

This long excerpt demonstrates the self-conscious complexity of representing the walking dead in a theatrical production. The pure Id of the zombie transforms into a creature capable of self-critical and complex discussion. Furthermore, as made evident in the script—though less clear on the stage—this moment suggests a further blurring between life and death when characters are less clearly divided from actors, who are characters for the actors on the actual stage in front of the viewer.

At this point in the play a confusion, or crossing, of boundaries occurs. This is a play in which one actor plays the part of an actor playing multiple characters, and the moment in which the script demands the multiplication of actor-characters is the same moment when the fabric of reality is supposedly ripped apart and "real" zombies invade the safe space of the fictional play. Here the confusion and elision between the real of the play, the real of the frame story, and the real of the audience watching the layered stage play begins to materialize as theatrics. At the same time, no matter how theatrical we recognize this moment to be, it is in this rupture that the unique potential of the walking dead emerges. Because the conceit of a reanimated corpse is both so fleshly—thus real—while also impossible—thus surreal—the zombie as embodied and performed on the stage (and thus in real, shared time and real, shared space) offers itself as a unique site for further investigating liminality as well as liveness. As a site for liminality, the zombie as staged materializes the theoretical moment of not-life and not-death where a person is no longer a person but not yet a corpse. In theory, as the ultimate rendering of a liminal state, the zombie is impossible, yet it is that impossibility that continually piques our curiosity and invites us to play at zombie. As a site for liveness, the staged zombie foregrounds the materiality of the body because we have a live body performing in front of other live bodies, but the performing body is meant to be an animated corpse. If it moves, its alive, but we know this walking creature to be a corpse. This is, of course, further complicated when that corpse begins to philosophize on its own motivations and state of being.

JAMES SUMNER
What the fuck?!

ANNIE DALTON
Conner, what the hell are you doing?!

JAMES SUMNER
This is not in the script!

Meanwhile, DAVE pulls SLASH/IAN aside. SLASH/IAN rips off his Slash costume and transforms into plain old IAN HARRISON.

DAVE WINFREY
You were supposed to keep him handcuffed!

[…]

CONNOR stumbles toward DAVE and IAN.

ROBBIE DARLING
BRRRRRAAAINNNNNNSSSS!!!!!

IAN HARRISON
I think he's really a zombie![416]

Though clearly "in the script," this moment is framed as occurring outside the circumscription of the black box theater. As Slash-the-character dissolves into Ian Harrison-playing-Slash-the-character, the supposed veil of illusion is seemingly ripped off and "actual" zombies begin to invade the stage. If (actors playing) zombies can materialize on the stage and destroy the fabric of illusion so carefully crafted by The Catharsis Collective/Sleepwalkers Theater then what constitutes reality on the stage? And if the stage serves as a mirror of the real world, then what can we read as "live"?

IAN HARRISON
It just didn't feel right to me. It's not something Slash would do.

ANNIE DALTON
Get him off me!

IAN HARRISON
I could see how Slash would keep him handcuffed at home, but—

DAVE WINFREY
It's a documentary play. You can't just make up your own—

ANNIE DALTON
Somebody get him off me![417]

From here the action continues to devolve. More and more of The Catharsis Collective fall prey to zombie-ness. More references are made to theater, theatrics, and other theatrical moments: Hamlet and *Hamlet*, type-casting, loss of characters by actors dying and reanimating, "small parts," and Equity plays.[418]

As a play not simply about zombies, but one about the complex layers of performing (actors playing characters playing characters under the conceipt of documentary theater), as well as the problem of representing the walking dead on stage, *Zombie Town* is unique within the already niche subgenre of zombie theater. As a work of live performance, *Zombie Town* offers the potential, "perhaps even utopic promise of theater, in which temporary communities assemble to look at social relations, to be

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[416] Bauer 67-69.
[417] Bauer 67-68.
[418] Bauer 73, 72.

provoked, moved, enraged, made proud by what human being can do when they're set in relation to one another."[419] Zombie theater offers a tension: as a mode of live performance, these theatrical productions offer the promise of utopic community while at the same time relying on a vision of dystopia, of apocalypse to draw that community together. In these theatrical moments of community formation and representational dystopia, zombie theater does what traditional theater cannot by reinforcing the promise of theater through unease of extreme situations, one that provokes stark character shifts, imposing social relationships that might not otherwise form.

Even as it caters to a niche market of zombie fans, this play is also already enmeshed within a history of live performance in which it cannot but take part, a situating that makes more urgent the questions of life and death that go hand-in-hand with the walking dead figure. If the cinema is the realm of the dead, of the embalmed, and the theater is the realm of life and reenactment, the zombie on the stage begins to conflate the two representational genres in interesting ways by forcing this traditionally cinematic figure to life on the stage. The instability of the zombie on stage foregrounds the ephemerality of live performance through the embodiment, the materiality, of a cinematic monster. Even if a patron knows nothing of zombies, nor necessarily cares to, this same patron may be one invested in supporting local, independent theater—people networking together, from different genres of culture, through zombie theater. *Zombie Town* is not just the brainchild of zombie fans, it not only pays homage to a genre, it engages in theatrical and philosophical debates around liveness, performance, as well as the liminal status of the walking dead by bringing the zombie to life on the stage (pun intended). In ripping this fictional creature from the representational frame of the screen, where presence is defined through absence and vice versa, and forcing it on the stage, my queries into how liveness manifests and is understood in nontraditional, new media terms takes on a new life (again pun intended) when presented with live bodies performing reanimated corpses.

Liveness and the Living Dead Live

Liveness as a site of cultural concern metaphorized through the zombie, as I have been arguing, has to do with a technological shift that impacts lived experience. Just as the move to sound film in the 1930s, and the proliferation of television in the nuclear family home in the 1960s, for the 21st century this is the spatial and temporal experiential shift that occurred circa 1995 with the emergence of a consumer Internet and corresponding user-friendly interface. With this in mind, we can then see that some of the more exciting and arguably relevant adaptational uses of zombies occur within and/or via the conduit of the Internet. The Internet itself is a medium through which something is transmitted, and we, as users, must engage with some sort of screened interface—usually a computer monitor but more and more often this screen is the one found on our mobile technology device such as the iPod Touch, iPhone, or Blackberry phone.[420] In part

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[419] Jill Dolan, *Geographies of Learning: Theory and Practice, Activism and Performance* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2001), 16.

[420] There are a very few, and relatively new, exceptions to this designed to allow the blind to also make use of the Internet. Google, a company often on the cutting edge of Internet technology developments, has a program Goog411 that allows users to have the

because of this dual level of mediation—through the Internet and via a screen—our own relationship to what "live" means has shifted, even if only on an unconscious level.

One of the ways zombies make it onto the Internet is via grassroots editorial "talk radio" shows called podcasts or television-like segments called vlogs (video logs). These usually take the form of a report (like the news) or an editorial talk-piece. Importantly, podcasts are not regulated by the FCC and are usually completely volunteer side-projects that do not generate income and thus do not have sponsors or commercials. This gives the creators more freedom and license to choose their material and craft the show in any way they believe to be the most appealing to their intended audience. Some of the more popular podcasts such as the *Midnight Podcast: The Podcast for all things Zombie*, the *Zombie Radio Project*, and the *World War Z Podcast*, or vlogs such as *The Dead Report*, employ self-consciously performative modes of presentation in their discussion of real-time and real-life zombie-related events: movie reviews, coverage of theatrical events such as *Night of the Living Dead: Live!*, zombie dance troupes, zombie proms etc.

The podcast and vlog are examples of Internet performance in a more traditional sense: the recording of a real-time event, an event performed for the purposes of being disseminated across the Internet, that is then produced and uploaded to a website. The transitory and liminal space of the Internet is also a site of networking, of connecting people in immediate real-time in order to produce spontaneous performance events in the more traditional sense of term (i.e., real-time, shared-space performance). Again, the zombie, as imagined through zombie cinema that originated with George Romero's 1968 classic *Night of the Living Dead*, is an interesting materialization of the networked possibilities of physical bodies coming together through the liminal space of the Internet because the zombie materializes the same liminal in-between that the Internet performs in 1s and 0s, and the subculture that has emerged from Romero's brain child further complicates an already nuanced ontological state: the walking dead.

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content from the Internet read to them over the phone using voice technology similar to that developed by Tellme.

CONCLUSION: THE UNDEAD PROJECT

> Good zombie movies show us how messed up we are, they make us question our station in society… and our society's station in the world. They show us gore and violence and all that cool stuff too… but there's always an undercurrent of social commentary and thoughtfulness.[421]

The title here is meant to evoke a number of meanings: this dissertation, of course, is a project about the undead; but this is also a project, like its subject, that will continue to "walk" beyond its initially intended lifespan (i.e., this dissertation). The epigraph here is meant to recall the import of these cultural objects and theories posited. The ideas put forth and analyses conducted are meant to spawn further conversations, engender new threads, offer new nodal connections, and encourage alternative modes of inquiry. The epigraph also recalls Kyle Bishop's assertion I cited in the first chapter: "the zombie film retains its ability to make audiences think while they shriek."[422] 21st century zombie cinema, with its commitment to social critique and commentary, offers an interesting representational lens through which to examine how we, as a culture, make sense of and respond to new media technologies. Additionally, this cinematic subgenre also exposes the possibilities film holds as an object of analysis for performance studies,

[421] Robert Kirkman, "Introduction," *The Walking Dead, Volume 1: Days Gone Bye* (Berkeley, CA: Image Comics, 2006).

[422] Bishop, "Raising the Dead" 196.

as well as how performance studies can further uncover the analytic import of the cinema.

The performance studies concepts of liveness and liminality speak to the cinema as an embalming medium where the figures captured on celluloid (or captured as binary code with the digital video camera) are frozen in time, ghostly echoes of their former selves. These cinematic figures, the cherished actors and characters that appear on screen, are no longer live; their liveness is an impossibility just like the same walking dead creatures who populate zombie films. As figures frozen in time and mummified (who appear also so alive on the screen), these actors and characters of the cinema exist in between the world of the material and that of the ephemeral. They are both present and absent, and liminality speaks to this duality; as a concept, liminality offers a means of further exploration for what this duality might mean, how, in fact, the cinema might occupy a third space being both present and absent *as well as* neither present nor absent. Just as these terms help to open-up the cinema in new ways, zombie cinema in particular opens-up this cinematic genre for analysis within performance studies. Because the zombie is an animated corpse, being both dead and alive, the zombie thematizes issues of liveness and presence that have proven so central to the discipline. The zombie as cinematic figure opens a door for performance studies to examine the cinema on its own terms.

To retrace a genealogy, zombies and technology have an interesting connection throughout the history of popular culture and mass production. Zombies lumbered onto the screen for the first time in 1932 with Victor Halperin's *White Zombie*. Moaning, inarticulate zombies appeared on the screen just as the union of cinematic sound and cinematic image began its honeymoon stages, having just merged a few years prior in *The Jazz Singer* (1927). Zombies seemed all but replaced by aliens and nuclear warfare in the 1950s when, with the rise of television sets as a fixture in the American family home, George Romero reinvigorated the subgenre, initiating the modern horror genre, with *Night of the Living Dead*. Again, by the mid-1980s, zombies had become a parody of themselves, hanging on by remakes and campy re-imaginings. And, as I have argued throughout this dissertation, the rise of consumer digital technologies and telecommunications inspired and offered the means for an explosion of a new wave of zombie cinema and culture.

Zombies, and the cinematic narratives surrounding their emergence, embody and perform cultural shifts as a result of technological innovation and proliferation. There is an interesting dichotomy, however, in 21st century zombie cinema, where the apocalyptic world that serves as the landscape for the narrative is devoid of technology. Within the diegetic frame of the films themselves technology and mass telecommunications have dissolved due to a destruction of the infrastructure that supports them: the networks of communication and social connection have been obliterated along with the political and economic systems that support them; and while new technologies have been nearly erased from the representational field, it is these same technologies that create and present the zombies that have brought about the very crisis that makes the sustaining of those technologies impossible. Even Romero adjusts for this loss of technological infrastructure when moving from *Diary of the Dead* to its sequel. *Diary* takes place within the first few days of the zombie apocalypse, thereby making it feasible that networked technologies would still have the systems in place to function. In *Survival of*

the Dead, however, the narrative occurs on an anachronistic island just off the New England shore, which is dependent solely on generators, machines and other analog forms of technology.

The apparent stress between the analog world of the zombie narrative and requirement of digital technologies to produce those zombies also plays out in the new television series *The Walking Dead*, based on Robert Kirkman's graphic novel of the same name. This new television series takes place months into the zombie apocalypse, painting a world in which the systems and infrastructures taken for granted in the modern 21st century have disintegrated: telephone and power lines no longer work; although the most basic and rudimentary radio broadcasts can be sent and received; and cellular and Internet networks are completely destroyed. And this world, which is devoid of advanced technologies, is populated by zombies whose likeness, as it appears on television screens, was constructed using advanced digital postproduction techniques. Kirkman, as evidenced in the epigraph to this section, is invested in the zombie narrative as social critique. Often, tying back to my interest in real world effects and community, this critique manifests as an examination of character development in moments of extreme duress: how individuals respond, what happens to social groupings and hierarchies, and how interpersonal relationships shift and play out. Each of these represents a network segment, a link in the chain of interconnectivity. So, in *The Walking Dead*, the character of Shane Walsh (Jon Bernthal) evolves through the status of dear friend, to lover, to renegade live wire—each of these stages in direct relationship to the same core set of friends from before to during the zombie outbreak.

A network not explicitly explored in this project, but forming a thread throughout, is the one of zombie subculture itself. There is the historical network of cinematic representations, as well as cinematic remakes and references. Within the world of fandom, a network of adaptations emerges in graphic novels and fiction. What began as a uniquely American and cinematic phenomenon began to spread across the globe as early as 1979 with the work of Italian director Lucio Fulci,[423] and has more recently found expression in countries such as Japan,[424] Germany,[425] and Denmark.[426] This list of international zombie cinematic production is by no means complete; in my research I've discovered the list of zombie films produced around the globe to be inexhaustible.

The zombie networks are global and local. They are national and international. They spread from screen to screen, across telecommunications bandwidth, and into the streets. Zombies remediate through these networks and through embodied reenactments. The conceptual reaches of biomedia are re-imagined when mobile communications inform where people localize, who they meet, and what they do with their bodies. This apparent ubiquity, however, may not be as pervasive for everyone. Zombies, though they

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[423] *Zombie*, dir. Lucio Fulci, Variety Film Production, 1979, film; *City of the Living Dead*, dir. Lucio Fulci, Dania Film, 1980, film; *The Beyond*, dir. Lucio Fulci, Fulvia Film, 1981, film; *Zombi 3*, dir. Lucio Fulci, Flora Film, 1988, film.

[424] *Versus*, dir. Ryuhei Kitamura, KSS, 2000, film.

[425] *Rammbock: Berlin Undead*, dir. Marvin Kren, Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen (ZDF), 2010, film.

[426] *Opstandelsen*, dir. Caspar Haugegaard, Jawbreaker Productions, 2010, video.

seem to be everywhere,[427] may be but a small blip on a larger radar for many. Again, this demonstrates the intricate interweavings of networks, technology, and embodiment: what is a pervasive means of cultural expression for some, serves only to briefly flash through the representational landscape for others. Zombies serve as one means of metaphor, but the pervasive impact of digital technologies remains a shaping force, even for those who choose to eschew these technologies as much as possible.

Death Framed

> The cinema combines, perhaps more perfectly than any other medium, two human fascinations: one with the boundary between life and death and the other with the mechanical animation of the inanimate, particularly the human, figure.[428]

Laura Mulvey in her recent *Death 24x a Second: Stillness and the Moving Image* (2006), considers the ways in which the film experience has shifted since the digital explosion of the end of the 20th century. She argues that these newer, controllable technologies have, of course, altered our relationship to the image, our understanding of its indexicality, and the tension of cinematic mummification in the preservation of seeming-life after death. Mulvey's articulation of this shift, with her employed leitmotif of the uncanny, speaks to the unique position of the cinema, and other similar moving visual media, as the ideal location for zombie representations. Furthermore, as I have been arguing throughout this project, the zombie, and the narratives surrounding this liminal figure, operates as a particularly pregnant object through which we understand and make meaning of our new media moment as well as the recent technological explosion and resulting cultural experiential shift.

Mulvey, best known for her positing of a theory of a dominant white, heterosexual, male gaze in traditional Hollywood cinema,[429] updates her theories of spectatorship to more accurately align with the identified shift in viewing experience. According to Mulvey, two types of spectators emerge: the pensive and the possessive. "The pensive spectator is more engaged with reflection on the visibility of time in the cinema; the possessive spectator is more fetishistically absorbed by the image of the human body."[430] The pensive spectator might also be understood as the academic spectator in that the new technologies of viewing, which offer a fragmented and nonlinear mode of spectatorship, allow the viewer to pause the moment, still the image, and otherwise disrupt the linear narrative flow of the film. The possessive spectator is able to turn her desire to literally possess the image—usually of a film star—into a more active experience. Whereas in pre-digital technologies, this would manifest in repeat movie theater viewings and the acquisition of still images released by the studio, now the

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[427] McIntosh 1.
[428] Mulvey, *Death* 11.
[429] Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure."
[430] Mulvey, *Death* 11.

possessive spectator can take the film with them—on DVD, on a flash drive, on the Internet, etc.—and watch the moments that excite them, still the frames that move them.

Mulvey's possessive spectator might literally possess, or become possessed by, that which they most desire by embodying or becoming that star or character. I would argue that this mode, or extension, of the possessive spectator is not new, but has found new expression thanks, in part, to networking technologies. The familiarity of this mode of possessive spectatorship can be seen in traditional drag shows, where men dress as a theatricalized version of their favorite stars: Judy Garland, Liza Minnelli, Joan Crawford, Barbara Streisand, and so on. By performing zombies in zombie walks, theater, and the like, fans of the subculture attempt to possess their object of interest through embodiment.

In the embodiment of zombies we have manifestations of what Victor Turner has termed, "the human seriousness of play."[431] Play is "'subjective,' free from external constraints, where any and every combination of variable can be 'played' with."[432] It is through play, and the enactment of plays (to play with words), that the zombie can materialize; through play, humans are able to make manifest that which is impossible, and thereby explore the potential reaches and metaphoric expressions of their current cultural state. As we've seen in the cinema, which is a genre of playing just as the theater is, the zombie and cinematic narratives around zombies thematize the technological, liveness, media, and networks. With zombie cinema we have an example of playing at the impossible—the corpse reanimated—as a means of working through new cultural situations. Just as young children use pretend play to work through and make sense of their social experiences, and therefore grow as grounded and aware social beings, so too do adults use a more structured form of play—usually a cultural product such as theater, film, or art—to reflect and respond to cultural experiences and societal situations.

In his discussions of play and ludic performance, Turner also reinvigorates the now familiar concept of the liminal. "It is the analysis of culture into factors and their free or 'ludic' recombination in any and every possible pattern, however weird, that is of the essence of liminality, liminality *par excellence*. This may be seen if one studies liminal phases of major rituals cross-culturally and cross-temporally."[433] Throughout this concluding section I have been illustrating (however indirectly) the importance of play in liminal moments. When we pretend to be zombies on stage or in flash mobs we play around with what death is or feels like, we become the possessive spectator by embodying the object of our affection/interest, while at the same time (particularly in the case of flash mobs more so than theatrical productions) disrupting the normative flow of social time (i.e., the zombie flash mob of 2005 discussed earlier in this chapter took place at rush hour in downtown San Francisco on a Friday). When we engage in play, we are also challenging social norms and the rigidity of established signs and systems.[434] Through the disorderly, through moments of fun and their disruption of the normal day-to-day, people as a community learn something.

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[431] Turner, *From Ritual to Theater*.
[432] Turner, *From Ritual to Theater* 34.
[433] Turner, *From Ritual to Theater* 28.
[434] Turner, *From Ritual to Theater*.

The power of play as transformative and productive is a subject investigated by performance theorist and game designer Jane McGonigal. In her recent publication *Reality is Broken: Why Games Make Us Better and How They Can Change the World* (2011), McGonigal argues that playing games, specifically collective video games, not only gives us pleasure but makes us better people by solidifying our sense of self and thereby empowering us to effect positive change in the world around us.[435] Games bring us together as communities, and the positive power of these communities, usually on-line, still needs to be validated in a culture (and discipline) that nostalgically privileges in-the-flesh encounters. From collective gaming ventures such as *World of Warcraft* (entirely online) to *I Love Bees* (a game that incorporates online technologies, and real world actions), McGonigal demonstrates the power of games to establish communities, encourage cooperative action, and simply provide a positive outlet for alternative role playing and identity formation.

It is this aspect of the zombie subculture that I wish to examine further in my next project. I want to take the ideas of remediation, networking, and even an expanded concept of Thacker's biomedia, and examine how they are deployed in what we might term traditional, shared-air reality. In doing so I will also further consider where the liminal emerges and is lived, as well as how liveness might be reimagined. Cinematic spectatorship is never passive, and is always active. Through play, new ideas emerge, communities are formed, structures bent, and life lived. Playing zombies, then, provides a material means through which to play around with new network forms, consider new means of community, perform liminal states (and their resulting communitas), play-at technology, and generally make-fun of our serious world while maintaining a foot in the door of the seriousness of global cultural conditions.

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They *are* coming to get you… Zombies *are* everywhere… They just may manifest in different forms. For this lady, the site of cultural play, expression, and re-imaginings comes in the form of the zombie.

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[435] Jane McGonigal, *Reality is Broken: Why Games Make Us Better and How They Can Change the World* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2011).

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House of the Dead 2. Dir. Michael Hurst. Mindfire Entertainment, 2005. Video.
House of the Living Dead. Dir. Ray Austin. Associated Film Productions, 1976. Film.
Hunting Creatures. Dir. Andreas Pape. United Maniacs Produktion, 2001. Video.
I Am Bish. Dir. Dave Bishop. Pissweak Superheroes, 2009. Video.
I Am Legend. Dir. Francis Lawrence. Warner Bros. Pictures, 2007. Film.
I Am Omega. Dir. Griff Furst. The Global Asylum, 2007. Video.
I Bury the Living. Dir. Albert Band. Maxim Productions, 1958. Film.
I Eat Your Skin. Dir. Del Tenney. Iselin-Tenney Productions Inc., 1964. Film.
I Walked with a Zombie. Dir. Jacques Tourneur. RKO Radio Pictures, 1943. Film.
I Was a Teenage Zombie. Dir. John Elias Michalakis. Periclean, 1987. Film.
I Was a Zombie for the FBI. Dir. Marius Penczner. Continental Video, 1982. Video.
I, Zombie. Dir. Andrew Parkinson. Fangoria Films, 1998. Film.
Incredibly Strange Creatures Who Stopped Living and Became Mixed-Up Zombies, The. Dir. Ray Dennis Steckler. Morgan-Steckler Productions, 1964. Film.
Infection: *The Invasion Begins.* Dir. Howard Wexler. Morningstar Entertainment, 2010. Film.
Insanitarium. Dir Jeff Buhler. BenderSpink, 2008. Video.
Invasion of the Not Quite Dead. Dir. Tony Lane. Indywood Films , 2011. Film.
Jean Claude the Gumming Zombie. Dir. Johnny Wu. Media Design Imaging, 2009. Film.
King of the Zombies, The. Dir. Jean Yarbough. Monogram Pictures, 1941. Film.
Kiss Daddy Goodbye. Dir. Patrick Regan. Pendragon Film, 1981. Film.
La Cage aux Zombies. Dir. Kelly Hughes. Lucky Charm Studio, 1995. Video.
Land of the Dead. Dir. George Romero. Romero-Grunwald Productions, 2005. Film.
Last of the Living. Dir. Logan McMillan. Gorilla Pictures, 2008. Video.
Last Rites of the Dead. Dir. Marc Fratto. Brain Damage Films, 2006. Video.
Laughing Dead, The. Dir. Somtow Sucharitkul. 1989. Video
Legion of the Night. Dir. Matt Jaissle. Kashmir Motion Pictures, 1995. Film.
Livelihood. Dir. Ryan Graham. 37.5 Productions, 2005. Film.
Living Dead Lock Up. Dirs. Mario Xavier and Mike Hicks. Golden Dragon Productions, 2005. Video.
Living Dead Lock Up 2: March of the Dead. Dir. Mario Xavier. Golden Dragon Productions, 2007. Video.
Living Dead Lock Up 3: Siege of the Dead. Dir. Mario Xavier. Golden Dragon Productions, 2008 Video.
Lord of the Undead. Dir. Timo Rose. SOI Film Entertainment, 2004. Film.
Machine Head. Dirs. Michael Murphy and Leonard Murphy. Schmooxen Frog, 2000. Video.
Mad, The. Dir. John Kalangis. 235 Films, 2007. Film.
Make-Out with Violence. Dirs. The Deagol Brothers. Limerent Pictures, 2008. Film.

Meat Market. Dir. Brian Clement. Frontline Films, 2000. Video.
Meat Market 2. Dir. Brian Clement. Frontline Films, 2001. Video.
Meat Market 3. Dir. Brian Clement. Frontline Films, 2006. Video.
Mental Dead, The. Dir. Adam Deyoe. Pratt Ratt Productions, 2003. Video.
Messiah of Evil. Dirs. William Huyck and Gloria Katz. International Cine Film Corp., 1972. Film.
Midnight Hour, The. Dir. Jack Bender. ABC Video Enterprises, 1985. Video.
Motocross Zombies from hell. Dir. Gary Robert. Cohen Brothers Productions, 2007. Video.
Mutant. Dir. John "Bud" Cardos. Laurelwood Productions, 1984. Film.
Mutant Vampire Zombies from the '*Hood*. Dir. Thunder Levin. Stormfront Films, 2008. Film.
Mutants. Dir. Amir Valinia. K2 Pictures, 2008. Film.
Mutation. Dir.
My Boyfriend's Back. Dir. Bob Balaban. Touchstone Pictures, 1993. Film.
Necro Files, The. Dir. Todd Tjersland. Threat Theatre International Inc., 1997. Video.
Necro Files 2, The. Dirs. Ron Carlo and Greg Lewis. Threat Theatre International Inc., 2003. Video.
Necro Wars. Dir. Robert Conway. Stoneridge Studios, 2010. Video.
Necropolis Awakened. Dir. Garrett White. Pathfinder Pictures, 2002. Video.
Necroville. Dirs. Billy Garberina and Richard Griffin. C.R. Productions, 2007. Video.
Night Life. Dir. David Acomba. Wild Night Productions, 1989. Film.
Night of the Comet. Dir. Thom Everhardt. Thomas Coleman and Michael Rosenblatt Productions, 1984. Film.
Night of the Creeps. Dir. Fred Dekker. TriStar Pictures, 1986. Film.
Night of the Dead. Dir. Eric Forsberg. Cerebral Experiment, 2006. Video.
Night of the Living Babes. Dir. Jon Valentine. Magnum Video, 1987. Video.
Night of the Living Dead. Dir. George Romero. Image Ten, 1968. Film.
Night of the Living Dead. Dir. Tom Savini. 21st Century Film Corporation, 1990. Film.
Night of the Living Dead: Reanimated. Dir. Mike Schneider. Neoflux Productions, 2009. Video.
Night of the Zombies. Dir. Joel M. Reed. 1981. Video.
Ninjas vs. Zombies. Dir. Justin Timpane. Endlight Entertainment, 2008. Video.
Ninja Zombies. Dir. Noah Cooper. D-Prov Productions, 2011. Video.
Nudist Camp Zombie Massacre. Dir. Tim Davis. MMJ Video Productions, 2011. Video.
Nudist Colony of the Dead. Dir. Mark Pirro. Pirromount Pictures, 1991. Video.
OC Babes and the Slasher of Zombietown. Dir. Creep Creepersin. Creepsville Entertainment, 2008. Video.
Ouanga. Dir. George Terwilliger. George Terwilliger Productions, 1936. Film.
Ozone (Street Zombies). Dir. J. R. Bookwalter. Suburban Tempe Company, 1995. Video.
Pathogen. Dir. Emily Hagens. Cheesy Nuggets Productions, 2006. Video.
Plague of the Zombies, The. Dir. John Gilling. Hammer Film Productions, 1966. Film.
Plaguers. Dir. Brad Sykes. Nightfall Pictures, 2008. Video.
Plan 9 from Outer Space. Dir. Edward D. Wood, Jr. Reynolds Pictures, 1959. Film.
Planet Terror. Dir. Robert Rodriguez. Troublemaker Studios, 2007. Film.
Platoon of the Dead. Dir. John Bowker. Pipedreams Entertainment, 2009. Video.

Portrait of a Zombie. Dir. Bing Bailey. Pipedreams Entertainment, 2009. Video.
Post Mortem, America 2021. Dir. Quattro Venti Scott Productions, 2011. Video.
Pot Zombies. Dir. Justin Powers. Fringe Media, 2005. Video.
Poultrygeist: Night of the Chicken Dead. Dir. Lloyd Kaufman. Troma Entertainment, 2006. Film.
Project Nine. Dirs. Brianna Colleen Byrne, Romeal Hogan, Brendan Nagle, Jonas Pachuski, Keri Rommel, Adam Schonberg, Jason Stoy, Dan Sullivan, John Theroux. Shady Maple Productions, 2010. Video.
Punk Rock Zombie Kung Fu Catfight. Dir. Peter Bernard. 2004. Video.
Pushin' Up Daisies. Dir. Patrick Franklin. Pushin' Up Daisies LLC., 2010. Video.
Quarantine. Dir. John Erick Dowdle. Andale Pictures, 2008. Film.
Quick and the Undead, The. Dir. Gerald Nott. Nott Entertainment, 2006. Film.
Rabid. Dir. David Cronenberg. Cinema Entertainment Enterprises Ltd., 1977. Film.
Raiders of the Damned. Dir Milko Davis. IDX Studios, 2007. Film.
Raiders of the Living Dead. Dir. Samuel M. Sherman. Independent International Pictures, 1986. Film.
Re-Animator. Dir. Stuart Gordon. Empire Pictures, 1985. Film.
Redneck Zombies. Dir. Pericles Lewnes. Full Moon Pictures, 1989. Video.
Reel Zombies. Dir. David J. Francis. Last Call Productions, 2008. Video.
Resident Evil. Dir. Paul W. S. Anderson. Constantin Film Produktion, 2002. Film.
Resident Evil: Afterlife. Dir. Paul W. S. Anderson. Constantin Film Produktion, 2010. Film.
Resident Evil: *Apocalypse*. Dir. Alexander Witt. Constantin Film Produktion, 2004. Film.
Resident Evil: *Degeneration*. Dir. Makoto Kamiya. Sony Pictures Entertainment, 2008. Video.
Resident Evil: *Extinction*. Dir. Russell Mulcahy. Sony Pictures, 2007. Film.
Resurrection Game, The. Dir. Mike Watt. Happy Cloud Pictures, 2001. Film.
Return of the Living Dead. Dir. Dan O'Bannon. Hemdale Film, 1985. Film.
Return of the Living Dead, Part II. Dir. Ken Wiederhorn. Greenfox, 1988. Film.
Return of the Living Dead, Part III. Dir. Brian Yuzna. Ozla Productions, 1993. Film.
Return of the Living Dead: *Necropolis*. Dir. Ellory Elkayem. Aurora Entertainment, 2005. Film.
Return of the Living Dead: *Rave to the Grave*. Dir. Ellory Elkayem. Aurora Entertainment, 2005. Film.
Revenant, The. Dir. D. Kerry Prior. Putrefactory, 2009. Film.
Revenge of the Zombies. Dir. Steve Sekely. Monogram Pictures, 1943. Film.
Revolt of the Zombies. Dir. Victor Halperin. Edward Halperin Productions, 1936. Film.
Revolting Dead, The. Dir. Michael Su. Revolting Productions, 2003. Video.
Rise of the Undead. Dirs. Jason Horton and Shannon Hubbell. Zapruter Productions, 2005. Video.
Risen. Dir. Damon Crump. AdHoc Film Co-Op, 2008. Video.
Rising Dead, The. Dir. Brent Cousins. Cousins Brothers Production, 2007. Video.
Romeo and Juliet vs. *The Living Dead*. Dir. Ryan Denmark. Third Star Films, 2009. Video.
Sabbath. Dir. William Victor Schotten. Schotten FilmWorks, 2008. Video.
Santa Claus Versus the Zombies. Dir. ZP Productions, 2010. Video.

Serpent and the Rainbow, The. Dir. Wes Craven. Universal Pictures, 1988. Film.
Severed: *Forest of the Dead*. Dir. Carl Bessai. Forest of the Dead Productions Inc., 2005. Film.
Shadow: *Dead Riot*. Dir. Derek Wan. Fever Dreams, 2006. Film.
Shatter Dead. Dir. Scooter McCrae. Tempe Video, 1994. Video.
Shaun of the Dead. Dir. Edgar Wright. WT2 Productions, 2004. Film.
Shock Waves. Dir. Ken Wiederhorn. Zopix Company, 1977. Film.
Sick and the Dead. Dirs. Jordy Dickens and Brockton McKinney. Magic Twanger Productions, 2009. Video.
Silent Night, Zombie Night. Dir. Sean Cain. Velvet Hammer Films, 2009. Film.
Slaughter, The. Dir. Jay Lee. Scream HQ, 2006. Film.
Slices of Life. Dir. Anthony G. Sumner. Tinycore Pictures, 2010. Video.
Space Zombie Bingo. Dir. George Ormrod. Troma Entertainment, 1993. Video.
Stag Night of the Dead. Dir. Neil Jones. Zomball Films, 2010. Video.
Stiffed. Dir. Billy Garberina. C.R. Productions, 2010. Video.
Stink of Flesh, The. Dir. Scott Phillips. Tempe Entertainment, 2005. Video.
Storm of the Dead. Dir. Bob Cook. B.C. Entertainment Group, 2006. Video.
Street Team Massacres. Dir. Adam Deyoe and Eric Gosselin. Pratt Ratt Productions, 2007. Video.
Stripperland. Dir. Sean Skelding. Cheezy Flicks Entertainment, 2011. Video.
Sugar Hill. Dir. Paul Maslansky. American International Pictures, 1974. Film.
Supernaturals, The. Dir. Armand Mastroianni. Samuel Goldwyn Company, The, 1986. Film.
Surf II. Dir. Randall Badat. Surf's Up, 1984. Film.
Survival of the Dead. Dir George Romeo. Blank of the Dead Productions, 2009. Film.
Swamp Zombies. Dir. Len Kabasinki. Killer Wolf Films, 2005. Video.
Teenage Zombies. Dir. Jerry Warren. GBM Productions, 1959. Film.
Tele-Zombie. Dir. Lory-Michael Ringuette. Deeply Disturbing Productions, 2004. Film.
They Walk. Dir. Charles House II. Pulp Added Works, 2010. Film.
Tormented. Dir. Jon Wright. Slingshot Productions, 2009. Film.
Trailer Park of Terror. Dir. Steven Goldman. Trailer Park Partners, 2008. Film.
Undead. Dirs. Michael Spierig and Peter Spierig. Spierigfilm, 2003. Film.
Undead or Alive. Dir. Glasgow Phillips. Odd Lot Entertainment, 2007. Film.
Urban Decay. Dir. Harry Basil. Urban Decay The Movie, 2007. Video.
Vanguard, The. Dir. Matthew Hope. Propaganda Pictures, 2008. Film.
Veil, The. Dirs. John Chance and Rich Chance. Chance Encounters, 2005. Video.
Video Dead, The. Dir. Robert Scott. 1987. Interstate 5 Productions, 1987. Video.
Virus Undead. Dirs. Wolf Wolff and Ohmuthi. Legendary Units, 2008. Video.
Voodoo Cowboys. Dir. Sean-Michael Argo. Cthulhu Blues Productions, 2010. Video.
Voodoo Dawn. Dir. Steven Fierberg. Mercury Home Entertainment, 1991. Film.
War of the Dead. Dir. Marko Makilaakso. Accelerator Films, 2011. Film.
Warm Bodies. Dir Jonathan Levine. Mandeville Films, 2012. Film.
Wasting Away. Dir. Matthew Kohnen. Shadowpark Pictures, 2007. Video.
Weed of the Living Dead. Dir. Michael Bilinski. MCB Entertainment, 2010. Video.
White Zombie. Dir. Victor Halperin. Edward Halperin Productions, 1932. Film.
Wiseguys v. Zombies. Dir. Adam Minarovich. Drexel Entertainment, 2003. Video.

Working Stiffs. Dir. Michael Legge. Sideshow Cinema, 1989. Video.
Z: *A Zombie Musical.* Dir. John McLean. Dancing Zombies, 2007. Video.
ZMD: *Zombies of Mass Destruction.* Dir. Kevin Hamedani. Typecast Pictures, 2009. Film.
Zombie 4: After Death. Dir. Claudio Fragasso. Flora Film, 1989. Film.
Zombie Allegiance. Dir. Tony Nunes. Solipsist Media Group, 2010. Video.
Zombie Apocalypse. Dir. Ryan Thompson. Phantasmal Pictures, 2010. Video.
Zombie Army, The. Dir. Betty Stapleford. Tempe Video, 1991. Video.
Zombie Beach. Dir. Mukesh Asopa. Asopa Films Incorporation, 2010. Video.
Zombie Beach Party. Dir. Stacey Case. El Zorrero Productions, Inc., 2003. Video.
Zombie Bloodbath. Dir. Todd Sheets. Trustinus Productions, 1993. Video.
Zombie Bloodbath 2: *Rage of the Undead*. Dir. Todd Sheets. Extreme Entertainment, 1995. Video.
Zombie Bloodbath 3: *Zombie Armageddon*. Dir. Todd Sheets. Extreme Entertainment, 2000. Video.
Zombie Brigade. Dirs. Carmelo Musca and Barrie Pattison. CM Productions, Seaflower Holdings Pty. Ltd., and Smart Egg Productions, 1986. Video.
Zombie Campout. Dir. Joshua D. Smith. Latetalk Productions, 2002. Video.
Zombie Cheerleading Camp. Dir. Jon Fabris. JJJ Productions, 2007. Video.
Zombie Chronicles, The. Dir. Brad Sykes. Razor Entertainment, 2001. Video.
Zombie Cop. Dir. J. R. Bookwalter. Suburban Tempe Company, 1991. Video.
Zombie Cult Mazzacre. Dir. Jeff Dunn. L.D. Filmworks Inc., 1998. Video.
Zombie Dearest. Dir. David Kemker. Scream Clock Productions, 2009. Video.
Zombie Death House. Dir. John Saxon. Double Helix Films, 1987. Film.
Zombie Diaries, The. Dirs. Michael Bartlett and Kevin Gates. Bleeding Edge Films, 2006. Video.
Zombie Doomsday. Dir. Tom Townsend. First Star Media, 2011. Video.
Zombie Driftwood. Dir. Bob Carruthers. Zombie Driftwood, 2010. Video.
Zombie Ed. Dir. Ren Blood. All Mine Productions, 2011. Film.
Zombie Farm. Dir. B. Luciano Barsuglia. BLB Media, 2007. Film.
Zombie Ferox. Dir. Jonathan Ash. Digital Nasties, 2002. Video.
Zombie Genocide. Dirs. Andrew Harrison and Khris Carville. Midnight Pictures, 1993. Video.
Zombie High. Dir Ron Link. Cinema Group, 1987. Video.
Zombie Honeymoon. Dir. David Gebroe. Hooligan Pictures, 2004. Film.
Zombie Hunters. Dir. Peter Maris. Maris Entertainment Group, 2007. Video.
Zombie Island Massacre. Dir. John N. Carter. Troma Entertainment, 1984. Video.
Zombie Nation. Dir. Ulli Lommel. Working Poor Productions, 2004. Video.
Zombie Night. Dir. David J. Francis. Primal Films Inc., 2003. Video.
Zombie Night 2: *Awakening*. Dir. David J. Francis. Last Call Productions, 2006. Video.
Zombie Nightmare. Dir. Jack Bravman. Gold-Gems Ltd, 1986. Film.
Zombie Ninja Gangbangers. Dir. Jeff Centauri. Plutonium Productions, 1997. Video.
Zombie Outbreak. Dir. Sarah Stennett. Princess Lilith Productions, 2006. Video.
Zombie Planet. Dir. George Bonilla. Piedmont Film Corp., 2004. Video.
Zombie Planet II: *Adam's Revenge.* Dir. George Bonilla. ZP Productions, 2005. Video.
Zombie Rampage. Dir. Todd Sheets. Trustinus Productions, 1989. Video.

Zombie Rampage 2. Dir. Todd Sheets. Trustinus Productions, 1992. Video.
Zombie Strippers. Dir. Jay Lee. Stage 6 Films, 2008. Film.
Zombie Town. Dir. Damon Lemay. Edgewood Entertainment, 2007. Video.
Zombie Toxin. Dir. Thomas J. Moose. Viscera Films, 1998. Video.
Zombie Undead. Dir. Rhys Davies. Hive Films, 2010. Film.
Zombie Wars. Dir. David A. Prior. All American Pictures, 2008. Video.
Zombie Women of Satan. Dirs. Steve O'Brien and Warren Speed. 24:25 Films, 2009. Film.
Zombie! Vs. Mardi Gras. Dirs. Will Frank and Karl DeMolay. Carnavale Productions, 1999. Video.
Zombiefied. Dir. Todd Jason Cook. Screamtime Films, 2012. Video.
Zombiegeddon. Dir. Chris Watson. Wild Range Productions, 2003. Video.
Zombieland. Dir. Ruben Fleischer. Columbia Pictures, 2009. Film.
Zombies Anonymous. Dir. Marc Fratto. Brain Damage Films, 2006. Video.
Zombies by Design. Dir. Dave Wascagave. Troubled Moon Films, 2006. Video.
Zombies Gone Wild. Dir. Gary Robert. Cohen Brothers Productions, 2007. Video.
Zombies of Mora Tau. Dir. Edward L. Cahn. Clover Productions, 1957. Film.
Zombies on Broadway. Dir. Gordon M. Douglas. RKO Radio Pictures, 1945. Film.
Zombies Unleashed. Dir. Richard Givens. LA Beats, 2010. Film.
Zombies! Zombies! Zombies! Dir. Jason Murphy. In The Dark Entertainment, 2008. Video.
Zombiez. Dir. John Bacchus. Purgatory Blues LLC, 2005. Video.
Zomblies Dir. David M. Reynolds. Realm Pictures, 2010. Video.
Zompyres: Texas. Dir. Jordan Funderburk. Foox Productions, 2010. Video.
Zone of the Dead. Dirs. Milan Konjevic and Milan Todorovic. Talking Wolf Productions, 2009. Film.