

Paula Cantillo's essay for Colm O'Shea's "Writing the World Through Art" explores national identity and the creation of cultural myths and monsters. The exposition is a set-piece on transitioning gracefully through matters most disparate: Ebola, zombies, xenophobia, Jungian psychology. As if opening a set of Matryoshka dolls, Cantillo guides her reader confidently among seemingly unrelated topics to reveal hidden insights and connections.

THE SHADOW OF THE UNDEAD

Paula Cantillo

An armored ambulance speeds down the interstate, a pack of military escorts at its flanks and a flock of helicopters circling anxiously above it. As the vehicle pulls into a deserted parking lot, two men in white space suits emerge and make their way hastily towards the back door of a hospital building. What looks like a scene straight out of an apocalypse film is actually news footage of Dr. Kent Brantly, America's first Ebola patient, being brought into Atlanta's Emory Health Center for treatment ("Ebola Patient"). In the weeks following his arrival, travel restrictions would be implemented, thousands of news stories would be aired tracking (or speculating about) the transmission of the virus, and hysteria would run rampant among the American public. However, in hindsight, having experienced only two deaths out of eight cases, it is obvious that the only thing apocalyptic about the American Ebola outbreak was our reaction to it.

It is true that, in a biological sense, viruses pose an invasive threat to our bodies. In the case of Ebola, the virus enters the host and hijacks their vascular system, causing their veins to decompose and hemorrhage. While, naturally, symptoms like these would arouse fear in anyone, it seems unlikely that Ebola's biological threat alone could have caused a panic as turbulent as that of 2014. If this were the case, viruses like the flu and HIV—which are considerably more contagious and statistically more deadly—would receive the same public attention and media coverage that Ebola received upon its arrival on

American soil. Perhaps, then, it is possible that our exaggerated reaction was provoked not by a simple health concern, but by a more latent, insidious fear.

An investigation into the virus's media presence shows that Ebola was the dominant story on both cable and broadcast news in the four weeks leading up to the 2014 midterm elections. Many politicians like Ted Cruz and Rand Paul used the virus as a means to advance their political agendas, taking an opportunity to attack President Obama for neglecting his duty and refusing to close the borders to all nations with reported cases of the virus. Ignoring the fundamental nature of the disease, many of these public figures claimed that Ebola was being transmitted by illegal immigrants, or that it could be used as a biochemical weapon by terrorists. These gross speculations stoked the already rising flames of American xenophobia, and, soon enough, made a fear of disease synonymous with a fear of foreigners.

Almost every story about disease stems from similar xenophobic anxieties. Take the zombie, for example: a creature near and dear to the plague sub-genre of film and narrative storytelling. Though the past decade has seen an explosion of the zombie in popular culture, the monster is not at all new to American mythology. In fact, it has been embodying a Western fear of outsiders since 1932, when it made its debut in Victor Hugo Halperin's film *White Zombie* (1932). This film, along with others such as *I Walked with a Zombie* (1943), heavily accentuates distinctions between American and Caribbean culture, the worlds of White and Black, and the realms of insider and outsider. The protagonists in each film, all White, are seen engaging in stylish European dinners, playing the piano, and generally convening in brightly lit scenes. On the other hand, African Voodoo masters and zombie plantation slaves are portrayed as gaunt, shadowy figures who partake in mysterious rituals and play entrancing rhythms on the drums. The heroes in these films respond to the Voodoo zombies in very much the same way that Americans in the 1920 imperialist era reacted to contact with the obscure and misunderstood Haitian culture: by polarizing the 'civilized' White world and the 'primitive' Black world into separate spheres of existence.

Later films like *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956) and *Night of the Living Dead* (1968) broke from the zombie's Haitian roots and

allowed the creature to embody a more age-relevant tension between the inside and outside. Instead of being enchanted by Voodoo, these zombies were brainwashed by alien invaders or affected by nuclear radiation. In each of these films, the creature is part of a horde—a mindless, destructive machine capable of corrupting or infecting anyone it comes into contact with. With the Cold War droning on in the background, it is easy to see the monster in these films as the embodiment of anxiety towards foreign communist influence and the effects of nuclear warfare.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, there was a short lull in the production of zombie narratives. It was not until the turn of the century that the creature was raised from the dead by the film *28 Days Later* (2002). With its introduction of the contagion factor, this film blurred the lines between horror and science fiction, infusing an aspect of realism into the zombie genre. This trend continued into later films like *The Dead* (2010), which shows an American Air Force engineer plane-wrecked while on a mission to West Africa, where an Ebola-like zombie virus has spread like wildfire among the natives. The engineer escapes after many months of fighting hordes of African zombies only to find that the epidemic has already reached the United States. At a time when illegal immigration was—in the eyes of many Americans—a threat to national security, this similar danger of disease being carried across the border seemed all too realistic. Even today, as Andrew O’Hehir comically states in his article “Ebola: The Heart of Darkness and the Epidemic of Fear,” there seems to be the paranoid perception that “all it takes is a handful of African visitors with cardboard suitcases and undiagnosed infections, and next thing you know, the cable goes out at Mom’s house and we have to eat the neighbors.” While clearly an exaggeration, this statement provides important insight into how outsiders, especially those considered most prone to viral contagion, are often times portrayed in the semblance of a mindless monster. For a subtle example of this, consider Donald Trump’s 2015 statement in which he said: “Tremendous infectious disease is pouring across the border. The United States has become a dumping ground for Mexico and, in fact, for many other parts of the world” (qtd. in Walker). The fact that he uses the term “infectious disease” instead of “people with infectious disease” may

seem trivial, but when put in conversation with the evolving image of the zombie, it makes all the difference.

In its humble origins in *White Zombie* and *I Walked with a Zombie*, the zombie held true to its roots in Haitian mythology as a creature exploited by dark magic and manipulation. Though frightening, and in some cases dangerous, the zombies were pitiable, curable, and, for the most part, still human. With new developments like *Night of the Living Dead* and *28 Days Later*, however, the zombie began to seem less like a victim and more like the flesh-eating monster we know today. This transition culminates with the zombie sub-genre's newest evolution, AMC's television series *The Walking Dead*. Throughout the show, the characters refer to the infected as "walkers," "biters," "dead-heads," and "geeks" as a way of accepting the fact that their loved ones are no longer human—that the infected are now the infection. Detachment of this sort is an important mental defense mechanism, as the zombies are dangerous, and it is much easier to blow the brains out of a "walker" than it is to hurt a loved one or friend.

Labels, as we have seen throughout history, are a fundamental tool in the construction (and then later, destruction) of a monster. In times of imperialism, the exploitation of whole indigenous civilizations was largely justified by calling the natives "savages." During the Cold War, the "communist" label was enough to spark nationwide hysteria and instigate a witch hunt that would eventually lead to the unwarranted prosecution, imprisonment, and deportation of hundreds of innocent people. The same type of work is done by Trump's use of labels, whereby it becomes much easier for Americans to detain an "infectious disease" at the border than to refuse a family looking for a better life.

It seems as if each era has its own signature devil. Each time one is defeated, another more frightful one is conjured up to take its place. It's rather like the community of Woodbury in *The Walking Dead*, which wages a war against protagonist Rick Grimes in the third season. Though the citizens of Woodbury seem peaceful, the city is infamous for its unprovoked and ruthless attacks on outsiders. Their leader, a young, charismatic man known as the Governor, is somehow able to convince them to waste their men and resources on attacking

any group of survivors outside of its walls. As DJ Pangburn of *Death and Taxes* explains:

Woodbury's walls have neutralized the zombie threat, and so a more menacing, unquantifiable threat must be constructed, even if it's largely imaginary. The fear of the 'other' shifts from one object to another. (Pangburn)

The United States has withdrawn from Haiti; it has held steady through the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and thus, like Woodbury, it must seek out a new enemy to once again play the role of the "boogeyman" (Pangburn). Ironically, both the United States and Woodbury brand their newest monster with the same label: "terrorist." For Woodbury, whose residents can presumably draw on pre-apocalyptic memories of terrorism in America, the word is compelling enough to launch them into a war against a small, agrarian society with three children, a newborn baby, and a crippled old man. Similarly, for the United States, the image of the armed, Middle-Eastern monster is enough to demonize a whole religion consisting almost entirely of peaceful people.

But to what extent is this fear paranoia? Certainly in *The Walking Dead*, Rick's group is peaceful, but who is to say that previous outsiders were not? The residents of Terminus, a cannibalistic community that Rick encounters in Season Four, were once said to have been good-natured people who offered a safe haven to any survivor who reached their city. However, when they took in a clan of marauders, the naive, well-meaning citizens were tortured, raped, and killed. Those who survived took up a policy of distrust and violence, believing that sympathy for outsiders made them vulnerable to betrayal and exploitation. Even the most adamant of liberals must admit that terrorism, much like Ebola and the marauders, is a legitimate concern that should be taken seriously. The question that divides most experts, however, is not whether or not terrorism is a threat, but rather what kind of threat it is. According to foreign policy analyst Ted Bromund:

An existential threat is one that would deprive the United States of its sovereignty under the Constitution, would threaten the terri-

torial integrity of the United States or the safety within U.S. borders of large numbers of Americans, or would pose a manifest challenge to U.S. core interests abroad in a way that would compel an undesired and unwelcome change in our freely chosen ways of life at home. (Jacobson)

For example, both the Axis Powers and the Soviet Union, with their massive ground and air forces, formidable alliances, and weapons of mass destruction, were the nation's greatest existential threats since the Civil War. ISIS and Al-Qaeda, even if they were capable of pulling off another attack like 9/11, are overall too small, too disjointed, and too ill-equipped to come close to matching any existential threats that America has faced in the past. If this is the case, why, then, is the nation so intent on raising the specter of the Axis Powers with the similarly-named Axis of Evil? Why must a monster be forged in the fire of our own speculation and exaggerations? Perhaps, like Ebola, it is because terrorism represents something much more complex than a threat to our national security.

To fully understand what role the terrorist really plays in American society, it is important to first understand who America is as a nation. According to Natsu Taylor Saito:

A deeply rooted aspect of American identity is the belief that the United States represents the most advanced stage in the evolution of human civilization, and therefore possesses a unique historical responsibility to bring its model of progress and development to the less fortunate. (55)

Even before World War II, the idea of America as a force of good was deeply ingrained in the nation's psyche. Today, the majority of Americans still view the nation as a defender of freedom, a champion of democracy, and a sort of world-wide superhero. Terrorism, defined by the U.S. Department of State as an act of "premeditated, politically-motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets," is the antithesis of this ideal ("Glossary"). The attack on the Twin Towers, the bombings in Paris and Brussels, and the massacre of civilians in Iraq all represent a savage, regressive, and inhuman form

of warfare that America, as a self-proclaimed 'city upon a hill,' would undoubtedly abhor. Indeed, the nation goes to great lengths, sacrificing inordinate amounts of money and men to stamp terrorism out abroad and to deter it from entering our borders. However, if held to the same standards as ISIS and Al-Qaeda, there are various American war crimes that also qualify as acts of terrorism. Take the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, for example. The attacks were meticulously planned, politically driven, and grossly indiscriminate, killing an estimated 226,000 people in the span of a few months. As it turns out, terrorism is not only something that America hates, it is also something that it has not come to terms with itself.

Analytical psychologist Carl Jung theorizes that every human is made up of two parts: the persona, or the part of our personality that we most identify with, and the shadow, defined by psychologist Carolyn Baker as the "unconscious aspects of the psyche of which we are ashamed or that do not resonate with our self-image" (Baker). For men, femininity is the shadow of a masculine persona; for the civilized, primitiveness is the shadow of a refined persona; and for America, inhumanity is the shadow of its virtuous persona. The most common way of interacting with one's shadow is suppression, whereby the male pushes away his feminine traits, the imperialist denies his barbaric qualities, and the U.S. hides the carnage of its terrorist actions behind bloodless terms like 'collateral damage.' While up until recently, this tactic was enough to keep the righteous image of America intact, the nation's superhero persona took a heavy blow during the Vietnam War. For the first time, television exposed the atrocities that our own forces were capable of; for the first time, we were seen not as liberators but as invaders; and for the first time, we came face to face with our shadow and found that it could no longer be suppressed.

Perhaps, then, the creation of monsters is not simply a product of hate and distrust so much as it is a response to a national identity crisis. According to author Anthony Stevens, the threat of our undesirable, shameful, or immoral attributes is often dealt with by using "a variety of ego-defense mechanisms, particularly repression, denial, and projection" (Stevens 84). The most effective of these, in which an individual or group is able to detach themselves completely from their

shadow, is projection. By ignoring that our country is the source of the darkness, we disown our disagreeable traits, giving us the illusion that our shadow is only manifest on the surface we cast it upon. In dreams, this projected shadow is the monster chasing us—a creature that we often fail to realize is a manifestation of our own selves.

All monsters, for that matter, can be argued to be the projected shadows of a certain society. For example, the villains of Greek mythology are all either female, barbarian, or chthonic—the shadow of a patriarchal, democratic, and Olympian societal persona. In Puritan mythology, the witch is the embodiment of sin and unrestrained desire, qualities suppressed by the Puritan persona of piety and temperance. Likewise, in *White Zombie* and *I Walked with a Zombie*, the zombie represents the shadow of imperialism's savage nature suppressed by a persona of civilization and refinement. The same goes for the Cold War and contemporary zombies. Are we not as guilty of forcing our form of government on others as the communists? Is our military not home to the world's largest arsenal of nuclear weapons? Are we not just as responsible for the half a million civilian deaths caused in Japan and Vietnam as Al-Qaeda is for the 2,996 civilians killed on 9/11?

In his book *Hunt the Devil: A Demonology of US War Culture*, Robert L. Ivie and Oscar Guner explain:

[T]he trope of evil prods the nation to dehumanize its enemies and displace its own deformities on a vilified Other. It sets in motion a 'victimage' ritual through which America redeems itself on an altar of vicarious sacrifice. (13)

The ritual of the sacrificial lamb, in which the sins of a people are cast onto an animal that is then killed in retribution, is the most ancient form of shadow projection. Today, the ritual lives on through the dehumanization of the 'Other' upon whom we cast our iniquities. The 'War on Terrorism,' be it justified or not, cannot rid us of our own barbarous acts any more than killing a goat can absolve us of our wrongdoings. Projection, like suppression, is just a symptom of denial—an inability to recognize our own flaws.

This is not to say that America is completely devoid of goodness. It is important to remember that the nation has helped the world through times of great crisis, that it is the first responder to natural disasters, and that it consistently ranks as one of the world's most charitable nations. The persona is not a false but rather incomplete part of the personality. Failing to incorporate the shadow results in a state of limbo in which we are constantly running from a monster we can never escape. Exceptionalist justifications for the crimes of Hiroshima, Nagasaki, My Lai, or Abu Ghraib only abet the perpetration of yet more barbarity that must in turn be suppressed or projected to protect our persona. This vicious cycle begets a blind and stubborn society—one that fights to keep Ebola away from its borders but refuses to address the flaws in its own healthcare system, one that rages against the 75 American deaths caused by ISIS in the past 15 years instead of addressing the 300,000 deaths caused by domestic gun violence.

The monster in our dreams, however, does not simply disappear when we stop running. On the contrary, Jung describes *auseinandersetzung*, or the “confrontation” with the shadow, as a painful and disorienting experience. It is a plunge into the darkest parts of our being, a stripping of our persona, and the death of our identity as we know it. In alchemy, this turmoil is known as *nigredo*, a state of blackness and chaos. In Greek mythology, it is represented by a descent into the underworld. Because of its harrowing nature, Jung advises that *auseinandersetzung* not be undertaken without adequate mental preparation (45).

It is here that the zombies of American mythology can act as maieutic art objects that allow us to indirectly confront our collective shadow. “The first stage of growth is being realistic about who we are, what we are and where we are now,” say Billy Childish and Charles Thomson, the founders of the “Remodernist” art movement (“Handy Hints”). Instead of endorsing persona-oriented films like *World War Z* (2013), in which Brad Pitt and a band of White doctors team up to save the world, Childish and Thomson advocate for art that lays bare our flaws and denies the trope of the fundamental hero. *The Walking Dead*, because of the lengthy nature of the television series, provides this degree of vulnerability that is often missing from non-serial nar-

ratives. Unlike Gerry in *World War Z*, Rick Grimes is no hero, and throughout the show it becomes clear to both him and the audience that he is no less barbaric than the Governor or the cannibals at Terminus. In Season Five, Rick gives a speech to his dwindling group of survivors in which he tells them that “we are the walking dead” (*The Walking Dead*, “Them”). With this quote, the masks that distinguish heroes from villains—fundamental good from fundamental evil—are shattered, and we, much like Rick, become painfully aware that the shadow upon the undead has always been our own.

For most people, it is easier to watch the lovable Gerry save a little Black boy from the clutches of zombies than to have our esteemed image of Rick slip away as he raids a community of innocent people. The jarring images and themes of the show throw us into a state of chaos in which, like the characters, we are constantly forced to ask ourselves: “Who are we?” (*The Walking Dead*, “A”). Art thus is the alchemist that melts down our composition, the guide that leads us into the underworld. Though the process is long and grueling, it is only by way of nigredo that ordinary metals can be turned to gold; it is only by dying that the warrior boy can resurrect as a hero; it is only by realizing that we are all infected that we can truly be cured.

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Elegantly cloaked, but masked by shadows, his eyes burn yellow as he tells us we all have a little evil inside us. Take Zach Kincaid A lonely and intense 14-year-old horror movie junkie, Zach is a good kid but a little confused as a result of his parents' recent break-up. Finding cold comfort in Valentine's assurance of protection, Zach runs for the first available train. Unfortunately, he steps onto the Undead Express, which is full of vampires who

Written by Echo Bridge Home Entertainment. Plot Summary | Add Synopsis. Fans of DRACULA and FRANKENSTEIN will enjoy THE SHADOW OF THE UNDEAD. ...more. Get A Copy. Amazon. Online Stores ³/₄. Audible Barnes & Noble Walmart eBooks Google Play Abebooks Book Depository Alibris Indigo Better World Books IndieBound. Kindle Edition. Vaya and Anna are central characters in The Shadow of the Undead. Their relationship is at the heart of this novel, but this isn't a lesbian romance. Three races of monsters exist in this novel. Vampire like creatures enslave and torture one group of shape shifters. This group of shifters used their superior population levels to eliminate the vampire kingdoms in America. Anna's father is an American king who leads his kingdom back to their Eu

Highly imaginative book about three races of monsters. Welcome Guys To My New Project. The Shadow Of The Undead! This Game Your Name Is Tiru And You Just Had A Nightmare. You Wake Up In A Strange Place Called HELL. You See A Ghost Named Jon. He Helps You Get Through The Tasks. Will You Survive? Progress. tools/tracking. 1566268. the-shadow-of-the-undead. Join Planet Minecraft! We're a community of creatives sharing everything Minecraft! Even if you don't post your own creations, we appreciate feedback on ours. Join us! Undead Shadows is a fast paced action zombie shooter that keeps players on their toes and tests their survival instinct. You are a survivor in the harsh post apocalyptic world looking for any means of survival against never ending waves of zombies from sun up to sun down and even worse in between. All Reviews: Mixed (20) - 45% of the 20 user reviews for this game are positive. Release Date: 2 Feb, 2015. Undead is a term used to describe those that are officially deemed deceased, but can still interact with the living of Arda. In the Third Age, "Dwimmerlaik" was often used to describe any undead beings. Some of the most notable examples of this dwindling race in Middle-earth are the Nazgûl, kings of Men, corrupted by the influence of the nine Rings of Power, and made loyal to the Dark Lord Sauron, and his One Ring.